Engaging International Jewish Cultures: A Middle School Curriculum for Supplementary Schools

Rabbinical Thesis

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

Cincinnati, Ohio

Spring 2014

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Rabbi Matthew Kraus for modeling informal education in the classroom; the *Rak Noar* experience has helped inform how I set out to create this curriculum. Additionally, Rabbi Meredith Kahan made it possible for me to build a library of resources at Rockdale Temple; the materials with which I worked helped shape the format of this work as well as fill out the list of resources for instructors.

I would like to extended my gratitude to Rabbi Jan Katzew for his guidance and help in making sure my focus includes the instructor as a student, and reminding me that through the process of teaching we are continually learners ourselves.

I cannot thank Dr. Michael A. Meyer enough immense generosity and willingness to take me on as a student, despite failing the first exam in the first course I took with him! I appreciate all of the time and energy he has put into helping me formulate a non-traditional rabbinical thesis and working with my vision of bringing history to young learners.

Finally to my husband, Rabbi Jon Kleinman, although he initially balked at the size and scope of this project, he has been incredibly supportive of the work I have done and continues to encourage me in all of my (seemingly) over-the-top endeavors.

Preface

This work aims to fulfill a perceived gap in the teaching of Jewish history to middle school students: the period between the Spanish Expulsion and resettlement of the land of Israel. Each chapter focuses on a different diaspora community, the status of Jews therein, and attempts to tell a story to which middle school students can relate. Each *madrich/madricha* tells the audience about his or her life, noting the universal aspects of adolescence as well as the particular details of his/her historical context.

The curriculum can be used in as short of a span as a semester or as long as a year. Each protagonist has five stories that can be used as lessons on their own or to supplement a general lesson in Jewish history. Learners will be exposed to life-cycle events and holiday celebrations in each of these different historical periods.

The instructor is provided with a text that explains the context of each setting as well as provides supplemental information. The instructor can use this information, and the bibliography, to create his or her own lessons to focus on a particular area of interest.

Instructors are encouraged to read the teacher supplement that contains overarching goals for the curriculum as well as ideas for presentation.

The text begins with an introduction to Israel during one of its highest periods of immigration and describes five families from different countries of origin. Each subsequent chapter details a Jewish experience from one of these regions, with the intention that learners will connect the historical experience of the *madrich/madricha* with the corresponding family in the introduction and conclusion. Instructors can teach about Israel and aliyah in the beginning or end of the unit.

It is my hope that learners will identify with the *madrichim* and see a bit of themselves in the story of Jewish history, as well as understand that the modern state of Israel is a home for Jews from all over the world.

Introduction: Israel in the 1950s

20th-Century *Aliyah*: A Brief Overview

Beginning in the final decades of the nineteenth century, Jews from Europe and the United States began to immigrate to the land of Israel and create a Jewish society. Although Israel did not become a state until 1948, these early pioneers helped create the population and infrastructure needed to support the Jewish state. The term *aliyah* comes from the Hebrew meaning "going up," in the spirit that one is ascends, or "goes up" when moving to the land of Israel.

Aliyah to Israel can be broken down into six periods before 1948, which will be discussed here. Post-state *aliyah* will be mentioned in regard to American and North African *olim* (immigrants).

The First Aliyah began in 1882 when a group of Eastern European Jews arrived in Jaffa and set out to create a Jewish community. In March they established a *moshav* (village) called *Rishon L'Tzion* – the first in Zion. They left their homeland due to increasing persecution and suppression of Jews.[1] Some Jews left as individuals or families, and others banded together with similar-minded individuals to emigrate as a group.[2] Most entered through the port cities of Jaffa and Haifa; some remained there to live in the growing cities whereas others sought to engage in agriculture in less developed areas.[3] Regardless whether they were city-dwellers or farmers, the majority of *olim* in this

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[1] Itzhak Alfassi et al., "Land of Israel: Aliyah and Absorption," ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007).
[2] Alfassi et al., "Land of Israel."
[3] Leslie Stein, *The Hope Fulfilled: The Rise of Modern Israel*, Praeger Series on Jewish and Israeli Studies (Westport, Conn: Praeger, 2003): 20.

period sought to establish a place where Jews could live without legal or economic threats.[4]

These *olim* received assistance from a variety of Zionist groups. *Hibbat Zion* (love of Israel) and Bilu (an acronym for *Beit Ya'akov L'chu V'nelcha* (Isaiah 2:5), "Come, house of Jacob, let us go up"), two Zionist associations that met in Eastern Europe, sought to find an end to Jewish persecution by bringing Jews back to the land of Israel and creating an autonomous society.[5] Their members focused on practical issues such as bringing organized groups from Eastern Europe to the land of Israel and providing resources for their settlement.[6]

The *olim* of the First Aliyah faced harsh physical conditions in the land of Israel. Without modern amenities such as paved roads, medical care, and electricity, creating a new agricultural society proved to be difficult. These early *olim* literally and figuratively paved the way for further Jewish settlement in the land of Israel. By the turn of the century, nearly ten thousand Jews had immigrated to the land of Israel and established nearly two dozen new towns and villages.

The year 1903 marks the divide between the first and second *aliyot* [plural of *aliyah*], likely due to the increasing persecution of Jews in the Russian Empire. The Kishinev pogroms of 1903 and 1905 in modern-day Ukraine and further restrictions on Jewish autonomy in Eastern Europe drove even more Jews to reconsider their current situations. Unlike those who arrived in the previous three decades, Jews of this period

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[4] Alfassi et al., "Land of Israel."

[5] Efraim Orni, "Hibbat Zion," ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), Gale Virtual Reference Library.

[6] Orni "Hibbat Zion" and Alfassi et al., "Land of Israel: Aliyah and Absorption."

arrived as individuals seeking to help physically build up the land of Israel as opposed to their predecessors with their goal of political autonomy.[7] Mostly youth, this group came to be called *chalutzim*, or "pioneers," and created the autonomous collectives known as *kibbutzim*.[8] The first *kibbutz*, Degania, was founded in 1909 by a group of individuals who wanted personal responsibility for the land and its products.[9] Not all immigrants were willing to live in a closed community, others found their livelihood in the *moshavot* (towns) and growing cities.[10] Immigration from Eastern Europe continued until the first world war, when international tensions halted immigration to the land of Israel.

After the Great War ended in 1919, a new flood of immigrants arrived from Russia, Ukraine, Galicia, Poland, and Lithuania. During the war, Socialist revolutionaries overthrew the Russian monarchy and established a new government in the territories of the Russian empire. This change in world order caused some Jews to remain in Russia and support the new government, whereas others sought to retain their Jewish identities by moving to the land of Israel. This period of *aliyah* is also characterized by young immigrants, who set up more *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* as they arrived in the land of Israel.[11]

Another impetus for *aliyah* was the Balfour Declaration (1917), which, in short, assured Jews that the British government would support Jewish settlement in the land of Israel. With the backing of an international power, Jews felt more secure moving to a

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[7] Stein, *The Hope Fulfilled,* 88.

[8] Alfassi et al., "Land of Israel."

[9] Moshe Kerem et al., "Kibbutz Movement," ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007).

[10] Misha Louvish and Fred Skolnik, "Aliyah," ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007).

[11] Louvish and Skolnik, "Aliyah."

land of unknowns. In 1920 the British Empire assumed control of the land of Israel from the dying Ottoman Empire, and immigration increased steadily.

The middle years of the 1920s saw an increase in immigration from Poland. This is the end of the period of mass migration from Europe to the United States, since in the 1920s the US began to place quotas on European immigrants. With the US no longer an option, Polish Jews opted for the land of Israel as a viable alternative.[12] Unlike in previous eras of immigration, these *olim* were older (middle age), middle class, and brought some capital with them to the land of Israel.[13] They settled predominantly in major cities and kept their old professions instead of seeking an entirely new life.[14]

The largest group of *olim* in the pre-state period arrived during the 1930s from Germany. This group included professionals with significant experience and resources.[15] The majority of German immigrants settled in cities and towns, and their expertise and capital helped speed up the urbanization of the land of Israel.[16] They brought new industries and manufacturing to the region.[17]

Unlike many of the immigrants before them, those who came during the Fifth Aliyah did not seek to shed their home culture and absorb that of the land of Israel. Many felt uprooted from their homeland and retained a strong attachment to German language and culture.[18] They continued to speak German and socialize amongst themselves.[19] Not

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[12] Stein, *The Hope Fulfilled,* 178.
[13] Stein, *The Hope Fulfilled,* 179.
[14] Stein, *The Hope Fulfilled,* 179.
[15] Louvish and Skolnik, "Aliyah."
[16] Stein, *The Hope Fulfilled,* 197.
[17] Stein, *The Hope Fulfilled,* 197.
[18] Guy Miron, "From Bourgeois Germany to Palestine: Memoirs of German Jewish Women in Israel," *NASHIM: A Journal of Jewish Women's Studies and Gender Issues* 17 (Spring 2009): 118.
[19] Miron, "From Bourgeois Germany to Palestine," 127.

all of them were Zionists, but rather many were refugees from Nazi Germany who were forced to flee their homes.[20]

During the Second World War and the five years preceding it, the British government sought to cap immigration to the land of Israel. These restrictions led to the phenomenon of illegal immigration, called Aliyah Bet (as opposed to the permitted or legal *aliyah*, Aliyah Aleph). A network of clandestine routes and secret societies helped thousands of Jews find a place to live during the interwar period of great uncertainty.

After World War II, Jews in the land of Israel appealed to the United Nations for an independent country. It was not until November 1947 that this plea was granted. During the three years in between, it became clear that the Arab countries surrounding what would become Israel were less than thrilled at the idea of an independent Jewish state. With the real threat of war looming, a few hundred Jewish veterans of World War II came to the land of Israel and volunteered their services to the various Jewish defense forces.[21] After these veterans, along with the nascent Israeli military, defeated opposing forces in the War of Independence, they brought their families to Israel and made their permanent homes there.[22] They brought with them a high level of Hebrew literacy and a strong attachment to the new state.[23]

In the years after statehood, many Jews in North Africa and the Arab countries of Iraq, Iran, and Syria sought to shed their *dhimmi* (non-citizen) status and live among Jews in the land of Israel. Civil unrest in the eastern countries served as an impetus for

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[20] Louvish and Skolnik, "Aliyah."
[21] Chaim I. Waxman, *American Aliya: Portrait of an Innovative Migration Movement* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989): 82.
[22] Waxman, *American Aliya,* 82.
[23] Waxman, *American Aliya,* 83.

immigration in the early 1950s, and only later, once tensions had quieted, did North African Jews receive the opportunity to emigrate freely. Although Zionist emissaries had been in Morocco since 1943, both emigration and immigration regulations were strict and made movement extremely difficult.[24] In 1949 an Aliyah organization named CADIMA, (forward), emerged and over its decade of existence helped over ninety thousand Moroccans immigrate to Israel.[25] The American Joint Distribution Committee and Jewish Agency helped cover some of the costs of travel and resettlement, and local *aliyah* committees in major cities helped recruit potential *olim*.[26] Somewhat like the German *olim* before them, North African Jews retained much of their home culture and continued to speak their native language.[27] They did, however, revel in the idea that they were finally part of society: no longer relegated to non-citizen status, these immigrants now cared about the state in which they lived and its freedoms.[28]

For *olim* of all periods, Israel provided a place where being Jewish was no longer an occupational liability and instead the common bond between neighbors and friends. The draw of the land of Israel, whether out of Zionist passion or hope for a better life, continues to unite *olim* and gives the residents of the land of Israel a common culture and language with which to build their lives and society.

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[24] Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands in Modern Times* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2003), 166-167.
[25] Michael M. Laskier, "Jewish Emigration from Morocco to Israel: Government Policies and the Position of International Jewish Organizations, 1949-56," *Middle Eastern Studies* 25, no. 3 (July 1989): 330.
[26] Laskier, "Jewish Emigration," 330-331.
[27] Alex Weingrod, "Change and Continuity in a Moroccan Immigrant Village in Israel," *Middle East Journal* 14, no. 3 (Summer 1960): 283.
[28]. Laskier, "Jewish Emigration," 326.

Uri: Jerusalem, Israel, 1955

Shalom! My name is Uri and I am 13 years old. I live in Yerushalayim with my *Abba*, *Imma*, brother Ariel, and sister Hadas. I am excited to tell you about my family!

My *Abba's* family has lived in *Eretz Yisrael* for nearly three hundred years. His ancestors came to Tzefat, a city in the North, to fulfill a dream of living in the land of Israel. We don't know where they came from but they were very interested in kabbalah (mystical Judaism) and wanted to live with other Jewish people to study and learn together.

At some point they moved to the Old City of Jerusalem, and lived there until my *Saba* and *Savta* moved outside the city walls in 1948. After the State of Israel became independent they felt safer leaving the Jewish Quarter. We live in an apartment next door to theirs and they have always been part of our day-to-day lives. While *Abba* is at work at *Ha'aretz* (the newspaper) and *Imma* is teaching Hebrew at an *ulpan* (Hebrew-language school), we go to *Saba* and *Savta's* to play and do our homework.

We also spend a lot of time with our neighbors. They come from all over the world – it's like a whole globe in our building! There are four floors and between the three apartments on each floor we have families from Russia, Poland, the United States, and even Morocco. There happen to be a lot of friends my own age, and I'm inviting them all to our *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* (Israeli Independence day) party next week.

The newest family to move in is the Ben-Tzion family, and they are from Morocco. I like their son Moshe very much even though he and I are very different. He has moved around a lot: he was born in a city called Fez, and then to get to Israel he had

to go to Casablanca, also in Morocco, then France, and then finally when he got to Israel they went to the Negev and lived in a *moshav* (village). His parents did not like it there so they eventually moved to Jerusalem. One of the reasons I like going to his house is because his mom is a really good cook: she makes all sorts of foods I've never tried before! On Shabbat they go to synagogue (my family never goes) and they invite us over for lunch afterwards and the food is so good! His *abba* works for the *merkaz klitah*, where new immigrants go to learn about Israel and learn Hebrew, and he and Moshe's *imma* talk about the food they ate at home in Morocco and what he makes for the new *olim*. At home they eat lots of homemade pita – Moshe's *imma* is so good at making it! His *abba* says that it's easier to buy lots of pita at the market and it's not worth the time it takes to make it at home. He also says that they should eat more couscous – it's not expensive and he has learned lots of different vegetables to add to it instead of meat. Meat is expensive here in Israel, so it's a treat to have *tajine* (slow-cooked stew) with beef instead of couscous with vegetables. When I go to Moshe's house his family speaks in Arabic, so he translates into Hebrew for me. He doesn't always know all the Hebrew words for something so sometimes I have to help him. Luckily lots of Arabic words are similar to Hebrew words so it's not too hard.

The Abramson family is also fairly new to Israel. Their son is named Josh but we call him Yossi because when his *imma* yells out the window for him she says "Josh-y" so we yell back "Yoss-si"! He was born in America but he and his *imma* made *aliyah* after the State of Israel was established. His *abba* fought in the War of Independence with my *abba*, and our family helped them get settled in *Yerushalayim* when Yossi and his mom came later. All of them are from Chicago but decided to live in Jerusalem and help Israel

win support from Jews in the United States. His *abba* works for the *Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael* (Jewish National Fund) and goes to America a lot to talk to groups and raise money for Israel. Since he travels so much we often have Yossi and his *imma* at our apartment for meals and holidays. His *imma* also works at the JNF; since she speaks English she helps write letters and communicate with people in America, South Africa, and England. She is learning Hebrew at the *ulpan* but when she and Yossi talk they speak in English. I am learning some English when Yossi translates for her.

The family right next door to *Saba* and *Savta* is from Germany. Their name is Roth and they have twin girls who are my age – Sara and Shayna. They were born in Israel after their parents left Germany. Their *abba* is a doctor at Hadassah Hospital and their *imma* teaches piano and violin in their house. There is always beautiful music coming from the apartment, except for one student whose violin sounds like a wailing cat. Sometimes it's really hard not to laugh – once the *imma* heard us laughing in the backyard and scolded us; we felt really bad for a few minutes but then the violin started again and we decided that we had to go inside to avoid getting yelled at again. The family speaks German at home and listens to records that they brought with them from Germany: most of us just have a small radio but they have a large record player! Their *abba* and *imma* don't come to our house very often, they spend time with other German immigrants and their families. It's not that they are not nice, they just don't have a lot to talk about with my parents or our other neighbors. The girls always have nice clean dresses on and their hair is nicely curled. One day we were playing outside and Shayna got mud on her dress and was very scared at what her *imma* would say. She and Sara

figured out a way to clean the dress and it just looked like it got some water on it instead of mud. They were very relieved!

The first neighbors *Saba* and *Savfta* met in their apartment were the Fleishmans, who moved into the apartment at the same time as they did. They had just left their *kibbutz* in the North and wanted to start a family in a city. The parents moved to the land of Israel in the 1920s from Poland and shocked the rest of their family when they settled on a *kibbutz*. All of the *abba*'s family had been rabbis in a town called Lublin, and these were the first two who lived a "secular" lifestyle. Their daughter, Minna, says that her *abba* tells her stories about growing up in a *shtetl* (Jewish community in Europe) and his childhood in the *yeshiva* (traditional Jewish schooling). She says he hated it and did not like being inside studying all day. That's partly why he came to Israel to work on a *kibbutz* – he got to be outside in the sunshine and work with his hands. He met Minna's *imma* there, and when they got married they decided to leave the kibbutz. When they arrived in Jerusalem they met other people from Lublin and someone helped Minna's *abba* get a job at *Bank L'eumi*, the national bank of Israel. Her *imma* is a seamstress and makes nice clothes for women in our neighborhood. Sometimes other woman from Lublin come to their house and do work all together – when I walk by I hear them talking and laughing in Polish but I don't understand a word!

These are the families in our building and I'm lucky to have so many friends close by. My family is getting really excited about our *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* party and the opportunity for everyone to celebrate Israel together even though we are all from different places.

Chapter 2: Fez, Morocco

Jewish Life in Muslim Morocco in the early Sixteenth Century

Jews under Islamic Law

Since our story begins in Morocco in the sixteenth century, it is useful for the instructor to have a brief knowledge of Moroccan history and how Jews survived under Muslim rule. The first section of this work will address the Jews' status under Muslim rulers and the socio-political climate that led to the creation and sustainment of the *mellah* in Fez. After a general explanation of life under Muslim rule, we will proceed with the information that students find most attractive: details and descriptions of everyday life and special events in the lives of Moroccan Jews.

Perhaps the greatest influence on Jewish life in this period is the role that Islamic law played in the everyday lives of Jews. Jews under Islam fell into the role of *dhimmi*, or protected citizen.[29] Not seen as full citizens under *sharia* (Muslim law), Jewish residents were subject to a plethora of restrictive statutes as laid out in the ninth-century Pact of Umar (or Omar). Non-Muslims living under Muslim rule needed to pay a special annual tax as well as follow a prescribed set of rules. The prohibitions included: not decrying the Koran, Islam, or Mohammed, not marrying Muslim women, not carrying weapons, nor seeking converts. On an institutional level *dhimmis* could not erect buildings taller than the city's lowest mosque; build new houses of worship or repair old ones; prevent one of their own from converting to Islam; It was incumbent upon *dhimmis* to wear distinctive clothing, remove their shoes when walking past a mosque, and accept their role of political vulnerability. This is not an exhaustive list and the enforcement of the Pact of

[29] Sarah Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa: From Dido to de Gaulle* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 43.

Umar varied from time to time and region to region. Moreover, Jewish courtiers and high officials often received exemption from these restrictions. Jews also harnessed power where they could; their control of a great deal of the region's financial resources and trade proved to be a useful method of gaining influence for these supposedly "vulnerable" subjects.[30]

Although Jews could not legally serve the government in an official capacity, there were certain positions of power that Jews could hold, as detailed by an eleventh-century Muslim jurist by the name of Al Mawardi. This "glass ceiling," when broken, resulted in disaster. Chouraqui notes that "a Jew or Christian could become vizier for executive tasks but never a vizier of delegation: he could carry out orders but he could hold no position of responsibility. Thus, he had no judicial powers, could not appoint officials, give orders to troops or administer the treasury directly."[31] These viziers and royal confidants often received exemption from *dhimmi* restrictions, but the exact nature of each individual's immunity varied from ruler to ruler. Each region in the Muslim world had its own standards to which *dhimmis* were held, the harshest of which were in Morocco.

Historical and Political Background

The daily life of Jews in early sixteenth-century North Africa was remarkably shaped by the socio-political climate in which they lived. An understanding of the Moroccan Jewish lifestyle and tradition requires approximately three hundred years of

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[30] Shlomo A. Deshen and Walter P. Zenner, *Jews Among Muslims: Communities in the Precolonial Middle East* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 91.

[31] André Chouraqui, *Between East and West a History of the Jews of North Africa* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968), 48.

historical context. From the indigenous Berber tribes to strict Muslim policies, Jews living in the Maghreb[32] during this era were subject to both the political and social mores of their overlords.

Until 1214, the region was controlled by the Almohad dynasty, fervent Muslims of Berber descent. In their zeal, they forced non-Muslims under their rule to convert to Islam; many did so to avoid persecution and improve their lot under Muslim rule.[33] Bernard Lewis argues that the Almohad dynasty put Jews into "a state of material degradation and intellectual impoverishment from which they never fully recovered."[34] This harsh treatment and repression was due not only to Islamic law, but also the encroaching threat of Christian Crusaders from Europe.[35] What is most important is that the Almohad dynasty dramatically influenced the ruling family that took charge in the middle of the thirteenth century: The Marinids.

In great contrast to the Almohads before them, the period of Marinid dynasty rule was characterized by (relative) religious toleration and economic success for Moroccan Jews. Also, stemming from a Berber tribe but less zealous than their predecessors, these rulers lightened the tight restrictions on non-Muslims living in Muslim countries, and were more lackadaisical in punishing transgressors. In the early fourteenth century, a

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[32] The "Maghreb" refers to the coastal region of northwest Africa comprising Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia.

[33] Shlomo A. Deshen, *The Mellah Society: Jewish Community life in Sherifian Morocco* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 39.

[34] Bernard Lewis, *The Jews of Islam* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 148.

[35] Yedida Kalfon Stillman, "Arab Dress : A Short History, from the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times," in *Arab Dress: a Short History: From the Dawn of Islam to Modern Times*, Themes in Islamic Studies v. 2 (Leiden Boston: Brill, 2000), 106.

Jewish family by the name of Waqqasa gained prominence as officials under a number of Marinid sultans.[36] Norman Stillman believes that this phenomenon occurred

> Because of the latter's [Jew's] extreme vulnerability and, hence, according to Islamic political psychology, dependability. ... As the Jews were a very marginal component of Moroccan society, they had no power base. They therefore offered no threat. They were considered totally dependent upon their masters, for they could expect no sympathy among the Muslim masses.[37]

The Marinids relied on Jews to fulfill a number of important roles, such as ambassadors to foreign courts, facilitators of trade with non-Arab communities, and a variety of banking and monetary professions in which Muslims could not engage. H. Z. Hirschberg notes that the Jews' role in economic trade and commerce helped rebuild Fez during the fourteenth century after centuries of military and religious strife had taken their toll on the city.[38]

Some of this religious turmoil occurred because of the sultans' choices of Jewish advisors. A late thirteenth-century sultan employed a member of the Waqqasa family as his second-in-command, but due to pressure from the Muslim leadership and aristocracy, was forced to have the Waqqasa family massacred in 1302 to avoid a popular revolt.[39] Norman Stillman claims that

> Up until this time the Merinid sultans had always been able to stem any popular dissatisfaction with their Jewish courtiers by the simple expedient of executing the officials. The few Jewish courtiers who are known to us from the Arabic

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[36] Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands: a History and Source Book* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1979), 78.
[37] Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, 79.
[38] H. Z. Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa*, vol. 1 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1974), 384.
[39] Chouraqui 48; David Corcos, *Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco* (R. Mass, 1976), 54.

> sources were, in fact, all put to death by the rulers they served—"and the dynasty was cleansed of their filth," as the chronicles usually commented.[40]

The time Stillman refers to is the spring of 1465. The ruler who would become the last Marinid sultan promoted a Jew named Aaron b. Batash to the post of vizier in his court. This appointment, combined with the perceived favor shown the Jews in relocating them to a neighborhood near the royal residence (*mellah*) that began a decade and a half earlier *and* a rumor that Jews had violated Muslim law by bringing wine into a mosque sparked a pogrom in the *mellah* that almost entirely demolished Fez's Jewish community. This series of political missteps led to the fall of not only this particular sultan, but his family line all together.

This disaster marked the end of the Marinid dynasty, which would influence the social and political culture of the next half century. The Wattasid dynasty rose to power and remained dominant for the first half of the sixteenth century, allowing Jewish refugees from the Iberian Peninsula to settle in its territory, which provided for a period of cultural and economic prosperity. As Iberian Jews began to arrive as early as the summer of 1492, Jewish life in Morocco, specifically its capital, Fez, began to revive and adopt new traditions and ways of life.

The *Mellah* of Fez and other Moroccan Restrictions on Jews

Bernard Lewis observes that Muslim leaders in Morocco were much harsher in enforcing legislation against *dhimmis* than elsewhere in the Muslim world.[41] His study of Moroccan judicial literature of this period yields strikingly stricter rules and regulations regarding *dhimmis* than in the Ottoman Empire and Muslim Spain. The following

[40] Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, 81.
[41] Lewis, *The Jews of Islam*, 150.

descriptions of Jewish life and legal limitations are not universal across the Muslim world, but should rather be taken in the context of the Moroccan political milieu.

The *mellah,* or Jewish area of Fez, was established in 1438. Unlike in parts of the Ashkenazi world, Jews entered this first *mellah* voluntarily and in concord with local Muslim leaders. This transition is unique; nowhere else in the Muslim world does a government-sanctioned "Jewish quarter" appear.[42] The *mellah* provided for the Jews both a cultural center and escape from the Muslim world around them. While outside the *mellah* Jews in Fez were required to remove their shoes or wear straw sandals as a sign of subservience to Muslims.[43] Jewish merchants formed their own guilds and professional societies that served the inhabitants of the *mellah.* While life was not idyllic inside the stone walls (local Jews likened it to a "sudden, bitter exile"[44]), it provided the Jewish community its own place to grow and evolve within the confines of Muslim society.

Religious Life in the *Mellah*

One of the central institutions within the *mellah* was the community synagogue. While more than one synagogue existed at any given moment, their characters could differ by a number of factors: cultural origin, rabbinical presence, and fiscal resources.[45] Even before the Spanish expulsion, a Castilian synagogue existed in Fez, serving travelers and those who had relocated from the region.[46] Local rabbis served as a source of religious authority, spiritual knowledge, and teachers of Judaism.[47] Rabbis served as

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[42] Lewis, *The Jews of Islam,* 150.
[43] Lewis, *The Jews of Islam,* 150
[44] Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands,* 80.
[45] Deshen, *The Mellah Society,* 109.
[46] Corcos, *Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco,* 174.
[47] Corcos, *Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco,*174.

judges in religious matters, such as marriage and divorce, decisions regarding Halacha, and the issue of the *agunah*, a married woman whose husband was missing and presumed dead. This placed the woman in an untenable position: she is not living as a married woman, but her husband has not handed her an official bill of divorce. As a result, she could not remarry; even to provide economic support for her family. As many North African Jews made their living through trade and commerce, the issue of a lost husband assumed to be dead occupied a significant amount of time in legal discussions. The community as a whole looked to Judaism as both an escape from and a justification for their political and economic situation. As part of a people in exile, they sought to escape into the worlds of kabbalistic mysticism, messianism, and religious Zionism.[48] Study of Talmud was not a "pastime," asserts Chouraqui, but part of a "continuous need to refer to the Torah in order to be able to obey the commandments and requirements correctly."[49] Synagogues played home to small study groups who utilized their space and their resources.[50] The synagogue served as repository of sacred literature; individuals could not afford to build personal libraries, so the synagogue and its sages provided copies of sacred texts.[51] The rabbis of the *mellah* faced both intellectual and practical challenges: until the middle of the sixteenth century, groups of rabbis and sages ran individual synagogues as if they were private property.[52] As a result, some had ornate architecture and featured expensive and highly detailed decorations, whereas others were sparely

[48] Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands,* 85.
[49] Chouraqui, *Between East and West,* 61.
[50] Deshen, *The Mellah Society,* 87.
[51] Deshen, *The Mellah Society,* 87.
[52] Chouraqui, *Between East and West,* 89.

adorned, similar to mosques.[53] In some circles, Jews removed their shoes and prayed sitting on a carpeted floor in mimicry of their Muslim neighbors.[54]

Prayer services occurred three times each day, per Jewish tradition, and were mostly attended by men. Many synagogues did not have the infrastructure for a women's section, simply because there was no demand for it. When women did attend services, they sat behind the men in the back of the synagogue.[55] Like many modern synagogues, attendance at worship service blossomed during the fall holidays and festivals.[56] The local rabbis understood the necessity of travel in order to make one's living (they, often, had to engage in work outside of the rabbinate to support their families), so there was a communal understanding of how often one ought to attend religious services. [57] Chouraqui likens the music in a Moroccan synagogue to Gregorian chants of the middle ages, punctuated with strong pronunciation of guttural letters.[58] The vast array of (comparably) accessible *piyyutim* (liturgical poetry) and core of liturgy-literate worshippers enhanced the communal aspect of worship. Scheindlin argues that because of the Jews' political situation they had a degree of autonomy that allowed them control over certain aspects of their society.[59] Adherence to Jewish tradition and Talmudic law was not an option, but rather the expected norm. Unlike in other parts of the Jewish

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[53] Sarah Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa: From Dido to de Gaulle* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 58; Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 59.
[54] Steven M. Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry: Jewish Folk Traditions from Persia to Poland* (New York; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 91.
[55] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 91.
[56] Deshen, *The Mellah Society*, 88.
[57] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 62.
[58] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 59.
[59] Raymond P. Scheindlin, "Merchants and Intellectuals, Rabbis and Poets: Judeo-Arabic Culture in the Golden Age of Islam," in *Cultures of the Jews: a New History*, 1st ed (New York: Schocken Books, 2002), 330.

world, religious adherence at this time was not marked by rigidity, but rather a "flexibility, a hospitality, a tolerance" not found in Europe.[60]

The Immigration of Iberian Jewry: *toshavim* and *megorashim*

The Moroccan Jewish community and its traditions changed drastically as a result of Iberian immigration in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. While, as previously mentioned, a Castilian congregation existed in the *mellah* before the Expulsion, the majority of congregations consisted of native Moroccans, known as *toshavim*, or "natives." As Spanish and Portuguese refugees (now known as *megorashim,* literally "expelled persons") poured into the *mellah*, their particular traditions and religious way of life quickly overtook that of the Maghrebi population. Shlomo Deshen calls this influx a "sociological turning point" for Moroccan Jewry.[61]

Deshen does admit, however, that "over time, the *megorashim* from Spain sank into their Moroccan environment, despite their different roots, and despite the communalism that bound them to each other. The *megorashim* fused with the autochthonous *toshavim* Jews, and all the *mellah* people lived their lives in an environment that was common to both them and to Muslim Moroccans."[62] This transition, however, did not occur smoothly. Jews coming from Spain and Portugal spoke another dialect of Arabic and pronounced Hebrew differently from those of Morocco, and brought sages and scholars with them who far surpassed the historical heritage and rabbinic authority of the scholars of the *mellah*.[63] Of the resources available to scholars,

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[60] Chouraqui, *Between East and West,* 61.
[61] Deshen, *The Mellah Society,* 8.
[62] Deshen, *The Mellah Society,* 119.
[63] Deshen, *The Mellah Society,* 8.

few religious writings come from *toshavim* or their descendants – almost all come from *hakhmei qastilia* – "Sages of Castile."[64] David Corcos notes that once the *megorashim* began to issue *takkanot* according to their Spanish-Portuguese custom, the two groups began to clash.[65] Until 1550 the groups met in separate synagogues, divided by historical tradition. This change can likely be attributed to the change in Muslim dynasty and exodus of Fez's wealthy and powerful Jews.[66] Thus it was through circumstance, not through concord, that tensions between the *toshavim* and *megorashim* diffused.

Family Life in the *Mellah*

Within the *mellah*, the extended family played a central role in social and economic life. As was customary in Middle Eastern society at the time, multiple nuclear families resided together under one roof. Some lived in large homes with a communal courtyard, whereas others resided in a "family compound."[67] The homeowner or head of household occupied the main house or largest rooms, while each nuclear family had its own private sleeping quarters.[68] Individuals slept on cushions or low couches, covered by light linen blankets.[69] Moroccan architecture featured large open windows, often decorated with elaborate lattice work, fountains and greenery in courtyards, and tile

[64] Deshen, *The Mellah Society,* 8.
[65] David Corocos, Haim Saadoun, and Hayyim J. Cohen, "Fez," ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), Gale Virtual Reference Library.
[66] Corcos *et al.*, "Fez."
[67] Deshen, *The Mellah Society,* 104.
[68] Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 77.
[69] Norman Roth, *Daily Life of Jews in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 63.

flooring.[70] Primitive air conditioning was erected through canvas or linen hung from the ceiling that had been doused in cold water.[71]

A kitchen in the *mellah* was often located in a different building or separate wing of the main house, both to avoid transference of heat to the living quarters as well as to protect against fire.[72] Roth supposes that kitchens featured two sets of cookware, one for meat products and the other for dairy, in adherence to Jewish dietary laws.[73] Families often ate together seated on cushions alongside small tables, as was typical of their Arab neighbors.[74]

This style of family living reflects the larger emphasis of Moroccan Jewry on extended family. Sarah Taïeb-Carlen notes that "the Maghrebi Jewish society attached greater importance to blood ties than to those of marriage. A man usually designated his family as being "the house of my father," thus referring to his male ancestors and also to all his parents on the paternal side, which he respected and venerated all his life."[75] One's extended family, she continues, "played a very important role because of the multiple functions that the extended family fulfilled since it was an exhaustible source of moral support and, when possible, of material aid."[76] The material aspect of these economic partnerships will be examined shortly in regard to Jewish occupations.

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[70] Roth, *Daily Life of Jews in the Middle Ages*, 63.
[71] Roth, *Daily Life of Jews in the Middle Ages*, 63.
[72] Roth, *Daily Life of Jews in the Middle Ages*, 66.
[73] Roth, *Daily Life of Jews in the Middle Ages*, 67.
[74] Roth, *Daily Life of Jews in the Middle Ages*, 67.
[75] Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 76.
[76] Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 76.

Judeo-Arabic Names

Family heritage also played an important role in naming a newborn child. Surnames did not exist in this period, thus the designation "ben" or "ibn" identified an individual based on his father.[77] Men often bore biblical or classical Hebrew names, such as Hai, Rahamim, Saadia, Ovadia, or Nissim, or even popular Arab names, such as Ali, Aysha, or Muhammed.[78] They also could identify themselves based on their professions, such as Abulafia (doctor), Asayad, (goldsmith), Almozeg (glazier). Another popular method of nomenclature was to name someone based on a characteristic: Assouline meant "noble," Elkyess, "smart," or Tawil, meaning "long" or tall."[79] Names based on residence or location helped recall countries of origin: Alfasi (from Fez), Masri (from Egypt), or Adni (from Aden).[80] Moroccan Jews even adopted names of Arabic or Berber origin, which, Hirschberg asserts, indicates "profound assimilation:" Yahya, Makluf, Khalifa, Sa'id, or Sellem.[81] Male names could also come from an Arabization of a Hebrew word, such as Yachiyah, from the Hebrew Chayim (although not always, according to Corcos).[82] Despite these formal names in Hebrew and Arabic, Corcos notes in his work that diminutive forms of these names often sounded like the vernacular. A boy with the traditional Jewish name Ya'akov (Jacob) rendered as Ya'akob, Ya'Koub, or even Jacobo, could be familiarly called 'Akan, 'Ako, Iggo, or even Kiko. An Isaac could

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[77] Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa,* 178; Lowenstein *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 73.
[78] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 71.
[79] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 71.
[80] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 71.
[81] Corcos, *Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco* 178; Hirschberg, *A History of the Jews in North Africa*, 64.
[82] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 65; Corcos, *Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco*, 178.

be nicknamed Isshiyik, Haki, or even Zazak.[83] Through familiar names, a family could both retain Jewish traditional names and adopt a bit of the local vernacular.

Women's names provide a greater insight into popular Maghrebi trends both in the native Jewish, immigrant Jewish, and Arab worlds. Jewish women rarely took biblical names, as Hirschberg and Scheindlin observe, perhaps for the simple reason that fewer female biblical characters actually have names.[84] Women in scripture are often referred to by their father or husband's name, so new parents seeking a traditional name for their newborn daughter had few from which to choose. Traditional Jewish names came from Hebrew (Mazaltov, Simha) but more often women had names in the vernacular or that reflected their country of origin. Corcos, in his work on first names of Jews in Morocco, observes that the names such as "Clara," "Auro," and "Orobuena" reflect Iberian origin and would help ensure family memory of Spanish or Portuguese roots.[85] "Setti" was a popular name in Granada, and is often found to be the first names of girls of *megorashim* descent.[86]

Contemporary Clothing

In addition to names, another identifying characteristic of a Jew in Morocco could, or could not, be his or her clothing. Muslim rulers, since the time of the Pact of Umar, called for various laws regarding dress and appearance to help identify a believing Muslim from a *dhimmi*. As with other restrictions on non-Muslims, different rules enforced various levels of this legislation throughout history. One of these laws has

[83] Corcos, *Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco*, 182-197.
[84] Scheindlin, "Merchants and Intellectuals," 327.
[85] Corcos, *Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco*, 178; 181.
[86] Corcos, *Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco*, 178.

already been addressed, that of wearing particular shoes outside the *mellah* to alert Muslims to the presence of a non-Muslim and remind the non-Muslim of his or her inferior status under the law. These shoes were called *tabban* and were often made of straw.[87] Since its inception, Jews were permitted to wear their footwear of choice inside the *mellah*; they usually donned slippers made of goatskin.

Men's turbans and headgear often indicated their social status in the Muslim world. Yedida Kalfon Stillman notes that a ninth-century work of rules regarding the *dhimmi* mandates that non-Muslim men wear a turban in a checkered patchwork pattern along with a belt called a *zunnar*.[88] This belt was fashioned around a long robe.[89] Men sometimes wore a richly embroidered vest or satin breeches gathered at the waist and ankle.[90] Stillman reiterates that this phenomenon occurred to identify non-Muslims from Muslims – one can conjecture that believer and non-believer alike donned similar if not identical styles of clothing.[91] During an earlier period Jewish men were forced to wear black clothing; restrictions changed over time but some older Jewish men continued to wear either black or white.[92] Women, however, wore colorful blouses, scarves, and even the satin pants mentioned above.[93] These were paired with silk shirts with bouffant sleeves and a square-cut neckline.[94] Women also wore elaborate headdresses or encased their faces and hair with scarves of cotton of silk, but wore artificial braids and elaborate

[87] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 66; Stillman, "Arab Dress," 115.
[88] Stillman, "Arab Dress," 103.
[89] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 64.
[90] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 66.
[91] Stillman, "Arab Dress," 104.
[92] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 64.
[93] Stillman, "Arab Dress," 115; Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 66.
[94] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 66.

headpieces for special occasions.[95] Some women wore delicate slippers with heels or even wooden shoes.[96]

Education

Children in the *mellah* often received an elementary education in secular subjects such as arithmetic and Arabic literacy. While Arabic was the vernacular in the Muslim world, Jews often learned to write spoken Arabic in Hebrew script. Some refer to this language as Judeo-Arabic (in the same vein of Judeo-Spanish or Judeo-German), but it often contained words from both the Arabic vernacular and Jewish tradition.[97] In school, Jewish children learned to read and write in Hebrew before Arabic, so Hebrew flowed more naturally from their pens.[98] Within the Jewish community most communication was conducted in Judeo-Arabic, but many Jews were able to communicate outside the walls of the *mellah.*

The majority of elementary education was devoted to religious matters: boys were taught not only Torah but *Tanach* (bible), from privately hired tutors or teachers either at the local synagogue or in the family home.[99] Community-based options were available, as elementary education was compulsory, but these institutions tended to be of poorer quality and emphasized learning by rote.[100] In between prayer services the synagogue served as a school and meeting place: students became familiar with the environment and early on knew their responsibility to the community. Their basic religious education

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[95] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 155; Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 66.
[96] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 67.
[97] Scheindlin, "Merchants and Intellectuals," 330.
[98] Scheindlin, "Merchants and Intellectuals," 330.
[99] Roth, *Daily Life of Jews in the Middle Ages*, 35.
[100] Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 71; Roth, *Daily Life of Jews in the Middle Ages*, 35.

prepared them to lead worship services.[101] The secular education these schools afforded was not enough to prepare its students for a trade, so often after completing the basic curriculum boys followed their fathers to work to learn his trade. Alternatively, a son could be apprenticed to an uncle or other relation to learn a different line of work from that of his father.[102]

Wealthier families provided broader secular education for their sons, which may have included science, philosophy, medicine, literature, or administration. These privileged young men would often become physicians or government administrators. Due to their linguistic abilities, Jews often worked as customs agents, interpreters, or consuls.[103] Jewish officials facilitated trade with England, the Low Countries, and France—predominantly Christian countries.[104] For the young men who were not so lucky as to be afforded a secondary education, many entered the worlds or artisanship or peddling.

Economic Life

As previously mentioned, Jewish artisans inside the *mellah* created their own professional guilds due to their monopoly on certain goods and services. Moroccan Jewry has historically been associated with small crafts: textiles, workers of precious metals, shoemakers, etc. Many men followed their fathers into the business and shared both their work and home life with their brothers.[105] Metalworking was a popular occupation for Jews in the *mellah*, as Islamic law prohibits molding and working with metal (for concern

[101] Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 71.
[102] Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 72.
[103] Deshen, *Jews Among Muslims*, 86.
[104] Deshen, *Jews Among Muslims*, 86.
[105] Deshen, *The Mellah Society*, 104.

over usury) and in Moroccan superstition metalworking has negative magical connotations. A fourteenth-century Marinid mint official "singled out Moroccan Jews as a group specialised in the metal type occupation."[106] From jewelers to tinsmiths, Jewish artisans provided much of the metalwork needed to support a society. Their monopoly on this industry provided a strong bargaining tool, however, as withdrawal of their services would cause a great panic and disrupt the local economy.[107]

Those who were unable to make their way into the guilds or find employment at home were forced to travel to make a living; "In Morocco, specifically, leaving the confines of the hometown and the city generally was considered unfortunate."[108] The wider culture reflects this, Deshen notes, as the Sephardi *birkat hamazon* (grace after meals) includes the following line: "May the Merciful One bless the master of this house...with sons who will live and belongings that will multiply...and may his and our belongings be successful and close to the city."[109] Not only was it desirable to have sons who worked close to home, women did not want a husband who had to travel long distances in order to make a living. Deshen observes that numerous legal cases were brought to rabbis because a woman refused to move with her husband when he had to relocate (either permanently or temporarily) for work.[110] Despite a lack of awareness of social and political matters, which was commonplace for women in the *mellah*, women

[106] Maya Shatzmiller, *Labour in the Medieval Islamic World*, Islamic History and Civilization v. 4 (Leiden [The Netherlands] ; New York: E.J. Brill, 1994), 39.
[107] Deshen, *Jews Among Muslims*, 91.
[108] Deshen, *The Mellah Society*, 39.
[109] Deshen, *The Mellah Society*, 39.
[110] Deshen, *The Mellah Society*, 106.

often engaged in small crafts and other domestic activities to supplement their husbands' income.[111]

Women and Girls in the *Mellah*

Unlike their brothers, young girls did not receive private tutoring or attend school at the local synagogue. Their education occurred at home with mothers, sisters, and aunts. Women's occupations at the time included: couture, embroidery, cuisine and taking care of the house and children.[112] Others took these domestic skills outside of their own homes and became professional weavers and silk dyers, practitioners of folk medicine, midwives, depilators (those who remove hair), astrologers, fortune-tellers, dressers of brides for weddings and corpses for funerals.[113] With the exception of purchasing the raw materials, women were responsible for all of the textiles in the home, from everyday clothing to ornate tapestries. Food and cooking fell under their purview as well, with the exception of slaughtering meat.[114]

As with any generalization, there are always exceptions. A number of Jewish women became prominent in their fields: some began by managing their husband's work while he was away travelling and became savvy businesswomen on their own.[115] Others became skilled nurses who could supplement a doctor's care, whereas others honed their writing skills as scribes or calligraphers.[116] More often than not, however, women were encouraged to find a husband, settle down, and start a family. A common wish for a

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[111] Deshen, *The Mellah Society*, 110-111.
[112] Taïeb-Carlen, The Jews of North Africa, 72.
[113] Scheindlin, "Merchants and Intellectuals," 326.
[114] Deshen, *The Mellah Society*, 111.
[115] Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 72.
[116] Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 71-72.

newborn girl was that "in time, she would find a good husband. This, indeed, was the most valuable present that life could offer her."[117]

Traditional Foods and Customs

Like many Jewish societies, traditional foods helped shape the liturgical year. Certain holidays featured specific menus that were heavily influenced by local cuisine. One meal of note is the Rosh Hashanah Seder, which featured seasonal foods whose names (in Arabic or Judeo-Arabic) were rendered as puns or jokes.[118] Popular foods included: dates, pomegranates, fish, beans, leeks, chard, pumpkin, onion, watermelon, apples, chestnuts, and the head of a lamb, which symbolized the head of the New Year.[119] The Passover Seder was equally elaborate and had its own set of unique rituals. The Seder plate featured the traditionally prescribed items: three *matzot*, four cups of wine, bitter herbs, shankbone, etc, and Seder attendees sat on cushions and reclined.[120] In Morocco in particular, it was customary to pass the Seder plate over guests' heads three times as a sign of blessing and welcome.[121] It was an honor for the head of household or oldest child to perform this ritual.[122] The *matzah* from North Africa looks different from that made in Europe – because it is handmade and the holes are punched individually, it looks more like a lacy doily than a solid cracker.[123] Also diverging from European tradition, Moroccan Jewry has a unique take on the issue of *kitniyot*, or legumes, during

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[117] Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 77.
[118] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 96-97.
[119] Alberto Somekh, *Kal Le-Rosh: il Seder di Rosh haShanah secondo il Minhag della comunità di Cuneo : una testimonianza dell'antico rito provenzale da manoscritti* (Torino: S. Zamorani, 2002), VI-XIII; אריה בן-גוריון and צבי שוע, *ילקוט ראש-השנה לגננת*... (בית השיטה : מדור הגנים הבינקיבוצי בשיתוף ארכיון-החגים הבינקיבוצי,1978) 70-69.
[120] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 97.
[121] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 98-99.
[122] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 97.
[123] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 128.

Passover. Steven M. Lowenstein asserts that rice was banned during Passover but beans were permitted; additionally sweet potatoes were allowed but not regular white potatoes.[124] After the Passover week concluded, many families celebrated with a festival called a *mimouna*, which marks the transition from Passover back to the rest of the year. It is the occasion on which Jews began to eat the first leavened food after the festival, which is usually a special pancake (*mufleta*) or couscous, along with pastries and desserts.[125] Deshen notes that the *mimouna* also serves as a cross-cultural experience: Jews rely on their Muslim neighbors to supply them with flour and leavened food for the celebration.[126] It is the personal experience of the author that at the close of Passover, Jews trade *matzah* with their Muslim neighbors in exchange for pastries and leavened goods.

Another specific meal across the Jewish world is the warm Shabbat afternoon dish. In Ashkenaz it is called *cholent*, but in the Sephardi world it goes by *s'khina* or *t'fina*. It is a dish composed of hard-boiled eggs and potatoes or chick peas, supplemented with meat and grains or beans.[127] This dish could sit atop a flame from Friday afternoon until lunchtime on Saturday and serve as a warm stew for the noonday meal. Lest this seem bland, it is important to note that North African cooking, both Jewish and non-Jewish, includes a wide variety of strong spices and hot peppery sauces, which may have included mint, cilantro, cumin, and various peppers.[128] A common main dish in North Africa is couscous supplemented with meat and assorted vegetables.[129] Jewish

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[124] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 126.
[125] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 100.
[126] Deshen, *Jews Among Muslims,* 101.
[127] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 124.
[128] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 127; Roth, *Daily Life of Jews in the Middle Ages*, 66.
[129] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 127.

households tended to consume lamb, beef, goat, and fish, all slaughtered according to Jewish dietary law.[130] Popular vegetables included leeks, asparagus, watercress, radishes, pumpkins, cauliflowers, eggplants, turnips, and cucumbers.[131] Tomatoes, now a staple of Mediterranean food, did not arrive in the Old World until the mid-sixteenth century, so tomato-based stews and sauces were not a part of North African cuisine at this point in history.[132] Fruits were a popular food as well; those consumed in this part of the world include apricots, watermelon, peaches, dates, grapes, figs, apples, raisins, and citrus fruits. One culinary item that differentiated Jews from their Muslim neighbors was alcohol. Traditional Islam prohibits the drinking of alcoholic beverages, so Jews were set apart in drinking wine and distinctive liquors, which included anisette or arak (*raki*).

Jewish Life-Cycle Events in the *Mellah*

Traditional foods also played a role during life-cycle events – during the *Tahdid*, the special ceremony celebrating the birth of a baby boy, special spices and herbs feature prominently. Chouquari describes the event as follows:

> If, by good fortune, a male child is born, the house takes on a festive air. Friends and neighbors are invited for some light refreshments, a chapter from the Book is read together in Hebrew, over the childbed is hung a sachet containing *khezama* (lavender blossoms) *zaater* (thyme), *jaui* (benzoin), *fasukh* (galbanum) and *kebrit* (sulphur). The evening is passed in chanting, charades, and *muhajiia* (riddles). At midnight, when all the doors are closed, the strange practice of *Tahdid* takes place; this lasts a week until the *Milah*, the circumcision.
>
> The father takes an old sword especially reserved for this purpose or, lacking that, any kind of sharp iron implement. (We have seen especially a large butcher's hatchet used for this.) While those present pronounce

[130] Roth, *Daily Life of Jews in the Middle Ages*, 67.
[131] Roth, *Daily Life of Jews in the Middle Ages*, 68.
[132] Roth, *Daily Life of Jews in the Middle Ages*, 68.

> exorcisms against the *djnun* [an evil spirit], the father makes wide slashes with the sword along the walls of the room to destroy or chase away the evil spirits. After this performance is over the sword or a knife or any iron implement, previously sprinkled with salt, is placed under the pillow or the mattress of the mother to protect her. We have seen the knife replaced by a horseshoe which was slid under the bed where the infant rested...At the same time as the rite of the sword is being enacted, the women throw *harmel* (incense) in the four corners of the house; they fumigate with *harmel*, thyme, and mugwort.[133]

This seemingly strange ritual is a perfect example of the marriage between traditional Arab superstition and Jewish practice. Until the forced move into the *mellah* in 1438, Jews and Muslim Arabs had lived side by side in both rural and urban areas. Jewish customs, foods, and even superstitions took on the flavor of those around them. Evidence exists that local rabbis tried to separate Jewish content from local influence, but to no avail.[134] Some of these traditions came from Bedouin and Berber cultures, which predated Islam.[135] These ideas were "woven into the tapestry of their day-to-day lives...beliefs and practices regarding magic and superstition that had been gleaned from several centuries of social, religious, and cultural exchange with the Bedouins, Berbers, and Arabs."[136] Chouraqui notes that when examining these traditions, it is sometimes impossible to tell if their origin is Arab or Jewish.[137]

Many of these superstitions surround life-cycle events. Birth is examined above, but courtship and marriage feature prominently, as well. It was not unusual for Muslims and Jews alike to call on witchdoctors, usually of Moroccan origin, "to dispense love

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[133] Chouraqi, *Between East and West*, 69-70.
[134] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 68.
[135] Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 59.
[136] Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 59.
[137] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 68.

potions and invocations, spells and counter-spells, to tell fortunes and make sacrifices and offerings to the *djnun*."[138] The *djnun* (or sometimes *jinn*) was an evil spirit or demon and North African culture offered a number of ways to repel the spirit and its advances. Some of these talismans were physical: a necklace of cloves, designs on tapestries, colors of scarves; whereas others were verbal: ritual phrases and incantations.[139] Once a love potion or magic elixir (or two fathers who made an agreement) worked their magic, a match was set up between a young man and woman. Despite what many think about Arab culture at the time, polygamy was not the norm but rather an exception.[140] Lowenstein notes that it was not uncommon for women to place a clause in their marriage contracts that forbids their husband from taking a second wife without her permission or while she was still living.[141] Local rabbis served as judges in cases of divorce due to childlessness, according to Talmudic law, but Moroccan Jewish families were large by today's standards.[142] Often neighbors or relatives would help arrange matches between young people in the same location.[143] The bride and groom usually accepted the arrangement and prepared to start their lives together.[144] Many families adhered to a long-standing Berber custom that the couple must avoid contact with their families in the weeks leading up to the wedding day. Often the bride would live in a temporary dwelling for up to three weeks, taking extra care to avoid her father's presence, before the ceremony.[145] The wedding itself was not a religious event, but rather social and familial. It did not take place in the synagogue, but rather in the bride's father's home, and the presence of a

[138] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 69-70.
[139] Choquari, *Between East and West*, 68.
[140] Shatzmiller, *Labour in the Medieval Islamic World*, 65.
[141] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 109.
[142] Corcos, *Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco*, 160.
[143] Deshen, *The Mellah Society*, 107.
[144] Deshen, *The Mellah Society*, 107.
[145] Taïeb -Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 59.

rabbi or religious official was optional.[146] The fathers of the bride and groom agreed on a *ketubah* text that incorporated both a traditional formula and the specifics of their particular transaction.[147] Ketubot in the Islamic world often contained artwork that illustrated items to protect the couple or promote fertility. Either a *hamsa* (a palm-shaped amulet) or fish (a sign of fertility) would appear, but rarely both on the same document: Boustan notes that the "motifs are generally separated – perhaps because each has a more distinct meaning in the context of marriage."[148] The bride wore an elaborately embroidered gown called a *kesva kabira*, inspired in the Spanish style.[149] The base of the garment was made of white linen, a bodice of gold embroidery, wide silken sleeves, and a large skirt fastened by a waistband embroidered with gold and pearls.[150] She wore a diadem on her head that was encrusted with precious metals.[151] A Sephardi wedding contains many of the elements seen in Ashkenazi ceremonies, save for *yichud*. Angel notes that Maimonides wrote that "*yihud* is when the bride and groom go home together after the wedding."[152] A symbolic *yihud* after the ceremony, as is generally done in Ashkenaz, is not customary.[153] The purpose of marriage in the Moroccan Jewish purview was to produce children (mainly boys) who could study Torah and perpetuate Jewish life.[154]

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[146] Taïeb -Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 77.
[147] Ra`anan S. Boustan et al., "Words, Images, and Magic: The Protection of the Bride and Bridegroom in Jewish Marriage Contracts," in *Jewish Studies at the Crossroads of Anthropology and History: Authority, Diaspora, Tradition* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 108.
[148] Boustain "Words, Images, and Magic," 122.
[149] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 110.
[150] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 67.
[151] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 67.
[152] Marc Angel, *Exploring Sephardic Customs and Traditions* (Hoboken, NJ: KTAV Publishing House, 2000), 67.
[153] Angel, *Exploring*, 66.
[154] Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 78.

Once a young woman married she was expected to take care of her husband's household and the children she would bear. Due to the Moroccan Jewish emphasis on one's family of birth, many young brides found this transition difficult. Sarah Taieb-Carlen notes that "A good brother was, for a woman, a more solid source of security than a husband because he had a lifelong responsibility to her whereas her husband could leave at any time. The same held true if a woman married a rich man. She considered it her duty to help her brothers and sisters."[155] Women who moved into their husband's household sometimes encountered conflict with their new mothers-in-law; the same phenomenon we have today is only exacerbated by all parties residing under the same roof. Many new brides complained that their husbands spent time with their mother and sisters instead of their new spouse.[156] Brides were often very young and vacillated between their father's authority and that of their husband; many husbands sought to control this perceived problem by limiting the amount of time a woman could spend in her father's house.[157]

Another use of the term "wedding" in Moroccan Jewish culture surrounds the observances of a *hillula* (literally "wedding" but takes on the meaning of "anniversary of death") of a renowned scholar. The idea is similar to the *yahrzeit* observed in Ashkenazic communities, but the *hillula* has a festive character rather than one of mourning. This custom contributes to the veneration of saints or holy people that is unique to Moroccan Jewish culture.[158] Many pilgrimage destinations arose throughout North Africa and

[155] Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 76.
[156] Taïeb-Carlen, *The Jews of North Africa*, 76.
[157] Deshen, *The Mellah Society*, 106; 108.
[158] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 71.

attracted thousands of visitors on the anniversary of the saints' death.[159] Both Muslims and Jews would visit the same gravesites: Chouraqui counts thirty-one saints revered both by Muslims and Jews, as well as another sixty-four who are of one group and honored by the other.[160] This fascination transcended an annual pilgrimage or celebration; individuals often utilized the names of these sages in their attempts to ward off evil spirits or express gratitude for a narrow escape; one could hear "O! Rabbi Simon!" after hearing bad news, or "O! Rabbi Meir!" after a harmless (but scary) tumble onto the ground.[161]

[159] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 102.
[160] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 71.
[161] Chouraqui, *Between East and West*, 75.

Yakub: Fez, Morocco, 1505

Scene 1: Introductions

Sallam aleikem! My name is Yakub and I am excited to teach you about my life and my family.

I am 13 years old and I live in Fez, a big city in Morocco. I live in a big house with my grandmother, my parents, my two brothers, my two sisters, my aunt, uncle, and two cousins. We are lucky to have a very big house and everyone has enough room!

My dad and my uncle are jewelers; they learned how to do that from their father. Their dad, my grandfather, is no longer living but my grandma tells us lots of stories about him. She tells us many interesting things about her life before she came to Fez, maybe I can share some of them with you later!

We live in the Jewish part of Fez, it is called the *mellah.* All of the Jewish people in Fez live in this area so that the Sultan can protect us. My mother doesn't think that he wants to protect us; she thinks it's so they can keep a close eye on the Jews.

One thing about our lives that is very different from yours is that we are not "citizens" of Fez. We don't have the same freedoms that Muslims have. We are called *dhimmis*, or "protected citizens." Because Muslim law is very harsh on non-Muslims, we can't do the same things that Muslims can. For instance, my dad and my uncle have to pay a special "Jewish" tax to the government every year. If they don't pay that, we would have to leave our home. The rule that bothers me the most is that we have to wear special shoes when we leave the *mellah.* We can't wear our normal shoes if we go to the big market in the city – we have to wear shoes made out of straw or no shoes at all. When my brothers and I go out wearing our straw shoes other people give us dirty looks or sometimes little kids throw things at us. It doesn't make me feel very good at all.

Inside the *mellah*, though, we have a pretty good life. My mom's family moved here when she was little because there were more opportunities to get a good job. Her dad was a shoemaker. I don't know a lot about my mom's family because we don't spend

very much time with them. My dad's family all lives very close together, so I can tell you a lot about how they came to Fez!

My dad was born in Spain, where my grandma and grandpa lived until the year 1470. Things started getting bad for the Jews because the Muslims and the Christians there were fighting. Most of the time the Muslims in Spain had been good to the Jews, so my grandfather decided that the family should move somewhere else where the rulers were Muslim. That's how they came to live here.

My grandma talks about how life was different in Spain. Sometimes it's hard to understand her because her speech is different than mine. She uses a lot of Spanish words when she talks and I have to ask her to translate them! Sometimes she gets frustrated with me because I have more Arabic words in my speech, and we pronounce the same words differently. She thinks her way is better, but I like mine!

Oh! I want to tell you about my brothers and sisters. I have two big brothers, Isshiyik, who is 18, and Yair, who is 15. We have lots of fun together when we're not in school. Isshiyik is about to get married though, and his new wife will come live with us. I'm scared that we won't get to play anymore, but hopefully she won't take up too much of his time. Yair and I are coming up with ways to get him to spend time with us. I have two little sisters, Simcha is eleven and Durrah is seven. They spend a lot of time with my mom and my aunt, but we have fun playing outside together in our family's courtyard. They don't go to school like Isshiyik did and Yair and I do, they learn a lot from my mom and my aunt.

I also have two little cousins: Mona is four and Nadira is two. My sister Durrah likes to play with them and do silly things with their hair. They are going to have a little brother or sister soon – my aunt and uncle really hope their next child is a boy!

I hope you like my family: I'm excited to share my life with you! I hear it's very different from life in America, so I hope we can learn a lot from each other. See you next time!

Scene 2: Rosh Hashanah Seder

Hello, again and *Shanah tovah*! It's Rosh Hashanah in my house and we are preparing for our Rosh Hashanah Seder. It's not like the Passover Seder (it's much shorter!) and we eat the special foods after my dad, uncle, brothers and I come home from the synagogue on Erev Rosh Hashanah. My grandma, mom, and aunt have been very busy preparing all of the food, and my sisters and cousins help bring it to us. We sit on the floor of our dining room in a big circle; each of us has a big comfy pillow to sit on. Instead of having one big table, we share little tables between two or three of us.

The Talmud gives a list of foods that we should eat on Rosh Hashanah because they bring good things – that is why we have this special Seder at the beginning of the year! Each section of the Seder has a different food and my dad says a different blessing over each one. He told us that he tries to do it exactly like his father did when he was little, even with the same bad jokes. My dad likes to tell jokes, and the Rosh Hashanah Seder is the perfect place for them. Each of the blessings over the foods we eat can be made into a pun. They don't translate very well from Arabic, but if he makes a good one I'll try to share it with you!

My father starts the Seder by reading the first blessing in a big booming voice. It goes "May it be your will, Adonai, our God and God of our fathers, that the new year be a good and sweet year from the very beginning of the year to the very end!" Then we eat dates, which are sweet like the year we hope to have!

We also eat leeks, which are kind of like an onion and kind of like garlic. The word for "leek" sounds a lot like the word for "get rid of" in the prayer that asks God that evil people be "gotten rid of" in our lives. I learned at school that other people have not always been nice to the Jewish people, like the Egyptians who made us slaves and the Babylonians who sent us into exile. I guess the sultans here aren't very nice to us, either, but at least we are not slaves and don't have to leave our homes. Sometimes I think about my dad's family who had to leave Spain when he was a little boy and what he must think of these stories.

The next things we eat are beans. The word for beans sounds like the word for "multiply" or "be plentiful" in the prayer that we read. The prayer means: "May it be your will, Adonai our God and God of our fathers, that our merits multiply." Basically that means we want God to recognize our good deeds and our relationship to our ancestors so that God will be good to us. I like this one better than the one before because it doesn't ask God to get rid of bad people, but recognize the good things that we do.

Then we eat a green leafy vegetable called chard, it's kind of like a beet but you eat the top instead of the bottom. My mom always thinks that's weird, because in her family they always had spinach, but my dad wants to do the tradition like his father did. My grandma has a special recipe for it that she keeps very secret – she won't let my mom help her in the kitchen when she makes it! It's really delicious; she takes the chard and puts it in oil with eggs and some other vegetables. I look forward to it every year!

Then we eat something made of pumpkins, and my mom is such a good cook that she makes lots of things with them! First we eat a regular dried date, and then we can have some jam made out of pumpkin or even a pumpkin cake or bread. My dad says the blessing that goes "May it be your will, Adonai, our God and God of our fathers, that you will tear wickedness away from us and call our merit before you." The word "tear" sounds the same as the word for "gourd" and since a pumpkin is a type of gourd it's kind of funny. My dad makes a big joke out of it – when he says the word "*tik'ra*" he holds up a whole gourd and tries to rip it apart. Usually he ends up mushing it in his hands and it gets all over the table and makes everything sticky. My little sisters love it when he does that, but I think it's kind of lame.

After we eat these special foods, we have a bunch of other foods that represent what we want for the New Year. There are onions, watermelon (which sounds like "promise"), apples, and then finally a sheep's head! I think it looks cool in the center of the table with all of the fruits and vegetables around it, but my sisters get squeamish when they see it. My mom tells them that one day they will learn how to make everything for the Seder, including the sheep's head, but they close their eyes and cover their ears and pretend not to listen. The sheep's head is really important because it represents the head of the year, like the word "*rosh*" in Rosh Hashanah.

At the end of the night we are all full from a big dinner and excited about what the New Year is going to bring for us. My mom, aunt, and grandma stay up and clean while the men go to sleep – we have to get up and go to services in the morning! My mom and aunt don't usually come to services, but sometimes my grandma will come if she is up for it. She likes to hear the melodies and listen to the men chant the blessings. She doesn't sit with us because men and women are not supposed to sit together during services, but sometimes I look behind me and she is standing in the back with a big smile on her face. She does not smile a lot, especially since my grandpa passed away, but it is nice to see her happy.

Scene 3: Birth of Baby Cousin

Hello, again! It's an exciting time in my house so I'm happy you're here to share it with us. Remember that I told you my aunt was going to have a baby? Well, the baby arrived last week and we have been very busy taking care of him! My uncle was so excited to have a little boy, and Mona and Nadria are happy to have a little brother to play with. He's still too little to do anything, he just sleeps a lot and cries, but everyone around our house is very happy that he's here.

I want to tell you all about the day he was born. That morning when she woke up my aunt knew that the baby was coming, and so they called the midwife to come help. My mom and the midwife stayed with her all morning and into the afternoon, when the baby was finally born. My dad told us to stay away, so Isshiyik, Yair and I went into the courtyard to play. Isshiyik said he remembered when I was born and that he and our father stayed far away from my mother the whole time.

After a few hours my mom came out and said that the baby was a little boy! My uncle was so happy and went in to see my aunt. My mom and grandma immediately started preparing for the *tahdid* that was going to happen that night.

You've never heard of a *tahdid*? Oh I'll tell you all about it. It's a special ceremony that happens every night between when a baby boy was born and when he has a *brit milah*. I've gotten to go to people's houses for the reception part, but my new baby cousin's *tahdid* was the first one I'd ever seen for real.

First my mom and grandma prepared lots of food for our friends and neighbors. At least fifty people came to our house that night to congratulate my uncle and my aunt. Everyone was eating and talking and laughing together and giving my uncle advice on how to raise a boy. He already has two little girls, but they say a boy is more responsibility. The men also read from a book called the *Zohar*, which is supposed to protect the baby. I learned about the *Zohar* in school, and our teacher told us that it contains the secrets of the Torah and only very wise men can understand it. I'm not sure if all of those men were very wise, but they seemed to be having a good time!

They also recited some psalms that were also supposed to protect the baby. I guess a newborn baby needs a lot of protection! My grandmother told me that sometimes demons come and try to hurt the baby, and we need to do all of these special things to keep them away. I've never seen a demon, but they sound scary and I will do what I can to help protect my new little cousin! I tried to sing along with some of the psalms that I knew, but the men were so loud I could barely hear myself think!

After all of our guests left we took the baby upstairs to bed. I know I was tired after having so many people around; I can only imagine how sleepy he must have been. We brought him to his parents' room and put him in his little crib, the same one all of my brothers and sisters and cousins used, and my grandma hung a little bag of spices above his head. She said that this is one of the first steps in keeping away the *djnun*, the demons. She let me smell the little bag first – it had some really nice sweet smells and some really harsh ones – I guess demons don't like strong smells! My uncle then took out this big sword, I'd never seen it before, but my brother said that my dad used it for my *tahdid* and my brother's. We were all very quiet and my mom, aunt, and grandma had other types of spices in little bags. They started tossing them in the corners of the room while my uncle took the big knife and scraped it along all of the walls. It made a really scary sound – the whole thing was very eerie and if I were a demon I would probably fly away. After my uncle finished scraping the walls he took some salt and sprinkled it on the sword. Then we all watched as he walked to my aunt's bed and put the sword under the soft mattress. My grandma told me that is supposed to protect my aunt from the demons, too. I guess having a baby is very scary and some babies don't live very long. I

bet my grandma would say that the demons sometimes take babies away, but I'm not sure about that.

After the ceremony was over I went to sleep – it was very late and I was very tired. Isshiyik, Yair, and I share a room, and Isshiyik was tossing and turning a lot and keeping me awake. He kept rearranging his sheets and mattress (we don't have bedframes, our mattresses lie right on the floor) and I asked him what was wrong. He said that he was a little scared and nervous during the *tahdid.* I didn't understand why he felt that way – he had been at mine and probably others, as well. He said that he doesn't think he's ready to hold that big sword and take on the responsibility of being a father so soon. I told him not to worry and that I would be there to help him with the scary parts. He just laughed and told me to go to sleep. Even though our new little cousin is going to change how our family lives, I think Isshyik getting married may change mine even more.

Scene 4: Relationship between mom, aunt, and grandma and more on being a *dhimmi*

It has been very busy around here since Shmuel was born. We had a big celebration for his *brit milah* last month and now most of our visitors have left. Now my aunt spends a lot of time with Shmuel and my mom and grandma are responsible for doing most of the work around our house. My mom and grandma don't always get along, but my aunt is usually there to make things run smoothly.

When my grandma, grandpa, dad, and uncle came to Fez, they set up their jewelry business right away. My grandpa was very good at working with gold and precious gems, and he became good friends with my mom's father, who travelled around selling diamonds and gems. My mom's father was able to bring my grandpa the best diamonds and he was able to put them in beautiful rings, earrings, and necklaces. Lots of people, both Jewish and Muslim, came to my grandpa to buy his jewelry.

My grandpa and my mom's father decided that their children should get married and make a "partnership." My grandpa was excited to have his chief buyer as part of his family, but my grandma didn't think it was a good idea. See, my father's family came from Spain, and they are called *megorashim*, which means "the people who were

expelled" in Hebrew. She did not think that her older son should marry someone from Morocco because they were not as good as the people from Spain. She sometimes makes comments about how things were better in Spain: people were nicer, their language is prettier, and they have a "nobler heritage," whatever that means.

My dad and mom liked each other right away and were happy to get married, even though my grandma was not happy. My mom tells me that she used to go back to her parents' house a lot before Isshiyik was born so she could see her parents and her brothers and sisters. My dad was not happy about that because he wanted her to try and get along with his mother, so she started seeing her family less and less. Now her parents have passed away and her brothers and sisters are married. We don't see them very often and sometimes I wish we did. Sometimes they come over for Shabbat afternoon lunch after they finish services at their synagogue. We don't go to the same place because my grandmother insists that we go to the Castilian synagogue, the one that does the Spanish traditions. Since my mom's family did not come from Spain, they go to a synagogue that does the traditions of the *toshavim*, or the people who lived in Morocco before the people from Spain started to come.

I don't know what their traditions are like, but I know they use some different words than we do and talk about different famous rabbis in history. I want to visit someday, but my mom says that our family follows the tradition of the father, not of the mother. It's okay though, because my mom tells us stories about when she was little and lived outside of the city. Maybe I can share one with you later.

When my aunt married my uncle, my mom was really happy because my aunt would be able to help with the things that my mom and grandma do around our house. They cook lots of delicious meals for us, make, wash, and fix our clothes, keep the house clean, and help with our sisters and cousins. It takes a lot of time to do all of this, and having three people help instead of two makes things a lot easier. When I am home, I sometimes help take care of the little girls or run errands for my mom. Women don't go to the market to buy things, so if she forgot to get enough meat for dinner or thread to repair clothes, I go for her.

The last time I went to the market, Yair and I got into some trouble. He decided to take a shortcut that he thought would be faster. I told him not to, that our father said we should stay on the main road, but Yair didn't care and dragged me along with him. We were outside the *mellah* so we were wearing our straw shoes. One of the rules about being outside the *mellah* as Jews is that we can't wear our regular shoes. We were walking down a little alley and one of the sultan's officials came walking towards us. He saw that we were wearing our straw shoes and started yelling at us, "You are near a mosque, a holy place of the Muslim people! Take off your shoes, you infidels, show some respect!"

I got really scared and froze. Yair started to tremble and explained that we didn't know we were walking past a mosque and if we did we would have taken off our shoes and walked barefoot. He was so scared, though, that his words didn't come out right and the officer thought he was talking back. "What did you say, you Jew? Stop stammering in your dead language and speak properly!"

I jumped in and said in my best Arabic, "Sir, I am very sorry that we have violated the laws of the *dhimmi*. We did not know that this site was a mosque. We will remove our shoes immediately and ensure that this will not happen again."

The official sneered at us, smacked Yair on the head and said, "Move along now, you Jews, and don't let me see you around here again."

Yair and I collected ourselves and ran back to our neighborhood. I felt safe behind the walls of the *mellah* and away from the sultan's police. When we got home my mom asked where the groceries were, but when she heard the story she got very quiet and very sad. She held Yair in her arms and told him that everything was going to be okay.

"This is our lot in life as Jews," she said, "we are not equal to the Muslims but we accept that. Sometimes they take their anger out on us whether it is our fault or not."

She then told us about the pogrom that happened in Fez her family before my father's family arrived. The Muslims in Fez were very angry at the sultan because he

chose a Jewish man to be one of his close advisors. They didn't think that someone who did not believe as they did was fit to have such an important job.

"Look out the window. Do you see the palace off in the distance?"

Yair and I nodded.

"The Jews did not always live so close to the palace. They used to live all around the city. Many years ago the sultan collected all of the Jews and told them to buy houses in this neighborhood, near his palace, so he could keep them safe. I think he just wanted to watch us more carefully, but after a while all of the Jews lived here in the *mellah*, because our synagogues, butcher shops, and family and friends lived here. After a while the Muslims got angry because they thought the Jews were receiving special favors from the sultan. They started a rumor that the Jews brought some of their wine into a mosque—"

"But we wouldn't do that!" I interjected. "Everyone knows that Muslims aren't allowed to drink wine."

"I know, my sweet," my mom responded, "but lots of people believed that rumor. It made the townspeople very angry and they came into the *mellah* and started to hurt people and take their possessions. There was lots of violence and many people died. It was a terrible tragedy for the Jewish residents of Fez. The sultan felt he had to dismiss the Jewish officer he had appointed, and soon that sultan lost all of his power."

Yair and I were stunned. Did all of this happen in our neighborhood? People came in from outside the *mellah* to take people's possessions and hurt their families? Yair asked,

"Why didn't the Jews fight back? Why didn't they do something to stop the mob?"

My mom responded, "It's against the law for a *dhimmi* to hurt or attack a Muslim; part of living as Jewish people means that we are subject to the Muslims' laws and rules."

"*Dina d'malchuta dina*" mumbled Yair.

"What was that?" my mother asked.

"*Dina d'malchuta dina*," he repeated. "The Talmud says that wherever we live we have to live under the rules of the government. I don't like it, though, when the rules are not fair."

"They may not be fair, but remember, your father and his family came here because the government in Spain was forcing the Jews to leave. Here we may not have all the rights and privileges that the Muslims do, but we have our home and our family. There has been very little violence in the *mellah* since the big pogrom, and that's why my family moved here. My father wanted the opportunity to make his business grow in the city, and it had been safe for a number of years. We took that chance, and I am glad that we did, because now we have our wonderful family," she said with a smile.

"Yeah, but I still don't think that's right," said Yair, "We Jews should be able to defend ourselves."

"When the messiah comes, my darling," replied my mom, sighing, "then we will not need to defend ourselves anymore."

Scene 5: Isshiyik's Wedding

The big day has finally arrived! Isshiyik is getting married! My mom and grandma have spent a lot of time getting the house ready for his new wife to move in. My aunt has been very busy with baby Shmuel, so she hasn't been able to help as much. Hopefully when my brother's wife Raha moves in she will be able to help my mom more.

Early in the morning we went over to Raha's father's house, where the wedding was going to take place. They have a big house like ours and it was already full of people. The women were upstairs getting Raha ready for the ceremony, and the men were downstairs giving Isshiyik a hard time, teasing him about really becoming an adult. I was told at my bar mitzvah that I was going to become an adult, but I somehow think this is different.

There is no rabbi at the wedding, but my father and Raha's father worked with one to draw up the *ketubah*, or marriage agreement. Sometimes her father would come to our house at night and I would listen to him and my dad working on the agreement. The rabbi uses an old text written in Aramaic and adds other requirements in Hebrew and Arabic based on what my dad and Raha's father want included. Raha's father was very insistent that the document said that Isshiyik cannot marry another woman without Raha's approval – I've heard of some people having more than one wife, but I've never met anyone with two mothers in the same family. I learned that in the Torah our ancestor Jacob had more than one wife, and King David had lots of wives, but I don't think people do that today.

We all waited for Raha to come downstairs and start the ceremony. The women were upstairs for so long, and we knew why once she entered the room – she was dressed up so beautifully! She had on a special wedding dress called a *kesva kabira*, which looked like something that would have come from Spain. It was a beautiful white linen dress with flowers and leaves embroidered in shiny gold thread. The dress had big wide sleeves (I think they kind of made her look like a bird!) and a wide white skirt with more gold and even pearls. She had lots of intricate braids woven in her hair and a little crown on top that my father had made. He makes a lot of these for brides, but I bet he made this one unique just for her. She was wearing a lot of makeup and looked very happy and very scared at the same time. Maybe she didn't like all of the people watching her, or she was scared, like Isshiyik, of what the future would hold.

She came downstairs and stood with her father, my father, and Isshiyik in front of a little table with the *ketubah* and a beautiful quill. I pushed past Yair so I could get a better look. The *ketubah* was a big piece of parchment with lots of writing and lots of artwork. It had pictures of the *hamsa*, the protective hand that is supposed to guard the bride and groom from harm. There were lots of pictures of hands, including two palms facing outwards. It reminded me of when the *kohen* recites the priestly benediction during services at the synagogue. I wonder if it is supposed to mean the same thing.

After Raha's father welcomed everyone to their house, he announced that the couple would sign the *ketubah* and then officially be married. He handed Isshiyik the

quill first, and Isshyik, with his hands shaking, dipped it in the ink and quickly signed his name to the document. He then handed it to Raha, who, blushing, took her time in signing her name. Girls usually don't learn how to write as well as boys do. I know my sisters aren't going to school so Raha probably didn't either.

Then the wedding ceremony began. There was no rabbi there, but a scholar from Raha's father's synagogue recited the blessings and told the bride and groom what words to repeat. The sage helped Isshiyik and Raha do two blessings that I already knew (*borei p'ri hagafen* and *b'orei minei besamim*) and then another one I didn't recognize. This must be the blessing for marriage. Then they each took a sip from the *kiddush* cup.

Then the four parents came up and helped hold a tallit over the couple's heads. They looked like they were in a little house! The sage sang some more blessings, they drank some more wine, and then he did the priestly benediction. His hands looked just like the hands on the *ketubah*! Then Isshiyik stomped on a glass and broke it into a million little pieces – any other time he did that, our mother would probably yell at him! Instead, everyone cried "*mazal tov!*" and ran to give them hugs and kisses.

Isshiyik then held out his hand for Raha to hold and the two of them went into the courtyard where Raha's family had prepared a big feast. There were so many different types of fruits and vegetables and pastries and meats – I couldn't believe it! While I was marveling at all of the food with Simcha and Durrah, Yair went off and was talking to Raha's sisters. I'm sad that he didn't want to be with me, but my sisters and I had a good time trying all of the different treats. Musicians played and people danced and sang happy songs to the bride and groom. It was a fun day, and I am excited to have Raha join our family!

Chapter 2: Lublin, Poland, 1648

Jewish life in Eastern Europe in the Seventeenth Century

Historical and Political Background

The Jewish community of Lublin, Poland, began in the early fourteenth century when a group of Jews, protected by the local nobility, settled just outside of the city along the castle walls.[162] The area, called *Podzamcze*, ("outside the castle wall") would eventually become the Jewish quarter of the third largest Jewish population in Poland.[163] Due to the local nobles' ability to decide whether or not to permit Jews to settle in a city proper, the phenomenon of a Jewish quarter outside of the city itself but near a noble residence was not unique to Lublin. Lublin became home to a renowned Jewish publishing house, an internationally known Talmudic academy that boasted famous rabbis such as Shalom Shachna and Salomon Luria and an economic center where Jews and non-Jews alike met annually to exchange goods from across the known world. This growth was possible because of the influx of Jewish refugees from the Spanish expulsion in the early fifteenth century as well as those fleeing the Thirty Year's War in the early seventeenth century.[164] While the Jews played an important role in Lublin's economy, they were not exempt from age-old European restrictions: in addition to various compulsory taxes, the Jewish population of Lublin lived under the protection of the local noble and dealt with occasional acts of antisemitism. While a decentralized country with locals controlling religious and political matters, the upper classes in Poland maintained a strong Catholic identity. In 1646 a group of students at an ecclesiastical college in Lublin

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[162] Michael A. Meyer, "Medieval and Modern Oriental and European Jewish History" (Hebrew Union College - Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati Campus, Spring 2011).
[163] Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*, vol. 4 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1895) 32.
[164] Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*, vol. 5 (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1895) 2.

incited a riot in the Jewish quarter, killing eight Jews and plundering approximately twenty homes.[165]

It is not the case, however, that the Polish government and nobility took a special interest in Jewish matters besides their economic value. In 1551 a royal charter permitted Jewish communities in Poland to settle internal issues privately and only bring matters to the nobility should someone refuse to comply with a local ruling.[166] On the local level, each community's *kahal*, (local governing organization) headed by a rabbi, dealt with internal issues such as synagogues, academies and their academics, cemeteries, real estate, and charity.[167] They also had the power to settle legal disputes between individuals as well as place a ban on those who did not comply with the community's rules.[168] Should an individual wish to appeal a ruling, he was entitled to appeal to the *Va'ad Arbah Aratzot* (Council of Four Lands) which was a Jewish legal body that met during the triennial fairs.[169]

This council, created in around 1580, comprised of rabbis and laymen, served as the intermediary between the Polish government and the Jewish population. The Polish government was more than willing to entrust Jewish matters to a Jewish council provided that the council complied with the government's demands (chiefly taxation).[170] In addition to collecting the requisite "Jewish taxes" and fulfilling the government's

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[165] Yad Vashem, "Lublin," trans. Morris Gradel, *Encyclopaedia of Jewish Communities in Poland*, Pinkas Hakehillot Polin (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2004), http://www.jewishgen.org/yizkor/pinkas_poland/pol7_00013.html.

[166] Simon Dubnow, *History of the Jews in Russia and Poland from the Earliest Times until the Present Day*, vol. 1 & 2, 3 ([New York]: Ktav Pub. House, 1975), vol 1, 105.

[167] Dubnow, *History of the Jews* vol 1, 106.

[168] Dubnow, *History of the Jews* vol 1,106.

[169] Nathan Hannover, *Abyss of Despair (Yeven Metzulah): The Famous 17th Century Chronicle Depicting Jewish Life in Russia and Poland during the Chmielnicki Massacres of 1648-1649* (New Brunswick, N.J.; London: Transaction, 1983) 119.

[170] Meyer, "Medieval and Modern"; Dubnow, vol 1, 103.

requests, the council served as a Jewish Supreme Court of sorts, hearing legal and commercial cases, regulating commerce within the community, sending money to *Eretz Yisrael*, and overseeing the Talmudic academies.[171] Additionally, according to Jacob Goldberg, the *Va'ad* passed ordinances that encouraged Jews to refrain from interacting with Christians. The Catholic Church was happy to comply with these rules, but evidence of Jewish-Christian relations in both economic and social matters leads one to believe that neither party went to great lengths to enforce these restrictions.[172]

The Jewish community of Lublin was vital to Lublin's success as an economic powerhouse. While its Jews never monopolized one section of the economy, as Jews had in alcohol and minting, for instance, in Muslim countries, Jews here served as intermediaries between the peasantry, nobility and monarchy.[173] Due to this crucial role, Dubnow argues,

> They [Jews] were appraised according to the advantages they could bestow upon this or that class, and since in many cases what was advantageous to one class was disadvantageous to another, a conflict of interests was unavoidable, with the result that the Jews were the objects of protection on one side and the targets of persecution on the other.[174]

This placed Polish Jews in a precarious position, which caused additional strife during the Chmielnicki Massacres and their fallout in the later part of the 1640s.

The Chmielnicki Massacres

The uprising began as a struggle for Ukrainian independence from Polish rule; in 1569 Poland and Lithuania united to form the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which brought a diverse population together under predominantly Polish rule. The new

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[171] Meyer, "Medieval and Modern."
[172] Jacob Goldberg, "Poles and Jews in the 17th and 18th Centuries: Rejection or Acceptance," *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas* 22, no. 2 (1974): 253.
[173] Goldberg, "Poles and Jews" 249.
[174] Dubnow, *History of the Jews* vol 1, 68.

government granted wealthy Poles landed estates throughout the Commonwealth. These estates relied on labor from the peasant population, which often reported to Jewish arendators, or lease-holders. These arendators managed the day-to-day running of the estate and served as the main intermediary between the peasantry and the nobility.[175] Additionally, these three strata of society followed three different religions: the Polish nobility was overwhelmingly Catholic, the arendators Jewish, and the peasantry Eastern (or Greek) Orthodox.[176] Bohdan Chmielnicki, a politically savvy Ukrainian nationalist, led a revolt against Poland with the aid of Cossack mercenaries. In 1648 the Polish government was particularly weak, and Chmielnicki took advantage of this opportunity to lead a movement to liberate the Ukrainian peasantry from the oppressive Poles.[177] Chmielnicki disseminated propaganda to the peasantry that called for a national and religious rebellion against the wealthy landowners (Catholics) and oppressive rent-collectors (Jews).[178] Inspired by his message, Cossacks began to attack and loot noble estates and slaughter the Jewish estate-managers in Ukraine; they travelled throughout the country wreaking havoc and slaughtering thousands for their cause.[179] While it is difficult to estimate accurate numbers, scholars believe that between one hundred thousand and five hundred thousand individuals perished in these attacks.[180] Nathan Hannover, a contemporary rabbi and scholar, relates first-hand accounts of the gruesome massacres in his work *Abyss of Despair*. It contains detailed descriptions of the Cossacks' actions, many of which may be too graphic to discuss with middle-school students. Some

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[175] Graetz, *History of the Jews*, vol. 5, 3.
[176] Chaim Bermant, *The Jews* (New York: Times Books, 1977), 26.
[177] Meyer, "Medieval and Modern."
[178] Goldberg, "Poles and Jews," 268.
[179] Dubnow, *History of the Jews* vol 1,145.
[180] Edward H. Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews: 23 Centuries of Antisemitism.* (New York: Paulist Press, 1985), 158.

Jews did escape death, however, by giving themselves up as prisoners of war or converting to Eastern Orthodoxy.[181] Some women underwent forced baptism and married their captors, while others were raped and bore Cossack children in what survived of the Jewish community. Some prisoners of war were fortunate enough to be ransomed by other Jewish communities; those in Salonika, Egypt, Germany, and Italy spent large sums of money redeeming Jews from the enemy armies.[182] This migration brought Nathan Hannover to Italy, where he published his work in 1652.

The violence increased during the spring and summer of 1648 and Chmielnicki's men moved westward over the coming year. Information spread quickly throughout the Commonwealth and Jewish communities packed up their homes and fled. They sought protection in walled towns and large cities, such as Lublin. Their security did not last long, however, as a Cossack army attacked Lublin during Sukkot of 1655, killing approximately ten thousand Jews and destroying the Jewish quarter.[183] For the purposes of this chapter, we will stop at 1648 when the massacres begin.

Everyday Life: Education and Worship

The aforementioned *Va'ad Arbah Aratzot* and the local *kahal* are characteristic of sixteenth-century Polish Jewry: its concern was with Talmudic discourse and legislation, which covered every aspect of Jewish life. The exceptional nature of Polish Jewry in this era is characterized by high-level study of Talmud and Jewish law and an immense emphasis on learning and teaching. Jews in Poland during this period boasted an extremely high male literacy rate compared to their neighbors, and Hannover asserts that

[181] Dubnow, *History of the Jews* vol 1, 146; 151.
[182] Hannover, *Abyss of Despair (Yeven Metzulah,)* 120.
[183] Yad Vashem, "Lublin."

every family had a family member who engaged in study on a regular basis.[184] The community's religious life centered around two institutions with two separate functions: the *Beis Midrash* (house of study) and the *Beis Kenesses* (house of gathering, i.e., synagogue). The *Beis Midrash* served as a place for men to study sacred texts, as well as a classroom for younger students. Boys began their religious studies in *heder* (a private institution led by a *melamed*) or *Talmud Torah* (a public school funded by the *kahal*) by learning and mastering the Hebrew Bible, Talmud and its commentaries, and occasionally Hebrew grammar.[185] The local *kahal* set the curriculum for each *Talmud Torah*, which provided young men the tools they needed to participate in a Jewish community. A *heder* education consisted of a *melamed* whom parents employed to teach their boys "as much and as quickly as possible."[186] Some girls received a basic education through a *melamed*, but this was the exception rather than the norm.[187]

Men and boys attended religious services multiple times per day, some even arriving early and staying late to attend extra study sessions. Nathan Hannover mentions a group that called themselves *chevra tehilim* (Psalms Society) that convened before morning services and recited a significant amount of the book of Psalms each day.[188] Others studied a page of Talmud, as Hannover notes that they needed to hear some "words of the law" before going to work.[189] Services were conducted in Hebrew, and the chazzan sang the beginning and end of each prayer to help the congregation keep pace.[190]

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[184] Dubnow, *History of the Jews* vol 1, 121; Hannover, *Abyss of Despair (Yeven Metzulah),* 111.
[185] Dubnow, *History of the Jews* vol 1, 114.
[186] Heiko Haumann, *A History of East European Jews* (Budapest ; New York: Central European University Press, 2002), 144.
[187] Haumann, *A History of East European Jews,* 25.
[188] Hannover, *Abyss of Despair (Yeven Metzulah),* 116.
[189] Hannover, *Abyss of Despair (Yeven Metzulah),* 117.
[190] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 89.

Men wore *talesim* and *tefillin*, but the former only after they were married.[191]

After leaving morning services, men would go to work and boys would attend school. Once students graduated from *heder* or *Talmud Torah*, they either became an apprentice or, if they had potential, continued their studies in the *yeshiva*. Students often travelled to work or study in other locations and lodged with a local family. It was not uncommon for a family to host one or two *yeshiva* students, providing their room and board while they studied under renowned Talmudic scholars. Nathan Hannover notes, and Haumann affirms, that scholarship and learning received the highest regard, and it was a father's greatest wish to enable his son-in-law to study.[192] The *yeshiva*'s goal was to provide its students (*bachurim*) with "a complete religious and juridical education based on the Talmud and the rabbinic codes of law."[193] *Yeshiva* students operated on a year-long schedule divided by the Jewish calendar. During the spring, from the months of Iyar to Shavuot (just after Passover and the subsequent seven weeks) and from Cheshvan to Hanukkah (after the fall holidays to early winter) all students studied Talmud with Rashi and the Tosafot.[194] *Yeshiva* students engaged in both rote memorization and *pilpul*, a style of Talmudic discourse made popular during this period. *Pilpul* is characterized by the demonstration of a high level of knowledge and expertise by finding small differences in arguments that seem to be saying the same thing or by "reconciling contradictions through finding subtle distinctions of various kinds."[195] Students were tested each week by an "inspector" the *yeshiva* employed, and when the young men were able to

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[191] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 94.
[192] Hannover, *Abyss of Despair (Yeven Metzulah),* 111; Haumann, *A History of East European Jews,* 26.
[193] Dubnow, *History of the Jews* vol 1, 115.
[194] Hannover, *Abyss of Despair, (Yeven Metzulah),* 112.
[195] Meyer, "Medieval and Modern."

demonstrate their knowledge to the faculty and community, they received money from community leaders.[196]

During the other part of the year, from the holiday of Shavuot to Rosh Hashanah and from Hanukkah to Passover, students had more leeway in their studies: often they worked with law codes (the *Turim* of Jacob ben Asher) and younger students studied the commentaries of Alfasi.[197] Instead of the formalized *pilpul*-style argument, they were free to engage in discussions with their teachers and classmates; on occasion a student was invited to lead the discussion.[198] This was an incredible honor. On the other hand, a student who did not live up to his teachers' expectations was punished.

Economics and Professions

For those who did not attend *yeshiva*, a variety of trades and professions beckoned. Some young men travelled to Padua, in Italy, to take advantage of a medical education.[199] Wealthy Jews enabled their sons to go to Germany and study science.[200] Others became apprentices to tailors, furriers, butchers, or glaziers; those with fewer skills became journeymen or day-laborers.[201] Those who acquired some wealth rented land from the Polish nobility, becoming arendators who managed the estates. Unlike in other Jewish communities, Jewish men were not drafted into the national army or given any opportunity to work in on the national stage.[202] Select members of the *Va'ad* reported to the Polish government, but the majority of Jews operated within the Jewish subset of Polish society.

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[196] Hannover, *Abyss of Despair, (Yeven Metzulah),* 114.
[197] Dubnow, *History of the Jews* vol 1, 118.
[198] Hannover, *Abyss of Despair, (Yeven Metzulah),* 113.
[199] Dubnow, *History of the Jews* vol 1, 132.
[200] Graetz, *History of the Jews* vol 4, 633.
[201] John Cooper, *The Child in Jewish History* (Northvale, N.J: J. Aronson, 1996), 244-245.
[202] Bernard D. Weinryb, *The Jews of Poland; a Social and Economic History of the Jewish Community in Poland from 1100 to 1800* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1973), 114.

The local marketplace served as a locus of goods, services, information, and socialization. While Lublin had a Jewish quarter, in many Polish towns the marketplace and the surrounding houses were owned and operated by Jews. As peasants came to sell their goods in the market, they often met Jews along the way that purchased their entire supply.[203] This was not a one-time relationship, Goldberg asserts, but Polish peasants often entered into long-term agreement with Jewish merchants, not just selling their goods to Jews but borrowing money from them, as well.[204] These ongoing relationships, both good and bad, contributed to the Jews' reputation amongst the Polish peasantry.

One Jewish profession did foster relationships with both the highest and lowest echelons of society: that of the arendators. As mentioned earlier in connection with the Chmielnicki massacres, Jews dominated the position of intermediary between the nobility and peasantry. Goldberg argues that "There were also close contacts between individual members of the old aristocratic families and Jews who were arendators of their properties, or acted as their agents, and who often became the grey eminence at their courts. Through these relations the Jews were able to mitigate threats of anti-Jewish enactments in the diet and the senate."[205] Unlike the *bachurim* in the *yeshiva*, these Jews interacted with non-Jews on a daily basis and sought to appease the nobility. When the Cossacks arrived, however, they drew little distinction between the landowners and their stewards in their acts of violence.

Larger than the local marketplace were the regional fairs, held two or three times per year. Lublin hosted the winter fair (usually held in the month of Shevat). The influx

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[203] Jacob Goldberg, "Poles and Jews in the 17th and 18th Centuries: Rejection or Acceptance," *Jahrbücher Für Geschichte Osteuropas* 22, no. 2 (1974): 263.
[204] Goldberg, "Poles and Jews," 263.
[205] Goldberg, "Poles and Jews," 258.

of merchants and businessmen brought wealth and prestige to Lublin; the city welcomed thousands of visitors bringing goods from across the known world.[206] In addition to trading goods such as spices, precious metals, textiles, and specialty items, individuals came to the fairs to transact other types of business.[207] Marriages were arranged, the *Va'ad* held sessions, and scholars exchanged commentaries, responsa, and intellectual discourse.

Nomenclature and Proto-Yiddish

Whereas learned Jews read and discussed texts written in Hebrew and Aramaic, the dominant language of everyday conversation was Yiddish, which emerged from Judeo-German. As Jews migrated east, their medieval German mixed with Hebrew and Polish. A mixture, sometimes called jargon, became the characteristic language of the *shtetl*. Scholars believe that Yiddish began at the turn of the first millennium as a mixture of three different language groups: Semitic, Romance, and Germanic.[208] In the seventeenth century, however, Yiddish was not clearly distinct from German; it is during this period that Eastern and Western Yiddish dialects begin to form.[209] It is possible to see these influences through individuals' names: the classic Yiddish monikers *Feivush* and *Feitel* come via the French *Vives* and *Vital*, which were the vernacular forms of the traditional names *Yechiel* and *Chayim*.[210] Many male names were biblical in origin but rendered in the vernacular, such as *Leib*, coming from the Hebrew name *Aryeh* rendered in German as Löwe (both meaning "lion"), and *Naphtali* or *Zvi* became *Hirsch* or *Hersh*

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[206] Graetz, *History of the Jews* vol 4, 640.
[207] Meyer, "Medieval and Modern."
[208] Dovid Katz, "Origins of the Yiddish Language" (presented at the Oxford Winter Symposium in Yiddish Language and Literature, Pergamon Press, 1985): 85.
[209] Dovid Katz, "Origins," 87.
[210] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 74.

(a deer).[211] Biblical names shortened in the vernacular were popular as well, such as *Jacob* (shortened to *Yankel* or *Koppel*) and *Yehudah* (shortened to *Yudel*).[212] Women's names reflect this phenomenon; they are often biblical or variants on adjectives and rendered in the vernacular in long and short forms. Women's names from the Bible such as *Avigail* and *Rachel* became *Avgali* or *Rekhl* amongst close family and friends.[213] Jews in Eastern Europe often did not adopt surnames until the late eighteenth century, so the patronymic model (Ya'kov ben Yitzchak) was an official form of designation within the Jewish community.

At home families spoke Yiddish while Hebrew was saved for prayer. Yiddish was the language of "profane culture," as opposed to sacred prayer and study, even though certain words and phrases overlapped.[214] As a result, most women did not know Hebrew beyond being able to recite basic prayers and relied on Yiddish translations for greater understanding.[215] Many women read, and some composed, books of individual prayers in Yiddish, called *tkhines*, and read the Hebrew bible in translation. *Tkhines*, which can be translated as "appeals" or "supplications," were written in the first person and are private devotional prayers.[216] With the invention of the printing press and the establishment of Jewish printing houses, books became cheaper and more widely available, so women were able to read others *tkhines* as well as Yiddish translation of sacred texts. Devra Kay notes that at least two translations of the Bible into Yiddish were available by the end of

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[211] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 74.
[212] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 73-74.
[213] G. L. Esterson, "The Given Names Database," *JewishGen.org*, accessed September 25, 2013, http://www.jewishgen.org/databases/GivenNames/.
[214] Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog, *Life Is with People: The Culture of the Shtetl* (New York: Schocken Books, 1995), 69.
[215] Dubnow, *History of the Jews* vol 1, 121.
[216] Chava Weissler, "Tkhines," ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), Gale Virtual Reference Library.

the seventeenth century.[217]

Women and Girls

Mothers and daughters often shouldered all of the responsibility for taking care of the home and providing meals for their family. In the case of an absent father, either due to death or a non-paid scholarly position, women would assume a greater role in work outside of the home.[218] It was not unusual for women to remarry should their husband pass away, thus blended families were not uncommon. Women were also responsible for the religious life of the household: preparing the home for Shabbat and festivals, ensuring the proper foods were (or were not) available during certain times of the year, and teaching their daughters how to manage a proper Jewish home. A Jewish household in this period normally housed a nuclear family and a variety of other relations: a relative visiting from another area, the children of relations who had died, or a new daughter or son-in-law during the first few years of marriage.[219] The addition of a scholar or two was not uncommon, as Hannover notes, and Weinryb cites a survey that places approximately five to seven people in each Jewish household during this time.[220] It was not uncommon for a widow or widower to move in with his or her parents, as grandparents or other relatives saw it as a religious duty to help raise each other's children.[221] Providing for a large family required a considerable amount of time and effort, especially in the context of a meticulously prescribed way of life.

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[217] Dovid Katz, "Origins," 61.
[218] Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2000), 113.
[219] Jacob Katz *Tradition*, 114.
[220] Hannover, *Abyss of Despair (Yeven Metzulah),* 111; Weinryb, *The Jews of Poland,* 311.
[221] Cooper, *The Child in Jewish History* 220-221.

Food

In addition to keeping a proper home and taking care of the family's finances, Jewish women cooked and baked a variety of Eastern European foods that many now see as "classic Jewish food." Common Eastern European dishes took on Yiddish names and tastes, such as *pirogen* (pastry filled with meat or vegetables), *varenikes* (stuffed dumplings), *knishes* (potato dumplings), and stuffed cabbage, flavored with the powerful tastes and smells of onions, garlic, and horseradish.[222] Two types of bread were popular, each in its own time; a dark hearty rye bread for every day, and a soft white egg challah for Shabbat.[223] Staples included cereal grains, black bread and vegetables, and small amounts of dairy, meat, and fish. Clean water was scarce, so often people drank beer, mead, or wine.[224]

Shabbat and holidays, however, had their own special menus. The aforementioned soft challah was saved only for certain occasions, and served alongside *cholent* and *kugel* on shabbat. The word *cholent* comes from the Old French for "warming up" (*chalent*), and refers to a stew made from meat, potatoes, and beans that is prepared on Friday and kept warm on a stove or oven until Saturday afternoon.[225] Due to the prohibition of cooking on the Sabbath, many families brought their pot of *cholent* or soup to the communal bakery on Friday afternoon. The oven would be sealed before sundown and opened the next day for family members to retrieve their Shabbat meal.[226] *Kugels* are baked dishes, and can be made with noodles, potatoes, or, on Passover, *matzah*.[227]

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[222] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 123.
[223] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 127-128.
[224] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 128.
[225] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 36; 131.
[226] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 133.
[227] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 137.

Holidays had their own particular delicacies, including *kreplach* (meat filled dumplings), *chremslach* (a Passover-friendly pancake made of matzo meal), and *blintzes* (a thin pancake filled with cheese or fruit). Many of these foods are not uniquely Jewish, but rather adaptations of Eastern European foods that fit Jewish dietary laws.

Polish-Jewish Dress

Jewish households shared a number of characteristics with their Eastern European neighbors. Weinryb notes that household inventories of Jewish and Christian homes contained many of the same items: tin bowls and cups, copper basins, iron stoves, thick featherbeds and pillows, basic clothing, and a copy of the Bible.[228] Jewish women wore clothes that closely resembled their non-Jewish neighbors, save for a distinctive cloth in front of their blouse (called a *brusttuch*) and a head-covering for modesty.[229] Jewish men had distinctive beards and ear-locks (called *payot*) and dressed in black, as opposed to the colorful clothes of their neighbors. On Shabbat those who could afford it donned a special white kaftan (tunic or robe).[230]

Life Cycle Events

As in many other diaspora cultures, life-cycle events in this period took on the characteristics and superstitions of non-Jewish neighbors. Pregnancy and birth superstitions permeated different cultures through the communal employment of Jewish and non-Jewish midwives.[231] Some uniquely Jewish rituals, though, were tying the sash of a Torah around a woman's waist during a difficult birth, or having a pregnant woman

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[228] Weinryb, *The Jews of Poland,* 113.
[229] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 169.
[230] Haumann, *A History of East European Jews,* 26.
[231] Cooper, *The Child in Jewish History,* 210.

bite the top of the etrog as a protective charm.[232] After a child was born, someone might tie a red ribbon on an infant's crib to ward off danger.[233]

In a manner not unique to the Eastern European community, friends and family would often come together to celebrate the birth of a new baby. There are specific rituals surrounding the *brit milah* of a baby boy, which begin the Shabbat before the ceremony takes place. This *zochor* or *sholem zochor* ("Hello, baby boy!") is a festive meal at the parents' home on Friday evening. Additionally, a *wachnacht* was a vigil that took place the night before the *brit milah* in which groups of men or children remained awake all night to study and ward off danger.[234] It is not surprising that families would want to scare off demons or the "evil eye," given pre-modern infant mortality rates. A common Yiddish saying upon seeing a new baby was "*a sheyn kind, kenehore*!": "a beautiful child – no evil eye!"

Weddings were also a time of celebration, excitement, and superstition. Most commonly arranged by parents, marriages would occur for women by age sixteen and men by age eighteen.[235] It was not unusual, however, for families to arrange marriages much earlier (thirteen or fourteen for girls, fifteen or sixteen for boys), and parents even received accolades for doing so.[236] Families often helped the new couple by providing dowries and allowing the bride and groom to live with them for the first few years of their marriage.[237] The marriage process begins with the fathers of the bride and groom signing an agreement, (sometimes called *tnoy'im*) which serves as a guarantee of the

[232] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 104.
[233] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 104.
[234] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 106.
[235] Jacob Katz, *Tradition*, 116.
[236] Jacob Katz, *Tradition*,116.
[237] Jacob Katz, *Tradition*,117.

terms of the dowry, the wedding date and time, and where the newly married couple will live.[238] The wedding itself, which could take place months or even years later, traditionally took place outside in a public area – not in the synagogue itself. The entire town was invited to witness the event, from the *bedeken* (traditional checking and recovering of the bride's veil to make sure the bride is the correct woman [see Genesis 29:23-25]), to the ceremony and festive meal. The bride, dressed in white, and the groom in black, fast on their wedding day and do not see one another until just before the ceremony. The bride is treated like a queen on her wedding day, and entertains family and friends while sitting atop a chair piled with cushions. She is accompanied to the *chuppah* by her parents, where she and her groom stand facing the rabbi and/or cantor. Her mother helps her circle her groom seven times, symbolizing the man who is now the center of her life. The rabbi conducts the ceremony: sings the traditional seven blessings; he reads the *ketubah* (marriage contract) aloud; invites the groom to place a ring on the bride's finger; and invites the groom to step on a glass, signaling the end of the ceremony. Enough food and drink is provided that guests may take some home with them as a gift or token.[239] The family and friends drink and dance, separated by gender, and family members engage in a number of iconic dances. There is the *mitzvah tanz* dance between the bride and groom who do not touch but hold ends of the same handkerchief, the *broygez tanz*, a dance between the two mothers in law, and a father who married off his last daughter would perform a *mezinke tanz* in celebration.[240] While a marriage is the beginning of a new couple's life together, for a father it is the giving up of his daughter.

An additional figure who played a prominent role during the wedding festivities

[238] Jacob Katz, *Tradition*,114; Zbrowski and Herzog, *Life Is with People,* 279.
[239] Zbrowski and Herzog, *Life Is with People,* 278.
[240] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry,* 110.

was the *badchen*, a clown or jester. Hired by the groom's family, he is often a beggar or small-time actor who helps raise the revelry of the day to new heights.[241] He (always a male) serves as a master of ceremonies: greeting guests, reciting poetry and stories, and appealing to the crowd's emotions.

While the preparations for a wedding were incumbent on the family to handle, customs regarding death and mourning fell under the jurisdiction of the local *chevra kadisha* (holy society). Part of the *kahal*'s obligation, the *chevra kadisha* took care of the Jewish rituals surrounding death: washing the body according to custom, making sure it is never left unattended, preparing it for burial, and seeing to it that the process runs smoothly. More than just a benevolent society, the *chevra kadisha* wielded power in its partnership with the *kahal*. If an individual was placed under *cherem* (banned from the community), the *chevra kadisha* would not allow the person to be buried in the local cemetery. The denial of a proper Jewish burial proved to be a strong bargaining chip for Jews in this period, and being blacklisted by the *kahal* was considered a severe punishment.[242]

Purim and the *Purimshpil*

One holiday celebration created in Poland and popularized in America was the *purimshpil*, which was first recorded in 1555.[243] On the holiday of Purim, on which Jews traditionally dress in costume and engage in revelry unparalleled during the rest of the year, Polish Jews began the tradition of a play (*shpil*) of the Purim story in a comical and

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[241] Zbrowski and Herzog, *Life Is with People* 279.
[242] Abraham Wein, ed., "Lublin."
[243] Hanna Wegrzynek, "Sixteenth-Century Accounts of Purim Festivities," in *Focusing on Jewish Religious Life, 1500-1900*, ed. Antony Polonsky, vol. 15, Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry (Oxford: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2002).

sometimes unruly way.[244] Only men performed in the *shpil*, but men, women, and children watched.[245] Unlike other holiday celebrations which are held in the synagogue, the *purimshpil* took place outside of the synagogue, perhaps in the town square or the synagogue courtyard.[246] In some communities it could be held in the home of a wealthy Jewish family.[247] Before the traditional public reading of *Megillat Esther*, Jews paraded through the streets in their costumes, sometimes reenacting pieces of the story as they went. The *shpil* itself could be based on the biblical book of Esther, but might have also drawn from the corpus of Jewish literature: Joseph's brothers selling him into slavery, the binding of Isaac, the story of David and Goliath, or Samson and Delilah.[248] Jewish men, dressed in women's clothing or as outlandish characters from scripture, drank liquor to excess, per one of the traditions of Purim in regard to the holiday, and behaved outlandishly amongst each other.[249] A key figure in the evening was the narrator, who during other times of the year served as a *badchen* or actor/entertainer.[250] Sometimes he served the dual role of being both the narrator and Mordechai, jumping in and out of the story to move the plot along.[251] At the end of the story a dummy or mannequin Haman was hanged on stage, commemorating the Jews' victory in Shushan.[252]

These *sphils* caught the attention of local Christians, and, not understanding the holiday and its customs, voiced concern to their clergy and government officials.

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[244] Wegrzynek "Sixteenth-Century," 89; 91.
[245] Lewis Sowden et al., "Theater," ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007): 679.
[246] Wegrzynek "Sixteenth-Century," 89.
[247] Sowden, "Theater," 679.
[248] Sowden, "Theater," 677.
[249] Wegrzynek "Sixteenth-Century," 89.
[250] Sowden, "Theater," 678.
[251] Jean Baumgarten, "Purim-Shpil," trans. Cecilia Grayson, *The YIVO Encyclopaedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, 2010, http://www.yivoEncyclopaedia.org/article.aspx/Purim-shpil.
[252] Baumgarten, "Purim-Shpil."

Witnesses described the events as mockeries of Passion plays, which normally occurred before Easter.[253] Purim often falls in late winter and Easter in the springtime, so it is not illogical for those who did not understand the holiday to juxtapose the two. One testimony from a Christian relates the following scene:

> One afternoon during Lent, but not long before Easter, a Jew from Sochaczew, Socha, was leading a chained man, a stranger and possibly a Christian, along the Jewish street. The man's hands were tied and he was blindfolded. He was wearing Turkish attire. Jews, perhaps children, were splashing mud at him and shouting all the way. The man was led into the synagogue, where the jeering and booing continued. The townspeople of Sochaczew interpreted this event as a parody of the Way of the Cross, with the scene of Christ's death re-enacted by the desecration of the host in the synagogue.[254]

While Sochaczew is located west of Lublin, Wegrzynek notes that testimonials exist from cities across western and southern Poland. Other testimonies mention cross dressing and the wearing of masks, as well as impersonating famous people. In Brest, across the Polish border in Belarus, a 1577 court record relates an incident during a *purimshpil* in which a young boy "played in a walking street comedy and called himself the grand duke of Moscow."[255] Wegrzynek entertains a number of theories as to how the custom of a public parade and carnival-like atmosphere came to Poland; one answer she posits is that Jews in Italy witnessed the custom of Venetian carnivals, and brought the tradition with them as they traveled east. Alternatively, a custom arose in the fifth century in Byzantine-controlled lands of burning an effigy of Haman on the holiday, and this tradition remained popular in medieval and modern Europe.[256] Despite its unknown origins, Polish Jews enjoyed the jovial and carnival-like atmosphere of Purim and its celebrations until

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[253] Wegrzynek "Sixteenth-Century," 88.
[254] Wegrzynek "Sixteenth-Century," 88.
[255] Wegrzynek "Sixteenth-Century," 89.
[256] Wegrzynek "Sixteenth-Century," 91.

1743, when a bishop banned the public festivities.

Avigali: Lublin, Poland, 1648

Scene 1: Welcome and Introduction

Sholom! My name is Avigali and I am twelve years old. I live in the town of Lublin, Poland, in the year 1648. I am excited to share my family and life with you!

We live in the Jewish part of town, just outside of the city's walls. My dad, Hirsch, buys and sells textiles, cloth, and sometimes he travels for a long time. My mother is no longer alive; she died when my baby sister Rashka was born. I was eight years old at the time and I remember how upset my father was. He loved her very much and did not know how he would live without her. After one year he married a woman named Rochel and she and her son Koppel came to live with us. Rochel is nice to me, but she will never be like my mother.

I have a brother, Boruch, who is 9 years old. We also have a Yeshiva student living in our house; his name is Mendl and he's like a big brother to all of us. He has been here for two years but he will leave soon to live with his new wife. I'm very excited to go to the wedding because I'm finally old enough to celebrate with the adults!

Tateh (my dad) says that soon he will try to make a match for me with a nice boy in town. It is not unusual for girls my age to meet their future husbands and get married within one or two years. I feel like a grown-up already, since I took care of Boruch and Rashka after *Mameh* (mom) passed away. I'm not ready to have babies of my own, but I feel like I could be a good wife already!

Rochel takes care of the house and makes food differently than *Mameh* used to, but I've learned a lot from her. She is from another city, Krakow, the biggest city in

Poland, and a matchmaker set her up with my father after Rochel's husband died. He was a merchant, too, but he worked with wine and alcohol, not cloth like *Tateh*. Rochel doesn't talk about him very much, but everyone says Koppel looks just like him. He is one year older than I am and just started going to the yeshiva. He doesn't like it there and wants to leave and become a wine merchant like his father was, but Rochel tells him that it's an honor to study and he should stay.

During the week I help Rochel take care of the house and Rashka while *Tateh* and my brothers go to *shul* and then to the rest of their daily activities: work, *yeshiva,* or *cheder*. We get up, get Rashka dressed and fed, and start planning what we need to do for the day. Sometimes I get to take her to the market to buy our food for the day – that's one of my favorite things to do! In the winter we get bundled up in our big coats and carry a wooden basket big enough to hold everything. Rochel always has me buy the same things, potatoes, onions, carrots, garlic, and flour. Sometimes, if there's some money left over, she says I can get honey treats for the two of us – those are always a treat! Rochel doesn't let me go to the market on Friday, though, because she needs to get special things for *Shabbes* that only she can pick out. She knows how to get the right chicken, the special flour for challah, and other treats we only have once per week.

When we get home from the market we help clean our house. I help with the laundry while Rashka puts things away. We clean the entire house, except for *Tateh*'s desk, and make sure everything is clean and in its rightful place. Rochel hangs the laundry outside when it is done, and then we begin to prepare dinner. We always have a big fire going in the kitchen; it helps us heat our whole house. *Tateh* and Mendl help carry the wood inside and Rochel feeds the fire all day. One time when Boruch was little

he got too close and an ember jumped out and burned part of his hair! It was very scary at the time but now we laugh about it.

When *Tateh* and the boys come home from shul after their evening prayers we have dinner together. *Tateh* asks the boys what they learned in school that day. Boruch is starting to learn Torah with the help of someone named Rashi – he must be very popular because everyone talks about what he teaches them. Even Koppel knew his commentary, and he went to cheder in Krakow! Tateh is very proud of Mendl and thinks of him like a son. He thinks Mendl is going to be a rosh yeshiva some day! That is the highest honor – the rosh yeshiva is the most respected man in town and has the seat of honor at the synagogue, near the Eastern wall. Well, I've never seen him sit at the synagogue but that's what Boruch tells me.

I don't go to services with the boys, first *Mameh*, and now Rochel, tells us what prayers we need to know. One of my most precious possessions is *Mameh*'s book of prayers for women, *tkhines*, – I keep it wrapped in a special cloth near my bed so the little ones won't damage it. There is a special prayer to say before we go to sleep – it's called *shema yisroel*, have you ever heard of it?

Well it is almost time to say my nighttime prayers and go to sleep. I'm excited to share more with you soon!

Scene 2: The Fair

Hello, again! Today I get to share something very exciting with you! It is wintertime and it's the time the whole town is getting ready for – the fair!

This is a special gathering where merchants and traders get together from all over Europe and sell their products to each other. Also, there are big important meetings between rabbis and even matchmakers – it was at one of these fairs that a matchmaker from Krakow suggested that my *Tateh* marry Rochel. So much is happening, and *Tateh* is taking me with him this year!

We got up very early in the morning and took *Tateh*'s cart of cloth and record-books out to what is usually a big empty field. Today, though, it was transformed into a huge market place with colorful tents, big wooden platforms that looked like stages, and happy people as far as the eye could see! *Tateh* lifted me up on his shoulders so I could see the thousands and thousands of people. Some wore strange clothes and spoke in languages I could not understand, but everyone seemed excited to see each other. As we walked through the aisles to get to *Tateh*'s booth, I saw foods, precious gems, and types of clothes I had never seen before – large sacks full of foreign spices from the East, shiny diamonds and rubies, and beautiful rugs in rich colors that looked like they took years to weave. We don't have anything that precious in our home- I wonder where these things will end up!

Tateh says that sometimes he sells a ream of cloth or two to one person, but he comes to the fairs to try to make bigger arrangements. He told me that he hopes to meet someone who knows or works with a tailor, and that they set up agreements for *Tateh* to sell him lots of cloth at once and then again in the future. If that tailor tells his friends that *Tateh*'s cloth is good cloth, they will want to buy from him too, and that will make his business grow. "But I don't get greedy," he says, "We always give a portion of what we earn to the *shul*, the *yeshiva*, and the beggars in our town. What we have on this earth is

not ours, it comes from God and we need to listen to God and give our fair share of *tzedakeh*."

I nodded. It was not unusual to see *Tateh* give a few coins to the beggar who sits outside his stall at the market. "There will always be poor in our world," he would say, "but they are part of our community and we need to help them."

We finally arrived at *Tateh*'s booth at the fair. I helped him unload the cloth he would show the buyers and placed the record-book on a small table. There was a stool there too, but I don't think *Tateh* ever sat down. He was too busy talking to people, doing business, and hearing news from far away. I sat on a pile of cloth watching him talk with buyers and sellers, listening to the strange words they used, a mixture of my Yiddish peppered with Hebrew, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, and other languages I couldn't begin to identify. *Tateh* slid seamlessly from one language to the next, addressing each person in the proper tongue. I knew *Tateh* knew Hebrew, from the prayers at *shul* and his time in *cheder*, but I had no idea that he could speak so many languages! I wonder if he learned them when he was younger, as an apprentice to a more experienced merchant.

At the end of the day we packed up *Tateh*'s booth and went back home. As we walked past the inns and boarding-houses they were full of people drinking and laughing after a hard day's work. There were other groups, however, who were sitting in small circles and looking very worried. *Tateh* saw me staring at them and asked what I was thinking.

"They look very unhappy, *Tateh*, while everyone else is laughing and playing games. I thought this was supposed to be a happy time."

"It is, my little one, but there are rumors that bad things are happening in the East, but you are not to worry. Lublin is a wonderful place for us to live; nothing will happen to us here."

I didn't understand what he meant by "bad things" so I just said "oh, okay" and continued our walk home. It was getting dark and the bitter cold of winter was getting worse. The wind whipped against my cheeks as I pulled the hood of my jacket tightly around me, ready to go home and go to sleep after a long day.

Scene 3: Purim

Gut Yontif! It has been a cold cold winter here in Lublin, but it's almost time for my favorite holiday, Purim!

We celebrate Purim in our community with lots of fun and games. We all get to dress up in costumes and even masks! I have a beautiful queen Esther costume that *Mameh* made for me when I was very young, but I'm sad that it doesn't fit anymore. Rashka is going to wear it this year if she wants to. Queen Esther is my favorite character in the Purim story – she was so brave to stand up for all of the Jewish people! I don't know if I would have enough courage to do what she did. It must have been difficult for her to hide her Judaism from her husband, the king. How would she have eaten kosher food in the palace if the king did not know she needed it? Would he make her work on Shabbes? I would be interested to learn more about the story. Maybe I will ask Mendl, because he tells us all of these stories.

This year for Purim I get to help Rochel sew costumes for *Tateh*, Mendl, and Boruch. Boruch is going to wear Mendl's costume from last year, but we need to make it

smaller so it fits. Mendl was one of King Achashveros' servants in the *shphil,* and he got his costume from another student the year before. Rochel has showed me how to take big clothes and make them smaller, so I am excited to help. Mendl wants to dress as Joseph, so Rochel is going to take two different pieces of clothing and make them into a striped robe. Mendl will be so regal in his coat – I only wish his future bride could see him in it!

Tateh's costume is always a surprise; he doesn't tell anyone about it before Purim itself. On Purim morning he goes to *shul* for morning services and then comes home to get ready for the *shpil.* The *shpil* is the big Purim play that the men of the town put on every year – *Tateh* loves being involved in it! He takes a long time getting ready and sneaks out of the house when he is done. We don't get to see him until he's in the *shpil* itself.

Last year it was snowing during Purim and we were all bundled up and ready to start our parade. I was sad because my beautiful Queen Esther costume was too small and Rochel dressed me up as *Sorah Imeinu* (Sarah, our matriarch) and Koppel as *Avraham Avinu* (Abraham, our patriarch). Our costumes were not very exciting and I didn't get to wear a mask, plus I had to be married to Koppel – yuck! Rochel was very proud of her last-minute idea but Koppel and I were not amused. Boruch went as Samson with a mop on his head to make it look like he had long hair, and Rochel dressed up as Pharoah's daughter and carried Rashka as her "baby Moses."

We went outside in the snow and walked together in the parade to the main plaza of the Jewish quarter. There was a big tent with a stage underneath, and I ran with Koppel and Boruch to the front of the crowd so we could see (and not get too wet from the

snow!). Musicians playing violins and trumpets started the music and a group of *yeshiva* students, including our Mendl, came out on stage to introduce the evening. They sang silly songs, most of them talked about their teachers at *yeshiva* so I didn't understand those, but then they introduced the story of Esther. The first scene showed King Achashveros punishing Queen Vashti for not listening to him, and she (who was really one of the boys from the *yeshiva* in a dress and lots of beaded necklaces) danced off the stage. The King was so upset that he didn't have a wife and called for a pageant to pick a new one. Everyone scattered offstage and the actors playing the women came on the stage but had their backs to us. King Achashveros went to each "woman" and as she turned around he told us what he thought of her. One man was dressed up as a very ugly woman with lots of marks on her face and a big nose and he yelled, "Not this one!" The second woman he went to was very very old, hunched over with a cane – she could have been someone's *bubbeh*! The King said, "Not this one!" He went through all of them, one by one, and he turned around the last woman and it was *Tateh*! He was dressed up as the beautiful Queen Esther! My own *Tateh*, Queen Esther herself! He was wearing one of Rochel's dresses with lots of jewelry and a headscarf. It was so silly to see him dressed up as Queen Esther, but I was very proud that my *Tateh* got to be the hero of the story.

Tateh was very funny as Queen Esther – he cried when Esther needed to cry and was brave when Esther needed to be brave. After the show was over I ran over to him and gave him a great big hug. He picked me up on his shoulders, even though I'm too big now, and tried to carry me around like a queen. I didn't go to sleep until very late that night because we were dancing and singing for a long time after the *shpil* was over.

I hope that this year is even better than last – hopefully I'll figure out my own costume very soon!

Scene 4: A Wedding

Welcome back! I'm excited to share some news with you – it is almost time for Mendl's wedding!

Rochel told me all about what is going to happen when we get to Zamoshtsh, where Mendl's bride Chava lives. It will take us two days to travel there, but it would be an insult to Mendl not to go. He has not talked much about his bride, but we are very excited to meet her. It will be a sad event for us too, since after he is married he will live with his new bride in her father's house for the next few years. I will miss him very much, but *Tateh* says it is time for him to start his own family.

"When we get to Zamoshtsh," Rochel said, "everyone in the town will be getting ready for the wedding. There will be a beautiful *chuppah* set up outside decorated with colorful flowers. Lots of tables will be set with tablecloths and fancy plates and utensils. Your father and the boys will go see Mendl and celebrate with him before the ceremony. You, Rashka and I will visit Chava and she will be wearing a long white dress and sitting on top of a big chair with lots of cushions."

"Like a queen!" I interjected.

"Yes, on her wedding day a bride is to be treated like a queen. We will all go up to her and tell her how beautiful she looks and how wonderful the celebration is so far.

She might be very scared, I know I was, and very hungry, because she will not have had anything to eat all day."

"But why? Shouldn't she be happy on her wedding day?"

"It's not about being happy or sad," Rochel answered, "it's about being forgiven for what you have done. Remember on Yom Kippur how *Tateh* and the grown-ups fast all day? This is the same idea. Both the bride and the groom should be pure before they are married."

"Oh." I replied. "I guess that makes sense."

"Then," Rochel continued," Mendl will come to where Chava is sitting and lift up her veil to make sure that it's really her underneath.

"Why would he do that?" I cried. "Who else would be there?"

"Remember the story of Rachel and Leah in the Torah?" Rochel asked.

"Yes! Jacob worked so hard for seven years and he wanted to marry Rachel, but then Rachel's father tricked him and he married Leah instead."

"Exactly," Rochel said, "Mendl is going to check to make sure it is Chava under the veil and not someone else. Then they will walk to the chuppah and meet the rabbi and the chazzan. Mendl will walk through the crowd first with his parents, and then Chava with hers. Then Chava will walk around Mendl seven times. The chazzan will sing the special seven blessings for a bride and groom. Then the rabbi will read their *ketubah* out loud to all of the guests."

"What's a *ketubah*?" I asked.

"A *ketubah* is a document that the bride and groom sign that means that the couple is married. The text is very old and describes what the bride is bringing to the marriage, says that the groom accepts the responsibility for her and her property, and that the bride has agreed to marry him. It's written on a beautiful piece of paper and the couple keeps it forever.

"Then Mendl will place a ring on Chava's finger and say special words in Hebrew. I don't know the Hebrew but it means 'You are consecrated to me with this ring, according to the laws of Moses and Israel."

"And then they're married?"

"Yes, Avigali, then they are married. We then get to join in a big feast with lots of dancing! The whole town is invited and Chava's parents will host everyone. It will be a wonderful day full of celebration."

"Oh! I almost forgot about the *badchen*! He is an important part of the whole evening."

"The who?" I asked.

"The *badchen*, he is like a clown or a jester. Mendl's parents worked very hard to find just the right person. His job is to make sure everyone is having a good time: he tells jokes, does silly dances, and recites funny poems about weddings and marriages. He will greet us when we arrive and tell everyone what's going on and what will happen next. He will entertain us: make us laugh, make us cry, and help us enjoy the day."

"That sounds wonderful, I am so excited!" I exclaimed as I went to prepare my things to travel.

The next day, though, we heard some horrible news. Remember when I told you about the bad things happening in the East? *Tateh* came home and told us that Chava's town, Zamoshtsh, had been attacked by a group of people called Cossacks, and they destroyed the entire town and killed many people, including Chava and her family. The battle took a long time, *Tateh* told us, and many people died of starvation while hiding inside the city. The people had opened their homes to other refugees, but no one was safe there.

Obviously we would not be going there, and I was very sad. Mendl was devastated and when he heard the news he tore his clothes in anger and sadness. There would not be a funeral to go to, so he stayed at home and only left to go to pray at the *shul*. Rochel told us to let him be and that it would take him a while to become his old self. I tried to bring him some of our potato soup, but he did not want to eat anything. I am so sad for him, and I wish there was something we could do. He will go back to the yeshiva when he is ready, *Tateh* says, but in the meantime we should let him be.

Scene 5: Purim 1649

It has been almost a whole year since we left Lublin. Let me tell you what has happened.

After we heard of the destruction in Zamoshtsh, we learned that the Cossacks were coming farther west, towards us. *Tateh* decided it would be best if we packed up our belongings and went to Rayshe, a town nearby where he knew other cloth salesmen. We

put as much as we could on his cart and walked for two and a half days to meet *Tateh*'s friend. He took us into his home where we stayed for the first week. They lived just outside the city in a Jewish area, like in Lublin, because Jews were not allowed to live inside the city itself. After that first week the house was very crowded so *Tateh* looked for a place to rent. We stayed in a small house, much smaller than our house in Lublin, for nearly ten months. *Tateh* was still able to do some work, but most of his supplies were lost back at home. I tried to help by doing housework for some of our neighbors – I used the skills that Rochel taught me and was able to clean their homes for a bit of money each day. By the time I was done I was very tired and did not have the energy to play with Boruch like I used to. He started attending the *cheder* in Rayshe but was unhappy without his friends back home.

After half a year *Tateh* started asking about the situation in Lublin. He discovered that after the Cossacks destroyed parts of the town, they left and had not returned. He decided to take a trip back home and see what was there. He was gone for a few weeks, and each day we eagerly awaited his return. Once he finally came back, he told us that our neighborhood looked nothing like it did before: many of the houses had been burned down, there was still rubble in the streets – no one was there to have cleaned it up, and the *shul* was barely standing. He looked so sad telling us the story that we didn't stop him to ask when we would be going back. We just let him talk.

A few days later *Tateh* decided that we would go back and he would help rebuild our town. He had written to some neighbors and friends who had also fled, and they decided together to return and revive Jewish Lublin. They started making preparations for not only our trek home, but the living conditions we would find when we got there. They

borrowed money from Jewish banks in Warsaw and Krakow to purchase the materials they needed to build houses, start up their businesses again, and rebuild and furnish the *shul.* The bankers were glad to help, and one of them even arranged for us to borrow a *sefer Torah* until we were able to get our own.

We made the journey back to Lublin, and *Tateh*'s description was exactly right. It was so sad to see the streets cluttered with wood, metal, and broken pieces of furniture. There was even broken glass from windows on the ground – we had to be very careful not to hurt ourselves. One of *Tateh*'s friends had found a building that was safe enough to inhabit for a little while, and we stayed there with a few other families until the men finished building basic houses. Rochel and I helped by taking what cloth we could find and turning it into clothes for little ones who had outgrown theirs during the time away. Because Rochel is so good at needlework, the group asked her to design and create the curtain that will cover the new *aron kodesh* (ark where the Torah scrolls are kept) in the synagogue. She took the task very seriously and spent many hours drawing plans and making sure every stitch was just right.

We arrived back in Lublin in the late fall, after the holidays, and now it is Purim again. There will not be the revelry and joy like in the past, but I am excited that Boruch and his friends are in charge of the *shpil.* Since the adults are so busy rebuilding and trying to revive our town, the boys in the yeshiva and cheder volunteered to run the *shpil* – hopefully it will be funny and take our minds off of all of the troubles we have had in the last year!

Chapter 3: Eastern France and Paris, 1789

Distinct Jewish Communities in France

It is difficult to understand the situation of Jews in early modern France without some demographic background information. France on the eve of the Revolution was home to two distinct Jewish communities: the German and Yiddish speaking Eastern European population in northeastern France, concentrated in the cities of Metz, Alsace, and Lorraine, contrasted with Jews of Spanish and Portuguese heritage who lived in the southwest: Bordeaux, Avignon, and Bayonne. These communities had little in common: they spoke different languages, engaged in different occupations, and held different places in France's social structure. Paris, the focus of this chapter, played host to Jews from all over the country as well as the rest of Europe. While the government did not permit Jews to claim permanent residence in the city, records from the Bastille show that about five hundred Jews lived in Paris at the time of the revolution.

Northeastern French Jewry bore a remarkable resemblance to its neighbors in Germany. The overwhelmingly Jewish city of Metz and the regions of Alsace and Lorraine boasted their own Jewish communal structure, conducted themselves according to Jewish customs, and interacted in a variety of languages, including Yiddish and German. Jay R. Berkowitz asserts that "French was not spoken on a daily basis by the Jews in Metz nor in the entire region of Alsace and Lorraine."[257] French was reserved for business transactions and correspondence with those outside of the community. In his examination of the court documents of the *beis din* (court) of Metz, Berkowitz found that traditional Jewish legal terms appeared alongside a transliteration of common French

[257] Jay Berkovitz, "Acculturation and Integration in Eighteenth-Century Metz," *Jewish History* 24 (2010): 273.

terms: although French may not have been a spoken language of communication, those who interacted with the French legal system knew enough of its jargon to incorporate it into their own records. Estimates place the population of these communities at about thirty thousand in the years leading up to the revolution.[258]

Southwestern France, by contrast, retained much of its Spanish and Portuguese heritage. Hertzberg notes that the main language of communication in these communities was Spanish, but shifted to French as subsequent generations began to integrate into French society.[259] Jews of Spanish-Portuguese descent lived in closer contact with their non-Jewish neighbors than their co-religionists to the northwest. It was no coincidence that these Jews tended to be wealthier than those of Central Europe and made their way into higher levels of French society. They numbered less than their Central European neighbors (approximately thirty-five hundred at the time of the Revolution) and sought to integrate with the Provençal society around them.[260] The first prayerbook translated into French was of the Spanish-Portuguese rite and appeared in 1772.[261] On a number of occasions southwestern French Jews published translations of their prayers and supplications. Hertzberg argues that these translations helped facilitate understanding for multiple groups: Jews who did not know enough Hebrew to understand their liturgy, women, who rarely received the opportunity to learn the language, and for gentiles, to provide a greater sense of transparency to Jewish practice.[262]

Jews from both northeastern and southwestern France, as well as travelers and

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[258] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 47.
[259] Arthur Hertzberg, *The Jews in France Before the Revolution: Prelude to Emancipation* (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1969), 270-271.
[260] Arthur Hertzberg, "French Revolution," ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007).
[261] Hertzberg *The Jews in France,* 318.
[262] Hertzberg *The Jews in France,* 319.

expatriates from around Europe, came together in Paris in the eighteenth century. There is little evidence of Jews in the capital in the previous two centuries, but Kahn asserts that records may not exist because the few that were there lived peacefully.[263] The first modern confirmation of Jews in Paris comes from 1721, when the Lieutenant General of Paris required Jews to have passports or specific permission from the Crown in order to enter the city.[264] These *lettres patentes* were issued to Jews from all over France and permitted them to enter Paris on business, but did not allow for permanent settlement.[265] One can assume that Jews had previously been conducting business in the city, and at a certain point the government stepped in to regulate it. After Jews had legal permission to enter the city, at least two Jewish hotels appeared in Paris.[266] According to Kahn's study of the records of Jews in the Bastille, Jews often resided in the homes of friends or relatives and, if caught without the proper papers, were jailed or expelled from the city.[267] Kahn believes that antisemitism permeated the local police force, and local enforcement enjoyed seeking out Jews, "like a hunter chasing a wild beast."[268] In 1756 the local government created a special bureau to oversee the Jews of Paris, and the head of the bureau often extracted money from the Jews in exchange for their safety.[269] Twenty years later the government ceased to issue the *lettres patentes* and the record of Jews in Paris fell into disuse.

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[263] L. Kahn, *Les Juifs de Paris pendant la révolution*, Research & Source Works #198 Judaica Series #5 (New York: Burt Franklin, 1968), 11.
[264] Kahn *Les Juifs de Paris,* 11-12.
[265] "French Revolution," *Encyclopaedia Judaica.*
[266] Arthur Hertzberg, *The French Enlightenment and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968), 201.
[267] Kahn, *Les Juifs de Paris,* 26.
[268] Kahn, *Les Juifs de Paris,* 15.
[269] Kahn, *Les Juifs de Paris,* 18.

Enlightenment Thought and Judaism

One can attribute the changing atmosphere in Paris in the late eighteenth century to the dissemination and acceptance of Enlightenment ideals. This period of philosophical thought began in the seventeenth century in France, and spread throughout Europe. It is important as it affected the ideals of freedom and morality over traditional systems, which directly impacted both non-Jewish perceptions of Jews and Jewish ideas about Jewish tradition. As the influence of absolute monarchies waned, new ideas of secularism, humanity, and cosmopolitanism permeated the world of intellectual discourse.[270] People began to question the status quo and posited their own solutions to society's ills. These ideas took on different qualities in various parts of Europe, and in France they led to an overthrow of the centuries-old monarchy.

For Jews in France the work of the *philosophes* (Enlightenment philosophers) caused both Jews and non-Jews to question the role that Jews played in French society.

Until 1784 Jews were required to pay a "poll tax" or "body tax," which served as further humiliation and social degradation of the group.[271] Other medieval superstitions still abounded, such as those of blood libel and host desecration, but the spirit of rationalism and reason helped overcome these antiquated notions. Other stereotypes included Jews as dishonest businessmen, especially in the buying and selling of horses.[272] Christian thinkers, influenced by the calls for humanism and natural law began to question what made Jews a distinct entity and whether or not those qualities could be overcome. In the vein of equality for all, what did it mean for Jews to be equal?

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[270] Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment: An Interpretation* (New York: Norton, 1995), 3.
[271] "French Revolution," *Encyclopaedia Judaica.*
[272] J. Godechot, "La Révolution Française et L'émancipation Des Juifs.," *Annales Historiques de La Révolution Française* 48, no. 223 (March 1976): 56.

To help answer this question, the *Société Royale des Sciences de Metz* sponsored an essay contest that asked "Is there a way to make the Jews more useful and happier in France?" The contest received international attention and garnered responses from Jews as well as gentiles. The responses to this question sparked a lot of controversy: the majority who answered in the affirmative did so because they believed that Jews could become model citizens alongside Christians, provided that the Jews shed their distinctiveness. In light of Enlightenment ideals, all individuals could be model citizens provided that they used reason and rationality in their decision-making.

It merits mention that Judaism was not the only religion to come under scrutiny during this period – Christianity was attacked, as well. The attack on "arbitrary power" applied not only to the monarchy but also the Catholic Church. Churches and Christian clergy suffered as a result of the Enlightenment and French Revolution, but Judaism featured prominently because of its emphasis on law and strict observance. Godechot notes that a popular argument for the secularization of Jews involved Jews eschewing *halacha* (Jewish law), which would translate into less respect for religious authority.[273] This would lead to French acculturation and the eventual assimilation of Jews into French culture.[274]

In light of these issues, Jews in southwestern France and Paris sought to prove their patriotism and allegiance to the government. One example of this loyalty took place when the dauphin (crown prince) of France fell ill. Jews, alongside their Catholic neighbors, offered prayers, charity, and well-wishes to the royal family. Their special prayer for the occasion was translated into French and sent to local officials. Along with

[273] Godechot, "La Révolution Française," 57.
[274] Godechot, "La Révolution Française,"57.

this supplication, the writers included their daily prayer for the King, a common practice at the time. The translation reads as follows:

> Almighty God, you who give salvation to Kings and keep in your right hand their life and their health; you who give power to Princes: Lord our God, who delivered David, your servant, from the murderous sword and preserved him from the ambushes of his enemies; you who divided the Red Sea to make a passage, and who made a path through the rapid waters of the Jordan: Oh Eternal One, our God, exalt our King Louis Le Bien-Aime [well-loved], XV, King of France and of Navarre: Oh Eternal One, King of Kings, accord him, by your bounties, a long and permanent life; preserve him from every sort of sorrow, pain and disquietude; may his reign be of long duration, may happiness follow all his enterprises, and guide it always toward that which can contribute to his glory and satisfaction; shower, Lord, his Royal Family with every sort of prosperity and blessing; spread, by your infinite bounty, peace, joy and abundance in all corners of his Kingdom; preserve, Lord, in his heart the goodness and clemency whose effects we feel; may his ministers, in following his example, be favorable to us; your will be done. Amen.[275]

This traditional prayer infused with words of patriotism and allegiance to the monarchy was a way for the Jewish community to show its loyalty while still maintaining its unique identity. It emphasizes the biblical history that Jews and Christians share (King David, dividing the Red Sea, importance of the land of Israel) and ends with well-wishes for the King and government.

Jews in the Capital

Not all Jews wished to remain both faithful to the tradition of Moses and proud Frenchmen, some preferred only the latter. Before 1789 Paris was the "frontier" for Jews, and many who moved to the city began to shed their traditional practices.[276] The journal of a famed rabbi and scholar, Chaim Joseph David Azulai, chronicles his 1777 visit to the capital. He noticed that the rabbi of the Avignon Jews (each group had its own

[275] Godechot, "La Révolution Française,"48.
[276] Hertzberg, *The Jews in France,* 299.

community and leadership) drank wine in gentile taverns,[277] Jews regularly broke the Sabbath and some even admitted to having gentile mistresses.[278] Kahn's study of the Bastille's records notes that two young men were walking around Paris in red heels and making mischief in order to attract (presumably) Christian girls.[279] Another Jew of German descent was told to leave Paris, but did not, and changed his name in order to continue his life of debauchery.[280] While a rabbi in Metz was concerned about women wearing the latest styles instead of proper modest wear, the Jews of Paris gallivanted around impersonating the nobility!

Paris, then, was a cosmopolitan city where Jews were not confined to the restrictions of a local *kahal* or community board. As long as they lived peacefully many managed to stay under the radar of the authorities and pursue their business and intellectual pursuits. As politics heated up and the revolution neared, Parisian Jews realized that this was their opportunity to petition for full equality. Although the Declaration of Rights of Man was adopted on August 26, 1789, its initial interpreters discerned that it did not apply to Jews. Ronald Schechter argues that citizen status depended on a certain level of wealth or income, and the majority of French Jews (those in the northeast) did not meet the requirements.[281] That same day the Jews of Paris appealed to the National Assembly for their own rights. Their request reads:

> In first restoring dignity to man, in recovering the enjoyment of his rights, you have not made any distinction between one man and another, this title appears to us like the other members of society, the rights that derive appear to us as equality. See, sirs, the consequence be assured for us, who

[277] Meaning that the wine could not have been handled properly and was therefore not kosher.
[278] Hertzberg, *The Jews in France,* 298-299.
[279] Kahn, *Les Juifs de Paris,* 16.
[280] Kahn, *Les Juifs de Paris,* 16.
[281] Ronald Schechter, "The Jewish Question in Eighteenth-Century France," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32, no. 1, Nationalism (Fall 1998): 86.

> follow the fundamental principles that you are about to establish. Thus, we certainly now have a different existence than that we have had dedicated until now. In the Empire, which is our father, the title of man guaranteed someone to be a Citizen, and the title of Citizen will give us the rights of the City, all of the civil faculties which we look to enjoy, alongside you, members of a society which we want to be a part of. [282]

These Parisian Jews utilized the enlightened and patriotic rhetoric of the day and made their case to the highest authority. They assert that they are equal to all other men, and, based on the rhetoric of the revolution, they should be considered equal alongside Protestant Christians. Clearly they know this will not happen automatically, and their goal is to make this language explicit to the National Assembly. It is also helpful that they praise the new civilization that the revolution is helping build, and assert that they want to participate fully in this new society.

This petition started a conversation that would last for months. On August 31 a delegation of Jews from Alsace and Lorraine demanded equality under the Declaration of Rights of Man. When they did not receive an answer they sent a new delegation in October.[283] The National Assembly debated the issue of Jewish equality in December of 1789, and ultimately granted Spanish and Portuguese Jews equal status on January 28, 1790. Northeastern French Jews, however, were not recognized until September of 1791, and the day following the resolution regarding new restrictions on Ashkenazi Jews surfaced. A number of pogroms broke out in Eastern France, some Jews were not permitted to enlist in the army, and Jews faced discrimination as individuals despite their legal freedom.[284]

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[282] "Adresse Présentée à L'Assemblée Nationale, Le 26 Août 1789, Par les Juifs résidans à Paris.," in *Addresses, Memoires et Petitions des Juifs, 1789-1794*, 2nd ed., La Révolution Française et L'emanipcation des Juifs Issue 5 (Paris: Editions D'Histoire Sociale, 1968), 164-165, author's translation.
[283] Godechot, "La Révolution Française" 57.
[284] "French Revolution," *Encyclopaedia Judaica*.

Economic Life

While these issues occupied the national stage, Jews continued to live their everyday lives in Paris and sought to earn a living. Many Parisian Jews relocated to the capital for business purposes: to conduct trade, to sell clothing and textiles, or serve as financiers to the government. Despite the prohibition of Jews from residing permanently in the capital, estimates place the Jewish population in Paris at about five hundred in the late 1780s. The wealthier Jews from Avignon, Bayonne, and Bordeaux settled in the neighborhoods of St. Germain and St. Andre, and often dealt with finances or trade in luxury goods.[285] Others worked as craftsmen of jewelry and engraving, painters, designers, and embroiderers. Kahn makes mention of a chocolatier and a family who processed tobacco.[286] Jews from the east dealt in horse sales, second-hand clothing, and peddling.[287] These Jews often lived in the poorer areas of St. Martin and St. Denis, which were farther from the city center.

While individuals and households relocated to Paris for a husband or father's work, women contributed to households, as well. If the head of household ran a shop or provided a service, his wife helped in some capacity – often with great pride.[288] Garrioch describes a situation in which a husband and wife team runs a shop and the wife, along with a shop assistant/domestic, leaves work an hour before closing to return home and prepare dinner.[289] In this situation a female head of household may outsource some of her domestic duties to other women, such as laundry, shopping, cooking, or caring for young

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[285] Doris Bensimon-Donath and Bernhard Blumenkranz, "Paris," ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007).
[286] Kahn, *Les Juifs de Paris,* 24.
[287] "Paris," *Encyclopaedia Judaica.*
[288] David Garrioch, *The Making of Revolutionary Paris* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 237.
[289] Garrioch, *The Making of* 239.

children.[290] Others, by contrast, stayed in the home and engaged in an urban "cottage industry," threading necklaces, weaving straw, mending clothing, or other handiwork.[291] Wealthier families hired household servants, many of whom were young, unmarried women, in order to lessen the burden of caring for their homes.[292]

Young mothers often helped one another with child-rearing, especially those who lived in close contact with one another.[293] Neighbors left their doors open to one another and cultivated strong relationships based on mutual trust.

Religious Life and Life-Cycle Events

Evidence of Jewish schools at the time of the revolution exists, but is scant. The papers of the "Society of Jewish Studies" mention two Jewish instructors in the late eighteenth century who ran *hadorim* (which indicate their Eastern European roots) and taught boys how to read Hebrew and translate some Bible.[294] This pattern followed the traditional mode of Jewish schooling in ancient languages and texts. Cooper notes that during this period corporal punishment in schools began to decrease, as school officials in Bordeaux noted that "it interfered with the educational process."[295] This is a far cry from the *yeshiva* and *cheder* of Eastern Europe.

Religious life in Paris varied from individual to individual; evidence exists of multiple synagogues in the city, as well as inns and shops that served as makeshift worship spaces. The first publicly acknowledged synagogue came into the open in 1788,

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[290] Garrioch, *The Making of,* 238-239.
[291] Garrioch, *The Making of,* 235.
[292] Garrioch, *The Making of,* 239.
[293] Garrioch, *The Making of,* 239.
[294] *Annuaire de La Société Des Études Juives,* vol. Troisème Année (Paris: A. Durlacher, 1884), 468.
[295] Cooper, *The Child in Jewish History,* 226.

and a number of Jewish cemeteries were purchased throughout the eighteenth century.[296] The hold of Jewish life faded, and Jews began to participate in society in ways akin to their non-Jewish neighbors. Kahn notes that a significant number of Jews participated in and were members of the various political societies prominent at the time of the revolution, and contributed not only their time but their wealth.[297] When the government ordered the shutdown of churches and synagogues, many congregations sold their buildings or contents to contribute to the nation.[298] Another record notes that a synagogue dismantled and sold its intricate woodwork to purchase saltpeter for national defense.[299] With the diminished emphasis on religious life, political and social life came to the forefront.

As previously noted, the Jews of Paris did not fall into one social or religious category. The various groups of Jews identified themselves by their community of origin, i.e., the "Portuguese Nation" or "The Jewish nation established in Alsace."[300] These communities differed in many aspects of social and religious life and remained distinct even in the metropolis of Paris. Sephardi Jews from Bordeaux and Bayonne tended to live in the neighborhoods of St. Germain and St. André, south of the Seine, whereas Jews from Eastern France resided in the poorer neighborhoods of St. Martin and St. Dennis, which were farther north of the city center.[301] Jews from Southwestern France often fared better with the local authorities; even before the Revolution they had acquired certain

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[296] "Paris," *Encyclopaedia Judaica.*
[297] Kahn, *Les Juifs de Paris*, 150-171.
[298] Léon Kahn, *Histoire de la communauté de Paris : les juifs de Paris sous Louis XV (1721-1760)* (Paris: Alcan-Levy, 1892), 158.
[299] Kahn, *Histoire,* 159.
[300] S. Posener, "The Social Life of the Jewish Communities in France in the 18th Century," *Jewish Social Studies* 7, no. 3 (July 1945): 197; 199.
[301] "Paris," *Encyclopaedia Judaica.*

privileges that their Ashkenazi counterparts fought for throughout the 1790s and later.[302]

Both the French government and individual Jewish communities exercised authority over Jewish marriages. While Sephardi Jews had some freedom to regulate their own affairs, Ashkenazi Jews lacked the right of marriage without the king's permission. The French government required a permit for Jewish couples to marry, and another to allow them to purchase their own home. The *lettres patentes* of 1784 required the king's approval for marriages, and Szajkowski asserts that local authorities made this process difficult for Jewish couples.[303] Even if both bride and groom had their parents' permission, without the king's permission, their marriage would not be recognized by the government, which made cohabitation and transfer of property difficult. Both Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews emphasized parental permission for weddings; local Jewish authorities in the Northeast and Southwest alike held fast to this practice. The Jewish communal authorities in Avignon stated that marriage without permission from all of the parents involved was invalid, even if the couple had the requisite witnesses.[304] All marriages had to be registered with the state for tax purposes; the French government collected a percentage of each dowry in Northwestern France.[305] The government regulated this through the requirement of each couple to submit a notarized summary (in French) of their marriage document (*ketubah*) within fifteen days of their religious marriage.[306] The requirement that this document be in French limited many Jews, as French literacy in

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[302] Posener, "The Social Life," 199.
[303] Zosa Szajkowski, Jews and the French Revolutions of 1789, 1830 and 1848. (New York: Ktav Pub. House, 1970) Annuaire de La Société Des Études Juives, vol. Troisème Année (Paris: A. Durlacher, 1884), 49.
[304] Jay R. Berkovitz, *Rites and Passages: The Beginnings of Modern Jewish Culture in France, 1650-1860* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 52.
[305] Hertzberg, *Enlightenment,* 208.
[306] Jay Berkovitz, "Acculturation and Integration in Eighteenth-Century Metz," *Jewish History* 24 (2010): 274.

Alsace and Lorraine was confined to the urban elite.[307]

Jewish authorities in Northeastern France sought to exercise more control over their communities' events as the eighteenth century progressed. A code of conduct published in Metz placed restrictions on not only behavior and dress, but the amount of money one could spend on a wedding or family celebration.[308] It went into such detail that it stipulated the number of musicians a family could employ for a wedding reception based on the value of the bride's dowry.[309]

One right French Jews possessed that the rest of the country did not was the right of divorce. Since it was a Catholic country, the French government did not permit its citizens to break the bonds of marriage, with the exception of the Jews. Because Jews were permitted to govern their own internal affairs according to Jewish law and *halacha* allows for the dissolution of a marriage, Jewish communities held a privilege distinct from the rest of the population.[310]

Rituals surrounding life-cycle events in Northeastern France are similar to those practiced by Jews in Germany and bear some resemblance to those in Eastern Europe. In his studies of birth, illness, and death rituals in Alsace, Freddy Raphaël's text is peppered with German, Hebrew, and even Yiddish phrases. He cites a Kabbalah-inspired work called *Sefer Raziel* (Amsterdam, 1701) that served as a "handbook" for new mothers. It included such traditions as a pregnant woman biting the tip of an *etrog*, recipes for amulets containing minerals or vegetables that were said to ward of demons, and the

[307] Berkovitz, "Acculturation," 274.
[308] Hertzberg, *Enlightenment,* 212.
[309] Hertzberg, *Enlightenment,* 213.
[310] Hertzberg, *Enlightenment,* 207.

custom of tying a snakeskin amulet to the child's bed.[311] The *etrog* was seen as a symbol of fertility, and biting upon it was thought to have aided in childbirth.[312] Each of these customs was to protect the child from the myriad of evils seeking to do him or her harm.

Many of the practices and traditions surrounding birth strive to fight off the evil spirit Lilith, who is known to steal children.[313] Raphaël asserts that, according to Kabbalah, Lilith uttered the following statement, "See my names, when you say them, neither I nor my troupe will be able to penetrate the house of a bed-ridden woman in order to cause her harm. I swear to you to reveal my names so that you may write them and hang them in the room where a newborn is found."[314] As a result of this belief, pieces of artwork have been found inscribed with Lilith's various names as well as the names of angels who assist in childbirth.[315] Other birth rituals of Northeastern France include drawing a circle in chalk or coal around the mother's bed in order to prevent demons from harming the child, as well uttering certain incantations. A knife ritual, reminiscent of the *tahdid* ritual of North Africa, involves using a specially engraved knife to draw circles around the woman's bed. The knife is decorated with eighteen circles, representing the word *chai*, meaning life.[316] This knife could also be swung in the air above the new mother's head, which purportedly reduces signs of the devil.[317] Raphaël also describes "incantory hangings," which list specific psalms and verses of scripture that are supposed to protect a woman in labor. These tapestries often depict the words of Psalm 121 and sometimes cite Exodus 22:17, which states, "You shall not tolerate a

[311] Berkovitz, *Rites and Passages,* 65.
[312] Berkovitz *Rites and Passages,* 66.
[313] Freddy Raphaël, "Rites de Naissance et Médecine Populaire Dans Le Judaïsme Rural d'Alsace," *Ethnologie Française*, no. 3/4, Nouvelle Serie (1971): 84.
[314] Raphaël, "Naissance," 85, author's translation.
[315] Raphaël, "Naissance," 85.
[316] Raphaël, "Naissance," 86.
[317] Raphaël, "Naissance," 87.

sorceress."[318]

In addition to birth rituals, Northeastern French Jews have a number of traditions that strive to protect a male child during the first days and weeks of his life. In preparation for the boy's circumcision, families held a *wachnacht*, in which they attempted to ward off Satan, who would, according to legend, harm the child so that the child could not be circumcised.[319] To defend the child, the family and friends would gather in the newborn's home and recite prayers, psalms, and read from Torah, all to ward off evil forces that sought to hurt the newborn. These rituals reflect the importance of a child receiving his Hebrew name; the assigning of a child's secular name also had its own set of rituals.

The ceremony called *Hollekreisch* occurs when a child, male or female, is at least forty days old.[320] There is no consensus on how the tradition evolved; some believe that it comes from a pagan ceremony to ward off the evil goddess Holle, whereas others connected it to the Hebrew word *chol*, meaning secular or profane, in relation to the child receiving his or her secular name.[321] The child is placed in a wicker cradle, on top of a tallit, and a Bible is placed under his or her head. Children surround the cradle and recite the child's secular name, while the father reads the opening verses of the book of Leviticus. The book's Hebrew name is *Vayikra*, which means "he called;" quite fitting for a naming ceremony! Afterwards the children receive candy and family and friends rejoice.[322]

At the other end of life, grave illness and death, Jewish rituals abound. Some of

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[318] Raphaël, "Naissance," 84.
[319] Raphaël, "Naissance," 88.
[320] Raphaël, "Naissance," 88.
[321] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 106.
[322] Lowenstein, *The Jewish Cultural Tapestry*, 106.

these customs are prescribed in Jewish texts, such as visiting the sick and funeral and mourning customs, whereas others are indigenous to Central and Eastern Europe. Jewish traditions as described in rabbinic literature include the existence of a *chevre kadisha*, the group that takes care of the body after death and prepares it for burial; observance of *shiva*, the seven days of mourning after a funeral; as well as funeral attendees aiding in the burial by shoveling earth onto the tomb. Rituals common in Northeastern France include the entire town closing their shops or ceasing work during the funeral; Raphaël notes that enemies of the deceased will attend his or her funeral, as "death erases all quarrels."[323] He describes a funeral procession walking through the entire length of a village in absolute silence, while passers-by remained quiet and respectful. The procession sometimes lasted for hours and incurred additional expenses; not every town had its own burial place and those who passed through neighboring towns and villages often incurred a fee or tax.[324] From Alsace, he notes, Jews walked through swamplands to reach the closest regional cemetery. The community's support did not disappear after the funeral; the community ensured that the grieving family ate after the funeral; usually a meal of bread, hard boiled eggs, and lentils, and even walked the family to synagogue on the first Shabbat after the initial period of mourning had ended.[325]

While the Jews of Northeastern France publicly observed Jewish mourning rites according to tradition, their co-religionists in Southwestern France did not have that luxury until the beginning of the eighteenth century. Many of the Jews who emigrated from Spain and Portugal were *marranos*, or "secret Jews." They practiced Judaism at

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[323] Freddy Raphaël, "La Représentation de La Mort Chez Les Juifs d'Alsace," *Archives de Sciences Sociales Des Religions* 20, no. 39, L'Evolution de l'Image Dela Mort Dans La Société Contemporaine et Le Discours Religieux Des Eglises (June 1975): 107.
[324] Raphaël, "Représentation," 110.
[325] Raphaël, "Représentation," 107; 108-9.

home but professed the Catholic faith in public. As a result, the first generations of Jews in Southwestern France received Catholic funerals and were interred in Catholic cemeteries.[326] It was not until 1710 that the first Jewish cemetery was established in Bordeaux, and even then it was designated not for Jews but for "the Portuguese." At this point the Jews of Bordeaux created a *chevra kadisha* and began to maintain their own death and burial records, further distancing themselves from the Church.[327]

The Jewish communal authorities in Southwestern France never exerted the same control over their communities as in Northeastern France. There were no great houses of study or rabbinic academies in the region, but the Jewish community created the institutions it felt were critical to living a Jewish life. While there is no mention of a kosher butcher in Bordeaux, records show that a Jewish family owned the local slaughterhouse.[328] One can infer as to whether or not they employed a rabbi proficient in kosher slaughter to supervise a particular section of the slaughterhouse. The city did house a *matzah* factory as well as a ritual bath, which were financed by taxes on kosher meat (whether that meat came from the slaughterhouse in Bordeaux is unclear).[329]

These taxes helped fund Jewish schools, which are first mentioned in Southwestern France in 1731.[330] The basic curriculum included Hebrew language and grammar, the Bible as translated into Spanish, and basic Jewish liturgy.[331] As the Revolution neared and Enlightenment ideals made their way southwest, courses expanded to include French and basic arithmetic, while Talmud and rabbinic literature

[326] Hertzberg, *Enlightenment,* 194.
[327] Hertzberg, *Revolution,* 195.
[328] Hertzberg, *Revolution,* 197.
[329] Hertzberg, *Revolution,* 199.
[330] Hertzberg, *Revolution,* 204.
[331] Hertzberg, *Revolution,* 205.

fell out of favor.[332] This change may have been at the insistence of the community's leadership organization, which controlled the school and its administration. Berkovitz notes that Judaism at this point in time "incorporated secular standards and values, particularly the notion of a more restricted role for religion in everyday life."[333] In an environment where the wealthy openly broke *halacha* in public and "heretical ideas were expressed unabashedly," the study of Mishnah and Talmud decreased in importance.[334]

[332] Hertzberg, *Revolution,* 205.
[333] Berkovitz, *Rites and Passages,* 81.
[334] Berkovitz, *Rites and Passages,* 81.

Bérnard, Paris 1789

Scene 1: February 1789

Shalom! My name is Bérnard and I am thirteen years old. I live in a city called Metz, which is on the border of France and Germany. I just became a Bar Mitzvah and a lot is changing in my life and I'm excited to share this exciting time with you.

I live in a house with my father, mother, aunt, and cousin. Until recently our *Opa* (grandfather) lived with us but he passed away. I miss him a lot; he was a very wise man and loved us very much. He taught me a lot about Judaism and Jewish texts. My Papa went to *cheder* but didn't like it at all. He goes to *shul* only on Shabbat, not every day, and that made *Opa* very upset. I would go to services with *Opa* until he was too ill to walk. Papa goes on Shabbat but it is clear he doesn't like to be there. He says it's not because of *Opa*, but because during the week he is too busy. Right after *Opa* died Papa would go to shul in the evening to say *kaddish* (the mourners' prayer) and leave right afterward. I'm lucky that my cousin Leib goes with me. He's sixteen and misses *Opa*, too.

Lately my Papa has been talking with Leib's father, *Onkel* Salomon, about joining him in Paris. *Onkel* Salomon moved there a few years ago to do more business. *Opa* worked in the horse trade; he purchases horses from breeders and sells them to the French army. Papa and *Onkel* Salomon started helping him with his work when they finished *cheder*. Here in Metz we have to go to school until age fourteen, and then after that we need to go for at least one hour each day. Once Papa and *Onkel* Salomon turned fifteen they helped *Opa* with his work. *Onkel* Salomon had an idea to expand their business, and

started travelling to Paris for weeks or months at a time. His wife, *Tante* Leah, and Leib moved in with us so they wouldn't be alone.

Onkel Salomon likes Paris a lot – he spends as much time as he can in the apartment he rents in a neighborhood called St. Martin. He spends most of the spring there, except for Passover, because Jews from Metz are not allowed to go to Paris during Passover. The rabbi says that is because Paris does not have the kosher food we need for the festival. *Onkel* Salomon doesn't like the rule, but he doesn't want to get into any trouble with the community in Metz or in Paris.

Opa was usually very laid back and told lots of jokes, but didn't like when *Onkel* Salomon went to Paris. He says that since we are not allowed to live in the city it is clear that people don't want us there. *Onkel* Salomon says that he got special permission from the police in Paris and is permitted to be there for a few weeks at a time. *Tante* Leah worries that he will stay longer than he is allowed to and will be arrested. Some of our neighbors have been sent to the Bastille (prison) and only let out after paying lots of money.

I hope to go to Paris one day with *Onkel* Salomon, just to see what it's like. He tells us wonderful stories of large statues and public fountains and tall buildings. I once asked him where he finds kosher food to eat and a synagogue in which to pray. He laughed and patted me on the head, and said that in Paris the Jews don't worry about such things.

Papa and *Onkel* Salomon have been working very hard in their business since *Opa* died. They say that they have big ideas for expansion, and I hope that means I can one day travel with them.

Scene 2: April 1789

Good news! I get to travel to Paris with Leib and *Onkel* Salomon! After Passover we are planning on going for six weeks so that *Onkel* Salmon can do business with the army. He says that the government is in trouble and this would be a good time for them to purchase horses for their army. Mama and *Tante* Leah do not like the idea of us going to the capital right now, but *Onkel* Salomon wants us to learn more about our family's business so we can be in charge someday.

Onkel Salomon is trying to teach me some words and phrases in French. At home we speak German and Yiddish, and I know how to read Hebrew from *cheder*, but *Onkel* Salomon says in Paris I will need to know how to get around. He and Papa learned French when they were young so they could help *Opa* with their business.

Even though I'm very excited to travel, I'm scared of what the big city will be like. Here in Metz we have a *kehillah* (community board) that takes care of interacting with the government and people who travel through Metz. Only members of the *kehillah* are allowed to talk to newcomers. In Paris I will probably meet lots of strangers, which will be a new experience. At home I don't meet a lot of non-Jews; Papa and *Onkel* Salomon do a lot of business with people who are not Jewish, but I've never talked to any of them.

Opa was very wary of non-Jews whom he did not know, but those he did business with in the neighboring towns he spoke of very highly. He said many of them were good honest people who were trying to live their lives just like we live ours. *Opa* never ate in their houses or went to their taverns, though, because that is forbidden by Jewish law. They liked him very much; some of them even came to *Opa*'s funeral. It was already a few months ago but I remember it like it was yesterday.

After he died, a representative from the *chevre kadisha* came to our home and saw that *Opa*'s body was taken to the funeral home where they followed all of the Jewish rituals. A group of men washed him according to the traditional customs and dressed him in a *kittel*, a plain white gown. Between the time he passed away and when the funeral began he was never alone; someone from the *chevre kadisha* stayed with him, even at night, and they recited psalms with comforting words. The next day we all went to the funeral home. Papa and *Onkel* Salomon sat quietly while the *chazzan* (cantor) sang the memorial prayer *El Molei Rachamim* and said a few words about *Opa*'s life. The *chazzan* said that everyone liked *Opa* and he always brought a smile to people's faces with his jokes. There were so many people there that the room could not hold everyone; friends and neighbors peered in through the open windows.

After the service was over we started our walk toward the cemetery. Jewish cemeteries are always outside of the city, so it was quite a long trek. As we walked through the town the shopkeepers closed their shops, came outside, and stood silently while the procession passed. They looked at us with eyes that were both sad and comforting. I walked in back with Mama and Leib while Papa and *Onkel* Salomon stayed closest to the front. We walked for what seemed like hours until we reached the

cemetery. The sign on the gate said "Beis Chayim," which means "house of life." I asked Mama why it would say that, and she shushed me, saying "we don't like to talk about the sad things in life, even if everyone knows what they are. If we can use a positive word to describe something sad, it hurts our hearts a little less."

At the gravesite the *chazzan* led Papa and *Onkel* Salomon in reciting *kaddish yasom*, the mourner's kaddish. Only the children, parents, siblings, and spouse of the deceased can say it out loud, and the rest of us join in one line and say *amen* after the others. Papa could barely say the words of the prayer through his tears. I'd never seen him cry before and it was hard to watch. I wanted to run up and give him a big hug but Mama held me tight. After *kaddish*, we each had the opportunity to go up to the grave and shovel a bit of earth into the ground. Mama said it is the most generous thing we could ever do for *Opa* because he could never repay us for it. I thought this was very nice, so I waited in line for my turn. After the grave was full we walked away from the site reciting psalms of comfort. *Onkel* Salomon looked very tired and anxious to get home.

We walked home in silence, ready to have the traditional meal after a funeral. We had walked so far and were very hungry. Some of our friends had prepared a lunch of dark rye bread, cheese, and hard-boiled eggs. *Tante* Leah told me that we eat foods that are round to remind us of the circle of life. I don't like hard boiled eggs, so I just had bread and cheese – Leib always eats my eggs for me. After everyone had eaten it was already time for evening services. In the late fall sundown comes very early. Instead of going to *shul* a group of men came to our home and prayed with us. Papa and *Onkel* Salomon sat on low stools during services and murmured quietly along with the group.

After the short evening service everyone left and things started to wind down. We knew that we could expect visitors every day for the next week who would come and sit with us and talk about *Opa*. It was good to tell stories about him, and even tell some of his jokes. Sometimes I forgot that he was gone until I snapped back into reality and remembered we were sitting *shiva*, not waiting for him to come home from *shul*.

After a few days *Onkel* Salomon went back to work. Papa decided to spend the entire seven days in mourning, but *Onkel* Salomon did not want to fall behind. He always wants to keep moving ahead, doing new and exciting things, and I think *Opa* kept him from being innovative. I think *Onkel* Salomon knew that *Opa* wouldn't have wanted Leib and me to go to Paris; I don't think the timing of our trip is a coincidence.

Scene 3: June 1789

We are finally here in Paris! It is so big compared to Metz: it took me nearly a week just to figure out our neighborhood. I am amazed at how many churches there are here: every block seems to have its own! They are big buildings with stained glass windows and tall towers (*Onkel* Salomon says they call them "steeples"), and are very different than the *shul* back in Metz. Our *shul* is a small building with lots of chairs and desks where men come to pray. Instead of spending money on the building, the *kehillah* chose to invest in beautiful Torah scrolls and pay our rabbi for his hard work.

Leib and I spent the first few weeks exploring Paris and trying to learn more French. We walked down the Rue St.-Martin (the main street in our neighborhood) and made it all the way to the River Seine. There are six bridges that connect the two parts of

the city: there are even two islands in the middle of the river! We were too scared to venture on further, but maybe another time.

We saw lots of food stalls and butcher shops when we first arrived. I asked *Onkel* Salomon where we could purchase kosher food, and he let out a little laugh. He said, "here in Paris we do not worry about *kashrus* we buy from the locals and when we dine with clients we eat what we are served." I was so shocked – what would *Opa* think! It was so important to him that we live according to Jewish law, but *Onkel* Salomon pays no attention to our traditions here in Paris. When Papa and *Onkel* Salomon are working, Leib and I buy bread and cheese from the women who run the little shops. Leib bought some ham for his meal, but I was too scared to try it. I don't know what would happen to me if I did eat it, but I didn't want to disappoint Mama or myself. Just because I had the opportunity doesn't mean I needed to take it.

There has also been lots of excitement in the city; *Onkel* Salomon says there is much more than usual. I heard some of the women talking in the shops about riots and protests because of the price of food. Very quietly they commented that it was the Queen's fault, that she spends lots of money on fancy things while the people in Paris do not have money to eat. I don't know very much about this Queen, but it seems like she doesn't know what regular people's lives are like.

Sometimes when we walk down the street we see people gathered on the corners giving speeches. My French isn't good enough yet to understand what they are saying, but they seem to be yelling about freedom and equality. I don't know a whole lot about their situation, but Paris seems very free to me, at least, for people who are not Jewish.

They can move about where they like and run their businesses, there is no council that forbids them from talking to certain people or telling them what food they can or cannot eat. My family and I had to apply for special permission to even enter Paris: we are not allowed to live here, but only come for short visits. In the old days, *Onkel* Salomon told me, there was a special police officer whose job was to oversee the Jews in Paris. If he caught someone without special papers he put them in prison! This certainly seems like inequality to me. I asked *Onkel* Salomon if we had special papers and he told me that as long as we stay out of trouble we would be okay. "There are more important issues at hand right now; they're not worried about a little Jewish boy walking the streets."

I asked *Onkel* Salomon what he meant by "important issues." He says that the people are unhappy with the King and Queen and want the government to change. He says the people don't like that the upper class and the priests don't have to pay taxes and the entire burden falls on the people who make the least amount of money. I asked him what he thinks of the government, because they are the ones who buy his horses, and he said that as Jews we don't have much of a say in what happens to us. He has heard that different groups are fighting for the same rights as French citizens, and that the Jewish people may have the opportunity to be free of lots of the restrictions on us. He does not want to make people in the government angry, because they are his clients, but he also thinks that he should not face special restrictions and taxes because he is Jewish. I'm not sure if *Opa* would have felt the same way – he understood that because we are Jewish there are certain hardships we have to put up with. *Opa* would not have gotten involved with all of these political issues, but *Onkel* Salomon thinks they are very important, along with all of the people marching in the streets of Paris! I don't have an opinion of my own

quite yet, I can tell that all of this is very complicated, but right now I'm excited to see what the streets of Paris have in store for Leib and me tomorrow!

Scene 4: July 1789

As I write this Papa and *Onkel* Salomon are in a deep discussion about what our next steps will be. Last week there was a huge riot in Paris: lots of women, and some men, broke into the Bastille and took lots of guns and other weapons. There was a big battle in the streets and almost one hundred people died. *Onkel* Salomon does not think it is safe for us to stay here, and is trying to convince Papa to take us home. Papa does not want to leave, but certainly does not want Leib and me to stay here.

The people of Paris were even angrier about the price of food and the inequality they faced, and over the last month things really heated up. There were more protests in the streets and calls for revolution. They say the government and rich people don't understand the common people and the people will not wait any longer.

Last month the common people broke away from the nobility (upper class) and clergy and created something called the National Assembly. *Onkel* Salomon thinks that this is a scary thing for the government, but it might be good for the Jewish people. He never seemed to care about being Jewish when we were in Metz, but here in Paris he says being Jewish is a handicap. If Jews are granted the same rights as citizens, he believes, it would mean equality for everyone, not just Christians. He then told me that in June he had gone to a meeting with other Jews from Metz, as well as Strasbourg and Nancy, which are not too far away, and they wrote a *cahier*, or a petition, to the government asking for social and economic equality. If the Jews received recognition from the

government, he said, they would give up their traditions that did not fit with French culture. He said the first thing that the group decided to give up would be their differing language: Yiddish or German. They decided that in order to be proper French citizens they needed to speak French. I didn't think that was too big of a deal, but then he said that these Jews suggested that we also give up our "strange" traditions, like only eating kosher food and not working on Shabbat. In this new society, he said, people would not believe in religion but instead in reason and logic. If a tradition doesn't make sense, he argued, there is no reason to keep it around. If only *Opa* could hear him now!

This was surprising to hear; I can only imagine what people at home would think if they heard this. Our lives in Metz are entirely Jewish: we work during the week so we can rest on Shabbat; we have special butchers and grocers to make sure our food is proper; the whole community comes together to help when someone dies, and to celebrate when something good happens. If we didn't have our Jewish community, would we be part of the French community? The Jewish people have been around for so long; are they going to disappear because of logic and reason? It could be good for us: there are so many ways the Jewish people have suffered and maybe this is the end of those troubles. I just can't help but think how our lives would change if we started to live like the people we see in Paris.

Papa and *Onkel* Salomon are done talking – I'm going to go see what they've decided.

Scene 5: October 1789

I am back in Metz with Leib, Mama, and *Tante* Leah. Papa brought us home in September in time for Rosh Hashanah and returned to Paris after Sukkot. He and *Onkel* Salomon saw the uprisings and violence in Paris and thought it was best if we left the city. Just before we left the King ordered troops to come into the city to put down the food riots that had broken out. The people in Paris were not happy and some of them even marched to Versailles to voice their displeasure to the Queen herself.

In the end of August *Onkel* Salomon and the other Jews in Paris went to the new government and asked them for equal rights. Their plea said that they admire what the new government has done for equal rights and want to be full participants in French society. They said that the Jews have suffered a lot under the King and Queen, who never paid attention to them, and now the new government should extend the idea of equality to the Jewish people. The Jewish people will be just like other citizens and support the government and follow its laws.

I'm nervous and excited to see what happens next. I'm glad to be away from Paris with all of this violence going on, but I look forward to reading *Onkel* Salomon's letters. Here in Metz life is the same as usual, but every time I walk past the butcher shop I can't help but think about the butchers in Paris and the Jews who buy ham from them. Will we still have our *shul* after we receive equality? Will we ever be equal to other French citizens? *Onkel* Salomon thinks that's important, but I'm not sure if that will change our lives here in Metz. It will let him stay in Paris, which he wants, but we will miss him back at home. Papa is still traveling, but he lets Leib or me come with him on some of his

trips so we can learn how to help him when we get older. I don't know where we'll travel when we're in charge – it could be Frankfort, Paris, or even farther away! Our trip to Paris made me excited to visit new places, hopefully I'll get to go to some in the future!

Chapter 4: Chicago, USA, 1905

Emigration from Eastern Europe

During the last two decades of the nineteenth century, Jews of all ages left Eastern Europe en masse. It is estimated that during the period from 1880 to 1920, nearly two million Jews left the Russian Empire and surrounding areas and the vast majority of them immigrated to the United States.[335] Unlike other periods of emigration, entire families left Eastern Europe, though not always in cohesive units, and sought permanent residence in a new land. It is estimated that of the two million who left, nearly half of them were women and a quarter under the age of fourteen.[336] Jewish life under Russian rule had become unbearable: Jews could not live in cities nor purchase land for agriculture and farming, therefore earning a living was nearly impossible.[337] Increased levels of taxation and conscription into the Russian army caused many families to evaluate their condition and decide to venture into the New World to improve their personal security and possibility of economic livelihood. Approximately one-third of immigrants to the United States in general stayed long enough to earn a substantial amount of money and bring it home to their families. Jewish immigrants, however, made up a small portion of this number – they chose to settle permanently in their new homes.

Traveling from Eastern Europe to America became easier in the late nineteenth century than it had ever been. In earlier periods, overseas travel carried a series of risks: worthless tickets, dishonest ship lines, long voyages without adequate food, water, or

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[335] Gur Alroey, "And I Remained Alone in a Vast Land': Women in the Jewish Migration from Eastern Europe," *Jewish Social Studies: History, Culture, Society* 12, no. 3 (Spring/Summer 2006): 40; Lloyd P. Gartner, "Jewish Migrants En Route from Europe to North America: Traditions and Realities," *Jewish History* 1, no. 2 (Fall 1986): 60.
[336] Alroey, "And I Remained," 43.
[337] Gartner, "Jewish Migrants," 51.

quarters. Usually emigrants took ground transportation to a major European city, Kiev, Brody, or Warsaw, then transferred to Vienna, Berlin, or Breslau, and then took rail transportation to a major port city.[338] Hamburg and Bremen, in Germany, as well as London and Liverpool in England saw vast numbers of travelers departing for the new world.

With the perfection of the steamship in the late 1870s, the majority of trans-Atlantic travel took place by steamship and the voyages took place on a regular schedule.[339] Port cities became stopping points for travelers awaiting other relatives (or funds to purchase a ticket). The German government, in particular, saw to it that overseas travel was subject to strict regulations and ensured that the emigrants passing through German territory would not be cheated.[340] The Alliance Israélite Universelle, based in Paris, offered monetary assistance to Jews leaving Romania and Russia beginning in 1869, and expanded its efforts as Jewish life in Eastern Europe became more difficult.[341]

The trip from Europe to the United States often took approximately ten days, and the ships boasted more-than-adequate food and quarters for their passengers. Previous perils of overseas travel; diseases from close quarters or lack of sufficient nourishment, fear of shipwreck or the ship's malfunction, or simply becoming lost at sea were a thing of the past. Ship lines provided kosher food for Jewish passengers and sufficient, if not ample, living space.[342]

A mixture of single men and entire families could be found on ships bound for

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[338] Gartner, "Jewish Migrants," 52.
[339] Gartner, "Jewish Migrants," 52.
[340] Gartner, "Jewish Migrants," 52.
[341] Simon R. Schwarzfuchs and Frances Malino, "Alliance Israelite Universelle," ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007).
[342] Gartner, "Jewish Migrants," 52.

America. Often Jewish families traveled in groups, either as extended families or entire neighborhoods, more often than other immigrants. Other times fathers or older sons would venture abroad first to secure work and earn enough money to send for the rest of their families.[343] Individuals and families alike disembarked on Manhattan Island and entered the United States through Castle Garden (also known as Castle Clinton), the precursor to Ellis Island.[344]

Chicago as an Immigrant Destination

The United States was considered the "Golden Land" amongst Eastern European Jews and drew the vast majority of emigrants. New York became the center of Eastern European and Yiddish-speaking society, but other major cities in the United States saw a dramatic increase in new residents. Chicago, the quintessential American city, saw a swell in its Jewish population and, by the turn of the twentieth century, it housed the second largest Jewish community in the country[345]. After what came to be known as the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe began to congregate just south of the city near the new rail yard. Bubnys notes that Chicago is unique because its immigrant residents tended to reside in neighborhoods based on their community of origin.[346] During this period of mass immigration Chicago also saw a great increase in its Italian, Polish, Irish, Swedish, Norwegian and Hungarian populations, among others.[347]

Eastern European Jews settled in Chicago's Near West Side, around Maxwell

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[343] Gartner, "Jewish Migrants," 55.
[344] "History & Culture," *Castle Clinton National Monument* (U.S. National Park Service), accessed December 23, 2013, http://www.nps.gov/cacl/historyculture/index.htm.
[345] Bruce C. Nelson, "Revival and Upheaval: Religion, Irreligion, and Chicago's Working Class in 1886," *Journal of Social History* 25, no. 2 (Winter 1991): 234.
[346] Edward Bubnys, "Ethnicity and Occupational Mobility: Chicago, 1870 and 1900," *Review of Social Economy* 42, no. 1 (April 1984): 51.
[347] Melvin G Holli and Peter d'Alroy Jones, *Ethnic Chicago: A Multicultural Portrait* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1994), 5.

Street, which came to be known as the "Poor Jews' Quarter" or "Jewtown."[348] Between 1880 and 1910, an estimated fifty five thousand Eastern European immigrants settled in the area.[349] Situated near the main railroad station from which many Jews disembarked, the area looked remarkably like a *shtetl* in Eastern Europe. Cutler notes that this was the "transplanted Eastern European *shtetl* atmosphere," with an open market bazaar, kosher meat markets, *matzah* bakeries, dry goods stores, and tailor and seamstress shops.[350] Most businesses were open during the week, closed early on Fridays, and reopened on Sunday mornings.[351] The demand for kosher chickens (both alive and pre-slaughtered) soared on Thursdays and Fridays, as well as sales of fish.[352] People walked the streets in Eastern European garb: long black cloaks and Russian hats, and women wearing head shawls or other head-coverings.[353] Chicago historian Carolyn Eastwood quotes an 1891 article from the Chicago Tribune: "On the West Side, in a district bounded by Sixteenth Street on the South, Polk Street on the North and the Chicago River and Halstead street on the East and West one can walk the streets for blocks and see nothing but Semitic features and hear nothing but the Hebrew patois of Russian Poland."[354] Cutler argues that the familiarity of Jewish life on Maxwell street helped ease immigrants into their new lives in the new world, as their co-religionists sought to recreate the feel of the Old World in a place with unlimited upward mobility.[355]

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[348] Irving Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago: From Shtetl to Suburb*, Rev. ed. with new pref. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2009) 58, 70.
[349] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 58.
[350] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 60.
[351] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 70.
[352] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 70.
[353] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 61.
[354] Carolyn Eastwood and Beatrice Michaels Shapiro, *Chicago's Jewish Street Peddlers*, Doris Minsky Memorial Fund Publication 1 (Chicago: Chicago Jewish Historical Society, 1991), 17.
[355] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 59.

Homes and Apartments on Maxwell Street

Immigrants' housing and open spaces did not vary drastically from those of Eastern Europe or the other transplant neighborhoods in Chicago. The narrow unpaved streets were flanked by uneven wooden sidewalks, buildings sometimes sat below street level because they were built before the street was graded, and houses had insufficient lighting and plumbing.[356] Professor Charles Zebulun noted in 1895 that there were three types of residences in the Jewish area, a "small, low, one or two story 'pioneer' wooden shanty,...brick tenements of three or four stories,....and the deadly rear tenement."[357] The wooden shanties were broken down into two or four apartments.[358] The tenement houses had fewer levels than their East Coast counterparts, those made famous on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, but posed similar dangers. Placed closely together, they did not allow for ample fresh air or light to enter the apartments, and a lack of adequate plumbing made for a back alley full of unseemly sights and smells. The majority of homes in this area did not have private baths; instead the community relied on six public bathhouses scattered throughout the neighborhood.[359] The "rear tenements" were those that faced the back alley and received even less air and light. The last category of housing was the one that most often housed sweatshops and other types of home industry.[360] In addition to large families, many Jewish homes also housed boarders or lodgers to help alleviate their financial burden.[361] Cutler notes that rent for a boarder at this time started at one dollar per week and included coffee or tea in the morning; other meals were extra.[362]

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[356] Eastwood, *Chicago's Jewish,* 18.
[357] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 61-62.
[358] Eastwood, *Chicago's Jewish,* 17.
[359] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 63.
[360] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 62.
[361] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 62.
[362] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 62.

In addition to boarders, the household's income depended on the earning power of each family member. When a husband or father first immigrated, he often found work in one of two areas: peddling or the garment industry. As the rest of their family followed, wives, sons, and daughters began working to contribute to the family's income. Many of the Jewish immigrants during this period fell into the category of tradesmen or craftsmen: tailors, shoemakers, watch-makers, upholsterers, butchers, bakers, barbers, etc.[363] They possessed skills that could easily translate to the new world, but the supply of skilled labor outweighed the demand. Additionally, a skilled tailor or craftsman would encounter an already-established hierarchy in his field, and the "greenhorn," (newcomer) would not be able to compete.[364] Only about thirty percent of immigrants, according to findings, were able to continue working in their profession. As a result, many immigrants, even those with finely honed artisanal skills or great scholars of Jewish texts, began their lives in America as peddlers.[365]

Economic Life

It was relatively easy to get started in the peddling profession, as it required little capital and relatively little knowledge of English. There were various types of peddlers, supplying everything from foodstuffs to household items and even services. The most numerous of all were the fruit and vegetable peddlers, who provided their customers with produce that was often "cheaper and fresher than the grocery store."[366] Other perishables included milk, bread, and butter, as well as smoked fish and matza.[367] Peddlers often

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[363] Charles S. Bernheimer, "The Jewish Immigrant as an Industrial Worker," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 33, no. 2 (March 1909): 176.
[364] Bernheimer, "The Jewish Immigrant," 176.
[365] Bernheimer, "The Jewish Immigrant,"176.
[366] Eastwood, *Chicago's Jewish,* 19.
[367] Eastwood, *Chicago's Jewish,* 19.

arrived at the wholesalers by three or four o' clock in the morning and worked until late in the day, sometimes logging sixty hours per week.[368] The entire business was self-motivated and one's success depended on one's determination. Eastwood argues that, for the Jew, being one's own boss and determining one's own hours were huge draws to the field.[369] For a people who, in the Old World, were subject to increasingly harsh occupational limitations and suffered from a lack of freedom of movement, peddling provided unlimited potential for upward mobility.

The peddlers were not alone in their endeavors, however, and some retailers in the Maxwell street area, usually more seasoned immigrants, helped them start their business. Shopkeepers on 12th street, in the middle of the South West side, would sell their goods to peddlers on credit, and expect repayment on a weekly or monthly basis.[370] Those in the garment industry were particularly magnanimous, as they sold needles, thread, and other sewing necessities to peddlers and the two parties developed ongoing relationships. These peddlers would turn around and offer similar services to their clients: Eastwood notes a linen peddler who would sell his wares to customers for just a down payment if they promised to pay him an installment towards the total each month. This was advantageous on his part, as the peddler would return to the client on a regular basis and provide the household with more goods.[371] Eastwood also tells of a family who had a particularly good relationship with their linen peddler, and the interviewee's mother would always put a kettle on for tea when she saw the peddler arrive.[372] These salesmen became an intimate part of the immigrant's life; besides speaking their native language together and

[368] Eastwood, *Chicago's Jewish,* 23.
[369] Eastwood, *Chicago's Jewish,* 23.
[370] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 67.
[371] Eastwood, *Chicago's Jewish,* 11.
[372] Eastwood, *Chicago's Jewish,* 11.

perhaps reminiscing about the Old World, the peddler never entered through the front door: he went through the back alley and entered through the kitchen.[373] This informality demonstrates the close relationships the peddler made during his working hours.

Besides foodstuffs and household goods, some peddlers walked through neighborhoods offering skilled labor. One of note is the glazier, known as the "pudding glass man," from his cries of "putting in glass!"[374] Others were repairmen, offering to fix broken knives, kitchen utensils, and even umbrellas.[375]

Other peddlers dealt in "recycling" of sorts. They would obtain scraps from manufacturing plants or unwanted or extra materials and, over time, amass enough material for a final product. Examples of this practice include cotton and basic fibers as well as metal, specifically iron.[376]

Like in the old world, none of these products had a price tag. Each item was subject to haggling, and both buyer and seller knew how to play the game: "Everything has value...but the price is not fixed. It is the fixing of the price around which turns the whole plot of the drama enacted daily...The sellers know to ask ten times the amount that their wares will eventually sell for, and the buyers know to offer a twentieth."[377] The same holds for the open air market on Maxwell Street – the particular customer, time of day, or even the weather could affect an item's sale price.

The other major business in which Jewish immigrants engaged was the garment industry. Immigration documents show that nearly half a million immigrants during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries listed their profession as tailors,

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[373] *Jewish Chicago: 1833 to 1948*, Chicago Stories (Chicago: WTTW11, 2004).
[374] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 67.
[375] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 61.
[376] Eastwood, *Chicago's Jewish,* 19.
[377] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 66-67.

dressmakers, or seamstresses, and nearly sixty percent of them were Jewish.[378] As these industries took off in America, fueled by the demand for ready-to-wear clothing and factory-made garments, Jewish immigrants provided the supply of labor. Jewish immigrants took part in the garment industry from top to bottom; from the needle workers and the small-scale peddlers mentioned above to the wholesalers and shopkeepers who sold the final product.

The garment industry maintained its own hierarchy that depended on a steady stream of new immigrant labor. The most basic type of labor was home industry: contract workers of sorts who brought materials into their home and completed work at their own pace. Home industry allowed new immigrants to remain with their families during the work day and enabled them to earn enough money to bring other family members to the States from their homeland.[379] The ability to bring other family members to America translated into more labor for a client and more earning power for a family. This type of work allowed for more flexibility than the sweatshop experience, which provided opportunities for new immigrants in a Yiddish-speaking environment. Sweatshops hired many new immigrants and provided them with work in a socially comfortable environment (although not physically comfortable, as many sweatshops operated out of small apartments in tenement houses with inadequate lighting, air circulation, and plumbing facilities or in apartments above storefronts[380]) and allowed workers to hone their skills and make social and commercial connections.[381] This experience is not to be

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[378] Arcadius Kahan, "Economic Opportunities and Some Pilgrims' Progress: Jewish Immigrants from Eastern Europe in the U.S., 1890-1914," *Journal of Economic History* 38, no. 1, The Tasks of Economic History (March 1978): 239.
[379] Kahan, "Economic Opportunities," 240.
[380] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 65.
[381] Kahan, "Economic Opportunities," 240.

romanticized, however, as men, women, and children often worked twelve to thirteen hour days six days per week, as well supplementing their income with other take-home work.[382] The garment industry operated on a seasonal cycle: while at times work was scarce, at others there was scarcely enough labor to fulfill demand.[383] Young boys and girls helped adult workers with various tasks, including operating small machines, cutting raw materials, and pressing finished garments.[384]

After an immigrant spent time working out of his or her home or a sweatshop, the next step in employment was the garment factory. After the Civil War the United States saw an increase in demand for ready-made clothing for women, and this industry took off during the latter half of the nineteenth century.[385] The influx of new immigrants and relatively unchanging wages encouraged workers to move up in the industry. Kahan notes that beyond factory work, some Jews moved "into clerical positions, management, and entrepreneurship..., there existed a special dynamic pattern of economic adjustment for this group, the largest single occupational group in the Jewish immigration."[386]

While a number of prominent immigrants climbed the ladder of entrepreneurship, it was their children who sought to move beyond their parents' occupations of peddling or needlework. Numerous authors describe the disconnect between Old World parents and New World children as one of the largest in nuclear immigrant families: Cutler quotes Israel Zangwill, the playwright and Zionist, who belonged to this generation: "While there is always a difference between the old and the new generations, the difference between the Jewish immigrant and his American child is that of ten

[382] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 65.
[383] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 65.
[384] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 65.
[385] Kahan, "Economic Opportunities," 239.
[386] Kahan, "Economic Opportunities," 241.

generations."[387] Though they spoke Yiddish at home and on the streets, this new generation attended English-speaking public schools, learned American history and civics, and, like many other first-generation Americans, felt ashamed of their parents' accents and insistence on the "old ways" of Russia.[388]

Community Organizations

Part of retaining the "old ways" was insistence on religious education. The Maxwell Street area boasted a public Talmud Torah as well as private *chadarim* for those who could afford it.[389] Young boys met with *melamdim* in preparation for Bar Mitzvah at one of the many synagogues. Religious life remained a strong force in the Maxwell Street milieu. During its early years nearly all shops and peddlers refrained from engaging in commerce on Shabbat and festivals; kosher meat markets abounded, and immigrants retained many of their Old World customs.[390]

Another avenue through which immigrants clung to their past was through the *landsmenshaften vereins*, or homeland societies. They organized based on the area from which they emigrated. Chicago boasted nearly seven hundred of these organizations throughout the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These grassroots groups emerged as men from the same region, city, or even *shtetl* in Eastern Europe banded together to provide camaraderie, connections, and sometimes material assistance to one another.[391] From securing transportation to arranging matches between their children, the men who undertook these tasks demonstrated a strong sense of devotion to

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[387] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 78.
[388] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 78.
[389] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 77-78.
[390] One pictorial history of Chicago features a picture of a man and young boy engaging in the tradition of *kapparot* before Yom Kippur.
[391] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 88.

both their old and new homes.

During this same period, more seasoned immigrants, German Jews who had arrived earlier in the nineteenth century, created a number of organizations to help their co-religionists settle in America. One of these, the Society in Aid of the Russian Refugees, emerged in 1891 to help immigrants with basic necessities: housing, food, clothing, employment, and healthcare.[392] Meiter notes that over six hundred families received help during the Society's eighteen months of existence, and many of them paid back the money they had borrowed. In total the society spent about thirty thousand dollars, and encountered very few problems in carrying out their work.[393]

Based on the records and announcements found in Chicago's Jewish press, these organizations fulfilled a variety of needs in the Jewish community. Some, Sorkin asserts, began as religious groups that provided worship space as well are burial plots for their members. Chicago's *landsmenshaften* owned different sections of Jewish cemeteries and made graves available for their members and their families.[394] In the *shtetl* a communal *chevre kadisha* would take care of these processes, but in the new world private groups assumed the responsibility. Others were literary societies or social clubs, whose members gathered together based on a common interest or cause. These groups were almost exclusively run and sustained by men; women had their own auxiliary groups, but it was not until the mid-twentieth century that these homeland groups became co-ed. Women's auxiliaries often dealt with charities and philanthropic ventures. These attempts to hold on to the Old World while forging their way in the New World helped ease the

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[392] Hyman L. Meites, *History of the Jews of Chicago* (Chicago: Jewish Historical Society of Illinois, 1924), 169.
[393] Meites, *History of the Jews of Chicago,* 170.
[394] Sidney Sorkin, *Bridges to an American City: A Guide to Chicago's Landsmanshaften, 1870 to 1990,* American University Studies v. 102 (New York: P. Lang, 1993), xi.

transition between the two and bring some comfort and *Yiddishkeit* (Yiddish language and culture) to both new and seasoned immigrants.

With the newfound freedoms they enjoyed in America, as well as the influence of American culture, various subsets of the Jewish community joined together to advocate new and different causes than they had in the past. Young people became involved with local, national, and even international politics as well as workers' rights organizations. Some of the names of various *landsmenshaften vereins* reflect both the land from which immigrants hailed as well as their purpose: the Gemileth Chassodim Association and Drohitchner, founded in 1902, engaged in philanthropy, aid, and other assistance led by individuals from Drahichyn, in present-day Belarus.[395] The region also boasted a ladies' organization as well as a general "society." Likely these were disparate groups at one point that banded together to share resources. Sorkin notes that the society originally met at a location on the corner of 14th street and Jefferson, in the heart of Maxwell Street, and individual contributions amounted to an annual income of $235 (which is approximately $6100 in today's currency).

Of particular note is the transplant Jewish community of Bessarabia, an area that has been claimed by Moldova, Russia, and today Ukraine. While the 1882 May Laws in the Russian Empire served as a catalyst for Jewish emigration from the Pale of Settlement, the Kishinev Pogroms in the early twentieth century spurred the exit of even more Jews from the southern part of the Empire. During the two pogroms, 1903 and 1905, over one hundred Jews were murdered during the destruction of three towns and nearly seventy villages.[396] The event attracted worldwide attention, even President

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[395] Sorkin, *Bridges,* 102.

[396] Eliyahu Feldman and Theodor Lavi, "Bessarabia," ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik,

Theodore Roosevelt wrote a letter to Czar Nicholas II in protest.[397] The Russian government did little to rectify the situation, and nearly seven thousand Jews left Kishinev in the span of three years.[398]

Bessarabian transplants formed over a dozen regional organizations in Chicago in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While the Bessarabian Federation organized nationally in New York in 1911, Chicago hosted a variety of local Bessarabian *landsmenshaften vereins* by the turn of the twentieth century. They included Sick Aid societies, a synagogue under the name of B'rith Shalom, and at least three benefit societies.[399] The purpose of one group, the Bessarabian Federation of American Jews, was

> ...to organize the Jews coming from the province of Bessarabia and the southern part of Russia for cooperative work in behalf of social interest: to cherish the spirit of brotherhood among the members of said organization; to educate its members in the science of philanthropy and benevolence: to cultivate its members in the knowledge of true American citizenship and patriotic principles.[400]

This group sought to combine the best of the Old World with what the New World had to offer. After the pogroms of 1903 and 1905, one group added the name Kishinev to its moniker, perhaps to raise awareness or solidarity for their co-religionists who fled after the atrocities.[401]

As evidenced by the existence of *Talmud Torahs* and *chedorim*, Eastern European Jews retained their religiosity in a way that German Jewish immigrants did not. German

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Encyclopaedia Judaica (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), Gale Virtual Reference Library: 496.
[397] Jean Ancel and Theodor Lavi, "Kishinev," *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), Gale Virtual Reference Library, 198.
[398] "Kishinev," *Encyclopaedia Judaica,* 198.
[399] Sorkin, *Bridges,* 30-31.
[400] Sorkin, *Bridges,* 31.
[401] Sorkin, *Bridges,* 31.

Jews, who immigrated to Chicago en masse from the 1840s to 1870s, created some of Chicago's first Reform congregations and chose to maintain a distance between themselves and the poorer Russian immigrants.[402] The synagogues of the Eastern European Jews often grew out of *landsmenshaften vereins*, whose members shared a common style of worship and Jewish customs. Cutler estimates that by the turn of the century, there were approximately forty synagogues in the Maxwell Street area, each with a membership of less than one hundred.[403] The congregations provided not only a place to worship thrice daily (it was not unusual to see a peddler's pushcart or backpack outside the synagogue doors) as well as the sense of a community within the city. Upon forming, most congregations did not have their own buildings. They met in rented halls or rooms above stores until they could raise enough money for a place of their own. These buildings varied from small homes converted to synagogues to former churches repurposed for Jewish uses.[404]

Tzedakah and Altruism in Immigrant Communities

Though many Jews left Eastern Europe for America, they did not forget about the plight of their coreligionists around the world. In addition to funds collected by various landsmenshaften vereins, individuals and organizations responded to events in the international Jewish world. Meites notes that after news of the Dreyfus Affair in France reached the United States, Jews in Chicago organized protest meetings and signed petitions. "If they served no other purpose," Meites posits, "they at least showed that the Jews of Chicago were not insensible to the welfare and good name of their brethren in

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[402] I could write about this for days...how much is enough for this work?
[403] *Jewish Chicago: 1833 to 1948*; Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 74. Most likely fewer than 100 heads of households, not individuals.
[404] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 74.

other lands; and the dramatic developments which finally vindicated Dreyfus, quickened our people throughout this country to a greater realization of the blessings of equality and tolerance which were theirs in America."[405] Another strong force in the closing years of the nineteenth century was Zionism: the Chicago Chebra Choveve Zion was founded in 1891 with over two hundred members, and by 1898 Chicago boasted the most powerful Zionist organization in the Midwest.[406] This group, Kadimoth, not only advocated for "a legally assured and publically recognized home in Palestine," but also sponsored public lectures on Jewish topics for the Maxwell street community.[407]

Yiddish in America

Immigrants did not rely solely on public lectures for information; various Hebrew and Yiddish language publications found wide circulation in Chicago during this period. A few decades earlier the *Israelitische Presse*, a Yiddish paper, folded within a year of its publication in 1879.[408] By 1887 however, the Chicago Yiddish-speaking community welcomed the *Jewish Courier (Juedische Courier)*, initially a weekly but eventually a daily, into their homes. The mass immigration of Yiddish-speaking Jews likely accounts for the success of the Courier and the failure of the *Presse*.[409] Soon the New York based publication *Der Forverts* opened a Chicago office and Yiddish language options abounded. One former resident of Maxwell Street recalls walking down a main thoroughfare and seeing a man yelling from a soapbox at each corner. "You could tell which ideology it was by which Jewish newspaper was sticking out of his pocket."[410]

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[405] Meites, *History of the Jews of Chicago,* 197.
[406] Meites, *History of the Jews of Chicago,* 167.
[407] Meites, *History of the Jews of Chicago,* 166-167.
[408] Meites, *History of the Jews of Chicago,* 159.
[409] Meites, *History of the Jews of Chicago,* 159.
[410] *Jewish Chicago: 1833 to 1948.*

Soon Chicago had its own left-wing paper (The Jewish Social Democrat), anarchist publication (Freie Arbeiter Stimme), and the *Courier* became the mouthpiece of the Orthodox movement.[411]

Formal Education and Acculturation

Part of acculturation to American society involved immigrants sending their children to school. Families that did not rely on each child's income for survival sent their sons and daughters to Chicago's public schools. Their secular and religious educations only lasted until approximately age fourteen, when many eschewed high school in order to work either with their families or venture out on their own.[412] Recognizing this, the German Jewish community of Temple Sinai spearheaded the creation of a Jewish Vocational School (opened in 1890), which provided a free secular education to Jews culminating in the acquisition of basic domestic and craft skills.[413] In addition to children's education, the building opened nightly to adults seeking English-language classes and coursework in American history.[414] The Vocational School is one institution among many created in the area for the benefit of the immigrant population. Another organization that provided Jews with not only education but recreational activities, as well, was the Chicago Hebrew Institute (CHI), a precursor to the Jewish Community Center.[415] Opened in 1903, it provided space for classrooms and lectures as well as a gymnasium, baths, and parlors.[416] Its second home near a large park, added playgrounds, club rooms, a library and synagogue space.[417] Chicago not only welcomed

[411] *Jewish Chicago: 1833 to 1948.*
[412] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 78.
[413] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 78.
[414] Meites, *History of the Jews of Chicago,* 161.
[415] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 85.
[416] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 85.
[417] Cutler, *The Jews of Chicago,* 85.

its Jewish immigrants, but set them up for success with a myriad of social and educational programs.

Some of the experiences at school caused parents and Jewish religious leaders concern. Christmas celebrations, in honor of the most popular American holiday in the 1880s, became prominent in public schools during the last decades of the nineteenth century.[418] Scholars have mixed opinions on Christmas' prominence in the Jewish community: some assert that celebrating Christmas with a Christmas tree and presents was merely one manifestation of Americanization, while others saw it as a rejection of Jewish tradition in favor of American secularism. In the old world, Jews overwhelmingly encountered Christmas as a Christian holiday, but in America they found the celebration of St. Nicholas akin to Thanksgiving and the Fourth of July.[419] Jewish homes began to boast Christmas trees in December along with mistletoe and holly, but Andrew R. Heinze asserts that "Jews had no intention of adopting Christmas."[420] Rabbis of the time, however, did not share Heinze's optimism and warned their congregants against celebrating Christmas.

American culture, even that through the Yiddish press, begged to differ. The *Forverts* ran advertisements for Christmas and Hanukkah sales, as one New York department store owner explained, "The spirit with which all Americans wait for the joyous Christmas goes ever stronger and stronger with the passage of time, and Chanukah gifts with Christmas presents go hand in hand. There is only a difference in name."[421]

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[418] Andrew R. Heinze, "Adapting to Abundance: Luxuries, Holidays, and Jewish Identity," in The American Jewish Experience, 2nd Edition (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishing, 1997), 170.
[419] Dianne Ashton, *Hanukkah in America: A History*, The Goldstein-Goren Series in American Jewish History (New York: New York University Press, 2013), 114; 115.
[420] Heinze, "Adapting to Abundance," 171.
[421] Heizne, "Adapting to Abundance," 174.

Other publications, such as the *Tageblatt*, "urged Jewish parents to give gifts to their youngsters at Hanukkah to increase children's enthusiasm for the Jewish holiday."[422] The issue of assimilation and adopting foreign traditions seemed to fly right in the face of the Hanukkah story, one of religious and national independence from an oppressive force. As a result, Hanukkah celebrations and their significance changed from the old world to the new. In Europe children did not receive gifts on Hanukkah, but rather *gelt* (money), which emerged from a Polish custom of giving money to teachers.[423] In America, however, the emphasis shifted from money itself to the gifts one could purchase. Stores began advertising special gifts for Hanukkah and offering items to its patrons on installment plans.[424] The practice of buying gifts on these plans became so prominent that the editor of the *Forverts* warned against it in an editorial.[425] The American tradition of consumerism began to merge with a Jewish festival conveniently located in December. Heinze asserts that if Purim, the traditional holiday of gift-giving and revelry, had been concurrent with Christmas, it would have risen to prominence instead of Hanukkah.[426]

Some Jewish Americans, however, created new Hanukkah traditions that honored both the integrity of the holiday and kept it within the Jewish sphere. In the spirit of civic events and community programs, Hanukkah pageants and programs began to pop up across the country. Ashton notes that in New York, annual Hanukkah concerts became the norm.[427] These programs usually began with Hanukkah blessings, lighting a *chanukiah*, and singing familiar songs with a choir. The second half was up to the

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[422] Ashton, *Hanukkah,* 112.
[423] Ashton, *Hanukkah,* 112.
[424] Ashton, *Hanukkah,* 112.
[425] Ashton, *Hanukkah,* 113.
[426] Heinze, "Adapting to Abundance," 172.
[427] Ashton, *Hanukkah,* 123.

director, usually a cantor. This venue provided cantors with opportunities to sing non-liturgical music and even supplement their income.[428] Sponsored by *landsmenshaften*, these concerts outside of the synagogue walls featured both male and female singers who sang classic Yiddish songs as well as new compositions. Instead of focusing on liturgical pieces and religious songs, these concerts gave American Jews the opportunity to engage with American musical trends within the comfort of their own community.

Over time Jewish residents, and later, their institutions, moved westward out of the Maxwell Street area to more affluent neighborhoods of Chicago. Legal issues, coupled with the building of an expressway through the area in the 1950s, caused the once thriving bazaar to become a marginalized and somewhat forgotten area. Many of Chicago's successful bankers, manufacturers, athletes, and even actors and actresses started their lives on the Yiddish-speaking area of Maxwell Street.

[428] Ashton, *Hanukkah,* 125.

Kayla, Chicago, USA 1905

Scene 1: Introduction

Hello! My name is Kayla and I am excited to tell you about my life. I was born in 1892 in a city called Kishinev, which was in Russia. I lived there until I was eleven years old, and then my family moved to America to join my Papa, who had left a few years earlier. I have an older brother, Avrum, and two little siblings, Shmuel and Sophie. All of us were born in Kishinev except for Sophie, who is still a baby.

It was hard to be Jewish in Kishinev. We had to live in our own neighborhood, and, as Papa tells me, Jewish people were not allowed to do certain jobs. Papa was a very good tailor, he learned from his father, and he says that in the 1880s lots of Jews left the more rural parts of Russia and came to the cities. The Czar made a law that Jews could not buy land or live in areas outside the cities, so lots of Jews left and came to Kishinev. Many of them were tailors, too, and it became hard for Papa and his father to earn a living. Papa also worried about being sent to the army, because the Czar required young men to serve even if they didn't want to. By the time I was eight or nine, Papa and Mama decided that it was time to talk about leaving Kishinev.

Now we live in Chicago, Illinois, in the United States. When my Papa came to America he heard from some others that a city called Chicago was a good place for Jews to go. He had enough money with him to buy a ticket to Chicago, and felt right at home when he arrived. There were other people from our part of Russia there who helped him find a place to stay and start a business. Papa worked very hard for two years to earn enough money to pay for three tickets to America.

We missed him a lot while he was in America and we were still in Kishinev;

Mama did as much work as she could to support our family while Papa was away. Before he left she did some sewing and mending clothes; afterward she took in laundry and I started helping a lot more. I washed the clothes and mended small things while she worked on special and delicate clothes, like ladies' *shabbes* (Shabbat) dresses and men's *talesim* (prayer shawls). Instead of playing with my friends I stayed inside with her most of the day working very hard.

I was not the only one of my friends who disappeared: many of the girls in our neighborhood began to leave for America with their families. Most of them went to New York, as we heard from others, but some went to South America or even Palestine! My brother Avrum told me that at the Yeshiva they talk about the land of Israel as an ancient place – it's amazing to think that some of our friends and neighbors may be going there themselves!

Once Papa sent us tickets to America, our family packed up our trunks (we each only got to take one!) and made our way to the train station in Kishinev. I had often heard the trains go by, but this was the first time I ever got to ride in one! It went so fast across the countryside – I could barely see the forests and the farms we would pass. We changed trains in Krakow, which is in Poland, and finally went to Hamburg, Germany. I had never seen cities like these! There were not only lots of trains, but tall buildings, factories, and, in Hamburg, boats larger than Noah's ark! Mama gave the agents all of our papers and tickets, and we went into our little room called a "cabin." It was very cramped – Avrum and Shmuel slept in one bed while Mama and I shared another, but they served us hot food at each meal and it felt good to go to the deck and feel the wind in our faces.

It was so exciting when the boat arrived in New York! We all stood on the deck

and waved at the people on Ellis Island and they waved back! After we got off of the ship we had to wait in a long line and show more papers to the officials. Mama said not to worry, because Papa had filled out a form that said we were healthy and would not be a burden on America. That meant that we would work very hard to build a new life in America, a place where we would not be treated badly because we were Jewish.

Then we got on another train and went to Chicago. So far I had heard lots of people speaking Yiddish and only the officials spoke English. Most people on this train spoke English and I didn't know what to do! A tall man came and asked me a question, but I could not answer him. I looked at Mama and Avrum, so Mama pulled out our papers to show the man. That seemed to satisfy him and he went on his way.

When the train arrived in Chicago Papa was there to greet us! I almost didn't recognize him after missing him for two years. He had a large backpack on his back and looked like he had spent a lot of time outside. He had borrowed a cart from a friend and we loaded our trunks onto it to bring them to our new home.

When Papa first arrived he lived with another family and paid them rent. When he heard that we were coming he started to look for a house just for us. It is not as big as our house in Kishinev, he told us as we walked, but it will do. I can tell he is very tired from his work but also so happy and relieved to see us. It is wonderful to have our family back together.

Scene 2: Maxwell Street

Hello, again! I want to tell you a little bit about what our life is like here in Chicago. We live in an area with lots of other Jewish people – they call it "Maxwell Street" because that's the main road through the neighborhood. It doesn't look too

different from what I remember of Kishinev! Everywhere I go there are signs in Yiddish and the sounds and smells remind me of what we left behind. There are kosher butchers and bakeries, men who sell fresh fruits and vegetables on wooden carts, and other men with big backpacks who sell everything from pots and pans to napkins and tablecloths. You can buy anything on Maxwell Street! Sometimes Mama sends me to buy food for the day, usually potatoes and a loaf of bread. I used to be scared to go out by myself, but soon I came to know the different sellers and now they are friendly neighbors.

We live in a two story house with another family; they have the first floor and we have the second. There is a front door which faces the street and the backdoor opens to an alleyway. The alley is dark and kind of dirty, so we don't go back there often. We do not have indoor plumbing in our house, so lots of waste is dumped out the back windows. When we do want to bathe we go to one of the bathhouses, but only before special occasions like holidays. We have two bedrooms upstairs and a big living room. During the day Mama and some of the other women in our neighborhood gather together to sew and mend clothes, just like she used to do in Kishinev. I help as much as I can, but I am the one in charge of baby Sophie so sometimes I have to leave and take care of her.

Papa and Avrum are peddlers; they sell sewing supplies to the people in our area. When Papa arrived he heard about a man named Mr. Phillipson who helped new immigrants who knew how to sew. Papa thought he might receive work for a tailor but instead Mr. Phillipson sold him a backpack of needles, thread, and extra cloth and told him to sell the supplies in the neighborhoods. Papa said he received the goods "on credit," which meant he didn't pay for them now but brings the money to Mr. Phillipson after he sells the items. Avrum helps him and sometimes they divide the goods and go in

different directions.

Shmuel, though, gets to go to school! There is a place called the Jewish Training School and he goes every day. He is learning English faster than any of us because he gets to work with teachers all day. He comes home and teaches us new things – sometimes Papa and Avrum ask him for help! I am learning a few words as I go out in the marketplace, but the rest of the time we speak Yiddish at home. Shmuel says that once his English is better he will join other boys and girls his age in learning to read and write. I wish I could go to school, but Mama needs me at home to help with sewing and with baby Sophie.

It's not boring at home, by any means. People are always coming in and out of our house with big reams of cloth or older clothes that need mending. Papa made some good business relationships with people and they are starting to buy the clothes we make at home. We know some of the other peddlers, too, like Zev, who sells us shoes, along with clasps and fasteners for our clothes. Zev is from a town near Kishinev and remembers a lot of the same things we do. He even knew some of the same people we did back at home! He comes once per week and Mama always puts some tea on the stove for him. He comes in and he and Mama talk about the old country and how things are different here. When we first arrived he told us about an organization called a *landsmenshaften verein*, which means "homeland association." It's a big term for a group of people who come from the same part of the old country. He told us that the Bessarbian landsmenshaften (Bessarabia is the name of the region around Kishinev) helped him find a place to live, a doctor and medicine for his wife when she was sick, and even a *shul* (synagogue) to go to on Shabbat and holidays. Mama told Papa about it and soon Papa

started to go to *shul* like he did back in Kishinev – every morning before work and in the evening before he came home. It makes him very happy to pray in the *shul* the way he used to at home.

Oh! Shmuel is home! I want to ask him what he learned in school today. Maybe he has some new English words to teach me!

Scene 3: Word from Home

It's been very sad around our house lately; all the newspapers have been reporting about a big pogrom back home in Kishinev and over a dozen people were killed. The neighborhood where we used to live was totally destroyed: Russian soldiers broke windows, burned buildings, and looted stores. Lots of Jewish people are homeless and cold because of the destruction.

I wish I could say that this was surprising, but there was another attack like this when we still lived in Kishinev. I was ten years old and all I remember is hiding in a cellar with some other families, hoping that we would be safe. One of our neighbors was very badly burned trying to escape from a house that was on fire. Others lost everything they owned when the Russians came and just took things from their homes.

The government in Russia does not like the Jews very much; the Czar keeps making life harder and harder for us. The whole world knows about what he is doing and that is why so many Jewish people are leaving now. Zev left many years before we did, and he said that our neighborhood has grown by thousands and thousands of people in the last twenty years, most of them from Russia. The newspapers say that Jews are no longer safe and we need to go to the United States or Palestine if we want to stay Jewish. I don't think you should have to choose between safety and your culture. Shmuel says that in

America we have "freedom of religion" and it's promised to us in a document called the "Constitution." He says the government cannot prevent us from being Jewish. I think that's one big reason why Papa decided to bring us here. I wonder if our neighbors who went to Palestine have the same protection.

Scene 4: Tzedakah, Altruism, and Zionism on Maxwell Street

We were all very sad to hear about the events in Kishinev last month. Papa immediately wrote letters back home to see who was still there and asked if he could help them find tickets to America. Mama was very anxious about the family members we left behind: cousins, aunts, and uncles. She kept urging Papa to write more and more letters. Shmuel was sad, too, but he is more interested in what is going on here. Avrum, though, was angry. He has the most memories of Kishinev out of the three of us, and he says that the world should not put up with the Czar's actions. He says that the Czar not just allowed this violence to happen but encouraged it, and the people in charge are barely being punished. Avrum believes this isn't fair and something has to happen.

He told me that while he was out selling needles and cloth he heard that a group of Jews had organized a meeting to raise money for the Jews in Kishinev and wrote a letter to the Czar. He found an article about it in one of the papers and it said that they raised three thousand dollars to send back home.[429] He decided to take a *tzedakah* box with him as he works and ask his clients to donate money for relief in Kishinev. His clients don't have a lot of extra money, but he says they have been generous with what they have. Most people have a *tzedakah* box in their house, and they are taking a few pennies out of it for Avrum's cause.

Even though the people here around Maxwell Street are not rich, they donate what

[429] Three thousand dollars in 1905 is equivalent to approximately $78,000 in 2014 currency.

little they can spare to our community. The *landsmenshaften verein* and synagogues rely on donations, just like in Kishinev, but our community does not have a lot of big *machers* (wealthy donors). The *shul* Papa goes to was not built to be a *shul*, but instead it's the top floor of a butcher's shop. They have a little *aron kodesh* (ark) with a Torah scroll someone brought from Europe and it sits in the corner under some blankets. For holidays they rent a bigger room in another house and carry the *aron kodesh* through the street to its temporary home. All of the money comes from people like Papa: peddlers, tailors, shoemakers, and factory workers. They only have a little extra money but they make sure it goes towards something for the whole community.

Even though Avrum is collecting money for people far away in Kishinev, our neighbors know that supporting Jews all around the world is very important. He has only made a few dollars so far, but he hopes that the money will be spent to help people leave Kishinev for America or Palestine.

Even before we left Kishinev, Avrum has been interested in Palestine. He tried to convince Papa to take us there instead of America but Papa insisted that America was safer. Palestine is controlled by what is called the Ottoman Empire, and Papa does not want to be subject to any empire – he says that America is a "democracy" and that is better. Avrum read a lot about the new immigrants to Palestine and says that they take care of each other and they are building up the land of Israel. For two thousand years Jews have lived outside of the land of Israel and now we are going back. He says that a man named Theodore Herzl believed there would be a Jewish state again, like under King David and King Solomon. Papa doesn't think it will happen any time soon, but Avrum reads a lot about Palestine and keeps up with the news. He told me that Mr. Herzl is

famous for saying "If you will it, it is no dream." Jews seem to be working very hard for this dream to come true! I hope that it does soon, so that the people of Kishinev and other places will have a Jewish country where they can live safely.

Scene 5: Hanukkah

Today I heard some very interesting news from Mama's friend Chaya – she said that there is to be a Hanukkah concert next week at the great theater on Jefferson Street! I didn't know what she meant at first, but then Shmuel told me that his friends at school have been talking about it for weeks.

Here in Chicago there are *chazzanim* (cantors) who put on special shows in the winter time, right around Hanukkah. I had never heard of this before because in Kishinev all we did for Hanukkah was light the *chanukiyah* and play *dreidel* with our friends – we did not celebrate it as a community. Papa told us the story of Judah Maccabee who defeated the evil king Antiochus and reclaimed the temple in Jerusalem. We remember how the oil in the lamp was only supposed to last for a day, but it stayed lit for eight days! It was a miracle! Mama made potato pancakes, cooked in chicken *schmaltz* (fat), and jelly donuts. I don't know if she'll have time to make all of the special foods this year since she is so busy working.

In America Hanukkah is close to a holiday they call Christmas, which most Americans celebrate, so people get very excited about the Festival of Lights. There are already decorations everyone: wreaths made out of holly, pine trees decorated with ornaments and tinsel, and even big *chanukiyot* in shop windows. Even the people are happier – the peddlers are selling more merchandise because everyone is getting ready to give each other gifts. Our family would give gifts to our friends and neighbors on Purim,

but here in America we also exchange presents on Hanukkah! I'm always happy to get a new dress or pair of shoes; I wonder what Mama will find for me! Fein's department store on Hallstead Avenue had a beautiful blue coat in the window; I saw it as I walked by coming back from the market the other day. If only we could afford it!

Shmuel said that at the concert the chazzan will lead some of the boys in reciting the *brachos* (blessings) for Hanukkah and they will sing songs together. They learned the songs at school, but Shmuel will teach me so I can sing along with everyone. One of them is about making a *dreidel* out of clay – how silly! Most of the Jewish songs I know are the ones we hear in *shul* on the holidays but women don't sing along with the *chazzan.*

After the boys sing their songs, the *chazzan* will sing other types of music, some of it from services and other holidays. I've never been to a big concert before, so I'm excited to see all of the people. Mama's friend Chaya says we have to wear our nicest clothes and behave properly – I will try my best!

Conclusion: Israel, 1955

Uri: Jerusalem, Israel, 1955

Final scene: *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* Party

It's fun when all of our families get together – it doesn't happen often but my parents like to gather us all together when there is a good reason. *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* seems like the best reason of all! Our apartment building has a little backyard and we are bringing lots of tables and chairs out from our homes so that people can sit and talk and eat delicious food together. Ariel and I are strong enough to carry things down the stairs, but Hadas is too little, so we gave her small bags of thing to bring down, like cups, plates, and bowls.

Imma has been working very hard to make delicious food for the lunch. Everyone is bringing something to contribute and she wants to make sure everyone is happy. She is making her homemade hummus and Israeli-style salad (cucumbers, tomatoes, parsley, and olive oil) along with *babaganoush*, made from eggplants. She was busy in the kitchen and realized that she forgot to get some of the things she needed, so Abba suggested that Ariel and I go out to get them.

We set out to Ben Yehuda Street to buy toys and decorations for the party. We got lots of small Israeli flags, banners to hang on the side of the apartment, and little hammers, called *p'tishonim*. Once I asked *Abba* why we celebrate with hammers, but he wasn't able to give a good reason. He just bopped me on the head and laughed.

Abba would have gotten them himself but he spent the last few days getting ready for the big celebration at *Har Herzl*, the military cemetery and national memorial. Every year he covers the event for the newspaper. Thousands of people come for a huge ceremony. There are usually important speakers, a fireworks show, and lighting of twelve

torches – each one represents one of the twelve tribes of ancient Israel. They invite twelve important people up each year to light one of the torches. It is a big deal and *Abba* is excited to go each year. He was out very late, though, and did not have time to run the errands *Imma* wanted him to do. Ariel and I had a lot of fun going to the stores to buy what we needed for the party – there were festivals in the streets with musicians, dancers, and delicious food! Ariel and I took some of the leftover money and bought some corn-on-the-cob, another wonderful *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* tradition!

When we got back home there was lots of work to be done to set up, but our friends came down to help us. They brought the food their parents had made along with their own decorations and flags.

Moshe's family brought a big bowl of *tabouleh*, which has similar flavors to our Israeli salad but is more filling. *Imma* says there is a grain in it called "bulgur." I don't know what that is but it sure tastes good! They also brought a dish with couscous, carrots, peppers, onions, zucchinis, and sweet potatoes. It's called "Moroccan couscous;" everyone around here has their own style of couscous with different spices and vegetables.

The Abramsons brought a little outdoor grill outside and made something called "hamburgers." They were delicious! They were made of beef and served like a sandwich between two pieces of bread. They also brought vegetables to put on top, like onions and lettuce. He says in America people put cheese on top, but since we want to respect everyone's level of *kashrut* we would use a fried egg instead. He also brought something back from America called "ketchup" that we were supposed to put on top. I tried a little

and it reminded me of the tomatoes my *imma* puts in *shakshuka* (poached eggs in a spicy tomato sauce), but it was much much sweeter. He says in America they serve hamburgers with French Fries (the American version of our "chips") and people even put ketchup on those! I prefer my chips with hummus and *techina*. Yum!

The Roth family brought a beautifully decorated tray of chopped liver and dark rye bread. I was hesitant to try it but Shayna says that it is very good! It was made from chicken livers mixed with eggs and potatoes. I could only eat a little bit at a time because it was so rich! It had a more peppery taste than I was expecting but I would eat it again. They also brought along a dish called *spaetzle*, which is kind of like noodles, with oil and spices. It was also very heavy and I could only eat a bit.

Finally the Fleishman's brought the desert – delicious *rugelach*! It's a bite-sized pastry filled with chocolate – tasty! I could eat a whole tray of them at once. At our house dessert is usually different types of fruit, so I like when we get something extra-sweet. They also brought along some turkey *schnitzel* which is delicious with hummus. I like hummus on everything, can you tell? *Schnitzel* can be made out of turkey or chicken and everyone serves it differently. It can be served in a pita with hummus or with potatoes and vegetables.

I like trying all of these different foods and playing with my friends. We had to teach the littler brothers and sisters not to hit each other too hard with the *p'tishonim* and that they're just there for fun. Abba and Yossi's *abba* were both at *Har Herzl* last night and talked about the ceremony. Yossi's *abba* knew someone who was honored by being asked to light a torch – he also worked for the *Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael* (the Jewish

National Fund) and did a lot to find support for Israel in other countries. Israel is such an important place and I hope that you get to visit someday soon!

It is only our seventh year of independence, and *Yom Ha'atzma'ut* is very new. In the future, though, I am excited to celebrate it every year with all of our friends and family. It is unique because wherever we come from, Israel is a safe place for Jews to be Jewish in whatever way we choose. Some go to synagogue, some don't; some keep kosher and others don't; Shabbat is a special day for everyone, even if some people spend the day without electricity and others listen to the radio. All of the Jewish people in Israel live their Judaism in different ways and do not have to worry about having to leave because of who they are.

Enduring Understandings, Goals, and Objectives for the Curriculum and its Contents

Overall Enduring Understandings

- The notion of *K'lal Yisrael* claims that it is both desirable and possible to speak of the Jewish people in all of its diversity and complexity as a single construct.
- Despite the unique aspects of Jewish life in different countries, there are still powerful convergent centripetal forces that unite the Jewish people.
- Although some traditions may have disappeared, Israeli culture today is an amalgamation of various pieces of Jewish culture throughout history and geography.
- Despite time and geography, young people experience many of the same fears, concerns, and emotions as they move into young adulthood.

Note: The goals mentioned herein are very general ("learners will understand"). It is the author's hope that each instructor will tailor specific classroom activities to the types of learners in the classroom. For example, a student can "understand that Jewish events brought the *shtetl* community together" through a myriad of different instructional methods, from videos, interactive activities, art projects, kinesthetic activities, etc. The attached sample lesson plans attempt to illustrate some of the different methods of instruction.

Introduction/Conclusion

Enduring Understandings

- Israel is a home for all Jewish people regardless of country of origin or socioeconomic status.

Goals:

1. Learners will understand that Israel is a heterogeneous society that, while Jewish, comprises individuals of many different cultural backgrounds.
2. Learners will understand that Israel is a Jewish state and the Right of Return entitles any Jew to claim Israeli citizenship.

Objectives:

1. Learners will read Uri's story and learn about his family history in the land of Israel.
2. Learners will, upon returning to Uri's story at the end of the curriculum, identify the places from which his neighbors emigrated and recall aspects of that culture from previous lessons.
3. Learners will engage in an end-of-the (year, semester, etc) program that celebrates each of these cultures as well as their place in Israel today.

Ideas for teaching:

1. Learners will meet with local *shlichim* (Israeli emissaries) and learn about their families' histories. Where did they come from before Israel? How does that influence how their family thinks about Israel? The diaspora?

2. Learners will discuss the idea of a "Jewish" state. What makes a "Jewish" state different from North America? What differences would learners see both on an everyday basis and over the course of time? The instructor is encouraged to bring in articles from Israeli newspapers that deal with Jewish issues on the national stage.

Chapter 1

Enduring Understandings:

- The *dhimmi* status limited the status and influence of Jews and Judaism under Muslim hegemony.
- Judaism was profoundly and positively influenced under Muslim rule.

Goals:

1. Learners will understand that while Jews lived as Jews in Muslim-controlled regions, they did not have the same freedoms that we enjoy today in North America.
2. Learners will understand Sephardi life cycle events – weddings and *tahdid.*
3. Learners will understand basic differences between their lives and the life of the *madrich* in regard to religious life, gender roles, and family dynamics.

Objectives:

1. Learners will read (or have read to them) the stories about Yakub's life and family.
2. Learners will articulate the feelings and emotions they felt while hearing the story.
3. Learners will identify out the differences between their lives and Yakub's life.
4. Learners will articulate the ways they identify with Yakub and the parts of the story that are foreign to them.

Ideas for teaching:

1. Journaling activity for each story;
2. "What would you have done?" activity for story with Muslim official;
3. Holiday celebration North African style (*mimouna* as described in teacher resource text);
4. Guest speaker of Sephardi heritage (can compare/contrast with Moroccan traditions based on speaker's own experience);
5. Watch selections from *Sallah* about the marriage arrangements for his son and daughter;
6. Incorporate Sephardi stories/fables (to be found in bibliography) and discuss the morals they tell.
7. Read poetry by Yehuda HaLevi (especially "*Libi B'mizrach*") and examine Sephardi Jews' relationship to Israel.

Chapter 2

Enduring Understandings

- Jewish life in Poland was subject to forces from within and forces from without; during the period of 1647-1648 outside forces were greater than those within the community, resulting in great turmoil and crises.
- Jewish life, with its annual celebrations and life-cycle rituals, provides stability to life in a non-Jewish world.

Goals

1. Learners will understand that *shtetl* life was governed by Jewish law and tradition.
2. Learners will understand that Jewish events brought the *shtetl* community together.
3. Learners will understand that Yiddish was the language of the Jewish people from approximately this period until the twentieth century.
4. Learners will understand basic differences between their lives and the life of the *madrich* in regard to religious life, gender roles, and family dynamics.
5. Learners will understand Ashkenazi wedding customs.

Objectives

1. Learners will read (or have read to them) the stories about Avigali's life and family.
2. Learners will articulate the feelings and emotions they felt while hearing the story.
3. Learners will identify out the differences between their lives and Avigali's life.
4. Learners will articulate the ways they identify with Avigali and the parts of the story that are foreign to them.

Ideas for teaching:

1. Recreate a fair: each group of students will receive the identity of a Jewish (or non-Jewish) merchant and have a cross-cultural experience. Students will learn about a particular trade or skill and try to "market" their products to others.
2. Learn about the *Va'ad Arbah Artzaot* – how Jews from different regions worked together for self-representation. Can draw parallels to Jewish organizations today.
3. Compare the yeshiva experience to religious school today – what do we learn that they did not? What sorts of things did they learn that we would like to learn today?
4. Create your own class *sphil* (doesn't need to be for Purim). How can you turn your classroom/school "upside down" and make it silly? How can you take a well-loved Jewish story and make it silly?
5. Guest speaker who grew up speaking Yiddish and/or has an intimate connection with Yiddish Jewish culture.

6. N.B. – Much of *Fiddler on the Roof* would be anachronistic here, but some of the images and descriptions of Jewish life would still be appropriate, especially those related to gender roles and Jewish life. For instance, the song "Tradition" and the Sabbath Prayer scene are good examples of gender roles in the medieval to early modern period. The wedding scenes would also be appropriate up until Perchik starts breaking cultural norms. The sewing machine scene, Perchik's political rhetoric, Chava's desire to marry a non-Jew, would not make sense in a 17th century context.

Chapter 3

Enduring Understandings:

- The Enlightenment and emergence of modern Western thought exposed Jews to new ways of life and provided them with choices that were extremely different from traditional Jewish societies of the past. These ideas challenged the norms and customs that had been practiced for hundreds of years;
- The Jewish community had to confront the consequences/costs as a result of these choices; some embraced the opportunity to engage in general social interactions whereas others fought to preserve traditional Jewish life.

Goals:

1. Learners will understand Jewish life in Western Europe was subject to legal restrictions different than those of Eastern Europe.
2. Learners will understand that in the 18th century Jews began to be exposed to non-Jewish society; the desire to assimilate into the greater society caused conflict both inside and outside the Jewish community.
3. Learners will understand Ashkenazi Jewish funeral customs.
4. Students will understand basic differences between their lives and the life of the *madrich* in regard to religious life, gender roles, and family dynamics.

Objectives:

1. Learners will read (or have read to them) the stories about Bérnard's life and family.
2. Learners will articulate the feelings and emotions they felt while hearing the story.
3. Learners will identify out the differences between their lives and Bérnard's life.
4. Learners will articulate the ways they identify with Bérnard and the parts of the story that are foreign to them.

Ideas for teaching:

1. Have learners relate to the idea of moving from a small town to a big city-how would your everyday life be different? Learners should draw on their own experiences as well as what they imagine
2. Learners can read Chayim Nachman Bialik's poem "*Levadi*" which describes the exit of Jews from eastern European *yeshivot* to the cities.

3. Learners will examine work by Baruch Spinoza and learn how his ideas changed the way Jews looked at Torah and traditional Judaism.
4. Learners can identify the challenges between Jewish life and secular American life in their world: is eating pork something they do at home and outside? What about at grandparents' homes or in the synagogue? What consequences come about as a result of these choices? Irrespective of what the choice is, the instructor should affirm that liberal Jewish practice is a matter of individual choice and that there are no "wrong" choices – each decision we make comes with its own set of questions to answer.

Chapter 4

Enduring Understandings:

- Persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe caused a mass exodus of Jews, many of whom came to the United States wishing to take advantage of freedom of religion and economic opportunities.

Goals:

1. Learners will understand Jewish life in Eastern Europe was subject to legal restrictions that made living there extremely difficult.
2. Learners will understand that Maxwell Street was an area of Chicago where Yiddish-speaking Eastern European Jews felt at home.
3. Learners will be able to identify the pieces of Kayla's story that come from Jewish tradition and those that are American (e.g., differences in Hanukkah).
4. Learners will understand how Zionism in America looked in the beginning of the twentieth century.
5. Students will understand basic differences between their lives and the life of the *madrich* in regard to religious life, gender roles, and family dynamics.

Objectives:

1. Learners will read (or have read to them) the stories about Kayla's life and family.
2. Learners will articulate the feelings and emotions they felt while hearing the story.
3. Learners will identify out the differences between their lives and Kayla's life.
4. Learners will articulate the ways they identify with Kayla's and the parts of the story that are foreign to them.

Ideas for teaching:

1. Many resources are available about New York during this time period; NYC's Lower East Side is similar to Maxwell Street. Kenneth Roseman's *Melting Pot: An Adventure in New York* is a wonderful choose-your-own-adventure book that walks students through the different paths of immigration and settlement during this period.
2. Video: *Chicago Stories: Jewish Chicago 1833-1948* is available from WTTW (local PBS affiliate)

a. Through archival footage, rare photographs, and interviews, relive the compelling story of Chicago's Jewish community, from the arrival of the first German Jews in frontier Chicago through the founding of Israel. Trace the history of Jewish immigrants who recreated a *shtetl* in the historic Maxwell Street district. Look at early conflicts and the way the community sought to heal itself through the Jewish obligation to offer a helping hand to those in need. Along the way, visit a Yiddish class, discover the secret of making the perfect bagel, hear reminiscences from former Jewish enclaves of Maxwell Street, Lawndale and South Shore and learn about Chicago's response to the Holocaust and the founding of Israel. (https://secure.wttw.com/catalog/detail?productid=PCSJD&standalone=1).

3. Learners can put together a program for an upcoming holiday (based on the "Hanukkah Ball" concept) and come up with creative ways to present the holiday and incorporate popular culture. How would they want to celebrate a Jewish holiday in an American way (or vice versa)? A Thanksgiving Seder? A Shavuot pageant? The possibilities are endless!
4. Learners can come up with a type of club or association (modern *landsmenshaft*) they think would be helpful for people moving to their town from another city/state/country. What is important to learn in this new place? What parts of the "old world" would they like to keep? What big events would take place? Where would they focus their energy? (advocacy for causes, donating money or time to a particular place, etc)

Sample Lesson for Chapter 1

Enduring Understanding: Judaism was profoundly and positively influenced under Muslim rule.

Goal: Learners will become familiar with the style of Sephardic Jewish literature.

Objective: Learners will take different Sephardic stories and create a short skit/play to bring them to life.

Materials needed:

- Rita Roth, *The Power of Song: And Other Sephardic Tales*, 1st ed (Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 2007).
- Photocopies of selected stories
- Misc props, costumes, materials

Procedure:

- 00:00-00:10 Instructor will ask learners to define the word "fable" (a short tale to teach a moral lesson, often with animals or inanimate objects as characters; the fable of the tortoise and the hare; Aesop's fables) What are we supposed to take away from a fable after we hear it?
- 00:10-00:15 Instructor will divide learners into groups of 2-3 and provide each group with a story.
- 00:15-00:35 In groups, learners will read their stories and identify the aspects of a "fable" – who are the characters? What are they trying to teach us?
- 00:35-01:00 Learners will prepare their story for presentation – they can present it as a play or skit, a song, news broadcast, etc. The main requirement is that they make sure their classmates understand the moral of the story and how the characters got there.
- 01:00-01:30 Learners will present their final products. The instructor should facilitate smooth transitions between groups, help learners articulate their parts, and ask a few debriefing questions to the group after each presentation. The instructor will also ask how these stories are different from Aesop's fables or the Eastern European stories of Chelm and *shtetl* life. These stories were part of a shared culture – what stories/experiences are common to 21st century Americans?

Sample Lesson for Chapter 2

Enduring Understanding: Jewish life in Poland was subject to forces from within and forces from without; during the period of 1647-1648 outside forces were greater than those within the community, resulting in great turmoil and crises.

Goal: Learners will understand the concept of the *Va'ad Arbah Artzaot* as a Jewish governing body (inside force);

Objectives: Learners will create their own Jewish organization and hold a mock meeting. Learners will be given an agenda item and bring their case to a community meeting.

*Sample Meeting Agenda attached

Classroom council (similar to student council/student government)

- How the class day looks (breaks, timing, snacks, etc)
- Types of activities the class does (inside the classroom, in the sanctuary, with other age groups, etc)
- Pretend there is a class "budget." How would that get spent? Provide guidelines for activities, tzedakah, etc. Discuss how monetary choices reflect the group's values.

Instructor can assign each agenda item to an individual or group and give them time to prepare their case (either class time that day or a session in advance). The specifics will depend on the setup of the particular religious school Feel free to change and adapt the agenda items to fit current issues in your classroom.

At the end of the meeting the instructor will ask students how it felt to make some of these decisions. The instructor will then reiterate that the Va'ad Arbah Artzot made similar decisions not just for one community, but Jewish communities all over central Europe (thousands of people!). Who makes these decisions for the Jewish community today? If you were making these decisions for lots of people (not just our class) would you go about it differently? How?

Meeting of Beth Shalom's 7th Grade Council

[Pick the date]
[Pick the Time]

00:00-00:200	Introduction	Instructor
	D'var Torah	Student #1
	Purpose of Meeting	Instructor
	Read through agenda	Instructor or Student #2
00:20-01:00 (break up the time as necessary for each item; tell each student/group to try to fill 5-10 minutes. It sounds like a lot but discussion will take up the majority of the time)	Discuss Agenda Items	
	1. Breakdown of Day: keep it how it is or should we revise?	Student #3
	2. Snack choices – what is the current system? Should we have students alternate bringing snack, rely on the school, take requests?	Student #4 Student #5
	3. Leadership in the school – should we reach out to other classes? How can we be leaders to younger learners?	Student #6 Student #7
	4. How do we use our classroom and synagogue space? Can we do different activities in the sanctuary, social hall, outside?	
	5. Class fund (could be discussion of where to donate class *tzedakah*): we have $1,000 to do with what we want. Where to spend it?	Student #8

01:00-01:20	Recap – what did we accomplish? What decisions were easy to make? Hard to make? What do these decisions say about us as a class? Where are our values? If someone was to read these minutes in 100 years, what would they come away with knowing about our class? What would you like them to think?	Whole class
01:20-01:30	**Conclusion** *Va'ad Arbah Artzaot* context	Instructor

Sample Lesson for Chapter 3

Enduring Understanding:

- The Enlightenment and emergence of modern Western thought exposed Jews to new ways of life and provided them with choices that were extremely different from traditional Jewish societies of the past. These ideas challenged the norms and customs that had been practiced for hundreds of years;
- The Jewish community had to confront the consequences/costs as a result of these choices; some embraced the opportunity to engage in general social interactions whereas others fought to preserve traditional Jewish life.

Goal: Learners will understand the importance of Spinoza's work and the changes it brought to the Jewish world.

Objective: Learners will put Spinoza on trial – should he be excommunicated?

Procedure

- 00:00-00:10 Learners will explore the question: "What makes someone part of a group?" and discuss what makes someone "in" or "out." Definition of a group, for this case, "a group of people who agree upon a set of shared principles."
- 00:10-00:20 Learners will generate a number of principles that the Jewish people hold today. Instructor will add that until Spinoza, it was widely accepted that all Jews believed in divine authorship of the Torah [Moses recorded God's word as spoken to him on Mt. Sinai]. For Spinoza to deny this was a big deal. At the time a Jewish community could excommunicate individuals (keep them out of the community). Spinoza's beliefs caused people to call for his excommunication [but don't give away the ending!].
- 00:20-00:25 Learners will break into groups that will argue for or against Spinoza's excommunication.
- 00:20-00:40 Learners will have time to prepare their arguments. Handout Attached N.B. due to copyright issues I cannot include a picture of Spinoza. For some learners, having an image of him available may be helpful in linking the text *about* the individual with an actual portrait.
- 00:40-01:10 Learners will engage in a "mock trial" of Spinoza.
- 01:10-01:30 After each side has presented its argument the instructor will tell the class that Spinoza was indeed excommunicated. The instructor may wish to dramatically read the following text (the actual writ of excommunication):

"The Lords of the *Ma'amad*," (the governing body of the congregation) announce that having long known of the evil opinions and acts of Baruch de Spinoza, they have endeavored by various means and promises, to turn him from his evil ways. But having failed to make him mend his wicked ways, and, on the contrary, daily receiving more and more serious information about the abominable heresies which he practiced and taught and about his monstrous deeds, and having for this numerous trustworthy witnesses who have deposed and born witness to this effect ... they became convinced of the truth of this matter; and after all of this has been investigated in the presence of the honorable sages, they have decided, with their consent, that the said Spinoza should be excommunicated and expelled from the people of Israel..."

"By decree of the angels and by the command of the holy men, we excommunicate, expel, curse and damn Baruch de Espinoza, with the consent of God, Blessed be He, and with the consent of the entire holy congregation, and in front of these holy scrolls with the 613 precepts which are written therein; cursing him with the excommunication with which Joshua banned Jericho and with the curse which Elisha cursed the boys and with all the castigations which are written in the Book of the Law. Cursed be he by day and cursed be he by night; cursed be he when he lies down and cursed be he when he rises up. Cursed be he when he goes out and cursed be he when he comes in. The Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law. But you that cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day."

"That no one should communicate with him neither in writing nor accord him any favor nor stay with him under the same roof nor within four cubits in his vicinity; nor shall he read any treatise composed or written by him."

- The instructor may also wish to add that in the modern era Spinoza is heralded as a great scholar of Judaism and was an innovator in his field. Like many trailblazers, he was not appreciated in his own time! (Think Galileo!)

Is Spinoza In or Out?

Reasons to excommunicate Spinoza:

1. Spinoza believed that Moses did not write the Torah.
2. Spinoza believed that people could serve God by being just and righteous to other people – they did not need to follow all of the intricate Jewish laws.
3. Spinoza believed that the Prophets did not speak with God, but had very vivid imaginations.
4. Spinoza believed that miracles did not happen because of God; humans only attribute them to God because we cannot explain them using science.

Is Spinoza In or Out?

Reasons **not** to excommunicate Spinoza:

1. Spinoza believed in God.
2. Spinoza believed that we could look to the Torah to learn how to practice religion.
3. Spinoza believed that the moral laws we learn from Torah are important for Jews to get along as a group.
4. Spinoza believed that the most important thing we learn from Torah is that we should "Know and love God, and to love one's neighbor as oneself."

Sample Lesson for Chapter 4

Enduring Understanding: Persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe caused a mass exodus of Jews, many of whom came to the United States wishing to take advantage of freedom of religion and economic opportunities.

Goal: Learners will understand how Jews in the early 1900s attempted to reconcile Jewish traditions with new (to them) American culture.

Objective: Learners will read about the Hanukkah Ball in Kayla's story;
Learners will use their creativity to formulate a way to celebrate a Jewish holiday in an American way or an American holiday in a Jewish way.

Materials needed:

Posterboard

Scratch paper

Drawing/writing utensils

Basic resources about Jewish holidays

If you want to get fancy a video camera to record presentations

Procedure:

- 00:00-00:10 Learners will discuss how they celebrate holidays – which ones do we take off of school? Which ones do we celebrate at school? At home? At the synagogue? There will be some overlap!
- 00:10-00:25 Learners will read/have read to them the story of Kayla and the Hanukkah concert. The instructor will explain any technology related issues (most people did not have radios, there were no ipods, people enjoyed going to concerts and listening to live music both to hear the music and to come together as a community).
- 00:25-00:45 Learners will, as individuals or in groups, create an idea for a community celebration around a Jewish or American holiday, incorporating aspects of both festivals. It could be a purely social event or one based on a social action project (or anything else they come up with!).

- 00:45-01:0 Each individual or group will have to create and present a final product that advertises their event to the community. It could be a poster, TV commercial, email announcement, tweet, etc. The following information should be prominent in each presentation:
    1. Name of the event
    2. Date and Time
    3. Location
    4. The two holidays being celebrated
    5. Who is sponsoring the event and why

  Learners are encouraged to think about each of these things carefully: the name should be catchy yet informative; the date and time will affect who can attend (young families, teenagers, older adults, etc); and the location can make people more/less comfortable (non-Jews in the synagogue, Jews at the YMCA, etc).
- 01:00-01:20 Learners will present their advertisements and describe the event they would hold.
- 01:20-01:30 Conclusion – what can we learn from each of these events? How can they help us celebrate being both Jewish and American? Think about Kayla trying to navigate both of these cultures – how would this event help her and her family learn about America?

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