Encyclopedia of
Jewish Folklore
and Traditions

Raphael Patai, Founding Editor ∗ Haya Bar-Itzhak, Editor

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On the cover: Seder (dinner on the feast of Passover).
The father is reading passages from the Haggadah. Ukraine XIX century. Anonymous artist.

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Editors

Judith L. Goldstein
Vassar College

Zeharia Goren
Oranim College, Israel

Ayalah Goren-Kadman
The Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance, Israel

Jillian Gould
Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada

Gila Hadar
University of Haifa, Israel

Yuval Harari
Ben-Gurion University, Israel

Galit Hasan-Rokem
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

Guy H. Haskell
Independent Scholar

Edna Hechal
University of Haifa, Israel

Eve Jochnowitz
YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

Esther Juhasz
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem/ University of Haifa, Israel

Zipora Kagan
University of Haifa, Israel

Tamar Katriel
University of Haifa, Israel

Michele Klein
Independent Scholar

Roni Kochavi-Nehab
Independent Scholar

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Rella Kushelevsky
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Dov Noy
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Ayelet Oettinger
University of Haifa, Israel

Elliott Oring
California State University, Los Angeles

Rivka Parciack
Independent Scholar

Raphael Patai
Founding Editor, Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore and Traditions

Yoel Perez
Ben-Gurion University, Israel

Idit Pintel-Ginsberg
University of Haifa, Israel

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University of Haifa/Oranim College, Israel

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Tel Aviv University, Israel

Tsila Zan-Bar Tsur
Independent Scholar

Oded Zehavi
University of Haifa, Israel

Yael Zirlin
Independent Scholar

INTRODUCTION

The origins of this first encyclopedia of Jewish folklore can be traced to the vision and initiative of the late Professor Raphael Patai, its founding editor, who unfortunately passed away when the project was still in its infancy. The list of entries he drew up served as the basis for the final product. In addition, his drafts of a number of entries were completed by other scholars and are published here under their joint names.

When I assumed the editorship of the encyclopedia, I had two major goals in view:

1. To provide the largest possible coverage of Jewish folk culture, with its many facets and diverse topics, on the basis of the most recent scholarship;
2. To offer, as much as possible, an accurate and objective presentation of Jewish folklore, while avoiding the trap of partiality and nostalgia that lurks for those who deal with folklore and tradition.

That it proved possible to achieve these goals, to a large extent, is thanks to all the scholars of Jewish folklore who enlisted in the project, whether as members of the editorial board, as contributors (see list, pp. ix–xi), or in both capacities. Scholars in other fields, too, whose work touches on Jewish folk culture, agreed to take part in this important venture and wrote entries relevant to their areas of expertise.

Without this broad support, the *Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore and Traditions* would never have taken shape. Nevertheless, the goal of full coverage of all the many topics and facets of Jewish folk culture was not realized (nor, in fact, had we ever thought this truly possible). Despite the significant breakthrough in folklore research in recent decades, many branches of Jewish folklore remain inadequately studied. This applies to various Jewish communities whose history has been thoroughly researched but whose folklore has not been investigated in depth; it also applies to specific fields and topics of Jewish folklore for which it proved impossible to recruit qualified authors.

Folklore and Jewish Folklore

The development of folklore studies has brought about a change in the definition of the field. In the past, folklore was defined as creative spiritual and cultural heritage, a collection of items and products (stories, sayings, music, poetry, art, customs, and so on), marked by an essential element of tradition, and passed on orally from generation to generation (Noy 1982, 7–9).

This definition has long since been challenged by various scholars (Ben-Amos 1971, 3–15; Dundes 1980, 1–9). Contemporary folklore studies emphasize the communicative element and define folklore as one type of communication process. Oral transmission is no longer considered the only essential element defining folklore; today, written materials, too, are part of the field, including those transmitted by the digital culture of the twenty-first century.

Nevertheless, all research approaches agree that folklore expresses both the individual performer (folk narrators, folksingers, embroiderers, and so on) as well as the group within which they act, and includes the heritage of previous generations. This being the case, both tradition and change are part of the folklore process; they attest to its dynamic nature and express the collective and individual identity of those who create and transmit it.

The unique features of Jewish folklore stem from a number of factors and are a direct outcome of Jewish history:

1. *The dispersion of the Jews.* The Jews lived in many different lands and were influenced by the local folklore in every country of their dispersion. This means that we cannot speak about a single Jewish folk culture, but rather about Jewish cultures. The very fact that the *Encyclopedia* has entries on various Jewish communities is clear evidence of the multicultural nature of Jewish folk tradition. As Raphael Patai wrote in his preliminary survey of the project:

> Jewish folklore, because of the worldwide dispersion of the Jews, is a quasi-global phenomenon, comprised of many common elements, but also of separate local developments, which include features derived from, or related to, the local non-Jewish folklore. This means that a study of Jewish folklore must, in addition to the presentation of its general aspect, also include a study of its specific local manifestations.

2. *The multilingual character of Jewish folklore.* This is obviously a direct result of the first factor, dispersion. Throughout the centuries, Jewish men studied Hebrew so that they could perform the liturgy and religious rituals. Jewish women, too, used Hebrew words, mainly those for the names of the festivals and rituals. Some men knew

Aramaic, the language of the Talmud. But Jews were also fluent in the vernacular of their non-Jewish neighbors, which they took over and modified into a Jewish language (notably Yiddish, Judeo-Spanish, and Judeo-Arabic). In the modern age, Jews began using the language of the host society in their daily lives. Most Jewish folklore was created in the Jews' spoken dialect, but incorporated words and idioms from other languages.

3. *Written sources.* Another special feature of Jewish folklore, going back to antiquity, is its presence in written texts. For Jews, the written word played a significant role in the creation, transmission, and preservation of folklore, more so than among other groups. Patai referred to this, too:

> The Jews have always been the people of the book, with a literary rate exceptionally high, and the tendency developed among them in early times to put down in writing—in addition to all the other forms of literature—also the folk customs and beliefs. The *minhag* (custom) has found its way even into the officially accepted and authoritative Jewish law code, the Shulhan Arukh of Joseph Karo (sixteenth century), which gave it a quasi-religious sanction, and blurred the boundary between folk custom and religious law. In addition, the Jews produced collections of folklore (especially books of customs) a long time before such literary-scholarly activity commenced among other peoples.

This phenomenon explains why the *Encyclopedia* has entries on canonic Jewish texts, such as the various genres of rabbinic writings—the Talmud, midrashim; and of kabbalistic literature. In addition, many entries on specific topics refer to ancient Jewish texts, from the Hebrew Bible to the works of the talmudic era and the Middle Ages, as well as anthologies of Jewish folklore. The vast majority of these texts are listed and glossed at the end of the *Encyclopedia.*

Scope and Coverage

The classification of folklore items is no simple matter. Categories proposed in the past, such as Dov Noy's (2007) distinction between audio-oral folklore, visual folklore, and cogitative folklore, are what scholarship refers to as "ideal models," since any particular item of folklore is apt to belong to more than one of them.

In the *Encyclopedia,* we have made an effort to include entries that belong to all the categories. In the domain of verbal folklore there are entries on folk narratives, classed by historical period—the Bible, talmudic literature, and medieval works—and entries on the various narrative genres, such as the wonder tale

and the legend, as well as entries on distinctive types of Jewish folktales, such as the "Ma'aseh Yerushalmi" (the Story of the Jerusalemite). Also in the category of verbal folklore, in addition to folktales, are entries on short genres such as the Proverb, the Riddle, the Parable, the Joke, and the *Qinah* (Lament).

Audio-oral folklore is represented by entries on Jewish and Israeli folk music and folksong. As for visual folklore, there is an entry on folk dance and numerous entries on what we refer to today as material culture and folk art—Costume, Food and Foodways, *Mezuzah*, Ḥanukkah Lamp, Torah Ornaments, Torah Ceremonial Objects, Tombstones, and so on.

Under the heading of cogitative folklore, there are entries on folk beliefs and the customs based on them, including Magic, the Afterlife, Amulets, Plants, Animals, and Folk Medicine.

Many beliefs, customs, folksongs, and folktales developed around the Jewish year cycle and life cycle. The year cycle is represented by the many encyclopedia entries on Jewish holidays and festivals. The life cycle has contributed entries on ceremonies associated with birth and circumcision, puberty and bar/bat mitzvah, marriage and wedding, death and burial, and consoling mourners.

Jewish folklore developed around characters, including supernatural figures, fictional characters, and historical personages. This topic is extensively covered in the *Encyclopedia*. The supernatural beings include angels and demons as a collective figure, as well as specific figures such as the Angel of Death, Asmodeus, Lilith, and others. Among the fictional characters there is, for example, an entry about the Wise Men of Chelm. The historical personages (or those considered to be historical by Jewish tradition) include characters from the Bible—the patriarchs and matriarchs, Elijah the Prophet, and various kings, as well as figures from later eras, such as Rabbi Meir Ba'al Ha'Nes, Bar Kochba, Shimeon bar Yoḥai, Rambam (Maimonides), Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, and many more.

Extensive folklore developed in association with the places where Jews lived. Consequently, there are entries on the shtetl, representing the Jewish settlement space of Eastern Europe, and on towns in Israel considered to be holy cities, including Jerusalem and the Temple, Safed, and Hebron. There are also entries on imaginary places, such as the Sambation and the supposed abode of the Ten Lost Tribes.

As I have already noted, ancient Jewish texts incorporate a wealth of folklore materials. These texts, too, are referenced in the *Encyclopedia,* with entries on the talmudic literature, midrash, medieval collections, and anthologies assembled in later periods.

Many Jewish writers and poets drew on folklore as the basis of their work. These artists, too, are the subject of entries that examine their writing and their use

of folklore materials. They include I.L. Peretz, Sholem Aleichem, Mendele Moykher Sforim, S.Y. Agnon, Itzik Manger, and Isaac Bashevis-Singer.

There are also entries on important periods in history, such as Holocaust Folklore, and on the folklore of specific social settings like the kibbutz.

As mentioned above, great importance was attached to the entries on specific Jewish communities. Unfortunately, some communities had to be left out due to the paucity of research on their folklore. Nevertheless, most Jewish communities have their own entries in the *Encyclopedia.* Because different communities have different characters and because of the disparities in the research, the community entries could all not be cast in the same format. For example, research into the folklore of some Jewish communities, such as those of Germany, Poland, and Russia, began before the First World War and was conducted with greater vigor between the two world wars within the communities; therefore the history of folklore scholarship is included in the entries pertaining to them. Other communities lack this kind of research—sometimes scholarly research began only after virtually the entire community had left its country of origin—and therefore this topic is not mentioned in the entry.

This brings us to the *Encyclopedia*'s coverage of folklore studies and folklorists, beyond what has been said thus far.

Folklore studies are represented by entries that fall into three main areas:

1. Entries about Jewish folklore research institutions, such as the YIVO Ethnographic Commission and the Israel Folklore Archives (IFA);
2. Entries about major periodicals in the field of folklore research, from the pioneering journals to contemporary publications;
3. Biographies of major Jewish folklorists, with reference to their major contribution to the study of Jewish folklore, including the trailblazers like Max Grünwald, S. An-Ski, and Y.L. Cahan.

Our initial intention was to exclude active scholars. But on second thought, and taking into account that it could be a long while before the publication of another encyclopedia of Jewish folklore, we decided to include short entries on professors of folklore who are still active and have made major contributions to scholarship.

Even though we were not able to achieve everything we wanted to, and hope that additional entries may still be added (at least to the digital version), I think we can say that the *Encyclopedia* is a veritable cornucopia of information for its readers.

Intended Readership

The intended readership of this encyclopedia consists primarily of students and scholars of Jewish studies in general and of Jewish folklore in particular. Nevertheless, the *Encyclopedia* also has value for an educated general audience. The editors have made sure that the entries are accessible for all readers. Terms that may require prior knowledge are explained in brackets or covered in the introduction or in the end matter. To facilitate use of the *Encyclopedia,* there are blind entries on important topics, with cross-references to other entries that deal with them. In all cases, readers can consult the detailed index to find what they are looking for.

Transliteration, Standard Folklore Indexes, and Categories

Transliteration was a particularly painful matter in the assembling of the *Encyclopedia,* which refers to many different Jewish communities and the many languages spoken by Jews. No one set of transliteration rules is accepted by all, which is why different contributors frequently employed variant spellings for the same term. In order to avoid blatant inconsistencies, we have used the standard YIVO system for Yiddish. The transliteration of Hebrew reflects a broad approach to transcription rather than a system developed for text-based or linguistic studies. The aim was to reflect the pronunciation of modern Hebrew as well as the use of conventions that are generally familiar to the English-speaking audience. Distinctions that are not relevant to pronunciation are not indicated, like, for example distinctions between tet and taf, alef and ayin. We retained the distinction between het and khaf by using ḥ for het and kh for khaf.

An exception to this rule are the names of authors or scholars for whom the traditional spelling is different. In such cases we opted for the spelling used by the individuals themselves, even if this collided with our transliteration rules. The same is true of terms for which English has adopted a dominant spelling that cannot be ignored.

Place names were even more problematic. Jews often used different names for towns and regions than did their non-Jewish neighbors. What is more, many places switched hands between countries, leading to a change in their name. We made an effort to overcome this problem by noting alternate names in parentheses wherever possible.

Folk literature has been blessed with international classification indexes that are standard and used by everyone in the field. The most important, referred to in many entries, is that of Aarne and Thompson (AT), plus a number, which appears in the type index. Instead of

expanding this short reference in every entry, the information is provided here. The type index referred to is Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson, *The Types of the Folktale: A Classification and Bibliography* (1961), published in Helsinki by Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia. This index is itself an expansion by Stith Thompson of the original classification published by Antti Aarne in 1910. A new and enlarged edition was prepared by Hans-Jörg Uther and published in 2004.

As stated, this is the international type index. The classification of Jewish folktales according to this system is evidence of what they have in common with the folk narratives of other peoples.

Nevertheless, not all Jewish folk narratives can be included in the international classification. Many entries refer to a "Jewish oicotype," meaning a story type that is unique to Jewish folk narratives as, for example, stories about deliverance from blood libels. The Jewish oicotypes have been defined by the Israel Folklore Archives (IFA) and numbered to be compatible with the international index. They are also listed in *Types of Oral Tales in Israel* by Dr. Heda Jason, published in Jerusalem by the Israel Ethnographic Society, [1965]–1975.

This brings us to an institution mentioned in many entries—the Israel Folklore Archives (IFA), named in honor of Dov Noy. The IFA has its own entry in the *Encyclopedia,* but for readers' convenience I will say a few words about it here.

The Israel Folklore Archives is located at the University of Haifa. Founded in the 1950s by Professor Dov Noy, its holdings include some 24,000 stories that have been transcribed, recorded, or filmed, as told by narrators in Israel who are members of various ethnic communities. This is the largest archive of Jewish folk narratives in the world. The stories are numbered and classified in various ways, the most important being the storyteller's country of origin.

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Haya Bar-Itzhak

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Volume 1

A

AARON

In the Bible, Aaron was the son of Jocheved and Amram (Exod. 6:20), the elder brother of Moses (Exod. 6:20, 7:7), the first high priest of the people of Israel (Exod. 40:13), and the ancestor of the priestly clan identified as *cohanim* (1 Chr. 24). The Hebrew Bible does not provide any details about his childhood.

His adult life's benchmarks depict a man who begins as Moses's subordinate and later becomes a more independent leader beloved by his people:

1. He is first mentioned as Moses's spokesman, confronting the pharaoh in order to free the enslaved people of Israel (Exod. 4:14–16, Exod. 7–12).
2. He acts together with Moses and is involved in the infliction of some of the ten plagues (Exod. 7:19, 8:1–12, 9:10–10:3).
3. In the wilderness, he supports Moses in the battle against the Amalekites, and in doing so ensures Israel's victory (Exod. 17:10–13).
4. During Moses's absence on Mount Sinai, Aaron submitted to the demands of the people and fashioned the Golden Calf for them, although he suffered no punishment for this act (Exod. 32).
5. He and his four sons were consecrated to priesthood by Moses (Exod. 28–29; Lev. 8–9).
6. Two of his sons, Nadab and Abihu, died while offering an uncommanded fire on the altar (Lev. 10:1–3).
7. He was able to stop the plague inflicted upon Israel for the Israelites' protest of Koraḥ's fate (Num. 17:1–15).
8. He and his sister, Miriam, doubted Moses's integrity and leadership because of his marriage to an Ethiopian woman. As punishment, Miriam was stricken with leprosy, but Aaron was spared (Num. 12).
9. His priestly supremacy and leadership were established after his staff was the only one among all of the tribe leaders' staffs to blossom miraculously in the Tabernacle (Num. 17:16–26).
10. He died at the age of 123, on the first day of the fifth month, year forty of the Exile, and was mourned for thirty days by all of Israel (Num. 33:38–39).

In postbiblical Jewish tradition, some of these benchmark themes reverberate. Aaron became a beloved figure, a man totally devoted to making and maintaining peace (*Avot de'Rabbi Nathan* 12:3), serving as a role model in the process (*m. Avot* 1:12).

His love of and readiness to protect Israel were emphasized. According to the Midrash, it was because of him that the pillar of cloud guided the people through the wilderness and to the Promised Land (*Num. Rab.* 1:2). In the Zohar, this pillar is called "the cloud of Aaron" (*Zohar* 3:103b).

Scholars regard his behavior in the Golden Calf incident as the result of his compassion for the people, who made him give in to their demands (Exod.R. 37:2, 41:10; *Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* 45).

Another attribute respected by the tradition is his calm and reserved reaction to his sons' deaths (*Sifra* 46a; *Lev. Rab.* 20:4), which was considered surpassing Abraham's sacrifice. The acceptance of his sons' deaths echoes down to the present in Jewish folktales (one version can be found at the Israel Folktale Archives at the University of Haifa), in which Aaron's silence is compared to the immobility of an inanimate object.

In the Kabbalah, one of the *sefirot*, the holy emanations of God, is symbolized by Aaron, the emanation called Sefira "Hod," the majestic aspect of divinity. As such, his name was included in the list of the seven Ushpizin, the holy guests invited to the sukkah (Zohar 3:103b–104a) during the festival of the Tabernacles (Sukkot). Images of Aaron can be found on Ushpizin's Plates, used for decorating the sukkah.

On amulets whose purpose is to prevent disease and epidemics, the verse describing Aaron stopping the plague (Num. 17:1–15) is central.

Raphael Patai and Idit Pintel-Ginsberg

See also: Magic; Moses.

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ABRAHAM

Abraham, the youngest son of Terah and brother to Nahor and Haran, according to tradition was born in 1948 anno mundi (1812 B.C.E.), at Ur of the Chaldees (Gen. 11:28, 15:7; Neh. 9:7; cf. Josh. 24:2–3). His birth name was Abram (probably meaning "he is exalted with respect to father"—i.e., belonging to a distinguished family) (Gen. 11:26–17:5; Neh. 9:7; 1 Chr. 1:26). The name Abraham, given to him by God as a blessing, is explained in Genesis to mean "the father of a multitude" (of nations; Gen. 17:5). Abraham is considered the founding patriarch of the Hebrews—through his son Isaac, born of his first wife, Sarah; of the Arabs—through his son Ishmael, born of his second wife, Hagar; of Midianites—through his son Midian, born of his third wife, Keturah; of Edomites—through his grandson Esau, son of Isaac; and of the people of Sheba—through his grandson Sheba, son of Jokshan from his wife Keturah (Gen. 25:3). In apocryphal literature, he was deemed the progenitor of the Spartans as well (1 Macc. 12:20–22; 2 Macc. 5:9).

Abraham is reputed to be the first believer in monotheism, and he has a significant role in the holy books of all three monotheistic religions—Judaism (Gen. 11:26–25:10), Christianity (Gal. 3–4; Heb. 11), and Islam (Quran 2:124–140; 37:83–113). Christians regard him as the progenitor of Christ, naming him "our father in Faith" (Gal. 3:16), Muslims claim that Muhammad is Abraham's descendant, and Jews call him "Abraham our father" (*Avraham avinu*), declaring to this day in the ceremony of circumcision that a boy "enters into the covenant of Abraham our father" (a phrase found already in the Damascus Document 12:11, written in the first century B.C.E.).

The biblical narrative presents the biography of Abraham as a compilation of isolated incidents, beginning with his departure from Ur to the land of Canaan, accompanied by his father, Terah, his wife and paternal half-sister, Sarai (Gen. 11:29; 20:12, later to be named Sarah), and his nephew, Lot (Gen. 11:31). On the way they stopped and settled at Haran, where Terah died at the age of 205 (Gen. 11:26–32). Only then, when Abraham was seventy-five years old, did God appear to him and command him to leave his father's house and his kindred and the land of his birth and go to Canaan, promising to make a great nation out of him (Gen. 12:1–3). Abraham obeyed and settled in Canaan, sojourning at first between Beth-El and Hai and then dwelling in Mamre in Hebron (Gen. 13:18), while Lot moved to Sodom (Gen. 13:1–12). Abraham left Canaan twice (the first time due to famine) and went westward to Egypt (Gen. 12:9–20) and to the land of Gerar (Gen. 20), from where he returned to Canaan greatly enriched after both the Egyptian king and Abimelech, king of Gerar,

discovered that Sarah—whom they both attempted to marry—was also his wife. Abraham committed himself to believing in God (Gen. 15), and in return God again promised him innumerable descendants who would inherit the land (Gen. 17:2–9). Nevertheless, Abraham did not have any children until the age of eighty-six, when his wife Sarah, seeing that she was barren, gave him her Egyptian handmaid, Hagar, as a second wife (Gen. 16). At the age of ninety-nine, Abraham was told by God that Sarah would conceive and give birth to a son. Abraham was also ordered to circumcise himself, all the males of his household, and all those to be born starting with his son, Isaac, as proof of keeping their covenant with God (Gen. 17:10–21). After Isaac was born, Sarah wished to banish both Hagar and her son, Ishmael, in order to ensure that Isaac would be the sole heir. This angered Abraham, but he complied after being told to do so by God (Gen. 21:1–12). Some years later God told Abraham to prove his loyalty by sacrificing Isaac (*Akedah*). Once more, Abraham obeyed immediately. The biblical story relates dramatically how he set off with Isaac to Mount Moriah, prepared the altar with wood, bound Isaac, took the knife in his hand, and only at the last minute, when it was obvious that he would not falter from slaughtering his son, did an angel prevent him from completing the act, for which he was blessed again with numerous seed "as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore," and with abundant prosperity (Gen. 22:1–18).

After the binding of Isaac, Abraham went to Beer-Sheba. It is not related whether he returned to Sarah or if she died at that time, but after her death, Abraham bought the Cave of Machpelah (known as the Cave of the Patriarchs) near Hebron, for her burial place (Gen. 23:3–20). He then guided his servant Eliezer to go to Mesopotamia and find, from among his kindred, a suitable wife for his son Isaac (Gen. 24). Abraham lived all those years at Beer-Sheba with his concubine-wife Keturah, who bore him six sons. He died at the age of 175 and was buried alongside Sarah in the Cave of Machpelah (Gen. 25:7–9).

These combined narratives portray Abraham as a righteous, obedient, and faithful believer in God and his laws (Gen. 15:6, 22, 26:5); he is also called "a prophet" (Gen. 20:7). In addition, biblical passages portray him as a very wealthy, seminomadic tent dweller (e.g., Gen. 12:8), possessing slaves, flocks, silver, and gold (e.g., Gen. 12:5, 16), purchasing land (Gen. 23:2–20), dealing with kings (Gen. 12:15–20, 14:18–24, 20, 21:22–32), and making military alliances (Gen. 14:13). Other incidents in the narrative depict him as a brave leader and warrior, fighting a coalition of eastern kings who invaded Canaan in order to free his nephew Lot from their captivity (Gen. 14); yet a peace-loving man (Gen. 13:8–9), generous (Gen. 18:1–8), and just (Gen. 18:23–33).

No archaeological evidence has been found that refers to Abraham or to any figures directly connected with him. Contemporary scholarship tends to see him as a fictitious symbol of faith, intended to legitimate future actions such as claiming the land and deeds of the Israelite monarchy (particularly King David), and to prevent human sacrifice, which was prevalent among the different nations in Canaan. The fragmentary biblical narrative can be regarded as compiled of much legendary matter, evident not only in stories such as the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and the transformation of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, but also in the fact that Abraham's family—Hagar, Keturah, his and his brother's children (Gen. 22:20–24)—are personifications of tribes, serving as etiological myths. These legends and stories have been greatly developed in postbiblical literature, embellishing the image of Abraham as well as bridging gaps in the biblical story, regarding such matters as Abraham's first and last years of life.

The lack of biblical data regarding Abraham's birth and childhood inspired legends containing many miraculous features that have parallels in the stories of the birth of heroes in various cultures. One story recounts that the night Abraham was born, a great star shone from the east, which swallowed up the four stars at the four corners of the heavens. Seeing it, the astrologers of Nimrod, the king of Ur, predicted that a child born on that night was destined to conquer the world. They advised the king to buy the child from his father at the price of a house filled with silver and gold, and then kill him. Terah, sitting among the king's counselors, said that this advice reminded him of the advice of a mule, because a treasure is of no value to parents who do not have a son to inherit it. His words revealed that a son had been born to him that night, but Terah claimed that his son had died and then hurried home and hid Abraham with his wetnurse in a cave for three years. Another story has Abraham born in a cave, where his mother was hiding from King Nimrod, who had ordered the death of all male babies born that year, after seeing in the stars that one of them would dethrone him. After Abraham was born, the radiance of his face filled the cave with a great light. His mother left him there at the mercy of his God, who sent the angel Gabriel to nurse him by making the right finger of the child's hand a miraculous source of milk. This milk not only sustained the child but also made him grow at such pace that within a few days he could already walk and talk.

Abraham is the first monotheist, that is, believing that there is one god, rather than many, yet the Bible does not explain how the son of an idolater (Josh. 24:2) came to believe in God. Thus Abraham's recognition of the existence of a single God is a principal recurring motif, depicted in different events experienced by Abraham at the ages of forty-eight, fourteen, ten, three,

one year, and even at the age of twenty days (Jub. 11; *Gen. Rab.* 30; 64:4; 95:2; Jellinek 1938, 2:118–119), resulting from either rationalistic-scientific reasoning or from divine revelation. Rational understanding of God as Lord of the universe is described as a process: Abraham observed the sun (in some versions, the stars or moon) rising, understood it to be Lord of the universe, and worshiped it. Yet upon seeing the sun setting and the moon rising, he worshiped the moon. When, in the morning, he saw the sun rise again, he concluded that all heavenly bodies are but servants of the real creator of the universe (Jellinek 1938, 2:118–119; *Sefer ha'yashar* p. 23). In some stories, Abraham learned from his father, Terah, that their god was a great idol in comparison to others, but after seeing that it did not respond in any way to the meals he offered it, Abraham deduced that it had no powers, and ruined it (*Sefer ha'yashar* pp. 25–26). Scholars also believe that Abraham deduced the concept of monotheism from noticing the existence of human welfare (that only God could create) (Josephus, *Antiq.,* 1, 7:155–56; Philo, *Abr.,* 68); from the laws of arithmetical and astronomical knowledge (Josephus, *Antiq.,* 167–168); and from the fact that that "every citadel must have a leader" (*Gen. Rab.* 39:1).

After recognizing God, Abraham is said to have strictly observed all the commandments, including the holy days, knowing all the secrets of Jewish law even though they had not yet been revealed to the Israelites (*b. Yoma* 28b; Jub. 11; *Gen. Rab.* 41:6, 64; *m. Qiddushin* 4:14; *Nedarim* 32a). In addition, he is said to have instituted the morning prayer (*b. Berakhot* 26b), and the laws of the tzitzit (the fringes or tassels worn on traditional garments by Orthodox Jewish men) and tefillin (the phylacteries, small square leather boxes containing slips inscribed with scriptural passages, worn by Jewish men during morning weekday prayers) (*m. Hagadol* to Gen. 14:23). At the same time, Abraham tried to spread the idea of monotheism to others—a motif based on the verse "and the persons he had acquired in Haran" (Gen. 12:5), interpreted to mean "the people he had converted" (*Gen. Rab.* 39:14; cf. Targum Onqelos and Rashi to Gen. 12:5).

Abraham taught monotheism by applying didactic reasoning. Thus, he tried to teach his father the worthlessness of idol worship by arguing that the biggest idol quarreled with the rest, and destroyed (burned or shattered) them. To his father's angry response, that Abraham was wrong, for an idol unable "to see nor hear nor walk" could not have done it, Abraham replied: "How then canst thou forsake the living God and serve gods that neither see nor hear?" In the same manner, Abraham asked an old man how he could worship idols made only the day before and a woman how she could offer meat to an idol with no mouth or hands (*Gen. Rab.* 38; *Tanna debe Eliyyahu* ER 27, S 47–49). Abraham's

refusal to keep silent provoked the anger of his brothers (Jub. 11) as well as of King Nimrod, who disputed Abraham (in a dialogue that has a parallel in the Hindu *Panchatantra* 1:376), and ordered servants to cast him into fire (in other versions, to imprison him for a year with no food or drink) from which he was saved by God (*b. Pesaḥim* 118a; *Tanna debe Eliyyahu* ER 27; *Sefer ha'yashar* pp. 28–29).

During his wanderings from Mesopotamia to Canaan, Abraham spread the concept of a transcendent God (Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* 3:29; *m. Avodah Zarah* 1:3) and became "the father of the whole world by teaching them faith" (Responsa, ed. Blau, 293). His fame spread through coins bearing his image (*Gen. Rab.* 39:11) and people were attracted to him thanks to his special powers to bless (*Gen. Rab.* 39:12; *Midrash Tanḥuma* Lekh Lekha:5) as well as to heal all sick people, by means of a pearl or precious stone with magic powers hung around his neck (*b. Bava Batra* 16b). When in Canaan, Abraham taught recognition of God by his generosity: He built a palatial mansion at a crossroad near Beer-Sheba, with four doors always kept open on four sides, and in it he himself served food and wine to any passerby. When people thanked him, he would point to heaven and say that they owed thanks to God alone and taught them to say the grace after meals, while Sarah did the same to the women (*Gen. Rab.* 48:9, 54:6). Hence he is regarded as "the father of the proselytes" (*Gen. Rab.* 43; *Mekilta de Rabbi Ishmael* Mishpatim 18) and is renowned for his love of men (Testament of Abraham) as well as for his spirit of righteousness and equity (*Avot de'Rabbi Nathan* 33). The traits of kindness, humbleness, and piousness characterize him to such a degree that whoever has them is considered his disciple (*b. Betzah* 32a; *Berakhot* 6b; *m. Avot* 5:19). Even today, the phrase "the house of Abraham our father" (*beit Avraham avinu*) is said as a compliment to generous people who open their houses to the needy.

As a result of these traits, Abraham is also considered a guardian of humankind in general and of Israel in particular: He prompted God to descend from heaven and come closer to men (*m. Rab.* to Gen. 24:3); thanks to him God gave Israel such things as the manna (miraculous food) (*Lev. Rab.* 34:8) and victory in war (*Esth. Rab.* 7:13; *Gen. Rab.* 39:16). Abraham was circumcised on the Day of Atonement by Shem, the son of Noah, "and every year the Holy One, blessed be He, looks upon the blood of the covenant of our patriarch Abraham's circumcision and forgives all our sins" (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* 29; *Song Rab.* 4:6). In liturgical poetry it is customary to ask God for absolution for the sins of Israel, in the name of Abraham's merit. Abraham sits at the gate of hell, preventing his circumcised descendants from entering it, or from serving more than a year of penance (*b. Eruvin* 19a; *Gen. Rab.* 48).

In addition to these, Abraham has many other traits: He is considered a priest (*b. Nedarim* 32b; *Gen. Rab.* 46:5, 55:6), as well as a prophet, second only to Moses (Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* 2:45). He is described as possessing great wisdom and knowledge in the secret lore of alchemy and magic (*Avodah Zarah* 14b; *b. Bava Batra* 16b; *Sanhedrin* 91a; *Sefer Yetzirah; t. Qiddushin*) as well as in astronomy and arithmetic (Josephus, *Antiq.,* 1:7, 8); in agriculture, instructing men in the art of improved plowing, so as to conceal the seeds from the ravens (Jub. 11:18–24); and in all the mysteries of creation (Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* 2:13, 17, 23). He was the first to know Hebrew, the language of revelation, taught to him by an angel of God, and he is the one who invented the alphabet (*Gen. Rab.* 42). The uniqueness of Abraham is discernible also in his physical size, described as towering above all others (*Gen. Rab.* 44; *Soferim* 21:9). After his death, the Angel of Death had no power over him, and his flesh was not rotted by worms and maggots (*b. Bava Batra* 17a).

Books devoted to the story of Abraham are the pseudepigraphic *Testament of Abraham* and *The Apocalypse of Abraham* (first or second century C.E.), as well as one of the earliest (seventeenth-century) plays written in Hebrew: "Yesod olam" (Foundation of the World), by Moses ben Mordecai Zacuto. Abraham has been referred to symbolically: Medieval philosophers were blamed for interpreting Abraham and Sarah allegorically, as personifications of the relationship between matter and form (according to Aristotelian philosophy); and kabbalists saw Abraham as a personification of "loving kindness" (*ḥesed*), the fourth of the ten *sefirot* (divine attributes or emanations in the Kabbalah). His character is also used in modern psychology, to mirror aspects of our own lives.

Despite the exalted portrayal of Abraham, he has also been subject to criticism, mainly for not pleading for mercy for his seed, when God told him that they will be enslaved in Egypt (*b. Shabbat* 89b, based on Gen. 15:13). The destiny of Israel is perceived as punishment directed to Abraham for his wrongdoings: Abraham is blamed for pressing scholars into military service (based on Gen. 14:14), preventing men from "entering beneath the wings of the Divine Presence" (*b. Nedarim* 32a, based on Gen. 14:21), and hesitating to circumcise himself (*Gen. Rab.* 42:8). Medieval philosophers such as Nachmanides (Commentary to Genesis 12:10, 20:12), and Isaac Arama (Binding of Isaac 16) judged Abraham's questionable behavior in presenting his wife Sarah as his sister, for fear of being killed while in Egypt (Gen. 12) and Gerar (Gen. 20).

Raphael Patai and Ayelet Oettinger

See also: Afterlife; Age and the Aged; Alchemy; Angel of Death; Brother-Sister Marriage; Hebron.

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ADAM

The story of Adam, the first human being and father of the human race, is found in the Bible at the start of the book of Genesis. According to the first version of the creation story, Adam was created in the image of God and to rule over all other creatures (Gen. 1:27–30). In the second version, which resembles the accounts in other cosmogonies, Adam was created from the dust of the earth and placed in the Garden of Eden, "to till it and tend it" (Gen. 2:7–15). The word "Adam," which appears in the Bible both as a generic noun (Gen. 2:7ff.) and as the name of the first man (Gen. 4:25ff.), is derived, in keeping with the latter version, from *adamah* ("earth, ground")—the material from which he was created (*Gen. Rab.* 17:4; *Pirke de'Rabbi Eliezer* 11), or, alternatively from *adom* ("red") the color of the clay from which he was formed (*Sefer Hayuḥsin,* §6, p. 232), and *dam* (blood), the substance that makes up his body (*Avot de'Rabbi Nathan* 2, 42).

The Creation Myth

The multiple versions of the creation of human beings in Genesis spawned various interpretations. To eliminate the possibility that Adam's creation in "the image of God" and God's use of the first-person plural, "let us make man" (Gen. 1:26), would be read as a relic of polytheism, many talmudic legends address the question of who in fact created the first human being. In general the answer is God, with the emphases on His personal involvement (*Gen. Rab.* 8:26); this in opposition to the Gnostic doctrine, recorded by Philo of Alexandria, that human beings were created by the angels (Philo, *De confusione linguarum*, 179). Nevertheless, evidence of the angels' participation in the creation of human beings can be found in narratives that describe how Adam was made in the image of the angels (*Gen. Rab.* 8:28; *Exod. Rab.* 30:16), or, as described in an Islamic legend as well, with their assistance ("Creation of the Fetus" in Jellinek, *Beit ha'Midrash* 1, 153–158).

The rabbinic corpus explains that human beings were created last to eliminate any suspicion that they were partners in the creation, to keep them from being proud, or so that everything was ready for them (*b. Sanhedrin* 38a). Various legends distinguish between the creation of Adam's soul on the first day and the creation of his body on the sixth day (*Gen. Rab.* 8:1; *Lev. Rab.* 14:1), or, alternatively, between the creation of his body on the first day and of his soul on the sixth day (*Yalqut Shimoni*, Gen. 34). Assigning his creation in part to the first day is meant to establish his essential status in the creation myth while eliminating any notion that he might have been a partner in it. Other legends describe how God created Adam at the start of creation but made him sleep

until all else was completed, in order to emphasize the hierarchy between Adam and God's other creations, such as animals and plants (*Eccles. Rab.* 6:10; *Gen. Rab.* 8:10). Later accounts describe how Adam taught the animals to bow to God and not to him (Zohar, Emor 107b).

According to the rabbinic literature, which resembles other mythologies on this point, Adam was fashioned out of earth and water. The dust for his trunk was taken, according to one tradition, from Babylonia; that for his head, from the Land of Israel (*b. Sanhedrin* 38ab). According to another legend, the dust used to fashion Adam came from the site of the Holy Temple (*Midrash Tehillim* 92:6), or, in other accounts, from many places all over the world, so that when he died the earth would take him back and he could be buried wherever he happened to be (*Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 3).

In some traditions, the first man was created from the four elements (Philo, *De opificio mundi*, 146). Other versions refer not only to the material elements from which Adam was formed but also to his soul, which comes, according to some, from the earth (*Gen. Rab.* 7:5), or, according to the Zohar, from the divine itself (Zohar, Va'yigash 205b–206a).

For the talmudic sages, the myth of the creation of Adam was the basis of the monotheistic creed as well as of the ethical doctrines of Judaism. The original creation of only one human being, whom all subsequent individuals resemble, conveys that every human being has a unique value that must be protected, on the one hand, and that all human beings are equal and none may lord this fact over his or her fellows, on the other (*b. Sanhedrin* 38).

The two aspects of human beings—earthly and celestial—are addressed by the rabbinic literature, too, in an attempt to clarify humankind's status and role in the world. Human beings eat and drink, excrete and die like the animals; but they walk erect, speak, see, and have the intelligence of the ministering angels (*b. Ḥagigah* 16a; *Gen. Rab.* 8:11). Unlike the animals on the one hand, and the angels on the other, human beings have free will; that is, they can freely choose how they will act; from this derives their moral responsibility for their effect on creation and even on God (Philo, *De confusione linguarum,* 176–178; *Sifre* Deut. 306).

Because the biblical account says nothing about Adam's size, one might imagine that in this he was no different from his descendants. But as envisioned by the authors of some legends, who seem to have been influenced by the myths of other ancient cultures, when he was first created Adam's body filled the world, stretching from farthest east to farthest west when he lay down and from earth to heaven when he stood up (*Gen. Rab.* 8:1; *Lev. Rab.* 14:1). The rabbinic literature describes Adam as unusually handsome; "the ball of Adam's heel outshone the sun" (*Eccl. Rab.* 8:2). For Philo, and later for medieval Jewish philosophers, his perfection was ex-

pressed not only in his physical dimensions but also in his intellectual power and spiritual capacity to be happy and content (Judah Halevi, *Kuzari*, 1:95; Philo, *De opificio mundi,* 139–144).

In the rabbinic legends, this perfection is manifested in the ideas that Adam was originally hermaphroditic (*Gen. Rab.* 8:1) and a microcosm of all creation. The notion that his various limbs and organs paralleled the parts of the world—his tears like the streams, his hair like forests, and so on—could already be found in ancient Babylonia and was further developed in the rabbinic literature and later (*Avot de'Rabbi Nathan* 31; Jellinek, *Beit ha'Midrash* 5:57–59). The Zohar makes the structure of the human body correspond with that of the divine *sefirot* (the ten attributes or emanations in Kabbalah), in order to establish the resemblance between humans and God and to stress humankind's ability to influence the divine (Zohar, Va'yeshev 191a).

Adam's great wisdom, reflected in the legends of how he assigned names to the animals, and his status as ruler of all creation inasmuch as he was created in the image of God, triggered the envy of the angels and particularly of Satan (Epstein, *Eldad ha'Dani*, pp. 66–67). Consequently, some of the angels opposed his creation (*b. Sanhedrin* 38b; *Gen. Rab.* 8:3–9) and God was forced to defend him in order to justify his creation (*Tanḥuma, Pequdei* 3; *Pirke de'Rabbi Eliezer* 11) and to punish Satan for attempting to make man fail (Latin *Life of Adam and Eve*).

Talmudic legends understand Adam's original vocation as stated in the Bible—to cultivate and guard Eden—to refer to studying the Torah and observing the precepts (*Sifre* Deut. 41; *Pirke de'Rabbi Eliezer* 11), above all the ban on idolatry and the social precepts that govern relations among human beings (*Gen. Rab.* 6:16).

In addition to its historical and moral importance for Judaism, the creation myth also epitomizes and foreshadows the later development of civilization. According to the legend, when Adam was created so were the souls of all future human beings, which are stored until born in the Palace of Souls in the seventh heaven, in Paradise, or in some other location (En. 2:8; Jellinek, *Beit ha'Midrash* 1, "Creation of the Fetus"). Other legends hold that the names and destinies of all generations were determined when Adam was created and that he was vouchsafed a glimpse of all souls that would ever enter the world (Zohar, *Lekh Lekha*, 90b).

Adam's Sin and Expulsion from Eden

The sin that caused Adam to be punished, according to the Bible, was his violation of the ban on eating from the Tree of Knowledge, after which he came to "know good and evil," thus resembling God (Gen. 3:22). Although
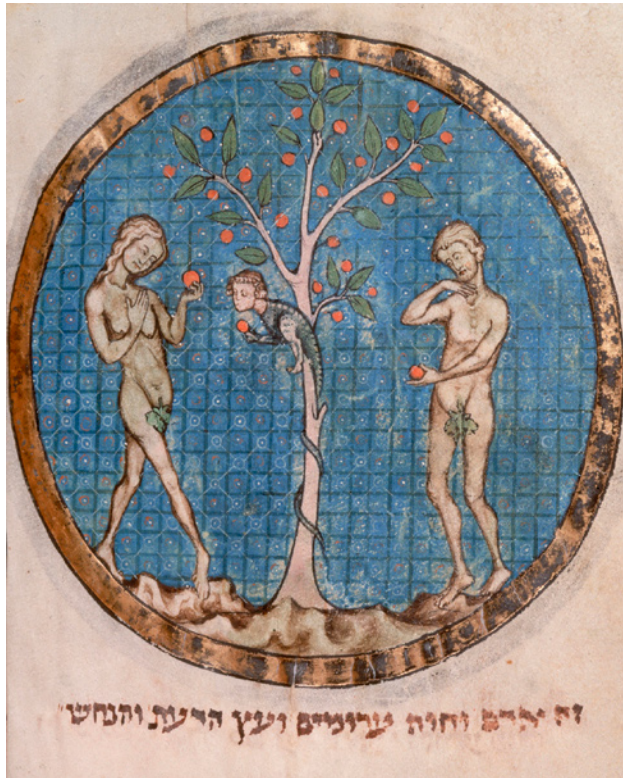
Adam and Eve and the serpent, ca. 1280. Circular image with Hebrew text from the North French Miscellany. Add.11639. Folio No: 520 v *(HIP/Art Resource, NY)*

Eve seduced Adam into committing this sin, he too was expelled from Eden because he listened to her, and also to prevent him from eating the fruit of the Tree of Life, which would make him immortal. A rabbinic legend holds that Adam failed when he did not acknowledge his transgression and ask for God's forgiveness, and that this is why he was expelled and punished (*Tanḥuma Tazria* 9).

Medieval philosophers such as Maimonides read Adam's eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge as an allegory of the dangers of giving in to sensual stimuli and physical appetites, symbolized in the creation story by the woman, Eve. This is why Adam lost part of his intellectual capacity and spiritual powers when he ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge and acquired moral and practical knowledge instead (Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* 1, 2).

Adam's immense body, which God shrank after creation out of fear that Adam might be identified with the deity Himself, contracted even further after his sin, which explains how it was possible for him to hide from God behind the trees of the garden (*Gen. Rab.* 19:8; *Num. Rab.* 13:2). After their expulsion from Eden, according to the Bible, God clothed Adam and Eve in "garments of skin" (Heb. *or*) (Gen. 3:21). From this the talmudic literature, followed by the Zohar, inferred that before the expulsion Adam and Eve were closed in "garments of light" (Heb. *or*), which they lost when they sinned (*Gen. Rab.* 20:12; *Pirke de'Rabbi Eliezer* 14). Adam's supernal beauty, too, was spoiled by his sin and he lost many of his special qualities, including, according to Philo of Alexandria, his joy (Philo, *De opificio mundi* 167).

One legend enumerates ten curses that struck Adam following his sin and expulsion from Eden. These included the need to toil to earn his bread and the shortening of his lifespan (*Avot de'Rabbi Nathan* 42:2).

According to some traditions, the day on which Adam was created was also the day on which he sinned and was expelled from Eden, and coincided with the first day of the month of Tishrei—the Rosh Ha'Shana festival, followed by the Day of Atonement—as a sign to Adam's descendants that they too would be judged on that day (*Lev. Rab.* 29:1).

After the Expulsion

The Bible recounts the story of Adam in detail until the expulsion, but has little to say about the later incidents of his life, such as the birth of his sons Cain and Abel, and later Seth, and many other offspring. The Apocrypha, followed by the talmudic literature, endeavored to fill in this lacuna with legends that tell how Adam came to know the world and that describe his remorse.

According to tradition, after the expulsion Adam became aware of the cyclical nature of day and night and of the seasons. The setting sun at the end of the day and the shortening of the period of daylight in the winter terrified him; he feared that the world was growing dark as punishment for his sins. But after the sun rose again in the morning and the days grew longer after the solstice he realized that this is simply the order of nature and established an eight-day festival to celebrate the return of the light (*b. Avodah Zarah* 8a; *Midrash Tehillim* 92:4). Adam, henceforth condemned to labor, learned how to make fire from stones (*b. Pesaḥim* 54a; *Gen. Rab.* 11:2) as well as how to cultivate the land from the angel Gabriel (*Conflict of Adam and Eve*).

Adam's bond to religion was manifested by his observance of the Noachide precepts (*b. Sanhedrin* 56b) and of the Sabbath (*Midrash Tehillim* 92:6). In the rabbinic tradition, Adam was also the first to pray for rain (*b. Ḥullin* 60b) and to offer sacrifices to God (*b. Avodah Zarah* 8a). He passed on to future generations all languages and crafts (*Gen. Rab.* 24:7) and defined the habitable zones of the world (*b. Berakhot* 31a).

These myths, attached to the figure of Adam, are indications of his role and status in the world and explain and justify the development of Jewish culture and the Jewish way of life.

Adam and Eve's remorse after their sin and expulsion from Eden is described at length in the Latin version of the *Life of Adam and Eve*, and in part also in the Armenian and Georgian versions of this text and in the rabbinic literature (*Pirke de'Rabbi Eliezer* 20; *Yalqut Shimoni*, Bereshit 34). In the Apocrypha, Adam and Eve, searching for food, decide to repent so that God will forgive them. Adam resolves to fast and immerse himself in the waters of the Jordan River for forty days. He sends Eve to the Tigris River to immerse herself there, but Satan intercepts her and seduces her into leaving the water prematurely. Satan tells Adam how he lost his pre-eminence among the angels and fell as a result of Adam's creation and his envy of him. In the wake of Eve's failure to fully repent, Adam and Eve separate for a number of months until Eve's repentance is accepted and Cain is born.

Another legend describes how the angel Raziel appeared to Adam and gave him a book of knowledge, composed of rules whose observance would guarantee a good and prudent life. After his sin Adam lost the book, but it was returned to him when he repented and he handed it down to descendents (beginning of the book of Raziel*;* Zohar, Bereshit 55b).

Adam lived for 930 years. According to tradition, the punishment of mortality that was decreed when he ate the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge was to be implemented after 1,000 years, which is one day as counted by God (*Avot de'Rabbi Nathan* 2:42; *Gen. Rab.* 19:8). But Adam, who was allowed to foresee the destinies of future generations, decided to give seventy years of his life to the soul that became King David, which would otherwise have died at birth (*Num. Rab.* 14:12).

Adam's Death

Adam's illness before his death is described in the several versions of the apocryphal *Life of Adam and Eve.* Adam sent his son, Seth, along with Eve to bring him a healing drug from the Garden of Eden, but God ruled that it could not be given to him until the end of days, when human beings no longer sin (*Life of Adam and Eve* 6–13; En. 25:4–5). After he died, according to the Apocrypha, Adam ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire drawn by angels. His soul was placed in the Garden of Eden, while his body was buried in the ground by angels, in the place from which God had taken the dust to form him. Just as there are divergent traditions about the place from which this dust was taken, so too are there multiple traditions about the place of his burial. According to the Apocrypha, he was buried at the site of the Holy Temple (*Life of Adam and Eve* 40, 43); according to the rabbinic literature, in the Cave of Machpela (*b. Eruvin* 53a; *Gen. Rab.* 58:4); according to the Zohar, adjacent to the Garden of Eden, which is located next to the Temple (Zohar, *Bereshit* 57b). For the first week after Adam's death the sun and moon did not shine, as a sign of mourning (*Life of Adam and Eve* 33–36).

The myths about Adam's death, like those about his life, foreshadow the death and burial rites of future generations. According to the Zohar, at their hour of death all human beings see Adam and remind him of his sin; and he, in turn, reminds them of their many transgressions (Zohar, Bereshit 57b).

In Culture and Folklore

The myth of Adam, in its many versions, has also inspired original works of art and literature throughout the Western world. These include Michelangelo's depiction on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel (1511) of the creation of Adam, and Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost* (1667), which has inspired many later literary and musical treatments. Interest in the myth has not declined in modern times, and Jewish artists such as Marc Chagall have depicted it in many works.

Dozens of stories, especially myths that tell how Adam was created, describe what he looked like, and provide details of his sin, are found in the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa, collected from many communities and historical periods. There are also accounts of the confrontation between Adam and Satan before and after the expulsion from Eden, a few etiological tales about Adam's relations with the animals, and jokes that appear in humorous collections.

Raphael Patai and Tsafi Sebba-Elran

See also: Demon; Eve; Lilith.

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AFGHANISTAN, JEWS OF

According to their own tradition, the Jews of Afghanistan trace their roots to the year 722 B.C.E., when the Assyrian king Shalmaneser V exiled the inhabitants of the northern kingdom of Israel and Transjordan to Assyria (2 Kgs. 17:6, 1 Chr. 5:26). Habor, one of the places in which they were resettled, is associated with the Khyber Pass, which traverses the mountain range between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Hara is identified with Herat in western Afghanistan, the main community of Afghan Jews from the eighteenth to twentieth centuries. The Gozan River is identified with the stream that bisects the town of Ghazni, the ancient capital of Afghanistan and home to a flourishing Jewish community in the Middle Ages. In addition, the largest ethnic group in Afghanistan in the twentieth century, the Pathans (members of the Pashto tribe), claim descent from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. According to genealogical lists in the Bible, Pithon (1 Chr. 8:36) was the great-grandson of Jonathan, the son of King Saul (1 Chr. 8:33–35, 9:39–41).

History and Geography

Modern Afghanistan is bordered by Iran to the west, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan to the north, and Pakistan to the east and south. The Silk Road linking the West to China passed through the country. In the pre-Islamic period, Afghanistan was a Buddhist country. Relics of this age can be found, for example, in the Bamiyan Valley, where two colossal statues of the Buddha, carved into the living rock, were destroyed by the Taliban in February 2001. Most of the country was known as Bactria and was controlled by the Bactrian kingdom. In the early Muslim period, it came to be known as Khorasan, which means "land of the east" or "land of the rising sun."

Evidence of ancient Jewish settlement in Khorasan is a letter—found in the ruins of a Buddhist monastery—from the eighth century C.E. that includes terms in Judeo-Persian. Rock carvings in Hebrew script, evidently made by Jewish merchants during a rest stop on their journey, have been found in Tangi Azao in western Afghanistan.

Archaeological evidence from the Middle Ages attests to the continuing presence of Jews in Afghanistan. Jewish inscriptions have been found in the ancient town of Ghur in Feruz-koh, known today as Jam. These include eighty-eight tombstones of community dignitaries, dating between 1012 and 1249. The stones, of undressed basalt, bear Judeo-Persian texts in Hebrew letters, recording the deceased person's name and status. This evidence points to an active communal life and the existence of synagogues, houses of study, and community institutions.

Testimony by Travelers

The presence of Jews in Khorasan is documented in the writings of Arab geographers, historians, and travelers and of Jewish emissaries from the Land of Israel.

According to the famous Jewish traveler Benjamin of Tudela, who preceded Marco Polo by a century, 80,000 Jews were living in the town of Ghazni in 1170 (scholars have disputed this figure). Joseph Wolff, a Jewish convert to Christianity who conducted missionary activities among the Jews of eastern lands, including Afghanistan, wrote about the Jewish communities that he visited in 1822, 1826, and 1831. The Jewish traveler Joseph Benjamin, who referred to himself as "Benjamin the Second," toured Asia in 1845 and wrote about the Jewish communities in Afghanistan and the origins of the Pathan tribes. In 1867, Baruch Shabbetai, an emissary from Jerusalem, visited Herat to collect funds for charity; while there he served as a witness to a marriage contract. Ephraim Neumark, in his Hebrew travelogue *Journey in the Land of the East* (1947), documented his encounters with remote Jewish communities. Setting out from Tiberias on December 17,

1883, he penetrated as far as Central Asia, where he visited the Jewish communities of Herat, Guryan, Meymane (known in the Middle Ages as al-Yahudiya), Balkh, and Tashkurgan. Neumark recorded the number of households in each place, the Jews' occupations and lifestyle, clothes, and customs, and chronicled important events of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Naphtali Abrahamov, an emissary from the Land of Israel to Herat, documented his impressions of the community in 1928–30 in the article "Two Years in Afghanistan" (1935; *Hayarden* 234, 236, 238, 240, 244, 247, 255, 259, 284).

Internal Documentation and Occupations

Internal documentation about the lives of the Jews is available from the second half of the nineteenth century, in *Events and Times* (1935), a book by Reuven Kashani about Mollā Mathatya Garji, the rabbi of Herat. There is documentation of the history of the Jews of Herat and the conversos of Mashhad in Iran, who, emigrating to Afghanistan in 1839–40, added 200 new families to the forty households already living in Herat.

There were Jewish communities in Herat, Kabul, Balkh, Meymane, and Andekhoi. Most members of the community were merchants, whose travels kept them away from home for months or even years on end. The mainstays of their trade were caracul pelts, precious stones, carpets, porcelainware, tea, sugar, and foodstuffs.

The community officers and craftsmen included the president of the community or *kalātar* ("most eminent"), the rabbi and scholar (*mollā*), the sexton of the synagogue (*shammash*), the dealer in medicinal herbs and spices (*attār*), the healer and apothecary (*khakim ji*), the baker (*nā nve*), and the goldsmith (*zargar*). Family names provide additional information about the Jews' occupations.

Synagogues

The city of Herat had four synagogues, built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on the ruins of older structures. Each bore the name of the rabbi who officiated in it: the Mollā-ye Garji synagogue, the Mollā-ye Yoav synagogue, the Mollā-ye Gol synagogue, and the Mollā-ye Shemuel synagogue. They had a central hall for prayers, with the Holy Ark on the western wall and the hazzan's lectern adjacent to it.

Worshipers took off their shoes at the entrance to the synagogue and sat on cushions. The women prayed from the women's gallery. The interior of the synagogue was decorated with stucco and colorful frescoes. Each synagogue also had a study hall, a ritual bath, living quarters for the sexton, a hall for celebrating life-cycle events, and storage rooms. There was a well in the courtyard and a
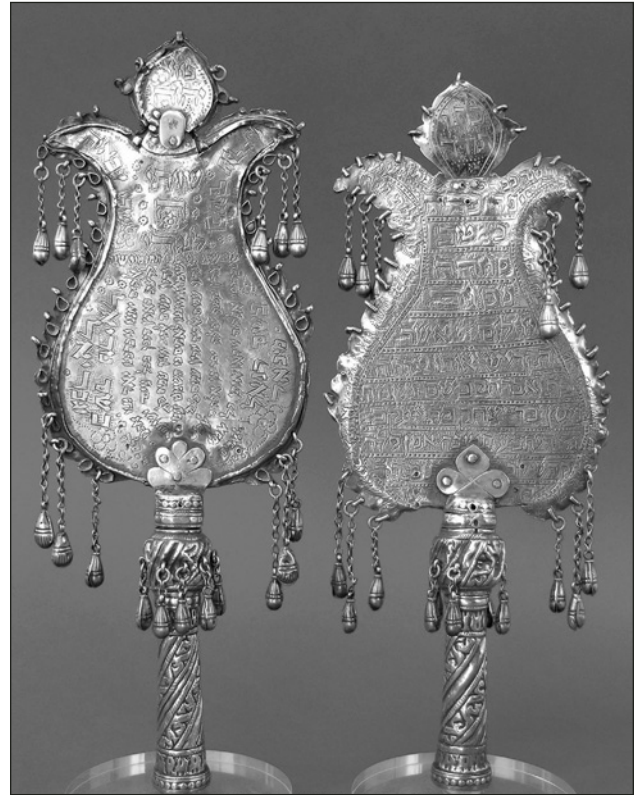
Crown Torah finials. Silver, chased. Afghanistan, ca. 1880. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

garden of herbs and spices used for the *Havdalah* ceremony (observed at the end of Shabbat, in order to mark the distinction between the departing sacred day and the coming ordinary weekday) and in folk remedies.

The synagogue was open every day of the year. At age three, boys came there to learn the Hebrew alphabet from the *khalife* (teacher and rabbi). After they had mastered it, they began their studies of Torah, prayers, and religious poetry (*piyyutim*). Boys who went further in their sacred studies also studied Rashi's commentary, the Mishnah, and the Gemara. Adult men studied the Zohar. A school that added arithmetic, drawing, and liturgical poetry to the traditional curriculum of sacred subjects opened in the late 1920s. This educational institution had a short life, however, because of the opposition of several leaders of the community.

Cultural Life

The Jews of Afghanistan used Hebrew for prayer and Torah study; their daily vernacular was Dari, a dialect of Persian. Men carried notebooks (*dastak*) in which they copied liturgical and secular poetry, aphorisms, proverbs, philosophical thoughts, and spiritual insights in Dari but using Hebrew script.

Jewish society in Afghanistan was patriarchal. Upon marriage a girl moved to her husband's house. Inheritance was through the paternal line. Nevertheless, women had great power and influence in various informal domains, such as the home and the community.

In Afghanistan, a preadolescent Jewish girl was called a "*dokhtar.*" From the time of menarche, she was known as *zan shodeh,* that is, "she has become a woman"; during menstruation she was *asure,* or "untouchable." After entering menopause, she was *mard shodeh,* that is, "she has become a man." At this stage of life, women became eligible to hold important community positions, serving as midwife, healer, apothecary, dream interpreter, synagogue beadle, bathhouse attendant, corpse-washer, and spiritual adviser.

If the men of the community were for the most part "foreign ministers," engaged in the relationship with the non-Jewish environment, the women were "ministers of the interior." They oversaw the community's symbolic and cultural system, conducted ceremonies, and passed on its moral, educational, and cultural codes to the daughters of the next generation by means of aphorisms and proverbs.

The life cycle was based on the classical trio of birth, marriage, and death. A well-known aphorism, "*Har chi mama miyāre/morde shur mibare*" (what the midwife brings/ the corpse-washer takes) linked the beginning and end of life in a binary system, between whose poles a person must behave fittingly and observe the precepts that apply between human beings and God and among human beings themselves. To regulate community life and social relations, the Jews in Afghanistan maintained autonomic religious courts to mediate and rule on community matters, shunning the Muslim courts. Funds were collected to support the needy and a system of volunteers served the community without pay.

Because of the community's remoteness and isolation from other Diaspora Jews, as well as its ethnic and religious isolation from Afghan life in general, it developed a unique cultural habitus, with a Jewish religious core surrounded by a diffuse system of cultural expressions adopted from the host society. This was manifested on several levels: (1) folk beliefs, customs, and ceremonies; (2) folktales and cultural oicotypes; (3) a dietary tradition that combined the geographical and cultural influences of the people of the cultural triangle of Persia, India, and China, with the Halakhot governing kosher food and kosher eating habits; (4) material culture, including both profane and sacred articles, such as ornamented marriage contracts (*ketubbot*), men's and women's clothing, and the architecture and decoration of residences and synagogues.

Folk medicine was prevalent among the Jews in Afghanistan. Khakim Ji Yahyā, who brewed potions from medicinal herbs and various minerals, was well known in Herat. This healer and his son set up a dispensary and clinic in the city, which served both Jews and non-Jews. Jewish healers, experts at preparing remedies and amulets for protection and defense against the evil eye and demons, were active in the villages and among the tribes.

The Jews in Afghanistan were known for their love of stories and parables. The Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University in Haifa includes 527 folktales collected from Afghan Jews who immigrated to Israel, a relatively large number considering the size of the community. Tall tales and legends predominate, with proverbs and sayings incorporated into the stories themselves. Some of them were collected and published in Hebrew by members of the community: Zevulun Kort's *The Princess Who Turned into a Bouquet of Flowers* (1924) and *Folktales Told by Jews of Afghanistan* (1983); and Ben-Zion Yehoshua's *The Father's Will* (1969) and *An Apple from the Tree of Knowledge* (1986).

Throughout their long years of exile, the Jews of Afghanistan yearned for the Land of Israel. They went on pilgrimages to the holy places and prostrated themselves on the graves of patriarchs and righteous men. Organized aliyah (the immigration of Jews to Eretz Israel) began in the late nineteenth century. Three main waves of Afghan aliyah can be distinguished: first aliyah, 1882–1914: 327 immigrants; second aliyah, 1933–39: 2,193 immigrants, including 730 "illegals"; third aliyah, 1950–51 (after the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948): 5,167 immigrants. The last Jews in Afghanistan emigrated to Israel and the United States in the 1960s and the 1980s.

Today the vast majority of the descendants of Afghan Jewry live in Israel. The smaller communities in New York, Los Angeles, and Singapore maintain cultural and religious contact with the mother community in Israel. As of 2009, only a single Jew, Zevulun Simantov, lived in Kabul.

Tsila Zan-Bar Tsur

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AFIKOMAN

See: Amulets; Passover

AFTERLIFE

The belief in the omnipotence and justness of God underlies a belief in an afterlife, a spiritual or bodily life that exists after a human being's physical death on Earth. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain immoral and inequitable existence in this world, enabling the righteous to suffer and the wicked to thrive. The concept of an afterlife is fundamental in the teachings of Christianity and Islam. Their sacred texts elaborate and offer a concrete, systematized image of the promised destiny awaiting human beings after death. By contrast, in Jewish sacred literature, discussions of an afterlife are sparse, obscure, and miscellaneous, offering no cohesive view on the subject. As a result, a wide variety of attitudes toward and conceptions of the afterlife have developed in Judaism throughout the ages.

In the Bible

The obscurity and scantiness with which the theme of the afterlife is treated in the Bible can be interpreted as a contra-response to the Egyptian milieu and culture, in which Jewish society sojourned right before accepting the Torah in the revelation at Mount Sinai. The afterlife played a dominant role in ancient Egyptian religion, and it may well be that this subject was silenced in the Bible with the deliberate intention of diminishing Egyptian influence and preventing Jews from adopting the ritual of death that existed around them. Judaism considered death impure and defiling, to such an extent that Jewish priests were not allowed to approach the dead (Lev. 21:1). The faith emphasized the importance of earthly life, centering on the covenant between the Jewish people and God. This world was depicted as the sole place that provided both the ability and the privilege of fulfilling humankind's part in the covenant (Eccl. 9:10; Isa. 38:18; Ps. 115:17). Man's purpose in life was to keep the commandments and thus progress spiritually. What would result in the afterlife was only a product of this earthly behavior and hence of lesser importance.

The Bible includes verses figuratively conveying a belief in the finality of life: the dead are likened to dust returning to dust (Gen. 3:19), to water that is spilled on the ground and that cannot be gathered up again (2 Sam. 14:14). Contrarily, other verses express a belief in the eternality of the soul: "the dust returns to the earth as it was, and the spirit returns to God, Who gave it" (Eccl. 12:7). Psalm 49 expresses a differentiation in allotting rewards: The righteous return to God, while the wicked go to *Sheol* (also called *Dumah,* literally meaning "silence"), yet this idea is an exception. The more prevalent belief is that everyone, good and bad alike, is placed by God in *Sheol* (1 Sam. 2:6).

Sheol is depicted in various places in the Bible as a dark (Job 10:21, 22; Ps. 88:13) and silent (Ps. 115:17) pit, located beneath the earth (Num. 16:30, Ezek. 31:14, Ps. 88:7, Lam. 3:55; Jonah 2:7, Job 26:5). It is a pale and gloomy shadow of earthly existence, resembling descriptions of the afterworld in other ancient civilizations, such as the Greek Hades and the Sumerian Irkalla. The dying join their relatives in the afterlife, as implied by the phrase: "gather to one's people/forefathers" (Gen. 25:8,17, 35:29, 49:33; Num. 20:24; Deut. 32:50; Judg. 2:10; 2 Kgs. 22:20), said mainly on the death of the patriarchs. It may be that, in some instances, the phrase "cut off from one's people" (כרת) refers to denying this privilege to extreme sinners (Lev. 17:10–14; 20:2–6; Ezek. 14:7–8). The dead have awareness: They wait for the living to join

them (1 Sam. 28:19), and rise up to greet great leaders arriving (Isa. 14:9). *Sheol* can rarely be avoided, as in the exceptional cases of Enoch, taken by God (Gen. 5:24), and Elijah, ascending to heaven in a chariot of fire (2 Kgs. 2:11). The dead can be roused to appear—temporarily—in the world of the living, the way Saul had a sorcerer conjure up Samuel (1 Sam. 28:8–15), but necromancy was forbidden in Judaism. After a person has entered *Sheol,* there is no return (Job 7:9; Eccl. 9:5–6).

A different concept of the afterlife, including resurrection, appears in late biblical sources such as Isaiah 26:19 (ca. 334 B.C.E.) and Daniel 12:1–4 (ca. 165 B.C.E.). Resurrection is depicted as inclusive but combined with the idea of a final judgment, in which the entire human race is resurrected, and individuals are rewarded or punished: Everyone shall be awakened, risen "from the dust of earth," but the righteous shall awake "for eternal life," and the wicked, "for disgrace, for eternal abhorrence." This depiction seems to have originated in the ancient Persian religion of Zoroastrianism, to which Jews were exposed because of Persian sovereignty of the region.

In Second Temple Literature

Most depictions of the afterlife in apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature (anonymous Jewish religious writings from 200 B.C.E. to 200 C.E. that are not included in biblical Scripture) continued Daniel's concept of resurrection (*teḥiyyat ha'metim*). Different beliefs were retained regarding the question of whether resurrection included everyone or only the righteous, as well as the question of whether resurrection was reserved for Israel alone or for the entire human race (Bar. 49–51:4; 2 Esd. 7:32–37). Another schism concerned the question of whether resurrection was bodily—meaning that the dead would come back to life both in body and in soul (1 En. 83–90)—or was to be spiritual only (Jub. 23:31; As. Mos. 10:9; 1 En. 103:3, 4; 2 En. 22:8–10). Some of the apocalyptic writings speak of two resurrections: the first only of the just, at the beginning of the messianic millennium; the second of the wicked, at the final Day of the Lord, which is for the wicked a "second death" (2 En. 66:5).

Until the Day of Judgment and resurrection, the dead are depicted as waiting in *Sheol,* sleeping or praying for absolution (2 Macc. 6:26; 7:9–36; 12:43; 14:46; Jub. 23:30; 4 Ezra 7:29–33; and elsewhere). According to some of these writings, the dead were not assembled together in the same place but, rather, divided into groups according to their virtues and sins. *Sheol* is depicted as consisting of various levels, where reward and punishment are executed even before resurrection. The wicked are frequently punished by fire (1 En. 90:26; 4 Ezra 7:36; *T. Ab.* 12); the righteous are sometimes rewarded by watching the wicked suffer (*As. Mos.* 10:10). In the Ethiopic Book

of Enoch (ca. 200 B.C.E.), *Sheol* is elaborately described as divided into four compartments, populated according to humankind's evil or good acts in the earthly world. In the first three compartments, the "faithful saints," the "moderately good," and "the wicked" await resurrection day, meanwhile enjoying bliss (in the first compartment) or suffering torment (in the third). The fourth compartment is for the wicked, who have already been judged, have received their punishment, and will not be resurrected on Judgment Day (1 En. 22). According to some of these writings, these levels of *Sheol* occupy a geographic location: most bliss on top; most torment, at the bottom (4 Ezra 7:36–37). Some writings replaced the image of *Sheol* with the general phrase "accursed valley," used to describe the place where the wicked will be judged and tortured (1 En. 27), whereas the just are to enjoy the delights of an eschatological "heavenly Jerusalem," of which the earthly city Jerusalem is the prototype (2 En.).

The Pharisees, the major sect that existed in Judaism during the last two centuries before the Romans' destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., maintained the belief in a resurrection that includes reward and punishment. The first-century Jewish historian Josephus Flavius wrote that Pharisees held that, while "souls of bad men are subject to eternal punishment" in the afterworld, souls of the virtuous were "removed into other bodies" and given "the power to revive and live again" (Josephus, *Antiq.,* 18:1, 3; *J.W.,* 2:8, 14). This implies a belief in reincarnation as reward, yet all the apocryphal writings of Pharisee origin assert a faith in resurrection. Their contemporaries, the Sadducees, maintained that souls die with bodies and hence denied resurrection and rejected all afterlife derivative—even the pale *Sheol.* Some apocryphal writings confront the Sadducees on this issue (Jub. 23:30; *T. Jud.* 25; *T. Zeb.* 10; *T. Benj.* 10; *Life of Adam and Eve* xiii; *Apoc. Baruch* 30:1–5; 50–51; 2 Esd. 7:32; *Pss. Sol.* 3:16; 14:13).

Alongside the belief that the afterworld was an interim station on the way to the Day of Judgment, there existed a belief that denied resurrection, maintaining that the spirits of the righteous entered blessed heavenly immortality immediately upon death. This belief was influenced by Greek philosophy, which claimed both immortality and the preexistence of souls. According to the Greeks, at death, souls are finally freed from their imprisoning earthly body and are able to return to their home in God; but the souls of the wicked suffer eternal death. The belief in immortality of the soul was adopted by the ancient Essenes and appeared in Hellenistic pseudepigraphical writings (4 Macc. 9:8; 13:16; 15:2; 17:5,18; 18:23; *Wisdom of Solomon* 3:1–9; 4:7,10; 5:16; 6:20; *Pss. Sol.* 49, 73). The ancient biblical idea of *Sheol* as the gloomy, twilight afterlife was also retained, but only in Ben Sira's deuterocanonical book *Sirach* (Eccl. 14:16; 28:21; 51:6, 9).

In Rabbinic Literature of the Talmudic Era

Rabbinic literature contains a variety of views on what happens in the afterlife. The soul is sometimes depicted as motionless or asleep, with the souls of the righteous "hidden under the Throne of Glory" (Shabbat 152b). Another view is that the dead are likened to the living in everything except the power to speak (*Psiqta Rabbati* 12:46). Usually the soul is depicted as fully conscious after death: It is aware of its present situation, remembers its earthly life, and is probably aware of things happening after its death in the world of the living, as well (*Exod. Rab.* 52:3; *Midrash Tanḥuma* Ki Tissa 33; *Ketubbot* 77b, 104a; *Berakhot* 18b–19a). The soul also maintains some connection with its earthly body, occasionally visiting it during the first twelve months after death, until the body deteriorates (*Shabbat* 152b–153a; *Midrash Tanḥuma Vayikra* 8).

Immediately after a person's death, the soul is brought to judgment. Each Jew has two places reserved: one in Paradise (*Gan Eden,* sometimes referred to as *Olam ha'Ba*) and one in hell (*Gehinnom*). After being given the verdict, the soul is shown the place it might have occupied had it lived differently (Midrash Ps. 6:6; 31:6). Only then is the soul assigned to its proper abode. Souls are divided into three categories: the thoroughly righteous, the thoroughly wicked, and those in between. The thoroughly righteous are ushered into heavenly paradise (*Berakhot* 17a), a place full of tranquility and bliss. About eleven people, mostly biblical figures, even managed to enter Paradise without dying (Ginzberg 2003, 5:5–96) and legend tells in detail how the third-century Palestinian amora Joshua ben Levi succeeded in achieving this feat (*Ketubbot* 77b). Paradise is sometimes described as consisting of life's sensual pleasures. The righteous sit under elaborate canopies (*Ruth Rab.* 3:4) at golden tables and stools (*Ta'anit* 25a; *Ketubbot* 77b), between rivers of milk and honey, and participate in lavish banquets in which delicacies are served, such as the Leviathan and "the wine preserved in its grapes since the six days of Creation" (*Bava Batra* 75a). Yet Paradise is also viewed metaphysically, as a place where no bodily enjoyment (eating drinking, propagation), business transactions, or emotions such as jealousy, hatred, or competition take place, but the righteous sit crowned, feasting on the brightness of the divine presence (*Berakhot* 17a).

Both the "thoroughly wicked" and the "people in between" are sent to the flames of hell, which are claimed to be sixty times hotter than earthly fire (*Berakhot* 57b). The first go there for "everlasting abhorrence" (Dan. 12:2), and the latter for a period of expurgation, after which they are sent to Paradise (Zech. 13:9)—although according to the school of Hillel, they are sent to Paradise immediately (*t. Sanhedrin* 13:3; *Rosh Hashanah* 16b–17a).

During the purgatorial period, the soul is made aware of the errors and wrongdoing it has committed during its earthly life. For each soul, a different purgatorial period is determined, according to its virtues and sins, lasting from one month to a maximum of one year. Lamentations and prayers for the dead—especially if coming from a son—were thought to mitigate the punishment (*Qiddushin* 31b), and this is why mourning orphans recited the Kaddish prayer for their parents' souls, yet did so for a period of only eleven months, thus showing faith that their parents did not receive maximum punishment. After serving the appropriate period of purification, the expiated souls go to Paradise (*Eduyyot* 2:10).

After one year, only the thoroughly wicked are left in hell to endure punishment (*t. Sanhedrin* 12:4, 5; *Rosh Hashanah* 17a). According to the teachings of Palestinian halakhist Rabbi Hanina, these include adulterers, those who put their fellows to shame in public, and those who called their fellows by an obnoxious name (*Bava Metzi'a* 58b), but the general belief was that there are few "arch sinners," namely: those that renounced Judaism, extreme evildoers, and evil leaders (*Sanhedrin* 10 Mishnayoth 1–4). Another belief was that Jews cannot be left in hell for more than a year, because Abraham draws out of it his circumcised descendants (*Gen. Rab.* 48; *Midrash Tehillim* 7:1; *Eruvin* 19a). Some teachers thought that non-Jewish villains, such as the pharaohs, are doomed to hell forever, while others believed that evil gentiles cease to exist after one year in perdition—their body is consumed, their soul is burned, and the wind scatters them under the soles of the feet of the righteous (*Rosh Ha'Shana* 17a). None of those who stay in hell after a year will have a share in the World to Come (*Olam ha'Ba*), yet the possibility of repentance and redemption is also mentioned in many works (Ginzberg 2003, 6:103, n. 586).

The general perception in rabbinic literature is that all the souls of the dead wait in the afterworld's compartments of Paradise and hell, until the days of the messianic redemption. During the messianic era, or after it, God alone will decide who will be resurrected and will resurrect the dead (*Ta'anit* 2a; *Sanhedrin* 113a; *Berakhot* 15b), with assistance from the messiah, Elijah, and the righteous in general (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* xxxii; *Sotah* ix 15; *Midrash Shir ha'Shirim Zuta*, vii; *Pesaḥim* 68a). The resurrection will take place solely in the Holy Land—"the land of the living," meaning "the land where the dead live again" (*Pesiqta Rabbati* i, after Ps. cxvi 9; *Gen. Rab.* lxxiv: *y. Ketubbot* xii 35b, with reference to Isa. xlii 5). The dead who are buried outside Israel will be compelled to creep through cavities in the earth until they reach it (*Gilgul Mekhilot,* e.g., *Pesiqta Rabbati* 1.c., with reference to Ezek. xxxvii 13; *Ketubbot* 111a). The dead will be roused from their sleep by means of the "dew of resurrection." Their souls will return to dust, which will be subsequently reconstituted as the perfect earthly body

into which individuals will be brought to life again in the physical world (*y. Berakhot* 9b; *Ta'anit* i. 63d, with reference to Isa. xxvi, 19; *Ḥagigah* 12b with reference to Ps. lxviii, 10; *Midrash Tanḥuma* Va'yigash: 8).

Different teachings exist regarding the identity of the resurrected. Some claimed that all dead souls will be brought to life, "As all men are born and die, so will they rise again" (*m. Avot* 4:22), but only the just will be granted everlasting life in "the World to Come" (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* xxxiv). The wicked will be brought back to life for a short while only, just until they are judged and sentenced to die a second and final death—destroyed by the unshielded rays of the sun or by a fire issuing from their own bodies (*Gen. Rab.* 6:6; 26:6; *Yalqut Shimoni* 2:428, 499). This belief assumes that "There will be no *Gehinnom* in future times" (*Rosh Ha'Shana* 17a; Tosefta to *Rosh Hashanah* 16b; *Bava Metzi'a* 58b; *Nedarim* 8b; *Avodah Zarah* 3b). Other beliefs maintain that only souls that deserve a part in "the World to Come" will be resurrected. These include martyrs (*Yalqut Shimoni* ii, 431); the righteous (*Ta'anit* 7a), and all the Children of Israel (*Gen. Rab.* 13:4; *Lev. Rab.* 13:3; *Sifre* Deut. 306)—excluding only those that denied resurrection, claimed that the Torah was not from Heaven, or were Epicureans (*Sanhedrin* 10:1; 90b–91a).

The ultimate reward of the individual Jew (and possibly the righteous gentile) is to be meted out in "the World to Come," which is the ubiquitous Jewish eschatological idea. Sometimes the term refers to a heavenly paradise, where the righteous wait until the days of messianic redemption. But "the World to Come" is destined to take place after the messianic era and resurrection and hence is most probably supposed to occur in the physical world: in the Holy Land or even in Jerusalem. Usually, it is described in terms emphasizing the difference between the world that we know and the world to come: This world, in comparison to the world to come, is like a lobby compared to a banquet hall; a hotel to a home; night to morning, darkness to light; shore to sea (*Pesaḥim* 2b; *y. Ḥagigah* 10a). Spiritual and physical pleasures—such as Sabbath, sunlight, and marital relations (*tashmish*)—are said to reflect it; yet what we know is but one-sixtieth of what is to be expected (*Berakhot* 57b). Even nature as humankind knows it shall change: already in the messianic era "the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days," but in the World to Come, "the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed," fading into insignificance because of the light radiating from the Lord (*Sanhedrin* 91b after Isa. 24:23; 30:26). The Divine Presence shall show its splendor and glory. This future bliss is so great that it can neither be imagined, explained, nor described, and instead of elaborating on the subject, the verse "no eye had ever seen a God besides You" (Isa. 64:3) is provided, meaning that none but God can grasp

it (e.g., *Berakhot* 34b; *Shabbat* 63a; *Sanhedrin* 99a). This much one should know: although "better one hour of tranquility of spirit in the world to come than all the life of this world" (*Avot* 4, Mishnah 17), it is not an end in itself, and this world is still exhibited as the main goal: "Better one hour in repentance and good deeds in this world than all the life in the world to come" (ibid.).

In Medieval Jewish Literature, Philosophy, and Kabbalah

By the Middle Ages, the belief in resurrection had become a basic credo of the Jewish faith, fixed in the Jewish liturgy, including morning prayers such as "Elohai neshamah"; "Gevurot," (also called "Teḥiyyat ha'Metim" or the resurrection of the dead) which is the second blessing of the weekday Tefilat ha'Amidah; and funeral services. This posed a problem to medieval Jewish thinkers, who followed Greek philosophy in believing in the immortality of the soul. The neo-Platonist doctrine assumes that all souls are an eternal immaterial substance, capable of survival after death. After being freed from the body, they ascend to their home in heaven, the righteous enjoying spiritual bliss in proximity to God. The Aristotelian doctrine maintains that only the "acquired intellect" escapes death; hence, immortality can be obtained by the intellectual contemplation of God. Another difficulty arose from the contrast between bodily resurrection and the neo-Platonist precept of "spiritual" as superior to "physical." In addition, resurrection was claimed to be individual, while according to some Jewish Aristotelians, the souls of all men, once immortal, are united.

These differences led Jewish philosophers to seek ways of integrating concepts from philosophy and religion, thus formulating different narratives of the afterworld. For example, the tenth-century philosopher and talmudist Rabbi Sa'adiah Gaon supported the doctrine of resurrection (*Book of Beliefs and Opinions* 7) yet claimed that the reunited soul and body achieve eternal, spiritual bliss in the world to come (i.e., bodily immortality after resurrection [ibid., 9]). Another way of merging the two contradictory concepts was by emphasizing the spiritual happiness of the souls in the afterworld (in paradise)—to be followed by resurrection (e.g., Judah Halevi, *The Kuzari* 1:109). Others declared faith in resurrection as a religious dogma, but stated that it was not one of the fundamental teachings of Judaism (Ibn Daud, *Emunah Ramah,* 1:7; Albo, *Sefer ha'Ikkarim,* 4:35–41).

Most divisive was the preeminent medieval Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides, who, on the one hand, affirmed resurrection and made it the last of his thirteen articles of belief (Maimonides commentary on Mishnah Sanhedrin introduction to *Helek*) but, on the other hand,

ignored it, and claimed in his *Mishneh Torah* (Teshuvah 8), the comprehensive code of Jewish law, and *Guide for the Perplexed* (*Guide* 2:27; 3:27, 51–52, 54) that in the "World to Come" there is nothing corporeal. Maimonides synthesized the two ideas by asserting that during the messianic era, body and soul will reunite and the dead will be resurrected, but at a later stage, all the resurrected will die a second death, after which the souls of the righteous will enjoy an eternal bodiless existence in the presence of God, in a spiritual "World to Come." The "righteous," according to Maimonides, were not the "good" or the "moral" but, rather, the men who actualized their intellect, following the Aristotelian belief that only the actualized intellect has an afterlife. Maimonides regarded intellect as lacking individual personality and spoke of the "incorporeal intelligences" (in plural), implying that in the World to Come there exists only one immortal "collective intellect" for all of humankind (introd. to *Helek; Mishneh Torah, Teshuvah*, 8–10; *Guide* 1:41; *Treatise on Resurrection*).

Maimonides portrayed the afterworld as a metaphysical place in which only the intellects of those who sought knowledge in their lifetime were allowed future existence. These were bodiless—like the ministering angels—perhaps even forming one collective soul. The pleasures of the afterworld resided in attaining new knowledge of God (rejecting sensual delights like banquets and golden tables), and resurrection was reduced to a degree of a temporary, future miracle. This view of resurrection was strongly combated by Abraham ben David of Posquières, the talmudic authority in Provence, France, at the end of the twelfth century, and Rabbi Samuel ben Ali, the Jewish scholar (Gaon) at Baghdad, forcing Maimonides to defend himself by writing his "Treatise on Resurrection." The elitist (Maimonides) view regarding immortality also aroused antagonism, such as by Rabbi Ḥasdai Crescas, who claimed that the afterlife is granted to whoever seeks goodness and the love of God (rather than the knowledge of God, *Or adonai* 2:5; 3:3; cf. also Gersonides, *Milhamot ha'Shem,* 1:13; Albo, *Sefer ha'Ikkarim,* 4:29).

The abstract concept of the afterworld expressed by Maimonides was contested in a number of post-talmudic writings that elaborated the rabbinical ideas of the afterlife in a very tangible, illustrative manner, e.g., tractate *Gan Eden* (Jellinek 1938, 3:131–140)*,* tractate *Gehinnom* (ibid. 1:147–149)*,* tractate *Chibut Hakever* (ibid. 1:150–152)*,* the *Iggeret of Joshua ben Levi* (ibid. 2:48–51)*, Midrash Konen* (ibid. 2:23–39)*, Otiyyot de'Rabbi Akiva* (ibid. 3:12–64), and especially "Tophet and Eden"—the 28th chapter in the *Maḥbarot* of the poet Immanuel ben Solomon of Rome, thirteenth to fourteenth centuries (Imanuel 1957, 791–853). These writings—some of which are of kabbalistic origin—lavishly supply the dimensions, compartments, materials, design, and so forth, of both Paradise and hell, as well as give detailed accounts

of the procedures taking place after death. An interesting idea is that of the beating in the grave (*Chibut hakever*), greatly developed in kabbalistic literature. According to this belief, immediately after a person's burial, four angels enter the grave, deepen it to the deceased's height, return his soul to his body, hold him by his limbs and shake and beat him with fire, just as a blanket is shaken to remove dust. The angels stop only after the deceased is able to tell them his "name from the Sitra Aḥra," demonstrating that he is aware of his evil self, following the belief that the names given to infants at birth are determined by God, each containing two sides, one of holiness and one of impurity. Remembering the name testifies that the spiritual impurity (*kelipah*) that was previously attached to both body and soul has fallen out completely. Mourners attending the funeral try to help the deceased remember his name by reading verses from Psalm 119, beginning with its letters. Naturally, the righteous need less beating then the wicked, and saints remember their names and tell them to the angel of death even before burial. However, all those who are buried on Sabbath eve are exempt from *Chibut hakever,* as the holiness of the Sabbath purifies their soul, separating the *kelipah* from it without inflicting pain (e.g., Ḥaim Vital, *Sha'ar hagilgulim* [The Gate of Reincarnations], 23).

Along with the philosophical debate regarding the nature of immortality and resurrection in the afterlife, a different view emerged that affirmed the transmigration of the soul (*gilgul neshamot*). This doctrine, which was prevalent in Asian philosophies, probably entered Jewish circles through Manicheism, Platonic, neo-Platonic, or Orphic teachings. It does not appear in the writings of Judaism or in any sect that stemmed from it prior to Anan ben David, the founder of the religious sect Karaism (except the Pharisee view, mentioned by Josephus, as such). Anan's followers rejected the belief in reincarnation, and it became a fundamental tenet of kabbalistic eschatology only years later, starting with its first literary expression in *Sefer ha'bahir,* the key symbolic commentary on the Hebrew Bible published in the late twelfth century.

According to the kabbalistic belief, each soul that is incarnated on earth has a special task assigned to it. Souls that fail in fulfilling their tasks are either punished and purified in hell or reincarnated again to complete the unfinished work. A few kabbalists, mainly in the late sixteenth century, asserted that people can be transmigrated even into non-human bodies—animals, plants, and inorganic matter. Lurianic Kabbalah (esoteric Jewish mysticism) in Safed turned transmigration into a general principle: It is the fate of all souls. Until then it was considered a very severe punishment, yet also an expression of God's mercy, giving even the thoroughly wicked another chance to atone for their sins and purify themselves. According to Jewish folk belief, a soul can be reincarnated as many as three times (according to Job

33:29), but the righteous transmigrate endlessly, for the sake of humanity. A contrary supposition asserts that the righteous can be reincarnated only three times, and the wicked up to a thousand. However, in a few, severe cases, it is believed that wicked souls are denied both hell and reincarnation and are doomed to exile from heaven without the possibility of finding rest.

Kabbalists use the idea of reincarnation to explain not only what happens in the afterworld but also the apparent misfortunes that occur in the physical world (i.e., why infants die and the righteous suffer). *Sefer peliah* views converts to Judaism as Jewish souls reincarnated into gentiles. Many biblical events were interpreted by Kabbalists in terms of transmigration. For example, Job's suffering was explained as atonement for his sins in his previous existence as Terah, the father of Abraham. Yet the era's main medieval Jewish philosophers, including Sa'adiah Gaon, David Kimhi, Yedayah Bedershi, Ḥasdai Crescas, Abraham ibn Daud, Joseph Albo, and Abraham ben Moses ben Maimon (the son of Maimonides), rejected this doctrine and considered it non-Jewish.

In Modern Jewish Thought

To this day, Judaism is focused on earthly life and the subject of the afterlife is seldom discussed. Hence, there is no dominant viewpoint, and modern Judaism incorporates simultaneously all the aforementioned distinct and contradictory conceptions of the afterlife (excluding the biblical belief in *Sheol*). What one believes depends to a great deal on one's own personality, degree of devoutness, and the religious sect to which one belongs. Generally, it can be asserted that the more Orthodox a person is, the more he or she is inclined to believe in the rabbinical-talmudic perceptions of the afterlife. These include the ideas of reward and punishment in Paradise and hell; future resurrection of the dead as a part of the messianic redemption; a promised World to Come; and some form of immortality of the soul. Mystic, kabbalistic, and Hasidic sects believe in reincarnation, as expressed in some versions of the nightly prayer accompanying the recitation of the "Shema" (asking for forgiveness for any sins that one may have committed "in this *gilgul* or in a previous one"). The idea of reincarnation has also become very popular in folklore, especially in Yiddish literature and in legends about *tzaddikim* (righteous individuals). Rabbinical sects reject reincarnation and tend toward an incorporeal view of the afterlife. The sects of Reform and Reconstructionist Judaism reject the belief in future resurrection of the dead, holding only the belief in a spiritual life after death. These sects have modified relevant liturgical passages accordingly, changing the words "giving life to the dead" (*meḥaye ha'metim*) to read "giving life to all" (*meḥaye ha'kol*), although the new prayer book of the Reform Judaism movement has returned to the traditional formulation. Many Reform and secular Jews believe, like the ancient Sadducees, that all ends with death, and there is no afterlife at all. This wide spectrum of learned opinions regarding the afterlife has become incorporated into Jewish folk belief. The likely confusion between different depictions of the afterlife is expressed in jokes and stories, such as the one claiming that there is only one afterlife for everyone: Moses sits and teaches Torah all day long. For the righteous, this is heaven; for the evil, it is hell.

Raphael Patai and Ayelet Oettinger

See also: Death.

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AGE AND THE AGED

Old age and the process of aging are described in rich and myriad ways in various Jewish texts, including the Hebrew Bible, rabbinic literature, and medieval kabbalistic texts. Borrowing from a respect for and celebration of the elderly as expressed throughout these texts, Jewish culture and folklore are rife with stories and celebrations that explore the aging process. Jewish folklore, which preserves traditional Jewish values and also reflects the changes that take place in Jewish society, expresses both the problems of old age and the social obligation to honor and care for the elderly.

In the Bible

In the Hebrew Bible, old age, in addition to being the last stage in a person's life, is a sign of blessing granted only to people of exceptional merit. At the same time, fear of the debilitation associated with old age leads the pious to turn to God. The psalmist gives poignant expression to this fear: "Do not cast me off in old age; when my strength fails, do not forsake me!" (Ps. 71:9). Similar expressions of apprehension about the failings of old age are found in talmudic literature.

As the last stage of life, old age has distinctive features including a dulling of the senses, such as with the blindness of Isaac and of Eli (Gen. 27:1; 1 Sam. 3:2 and 4:15) or the deafness of David's supporter Barzillai (2 Sam. 19:33–38); a decline in natural body heat, as in the case of David (1 Kgs. 1:1); a general decline and weakness; and the mental confusion caused by a lack of confidence in one's body, as described at length by Ecclesiastes (Eccl. 12:1–7).

As an attribute of leaders, however, old age is a time of wisdom and understanding (Job 12:12). It endows elders with social status and consolidates their role as counselors and judges. The Bible also speaks of elders as a source of knowledge and authority: "Ask your father, he will inform you; your elders, they will tell you" (Deut. 32:7). Consequently, when Moses goes to the pharaoh to demand that he set the Israelites free from captivity, God sends the "elders of Israel" along with him to lend weight to Moses's words (Exod. 3:16).

Whether because of they are frail and depend on the young or because they have experience and wisdom, respect for parents and elders is an important biblical precept (Lev. 19:32; Prov. 23:22). The reward for fulfilling it is long life (Exod. 20:11). A society that does not heed and respect its elders, by contrast, is cruel and corrupt (Deut. 28:50, Isa. 47:6; Lam. 4:16).

There are several different definitions of the onset of old age in the Bible. Samuel testifies that he is old at age 52 (1 Sam. 12:2), whereas Moses enjoys full vigor until he is 120 (Deut. 34:7). In general, the Bible considers long life a blessing and incorporates it into its vision of the End of Days (Isa. 65:20; Zech. 8:4; Ps. 92:15), whereas a short life is a curse or punishment (1 Sam. 2:31–32). The fathers of the human race and the patriarchs of the nation were long-lived: Adam reached 930; Methuselah, 969; Abraham, 175; and Isaac, 180. But only three persons are said to have died "in a good old age," meaning without the physical deterioration or pain that generally accompanies growing old: Abraham, Gideon, and David. According to the Bible, individuals can improve their prospects of growing old by observing the precepts. In addition to the precept of honoring parents, those of sending away the mother bird (Deut. 22:7; Beuti 22:7), giving charity (Prov. 16:31), and others are rewarded by length of days.

In Rabbinic Literature

The rabbinic literature, too, is aware not just of the physical decline and social disabilities that accompany old age but also of the social advantages and position that go along with it. The infirmities of old age are described in detail in the Talmud (*b. Shabbat* 151b–152a), as a gloss on the metaphors at the end of Ecclesiastes (12:1–7). The midrash compares the elderly to apes (*Tanḥuma Pequdei* 3). Old persons are quick to forget what they have learned (*m. Avot* 4:20); their judgment is faulty and they are easily frightened (*Eccl. Rab.* 12:4). The physical and mental pains of old age are frequently described through metaphors and riddles that are evi-

dence of the difficulty of speaking about the matter explicitly. Youth is a "bunch of roses"; old age, a "bunch of thistles" (*b. Shabbat* 152a). Rabbi Simeon, in a story that exists in multiple versions, describes old age in similar fashion when asked why he did not go out to greet his own teacher: "Rocks have become higher, those near have become remote, the two have become three, the peacemaker is no longer in the house." That is, fear of rutted paths, poor eyesight, the need for a walking stick, and lack of sexual desire, all of which have overtaken him in old age, deter him from going out. So that their condition will not further decline and they will not become a burden on society, the elderly are directed to pray that "their eyes see, their mouth eat, and their legs walk" (*Tanḥuma Miqqetz* 10).

The rabbis' fear of old age is sometimes expressed in folktales that have international parallels and that describe charms for assuring long life or immortality. According to rabbinic tradition, the Angel of Death was barred from the town of Luz; consequently, its elderly did not suffer the infirmities of old age. When they became very old, they walked beyond the city limits, where they died quickly and painlessly (*Gen. Rab.* 69:8; *b. Sotah* 46:2). The attitude toward an old man is not always the same as that toward an old woman, as in the popular adage, "an old man in the house is a burden in the house, an old woman in the house is a treasure in the house" (*b. Arakhin* 19a), which reflects the fact that a woman is never too old to be useful in some way, but taking care of an old man is an annoyance. Sometimes, however, the rabbinic literature, like folk literature the world over, expresses fear of old women, who are identified with witchcraft (*b. Sanhedrin* 102b).

The elderly are exempted from precepts that require major physical effort, such as making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem (*m. Ḥagigah* 1:1). They cannot serve on the Sanhedrin; according to Rashi, this is because they have forgotten the pain of raising children and are consequently apt to judge people too harshly (*b. Sanhedrin* 36b).

The onset of old age is subjective: "Sixty to be an elder, seventy for white hair," according to the Mishnah (*m. Avot* 5:21). But old age may come earlier as a result of severe emotional trauma or terror, the anguish of raising children, a shrewish wife, or war (*Tanḥuma Ḥayyei Sarah* 2). Observance of the precepts, by contrast, is conducive to long life (*Yalqut Shimoni*, Eqev, §871).

The rabbinic literature also praises old age as a warrant for wisdom. According to Rabbi Simeon ben Eleazar, "If old men say to you, 'tear down,' and young men say to you, 'build'—tear down and do not build, because demolition by the old is construction and construction by boys is demolition" (*b. Megillah* 31b). The wisdom of an old man often outweighs the collective knowledge of many younger persons (*Lam. Rab.* 25:5, as indicated by Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Zakkai's praise of Rabbi Tsadok

[*Lam. Rab.* 1:31] or even that of a king, as shown by the lesson that Hadrian learned from the old man who was planting fig trees [*Lev. Rab.* 25:5]).

Respect for parents is an important principle in the rabbinic literature, just as it is in the Bible, and can be learned even from gentiles. Because not all old people are wise, however, the rabbis disagreed as to whether they were all deserving of respect (*b. Qiddushin* 32b; *b. Shabbat* 152a). The signs of old age first entered the world, according to tradition, when Abraham entreated God to make some physical distinction between himself and Isaac, who was his spitting image. The next morning Abraham woke up to find that his request had been granted: his hair was white. Old age is thus seen as a privilege, through which the elderly can enjoy respect and social status (*Tanḥuma Hayyei Sarah* 1; b. *Bava Metzi'a* 87a).

Consequently, the rabbinic literature enjoins persons to respect their parents, to care for them, and to see to their special needs. The attitude shown by children when caring for their parents is crucial: The Talmud tells of a son who provided his father with fine foods but treated him like a dog—and went to *Gehinnom*; and of a son who fed his father simple fare but protected him and respected him—and was allotted a place in Paradise (*b. Qiddushin* 31a–b).

In Kabbalistic Texts

The tradition of showing respect for the elderly is also found in medieval kabbalistic texts. In general, age is considered conducive to an understanding of Kabbalah. The old man, or *sava,* of the Zohar appears miraculously and has special powers and extraordinary knowledge (Zohar 2:94b–114a). The esteem for old age is also reflected in the expression "the ancient of days," one of the appellations of God in the mystic literature.

In Jewish Folklore, Folktales, and Modern Traditions

For all that it was aware of the limitations of old age and the physical, mental, and social problems that accompany it, traditional Jewish society, as reflected in biblical, rabbinical, and kabbalistic texts, also saw it as a warrant of the wisdom acquired through experience and through long study and observance of the Torah. This is why, throughout history, Jewish society always protected and supported the elderly.

The processes of modernization that began in the eighteenth century, in the wake of worldwide social, religious, and national crises, migration, technological advances, and cultural changes, modified the structure of the traditional Jewish family and spawned alienation between generations. The dislike for the old world was

channeled against the parents' generation, and, little by little, responsibility for the elderly was transferred from the family to community welfare institutions. With the increase in life expectancy and significant numerical expansion of the elderly segment of the population, the problems associated with caring for the aged, as well as recognition of their social and cultural contributions, have become topics of scholarly research in many fields.

In Jewish folklore, many stories about old people, collected from various communities and included in the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa, present the elderly as wise counselors who are ready and willing to provide assistance or blessings and sometimes as endowed with supernatural powers. But there are also many Jewish folktales that express parents' fear of being abandoned by their children and even show that this fear is justified. In order to win their children's respect, parents must promise their children a sizable legacy— but even so they may not always enjoy the deference they deserve. Jokes about old age, especially common among Jews from Poland, deal with the fear of death and abandonment, loss of sexual potency, and betrayal by the body.

Liberal Jewish women's groups have produced modern ceremonies that draw on Jewish traditions to recognize the advent of middle and old age. These ceremonies focus on women age fifty and older, who have ceased to be fertile (after menopause). Linked to festival customs, such as the *Havdalah* at the end of the Sabbath, they may include drinking four cups of wine, representing the four different stages in a woman's life cycle, or various female qualities. The texts recited are both traditional and modern, along with prayers and blessings, personal narratives, and perhaps even the writing of an ethical will for her children based on the mishnaic designation of "age fifty for counsel" (*m. Avot* 5:21). Old age, as reflected in these ceremonies, is not just the end of one stage of life; it is also the start of a new phase of challenges and benefits.

Raphael Patai and Tsafi Sebba-Elran

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AGNON, S.Y. (1888–1970)

One of the leading Jewish novelists of the twentieth century and a Nobel Prize winner, S.Y. (Shmuel Yosef) Agnon expressed the power of the Hebrew language and the richness of Jewish tradition in his work. His fiction deals with the conflict between traditional Jewish life and the modern world and attempts to recapture the fading traditions of the European shtetl (township).

He was born Shmuel Yosef Czaczkes on July 17, 1888, in Buczacz, Eastern Galicia, which at the time was controlled by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The boy was raised in a mixed cultural environment, in which Yiddish was the language of the home and Hebrew the language of the Bible and the Talmud. Agnon also learned German literature from his mother and knowledge of the teachings of the medieval Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides and of the Hasidim (an Orthodox Jewish sect) from his father.

Agnon's first publications were in Hebrew and Yiddish. As a sixteen-year-old, he published "Agreement" in verse, which was included in the *Minḥat yehuda* volume (May–June 1903) published by Rabbi Yehuda Zvi Gelbard and which featured interpretations of legends attributed to the talmudic sage Rabba bar bar Ḥannah. The same year he published a poem about Rabbi Yosef

dela Reina, a sixteenth-century kabbalist whose efforts to hasten the era of messianic redemption were well known in Jewish folklore and stirred interest among modern writers. Thus, Agnon's interest in Jewish folklore is discernible in early phases of his writing.

While Agnon continued to write and publish stories and tales in *Hamitzpe* (Kraków), his immigration to Eretz Israel in 1908 constituted the turning point in his literary career. His first story published in Israel, "Agunut" (Forsaken Wives), was published in the journal *Haomar* in 1909 under the pen name Agnon.

In 1912, Agnon traveled to Germany, where he married and then fathered a daughter and son. In 1919, he published *Hanidaḥ* (The Remote), which marked the renewal of his creative work, after the interruption of World War I. In 1921, Agnon published his collection *The Secret of the Straight* (בסוד ישרים) and in 1922 he published another collection, *At the Handles of the Lock* (על כפות המנעול). In 1924 he returned to Eretz Israel and settled in Jerusalem.

A four-volume collection, *The Complete Works of S.Y. Agnon*, was published in 1932. In 1935 Agnon received the Bialik Prize for literature, for his story "At the Heart of Days" (בלבב ימים); in the same year, his novella "A Simple Story" (סיפור פשוט) and his collection of stories *In Return, and at Peace* (בשובה ונחת) were published. In 1938, Agnon published two anthologies, *Days of Awe* (ימים נוראים) —a book of rituals, legends, and customs pertaining to the period of *selichot*, between the Jewish New Year and the Day of Atonement—and *Writer, Story, Book* (ספר סופר וסיפור), or *Tales of Righteousness,* 101 stories related to the pupils of the Hasidic leader Ba'al Shem Tov. In 1939 he released his novel *A Guest for the Night* (אורח נטה ללון) based on a journey to his birthplace in the mid-1930s; in 1945, he published his novel *Only Yesterday* (תמול שלשום), based on his experiences in Palestine before World War I.

In 1951, Agnon again received the Bialik Prize, and his collection of stories, *Near and Apparent* (סמוך ונראה) was published; in 1952, his collection *Until Now* (עד הנה) came out, followed in 1953 by the publication of the seven-volume *Complete Works of S.Y. Agnon.* Agnon received the Israeli Prize in 1954 and then again in 1958. His anthology *You Saw It* (אתם ראיתם), a collection of stories related to the bestowal of the Torah, was published in 1959, followed by the collection of stories *The Fire and the Mighty* (האש והעצים) in 1962. In 1966, Agnon received the Nobel Prize for Literature. To date, he is the sole Hebrew author to win this honor.

Agnon tried to create for himself a mythical biography, one which was a miniature reflection of the life of his people. Thus, he claimed to have been born on the Ninth of Av (Tisha Be'Av), the day on which tradition claims that the messiah was born; this birth-

Samuel Joseph (Shmuel Yosef) Agnon, in 1966, when he received the Nobel Prize for Literature in Stockholm. *(AP Photo)*

date claim was not accurate. Similarly, he published his first poem during the Lag Ba'Omer, a Jewish holiday celebrating the thirty-third day of the counting of the Omer, which runs from the second night of Passover to the day before Shavuot, and he claimed to have immigrated to Israel on this holiday (in reality, he arrived three weeks after the holiday). Twice his home was ruined: in Hamburg in 1924 his house, library, and manuscripts (including *The Book of Hasidism*) burned; and in 1929, together with other residents of Jerusalem's Talpiyot neighborhood, he was forced to evacuate his home as a result of anti-Jewish riots. Agnon conceptualized his periods outside Palestine as stints of *galut* (exile). His nom de plume, Agnon, refers to eternal division between man and soul, a lover and the object of his affection, between religion and secularism, between the Land of Israel and exile.

In Germany, Agnon met and married Esther Marx. His son was named after the secular hero Hemdat, a participant in the second aliyah wave of immigration; and his daughter, Emunah, was named after the quality of faith, which Agnon sought all his life. This mythic quality was reinforced when Agnon began to use acrostic devices in his prose, as in the example of stories whose heroes' names begin with the Hebrew letters ayn and gimmel, which are his own initials ("Edo and Einam," "Ad Olam"). Every turn he took, from Buczacz to the second aliyah,

his departure to Germany and his return to Eretz Israel, found symbolic representation in his writing.

Agnon was inspired by, and drew from, an array of Jewish sources (the Pentateuch, Midrash and Aggadah, Hasidic tales, Jewish folklore), as well as from written and verbal sources in world culture. His reliance on traditional sources is evident in linguistic formulations of his prose. The way that tradition influences his writing changes from story to story. Agnon had respect for the words woven by the tellers of oral tales, and those found in written works of folklore and Hasidic tradition. Yet, apart from his anthologies that record original tales, he superimposed his own language, style, and narrative twists on these traditional stories. The various materials, whether written or oral, were used by Agnon as leverage in the telling of his own story, even when the author claimed to be relaying precisely what the original storyteller had told him. As in the case of a folk storyteller, who has the habit of citing the name of the person from whom he heard the story or the narrative incident, Agnon often referred to his source, as in the case of the story "Tears" (דמעות) in which Agnon wrote, "Rabbi Shmuel Aryeh told me." Sometimes the reality of the source is open to question, as in the opening of "Forsaken Wives," in which Agnon declared "as is relayed in sources." Sometimes the narrator cites a fictional source as though it provides authoritative backing for his story's veracity.

In the case of tales from Poland, Agnon retold stories, providing a new version to tales that were widely circulated and known in Eastern Europe. Many of his literary renderings of folk narratives were originally written with the purpose of mediating between the rich reservoir of Hasidic tales and the modern sensibilities of readers. Agnon's rendering expresses a hidden, complex dialogue between the values and outlooks of the modern interpreter and the traditional sources that Agnon purported to be recording. The fusion between narrative structures of Jewish oral tradition and European paradigms effaces the religious contents of the sources, while connecting Agnon to the chain of generations of Jewish storytelling, even providing him with elevated status as the last, supreme storyteller. This is evident in works such as *The Nice Tales of the Land of Israel* (Sippurim naim shel Eretz Yisrael) (1953) and stories such as "Guest for the Night" (1939), "Until Now" (1952), and "Bridal Preparations" (1919–1920).

Agnon published three collections of stories and legends from Jewish oral tradition—*Days of Awe* (1938), a book of rituals, legends, and customs pertaining to the period of *selichot*; *Writer, Story, Book* (1961, 1978); and *You Saw It* (1959), a collection of stories relating to the bestowal of the Torah. These volumes reflect Agnon's imposing knowledge of Jewish tradition, and also express the multidimensional richness of his creativity.

Hinting allusions to sources enrich Agnon's texts. For instance, the heroine of "The Physician and His Ex-Wife" (הרופא גרושתו), Dina, is a nurse, a position that alludes obliquely to the story of Sheḥem Ben Ḥamor and Dina Bat Yaakov. The hint at this ancient affair of destructive jealously strengthens the effects of Agnon's story.

In some instances, Agnon stands a traditional narrative on its head, as in the story "The Lady and the Peddler" (האדונית והרוכל), which inverts the tale of "Bluebeard," the man who murders his wives. In Agnon's tale the lady murders her husband, whereas the wandering Jew would prefer to take residence and integrate into society

Critical Analysis

In order to understand Agnon's literary accomplishment and his cultural world, one must analyze the interlocking web of connections between traditional sources (the hidden text) and Agnon's literary rendering (the visible text). The diverse array of sources (fragments from tales and legends, motifs from Jewish narratives or stories in world culture), which are either directly embedded in the text or obliquely alluded to, help the reader grasp the multiple meanings of Agnon's work. While Agnon pays tribute to sources he uses in his work, he does not blindly embrace them. Sometimes his approach to them is nostalgic and sometimes it is critical and ironic and expands upon satirical devices that were developed in nineteenth-century Hebrew literature.

Although Agnon made wide use of folk tradition, he displayed an attitude of criticism and ridicule toward folklore research. As exemplified by his novel *Shira*, Agnon preferred works of active creativity, rather than detached analysis of folktales. He had reservations about the use of folktales as research items; thus, he envisioned conflict between author and researcher. Whereas an author is the perpetuator of tradition, a researcher extracts items from tradition, and destroys the vitality of tradition. In the folkloric *Book of the State* (ספר המדינה), a collector of humoristic materials is ridiculed and portrayed as one big joke. In Agnon's view, compilations rendered by folklore researchers fail to represent the historical or artistic truth of tales; they deflect attention from the tales' creative essence.

Similarly, in "Facing Away from the Wall" (לפנים מן החומה) Agnon expressed his doubts about scientific folklore research and about the ability of systematic collecting and recording to render cultural truth. The researcher, in Agnon's view, is a foreign element who attempts to document a society's religious expressions outside their natural context. As the researcher sees it, prayer has an artistic quality, yet he does not grasp its religious dimensions; in this way, the research can bring

harm to the foundations of religious faith and to a people's cultural tradition. The "scientific tourist," or folklore researcher, who is alienated from the cultural values that he or she analyzes, maintains a connection with the subject of study—and this connection is liable to bring ruin to them both (as seen in "Edo and Einam").

Agnon died in Jerusalem on February 17, 1970. After his death, Agnon's daughter, Emunah Yaron, published thirteen volumes that he left behind. Agnon's writings, both those published in his lifetime and his posthumous work, have been translated into several languages.

S.Y. Agnon remains the unchallenged master of modern Hebrew literature. His works are studied and quoted in Israel and around the world. More than any writer or poet before or after him, Agnon created a rich dialectic between ancient Hebrew oral and written traditions and the pressures of modern life. He drew from all sources, transformed whatever he absorbed, and created works that were uniquely his own while dramatically influencing writers of Hebrew fiction who embarked on careers from the 1950s through the present.

Aliza Shenhar

See also: Rabbah bar bar Ḥannah; Yosef dela Reina, The Story of.

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AKEDAH

See: Abraham

ALCHEMY

"Alchemy," an Arabic word altered by Greek pronunciation, meaning "melting and molding metal," is the name given to the experimental chemical investigation and speculative philosophy of natural substances that is considered the foundation of modern chemistry. It was practiced in the East (including Asia) and in Europe, since Late Antiquity. Alchemy stemmed from theories assuming that all materials originated from earth, air, fire, and water, and hence were but disparate manifestations of the same primeval matter.

Alchemists supposed that, because of this fundamental closeness, elements could be transformed into other elements, and they centered their efforts on attempts to transmute base metals into precious ones. Alchemists considered elements not only physical substances but also spiritual essences that possessed secret powers, which affected human physiology. They associated elements with supreme entities (such as gods and stars) and with varied symbolism and interpreted them as embodiments of different facets of a human being, as well as of different personality types. These ideas reached their summit in the alchemists' effort to discover "The Philosophers' Stone" (*lapis philosophorum,* also called "Red Tincture" and hundreds of other names). Alchemists believed that this mysterious, legendary element acted as a transmuting agent (a "catalyst"), turning base metals into gold and silver. It was believed to possess the power of panacea, granting health, youth, and terrestrial immortality (*elixirium vitae*) to whoever dissolved it and drank the resultant "golden water" (*aurum potabile*).

The mere idea that gold, longevity, and eternal life could all be possessed via human effort has excited human imagination ever since the beginnings of alchemy. The fact that none of its aims was ever achieved, and that few (among them many charlatans) practiced it until alchemy's demise in the late eighteenth century, did not diminish its allure. Most rulers patronized alchemists, hoping that they would one day pay off their debts, and the belief in alchemy's potential was almost universal. In this sense, alchemy became an integral part of folk culture and literature.

The most important Jewish alchemist known is also the earliest and most important Hellenistic alchemist:

Maria the Jewess, born Maria Hebraea in Alexandria, during the second century C.E. Maria is said to have discovered hydrochloric acid and is reputed to have invented various vessels and devices used for heating, boiling, distilling, and liquefying substances, such as the *kerotakis* (also called "Mary's oven") and bain-Marie (also known as "water bath"), used in chemical laboratories to this day. Maria was widely quoted in alchemic literature. Among her sayings is that "only the seed of Abraham" is entitled to engage in alchemy.

After Maria, no knowledge of significant Jewish alchemists or writings on the subject has survived. There were Jewish alchemists, and it was a known Jewish profession in the courts of kings and noblemen in medieval times, but it was probably practiced among Jews to a much lesser extent than among non-Jews. Alchemical works written by Jews are few and anonymous. Some medieval scholars, including Judah Halevi and Abraham Ibn Ezra, objected to alchemy explicitly. The Jewish occult science of the Kabbalah and its practitioners, such as Moshe de Leon and Ḥaim Vital, were influenced by alchemical beliefs, but only traces of this lore exist in their writings and in the Zohar itself (such as Zohar 1:249–50, 2:148a, 2:423–4).

Jewish disapproval of alchemy most probably arose because of its mystical and magical nature, as an incorporation of beliefs originated in old Egyptian lore, Greek philosophy, and gnostic speculations. Other monotheistic religions as well did not approve of this syncretism, and during the Middle Ages, the Christian Inquisition persecuted alchemists for performing witchcraft. Yet non-Jewish alchemists found a way to legitimize their occupation, by ascribing to it a respectable Jewish origin. According to Zosimos of Panopolis, a Greek-Egyptian alchemist who lived at the end of the third and beginning of the fourth century C.E., Jews were the ones who imparted the "sacred craft," teaching "the power of gold" to the world, after deceitfully learning it from the Egyptians. Alchemical knowledge and writings were ascribed to most biblical patriarchs, prophets, and kings, based on the conviction that it was divine wisdom and therefore revealed by God to his faithful adherents.

Thus, contrary to its marginal implementation in reality, the Jewish connection to alchemy played a major part in works written by non-Jews on the subject, beginning in ancient times and culminating in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, when doubts about alchemy began to surface. The belief in the Jewish origin of alchemy was reinforced by several methods, principally by giving new interpretations to biblical verses. For example, the exalted old age of the patriarchs was attributed to their use of the Philosophers' Stone. The stone also explained the possession of great quantities of gold and silver, by those such as Abraham (Gen. 13:2); King David building the Temple (1 Chr. 22:14, 29:2–5); and King Solomon,

making "the silver and the gold in Jerusalem like stones" (2 Chr. 1:15). The word *pukh* (פוך) was understood to be the word "philosopher's stone" and thus interpreted to be handed from King David to King Solomon (1 Chr. 29:2); known to Job, who named one of his daughters Keren ha'Pukh (Job 42:14); and to Isaiah the prophet, who promised to set "stones with carbuncle [*pukh*]" (Isa. 54:11). Replacing one element with another was interpreted as alchemical transmutation, especially regarding metals, such as in Isaiah's promise, "Instead of the copper I will bring gold, and instead of the iron I will bring silver, and instead of the wood, copper, and instead of the stones, iron" (Isa. 60:17). Tubal Cain, "who sharpened all tools that cut copper and iron" (Gen. 4:22), was considered the founder of alchemy, although it was said to be delivered by God to Adam himself. In fact, the art of God in creating the world (Gen. 1, especially verses 2 and 7) was also argued to be the embodiment of alchemy.

Other ways of strengthening the belief in alchemy as divine Jewish knowledge included writing pseudo-epigraphic alchemical treatises, presumably written by prominent Jewish figures. Manuscripts attributed to biblical figures, primarily Moses, exist from Greek times until as late as the eighteenth century. An alchemical treatise was also attributed to Moses Maimonides, one of the greatest Torah scholars of the Middle Ages, although scholars agree it was not written by him. Famous non-Jewish alchemists of the past, such as Zosimus the panopolitan and Khalid ibn Jasikhi (Calid Hebraeus), the first alchemist of the Arab period, were also claimed to be Jewish by later generations.

The forced connection of Judaism to alchemy resulted in a popular belief that Jews mastered the art better than others did. Medieval European Christian alchemists sought Jewish masters and learned the Hebrew language as a tool to better understand the field. When the Jewish Kabbalah became known during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a Christian "kabbalistic alchemy," based on kabbalistic symbolism, was developed. In addition, Nicolas Flamel, a French manuscript seller who lived ca. 1330–1418 and the only alchemist ever reputed to have found the Philosopher's Stone, succeeded in doing so only by possessing "the Book of Abraham the Jew" and by turning to Jews to help him decipher its meaning. Attributing alchemy to Jews has led to anti-Semitism by Christians who opposed alchemy.

Raphael Patai and Ayelet Oettinger

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ALEXANDER, TAMAR (1945–)

Tamar Alexander was born in Jerusalem on October 17, 1945. She is a professor of Hebrew literature and folklore at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Beer-Sheba, Israel, and since 1996 has held the Frankfurter Chair in Sephardic studies. Alexander is director of the Gaon Center for Ladino Culture and has headed the university's Folklore Program since 2004. She also chaired the Hebrew Literature Department from 1996 to 2000. Alexander was a visiting professor at Yale University (2000) and the University of Granada (2009).

Alexander contributed to folklore research in the fields of Sephardic culture, supernatural phenomena in folklore, folk beliefs, and customs, medieval Hasidic narrative, proverbs, folk literary genres, and anthologies. She has also contributed to the study of folklore by cofounding (in 1981) and coediting the journal *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* and founding (in 2007) and editing *El Presente*: *Studies in Sephardic Culture*. She served during the last years on the Council for Higher Education, the national institution for higher education in Israel.

She has published many books and dozens of articles, among them:

Erase una vez … Maimónides: cuentos tradicionales hebreos, with E. Romero (Córdoba: Maimonides Research Institute, 1988, 1992, 1996); translated into English as *Once Upon a Time … Maimónides*: *Traditional Hebrew Tales (An Anthology)* (Lancaster, CA: Labyrinthos, 2004); *The Treasure of Our Fathers*, *100 Sephardic Tales,* with D. Noy (Jerusalem: Misgav Yerushalayim, Hebrew University, 1989, 1992); *The Pious Sinner: Ethics and Aesthetics in the Medieval Hasidic Narrative* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1991); *En este tiempo, A Judeo-Spanish Folk Play from Salonika,* with S. Weich-Shahak (Tel Aviv: Tag, 1993, 1994); *The Seven Magic Nuts: Judeo-Spanish Folktales for Children*, with E. Einat (Tel Aviv: Yediot Ahronot, 1992) (in Hebrew), selected as one of the ten best children's books of the year; *Tarat Tarat: Jewish Folktales from Ethiopia*, with A. Einat (Tel Aviv: Yediot Ahronot, 1996) (in Hebrew); *The Beloved Friend-and-a-Half, Studies in Sephardic Folk Literature* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, and Ben-Gurion University Press, 1999) (in Hebrew), winner of the Toledano prize; translated into English as *The Heart Is a Mirror, The Sephardic Folktale* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2008); *"Words Are Better Than Bread"*: A *Study of the Judeo-Spanish Proverb* (Jerusalem: Ben-Gurion University Press, 2004); *La palabra en su ora es oro: The Judeo-Spanish Proverb from Northern Morocco,* with Y. Bentolila (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute), 2008; *Forever After: The Performing Art of the Storyteller (*ed.) (Ramat Gan: Anthology of Folklore Research Studies, 1993, 1994); *Algriya de Purim, Studies and Coplas for Purim (*ed.) (Gaon Center Beer-Sheva: Ben Gurion University, 2007); *Proceedings of the 14th World Union Congress of Jewish Studies 2004* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 2009).

Galit Hasan-Rokem

See also: Folk Narratives, Sephardi; Ibn Ezra, Abraham; Rambam (Maimonides); Spain, Jews of.

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ALMI, A. (ELIA CHAIM SCHEPS)

See: Poland, Jews of

ALPHABET OF BEN SIRA

The Alphabet of Ben Sira is an anonymous collection of satirical Hebrew tales, created among the Jewish communities of Iraq and Iran in about the ninth or tenth century. It is attributed to Shimon Ben Sira, the second-century B.C.E. poet and moral teacher and author of *The Book of Ben Sira* (also known as *Ecclesiasticus)*. Although in the Jewish culture of the Middle Ages there was much

confusion between *Ecclesiasticus* and the *Alphabet*, there is no relationship between the two works. Some proverbs appear in both, but because they are also quoted in the Babylonian Talmud under the name of Ben Sira, it is most likely that the *Alphabet* took them from the Talmud and had no knowledge of the Hebrew apocryphal work. The *Alphabet* was preserved in about one hundred manuscripts, in full form and fragments, dating from the fourteenth century. The first printed edition of the *Alphabet* appeared in Constantinople in 1519; more than a hundred printed editions have circulated from the sixteenth century to the present.

The work is divided into three "Alphabets" (or parts)—"Toldot [Life of] Ben Sira," "Alphabet of Ben Sira," and "The Additional Questions"—supposedly written at different times and places. The "Toldot" starts with the tale of the prophet Jeremiah who went one day to the public bath and saw there the wicked sons of Ephraim masturbating in the water. He reproached them severely, and they threatened that if he did not do as they did, they would rape him. He masturbates, and his seed is preserved miraculously in the water until his daughter takes a bath, and she becomes pregnant from her father's seed. After people accuse her of adultery, the child speaks from her womb, explains how he was conceived, and demands that after he is born she must name him Ben Sira, as this is numerically identical with the name of his father, Jeremiah. Ben Sira is born after seven months, already circumcised, with teeth, and able to speak. When he is one year old, he demands to be taken to a teacher. Upon his teacher's instruction in the Hebrew alphabet, Ben Sira follows with twenty-two proverbs or wise sayings. He studies the Torah and Jewish wisdom until he is five or seven years old. He becomes so famous that the greatest king of the East—the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar—sends for him to test his wisdom. The king asks him twenty-two questions, one for each letter in the Hebrew alphabet. The questions relate mainly to biblical themes and natural phenomena; to each one Ben Sira answers with a tale.

The second part is a collection of twenty-two Aramaic proverbs related to Ben Sira, arranged alphabetically. Each proverb is followed by a translation-interpretation or homily in Hebrew, and a short story or stories illustrating the proverb's moral. The third part collects twenty-two additional proverbs, arranged according to the letters of the alphabet, to which it adds other illustrative tales.

The Toldot is, however, the most original and important part of the work and is the first known narrative: The story of the birth of Ben Sira functions as a frame-narrative for the twenty-two "inner" tales presented as questions posed by Nebuchadnezzar to the child Ben Sira. The contents of the Toldot are original as well, as it introduces into Jewish folk tradition tales like those of Lilith, the first woman, Solomon and the queen of Sheba,

the myth of Milkham, and important animal tales such as the eternal bird and the tale of fox. The most problematic and controversial tale, however, is the opening one of Jeremiah's daughter impregnated by her father's seed. Scholars have suggested that the tale is either a satire on the birth narrative of Jesus or a Jewish adaptation of an ancient Iranian myth of the birth of the messiah from the holy virgin impregnated by heavenly seed kept in the water of a lake.

Because of the *Alphabet*'s discussion of taboo or antinormative subjects, some medieval Jewish authorities forbade it to be copied and read. Nonetheless, it was one of the most popular folk books in medieval Judaism. The variegated religious and folk traditions expressed in this work attest to Jewish culture's deep knowledge of and openness to other beliefs and traditions. The *Alphabet* had great influence on Jewish folk literature in the following centuries.

Eli Yassif

See also: Lilith.

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AMULETS

An amulet is an object that is believed to have special beneficial powers, such as the power to protect against misfortune and danger, to heal, to calm a stormy sea, or to increase a person's success in business. When issued by a religious expert to secure divine blessing in human affairs, it becomes a theurgical tool and an object that has religious importance because it is associated with holiness.

Jewish amulets derive from a mystical approach to life. Their makers and users assume the presence of good and evil spiritual powers. They also assume the possibility of securing divine blessing through esoteric inscriptions on the amulet, or through its association with holiness. The inscriptions that Jews have employed on amulets since antiquity are mostly rooted in literary sources, in the Torah and Midrash, and in Jewish mystical and magical texts.

The Hebrew word for amulet, *kame'a,* is derived from a root meaning "to bind." An amulet is traditionally bound to a person, or to his or her property, to protect against danger. It may be worn, for example, on a neck-

lace, pinned to clothing, or bound to the wrist; it may be affixed to a wall, bed, or vehicle. It may be carried in a pocket, or put under the pillow.

In antiquity, Middle Eastern peoples bound protective devices to their arms, wore them on their foreheads, and inscribed their door lintels with protective signs. Jews inscribed biblical verses instead of pagan magical markings. Deuteronomy (6:4–9, 11:13–21) instructs that a man should bind specific biblical verses to his hand and forehead and, in addition, he should inscribe these words on his doorposts and gateposts. Jews have followed this injunction literally, in mounting *mezuzot* to their doorposts, to remind themselves of God and of God's constant watchfulness. However, Jews have long assumed that the words of the Torah carry divine power, and that by binding biblical verses and divine names to themselves and to their property they can profit from the verses' spiritual force. Thus the Torah is the most important source for verses found in Jewish amulets, from ancient times to the present day, with biblical verses or biblical divine names—such as *El Shaddai* (Almighty God) and the four Hebrew letters for God (the Tetragrammaton) in any of its permutations—featured on amulets used by Jews around the world.

Just as a medicine requires prior testing and proof of success before it can be manufactured and prescribed to a patient, so also a Jewish amulet is traditionally issued by a religious expert and should have proved effective at least three times. Rabbinic authorities have forbidden the use of pagan amulets (*Shabbat* 6:2, 6:10, *b. Shabbat* 61a–b). However, such rabbinic rulings, as well as the books of charms written by Jews, imply that anxious Jews have sometimes adopted or adapted the amuletic customs of their non-Jewish neighbors, but such objects are not characteristically Jewish amulets.

Those amulets that are characteristically Jewish are inscribed with verses from the Torah, Hebrew prayers, divine names, or Jewish symbols. Such amulets have commonly been made out of parchment, clay, cloth, stones, paper, and other materials. Magical seals and formulas attributed to biblical figures derive from the *Hekhalot* literature, the mystical writings produced during the Talmudic and early Gaonic period (c. sixth century through mid-eleventh century), as well as from earlier non-Jewish magical literature. Angels and demons invoked and adjured on amulets often also stem from these sources. Amulet makers have drawn on Jewish liturgy, too, copying well-known prayers or petitions in the form of prayers. Customary liturgical responses to prayers, such as the thrice repeated *amen* and *selah,* are also commonly featured on Jewish amulets. Jewish amulet-makers have also drawn on the Midrash and Jewish mythology. Thus, for example, some common childbirth amulets carry a short story about Lilith, a murderous female demon, and the names of the angels that will prevent her wreaking

destruction on a newborn or its mother. Especially since the sixteenth century, amulet-makers have copied the esoteric formulas in the kabbalistic literature. Kabbalists have claimed that these formulas come from an ancient and esoteric Jewish tradition that dates back to Moses or Solomon.

In the sixth century, Jews living in Babylonia buried amuletic bowls in the ground beneath the house. However, a Jew living in Palestine at that time was more likely to use an amulet in the form of a thin metal sheet (gold, silver, copper, or lead), worn on the body or hung in the house. Such bowls and lamellae were inscribed with biblical verses and adjurations and may have had a story written on them, reflecting contemporary folk beliefs concerning danger and the spiritual world. Tales of evil demons and helpful angels spread orally and in written form, so that these characters appeared on later amulets and in amulet-makers' instructions, often without their earlier narrative context.

Instructions for making an amulet have frequently carried an endorsement that they had been "tried and proved" successful. The story that accompanies the amulet, including which well-known rabbi recommended or used the particular formula, undoubtedly adds to its psychological power.

Maimonides denounced the use of amulets as magic, and forbade the use of biblical verses for healing (*Guide for the Perplexed* I.61 end, III.37). However, many Jewish physicians, kabbalists, and wonder-workers, who have made or employed amulets to secure divine blessing for others, have considered that the biblical injunction against the use of magic (Deut. 18:10–11) does not apply to this use of amulets for protection and healing. Indeed, many Jews attributed illnesses, death in childbirth, and other misfortunes to malevolent spirits who could be kept at a distance by amulets and not by a physical remedy. Rational Jews, following in the Maimonidean tradition, decry amulets as magic and forbid their use, and some kabbalists have also joined this condemnation, pointing out as well that the amulet industry has been taken over by charlatans and fakes.

Jews have also used Jewish ritual objects, such as the *mezuzah* (a parchment inscribed with specific Hebrew verses), the *etrog* (medium-size citrus fruit used in rituals during the holiday Sukkot), and the *afikomen* (*matzoh* that is broken in the early stages of the Passover Seder and set aside for dessert), amuletically, in the hope of gaining divine blessing through contact. Another category of Jewish amulets includes items pertaining to a saintly figure, such as the staff of Elijah, treasured for its amuletic properties among Kurdistani Jews, the belt of a Moroccan saintly rabbi, a red thread that has been wound around the tomb of the biblical matriarch Rachel, or a Hasidic book of prayers. Also, magical charms, such as a coin, a dagger, or a piece of *matzoh,* become Jewish amulets by virtue of

their Hebrew inscriptions, or by virtue of the story that connects the amulet to a Jewish literary source.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Jewish artisans sometimes used watercolors, papercuts, micrography, or embroidery to beautifully decorate the amulets used in childbirth and for protecting a home. Jewish craftsmen engraved similar texts, often abbreviated, on metal such as silver, or on a gem such as carnelian. However, mass production of Jewish amulets also developed at this time.

As long as science and medicine cannot adequately forestall sickness and remove anxiety, there will always be an interest in age-old alternatives. In the early years of the twenty-first century, Jewish amulets can still be seen in the cribs of newborns, viewed on Israeli buses, and displayed at some Jewish business premises. The story of the success of a particular amulet, such as an amulet to promote conception, may still pass along with the amulet to a new user. There will always be a Jew who can confidently supply an amulet, and many Jews eager to use it.

Michele Klein

See also: Demon; Lilith; Magic; Shiviti-Menorah.

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ANGEL OF DEATH

In the biblical view, as well as in later Judaism, God alone is master over life and death, and a person dies only when God so decides (see, e.g., Job 10:9). Nevertheless, the idea that God has "messengers of death" who—like all angels—are deprived of all voluntary power and merely carry out divine decrees, is also indicated in the Bible (e.g., Prov. 16:14, 17:11), as is the notion that God can stop the emissary with a command (2 Sam. 24:16) and redeem man from death (Hos. 13:14). The image of death is personified in the Bible and is seen by King David as "standing between the earth and the sky, with a drawn sword in his hand, extended over Jerusalem" (1 Chr. 21:16). The term "Angels of Death" (*malakhei ha'mavet*) appears in the Bible

only once (Prov. 16:14). Otherwise, the allegorical figures whom the Lord sends to cause destruction among men are given various names, such as: "the Angel of the Lord" (*malakh Adonai,* 2 Sam. 24:16; Isa. 37:36; 2 Kgs. 19:35), "the destroyer" (*hamashḥit,* Exod. 12:23); "the destroying angel" (*malakh hamashḥit,* 2 Sam. 24:16), "a delegation of evil messengers" (*mishlakhat malakhei ra'im,* Ps. 78:49), and "king of terrors" (*melekh balahot,* Job 18:14). These spiritual beings perform such tasks as executing 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp (Isa. 37:36; 2 Kgs. 19:35), and killing the first-born of the Egyptians (Exod. 12:23), yet nowhere in the Bible is it mentioned that these angels specialize in the act of bringing death. Upon seeing the angels, people believe that they are going to die (Judg. 13:22–23), yet this also does not testify to the angels' role as harbingers of death, for it may originate from the belief, common in the Bible, that one dies when looking upon God (hence, also upon God's messengers).

In Postbiblical and Rabbinical Literature

In postbiblical literature and over time and place, the image of the Angel of Death has been individualized: in *Hekhalot* literature Sofriel is appointed to oversee the "Books of Death" and the taking of lives (*Hekhalot*, 28–29). In rabbinic and medieval literature—especially in kabbalistic writings—at least a dozen angels are given this title, sometimes dividing the task between them: Gabriel brings death to kings; Af to man; Kafziel to youths; Mashkhit to children; Hemah to domestic beasts, and Meshabber to all other animals (Jellinek 1938, 2:98). Most common are stories about Azrael (among Jews from Muslim countries), Samael (which is the Jewish equivalent to Satan), and Malakh ha'Mavet (literally, "Angel of Death"). The latter is also the only angel that specializes in the task of bringing death, while all the rest are primarily angels of destruction and punishment, death being but one method in their search for the downfall of humankind in general (En. 56:1, 70:11; *T. Ab.* 1:18.20; *b. Shabbat* 89a; *Exod. Rab.* 41).

Rabbinical literature was filled with legends about the Angel of Death, developing his image and giving it distinct characterizations and a quasi-independent personality. Thus he came to resemble the polytheistic concept of a specific deity of death—although depicted at all times as subject to God's will—rather than being considered a particular functional expression of God's will. In these legends, the Angel of Death is described in full, including details of his creation by God, his form and features, his powers and limitations, and his encounters with men and animals. There are also stories about a few exceptional individuals who escaped him or even over-

powered him. He was said to have been created by God on the first day of creation along with darkness and light (*Midrash Tanḥuma* Gen. 39:1) or after the first sin (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* 13; *b. Avodah Zarah* 22b; Zohar 1:35b). The Angel of Death is doomed to be destroyed after the days of the messiah and the resurrection of the dead, when there will no longer be a need for him, as promised in Isaiah 25:8 (Jub. 23:29; *Lev. Rab.* 21:4; *Pesiqta Rabbati* 161b). Until that time, he dwells in the seventh heaven and reaches earth "in eight flights"—meaning that he is the slowest among angels, although when taking the form of pestilence, he becomes the fastest and reaches earth in only one day (*b. Berakhot* 4b). Physically, he is conceived of as possessing twelve wings (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* 8), and "covered with eyes" (*Hekhalot* 28; *Avodah Zarah* 20b; *Berakhot* 4b), allegorically signifying that he sees all creatures, and that nothing can escape him (both wings and eyes characterize angels in general [Ezek. 1:18, 10:12]). The eyes are said to shine with a bluish fire while he himself is made of greenish flames (Sa'adiah Gaon, *Book of Beliefs and Opinions* 6:7). He is also portrayed in other intimidating images, such as having seven dragon heads (*T. Ab.*).

In his hand, the Angel of Death holds the object by which he inflicts death. Usually it is a drawn sword, as mentioned in the Bible (1 Chr. 21:15; cf. Job 15:22; En. 62:11), thus presenting him as a warrior. Yet the object can also be a foil (Sa'adiah Gaon, *Book of Beliefs and Opinions* 6:7; *b. Mo'ed Qatan* 28a), and in later representations a knife (*b. Ketubbot* 77b) and a cord. The Angel of Death is depicted as wearing a "cloak of vengeance" (*ga'avah; Hekhalot* 28) or a mantle that enables him to change forms so as best to suit his purpose (*idra* [*Eccl. Rab.* 4:6]; also interpreted "a foil"). Thus, he appears not only in the frightening and unconcealed forms of an armed warrior (cf. *b. Avodah Zarah* 20b; *Arakhin* 7a) or a diligent reaper (cf. Jeremiah 9:21), but also in the form of pestilence (*b. Bava Qamma* 60b; *Sanhedrin* 70), as well as in other, more conventional forms, most common of which is a poor beggar or nomad begging for pity (*b. Mo'ed Qatan* 28a). Approaching the dying person, the Angel of Death stands by his or her head, aiming to capture the soul, which is believed to exit the body through the mouth (Jellinek 1938, 2:94; *Midrash Tehillim* to Psalms 11). Upon making eye contact, the dying person recognizes him at once, begins trembling with horror and opens his mouth—into which the Angel of Death inserts a drop of gall, dripping from the end of his sword (*Avodah Zarah* 20b; Jellinek 1938, 1:150). This is the source of the idiom "the taste of death." Gall also resembles "burning," which is one of the four Jewish methods of execution, performed by pouring hot lead down the victim's throat. Yet the Angel of Death selects the way of death to fit the particular sins a man has committed and so inflicts death also by throttling and slaughtering (*b. Avodah Zarah* 20b; Grünhut 1898–1903 5:102a).

In Jewish Folktales

Jewish folktales of the Angel of Death can be divided into three categories, depicting him as three disparate characters. In the first group of stories, the Angel of Death is described as demonic, evil, and persistent, greatly feared by all, making even the thought of coming back to life after death horrifying (*b. Mo'ed Qatan* 28a). Indeed, in the next world fighting him shall be the supreme punishment for non-Jewish villains such as the pharaoh, Sisera, and Sennacherib (*Yalqut Shimoni* 25:428). Usually in such stories the Angel of Death is identified with Samael (*b. Bava Batra* 16a; *Pesiqta de'Rav Kahana* 161b; *Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* 8; *Num. Rab.* 5:7), whose name means "the poison of God" (*sam ha-El*), referring to the deadly drop of gall at the end of his sword (*b. Avodah Zarah* 20b; Kohut 1866, 69, 71). In this depiction the Angel of Death receives his orders from God (*b. Berakhot* 62b) but performs them without differentiating between good and evil (*b. Bava Qamma* 60a). He also acts independently, taking the initiative to actively accuse, seduce, fight, harm, and destroy humans in any manner possible. For example, he is held responsible for trying to persuade Abraham to refuse to do God's will when asked to sacrifice Isaac and later for causing the death of Sarah by telling her that Abraham had sacrificed Isaac in spite of his pleas (*Gen. Rab.* 106:4). No one can escape the Angel of Death in this form (*Mishnah Avodah Zarah* 48, based on Targum to Ps. 89:45, cf. Targum to Job 18:13; Ps. 91:5; *b. Nedarim* 49a; *Ḥullin* 7b).

In his two other characterizations, the Angel of Death can be escaped by different methods. The second group of stories portrays him as open to negotiation and subject to rules limiting his power. One limitation is geographic: The Angel of Death cannot enter the city of Luz (meaning both "essence" and "almond"), and when the inhabitants want to die they must go outside the walls, where they fade away (*b. Sotah* 46b; 2 Zohar 151b; *Gen. Rab.* 69 about Gen. 28:19; cf. *b. Sanhedrin* 97a). All other limitations originate from the notion that humans have some control over their lives: sinning brings death, while good deeds "calm" the Angel's anger (*Derekh Eretz Zuta* 8) or protect their doers from his power, for God lengthens their lives (*Gen. Rab.* 68; *Eccl. Rab.* 3:2). Hence the Angel of Death cannot touch sinners who have confessed their sins (*Midrash Tanḥuma* Balak 139); people engaged in studying the Torah or in praying (*b. Avodah Zarah* 5a; *Mo'ed Qatan* 28a), as well as other people who pray and study for the sinner's sake (*b. Ketubbot* 104a). Charity (*tzedakah*) is also believed to redeem humans from death (*b. Bava Batra* 11a, based on Prov. 10:2; 11:4). For these reasons, the Angel of Death has difficulty taking the lives of the righteous. He had no power over eleven (mostly biblical) figures that eventually entered Paradise in their

lifetime, without dying (*b. Bava Batra* 17a; Ginzberg 2003, 5:5–96). Many legends recall the difficult time Moses gave him—frightening, punishing, and humiliating the Angel of Death until he fled and Moses died by a kiss from God ("Mitat Neshiqah," e.g., *Midrash Petirat Mosheh Rabbenu Alav ha'Shalom*; *b. Bava Batra* 17a; *Sifre*, Deut. 305; *Midrash Tanḥuma* va'Ethanan:6; *Deut. Rab.* 9,11; Grünhut 1898–1903 5:102b, 169a). The Angel of Death was driven away by talmudic sages as well (*b. Mo'ed Qatan* 28a), yet sometimes he succeeded in seizing them by applying strategy and cunning (*b. Baba Metzi'a* 86a; *Makkot* 10a; *Sukkah* 53a). In other instances, the Angel of Death conversed with sages in a friendly manner and even offered them new knowledge (*b. Avodah Zarah* 35b; *Berakhot* 51a; *Ḥagigah* 4b). In this almost human depiction, the Angel of Death can also be moved by exceptional acts of benevolence to have pity on humans, granting them "time for arrangements" before dying (*b. Mo'ed Qatan* 28a) and even sparing lives (*Derekh Eretz Zuta* 8).

In the third group of stories, people fool and deceive the Angel of Death, who is portrayed as stupid and gullible. One way to do this is by changing the doomed person's name (a custom common to this day, for example, among people ill with terminal diseases). Another way is to distract the Angel of Death so that he will miss the precise moment designated for taking the soul or to chase him away—by, for example, showing him a staff with the name of God engraved on it (*Midrash Petirat Moshe*) or telling him that the Angel of Death's wife is coming. One of the most famous stories of trickery regards Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, who convinced the Angel of Death to show him his place in Paradise in advance, while entrusting his knife to him. Upon arriving in Paradise, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi jumped over the walls—with the knife in his hand—and swore not to come out. The problem was settled by a compromise: The rabbi gave the knife back to the Angel of Death, "because the children of men have need of it," and in return he was allowed to stay in Paradise without dying (*b. Ketubbot* 77b; Jellinek 1938, 2:48–51). These stories share motifs found in the universal tales of the "stupid ogre" and the "beaten devil." They enable revenge by depicting humans as overcoming the Angel of Death and thus give consolation. The humor in them expresses an ability to accept death as a part of life, without bitterness or denial, along with the wish to control death and thus prolong mortal life. Perhaps this perception of death as a part of life is what led to the theory that the Angel of Death is also the "angel of birth" who accompanies every soul into this world, thus implying that each person has an Angel of Death of his or her own (*b. Ketubbot* 104a, *Num. Rab.* 11; *Midrash Tanḥuma* Pequdei:3).

Many folk narratives about the Angel of Death—in each of his three forms—are set on a wedding night, during which one of the two betrothed is fated to die, and the other is willing to give his or her life instead (Tob. 3:8,17; Jellinek 1938, 5:152–154; Gaster, *The Exempla of the Rabbis* [1968] 139; cf. the Greek Alcestis motif). In medieval times, among Jews from East European countries, this image developed into the custom of performing the "Dance of Death" (*todtentanz*) at wedding ceremonies, as well as on other festive occasions, so as to calm the Angel's anger. The dancing Angel of Death often sang of the vanity of mortal existence and the importance of piety (Noy 2007, 150). Another motif, prevailing in Yiddish folk ballads (cf. Priluzki 1913, 1–42), is that of a young girl futilely begging the Angel of Death (depicted as an old, white-haired gentleman) to spare her life.

Customs related to the Angel of Death persist to this day. Most of them are associated with death and burial, such as closing the eyes of the dead, pouring out the water in a house where death has occurred, breaking pots, and serving meals to the assembled mourners. Yet some customs appear on other occasions as well. For example, the prayer that is recited on the Sabbath before each new month is not recited prior to the Jewish month of Tishrei*, thus attempting to confuse the Angel of Death so that he will forget that it is the time of year in which God sentences people to life or to death and therefore will not try to influence God's judgment. The Angel of Death plays an important part in the Haggadah, a set form of benedictions, prayers, midrashic comments and psalms, stories, and songs recited at the Seder ritual on the eve of Passover, both in the story of the tenth plague God inflicted upon the Egyptians and in the folk song "Had gadya" (One Kid). At its end, the Holy One kills the Angel of Death, thus ending the Passover Seder on a joyful note.

Raphael Patai and Ayelet Oettinger

See also: Age and the Aged.

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ANGELS

Throughout Jewish folklore—from biblical texts and kabbalistic literature to modern Jewish folktales—angels play significant roles as mediators, protectors, and divine messengers.

In the Bible

In the early books of the Bible angels are mediators between the earthly and celestial realms. The root of the Hebrew word *malakh* "angel" is the Ugaritic verb *l'kh* (send)—an angel is one who is sent on a mission, an emissary from heaven to earth. The angels in the Bible convey the word of the Lord to those selected to receive it or expound it to His prophets. Angels deliver the message, appointing individuals to play certain roles; they defend the righteous and even wage Israel's wars. They announce to Abraham and Sarah that they will have a son, despite their advanced age (Gen. 18). An angel informs Gideon of his appointment as judge (Judg. 6:11–24). An angel rescues Hagar, lost in the wilderness, and tells her to return to Abraham's home in order to give birth to Ishmael (Gen. 16:7–14). In the time of Hezekiah, an angel of the Lord strikes down the Assyrian army that is besieging Jerusalem (2 Kgs. 19:35; Isa. 37:36). As a general rule, an angel appears only to a single person and in dramatic circumstances, when God's presence and immediate intervention is essential. Such, for example, is the sudden appearance of the angel to stay Abraham's hand from killing Isaac (Gen. 22:11–12).

Sometimes the Bible employs words other than *malakh* to refer to angels. The mysterious figure that wrestles with Jacob in the night is referred to first as *ish* (a man) and then as *elohim* (Gen. 32:25–31), and only later, retrospectively, as a *malakh* (Hos. 12:5). Some scholars believe that *malakh* can mean human messengers, too, or that the word is a euphemism for God. Other terms applied to angels in the Bible are "sons of Elohim" or "sons of *elim,*" "holy ones," "host of heaven," cherubim, seraphim, "creatures," and "wheels." This proliferation reflects the theological challenge biblical authors and interpreters face when attempting to uphold the belief in angels without personifying them in a way that might detract from strict Jewish monotheism. A biblical angel must act for God, in order to protect His unity, but without threatening His sovereignty. The angel of the Lord who appears to Moses in the burning bush, for example, is a stand-in for God, Who is manifested only through His voice (Exod. 3:2).

Biblical angels are often classified into several groups, by form and function. In this nomenclature, those designated by a collective name—sons of *elim,* hosts of heaven, cherubim, seraphim—reside in heaven and exist only to praise God. According to Isaiah's description of the seraphim (Isa. 6), angels of these genera have several pairs of wings, or, like Ezekiel's "creatures" and "wheel" (Ezek. 1), they have multiple faces, some human and others of various animals, and a body that resembles a fiery torch. Although their functions vary, the most common is to praise God (Ps. 148:2). Cherubim are mentioned as the sentinels of Eden (Gen. 3:24) or as the supports of God's throne (1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Kgs. 19:15).

Despite the similarities between angels as members of the heavenly entourage, a category that appears much later in rabbinic literature, and angels as individual entities, the latter appear in the Bible mainly as God's emissaries on earth.

In Literature of the Second Temple Period

This distinction between types of angels was blurred in the Second Temple period, starting with the book of

Daniel, when Jewish angelology expanded and the term *malakh*/angel came to be used for all supernatural beings, whether individual or collective, and whether active on earth or in heaven. Particular names were assigned to certain angels, who were conceived of as independent entities who at times may act of their own initiative, or as angelic patrons or celestial ministers overseeing the nations of the world and Israel. According to the book of Daniel, the tutelary angel of the people of Israel, responsible for their peace and prosperity, is named Michael (Dan. 12:1).

The influence of ancient Eastern mythologies on Second Temple angelology is evident in the angels' names and functions. Aside from the roles already attributed to angels in the Bible—protecting and rescuing, interpreting prophetic visions, and praising the Lord—the celestial ministers of the Apocrypha may represent and watch over both individuals and nations, and clash with one another in order to influence their protégés' destiny. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, angels will do battle on Judgment Day until the Sons of Light overcome the Sons of Darkness.

The expansion of the angelic world in this period may be rooted in the hopes for divine providence, in an era when direct revelation was no longer to be had, or in exposure to Babylonian myths and an attempt to integrate them into the biblical narrative without infringing on Jewish monotheism. Whatever the case, the result was a more detailed taxonomy and hierarchy of angels indicative of their new functions. A band of four—in some traditions, seven—"archangels" or "angels of the presence" is installed as the leaders of the angels (4 Ezra 4:38; Enoch 1:40, 2–10). These angels—Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Phanuel, Uriel, and others—are closer to God than the others and are dispatched on missions of historic importance. There are also groups of angels whose designation indicates their role: angels of peace, angels of advocacy, angels of holiness, angels of power, and so on. In the Apocrypha angels are the overseers of natural phenomena, in charge of the stars, the sea, the rain, the winds, the clouds, cold, hail, and more (Enoch 1:60, 11ff; Jub. 2:2ff). There are even angels assigned to the days of the year, special dates in the year, and the various hours of the day (Enoch 1:75, 1ff).

The relatively open channels of communication and movement between the earthly and heavenly realms, starting in this period, underlie the myths of human beings who were turned into angels; notably Enoch, who, on account of his moral virtue, was assumed into heaven and became the angel Metatron (Enoch 2:1ff). Moving in the opposite direction, literature of this period discusses fallen angels. These, known in many versions in the mythologies of the ancient east as well, make their first appearance in a Jewish context in the book of Enoch (Enoch 1:6ff), which links them to the giants born of the sons of Elohim and daughters of men (Gen.

6:1–4). In this apocryphal text, these sons of Elohim were 200 guardian angels who, lusting for human women, descended to earth to pursue them. The giants whom they fathered began corrupting and destroying the human race; but in response to human entreaties the angels of the presence were given permission to punish them. There are many versions of this myth in the Apocrypha, in the rabbinic literature, in the Zohar, and even today, among the holdings of the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa.

In Rabbinic Literature

The tannaitic literature attaches scant importance to angels, apparently out of a fear of polytheistic influences. The evidence of the later amoraic sources, by contrast, is that belief in angels was widespread, with a correspondingly well-developed doctrine of their nature and roles in the world. Some angels, according to the rabbinic literature, were created on one of the six days of creation; but most of them are reborn each day in order to praise God, after which they vanish or sink into the river of fire (*Gen. Rab,* 78:1; *b. Ḥagigah* 14a). They can fly, speak only Hebrew, and know the future (ibid., 16a). They are composed of water and fire; their shape is that of human beings of vast size. Although they have no wants or needs, they are prone to envy of human beings, just as the ministering angels were jealous of Moses when he ascended to heaven to receive the Torah (*b. Shabbat* 78b). The evanescence of most angels, their limited powers of understanding, and their envy of human beings are evidence of the diminution of their status in the rabbinic literature, evidently to avoid any hint of a material deity. This apprehension is also reflected in the story of Elisha ben Avuyah, who interpreted his vision of the angel Metatron sitting as if he were God and recording the merits of Israel as evidence of a divine dyarchy (*b. Ḥagigah* 15a). Elisha's consequent apostasy, and Metatron's punishment, indicate the traditional author's attempt to give voice to, but also to obviate, the problems inherent in the belief in angels.

The angels' demotion in rabbinic literature is manifested in their lesser powers rather than in their more infrequent appearance. Rabbinic texts promoted the belief in the existence of angels that protect both nations and individuals. At the time of the Exodus, according to one legend, the tutelary angels of the nations were summoned to the heavenly bar to consider the Egyptians' fate. During the course of the deliberations, the angel Gabriel displays part of a wall that the Israelites had been forced to build in Egypt. When this is found to contain the corpse of an Israelite child, the tribunal decrees the punishment of the angel of Egypt, Uza, who represents the destiny of the entire Egyptian people (*Yalqut* Exod. 243). The rabbinic literature also takes over the tutelary

angels of natural phenomena, as in the account of Rahab, the angel of the sea, forced to submit to God's authority (*Num. Rab.* 18).

Picking up on the ancient hierarchy of the angels, the rabbinic literature and Kabbalah stress the supremacy of the angels of the presence or ministering angels. But there are also cruel and punitive angels, such as the angels of destruction and the Angel of Death. The latter, who first appears in the Bible, becomes more real and more autonomous in postbiblical and later literature. In addition to his pitiless role of announcing and implementing death, he is sometimes described in the Apocrypha and thereafter as merciful and an adept of magical practices and folk medicine (Jub. 10:10–14).

In Kabbalistic Literature

The kabbalistic literature, starting at the end of antiquity, helped develop and expand Jewish angelology. The Hekhalot literature (ancient collection of mystical writings) and medieval mystical compositions such as the *Book of Raziel* name many angels along with their functions. According to medieval folk belief, angels may take human form, appear in a dream, or intervene in human life thanks to belief in their existence. Kabbalistic treatises with a magical character, such as the *Book of Raziel,* supposed to have been revealed by the angel Raziel, include recipes for prayers and amulets of use for summoning angels. An angel's name, which generally indicates its function, could be used to summon it and compel it to act. In addition to the common names of the angels of the presence—Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael—the *Book of Raziel* includes hundreds of other names, such as Ḥasdiel and Raḥmiel, who stand for gracious kindness (Heb., *ḥesed*), mercy (Heb., *raḥamim*), and generosity; Zakriel, responsible for remembering (Heb., *zakhor*); Morael, the angel of fear (Heb., *mora*) and trembling, who rules over the penitential month of Elul; Raphael, who is in charge of health (Heb., *rafa* [heal]); and many others. In some cases, an angel's function can be determined only by expounding its name; in other cases the name has no obvious meaning, as with the triad of Senoy, Sansenoy, and Semangelof, where the assonance also serves a mnemonic function.

The Zohar's classification of the angels serves to ground the belief in their existence as part of the link between the lower and upper worlds of the Kabbalah. The upper angels, according to the Zohar, reside in the palace (*heikhal*) called Merkabah (chariot). Other groups of angels are divided into seven sections, with the angels of mercy in the upper four and the angels of destruction in the three lowest. The different categories of angels play different roles in the Zohar. The active upper angels are "male," for example, and the lower passive ones are "female."

Angels, according to the Zohar, assume the spiritual form of human beings. Some of the sources describe them as composed of the divine attributes of mercy, power, beauty, and control, which are associated in turn with the four elements, water, fire, earth, and air. Alongside their traditional roles, angels also have specific tasks in the world; Metatron, for example, teaches the esoteric lore to human beings. This function is mentioned in other texts as part of the divine providence enjoyed by kabbalists such as the seventeenth-century Samson Ostropoler, who studied Torah arcana with an angel.

Outside this rich literature that developed in the early Middle Ages, and thereafter in the esoterica of the German Pietists, angelology played only a small role in Jewish rationalist philosophy. Although many medieval philosophers accepted the existence of angels, Sa'adiah Gaon considered their power less than that of human beings, while the medieval Torah scholar Maimonides reduced them to figures of speech.

In Jewish Folktales

Despite secularization and the excision of references to angels from prayerbooks and modern Jewish thought, the Israel Folktale Archives has many stories about angels from various communities. In some of them angels intervene in earthly life only through dreams or after death; in others, however, they are full-fledged and realistic characters. For the most part, they punish and sometimes slay transgressors, help the righteous, and save young maidens in distress; they serve as matchmakers and sentence human beings to Paradise or to hell. Thus, the belief in angels has not vanished in the modern age. Even if this belief system has no mass or overt expression, it is not rejected in traditional contexts, and it serves symbolic and poetic functions in secular ones.

Raphael Patai and Tsafi Sebba-Elran

See also: Angel of Death.

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ANIMAL FOLKTALES

An animal folktale is a folktale whose principal characters are animals and whose plot takes place in an animal world (not in the human one). Even if there is one human being (or several) among the characters, and he or she is the main hero of the narrative plot, the strange animal world remains unchanged, and only by chance does the human character become integrated into that world. The human usually understands the animal language, speaks it, and behaves in accordance with the rules dominating the animal world.

The animal folktale (according to Aarne-Thompson classification 1–299, as defined in the AT number classification system) includes also folktales whose characters are birds, fish, ants, serpents, and other living beings as well as plants and objects.

When the plot of the animal tale is set in the remote past but deals with or illuminates a specific contemporary condition or custom in the human world, the animal tale becomes a fable (Heb., *mashal*) and its ending serves as a moral (*nimshal*). In most languages the term "fable" includes the story and the moral, while the latter refers to the present, actual world.

History

The animal tale is regarded as the oldest form of the folktale. Since antiquity, it has been used to describe and explain events and qualities of the animal world, and to respond to human intellectual curiosity about an unknown neighboring world involved in problems of domestication and hunting.

Drawing on the behavior and characteristics of specific animals and plants, which were humankind's closest neighbors, friends, or enemies, societies all over the globe created myths that, aided by human fantasy, explain origins, beliefs, rites, and customs. In these myths, animals and plants play a central role, usually of an etiological nature. Thus these myths are connected with the systematic study of zoology, botany, and cultures.

The oldest known texts of "pure" (i.e., without a moral) animal tales originated in Sumer (around 4000 B.C.E.), but some scholars regard China, India, or Greece as the place of the genre's origin, whether oral or written. For folklorists, ethnographers, and anthropologists, it is clear that the genre existed in oral form for many centuries before its texts appeared in writing and became canonized.

Distribution and Circulation

The genre of the animal folktale is widespread throughout the world, at all levels of culture, and it dominates the folk literature and the storytelling of preliterate people. In later societies the fable, based on the animal, constituted an important part of literature. In many cases scholars can prove that the original characters of the animal tales have been replaced by human actors, and the animal tale became in the sophisticated West a human, ordinary folktale, usually a parable, whose characters are human beings.

Much can be learned about the distribution of animal tales in India from the Jatakas, a collection of

literary fables. The same holds true for Greece, where the written Aesopian tradition is dominant. The genre was developed and elevated there by Aesop in the sixth century B.C.E. Although scholars still debate Aesop's precise role, he undoubtedly influenced the later (Latin) change of the fable-genre into poetic prose (he himself narrated his fables in prose), as well as the subsequent medieval and Renaissance elaboration of the Reynard cycle in Europe.

The line between the literary and oral animal tale is difficult to explain historically, as in many instances folktales from written collections reflect the oral folk tradition. According to many scholars, the animal tale was intended primarily to entertain, while the didactic, moralizing fable was developed to teach. In modern animal folktales it is unclear whether the animal in the tale (coyote, raven, rabbit) is performing an animal or a human role. This is especially true with animal trickster tales, where the deeds of the trickster in animal shape are motivated by a strong logical mind.

The Characters

The main characters in the animal tales are the fox, the wolf, and the bear, which are European forest animals. In many of the versions, extant also in the talmudic-midrashic fable literature, the animals are organized and resemble an animal kingdom, whose ruler (the lion) is the king of the beasts. In that kingdom there exist courts, parliaments, and religious ceremonies, and the moral of the story can be easily transferred to the human world.

In the oral tradition, the animal tales take on a life of their own and very seldom intertwine with the written beast-epics. In northern Europe, the original lion character was replaced at first by the wolf and then by the bear, while the narrative plot did not change. The same holds true with the European fox, who replaced the Indian jackal (the fox is mentioned only once in the Rig Veda, the ancient Indian sacred collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns).

Among the European fabulists who followed the Aesopian tradition and collected and adapted fables, four authors were outstanding: (1) Moshe the Sefaradi (b. 1062), who converted to Christianity and changed his name to Petrus Alfonsi, compiled *Disciplina Clericalis* in 1110; (2) Marie de France, who lived in England in the twelfth century; (3) Berechiah ha'Nakdan, a contemporary of Marie de France who composed his "Fox Fables" in Hebrew; and (4) Jacques de Vitry, a French priest who lived in Belgium, participated in the Fifth Crusade, was a bishop in Acre, and died in Jerusalem in 1140. These four fabulists drew on many Jewish folk traditions. In his comparative writings, the Israeli folklorist Haim Schwarzbaum contributed to scholars' knowledge and comprehension of these four fabulists and their written and oral sources.

Unlike in preliterate societies, the animal tales did not play an important role in the European fable tradition. When the author of *Gesta Romanorum*, a Latin collection of anecdotes and folktales, compiled his anthology at the end of the thirteenth or the beginning of the fourteenth century, he included only a few animal tales in it.

Scholars now assume that the tradition of the written animal tale and fable started in India, where it existed before it developed in Europe. The five books of the *Panchatantra*, a canonical collection of Sanskrit (Hindu) and Pali (Buddhist) fables in verse and prose composed in Kashmir, contain folktales of many kinds, but the majority are animal fables. Although this written tradition begins at approximately the end of the first millennium C.E., the accepted scholarly view is that the oral sources of the *Panchatantra* are very early.

The folktales in which animals interact with human heroes, but their plot occurs mainly in the human world (Puss in Boots, animal helpers), belong, according to the AT classification (AT 300–749), to the ordinary, fairy-tale genre.

The Animal as the Reflection of the Narrating Society

Because the animal's world is a realistic one, it faithfully reflects the narrating as well as the listening and absorbing human society. Although many aspects of human and animal behavior are similar, it is more convenient for human beings to refer to themselves using allusions to and allegories from the animal world. The narrator can ascribe to his animal heroes traits of protest, even rebelliousness, which he would not dare use in referring to his human contemporaries. The narrators are always aware of the fact that the listening audience might include potential calumniators and delators, and by referring to animals whose king is the lion he can always claim that the connection between the narrated animal tale and the human world is the creation of the delator whose "sick fantasy" connects the animal tale with human beings. The listeners are of course aware of the allusions and the unspoken thoughts of the intelligent storyteller.

Classification of the Animal Tale Types and Motifs

To enable future researchers to pursue comparative analyses, folklorists tried, from their first steps at documentation in the nineteenth century, to create a world classification system. The Finnish scholar Antti Aarne built on folklorists Julius and Kaarle Krohn's historic-geographic method of comparative folkloristics and developed the ini-

tial version of the Aarne-Thompson system of classifying folktales, first published in 1910. The American scholar Stith Thompson enlarged its scope in 1961, creating the AT number system often used by folklorists today.

The following is a complete classification for animal tales:

The Tale-Type Classification

AT 1–99: Wild Animals (Mammals of the Field and Forest)
AT 1–69: The Fox (Jackal)—The Clever Animal
AT 70–99: Other Wild Animals
AT 100–149: Wild Animals and Domestic Animals
AT 150–199: Man and Wild Animals
AT 200–219: Domestic Animals
AT 220–249: Birds
AT 250–259: Fish
AT 275–299: Other Animals, (Plants), and Objects

The Motif Classification

The International Motif Index created by Thompson in 1936 starts with the Animal Tales that are represented by the B motifs. The headings of this Index are as follows:

B 0–99: Mythical animals
B 100–199: Magical animals
B 200–299: Animals act as human beings
B 300–599: Friendly animals
B 600–699: Marriage of person and animal
B 700–799: Fanciful traits of animals
B 800–899: Miscellaneous animal motifs

The Animal Tale and Children's Literature

Not all animal tales were created in response to humans' intellectual curiosity about happenings in the neighboring or surrounding animal world. Nor did all the animal tales function as a ruse, using language allegorically to express dangerous ideas, as when a lion and a fox are intended to represent ruler (king) and servant, respectively.

Many of the animal tales started as children's stories or became children's tales, in which domesticated animals filled, in many cases, the home and the yard and competed with local children for spiritual and material favors from the children's caregivers.

Looking at a children's story from a stylistic aspect one will find many iterations that deviate from the structural triad and from the three characters of the folktale as identified by Axel Olrik: Often the children's story seems to be dominated by elements of absurdity and nonsense. In addition to the piled-up repetitions that outweigh the structural triad and the high number of characters instead of the usual three, there exists a didactic element that is so explicit that the story does not need a moral.

To this genre belongs Grimm's Fairy Tale No. 5 (AT 123, with 8 versions from Morocco, Iraqi-Kurdistan, Iraq, and Iran, and three versions from Lithuania and Romania in the Israel Folktale Archives at the University of Haifa) about the wolf and the children who are punished because they did not act according to their mother's instructions. In Grimm's Tale No. 26, otherwise known as "Red Riding Hood" (AT 333, with three versions from Morocco and two from Iraq), the children are replaced by a girl who does not listen to her mother and grandmother. The common denominator of these two folktales, one of which takes place in the animal world, the other among humans, is the didactic message: Whoever does not heed the voice (counsel, religious precept) of established authority, which always cares about and warns the inexperienced individual, will be punished. The powerful establishment (the mother, the hunter, the adult) is not only warning and defending; it is redeeming and saving, too. Even if the method of saving is supernatural (cutting the wolf's belly and thus saving the living child inside), it is an outcome of a clever device as well as the experience and strength (the hunter's gun) of the savior.

The agent of the establishment or ruler who is the cause of the tale's "happy ending" is the "hidden" character at the story's beginning. The end of the children's story proves that the warning at the beginning was right and that wisdom lies in following the elders' ways (cf. Job 12:12).

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See also: Fable.

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ANIMALS

Animals are mentioned frequently in Jewish folklore, which throughout history has been shaped and influenced by the beliefs and cultures not only of particular Jewish groups but also of the peoples among whom Jews lived in the Diaspora.

The tales, songs, parables, and proverbs relating to animals reflect notions held by ancient peoples about animals and their behavior. These notions, resting on both observations and beliefs, formed traditions that persisted for centuries with few changes.

In the Bible

The Bible is filled with descriptions of animals, evidently written by people familiar with nature and inspired by it. These descriptions express a belief that Divine Providence dwells in all creatures, "from *Oryx* to egg lice" (according to a talmudic saying in *Shabbat*: 107b).

Folklore research on animals in the Bible requires a comparative survey of the ancient literature and mythology of Babylonian, Egyptian, and Canaanite sources. In this context, it is appropriate to mention the work of British anthropologist and folklorist James Frazer, particularly his *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament* (1919), despite the fact that scholars have rejected many of his claims (Bodenhaimer, 1949, 1:327–335). Biblical descriptions of animals can be classified as follows.

Creation Passages

The story of the animals' creation and the order in which they appeared in the world is a model for studying ancient zoological classification. Another example is the description of Noah's ark (Gen. 6, 7) and the life of the animals in it, which was the subject of numerous later tales and parables, particularly in the rabbinic literature.

Similes and Symbols

Numerous animals are used as similes for Israel's tribes, due to their specific qualities as described in the blessings of Jacob and Moses (Gen. 49; Deut. 33); the lion is identified with the tribes of Judah, Dan, and Gad, the ass with Issachar, the serpent with Dan, the hind (deer) with Naphtali, the wolf with Benjamin, the ox and the oryx with Joseph. Animals also served as similes for various nations: Israel is a lion (Ezek. 19:2), Egypt is a crocodile (Ezek. 29:3), and the king of Babylon is an eagle (Ezek. 17:3). Isaiah (27:1) is mentioned together with the "leviathan," the "tortuous serpent," and the "dragon." These were Canaanite mythological monsters, considered by idol worshipers as divinities. In Isaiah they describe three important kingdoms: Egypt, Assyria, and Babylon (Isa. 27:1). To the ancients, animals were associated with specific qualities: the lion and the oryx symbolize strength and might (Num. 23:22; Deut. 33:17), the ant symbolizes diligence (Prov. 6:6), the dove is a symbol for innocence and foolishness (Hos.

7:11), the grasshopper is a symbol of smallness (Num. 13:33), the wild ass symbolizes freedom (Job 39:5).

In many instances the Bible uses one animal to describe another: "His horses are swifter than eagles" (Jer. 4:13). The locust plague described in Joel contains ample animal similes and idioms, which were taken from local folklore and became part of the oral tradition (Joel 1:1–2). The locust is described thus: "His teeth are the teeth of a lion, and he hath the jaw-teeth of a lioness" (Joel 1:6), and so: "The appearance of them is as the appearance of horses" (Joel 2:4).

The prophets also refer to animals in their parables in order to illustrate lessons in morality: "As the partridge that broodeth over young which she hath not brought forth, so is he that getteth riches, and not by right" (Jer. 17:11). This parable is based on the perception that the female bird takes eggs in addition to her own and broods over them, but is unable to warm them and to cause their hatching.

Many of the figurative descriptions fauna are dedicated to Divine Glory. They are based on ancient zoological knowledge, which at times is surprisingly accurate (Ps. 104:18), but limited: "Knowest thou the time when the wild goats of the rock bring forth? Or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve?" (Job 39). The descriptions in Job (38–41) of large or small animals, some considered wonderful and strange to humans, merit mention: for example, the description of the hippopotamus, a large and strong creature that dwells in pools of water. Among these descriptions, the ones about the whale, the largest mammal on earth, are exceptional. They combine realism and imagination, and are based on mythology and folklore about sea monsters, common to many nations: "Out of his mouth go burning torches, and sparks of fire leap forth, out of his nostrils goeth smoke, as out of a seething pot and burning rushes" (Job 41:19–20). The scholar Menahem Dor (1997) suggests that all the names of fowl (e.g., Isa. 13:21–22, 34:14) are names of demons.

Religion and Law

The list of pure and impure animals (Lev. 11; Deut. 14) is an example of a unique Jewish law, a factor separating Israel from other countries. Among the best known is the pig (and the mouse) sacrificed by gentiles and Israel sinners (Isa. 65:4, 66:17), which later became the dominant symbol of impurity and inspired abhorrence.

In Rabbinical Literature

In considering folklore in rabbinical literature, a distinction should be made between juristic sources in which folkloristic matter is scarce, and the sources of midrashic nature in which it is ample. In ancient juristic sources, such as the Mishnah, Tosefta, and juristic Midrash, folkloristic elements are seldom found, such as the view about "a mouse half flesh and half soil" (m. Ḥullin 9:6).

In talmudic and midrashic literature, folkloristic descriptions are based on biblical commentaries or folktales widespread in the Roman and Byzantine periods. For example, the verse "Or canst thou mark when the hinds do calve" (Job 39:1) is described by the preacher as Divine Providence that saves the hind while giving birth: "This hind, narrow is its womb. While giving birth, I bring her a dragon which stings her womb, and she heals from the birth" (b. Bava Batra: 16b). Other midrashic texts describe imaginary animals, for example, the enormous fowl surnamed "Bar Yohni" (b. Bekhorot: 57b), reminiscent of the classic mythological phoenix.

Another type of folklore, which entered rabbinical literature, is connected to agriculture and nature, common in Greco-Roman literature (found, e.g., in the writings of Aristotle, Herodotus, and Pliny). For example, with regard to the duration of animal gestation, it was believed that the snake's gestation period lasted seven years, and in particular the adder snake, for it conceives once every seventy years (t. Bekhorot 1:10; Ber. Rab. 20:4; and other parallel versions, such as the chapter "Zra'im," published from the Genizah by Feliks 1992).

An additional type of folklore is connected to the interpretations of animals' names in the context of qualities attributed to them. For example, the Egyptian vulture (Raḥam) is so called because, with its creation, mercy (Heb., raḥamim) came to the world. The stork (Ḥasida) is named after the benevolence (Heb., ḥesed) God granted it. According to another famous tradition, the crow is considered a cruel bird that neglects its chicks (b. Ḥullin: 63a).

Numerous midrashic texts describe Noah as a devoted animal caretaker in the ark. He knew all their needs, among them the unique habit of the ostriches to swallow various objects including glass. This breadth of ancient knowledge was even used in juristic rulings (b. Shabbat: 128a). Another example is the view that lice have spontaneous life, as believed by scientists of the time, and therefore killing them on the Sabbath was permitted (b. Shabbat: 107b). An interesting description believed also in the Middle Ages is that the salamander is born from fire and therefore is fireproof (b. Ḥagigah: 27a). This comment and others similar to it form the basis for numerous homilies and parables.

A particularly widespread genre is fox fables, dozens of which are found in talmudic-midrashic literature, remnants of the many that were orally conveyed in the tannaic period. Similar fox/wolf and sheep fables are well known from Aesop's writings dating back to the sixth century B.C.E.

Folklore about animals existed in the Middle Ages and thereafter, especially in books about natural sciences, philosophy, and medicine. Among the most important writings are the thirteenth-century book *Sha'ar ha'shamayim* by Rabbi Gershom Ben Shlomo, *Midrash talpiyot,* a compilation of rabbinical teachings by Rabbi

Eliyahu Hacohen of eighteenth-century Izmir, and the *Sefer ha'brit* (The Book of the Covenant), composed by Rabbi Phinehas Hurwitz (1765–1821).

Together with this literature, the folklore embedded in the kabbalistic literature and in the writings about remedies and amulets should be mentioned. All these depictions reveal that the descriptions of animals are influenced by and derived from several layers of sources: biblical, rabbinical, and zoological knowledge found in classical and Arabic literature (e.g., the writings of al-Jahiz and al-Damiri). The ostrich, for example, due to its shape and singular behavior, is an animal frequently mentioned in folklore. Most of the later commentators believed it to be "Kannaf Renanim" (Job 39:13–17), described as a hybrid fowl born from the cross-breeding of a camel and a bird. Its female warms her eggs by the heat of her gaze. These beliefs were the basis for hanging ostrich eggs in Middle Eastern synagogues, and numerous explanations were offered, for example, that the egg symbolizes direct and permanent Divine Providence over Israel. The ostrich egg is a prominent example of how folklore influenced Jewish commentary, ethics, and art.

Zohar Amar and Ephraim Lev

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AN-SKI, S. (1863–1920)

Born Shlomo Zanvil Rappoport on October 27, 1863, in Chashniki, Vitebsk province, in what is now Belarus, An-Ski became a political activist, folklorist, and writer, renowned for his play *The Dybbuk*. The first draft of the play was written in 1914, inspired by the findings of the ethnography expedition and based on folk belief about a spirit of a dead person that invaded the body of a liv-

S. An-Ski in 1916. *(Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary)*

ing person. He began studying Russian folklore in 1888 when he settled in Yakaterinoslav and later, when, in the spirit of Russian populism (*narodnichestvo*), he went to live among coal miners. During his years as a political exile in Paris, after being expelled by Russian authorities, he became acquainted with European and especially French folklore. This provided the tools that shaped his views of Jewish folklore. He saw the latter as a means of uncovering modern Jewish life and as the symbolic language of Jewish history.

The return of An-Ski to Jewish society took place in 1900 after the death of Piotr Lavrov (1823–1900), the theoretician of *narodnichestvo*, for whom An-Ski worked as a secretary. After reading the works of I.L. Peretz, he discovered that it is possible to draw on folklore and express modernism in Yiddish. This led An-Ski to return to Jewish society and to Jewish folklore as the pinnacle of this return.

In 1906 An-Ski began fifteen years of engagement with Jewish folklore, which ended only with his death in 1920. He began the work that would make the study of Jewish folklore possible by setting up a network of Jewish cultural institutions. The Jewish Historical and

Ethnographical Society of St. Petersburg began a new burst of activity in 1908 marked by the founding of the Jewish monthly *Evreiski mir* (Jewish world) and the appointment of An-Ski as its literary editor. In 1919, he founded the Historical and Ethnographical Society in Vilna. With the support of the various societies, he launched a lecture tour through the pace of settlement that focused on Jewish folklore.

The zenith of his folklore research was the ethnographic expedition that set out on July 1, 1912—known at the time as Günzburg expedition after Baron Horace Günzburg and referred to today as the "An-Ski expedition." He viewed the expedition as his life's mission and saw it as a project of Jewish national scope. The expedition visited some seventy Jewish communities in Volhynia and Podolia and collected folklore, including tales, songs, and proverbs, and documented and collected items of material culture and folk art. A direct result of the expedition's labors was the folklore questionnaire about life-cycle events, which was conducted by the Russian-Jewish ethnologist Lev Sternberg (1861–1927).

Selected items from the expedition's treasures were exhibited in St. Petersburg in 1914 and in the Petrograd Museum in 1917. In 1929, when the authorities accused the Jewish Ethnographic Society of counterrevolutionary propaganda, many items were transferred to the Mendele Moicher Sforim All-Ukrainian Museum for Jewish Culture in Odessa, which had opened in 1927. In 1926 the ethnographic department of the Russian Museum cataloged items that An-Ski had deposited for safekeeping in 1917. In 1930 these items, along with others from An-Ski's collection, became the Ashkenazi Jewish collection of the Leningrad Municipal Ethnographic Museum. They were damaged during the bombardment of the museum in 1941. In 1952, the silver ritual objects were transferred from the former Jewish Museum in Odessa to Historical Museum in Kiev. Documents, manuscripts, recordings, and texts were sent to the Institute of Proletarian Jewish Culture in Kiev. In the 1990s they were transferred to the V.I. Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine. Other materials are scattered in archives, libraries, and museums in St. Petersburg, Kiev, Minsk, and Moscow. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the ritual objects have been on display in the Russian Ethnographic Museum. Between 1992 and 1995, some of the An-Ski collections were exhibited in Amsterdam, Cologne, Frankfurt, Jerusalem, and New York.

At the same time, An-Ski was formulating his theory about Jewish folklore. In his articles he deals with legends about blood libels, Jewish folk songs, children's songs, charms and oaths, riddles, proverbs and sayings, and legends about synagogues.

His most important article, "Jewish Ethnopoetics," reprinted in volume 15 of his collected writings, reflects his attempt to treat all the genres of Jewish folklore and to develop a comprehensive theory about it. The essay "Jewish Ethnopoetics," which was written in 1908, before the ethnographic expedition was even contemplated, reflects the areas that An-Ski considered essential for the study of Jewish folklore. He spoke of the need to interest the intelligentsia in Jewish folklore, the need for ethnographic work to collect folklore in the places where it is alive, and the need for scholarly induction to produce a theory about the distinct features of Jewish folklore.

An-Ski emphasizes the distinctive features of Jewish folklore in the more general context of European folklore. Jewish and European folklore share the same paradigms. The difference between them lies in the content: the veneration of physical strength in European folklore versus the spiritual orientation of Jewish folklore. To the heroic epics of Europe, he contrasts the spiritual might of the Jewish hero, who acts by speech rather than by sword. The Jewish hero can lay waste to cities, destroy armies, and subdue wild animals by the force of his words alone.

By virtue of his contribution to locating folklore and ethnography at the center of the intellectual discipline of Judaic studies, to seeing fieldwork as the basis of folkloristic endeavors, and his attempt to develop a theory of Jewish folklore, An-Ski remains the keystone of Jewish folklore studies.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Dybbuk; Poland, Jews of; Russia, Jews of.

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ANTHOLOGIES

The term "anthology" comes from the Greek word *anthologia* (a compound term that combines *anthos* [flower] and *legein* [to gather]), to mean a bouquet of flowers, metaphorically applied to a literary collection of selected songs, tales, jokes, or other genres. A narrative anthology, or anthology of narratives, in this context is an anthology of folktales and is used here to make a distinction between these and other anthologies, such as anthologies of poems or anthologies of essays.

Anthological principles of selection and recombination—that is, purposefully selecting literary works from written and oral sources and assembling them in a new order—are present in select biblical books, such as Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes, and the apocryphal *Wisdom of Ben Sira* (Latin, *Ecclesiasticus*). Psalms is a collection of poems and prayers, whereas the others consist of proverbs, either literary or oral, thematically organized. Similarly, anthological principles guided the editor of the Babylonian Talmud, who grouped together tales of the same genre, on the same subject, such as tall tales (*Bava Batra* 73a–74b), miracle tales (*Ta'anit* 23a–25b), and destruction narratives (*Gittin* 55b–58a), without necessarily having in front of them earlier anthologies of these forms.

The Bible and the apocryphal and talmudic-midrashic literature include tales drawn from the oral traditions of their respective periods, but the narratives do not have an independent literary existence within these works. Rather, they occur as historical accounts, illustrations of ethical or religious principles, exegetical commentary on the biblical text, and complements to scriptural tales.

Early Anthologies

Evidence of the awareness among Jewish editors of the literary value of anthologies is available only after the Arab conquest in the seventh century. From then on, anthology became the primary format for the transition of folklore forms from orality to literacy, from storytelling to story writing and reading. Whereas in Indian and Arab cultures, such anthologies were framed by fictional storytelling situations, as is the case in the *Panchatantra* and the *Arabian Nights*, in Jewish tradition the anthologizing of tales followed a written model, either a core biblical text or the very order of the alphabet. *Midrash Aseret ha'Dibberot* (The Midrash of the Ten Commandments), likely from the tenth century and from Iraq, is the earliest narrative Hebrew anthology, predicated upon the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:2–14; Deut. 5:6–21). *The Alphabet of Ben Sira*, like Asian anthologies, builds upon a dialogic confrontational situation in which the youthful Shimon Ben Sira must respond to the challenges of the wise men of the court, at the risk of his life.

Linguistically and literarily, the anthologizing process of traditional narratives continued by achieving independence from scriptural reference, and through translation into a vernacular Diasporic Jewish language or even a non-Jewish language. *Ḥibbur Yafeh meha'Yeshu'ah* (An Elegant Composition Concerning Relief After Adversity), by Nissim ben Jacob ibn Shāhīn (990–1062) of Kairouan,

Tunisia, illustrates this process. The book, compiled under the influence of Arabic consolation literature, such as *Kitāb al-faraji ba'd al-shiddah*, was available in Judeo-Arabic. Its tales no longer followed the order of an earlier written text, but became independent narratives, even as many of them still served as exempla that validated a biblical verse or proverb or resolved an ethical dilemma.

Although each of these anthologies includes a share of internationally known tales, in format, frame, and content they are grounded in Jewish tradition. Subsequent anthologies demonstrate the convergence of Asian and European literary traditions with Jewish or Judaic-derived narrative collection. *Disciplina Clericalis,* which was compiled in the twelfth century by Moshe the Sefaradi (b. 1062), a convert to Christianity in 1106 who was known as Petrus Alfonsi, although written in Latin includes tales from Arabic and Jewish traditions and narratives that later occurred in Jewish oral literature. The framed anthology *Mishle Sendebar* (Tales of Sendebar) belongs to the Eastern cycle of the *Seven Wise Men of Rome* and recreates a confrontational storytelling situation, concerning the young prince's innocence of sexual abuse. The earliest extant manuscript is from the fourteenth century, yet the collection was known in Hebrew several centuries earlier. Its stories do not draw on earlier Jewish sources; rather, they record the introduction of Eastern and Arab tales into the narrative traditions of Jewish societies.

Similarly, the collection of *Mishle shu'alim* of Rabbi Berechiah ben Natronai ha'Nakdan (twelfth to thirteenth centuries) draws on European medieval, Latin Aesopic, and Asian fable traditions, and it became a canonic fable collection in Hebrew literature. Aesopic fables occur in the talmudic-midrashic literature, in which the knowledge of fables is attributed to rabbis such as Hillel the Elder (first century), Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Zakkai (first century), Rabbi Meir (second century), and Bar Kappara (second century) (*Soferim* 17:9; *b. Sukkah* 28a; *Bava Batra* 38b, 134a; MR, Lev. 28:2). But there is no extant fable anthology in Jewish tradition dating to the late antiquities. The use of the phrase "three hundred fables" that each of these rabbis knew is merely formulaic and does not refer to any known collection. Rather, the fable is a genre that occurs frequently in talmudic-midrashic literature in exegetical and dialogic contexts but until the Middle Ages was not anthologized.

Anthologies in Manuscripts

In the Middle Ages, anthologies served scribes, a convenient format for assembling tales either from previous sources or from oral tradition. These scribes did not usually copy the talmudic-midrashic stories verbatim. Instead, in their anthologies the tales appear with literary elaborations that suggest exposure to tales in the oral tradition, or resort to a different language regis-

ter in rendering the tales in Hebrew. But whatever the style, these texts document the knowledge of narrative traditions in medieval Jewish communities. Three of the most prominent anthologies in manuscripts are *Sefer ha'Ma'asim, Sefer ha'Zikhronot,* and *Sefer ha'Ma'asiyyot.*

Sefer ha'Ma'asim (Book of Tales) is a thirteenth-century collection of sixty-one tales from northern France, included in a manuscript in the Bodleian Library in Oxford (Or 135). This important manuscript contains other anthologies and midrashic books such as the *Alphabet of Ben Sira, The Mishle Shu'alim (Fox Fables) of Rabbi Berechiah ha'Nakdan, Tales of Sendebar, A Chronicle of Moses, Midrash of the Ten Commandments,* and *Midrash va'Yosha.* An unknown scribe compiled the manuscript in the northern Champagne region of France during the second quarter of the thirteenth century, no later than 1250.

Sefer ha'Zikhronot (The Book of Memory), also known as *Divrei ha'Yamim le'Yeraḥme'el* (Oxford, Bodleian Library, manuscript Heb.D. 11), anthologizes primarily mythical and historical narratives. It was written early in the fourteen century in the Rhine valley. *Sefer ha'Ma'asiyyot*, known in English as *The Exempla of the Rabbis* (Gaster Codex 82) consists of talmudic legends, and its provenance and dates are not known with certainty. In all likelihood, the collection, if not this particular manuscript, is from Persia and dates from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries.

From Script to Print

The transition from script to print increased the number of folklore anthologies exponentially, though not immediately. First, some anthologies that had circulated in manuscript form, such as *Ḥibbur Yafeh meha'Yeshu'ah* (published as *Ma'asiyyot she'ba'Talmud*, Constantinople, 1519), *Mishle Sendeband* (Constantinople, 1516)*,* and *Midrash Aseret ha'Dibberot* (Venice, 1541[?]; Ferrara, 1554), *Mishle shu'alim* (Mantua, 1557–1559), appeared in print. Then, around the mid-sixteenth century several other anthologies also appeared in print, such as *Ḥibbur ha'Ma'asiyyot ve'ha'Midrashot ve'Haggadot* (Venice, 1551?), *Midrashot u'Ma'asiyyot she'ba'Talmud* (1544), and *Sippurei ma'asim* (Ferrara, 1554). Some included tales and collections that were previously available in script, as well as new tales previously unavailable.

This transitional stage did not end right away, when print began to be the primary mode of narrative anthologies. The practice of circulating tales in manuscript form continued in different Jewish population centers for about 250 more years, as the history of *Shivḥei ha'Besht* (In Praise of the Ba'al Shem Tov) (see below) demonstrates. This first collection of legends about the founder of Hasidism circulated in manuscript form for decades, at least since the Besht's death in 1760 until its publication in 1814. Yet, the persistence of script notwithstanding, the emergence of print effected the

preparation and publication of anthologies. While previous manuscripts were finding their way slowly into the printer's workshop, there were others whose editors submitted them directly for publication in print.

Rabbi Ya'akov ibn Chaviv [Habib] (ca. 1445–1516), a prominent Spanish rabbi who was expelled with all the Jews from Spain in 1492, and then left Portugal before 1501, settled in Salonika. He devoted the last two years of his life to the completion of the anthology of the Aggadah in the Talmud, *Ein Ya'akov* (Salonika, 1516). The Babylonian Talmud serves as the frame of reference for arranging the aggadot in this anthology. *Ein Ya'akov* was one of the most popular anthologies, published in more than a hundred editions. A similarly popular anthology, published toward the end of the century, but of which the only extant copy is from the third edition, was *Ze'enah u'Re'enah* ([Women], Come and See) (Basel, 1622), by Jacob ben Isaac Ashkenazi. Not strictly an anthology of independent texts, the collection is predicated upon the weekly reading portions of the Pentateuch and combines discourses about selected biblical passages, midrashic narratives, and interpretations that women read on the Sabbath.

From the sixteenth century, eight Yiddish manuscripts of tale collections are known. They were *Maysebikhlekh* (folktale booklets) of various sizes, ranging from three or four to twenty tales per manuscript collection. The largest of them, recently discovered (Jerusalem Heb.8°5245), consists of 100 tales of this kind. The first published edition of a *Mayse Bukh* (Basel, 1602), known also by the title *Mayse Bukh*, includes 257 tales that Jacob ben Abraham, a Lithuanian book dealer, had printed at the press of Lonrad Wladkirch, directing his volume to women readers, assuming greater Yiddish than Hebrew familiarity among them.

Local Anthologies

Toward the end of the seventeenth century, Eliezer Liebermann translated from Hebrew to Yiddish and published in 1696 in Amsterdam a collection of historical legends and accounts that his father Rabbi Juspa of Worms had written down. Juspa was the salaried beadle (*shamash)* of the community, who, coming to the city as a young man, was fascinated by the legends that its members told. Rabbi Juspa of Worms wrote them down for posterity but only occasionally noted his sources and the circumstances in which he heard these tales. This book, *Sefer ma'aseh nissim* (A Book of Wonders), became the first anthology in Jewish folklore whose editor deliberately recorded tales known in the oral tradition of a single community. These are narratives of persecution, tolerance, rape, magic, demons, miracles, and romance that were known in the community and probably in the entire region.

Hasidic Anthologies

Anthology was the basic publication format of Hasidic legends. Starting with the publication of *Shivḥei ha'Besht* (In Praise of the Ba'al Shem Tov) (1814), first circulated as a manuscript, and with the thirteen tales in the bilingual Hebrew and Yiddish *Sefer ha'Ma'asiyyot* (A Book of Tales) (1815) of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav (1772–1810), a great-grandson of the Besht on his mother's side, Hasidic tales appeared in narrative anthologies. Listed and collectively analyzed in *The Hasidic Tale* (2008), by Gedalyah Nigal, these anthologies center upon the pietistic or miraculous acts of either a single rabbi or *tsaddikim,* the thirty-six righteous individuals who are to be found in each generation, according to the Talmud. These anthologies served as the source for secondary anthologies such as *Die chassidischen Bücher* (1927), edited by Martin Buber (1878–1965) and published later as *Tales of Hasidim* (1947–48), and in Hebrew as *Or ha'ganuz* (Hidden Light) (1946).

Late Anthologies

Folk literature, upon which the print revolution began to have an impact in the sixteenth century, achieved an unprecedented prominence in Jewish cultural literacy three centuries later. Modernization facilitated the social awareness of folk literature and anthologies made tales, songs, and humorous narratives available to a broad readership. These collections expanded and diversified the literary horizons of Jewish folk traditions, reaching beyond the thematic boundaries of the biblical, talmudic-midrashic, and medieval tales and figures, and representing subjects, genres, events, and personalities that are current in different Jewish societies and communities, and told in vernacular Jewish languages. So while the earlier anthologies told and retold stories from the remote past, the Hasidic anthologies included tales about known rabbis and personalities. Fittingly, printers, book dealers, and book peddlers played a primary role in the emergence of modern folklore anthologies and continued to play an active part as collectors and editors well into the middle of the twentieth century.

Fifty-Seven Anthologies

The first comprehensive anthology that drew on both medieval and local sources was *Sippurim*, edited and published in German and Yiddish by Wolf Pascheles (1814–1857). To its first volume Leopald Weisel contributed a group of tales, "Sagen der Prager Juden" (50–81), which included, among other legends, the first published version of the legend of "The Golem." In the next decade Adolph (Aaron) Jellinek (1821–1893) published an anthology of Hebrew medieval manuscripts and early prints, *Beit ha'Midrash* (1853–1877), in six volumes, which was reprinted in 1938 and 1967 and has

remained the principal collection of traditional Jewish folktales. The anthology, prepared within the scholarly tradition of the Wissenschaft des Judentums, includes midrashim and earlier anthologies such as *Midrash Aseret ha'Dibberot* (The Midrash of the Ten Commandments) (1:62–90), *Midrash eleh ezkerah* (Midrash of the Ten Martyrs) (2:64–72, 6:19–35), and *Meshalim shel Shlomo ha'Melekh* (King Solomon's Fables) (4:145–152). In addition, Jellinek included three anthologies of *Ma'asiyyot* (Folktales) (4:142–144, 5:131–154, 6:121–147), which consisted of tales he had assembled from manuscripts and early printed collections.

The editors of the early modern folktale anthologies prepared them as part of an emerging children's literature, rendering and rewriting talmudic-midrashic legends into biblical Hebrew appropriate for children. The first of these anthologies was *Sippurei Jeshurun* (1877) by Isaac Margulies of Vilna (1842–1887), which included 280 tales arranged in five sections. Ten years later, Ze'ev Jawetz (1847–1924) published *Siḥot minni kedem* (Ancient Fairytales) (1887), which was initially distributed as a subscription premium for the *Knesset Yisrael* yearbook. The anthology included only nineteen tales from the Talmud and the Midrash rendered into biblical Hebrew. In his introduction, Jawetz articulated the relations between nationalism and folklore that motivated the recording of folktales in Europe and his own anthology. A year later, in 1888, he moved to Eretz Yisrael and was very active in the cultural life of the Yishuv (Jewish settlement) until 1894, when he returned to Europe, continuing his Zionist activities and writings in several countries. With his slim anthology, Jawetz signaled the value of the tales in the Talmud, not only in the Bible, as a source for symbols of national cultural identity.

Other educators followed Jawetz's lead. Shemuel Zisel Levin in his anthology *Divrei ḥakhamim* (Sages' Tales) (1892) included nineteen tales, and Israel Benjamin Levner (1862–1916) in *Kol aggadot Yisrael* (All the Jewish Legends) (1898–1903) created a monumental anthology of over a thousand tales, a selection of which was later translated into German (1915) and English (1946). Bernhard Kuttner took a similar educational approach, extending the sources upon which he drew to the Middle Ages and publishing his anthology in German, *Jüdische Sagen und Legenden für Jung und Alt* (1902–1906), bypassing any national aspirations.

With similar educational concerns but also transcending them, the landmark anthology that was published during the first decade of the twentieth century was *Sefer ha'Aggadah* (Book of Legends) (1908–1911), edited by Haim Nachman Bialik (1873–1934) and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky (1859–1944). This anthology of talmudic-midrashic narratives and proverbs had a significant impact on Jewish cultural life, thought, and literature. The editors culled the narrative segments from a broad range of Jewish books from late antiquity, translated the Aramaic texts into Hebrew, yet neither rewrote nor sought to improve upon the original texts. Furthermore, unlike in previous anthologies, such as *Ein Ya'akov,* they did not follow the order of the source books, but arranged legends and sayings thematically and chronologically, highlighting biblical and rabbinical personalities and crucial historical events. *Sefer ha'Aggadah* was published in many editions and translated into English, Japanese, Russian, and Yiddish.

Similarly, exploring the relations between folk literature and nationalism, Micha Josef Berdyczewski (1965–1921) expanded the basis for his collection of Jewish folktales, *Der Born Judas* (1916–1923). He sought to represent in his anthology the postrabbinical folk-literary creativity as found in medieval, Renaissance, Hasidic, and contemporary popular literature of different Jewish ethnic communities, manuscripts, books about ethics (termed ethical books), and travel accounts. First published in German from Hebrew sources, his anthology appeared later in its original Hebrew, and in English translation as *Mimekor Yisrael* (From the Source of Israel) (1939–1945, 1976, 1990).

In a romantic search for the "national soul," Mordechai Ben-Yeḥezkel (1883–1971) perused many folk books—primarily from the Hasidic presses, but also from medieval anthologies and ethnic tale collections from Islamic and Mediterranean countries—and culled from them and also, sparingly, from oral tradition, a six-volume, thematically organized anthology, *Sefer ha'Ma'asiyyot* (1925–1929, 1957), that represents folk-literary traditions, mostly dating to the nineteenth century.

These three anthologies established both a pattern and a canon for folktales that were available in talmudic-midrashic, medieval, Hasidic, and nineteenth-century sources. They inspired later anthologies, particularly in English, such as *Myth and Legend of Ancient Israel* (1928, 1962), by Angelo S. Rappoport (1871–1950); *Gates to the Old City* (1981), by Raphael Patai (1910–1996); and *The Legends of the Rabbis* (1982, 1994), by Judah Nadich (1912–2007).

Oral Sources

Taken as a whole, the folktale anthologies in Hebrew, English, French, and German that publish the tales of the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) comprise the largest and, so far, the most comprehensive anthologies of Jewish folktales. Dov Noy founded the IFA in 1955 in Haifa. Since then, under the IFA's auspices, over forty-two anthologies have been published, ranging in size from seven to seventy tales each and organized around such principles as ethnicity, narrator, locality, and theme. Among the texts in the IFA are tales that appeared in two anthologies, *Otzar ha'Ma'asiyyot* (A Treasury of Tales) (1979)

by Reuven Na'anah, and *Avoteinu sipru* (1970–1975) by Moshe Rabbi, which were written down from oral tradition and published before their submission to the IFA.

The tales in the IFA were recorded in Israel and represent traditions that immigrants from over fifty countries brought with them. Most of the anthologies were published in the IFA Publication Series, but some appeared in other venues and in other languages. In some cases, orally recorded tales appeared in anthologies together with folktales from other sources, translated or retold.

Ethnic Anthologies

Ethnic anthologies present narrative traditions of a single Jewish ethnic group. While some of their tales or songs are known among other Jewish ethnic groups, the respective anthologist seeks to present them as the tradition of a specific Jewish ethnic group.

Sephardic Anthologies

The earliest modern folktale anthology that circulated within the Sephardic communities was not written in Judeo-Spanish but in Hebrew. *Oseh pele* (The Miracle Worker) (1845–1869), by Joseph Shabbetai Farḥi (1802–1882), is a collection of ninety-four tales, first published in two parts in 1845 and 1869, then published in 1870 in one volume that became very popular in Mediterranean Jewish communities. Its sources are both earlier books and oral tradition. Because of the immense popularity that *Oseh pele* gained, it functioned as contributor to and stabilizer of narrative oral tradition.

Linguists and folklorists were the first to record narratives in Judeo-Spanish and hence published their collections in scholarly venues, such as fourteen tales in *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Judenspanischen von Konstantinopel* (1914), by Max Leopold Wagner (1880–1862), twenty-three tales in "A Study of the Monastir Dialect of Judeo-Spanish Based on Oral Material Collected in Monastir, Yugo-Slavia" (1930), by Max A. Luria (1891–1966), thirty-two tales in *Recherches sur le judéo-espagnol dans les pays balkaniques* (1935), by Cynthia Mary Jopson Crews (1906–1967), and seventy tales, selected from 150 texts recorded in the 1920s in *Tales, Songs and Folkways of Sephardic Jews* (1982), by Max Grünwald (1871–1953).

During the 1930s, Sephardic writers and scholars began to record and publish Sephardic folktales. A landmark anthology is *Ma'asiyyot am li'bnei-kedem* (Oriental Folktales) (1938), which includes fifteen, out of a total of twenty-eight, tales recorded by Joseph Meyuḥas (1862–1942) from Sephardic narrators in Jerusalem. After World War II, Arcadio de Larrea Palacin edited an anthology of 153 tales, *Cuentos populares de los Judios del Norte de Marruecos* (1952), which he recorded in Tetouan, Morocco. In Canada, André E. Elbaz edited an anthology

of eighty-two tales recorded from Sephardic-Moroccan immigrants, *Folktales of the Canadian Sephardim* (1982). In Israel, publication of anthologies of Sephardic folktales was generated by the research of scholars associated with the IFA, including *Never Despair* (1966), edited by Yifraḥ Ḥaviv; *The Golden Feather* (1976), edited by Moshe Attias; *The Treasure of Our Fathers: Judeo-Spanish Tales* (1989), edited by Tamar Alexander and Dov Noy; an anthology of Sephardic tales about Maimonides (1135–1204), *Erase una vez . . . Maimónides: cuentos tradicionales Hebreos* (1988), edited by Tamar Alexander and and Elena Romero; *Folktales of the Jews, Volume 1: Tales from the Sephardic Dispersion* (2006), edited by Dan Ben-Amos. Notable among them are the bilingual anthologies that Mathilda Koén-Sarano edited in Judeo-Spanish: *Kuentos del folklor de la famiya Djudeo-Espanyola* (1982), *Djoha ke dize? kuentos populares djudeo-espanyoles* (1991), *Konsejas i konsejikas del mundo djudeo-espanyol* (1994), *Lejedas* (1999), and *De Saragosa a Yerushaláyim: Kuentos Sefaradís* (1995).

Ashkenazic Anthologies

Paradoxically, anthologies of East European narrative oral tradition were slow to appear in print. While Hasidic legends, popular tales, and humorous anecdotes appeared in chapbooks and were sold in the marketplace, orally recorded tales began to appear in print only after World War I. Jewish folk literature had to secure its position between the religious narrative and the emerging forces of enlightenment and nationalism. These anthologies represented tales of alter-religious rationalism, on the one hand, and normative religion, on the other hand. Consequently, establishing Jewish folk literature's position in the printed literature of the time was a slow process. Over 4,000 tales were written down during the first systematic ethnographic expedition into small towns in the regions of Volhynia and Podolia that Shlomo Zanvil Rappoport (1863–1920), known by his pen-name S. An-Ski, led in 1912–1914. As of 2010, these manuscripts and recordings are deposited at the State Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg and remain unpublished. Shmuel Lehman (1886–1941) published a collection of sixty-eight anecdotes and seventeen tales of the Jewish underworld, which he gathered independently, in *Bay Undz Yidn* (1923, 59–91), edited by M. Wanwild (Vanvild). The first independent (that is, not related to any organization) anthology of oral tales was a small collection of legends, *1863* (1927) that A. Almi (Elye-Khayem Sheps, 1892–1968) recorded about the 1863 Polish insurrection against Tsar Alexander II (1818–1881).

With the foundation of the Jewish Scientific Institute (YIVO) in 1925, Yiddish folktale collecting began systematically and the first anthologies began to appear. Yehudah Leib Cahan (1881–1937) organized a network of folklore collectors and published the texts that they deposited.

His first anthology, *Yidishe folksmasiyyot,* (1930) included thirty-four tales, but the collection at YIVO became a source for several anthologies. Y.L. Cahan himself included a collection of 26 tales and 134 narratives about different traditions in his volume *Jewish Folklore* (1938, 101–193). When the Holocaust occurred in Europe during World War II, Benzion H. Ayalon-Baranick prepared *Antologia le'folklor yehudi be'artzot mizraḥ Eropa: Hayoh haya ma'aseh* (1946), a multigenre anthology of the folklore of the culture that was being destroyed. Later in the twentieth century, after the destruction of European Jewry, when the Yiddish language itself became a subject of longing and nostalgia, Beatrice Silverman Weinreich edited the anthology *Yiddish Folktales* (1988), which includes 178 tales, and Sara Zfatman edited a bilingual Hebrew and Yiddish anthology, *Ma'asiyyot kesem mi'pi yehudei mizraḥ Eropa (Yidishe Vunder-Ma'asiyyot fun Mizraḥ-Eirope)* (Yiddish Tales of Wonder from Eastern Europe) (1998).

However, the most comprehensive anthology of Yiddish folktales was assembled not from direct oral recordings but through a newspaper column to which readers sent accounts of folktales that they recollected. Based on this method Naftoli Gross (1896–1956) published his *Mayselekh un Mesholim: Tales and Parables* (1955), containing 540 tales, which were later annotated in *Studies in Jewish and World Folklore* (1968), by Haim Schwarzbaum (1911–1983). Despite the suppression of Yiddish culture in the Soviet Union before and after World War II, Efim Raïzé (1904–1970) managed to record oral narratives of different genres, of which a selection of 409 texts was edited by Valery Dymchitz and published in Russia in 1999 and in French translation in 2004 as *Contes populaires juifs d'Europe oriental.* In Israel the recording and publication of folktales from Eastern Europe continued under the auspices of the IFA. A few volumes have appeared devoted specifically to folktales from Eastern Europe, such as *The Kept Promise: Six Folktales from Galicia* (1966), by Berl Babach; *Folktales of the Jews, Volume 2: Tales from East Europe* (2007), edited by Dan Ben-Amos; *Jewish Folk-Stories from Hungary: Fourteen Folktales* (1965), by Gershon Bribram; *Seven Bags of Gold: Seven Yiddish Folktales from Lithuania* (1969), by Dvora Fus; *Advice from the Rothschilds: 28 Humorous Stories from Poland* (1981), by Abraham Keren; and *East European Jewish Cante Fables* (1968), by Meir Noy.

Anthologies of Tales from Muslim Countries

Similar patterns of transition from oral storytelling to folktale anthologies occurred in the Jewish communities in the Islamic countries of Iran, Iraq, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and Yemen. However, because of the differences in their distance from the printing centers, there were some variations in this process, depending upon the specific conditions in each country. For example, the early anthologies of Iraqi folktales, such as *Sefer ha'Ma'asiyyot* (Book of Tales) (1842), by Eleazar ben Aharon Sa'adiya Hakohen, and a Judeo-Arabic book, *Ajab al-ajab* (Wonder of Wonders) (1889), by Yosef Eliyahu Hakohen, were printed in India, in Calcutta (Kolkata) and Bombay (Mumbai), respectively, rather than in Iraq. Hakham Shlomo Abid Twena (1855–1913), originally from Iraq, was very active in Calcutta, writing, editing, and publishing Jewish books, among them folktale anthologies, a selection of which appeared in *The Hakham from Bagdad in Calcutta* (2002), by Yitzhak Avishur. *The Folktales of {the} Jews of Iraq* (1992), by Yitzhak Avishur, includes bilingual texts, in Judeo-Arabic and Hebrew, culled from all three phases of the transformation from orality to literacy; thirty of them are from nineteenth-century manuscripts, and twenty-two are parallel tales from printed and oral sources.

In addition to the aforementioned two volumes, the primary folk anthologies from Iraq are *Sefer ma'aseh nissim* (The Book of Miracles) (1890) and *Sefer ma'asim tovim* (The Book of Good Acts) (1890), by Solomon Bekhor Huzin, and *Sefer niflaim ma'asekha* (Book of Your Wonderful Acts) (1912), by Yosef Hayyim, which was published in Jerusalem. An anthology of collected tales on deposit in the IFA is *Jewish-Iraqi Folktales* (1965), edited by Dov Noy.

In Yemen, the tradition of professional scribes continued throughout the nineteenth century; consequently, no printed anthologies are available and even manuscript anthologies are rare. Scribes preferred to copy holy books rather than entertaining tales. As a result, anthologies of the folktales of Yemenite Jews were published outside Yemen, in the United States and Israel. Among them are *From the Land of Sheba: Tales of the Jews of Yemen* (1947), by S.D. Goitein; *Mi'zkenim etbonan* (1968), by Mishael Caspi; *The Chambers of Yemen: 131 Jewish-Yemenite Folktales and Legends* (1978) and *Ḥevion Teman* (1983), by Nissim Benjamin Gamlieli; and *Mivhar me'Sippurei yehudei teiman: Mi'pi ha'Am u'mi ha'Midrash* (A Selection of Jewish-Yemenite Tales from Oral Tradition and from the Midrash) (2006), by Shelomoh Kokhavi. Two unique anthologies that represent the folktale repertoires of single narrators are *Jefet Schwili Erzählt* (1963), edited by Dov Noy, and *Me'aggadot teman: me'Sippurei Rabbi Yehuda ben Rabbi Aharon Yarimi* (1978), edited by Aharon Yarimi. Other Yemenite-Jewish tales are to be found in the anthologies at the IFA.

In contrast to the situation in Yemen, printing presses were available in the North African–Jewish communities, and the communities were inundated with narrative chapbooks in Judeo-Arabic and Hebrew, some of them folktales, others of different literary forms, similar to the nineteenth-century popular literature found in Europe generally and in the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe. Folktale anthologies in these communities were available

in different proportions in manuscript, print, and, then, after immigration to Israel, in recollection and recording from narrators. The folktales of the Jewish communities in North Africa appeared in eight anthologies of tales recorded in Israel and are on deposit in the IFA: *Moroccan Jewish Folktales* (1966), *Jewish Folktales from Tunisia* (1966), *Jewish Folktales from Libya* (1967), all three edited by Dov Noy, and two bilingual anthologies in Judeo-Arabic and Hebrew: *Sippurei am me'Beit She'an* (Folktales from Bet She'an) (1981) and *Sippurei am me'Shelomi* (Folktales from Shelomi) (1982), both edited by Aliza Shenhar and Haya Bar-Itzhak, who also published a selection of these anthologies in English translation in *Jewish Moroccan Folk Narratives from Israel* (1993), and the more popular anthologies edited by Issachar Ben-Ami, *The Apple of Conception: Jewish Moroccan Folk Narratives* (2000) and *A Flower to Resuscitate the Dead: Jewish Moroccan Folk Narratives* (2000).

Folk Songs

Neither in the late antiquities nor in the Middle Ages, when rabbis and scribes began to document Jewish prose narrative traditions, did they or any other writers attend to the folk-song traditions in Jewish communities. The gap in current knowledge of the literary history of Jewish folk songs makes it difficult to gauge the role played by these folk songs in Jewish social life. The twentieth-century recovery of the extensive folk-song tradition, retained orally in Sephardic communities, however, provides some evidence. It is likely that folk songs were an integral part of Jewish oral traditions throughout history, but this is impossible to ascertain today. Although recording and publishing of folk songs in anthologies began in the nineteenth century and continued into the twentieth century, it still lags behind the publication of folktales.

Sephardic Folk-Song Anthologies

In the Sephardic communities the transition from orality to print in folk-song anthologies followed a familiar pattern in which chapbook and street literature preceded more formal literary and scholarly publications. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, oral folk songs in the Judeo-Spanish tradition began to appear in small chapbooks. For example, Yacob Abraham Yoná (1847–1922), originally from Monastir (former Yugoslavia), moved to Salonika, where he learned the printing craft and began to publish his own chapbooks of texts that he had heard orally. *The Judeo-Spanish Ballad Chapbooks of Yacob Abraham Yoná* (1971), compiled by Samuel G. Armistead and Joseph H. Silverman, is an anthology of several of the booklets that he peddled. The philological significance of Judeo-Spanish poetry was recognized by Ramón Menéndez Pidal (1869–1968), who laid the

foundations for its study. An "Anthology of Rare Ballads" from his collection appears in *El romancero juedo-español en el archivo Menendez Pidal* (3:7–73). Interest in this poetry continued for scholarly purposes as well as for the purpose of cultural preservation and identity. This poetry is part of the most cherished cultural heritage of the Sephardic community. In 1929, encouraged by the German-American anthropologist Franz Boas, Zarita Nahón recorded Judeo-Spanish songs in Tangier, Morocco; they were published in 1977 in *Romances judeo-españoles de Tanger,* edited by Armistead and Silverman. The best-known anthologies are *Romancero sefaradi: Romanzas y cantes populares en judeo-español* (1961) and *Cancionero judeo-español: Canciones populares en judeo-español* (1972), edited by Moshe Attias (1898–1973); *Cancionero sefardí* (1995) of Albert Hemsi (1897–1975), edited by Edwin Seroussi, and *Chants judéo-espagnols* (1959–1973), edited by Isaac Levy. Yet the most comprehensive anthology of Judeo-Sephardic narrative poetry was still in preparation as of 2010. For almost forty years, from 1957 to 1994, Samuel G. Armistead and Joseph H. Silverman recorded songs in Sephardic communities around the Mediterranean and in the United States. Their project, "Folk Literature of the Sephardic Jews" is projected to appear as a twenty-volume anthology, of which the first five volumes have been published (1971–2008).

Ashkenazi Folk-Song Anthologies

The beginning of Yiddish folk-song anthological publications is marked by the monumental *Yidishe Folkslider in Rusland* (Yiddish Folk Songs in Russia) (1901), which was reissued ninety years later. The editors, Saul Ginsburg (Ginzburg) (1866–1940) and Pesaḥ Marek (1862–1920), collected the songs from readers of the Jewish press in Russia who responded to their request. In their anthology, they publish 376 Yiddish texts in the Hebrew and Roman alphabets, divided into eleven chapters devoted to such (often multiple) themes as religion, history, lullabies, children, elementary Jewish schools (*cheder*), love songs, bride and bridegroom, wedding, family life, daily life, soldiers, and miscellaneous. With their thematic division of Yiddish folk songs, Ginzburg and Marek established the fundamental categorization of these songs, which was repeated in future anthologies with only slight modifications. As the bibliography appended to their volume indicates, during the last three decades of the nineteenth century numerous minor anthologies of Yiddish folk songs were published and were available in popular formats as chapbooks, slim volumes, or substantial books. Some of them were titled *folkslider* (folk songs), and others simply *lider* (songs), indicating the existence of a vigorous popular poetic tradition. In the same year, 1901, the poet Yakir (Mark) Warshavsky (1885–1942) published a collection of thirty-one of his

songs, *Yidishe folkslider mit Noten* (Yiddish Folksongs with Music), about daily life and the concerns of simple folk, popularly considered to be folk songs.

In the second decade of the twentieth century, two major anthologies of songs recorded from oral tradition appeared. They were *Yidishe folkslider* (1911, 1913), edited by Noah Prylucki (Noyekh Prilutski) (1882–1944), and *Yiddish Folk Songs with Their Original Airs: Collected from Oral Tradition* (1912), which Yehudah Leib Cahan (1881–1937), recorded from immigrants in New York. The songs of this anthology were incorporated into the posthumously published anthology, edited by Max Weinreich (1894–1969), *Yiddish Folk Songs with Melodies* (1957), which included also songs from two other collections that Cahan published in *Pinkes* (1927–1928) and *Yivo-Bleter* (1931). The singers whose folk songs Cahan published were immigrants to New York. Some of the folk songs that appeared in the volume that Cahan edited, *Jewish Folklore* (pp. 1–97), were part of the YIVO (Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut [Yiddish Scientific Institute]) collecting project and were recorded in Europe. Among the contributors to this collection was Shmuel Zanvel Pipe (1907–1943), who perished in the Holocaust and whose own anthology was published in Israel in 1971 as *Yiddish Folk Songs from Galicia.*

After World War II, the folklorist and singer Ruth Rubin (1906–1999) undertook to record on tape Yiddish folk songs from immigrants and Holocaust survivors, beginning in 1947 and continuing throughout 1950s and 1960s. She established the Ruth Rubin Jewish Folksong Archive, located in both The National Archives of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, New York. Three anthologies include songs that she recorded: *A Treasury of Jewish Folksong* (1950), which she edited; *The Golden Peacock: Yiddish Folksongs* (1970), edited by Moshe Gorali, Gideon Almagor, and Moshe Bick; and *Yiddish Folksongs from the Ruth Rubin Archive* (2007), edited by Chana Mlotek and Mark Slobin.

Simultaneously with the folk-song recording from Eastern European immigrants in the New World, there was a continuous effort to document the poetic tradition of the Jews in Poland and in the Soviet Union. The ethnographer Shmuel Lehman (1886–1941), who was concerned with the Jewish underworld, published *Ganovim Lider mit melodis* (Songs of Thieves with Melodies) in 1928. In the Soviet Union, under repressive conditions that endangered his freedom and life, Moshe Beregovski (1892–1961), an active ethnomusicologist in Ukraine, worked on two collections, "Jewish Folk Music" (1934) and "Jewish Folksongs" (1962), which were published in *Old Jewish Folk Music* (1982), edited by Mark Slobin. Aharon Vinkovetzky, who worked with the Beregovski archive in Leningrad (St. Petersburg), took a collection of Jewish folk songs with him when he emigrated to Israel

in 1979. These songs were published in the four-volume *Anthology of Yiddish Folksongs* (1983), edited by Vinkovetzky, Abba Kovner, and Sinai Lichter, which includes 340 songs. In the Soviet Union, Yehezkel Dobrushin and A. Yuditski published the anthology *Yidishe Folkslider* (1940), which includes songs in praise of Joseph Stalin.

Anthologies of Folk Songs from Muslim Countries

The music of Jewish communities in Muslim countries has been a subject of recording, scholarship, and popular and academic production, but the publication of the verbal poetry associated with this music lags behind. Sung mostly by women, these folk songs did not enjoy the same level attention as the tales and fables received. The principal available anthologies are *Arabic Poetry and Songs of Yemenite Jewish Women* (1974), edited by Nissim Binyamin Gamlieli, which includes love songs, songs of sorrow, polygamy songs, children's songs, wedding songs, and narrative poetry, and *Women's Folk Songs in Judaeo-Arabic from Jews in Iraq* (1986), edited by Yitzhak Avishur, which includes lullabies, songs for young children, wedding songs, songs for the *ziyāra* (pilgrimage festivity), lamentations, and drugs.

Humor

Folk humor and humorous narratives have been part of Jewish traditional literature and life, yet they were not considered a subject appropriate for distinct book's, let alone anthologies. The medieval *Sefer Sha'ashuim* (The Book of Delight), by the physician and poet Joseph ben Meir ibn Zabara (1140–1200), was designed to be humorous, but many of its comic tales have an ethical dimension, purporting to be moral rather than serving merely as entertainment.

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Jewish marketplaces in East European towns began to feature chapbooks about comic figures that functioned as jesters in the oral traditions of these societies. Chapbooks with titles such as *Der Berimter Hershil Ostropoler*, which began to appear in the 1880s, made available in print anecdotes, witticisms, and jokes that circulated in Jewish communities about this and other popular jesters, the "wise men of Chelm" and other themes in the humorous oral repertoire. The publication of these chapbooks followed Jewish immigration to the United States, so they were reprinted in New York. In the 1920s, interest in East European Jewish humor transferred from oral circulation and chapbooks into publications for the scholarly and lay readership of Jews and non-Jews. Editors published these Jewish jokes in German, Hebrew, Yiddish, and English. Chaim Bloch's *Ostjüdischer Humor* (1920) was followed by *Yudishe Vitsen* (Yiddish Jokes), by Yehoshua

H. Rawnitzki (1859–1944), and the one-volume edition of *Sefer Ha'Bediḥah ve'ha'Ḥiddud* (The Book of Jokes and Wit) (1922), by Alter Druyanow (1870–1938). The expanded, three-volume version of this book (1935–1938) became the standard Hebrew anthology of East European jokes, translated from the Yiddish. Yiddish anthologies appeared in New York such as *Oytsre's fun yidishn Humor* (1929), by Rabbi Isaac Aschkenasy, and in Switzerland in a romanized edition, *Rosinkess mit Mandlen* (1920) and *Rêjte Pomeranzen* (1935), which were edited by the professional folklorist Immanuel Olsvanger (1888–1961), who, after World War II published a selection from them in *Lechayim!* (To Life!) (1949). Humor by and about present and past Jewish public figures was recorded by Mordekhai Lipson (1885–1958) and published first in Yiddish in *Di Velt dertseylt* (People Tell) (1928) and then in an expanded format in Hebrew *Mi'dor dor* (From Early Days) (1929–1938, 1968). The publication of anthologies of Jewish humor ceased during the Holocaust period, but shortly thereafter they began to appear in Israel and the United States.

Dov Sadan published two anthologies, *Ke'arat tsimukim* (1952) and *Ke'arat egozim* (1953), which included humorous witticisms and anecdotes that he had heard in his family and social circle. They represent the humor of traditional and modern Jewish intellectuals. An anthology of humor culled from traditional sources, literature, and conversations of literary, artistic, political, or rabbinical figures is *Sehok pynu* (1951), by Efraim Davidson, which he followed up with *Sehok le'pynu* (1958), which includes humor about the State of Israel. All these anthologies, even when published in Israel, assembled primarily East European Jewish humor. In the 1950s, Dan Ben-Amotz and Ḥaim Ḥefer published an anthology of jokes told in the Yishuv period by members of the Palmach in *Yalqut ha'Kezavim* (A Bag of Lies) (1956), later expanded and translated into English as *Israeli Humor* (1981) by Elliott Oring. This anthology demonstrates both continuity and innovation in the humor of the children of immigrants in the Land of Israel.

During the 1920s, anthologies of Jewish humor began to appear in English translation in the United States. They included Jewish jokes from Eastern Europe and the United States. *Laughs from Jewish Lore* (1926), by Jacob Richman, includes humor about life in the Pale of Settlement as well as in New York. By that time "Jewish Jokes" had become a familiar and popular concept in the United States, to the point that a booklet, *The Best Jewish Jokes* (1926), was published in the popular series "Little Blue Books"—duodecimo volumes, rendering conversations in "dialect" by changing w to v and th to d (e.g., "vant" for "want"and "de" for "the")—a feature missing from the anthologies published by Jewish presses. Richman's second anthology, *Jewish Wit and Wisdom* (1952), includes a broad variety of humorous narratives from Europe, the United States, and Israel. Other collections from that period, such as *An Anthology of Jewish Humor and Maxims* (1945) by Elsa Teitelbaum, and *The Jew Laughs: Humorous Stories and Anecdotes* (1935), *Let Laughter Ring* (1941), *Here's a Good One: Stories of Jewish Wit and Wisdom* (1947), and *The Merry Heart: Wit and Wisdom from Jewish Folklore* (1951), edited by S. Felix Mendelsohn, combine East European and American Jewish jokes. As part of the wave of "treasury of folklore" books that swept the United States, Nathan Ausubel (1898–1986) published *A Treasury of Jewish Humor* (1951), which included humor not only from the oral tradition but also from the writings of Jewish humorists. This became one of the standard anthologies of Jewish humor and was later followed by the *Encyclopedia of Jewish Humor* (1969), edited by Henry D. Spalding. While anthologies of Jewish humor in the United States were published mainly in English, anthologies in Yiddish continued to appear, for example, *Jewish Humor and Jewish Jesters* (1963), by B.J. Bialostotzky.

Ethnic Anthologies

In the scholarship about the written and oral literature of Jewish ethnic groups, there are a few multigenre anthologies that represent the literary creativity of a particular society without distinguishing between folk literature and the writings of, or attributed to, leading past and present poets and authors. These broad-ranging anthologies, which include interpretive and informative essays and notes, are invaluable for the study of Jewish traditions. Such are the anthologies *In Queen Esther's Garden: An Anthology of Judeo-Persian Literature* (2000), edited by Vera Moreen; *Karaite Anthology* (1952), edited by Leon Nemoy; *Shirat yehudei ha'Targum: Pirkei alilah u'gevurah befi yehudei Kurdistan* (The Poetry of Targum-Speaking Jews: Heroic Poetry of the Jews of Kurdistan) (1959), edited by Yosef Yoel Rivlin; *The Folk Literature of the Kurdistani Jews: An Anthology* (1982), edited by Yona Sabar; *Rabbinic Fantasies: Imaginative Narratives from Classical Hebrew Literature* (1990), edited by David Stern and Mark Jay Mirsky; and *Falasha Anthology* (1951), edited by Wolf Leslau.

Anthologies for Holidays and Festivals

The anthologies for holidays and festivals are not, strictly speaking, folklore anthologies. Their themes are Jewish holidays in the traditional annual cycle, and they include descriptions of customs associated with their celebrations in different Jewish ethnic groups, as well as folktales and folk songs associated with these holidays. In addition, their editors often include short stories and poems written by writers and poets about the holiday celebrations in the family and in the community. The

most comprehensive of the anthologies for holidays is the multivolume set *Sefer ha'moadim* (The Book of Holidays), edited by Yom-Tov Lewinski and Y.L. Barukh.

Conclusion

In modern times, anthologies of folk traditions have been an indispensable instrument for the transmission of tradition from generation to generation, for the representation of cultural memory and the construction of ethnic identity. They become windows into the folk literature of different ethnic groups, enabling oral traditions to be transmitted not only within but also across Jewish ethnic groups. Anthologies are the by-products of a deliberate selection that attempts to represent the quintessential ethical and esthetic values of Jewish communities. As a body of literary texts, they have become the canon of published Jewish folk literature.

Dan Ben-Amos

See also: *Ma'ase Book* (*Mayse Bukh*); *Oseh Pele*.

Note: For a comprehensive list of anthologies, see the Appendix: Anthologies of Jewish Folklore.

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ARAMAIC

See: Languages, Jewish

ARARAT

"Ararat" is the name of the mountain on which, according to the biblical story, Noah's ark came to rest after the waters of the flood subsided (Gen. 8:4). The Land of Ararat is also mentioned in the Bible as where the sons of Sennacherib found refuge after murdering their father (2 Kgs. 19:37, Isa. 37:38); and as the first among hostile nations, required to fight Babylon (Jer. 51:27).

The biblical reference to Ararat is unclear, stating only that it was the highest point on earth, therefore the first to emerge from the waters of the flood. Throughout the ages, there have been many attempts to identify its location. According to the author of the book of Jubilees (5:28, 7:1), "the ark ran aground on top of Lubar, one of the mountains of Ararat," but this location is also unknown. Ararat was rendered as Kurdistan by the Aramaic and Syriac translations of Genesis 8:4 (*Tur eKardu*), by Berosus, the third-century Chaldean priest, and by the writer of Midrash Genesis Rabba (33:4). The Nestorians and the Muslims follow the Babylonian story of the flood (the Gilgamesh flood myth) mentioning that the ship (ark) rested on "Mount Nimush" (sometimes read Nizir), east of Assyria, today identified as Pir Omar Gudrun. Another tradition, acknowledged today, maintains that Ararat is a mountain in Armenia, near Kurdistan. Among those who held to this tradition were the first-century Jewish historian Josephus Flavius, the Greek historian and philosopher Nicolaus of Damascus, the mishnaic sage Rabbi Jonathan ben Uzziel, the second-century Christian fathers Hippolytus of Rome and Theophilus of Antioch, the fifth-century Christian fathers Jerome and Epiphanius of Salamis, the ninth-century Muslim author al-Masudi, the early thirteenth-century Syrian biographer Yaqut al-Hamawi, and the thirteenth-century Venetian explorer Marco Polo.

By the mid-nineteenth century, archaeologists had identified the land of Ararat with the first-millennium B.C.E. kingdom and region of Urartu, known from Assyrian records as contemporaneous with the early kingdoms of Judah and Israel, invaded and partially conquered by Asshurnazir-pal and Shalmaneser II. The region of Urartu is centered on Lake Van, in the mountains of present-day Armenia and eastern Turkey. Its tallest peak is a volcanic mountain located in extreme northeastern Turkey, near the borders of Iran and Armenia. It is 16,946 feet (5,165 meters) high—the tallest mountain in Turkey today. Armenians call it "Massis," the Turks "Ağrı Dağrı," Persians "Koh i Nuh" (or "the mountain of Noah"), and European geographers named it Mount Ararat.

The Armenians believe that Noah's ark remains at the top of Ararat and hence forbid anyone to ascend it. Still, the search for the physical remains of Noah's ark has fascinated people throughout the ages, and many

have tried to reach the estimated site of the ark despite superstition, fear, and natural difficulties. Josephus Flavius quoted classical authors testifying that "some people carry off pieces of the bitumen [of the ark], which they take away and use chiefly as amulets for the averting of mischief" (*Antiq.* 1:3:5–6). Some Armenian monasteries possess relics supposedly made of wood taken from the ark site. Researchers claimed to have found timber from the ark and fossilized sea creatures in the area. Archeological expeditions have been conducted from the nineteenth century to the present (some of which are supported by the evangelical and millenarian churches). Yet, despite the many rumors, no scientific evidence of the ark has ever been found.

Following the idea of Ararat as a place of shelter (and influenced as well by his last name), Mordecai Manuel Noah (1785–1851) gave the name Ararat to a Jewish "City of Refuge" that he founded in 1825. Noah, a New York politician, philanthropist, and playwright, proposed saving the Jewish people by establishing a Jewish state. He purchased a third of Grand Island (a 27-square-mile island near Buffalo, New York) and invited world Jewry to settle there. His utopian plan failed, as Jews jeered at him and criticized his idea. Noah sold the property in 1832 and became a Zionist, directing his activities until his death to the establishment of the Jewish state in the Land of Israel, then a part of the Ottoman Empire. British author Israel Zangwill retells the story of the state of Ararat in his short story "Noah's Ark" (in *They That Walk in Darkness: Ghetto Tragedies*), 1899.

Raphael Patai and Ayelet Oettinger

See also: Noah.

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ARMISTEAD, SAMUEL G.

See: Anthologies

ASMODEUS

Referred to as king of the demons, Asmodeus (Heb., Ashmedai) is one of the major figures in Jewish demonology. The etymology of the name is unclear and disputed. Scholars consider it connected to Aeshma Devas, the Persian deity of evil, but a few researchers point to a similarity to the Semitic root word *shamad,* meaning "destruction."

Asmodeus is first mentioned in the apocryphal "Book of Tobit" (fifth to fourth century B.C.E.). There Asmodeus is identified as the demon attacking Sarah's grooms on the nuptial night, preventing them from consummating the marriage. Tobias, the son of Tobit (the story's hero), guided by Rafael the archangel, marries Sarah, and is able to finally expulse Asmodeus by fumigating the inner parts of a fish.

On the one hand, in this story it seems that Asmodeus shares violent and destructive aspects of the traditional figure of a jealous demon who wants to take a human virgin to himself. On the other hand, Asmodeus's role is well rooted in Jewish normative behavior; it may be seen as part of the divine stratagem to marry the proper couple and to prevent an unsuitable match.

According to the treatise "The Testament of Solomon" (a Greek text from the third century C.E., influenced by Jewish Greek magic), Asmodeus is the demon who attacks and disturbs all newly married couples. He is the one who drives husbands into mad passions and unfaithfulness.

In these sources, which did not prevail in Hebrew, Asmodeus is an expression of the human fear of the unpredictable nature of weddings and nuptial nights. The tension and worries that accompany these moments are described as concrete and real once transposed into demonic attacks.

In the Babylonian Talmud, Asmodeus is mentioned twice. In a very short account in *Pesaḥim* 110a, he is in charge of couples. The expression in Hebrew hints at the role of Asmodeus among newly wedded couples but is not further developed as such. The commentary in the Talmud refers to the danger in repeating actions an even number of times, for it triggers Asmodeus's attacks.

A longer talmudic account is the story of King Solomon and Asmodeus (*b. Gittin* 68a–b). King Solomon, determined to construct the Temple according to God's command, without any metallic tools, seeks Asmodeus's

assistance. After imprisoning him with the help of chains and the Sacred Name, Solomon extracts from him the secret of locating the Shamir, the fantastic creature capable of carving stones. Solomon teases Asmodeus for being under the power of a human being. Once released from his chains and the Sacred Name, Asmodeus regains his demonic appearance and powers. He overthrows Solomon, takes his shape, and rules instead of him. Solomon starts a long journey unrecognized and mocked at, but finally reaches Jerusalem. Thereafter, Asmodeus the impostor is uncovered and Solomon eventually regains his position.

In this story, Asmodeus has various interesting features: acting according to proper Jewish norms, he studies the Torah in the heavenly yeshiva; he quotes biblical verses; he is aware of the effects of drinking wine; he surrenders to the sacred power of God's name; and he knows the future and acts according to the law of reward in the world to come. But, in addition to these characteristics, Asmodeus keeps his demonic side: His feet are those of a vulture; he has low resistance to temptation and is especially tempted by women. This brings people to recognize him as a demon when he seeks women while they are menstruating, an act in complete opposition to the Torah specific commandment, and wants to have sexual intercourse even with Bathsheva, Solomon's mother.

The purpose of this story, as one of the sacred legends, is to reinforce normative behavior and ethical beliefs. Here it emphasizes Solomon's misbehavior in his ostentatious lifestyle, his punishment, and his repentance at the end. Asmodeus's role is to punish him but also to reflect human misconduct.

This story reappears in the Midrash and folktales. Various versions can be found in the Midrash: *Num. Rab.* 11, *Midrash Tehilim* Buber psalm 78, *Yalqut Shimoni* Kgs. 1:182; Jer. 285, *Otzar ha'midrashim*. In the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa, there are eleven versions of this story.

In the early kabbalistic Treatise on the Left Emanation, which describes in detail the structure of Sitra Aḥra, the evil side of the celestial entity, Asmodeus is called "The great king of the demons." He rules a certain part of Heaven, called the upper part of the third ether, but is Samael's subordinate. He is allowed to inflict pain and destruction only on Mondays and is the husband of the younger of the two Liliths, the elder one being Samael's spouse.

Idit Pintel-Ginsberg

See also: Demon.

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ATTIAS, MOSHE (1898–1973)

Moshe Attias was one of the first scholars and collectors of Sephardic folklore in Israel, an educator, and a vital part of community life. He was the first director of the Educational and Cultural Department of Jerusalem municipality and served as the secretary of the National Committee before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Attias, who was born in Salonika, Greece, was very active in assisting the immigration of Jews from Greece to Israel. He published many articles in Hebrew and Ladino on current events. At the same time, he devoted great effort to collecting and publishing Sephardic folklore (stories, romances, proverbs, and customs). His articles appeared regularly in such journals as *Edoth, Sefunot, Ba'Marakha,* and *Shevet va'Am.*

His most important works are collections of romances and folk songs published in two volumes: *Romancero sefaradi* (1961); *Cancionero judeo-espanol* (1972). The first includes 136 romances in Ladino and Hebrew translation divided into seven subjects, such as old romances, romances after the expulsion, romances based on the Bible and the Midrash, and elegies for Tisha Be'Av. The *Cancionero* includes 148 Ladino songs translated into Hebrew. Both volumes are accompanied by academic notes, a glossary, and indexes.

In folk narrative he published a small book in Hebrew titled *The Golden Feather: Twenty Folktales Narrated by Greek Jews,* edited and annotated by Dov Noy (1976). The romances, folk songs, and folk stories were documented by Attias himself as told and sung to him by Sephardic informants.

As a translator, Attias also translated from Ladino into Hebrew a Sabbatean manuscript of poems from the eighteenth century (1947), published with two introductions, one by Yitzhak Ben-Zvi and the other by Gershom Scholem.

He also translated the Spanish poem "El Cid" from Spanish to Hebrew (1967) and one of Burla's novels: *Kismei moledet* (Enchanted Homeland) from Hebrew to Judeo-Spanish Ladino (1926).

Tamar Alexander

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AUSUBEL, NATHAN (1899–1986)

Nathan Ausubel drew popular attention to Jewish folklore with the publication of *A Treasury of Jewish Folklore* in 1948. The anthology's subtitle stated the contents as "stories, traditions, legends, humor, wisdom, and folk songs of the Jewish people." It was published in more than forty editions in forty years and achieved unprecedented popularity for a Jewish folklore text. It was one of many popular "treasuries" issued during the 1940s that presented folklore as a locus of identity-building and modern artistic reinterpretation. Alarmed by the destruction of East European Jewry and assimilation in the West, Ausubel presented the treasury to build appreciation for the Old World Jewish cultural traditions.

Ausubel lived and worked as an author and editor in the United States, but he was born in Leżajsk, in the Galicia region of the former Austro-Hungarian Empire (now part of southeastern Poland) on June 15, 1899, and came to the United States in 1902. He explained in his introduction to his *Treasury* that, having been raised in an Orthodox religious environment filled with East European Jewish folklore, faced with American secularization and assimilation he was motivated to compile folklore he recalled. With the passing of an immigrant population in the United States, he worried about the cultural continuity of Jewish identity in the future. In the wake of the war and the tragedy of the Holocaust, his work stressed the humanistic lesson found in Jewish folklore: "the common humanity of all races and nations . . . [which will] thus draw them closer in the bonds of brotherhood

and understanding" (1948, xxi). He sought folklore from varied Diaspora sources that could reveal a shared ethnic "character" and cultural "root" for all Jews.

Although he recognized the possibility of "spontaneous folk-creation of the Jewish people" in its historic experiences, he did not explore the emergent Zionist folklore of a new Israel. Informed by Romantic Nationalism, which claims a collective "soul" or "poetic spirit" derived from the folklore of common people in a past way of life and capable of providing a source of unity in modern society, he looked to the Jewish folk experience in Eastern Europe as a basis for ethnic identity in Western countries. Since he understood that Jews' historic experience was spread in various countries over time, he attempted to outline the distinguishing features of a unified Jewish folk tradition:

1. a poetic and introspective nature drawing on religious sources to form moral lessons for living separately within a host society;
2. wit and irony cultivated by disenchantment, growing out of a historic lack of power in host countries;
3. a cathartic optimism that is reflected in a tradition of humor as well as haunting sadness drawn from tragedy;
4. a unity owing to common ancient sources in the Aggadah and the Midrash (the rabbinic literature).

The contents of his *Treasury* reflected these features. The first part, consisting mainly of anecdotes and jokes, was called "Jewish Salt" to show the tradition of humor drawing on the status of Jews as a persecuted minority. Other sections extolled Jewish identity in hero tales of piety, righteousness, charity, resistance, and miracle. Religious parable and trickster tales are prominently featured along with moral lessons inherited through the wisdom of proverbs and riddles. The book concludes with a long section on songs and dances, mostly from Yiddish culture.

The *Treasury* has endured scholarly criticism of the sort leveled at other similar anthologies. It relies on print sources with dubious connections to oral tradition, and its anthology format assumes questionable cultural connections among examples. Its definition of folklore is considered overly broad and includes material from commercial culture. Ausubel was generally unreflective about the functional meanings or ethnological contexts of the selections within the cultures of which they are a part. His *Treasury* slights Sephardic contributions to Jewish culture and neglects the persistence of Jewish communal traditions in Africa, South America, and Asia. In postmodern commentaries, Ausubel's volume is often given as an example of the nostalgic construction of an

idealized shtetl, or East European village, the root of Jewish identity in the modern industrialized countries of America and Western Europe. Writing a preface explaining the enduring popularity of the *Treasury* more than thirty years after the book was published, the scholar Alan Mintz commented that, despite Ausubel's formidable achievement of compiling omnibus treasuries, it is clouded by a problematic assumption that Jews across the Ashkenazic diaspora possess a cultural personality that remains constant in the face of historical change.

Ausubel's other anthologies published in the 1950s and 1960s continued to emphasize the common roots of Jewish culture in Old World humor, knowledge, and wisdom. In works such as *A Treasury of Jewish Poetry* (1957) and *A Treasury of Jewish Humor* (1951), he particularly drew attention to the reinterpretation of Jewish folk themes in modern literary efforts in America and Europe. His anthologies were still in print through the end of the twentieth century and spawned a number of alternate treasuries for Jewish cultural expressions compiled by other editors who credited his work for inspiration. He died at his home in Callicoon, New York, on November 23, 1986.

Simon J. Bronner

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AV, FIFTEENTH OF (TU BE'AV)

The Fifteenth of Av (Tu Be'Av) was a popular festival during the time of the Second Temple, as described in the Mishnah: "There were no more festive days for Israel than the Fifteenth of Av and the Day of Atonement, when the (young) men [alternate version: women] of Jerusalem would go out in white borrowed garments . . . and the (young) women of Jerusalem would go out and dance in the vineyards" (*Ta'anit* 4:8). Historical attestations point to the source of the celebrations on the Fifteenth of Av—a day when mourning was prohibited (*Megilat Ta'anit*)—

as the great culminating day of the wood offering, when both priests and general populace would bring large quantities of kindling wood for use on the Temple altar (initiated perhaps by the returning exiles; cf. Neh. 10:35 and 13:31). The festivities on this day were no less than on days when the first fruits (*bikkurim*) were brought to the Temple, and the white garments of the men as well as the dancing of the young women are preserved as vivid memories of the festive nature of these days and of the popular sentiments toward the Temple in Jerusalem. The day occurs in approximately mid-August, when the solar heat is at its height and the wood is thus the driest. After this day, when the sun starts losing its strength, wood was not hewn for the altar, the day thus being called "the day of the breaking of the axe."

However, other descriptions depict the custom of the young women at these dances inviting eligible young men to woo them: "And what would they say? 'Come lift your eyes, young man, and see what you would choose for yourself! Do not set your eyes on beauty, but rather on family'" (*Ta'anit* 4.8). This description, combined with the proximity of the festival to midsummer (although actually occurring at least one month after the summer solstice), has led to the suggestion that the festival—or certain rites connected with it—originated as a pagan nature festival connected to fertility rites or a betrothal ritual accompanied by folk dances (cf. Judg. 21:19–21).

Later rabbinical sources, perhaps unaware of the connection with the wood-offering festival of the Temple era, suggest a number of other reasons for the festive quality of the Fifteenth of Av, some connected as well to the act of betrothal: Women who inherited land were allowed to marry men of other tribes on this day (thus repealing the law promulgated at the beginning of the conquest of Canaan [Num. 36:6–9]); men of the tribe of Benjamin were allowed to marry women of other tribes (see Judg. 21:1ff.); checkposts installed by Jeroboam I to prevent Israelites from making the pilgrimage to Jerusalem were removed by the last king of the Israelite kingdom, Hoshea ben Elah; and the Romans permitted the dead of Bethar (killed during the Bar Kochba revolt) to be buried (*b. Ta'anit* 31b–32a; *y. Ta'anit* 4:8). Another historical reason for the festive quality is connected to the tradition that it was on the Ninth of Av (Tisha Be'Av) that the generation of the exile from Egypt sinned by believing the report of the spies and were destined to die during their forty years' wandering (Num. 14:28–35). Each year on this day every person dug his own grave and lay in it, and the following morning all arose from their graves except those destined to die that year. On the fortieth year, all those who dug their graves arose from them; the people were confounded, and, thinking that perhaps they had miscalculated the days of the month, continued to lie in their graves every night until the fifteenth of the month, at which time it became clear that the decree had finally been annulled.

There are no specific celebrations prescribed for Tu Be'Av, except for the omission of the penitential prayer (Taḥanun) and the proscription of eulogies at burials. It also became customary to arrange marriages on that day. In modern Israel the day has become associated with betrothals and romantic love.

Paul Mandel

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AV, NINTH OF (TISHA BE'AV)

The ninth of Av (Tisha Be'Av) is a day of fasting and mourning, first mentioned in the biblical book of Zechariah (518 B.C.E.) as one of four fasts, all associated with events surrounding the destruction of the first Temple and Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. Although the other three fasts (the tenth of Tevet, the seventeenth of Tammuz, and the Fast of Gedalia) continue to be observed, the Ninth of Av long ago emerged as the most important of the minor fasts. It commemorates the destruction not only of Solomon's Temple but also of the Second Temple in 70 C.E., which historians believe happened on the same date. According to the Mishnah (*Ta'anit* 4:6), the Ninth of Av was also regarded as (1) the day on which the city of Bethar—the final Jewish stronghold during the Bar Kochba revolt (132–135 C.E.)—was conquered by the Romans; (2) the day on which the Temple grounds were plowed under by the Romans one year after the siege of Jerusalem; and (3) the much earlier day on which the spies that Moses had sent to explore Canaan returned with their discouraging report, and the children of Israel panicked, wept, and gave up hope of entering the Promised Land, and thus were punished with forty years of wandering in the desert (Num. 13:27–14:35). The midrashic comments on the passage from Numbers add that because the Jews wept at the spies' report without reason, God would make this day an "eternal day of mourning"; thus it was decreed that the destruction of the Temples and the scattering of the Jews would take place on the ninth of Av. Another belief holds that the messiah will be born on Tisha Be'Av (*y. Berakhot* 2:4).

Tragic historical events continue to be associated with the Ninth of Av in post-Temple Jewish history. Historians and scholars claim that the Ninth of Av coincided with the beginning of the First Crusade, the expulsion from England in 1290, the expulsion from Spain in 1492, the start of World War I, the beginning of mass deportation of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka in 1942, and the bombing of the Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1994.

For centuries, synagogue services on the Ninth of Av have evoked a direct, emotional connection to the events of 70 C.E. Ceremonies take place at the end of three weeks of semimourning (which begin with the Fast of the seventeenth of Tammuz) and intensify, with greater restrictions, during the final nine days (the beginning of the month of Av). The fast itself begins at sunset, and the evening ceremony is unique and dramatic. The synagogue is lit with only a few, scattered candles, creating a dark, shadowy, and somber atmosphere; congregants, in socks or slippers, sit on low stools, overturned benches, boxes, the floor, and the steps of the platform (*bimah*). The ark is open and may be draped in black. The *ḥazan* chants the biblical book of Lamentations in a sad and despairing tone, and selected dirges or poems of mourning (*kinnot*) that focus on the loss of the Temples and other disasters, including the Holocaust, follow. Perhaps the climax of the service is the moment when the *ḥazan* prostrates himself before the ark and declares the number of years that have elapsed since the destruction of the Second Temple. At this point the lighting may have been reduced to one candle for the reader. Reciting the precise number of years that have passed connects the present commemoration to the actual event, evoking a powerful sense of immediacy for everyone present. Similar services follow the next morning, and the book of Job is read in many Sephardic congregations. It is also customary to visit cemeteries on this day.

In his *Memories of Jewish Life* (2008), Augusto Segre, the Italian-Jewish memoirist, captured the mood of the night of the Ninth of Av in a small Italian city in the 1920s:

> The prayers finished, everyone leaves, each carrying his own candle. Thus the shadows of the figures lengthen upon the walls and reach up as far as the large windows, while the stars look upon that group of Jews who, after so many centuries, still cries over a catastrophe that seems to have befallen them at just that moment. No one says goodbye, and this, too, is a sign of mourning. The small children say, "Tonight we don't say *buona sera*." (p. 111)

Indeed, the *Shulḥan arukh,* the standard legal code of Judaism, states, "We are forbidden to greet a neighbor on the ninth day of Av, even to say 'good morning' or the like."

However unlikely it may seem, there is also a lighter side of the Ninth of Av, at least among young children in historical Ashkenazi society. It may seem incongruous to read in Yekhezkel Kotik's *Journey to a Nineteenth-Century*

Shtetl, first published in Yiddish in 1913, that "the Ninth of Av was a day of laughter and amusement" (p. 200). The serious demeanor of the fast day evidently inspired children to play pranks. In at least one shtetl, youths took advantage of the fact that congregants were in socks to pour pails of water on the floor and soak their feet (Kotik 2002, 200). In *They Called Me Mayer July* (2007), a memoir of life in pre–World War II Apt, Poland, Mayer Kirshenblatt wrote,

> To us youngsters, Tisha b'Av was a great day. . . . we played pranks. . . . We would search for girls and women who were not wearing head coverings and throw burrs at them. Once entangled in their hair, the burrs were very difficult to remove. There were plenty of burrs in the cemetery . . . so we would collect the burrs and as the girls approached the cemetery, we would accost them. (pp. 56–57)

According to the memoirist Yekhezkel Kotik, youths also flung burrs at bearded men, while they were reciting *kinnot*, "which caused uproarious laughter" (p. 200).

This custom was widespread and is attested to in several memoirs, including Kotik's. A similar prank—bombarding worshipers with green margosa fruits—is reported from the Sephardic community of the Ohel Moshe quarter of Jerusalem.

The Ninth of Av has also entered Jewish folk narrative. Folklorist Dov Noy retold a popular legend in his 1959 essay, "Next Year in Yerushalayim!—Finding a Way to Return":

> During Napoleon's campaign against Russia, as he passed through a small Jewish shtetl, he expressed a desire to see the inside of a synagogue. By chance it was the fast of the Ninth of Av (Tisha Be'Av), and the Jews were sitting in darkness on the floor weeping as they prayed.

> When it was explained to Napoleon that the reason for the weeping was for the destruction of the Temple, he asked, "When did this happen?"

> "Two thousand years ago," he was told.

> Upon hearing this, the Emperor declared, "A people who knows how to remember its land for two thousand years will certainly find the way to return."

Steve Siporin

See also: Egg; Jerusalem and the Temple.

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B

Ba'al Shem Tov (Besht) (1700–1760)

Israel ben Eliezer, generally called the Ba'al Shem Tov (lit., master of the good name) is the founder and first leader of the Hasidic movement in Eastern Europe and its most sanctified figure—the archetype of the Hasidic *tzaddik* (Yidd., holy man; *rebbe*). The Ba'al Shem Tov (commonly abbreviated as Besht) acquired an immense reputation for his skills as a healer and mage as well as for his charismatic spiritual leadership. His reputation as the founder of Hasidism, although its consolidation as a movement was not yet evident in his lifetime, derives from a combination of his knowledge of kabbalistic mysticism, his magical powers as a *ba'al shem* (or rabbi miracle-worker), and his sensitivity to others and social involvement.

After his death, many stories about him were transcribed and published in the volume *Shivḥei ha'Besht* (In Praise of the Ba'al Shem Tov), which has appeared in numerous versions and editions (references here are to the edition by Rubinstein 1991). These have become the main source of knowledge about him and his teachings.

The book was first printed in Kapust in 1815 by Israel Jaffe. In his introduction, he states that he was inspired to publish it by religious motives derived from Hasidic theology. The edition was printed from the many manuscripts based on the collection of stories compiled by Dov Ber of Linits, the son-in-law of the Besht's scribe, Alexander Shohat. These manuscripts widely circulated to satisfy readers' thirst for the stories,

There was a second printing later in the year in Berdichev. A Yiddish version appeared in Ostraha that same year (1815) as well, though some historians believe that it was translated into Yiddish from a different Hebrew manuscript.

Spiritual Preparation and Gifts

According to the biographical legends about him, the Besht was born into a poor family. While preparing himself to become a spiritual leader he lived in seclusion—as mandated by Hasidic mystical tradition—in the Carpathian Mountains. It was during this period that he first became aware of his spiritual mission to establish Hasidim and of his extraordinary

powers, which he was not yet permitted to make use of by God. The Besht's expertise, according to the tradition, was drawn from the writings of Adam Ba'al Shem, a legendary hero of the seventeenth century, who appeared to the Besht in a dream and gave him instructions to convey his manuscripts, even though he did not know him (*Shivḥei ha'Besht* 44–45). Modern scholars believe that these treatises, which dealt with practical and speculative Kabbalah, gave the Besht the cachet and authority not provided by his lineage and early life.

It was only in 1736, on his thirty-sixth birthday, that the Besht was given divine permission to begin using his supernatural powers to heal the sick and help people in his town, Międzybóz, and the other communities in Eastern Europe to which he was summoned by individuals or by a heavenly messenger. The epithet *ba'al shem tov* refers to the magical practices he employed, in which he combined holy names of God and the letters of the Torah in prayers and amulets in order to heal the sick, help barren women conceive, exorcise evil spirits, frustrate blood libels, and so on. The Besht's special powers also gave him the faculties of foresight, prophecy, and teleportation, so that he could locate missing persons or stolen property (ibid., 198–200, 229–230) and ward off disaster (ibid., 227). In addition to his use of magical techniques, as related in the stories, the Besht also engaged in the standard medical practices of his day, including bloodletting and medicinal herbs, in which he was an expert who ranked with the most qualified physicians of the age. On more than one occasion, his treatment accomplished the impossible, such as restoring the sight of the blind (ibid., 193), enabling paralyzed persons to move (ibid., 270–272, 294–296), and even resurrecting the dead (ibid., 306). His opponents were compelled to acknowledge his powers after he had repeatedly saved them from disaster or demonstrated their impotence (ibid., 73–74, 306–307).

The Besht was not always successful. Sometimes he proved unable to heal the sick (ibid., 267–270) or prevent the persecution of Jews (ibid., 210–212). When a storm interrupted his planned voyage to Eretz Israel he understood that he was not permitted to go to the Holy Land ("Adat tzaddikim," story 3). Such failures are an integral part of the characteristic tension that informs the genre of the saint's legend.

Leadership

The Besht was also a religious and public leader whose doctrines set the tone for Hasidism. The first element that he emphasized was "adhesion to the Creator" (*devekut*). He held that prayer was the most effective way to draw closer to God. Communion with God during prayer is produced by profound meditation on the letters and words of the liturgical text, which carries the mind

First page of the book *Shivḥei ha'Besht* (In Praise of the Ba'al Shem Tov), first print, Kapust, 1815. The book contains more than 200 stories about Ba'al Shem Tov and his associates.

into a mystical state of spiritual elevation. The stories depict the Besht at prayer as lost in an ecstatic state, manifested in extraordinary movements and voices, as his soul freed itself from his body and ascended to the upper worlds (*Shivḥei ha'Besht* 85–86, 91–94, 169). In this spiritual flight the Besht encountered figures from the past and observed future events (ibid., 210–212). In such states he was asked to provide rectifications (*tikun*) for the corrupt souls of sinners, to heal the sick by the use of the sacred names of God, and to expose and avert serious threats to the Jews—as in the story in which the messiah teaches the Besht how to employ the letters of the Torah to release the Jews' prayers and save the community from a libel against it invented by the Sabbateans (who believed that Sabbatai Zevi is the messiah) (ibid., 91–94).

Such adhesion to God, in the Besht's new mode, could be expressed not only in prayer or Torah study but also in daily life. According to the Besht, all of one's routine actions are a way of working with God and can be imbued with the intention of gathering up the sparks of holiness that are scattered in all spheres of reality. Worship of the Creator had to be based on religious joy.

The Besht's involvement in the daily life of the Jews in Eastern Europe was his key contribution to the emergence of Hasidism and what distinguishes him from his predecessors and contemporaries. In the stories about him, the *tzaddik* "descends" to the world of the sinner in order to raise up and rectify the latter's soul. The *tzaddik* is expected to employ his spiritual powers in order to spiritually elevate his contemporaries with him and thus to combat evil. His role is to make known to all the

righteousness of those marginalized by society, including children, transgressors, and women (ibid., 165–166). One of the most important means of instruction employed by the Besht was storytelling, based on narratives with which many people could identify. He held that accounts of the lives of the righteous were equal in worth with study of the mysteries of the Divine Chariot (associated with the prophetic vision of Ezekiel), because they could help a person restore the holy sparks to their source in the upper world (a concept borrowed from the Lurianic Kabbalah of the sixteenth century) and thereby serve God. In this way the Besht contributed to the rectification of the world, redeeming the souls of individual sinners from all walks of society and saving entire Jewish communities from disasters, including war, plague, and religious persecution (ibid., 91–94).

According to tradition, the Besht died in 1760 on the first day of Shavuot (which celebrates God's gift of the Torah to the people of Israel). It is recounted in the tales about the Besht that—as proof of his greatness—the Besht knew when he would pass away. The sense of mission that accompanied him over the years, as well as his confidence in his own path and abilities, amplified his charisma (ibid., 74–75, 223–224). These character traits help explain why Hasidim continue to look to him as the prime authority for their doctrine so many years after his death.

Posthumous Writings

The Besht left behind almost no manuscripts, aside from a few letters, some of which were published in the books about him. He was opposed to having his teachings and deeds recorded (*Shivḥei ha'Besht* 230). It was not until twenty years after his death that his disciple, Jacob Joseph of Polonoi, set down some of the master's doctrines in his books *Toledot Ya'akov Yosef, Zafenat pane'aḥ,* and *Ketonet passim.* Other disciples published sermons and sayings that they attributed to the Besht. The stories that were transmitted orally and in writing were first collected at the end of the eighteenth century by Dov Ber of Linits. Because this text was copied over many times and even translated into Yiddish, many corrections and changes were made to it when the first edition of the *Shivḥei ha'Besht* was prepared for the press by Israel Jaffe. Jaffe's version, which became the copy text on which the many later editions were based, contains some 250 tales, arranged chronologically and thematically. Some of them are based on familiar folklore themes, as can be learned from the index of motifs added to the English edition. As the almost-exclusive source for our knowledge of the Besht's life and historical contribution, the book has given rise to many scholarly debates about the historical reliability of the tales. It is generally accepted that *Shivḥei ha'Besht* represents both the original tale tellers as well as the later editors. The work was intended, in part, to justify the course followed by later Hasidism and to blunt nineteenth-century *maskilic* (adherents of the Jewish enlightenment) criticisms of its path.

The stories about the Besht have been given modern literary treatments by I.L. Peretz, M.J. Berdyczewski, Martin Buber, S.Y. Agnon, and others. As part of their new attitude toward Judaism, the modern collections emphasize the unique innovations of Hasidism but also that it is an integral part of Jewish tradition. Many stories about the Besht, most of them transcribed from narrators born in Eastern Europe, are in the holdings of the Israel Folktales Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa. In these stories, the character of the Besht retains its classical lineaments—a figure with supernatural powers who works miracles and employs magical techniques to heal the sick and save Jewish communities from blood libels. The core of his religious activity, as presented in these stories, is adherence to God and good intentions, rather than meticulous observance of the precepts and proficiency in the sacred texts. Thanks to this philosophy, the Besht makes it possible not only for scholars but also for simple folk to serve God and refine their souls.

Raphael Patai and Tsafi Sebba-Elran

See also: Hasidic Tales; Kabbalah; Magic.

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Badchan (Jester)

The *badchan* (lit., "entertainer") is a merrymaker or rhymester that appeared throughout Jewish culture and folklore. Although scholars have no historical evidence of the existence and activities of such a Jewish character prior to the thirteenth century, one can find information about the *badchan-letz,* as he was referred to in Hebrew, in biblical sources. The Bible maintains an ambivalent attitude toward the character (called a *letz*), who is described as one who bluffs (Prov. 1:22), is loathed (Prov. 9:24), and is a sinner (Ps. 1:1). The Talmud uses the term *"badchan"* to describe one who is doing a mitzvah (good deed) of bringing joy to sad people (*Ta'anit* 22a), although the attitude toward him is still negative (*Ḥullin* 95b).

During the Middle Ages the *badchan-letz* wandered along the European roads, entertaining passers-by, together with artists of different countries and religions, whose own customs and way of life often influenced the *badchan.* His figure does not leave the literal-artistic stage for hundreds of years; it simply changes forms and places and is called by different names. Ever since the *badchan* appeared on the Jewish stage, he has been the target of criticism by the religious authorities. Yet the masses have always seen him as an attractive and intriguing character. Only in the nineteenth century was the *badchan* presented as a scholar, someone who had knowledge of customs and religious commandments, performed in wedding ceremonies, and wrote popular poetry.

Beginning in the sixteenth century and until the end of the nineteenth century, the *badchan-letz* went through a long process of development and transformations while adapting to the cultural-social circumstances around him. Finally, in the nineteenth century his character solidified into two main aspects: a scholar and a jester. As a serious scholar he accepted the framework of religious commandments integral to the daily life of Jews. As a jester he accepted qualities of the carnival, the source of his art.

The *badchan,* whose art lay in his tongue, became known as the organizer of wedding ceremonies, one who brought joy to brides and grooms, and one who had a rich, varied repertoire that attracted many people to his performances. Even though he belonged to a group of comic artists who criticized, laughed, and scoffed, within Jewish culture he played an important role in the wedding ceremony and fulfilled one of the most important religious commandments: to bring joy to brides and grooms.

During this time, he also began to write his own acts and stand-up improvisations, which gave him a new dimension and enabled him to enrich his art. Responding to his audience—a vital partner at these events—the *badchan* bonded with them and constantly altered his materials. This is why the transition from the active *badchan* who was standing on stage, stimulated by his audience, to the *badchan* who was sitting behind the desk, writing and printing out his poems, entailed a different cognitive approach among these artists. This developmental process resulted in a new mode of creation.

The most significant change that the writing-*badchan* experienced was the loss of his fellow creators—his viewers. The moment he turned to writing he was left alone, intimately conversing with his creation, dealing with questions of "what" and "how" about the creative process. The transition to writing was also a significant step in the characterization of the *badchan*'s poems. The very fact that these poems were written down caused them to have fewer folk elements because they went through a process of rephrasing and editing. The *badchanim* were well aware of the importance of the transition from one genre to another, and they used it as an advertising-communicational medium in order to publish their creations and become famous nationwide.

The Complexity of the *Badchan*

Like all comic artists the *badchan* is also a complex character; he is the fool, the comedian, the man behind the ugly clown; he has hypnotic powers and can speak without being disrupted; he is flexible and vital and hides his identity behind a mask. Maybe this is why he was often cast aside, estranged, and hurt.

"Tanz der Marschelik, Spassmacher" (Dance of the Marshelik, Jester). Illustration by an artist identified only as "M.D.," 1902. Postcard published by A.F.T. Drawing depicting a *badkhn* (*marshelik*) at a Hasidic wedding. *(YIVO Institute, New York)*

He sees it as his duty to uncover humiliations, reveal ugly social phenomena, punish those who deviate from the right way, preserve the norms of society, release tensions, and minimize conflicts. This is how he expresses his social sensitivity, his desire to be part of social relationships, his will to see people laugh, and his will to beautify society. And if he succeeds in doing all the above, he feels a lot of satisfaction.

The *badchan*'s art, like that of other comedians, is based on his ability to observe whatever happens in society from his own individual angle, his own funny perspective. At the same time, he creates a dialogue with his audience, while sharing his opinions and conclusions with them and while getting feedback that might affect his future actions.

Throughout history, the performances of *badchanim,* like those of other comedians, created the expectation of seeing a funny show. The *badchan* knew how to convey his messages in different ways, while using mimicry and humorous facial expressions. Some of the *badchanim* emphasized bodily gestures and used exaggerated descriptions. Their purpose was simply to make people laugh. At the same time, some *badchanim* were more than mere clowns. They mocked society and criticized its institutions, including the government, educational institutions, and religious institutions. In the second half of the nineteenth century the *badchan*'s repertoire dealt mostly with social matters. A popular topic, which was not overlooked by any *badchan,* was society's intellectual and social corruption and hypocrisy. Another popular topic for humor was modernization.

The *letz* appeared as an anarchic character with chaotic energy that could not be realized. He performed within a special system of laws, which was somehow the opposite of the daily social system. The *badchan-letz* moved between the two realms of Jewish scholar-preacher and festive clown: As opposed to the preaching side of the *badchan,* which was dominant before the wedding ceremony, he expressed his entertaining side afterward, transforming the preaching *badchan* into a *letz.*

These opposite dynamics reflected both sides of the Jewish wedding, the most important Jewish event in which the *badchan* operated: The heavy, serious atmosphere that had existed before and during the wedding ceremony (the *ḥuppah*) and the light, joyful atmosphere that followed it. Thus, the *badchan* used both his deep knowledge of marital laws and customs and his abilities as an entertainer. Hence the term *badchan-letz* is more appropriate for this character than the term *badchan* alone.

The Art of the *Badchan*

The poetics of the *badchan* is unique in popular literature. The simple verbal expression is a very important

part of it. The language is not very different from the spoken common language. Another characteristic is the use of the holy language in different levels—the more vulgar the style, the less evidence scholars find of biblical sentences and quotations. Among the prosodic phenomena, rhyming is the most common element. Repetition of sounds exists due to the rhythmic element in words. Both the actor-*badchan* and his audience are active factors in the artistic experience. They depend on one another in the circular process of creation and moving rhythmus. Understanding the audience, their needs, their state of mind, and their nature is as important as knowing the artistic principles and the technical procedures. The *badchan* must control all the semiotic signals between the audience and the creation. This is equally important to his mastery of the verbal language. He must consider visual elements such as costumes and masks, mimicry, and bodily gestures. The words, the intonation, the gestures, the bodily language, and the music are all parts of the theatrical medium. All artists, including the *badchan,* use and speak this harmonious language.

This tradition, which combines writing poems and a stand-up comedy show, still exists today. At Hasidic weddings the *badchan* is still a central figure. Jewish stand-up comedians appear on stages both in Israel and in the United States. The origins of their comedic style lie deep in the activities of the traditional Jewish *badchan.*

Ariela Krasney

See also: Marriage.

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BALAAM

The book of Numbers (22:2–24:25) relates the story of Balaam (Heb., Bilam), son of Beor from Pethor in Mesopotamia, a magician (*qosem,* Josh. 13:22) reputed to have such powers that both his blessings and curses were fulfilled. Balak, son of Zippor, king of Moab, sent for Balaam, imploring him to curse the Israelites, so that Balak would be able to drive them out of the land of Israel. Balaam was willing to do this, yet obeyed God's order, and joined the Moabite delegation only after refusing them twice. On the way to the camp of Balak, king of Moab, the ass of Balaam stopped and refused to proceed, for it saw the angel of God blocking its path. Balaam, unaware of the angel, beat the ass, which—after the third beating—reproached its master (talking to him in the mode familiar from fables). Only then did Balaam see the angel, who ordered him to continue with the people of Moab, yet to use none but the words God would put in his mouth. The result was four oracles, phrased in poetical form, in which Balaam blessed the people of Israel, instead of cursing them.

The biblical story reflects a polar evaluation of Balaam: On the one hand, he is depicted as a great sorcerer, able to attain prophetic power and addressed by God. On the other, even his ass sees what he is blind to, thus satirizing his gifts as a seer. In other places in the Bible, Balaam is held responsible for the seduction of Israelites to worship Baal Peor and he is said to have joined the Midianites in their war against Israel, a war in which he met his death (Num. 31:8, 16; Joshua 13:22).

This polar attitude exists also in postbiblical writings on the subject. The Greek-Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria (*De vita moysis* 1:48) and the first-century Jewish historian Josephus Flavius (*Antiq.* 4:6) considered Balaam the greatest prophet of his time. In rabbinical writings he is counted as one of seven heathen prophets (*b. Bava Batra* 15b), having the spirit of prophecy (*b. Zevahim* 116a), as great as Moses (*Num. Rab.* 20:1; *Tanḥuma* Balak 1), or even greater (*Sifre* Deut.). His greatness was expressed in the fact that he could ascertain the exact hour of God's wrath (*b. Berakhot* 7a; *Avodah Zarah* 4a–b; *Sanhedrin* 105b). Luckily, both angels and merits (deeds) of the righteous ancestors of Israelites protected them from his witchcraft (*Tanḥuma* Balak 17, 23; *Targum Yerushalmi* to Num. 23:9, 10, 23). In other sources, Balaam is portrayed as a false prophet, whose prophecy was of a low order, as evil ("rasha"*; m. Berakhot* 1:3; *b. Ta'anit* 20a; *Num.*

Rab. 20:14); and as foolish, following his name "be'or" (meaning "fool," [*Targum Yerushalmi* to Num. 22:5; *b. Sanhedrin* 105b]). The name Balaam, which is interpreted to mean either a combination of two Semite deities: Bel and Am, or "Am is Lord," was punned in rabbinical literature to mean "without people" (belo am) or "one that ruined a people" (bill'a am [*b. Sanhedrin* 106b]). Rabbinical literature portrayed Balaam physically as a cripple—lame in one foot—and blind in one eye (ibid., 105a) and accused him of committing sodomy with his donkey (ibid., 105a–b). He was identified with Elihu, the son of Barachel the Buzite, the friend of Job (32:2), probably because "Buzite" is derived from the Hebrew word *buz* (contempt) (*y. Sotah* 5:8, 20d). In addition, Balaam is identified with the first king of Edom (Gen. 36:32; *Targum Yerushalmi*, Ibn Ezra to the passage), as well as with Laban, the son of Bethuel (*Targum Yerushalmi* to Num. 32:5; cf. *Gen. Rab.* 57, end; and *Sanhedrin* 105a), and with Kemuel, the father of Aram (Gen. 22:21).

Balaam is blamed for seeking the ruin of Israel in several ways. He is described as the master-magician in the court of the pharaoh, a personal rival of Moses (who was found and raised by the pharaoh's daughter), and the one who counseled the pharaoh to drown the male Israelite children in the Nile (*b. Sanhedrin* 106a; *Targum Yerushalmi* to Exod. 7:11; *Chronicles of Jerahmeel* 47:6, 7). Balaam is also said to have been the adviser of Balak, telling him how to corrupt Israelites and thus destroy them (e.g., *Num. Rab.* 20:1; *Tanḥuma* Balak 1; *b. Sanhedrin* 106a). Because of this act, the Holy Spirit departed from the gentile peoples, and ever after prophecy was a gift reserved to Israel alone (*Tanḥuma* Balak 1).

Several stories relate the death of Balaam. He is said to have died at age thirty-three (*m. Sanhedrin* 1.3), and all four legal methods of execution—stoning, burning, decapitating, and strangling—were employed in killing him (ibid.). According to one story, he was pursued and killed by Phinehas, the grandson of Aaron, Moses's brother. Balaam tried to escape by flying into the air, but Phinehas, making use of the Holy Name, seized him by the head and unsheathed his sword to slay him (*Targum Yerushalmi* to Num. 31:8; *b. Sanhedrin* 106b). Serpents arose from Balaam's corpse, and he lost his share in the World to Come (*b. Sanhedrin* 90a).

Some external light was thrown on the Balaam story with the 1967 discovery at Tell Deir Alla, east of the Jordan River, of an eighth-century B.C.E. plaster inscription, which refers to a Bl'm Brb'r (Balaam son of Beor) as a "seer of the gods." This indicates that the tradition about a seer by this name, who was revered as a prophet, existed among the non-Israelite inhabitants of the land.

To this day, according to Jewish folklore, if a person plots to do evil yet his scheme inverts into good, he is compared to Balaam with the saying: "attempted to curse and was found blessing."

Raphael Patai and Ayelet Oettinger

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BAŁABAN, MAYER (MEIR) (1877–1942)

The early-twentieth-century scholar Mayer Bałaban was the chief historian and principal figure in the study of the history of Polish Jewry. Bałaban contributed also to the study of the ethnography and folklore of Polish Jewry.

Bałaban was born into a family of *mitnagdim* (those who are opposed to Hasidism) in Lwów (Lemberg) in Galicia on February 20, 1877. He received a religious education in his youth and then attended a secondary school in Lwów. He began to study law at the local university, but his family's difficult economic situation forced him to drop out. For a number of years he taught at a Jewish school. When he was at last able to return to the university, he chose history instead of law. In 1920 he became director of the Taḥkemoni rabbinical seminary in Warsaw. Five years later he received a teaching position at the Free University of Warsaw and the University of Warsaw. He also served as director of the Institute for Jewish Studies in Warsaw, from its foundation in 1927 until the beginning of World War II. Bałaban was invited to join the council for the Department of Judaic Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and in 1937 he went to Jerusalem and gave a lecture at the university, a great honor for both parties.

Bałaban's publications on the history of Polish Jews contain references to their ethnography and folklore. His main contribution to the study of folklore is his three monographs on the Jewish communities of three large cities: Lwów (Bałaban 1906), Kraków (Bałaban 1931, first publication in 1913), and Lublin (Bałaban 1919). He followed their publication with his *Zabytki historyczne żydów w Polsce* (Historical Antiquities of the Jews in Poland) (Bałaban 1929).

Bałaban's interest in ethnography and folklore of Polish Jews concentrated in two areas: (1) material culture and folk art, and (2) folk legends. In his histories of Polish Jews, Bałaban offered detailed descriptions of the synagogues in various places, including of the architecture and the interior of synagogues with all their appurtenances: Torah scrolls, Torah crowns, the pointer, the holy ark, the basin and lever for washing the hands, the wedding canopy (*ḥuppah*), the shofar (ram's-horn trumpet), the ark curtain, and so on. Among the distinctive items in Polish synagogues described by Bałaban are the wall plaques bearing the prayer for the sovereign, which could be found in synagogues until 1918.

Bałaban also studied buildings associated with key figures in Polish Jewish history and the customs and legends attached to them. He evinced great interest in household items and personal belongings. He wrote about clothing and jewelry: gold and silver engagement rings

Mayer Bałaban. *(Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary)*

with the inscription "Mazal Tov" (good luck), wedding rings with the inscription "he who finds a wife has found happiness" (Prov. 18:22), signet rings and amulets, genealogical charts found in Jewish homes, family documents written on parchment scrolls or eggshells, and much more. There are few areas of the material culture of Polish Jewry that he did not describe in his research.

Bałaban's special interest in the folk legends of Polish Jews was demonstrated in two ways: He set down texts from the oral traditions and incorporated them into discussions about historical figures, places, objects, and the like. Alongside texts he brought as anecdotes or illustrations of historical discussions, there are also legends that occupy an honored place in his work. Here he offered parallels, drew comparisons among them, and discussed the legends at length. The most prominent legends that received such favored attention are those about "Gildene Roize" (Golden Rose), who saved the Lwów synagogue from the Jesuits (Bałaban 1906, 165–186; 1920, 20), and Saul Wahl, the Jew who, according to the legend, served as king of Poland for a short period (Bałaban 1930, 17–38).

When the Germans invaded Poland in September 1939, Bałaban concentrated on saving his library. In the ghetto he was placed in charge of the Judenrat (the Jewish

administration) archive. He died in the Warsaw ghetto in December 1942 or January 1943 as a result of a heart attack caused by the area's harsh living conditions.

A legend about his death, which circulated in postwar Warsaw, tells that Bałaban had been summoned by a commandant of the ghetto or by a Nazi historian and ordered to write the final chapter of the history of the Jews. Bałaban returned home in despair. Knowing that he would never allow his pen to serve as an authority for the end of his people's existence, he committed suicide. For folklorists, the legend of Bałaban's death told by the Jewish survivors exposes their need, in the wake of their trauma, to turn the man who studied their history and culture into a hero of that very culture.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Poland, Jews of; Wahl, Saul.

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BAR AND BAT MITZVAH

The terms "bar mitzvah" and "bat mitzvah" derive from the Hebrew for "son and daughter of the commandment." "Bar mitzvah" is found in the Talmud as a general reference to a male child reaching his religious majority on attaining puberty, which by custom, rather than by law, is recognized at age thirteen for boys and twelve for girls. Although a ceremony for bar or bat mitzvah is not required and is not sanctioned by ancient authority, it has become widespread in Jewish culture in the modern period as a coming-of-age tradition representing maturity for the Jewish boy and girl. Considered in many countries one of the most important milestones in the life of the Jew, it has been deemed worthy of a ritualized social celebration including family, friends, and community members in and out of the synagogue. Its absence among Yemenite Jews indicates that it is not a universal tradition, although it is one of the most widespread life-cycle events in Jewish culture. In addition to a diversity of customs associated with the ritual observance, the emphasis placed upon the celebration itself also varies. In the United States, these celebrations among liberal Jews are typically elaborate affairs, often with a series of parties and pilgrimages rivaling those associated with a wedding, whereas in Western Europe, the ceremony is usually a quieter and frequently more religious event.

Rabbinical sources often cite the Jewish ethical treatise *Avot* for the designation of thirteen as the age of fulfillment of mitzvot; Qiddushin 16b clarifies that a boy is of age when physical signs of adulthood appear after he reaches the age of thirteen years plus one day. The medieval Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides (*Yadayim Ishut* 2:9–10) added that signs of adulthood in a girl are those that appear after her twelfth birthday plus one day. Folklorist Theodor Gaster theorized that the age had historical roots in the customary time of marriage and establishment of a household in the ancient Middle East. This linkage resulted in having aspects of the Jewish wedding incorporated into the ceremony, on the one hand, and development of childhood and family rituals within a religious social frame, on the other. A modern development accompanying the expansion of the life course has been the second bar mitzvah, seventy years after the first, because seventy years is regarded as a typical life span and therefore allows for becoming a bar mitzvah again at the age of eighty-three.

A bat mitzvah in Italy in which girls recited biblical verse and a rabbi delivered a sermon recognizing the specialness of girls being allowed to join a minyan (the quorum of ten Jewish adults, originally men, required for religious obligations) was known as early as 1844. This practice influenced Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, originally an Orthodox synagogue leader, who advocated for a bat mitzvah equal to that of the bar mitzvah when he presided in

A bar mitzvah taking place in a Sephardic synagogue, Brooklyn 1998. *(Photo by Simon Bronner)*

1922 over the first bat mitzvah in the United States. The bat mitzvah as a female version of the bar mitzvah became more commonplace by century's end in various denominations, with the exception of the Orthodox. Nonetheless, in many Modern Orthodox communities, parents organize a party for their daughters in their twelfth year, although a synagogue component is absent. In Italy, the girl often celebrates having passed her twelfth birthday in a religious fashion, with a rabbinical examination on the Jewish holidays of Shavuot (which celebrates God's gift of the Torah to the people of Israel) or Purim. In Israel, the coming of age is frequently devoid of liturgical observance but may be celebrated with a pilgrimage to Rachel's Tomb or festivity at other sacred sites.

The religious aspects of the bar mitzvah involve the right of the boy to put on tefillin (phylacteries). In some Sephardic communities, donning tefillin is the occasion of a separate ceremony, with readings and speeches, during the week before the Sabbath observance. In the synagogue, usually on the first Sabbath after the boy's thirteenth birthday, the boy is expected to read a portion of the Torah and a *haftarah* (selections from the book of Prophets). Since the late 1960s, some families have chosen to perform these readings in ceremonies at the Western Wall in Jerusalem (remnant of ancient wall surrounding the Jewish Temple's courtyard) and accompany the bar mitzvah with a tour of religious sites in Israel.

Among Moroccan Jews, a liturgical poem (*piyyut*) is often recited as the boy is called to Torah for his first *aliyah* (first reading from the Torah in public). The boy may deliver a talmudic discourse (*derashah*) to show his budding erudition, or a general talk. A Sephardic custom that has spread to Ashkenazi congregations is for the boy's congregational audience to throw candies at the boy upon completion of his Torah reading. The rabbi may follow with a blessing and the presentation of a congregational gift of a religious article. The father has a special role in the ceremony because of the expectation that he is responsible for the boy's Jewish education. The father may recite the blessing "Barukh she-petarani" (Blessed is he who has freed me from the responsibility for this child), and he may also give a speech on behalf of the family. A psychological explanation of this paternal involvement considers it a ritual withdrawal of the father to make way for the son in the patriarchal line of the family as well as in the synagogue. The mother may be involved with symbols of nurturing, such as the presentation of a hand-woven shawl (*tallit*) and skullcap (*kippah*), and some congregations make looms available to congregants for weaving these articles. The family usually sponsors a meal that qualifies as a obligatory meal (*seudat mitzvah*) in fulfillment of a religious commandment, and in many Jewish communities the meal is supplemented by a secular celebration in a rented hall. In the modern ritualiza-

tion of the bar and bat mitzvah, the long preparation for the ritual is emphasized, often beginning with the start of Jewish education.

The reception in a hall often includes the lifting of the bar or bat mitzvah, a variation of the wedding tradition of hoisting the bride and groom on chairs. It may also include a candle ceremony, such as the placement of fourteen candles, representing the age of thirteen and one for good luck, or for each significant relative (including grandparents, uncles, and aunts) called up to light a candle with the boy. Gifts often include signs of the celebrant's status as student and Jew: pens, books, and religious articles. Donations of money are usually in multiples of eighteen, which represents the numerical value of the letters in the Hebrew word ḥai (life) and thus signifies good luck. In the United States, families may organize the reception around a theme reflecting the interests of the boy or girl, such as athletics or performance arts, and bring in entertainment characteristic of a carnival. Various interpretations of the ritual importance placed on the bar or bat mitzvah as an event displaying consumption in the United States have centered on the signaling of Jewish success as an ethnic minority in a capitalist society in which status is demonstrated by the ability to consume. It has more of a social, secular quality than the Christian communion, although it has been compared to an adolescent "coming out" celebration of the American "sweet sixteen" or the Latin American *quinceañera* or *fiesta de quince* at fifteen for girls.

Regularly celebrated at the age of twelve or thirteen, the Jewish coming of age is more predictable as a Jewish event than the wedding. Its rise beyond the role of the wedding or *brith-milah* (circumcision) among Jewish milestones suggests that it is a statement of ethnic identity and individualism, given that the timing of the wedding is more uncertain and recognition of accomplishments at the *brith* are absent. Its significance is also represented in Jewish education because many Hebrew schools organize their curriculum around preparation for the bar and bat mitzvah. Many egalitarian congregations insist on having the bar and bat mitzvah for children at the same age (typically thirteen) and include the child's Hebrew School cohort in the celebrations. The bar and bat mitzvah has grown in popular visibility and arguably in cultural importance as a ceremony since the mid-twentieth century, especially among liberal Jews, who often signal with the planning of the celebration the family orientation of Jewish home practice, often over synagogue centeredness, modernistic Jewish values, and the fragile nature of Jewish identity.

Simon J. Bronner

See also: Jerusalem and the Temple.

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BAR KOCHBA, SHIMEON

Shimeon Bar Kochba was the military leader of the Jewish uprising against Rome during the years 132–135 C.E. His real name was Shimeon ben Kosiba, as proven from military dispatches written in his name found in 1960–1961 in the Judean Desert, and he is known as such in the Talmud and Midrash. The appellation "bar Kochba" (lit., "son of the star"), attested in early Christian writings, may have been given to him by his followers, who applied to him the prophetic terminology of Numbers 24:17, "a star arises out of Jacob . . . smiting the borders of Moab," a verse that had already been subject to messianic overtones.

When the Roman emperor Hadrian initiated a policy of Hellenization of the Jews, prohibiting circumcision and erecting a Roman temple in Jerusalem (renamed Aelia Capitolina) over the ruins of the Jewish Temple, the Jews rebelled. Led by Bar Kochba, they enjoyed initial success, including the capture of Jerusalem and the

Bar Kochba coin (front and back). Silver tetradrachm (sela) of the Bar Kochba Revolt, 133 C.E. (© The Israel Museum, Jerusalem)

reestablishment of a Jewish government, and coins were minted combining his name (Shimeon) with the title *nesi Yisrael* (president of Israel). Ultimately, however, Roman forces succeeded in quashing the rebellion and retaking Judaea. Bar Kochba and his forces retreated to Bethar, a stronghold in the vicinity of Jerusalem, where he was killed in 135.

Both the Talmud (Jerusalem Talmud, *Ta'anit* 4, 9) and the Midrash (Lamentations Rabbati 2, 2) present a picture of Bar Kochba as a ruthless, strong-willed, and capable leader, a portrayal reflected also in his letters, discovered by archaeologists in the 1950s and 1960s. According to the rabbinic sources, Bar Kochba's soldiers were tested for bravery and strength by undergoing the amputation of their fingers or by successfully uprooting a large tree while riding a horse. He was noted for his prowess, evidenced by his ability to capture between his legs stones thrown from catapults and hurl them back at the enemy. He was defiant against the religious leaders, even raising a cry against God: "Neither help nor hinder us in our battles!" Indeed, in his final moments during the siege of Bethar he angrily killed his uncle, Rabbi Eleazar of Modi'in, whom he suspected was helping the Roman forces. In one source, Bar Kochba's own death is ascribed to divine retribution by means of a snake that wrapped itself around his body. The duration of the siege of Bethar—which in Jewish sources came to connote the revolt in its entirety—is given as the typologically significant number of three-and-a-half years (or, in other sources, two-and-a-half years), and the downfall of Bethar is commemorated on the same day as the destruction of the two Temples, the Ninth of Av (Tisha Be'Av).

Despite these negative descriptions, no less a figure than Rabbi Akiva is said to have believed that Bar Kochba was the awaited messianic king, who would throw off the yoke of the Roman Empire and reestablish Jewish independence. Nonetheless, other sages did not share this belief. One source describes a test given to Bar Kochba by the sages after he declared himself the messiah; when he

failed the test they put him to death. The aftermath of the disastrous outcome of the Bar Kochba revolt is described in Jewish sources as particularly horrifying and devastating, with many deaths and almost complete devastation of the villages of Judea, a view corroborated by non-Jewish sources (as found in the works by the second-century Roman historian Dio Cassius [Roman History, book LXIX 12-14], and the third-century Christian exegete and historian, Eusebius [Ecclesiastical History, IV 6]). During the years after the revolt, harsh new decrees were issued by Hadrian aimed at eliminating Jewish religious practice. This time is known in Jewish sources as "the period of *shemad*," of religious persecution and harsh decrees.

In later generations the image of Bar Kochba went through a series of transformations, based on the outlines of his history and character as described in the early sources but introducing new emphases in accordance with different historical circumstances. Thus, early medieval writers (Abraham ibn Daud [Abraham ben David], the twelfth-century Spanish-Jewish historian and philosopher [The Book of Traditon, ch. III]; Maimonides [Moses ben Maimon], the twelfth century, Jewish exegete, talmudist and philosopher [*Mishneh Torah*, Laws of Kings 11:3]) saw him as a "great king" who achieved political and military success, and who was recognized by the sages as a possible messiah, until his death proved him to be otherwise. Indeed, although Bar Kochba proved to be a false messiah, he is viewed by some Jewish traditional scholars in a more positive light, as part of an unfolding process of redemption based on physical strength and national bravery, which went awry due to arrogance and sin, calling down gentile persecution and hatred. In some late kabbalistic texts he is seen not as a false messiah but, rather, as an "unfinished" messiah, incorporating potential for future redemption.

The basic themes of military prowess, messianism, and national redemption led to a revision of the character of Bar Kochba in a positive light by Zionist circles in the modern period. This was facilitated by the supposed con-

nection between the Jewish holiday Lag Ba'Omer and the Bar Kochba revolt: a talmudic reference to the tragic death of 24,000 students of Rabbi Akiva during the period of counting the Omer was understood by some nineteenth-century Jewish historians as referring to the calamities of the Bar Kochba revolt, which abated on Lag Ba'Omer. An old custom in East European Jewish communities of allowing students to celebrate this day as a holiday, with processions in the forests and games of bows and arrows, was connected to the physical and military heroism of Bar Kochba, thus solidifying the developing positive view of Jewish national liberation based on physical strength. Bar Kochba was repeatedly invoked as a symbol of Jewish resistance, and the site of his last stronghold, Bethar, even became the name of a Jewish youth movement and sports society (through an acronym formed from the words *Berit Yosef Trumpeldor*), exemplifying the ideals of pioneering, military national defense, and self-sacrifice. The image of Bar Kochba as a fearless, if tragic, leader became the subject of children's stories and songs, influenced numerous literary dramatic works in prose and poetry, has become part of current political debate, and, as well, has re-entered the arena of modern Israeli folk culture.

Paul Mandel

See also: Av, Ninth of (Tisha Be'Av); Lag Ba'Omer.

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BAR-ITZHAK, HAYA (1946–)

Born in Berlin, Germany, on August 17, 1946, Haya Bar-Itzhak studied at the University of Haifa (where she received her bachelor's and master's degrees in 1971 and 1979, respectively) and Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where she wrote her Ph.D. dissertation: "The 'Saints' Legend' as a Genre in Jewish Folk Literature (Sample of Oral Stories About Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, Rabbi Haim

Pinto and Rabbi Salom Shabazi)," under the supervision of Dov Noy. She completed her Ph.D. in 1987.

The focus of her research is Jewish and Israeli folklore, with an emphasis on the ethnographic and poetic aspects. The ethnographic aspect is manifested in her fieldwork and in examining the folk narrative as a communicative process—the storytelling event, narrator-audience relations, and performance. In the area of poetics she has examined various poetic elements—character, space, time, narration, and the components of communication—using concepts from literary theory and adapting them to the field of folk narrative. Her studies relate to various genres such as myth, legends of different types, and the wonder tale. Her work emphasizes different research approaches and examines how each contributes to the study of the folk narrative.

In her research on folk narratives in Israeli society, Bar-Itzhak has contributed to the study of ethnicity, immigration, and settlement. She has published extensively on Jewish folklore in Eastern Europe (especially Poland), particularly on legends of origin, intercultural communication between Jews and Poles, women, and the history of Jewish ethnography and folkloristics.

Her academic posts include visiting professor in the Department of Folklore and Folklife at the University of Pennsylvania; visiting professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley; fellow at Simon Dubnow Center in Leipzig; Fulbright scholar in residence and visiting professor at Pennsylvania State University, Harrisburg; and visiting professor at Indiana University, Bloomington.

Among Bar-Itzhak's books are *Jewish Moroccan Folk Narratives from Shlomi* (with Aliza Shenhar-Alroy, 1993), *Jewish Poland: Legends of Origin* (2001), *Israeli Folk Narratives: Settlement, Immigration, Ethnicity* (2005), *The Power of a Tale* (editor, with Idit Pintel Ginsberg, 2008), and *Pioneers of Jewish Ethnography and Folkloristics in Eastern Europe* (2009). She has also published many articles in scholarly journals in Hebrew, English, German, Russian, and French.

Since 1992, Bar-Itzhak has served as chair of the Department of Hebrew and Comparative Literature and head of Folklore Studies at the University of Haifa, Israel. Since 1994, she has also served as academic head of the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the university, where she focuses her research on the comparative computerized study of the folk narrative and aims to computerize all the IFA tales. She is also a coeditor of *Chuliyot,* a journal of Yiddish culture, and *Dappim,* a journal of Hebrew literature, and serves on the editorial board of *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore* and *Jewish Cultural Studies.*

She is the recipient of the National Jewish Book Award–Honor Book and the Lerner Foundation for Yiddish Culture Award.

Aliza Shenhar

See also: Folk Narratives in Israel; Poland, Jews of.

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BAR YOḤAI, SHIMEON

See: Shimeon Bar Yoḥai

BASHEVIS-SINGER, ISAAC (1904–1991)

Isaac Bashevis-Singer was a Polish-born Jewish American author and one of the leading figures in the Yiddish literary movement of the mid- to late twentieth century. The recipient of numerous awards, including two National Book Awards and the 1978 Nobel Prize for Literature, Bashevis-Singer originally wrote in Yiddish; his works were often serialized in the Yiddish newspaper the *Jewish Daily Forward* before being translated into English. His novels and short stories are infused with strong links to and explorations of Jewish culture and folklore, including supernatural worlds of ghosts and demons and characterizations of people strongly rooted in the small Jewish towns and villages of Poland.

Early Life

He was born Isaac Singer on July 14, 1904, in Radzymin, Poland, in a small Jewish community (shtetl) not far from the capital city of Warsaw. His father, Pinkhes-Menakhem Singer, a rabbi, was naive and sentimental, while his mother, Bas-sheve, was witty, sharp-tongued, and rational. The writer later named himself after his mother, in a declaration of identity: "My name reflects my personality, and contradictions construct my world and my work. Therefore I call myself Isaac Bashevis-Singer, combining the two parts inherited from my father (Singer) and from my mother Bas-sheve (Bashevis)."

When he was four years old, his family moved to Warsaw, where his father served as a rabbinical judge in the Jewish community of Krokhmalna Street, a mixture of pious Hasidim and secular intellectuals, workmen and tradesmen, working-class people, and tough criminals. Despite the eclectic nature of the community, its members adapted themselves to the Jewish traditional code, thus regarding the rabbinical court as a major element in their lives.

The rabbinical court was located at the Singer home, as Bashevis-Singer tells in his autobiographical book *Mayn tatns bes-din-shtub* (In My Father's Court, 1956). Men and women came to the court for many reasons: Torah-trials, marriages, divorces, or daily questions about religious matters. Not only was "the door . . . opened," as the writer related in the aforementioned book, but the visitor's heart was opened, revealing his or her intimate secrets. The inquisitive child eavesdropped eagerly on affairs that were not appropriate for his age. After many years, these events reappeared as the core of the writer's narratives, both in his autobiographical and fictional works.

The family lived in this neighborhood until the German occupation during World War I. In 1917, attempting to escape hunger and humiliation, his mother took Isaac and his brother away from Warsaw and to her family in Bilgoray, a shtetl in southeast Poland,

The Bilgoray period is depicted in a series of stories that first appeared in *Forverts,* a Yiddish newspaper in New York. The series was published under the titles *Fun mayn zeydns bezdn-shtub* and *Mentshn oyf mayn veg* (My Grandfather's Court and People on My Way). In 1996, the stories were published in book form in Jerusalem as *Mayn tatns bes-din-shtub (hemsheykhim-zamlung)* and then in the United States as *My Father's Court—Sequel Collection* in 2000. This collection portrays the character of Jewish life in a traditional shtetl.

At the age of eighteen the young man felt himself closed in by the provincial life and rabbinical heritage in Bilgoray, and ran away from his grandfather's home, intending to settle again in Warsaw. This was the beginning of a new period in his life (1923–1935). The events of that period and the relations of the young writer within the Jewish literary scene in Warsaw are related in *Der shrayber-klub* (The Writers Club) and in *A shif kein Amerike* (A Ship to America). These autobiographical works offer another perspective on the description of Jewish life in Poland, mingling the Old World with the new one.

In 1933, in response to a new outburst of anti-Semitism in Poland, Bashevis-Singer published his first novel, *Der sotn in Goray*, in Yiddish in serial form in the Warsaw Yiddish magazine *Globus.* Two years later the novel was published in book form (Warsaw, 1935; English translation: *Satan in Goray,* New York: 1955). The novel is a modern allegory based on a poetic pattern of kabbalistic and folkloric dybbuk tales (a dybbuk is a dead soul that can possess the living). It represents the seventeenth-century pogroms (violent Russian mob-attacks against the Jews) as a forerunner to modern anti-Semitism and warns against the spread of false messianism as a response to massacres and other traumatic events in Eastern Europe. Anchored in the social and cultural area of the Polish-Jewish shtetl, the novel reflects the histori-

Author Isaac Bashevis-Singer is applauded by Sweden's King Carl Gustaf after receiving his Nobel Prize for Literature in Stockholm in 1978. *(AP Photo/Reportagebild)*

cal struggle between a rational rabbinical leadership and the Sabbatean movement (movement started by Sabbatai Zvi, who declared himself Messiah and later on converted to Islam), signifying the constant confrontation between orderly and chaotic forces. This struggle leads to an unanswered question: Is it possible to exorcise the dybbuk of evil and destruction from human nature?

Major Works and Themes

In 1935, Bashevis-Singer left Poland for New York, where he became a reporter for the *Daily Forward,* America's largest Yiddish newspaper. Although he would spend almost two-thirds of his life in New York, his mind and works never left Eastern Europe. He continued to write in Yiddish, in a style rich in cultural and folkloric allusions, but also participated in the process of translating his works into English, polishing and adapting them to the taste of American readers. As a result, critics have noted that although the English-language versions are more elegant, the link to Jewish cultural and folkloric source materials is diminished.

American publishers gave priority to the English-language editions, and few of the Yiddish originals were ever published in book form: five novels, three collections of short stories, and two volumes of memoirs. Many of the author's serialized novels, short stories, and nonfiction writings in Yiddish are inaccessible to the common reader, located only in *Forverts'* archives and other newspaper and magazine back issues in Poland and in the United States. On the other hand, the list of English-language books is considerable: thirteen novels, ten volumes of short stories, five volumes of memoirs, fourteen children's books, and three anthologies of selected writings.

His most well-known and celebrated works are:

Autobiographical works: *Mayn tatns bes-din-shtub* (New York, 1956) / In My Father's Court (New York, 1962); *Mayn tatns bes-din-shtub [hemsheykhim-zamlung}* (Jerusalem, 1996) / *More Stories from My Father's Court* (New York, 2000); *Neshome ekspeditsyes* (New York:, 1974) / *Shosha* (London, 1979); *Love and Exile: An Autobiographical Trilogy* (New York, 1984).

Novels: *Der sotn in Goray: a mayse fun fartsaytns* (Warsaw, 1935) / *Satan in Goray* (New York, 1955); *Der kuntsnmakher fun lublin* (Tel Aviv, 1971) / *The Magician of Lublin* (New York, 1960); *Der knekht* (New York, 1967) / *The Slave* (New York, 1962); *Shotns baym hadson* (New York, 1957–1958) / *Shadow on the Hudson* (New York, 1998); *Enemies, A Love Story* (New York, 1972).

Family chronicle novels: *Di familye mushkat* (2 vols., New York, 1950) / *The Family Moskat* (New York, 1950); *Der hoyf* (New York, 1953–1955) / *The Manor* (New York, 1967) and *The Estate* (New York, 1969).

Yiddish and English collections of short stories: *Der sotn in Goray: a mayse fun fartsaytns un andere dertseylungen* (New York, 1943); *Mayses fun hintern oyvn* (Tel Aviv, 1971); *Der shpigl un andere dertseylungen'* (Jerusalem, 1975); *Gimpl tam un andere dertseylungen'* (New York, 1963). *Gimpel The Fool and Other Stories* (New York, 1957); *The Spinoza of Market Street* (New York, 1961); *Short Friday and Other Stories* (New York, 1964); *A Friend of Kafka* (New York, 1970); *A Crown of Feathers and Other Stories* (New York, 1973, recipient of the National Book Award); *Passions* (New York, 1975), *Collected Stories* (New York, 1982); *The Death of Methuselah* (New York, 1988).

Books for children: *A Day of Pleasure: Stories of a Boy Growing Up in Warsaw* (New York, 1969, recipient of the National Book Award); *The Golem* (New York, 1983); *Stories for Children* (New York, 1984).

Although it is hard to define the corpus of Bashevis-Singer's writings as a whole, it is possible to point out the main features of his art. The events in most of his works are marked by sensation, strong lust, mystery, and surprising reverses. The natural joins the supernatural, and the demonic mingles with the human. Thus, the narrative element is highly dramatized and sharply focused.

Strong desires and strange impulses motivate most of his characters. Some are dreamers, some are sinners; some are naive, others are witty; but all of them belong to the shtetl, even if they live in the big cities of Warsaw or New York. The writer describes their ways of life, paying attention to the smallest detail. He reveals their intimate secrets and portrays their behavior during public events, such as weddings, funerals, prayers, exorcisms, or rabbinical trials. Throughout the narrated actions the reader (mainly the Yiddish reader) can listen to the way these people talk, with the authentic nuances of folkloric speech.

Bashevis-Singer had close affinity to the folkloristic belief in supernatural forces, and defined himself as "obsessed" by demons and other kinds of spirits. Accordingly, most of his works repeatedly stress the presence of supernatural elements in reality. Demons appear as an exteriorization of forbidden passions, and the author uses them as a literary device for concise depiction of the inner motivations in human life. The fantastic descriptions of the demonic elements are anchored in kabbalistic books, folkloric legends, and daily ways of life in the Polish-Jewish shtetl. These core materials are assimilated in the works within a process of artistic stylization that enables the author to use the demonic prism as a focused reflection of reality. By examining the relationship between reality and fantasy, truth and falsehood, sanctity and defilement;,and the divine and the satanic, Bashevis-Singer's works uncover the perplexity of the twentieth-century individual, with one eye on the past and the other rooted in the present and gazing into the future.

A prolific author, Bashevis-Singer continued to write and publish new material until his death on July 24, 1991.

Bilhah Rubinstein

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BASTOMSKI, SHLOYME

See: Poland, Jews of

BEN HAM'ELEKH VE'HA'NAZIR

Ben ham'elekh ve'ha'nazir (The King's Son and the Ascetic) is a Hebrew rhymed prose work of moral literature (*adab*), written in the first half of the thirteenth century by Abraham ben Samuel Halevi ibn Ḥasdai of Barcelona. The story is a translation-adaptation of the celebrated legend of Barlaam and Josaphat, which is based on a second- to fourth-century Buddhist Sanskrit text about the life of Siddhārtha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism. According to the Indian tradition, Prince Siddhārtha left his palace for the first time at the age of twenty-nine. In the following three days, he encountered illness, old age, and death and realized that position, wealth, and fame are transient. Siddhārtha then left his family and wandered about India, seeking a remedy for human suffering. He acquired knowledge from several tutors, tried the path of asceticism, but succeeded in reaching Nirvana—the heavenly state of enlightenment that frees individuals from suffering—only through meditation, at the age of thirty-five. Thus he became "the Buddha," meaning "the awakened one."

The tale of Buddha, extolling the quest for spiritual meaning in life, gained popularity over time and space. From Sanskrit the story was translated into Pahlavi (the written form of Middle Persian), and from the latter it was translated-redacted into two major variants: Arabic and Greek. The Arabic version was written in the eighth century and became popular in countries under Islamic rule. It was titled *Kitab Bilawhar wa-Budhasaf* (or *Yudasaf*)—a name reminiscent of the epithet bodhisattva, given to followers of Buddha. The text is similar to the Indian versions and does not convey any Muslim morals. The Greek version, titled *Barlaam and Josaphat,* was translated-adapted either in the seventh century from the Pahlavi or in the tenth century from the Arabic version. This is a tendentious, Christianized adaptation of the story, offering Christianity as the remedy for human suffering.

The story of Barlaam and Josaphat is set in India years after the Apostle St. Thomas has converted many of its inhabitants to Christianity. A pagan king, named Abenner, ascends the throne and persecutes all Chris-

tians in his realm. Being foretold that his newborn son, Josaphat, shall be a Christian monk, the king isolates him from external contact, thus hoping to prevent the prophecy. Despite this imprisonment, the prince meets a leper, a blind man, and an old man, yet his escort does not relieve his bafflement. God commends a hermit named Barlaam to help the prince. Barlaam enters the palace disguised as a dealer of precious stones, answers the prince's questions, and converts him to Christianity. Hearing this, King Abenner does his best to cause Josaphat to "repent" and leave Christianity by holding a public dispute between faiths and other methods. But all his devices fail, and as a result King Abenner himself begins to believe in Christianity, renounces the throne, and becomes a hermit. Josaphat then governs alone but eventually abdicates as well, searching the desert for his teacher Barlaam and finally joining him in reclusion. Years after they die, their bodies are brought to India and their grave becomes renowned for its miracles.

This Christianized Greek version became the primary source for hundreds of translations into Latin and most of the languages that were spoken by Christians in the Middle Ages. The Greek version was translated into Arabic, from which the Hebrew variant was translated-adapted. This fact is recounted by ibn Ḥasdai, the Hebrew translator, in the preface to the book. What ibn Ḥasdai did not tell his readers, however, is that he inserted many changes into the translated text, essentially eliminating all Christian elements. The text does contain the Parable of the Sower (chapter 10, analogues to the Gospels of Mark 4:1–20, Matt. 13:1–23, Luke 8:1–15; Thom. 9) and one verse from the New Testament (chapter 25, parallel to Matt. 10:20; Luke 12:33), but it is most probable that the author did not know of their origin. In order to differentiate his work from the Christian original, ibn Ḥasdai even omitted all names and called the characters by their functions: "the king," "the king's son," and "the ascetic." The king persecutes the ascetics because of a personal grudge, having nothing to do with religion. The ascetics themselves are not described as belonging to any specific faith, but as people who are content with very little and despise this world in general. In their sessions, the ascetic teaches the prince values and morality, ways of good behavior, facts of life, general education, philosophy, and theological knowledge—all of which are common to all monotheistic religions. The goal of the training is to prepare the prince to govern his people wisely and compassionately, a goal contrary to reclusion and monasticism—the objectives of the tutelage in *Barlaam and Josaphat.* Indeed, the prince expresses his desire to join his teacher in the Hebrew version as well, but, contrary to the Christian version, the ascetic refuses and stresses the prince's duties as a son and a ruler to be. The Hebrew version ends when the ascetic is convinced that his apprentice has learned what he came to teach him and leaves in order to teach others. There is no trace of the king's struggle against his son or of any religious conversion.

In addition to these changes, the Hebrew version contains ten stories—some of which are of Indian origin—that do not appear in any other version of the book, whether derived from Greek (Christian) or Arabic (Muslim) origin. Ibn Ḥasdai also inserted into the text 256 proverbs and epigrams that he had gathered from different collections of Arabic moral literature; and in the last four chapters of the book, he included a translation of a lost Arabic neo-Platonic essay (pseudo-epigraphically ascribed to Aristotle). Another innovation is in ibn Ḥasdai's style: "The King's Son and the Ascetic" is written in the nonclassical medieval *māqāma* genre (including ornamental rhymed prose, interspersed with monorhymed metrical poems). It can be assumed that he did this in order to attract readers, for the *māqāma* was a most popular genre at the time. In addition, ibn Ḥasdai probably attempted to appeal to readers by planning to include illustrations in the text. The only illuminated manuscript of a Hebrew work of belles lettres known to exist is *Meshal ha-Kadmoni* (The Fable of the Ancient), by Itzhak ibn Sahula (1281). Yet manuscripts of "The King's Son and the Ascetic" include titles and vacancies for drawings (i.e., places evidently left for them), and there might have been others with pictures embedded.

As a pronounced work of *adab,* the book educates readers by means of entertainment. It intends to teach morals by using folk literary forms: exempla, folktales, allegorical stories, fables, poems, maxims, proverbs, epigrams and wit, riddles, and a theoretical-intellectual essay. Most of these serve the ascetic in teaching his lore. The result is a varied and colorful compilation, appealing to readers throughout the ages, as can be deduced from the book's many manuscripts, translations into Yiddish, German, and Bukhori (the language of Bukharan Jews), and thirty-four Hebrew printed editions, the first in Constantinople 1518. An annotated scholarly edition was published in 2011.

Raphael Patai and Ayelet Oettinger

See also: Māqāma.

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BEN-AMOS, DAN (1934–)

Dan Ben-Amos is a prominent scholar of Jewish folklore, folklore theory, and African oral tradition. He has studied and written about the history of Jewish folklore, Jewish humor, and the folklore genre. In addition, he has done fieldwork in Benin City, Nigeria, and written about African storytelling and oral tradition.

Born on September 3, 1934, in Petah Tikvah in Israel, he studied Hebrew and English literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and folklore at Indiana University at Bloomington. His master's thesis was titled "In Praise of the Besht: Commentary and Motif Index" (1964) and his Ph.D. dissertation was "Narrative Forms in the Aggada: Structural Analysis" (1967).

Dan Ben-Amos contributed to the study of folklore in several areas. The first is the theory of folklore—among his lasting contributions to folkloristics is his definition of folklore as artistic communication in small groups, as outlined in his 1971 article "Toward a Definition of Folklore in Context," written for the *Journal of American Folklore.* Another lasting theoretical contribution is his work on folklore literary genres, where he coined the term "ethnic genre," starting with his article "Analytical Categories in Ethnic Genre" published in *Genre* (1969), and the importance of context and performance in folklore studies.

He contributed to the study of traditional written Jewish folklore in the Bible, the Talmud, and Midrash, and the Hasidic tale. He wrote about generic distinctions in the Aggadah, talmudic tall tales and historical poetics, and the case of Niflaot and Nisim, as well as the Hasidic tale, by editing and translating *In Praise of the Ba'al Shem Tov.*

He contributed to the study of folk narratives of various Jewish ethnic groups based on both written sources and oral folktales. In the past fifteen years he has been working on *Folktales of the Jews*, a series of folktale anthologies of oral tales recorded from storytellers in various Jewish ethnic groups and stored in Israel Folktale Archives (IFA).

Finally, another lasting contribution of Ben-Amos is to the history of the study of Jewish folklore as expressed in his essays "Jewish Studies and Jewish Folklore" and "Jewish Folklore Studies," among others.

His major publications include *In Praise of the Ba'al Shem Tov* (editor and translator, with Jerome Mintz, 1970); *Folklore: Performance and Communication* (editor, with Kenneth S. Goldstein, 1975); *Sweet Words: Storytelling Events in Benin* (1975); *Folklore Genres* (editor, 1976); *Mimekor Yisrael* (editor, 1990); and *Cultural Memory and the Construction of Identity* (editor, with Liliane Weissberg, 1999).

Ben-Amos is also the editor of the Raphael Patai Series in Jewish Folklore and Anthropology (Wayne State University Press), which publishes books illuminating the diverse and culturally rich Jewish heritage, and the Folklore Studies in Translation Series (Indiana University Press).

Ben-Amos has taught in the Folklore and Folklife Program at the University of Pennsylvania since 1967. He is currently chair of its graduate program and professor of folklore and Near Eastern languages and civilizations.

The first volume of his collection of tales (with commentaries), *Tales from the Sephardic Dispersion,* won the National Jewish Book Award in 2006.

Linda Lee

See also: Berdyczewski (Bin-Gorion), Micha Josef; Hasidic Tales.

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Ben Yehezkel, Mordechai

See: Anthologies

Berdyczewski (Bin-Gorion), Micha Josef (1865–1921)

Micha Josef Berdyczewski was a writer of fiction, a folklorist, an essayist, a critic, and a scholar. The author of more than 150 Hebrew stories, and numerous stories in Yiddish, he was a leading figure in Hebrew literature and culture at the turn of the twentieth century. His fiction and essays chronicled the challenges that nineteenth-century Jews faced when forced to choose between modern and traditional ways. His anthologies of Jewish legends and folktales, published in Hebrew and in German, were meticulously researched and arranged and contribute significantly to the canon of Jewish folklore literature.

Life Story

Berdyczewski was born July 27, 1865, in Medzibezh, in western Ukraine. He spent his childhood and youth in Dubova, where his father served as the community's rabbi. His mother died when he was eleven, one of two traumatic experiences that shadowed his life and served as subject of several of his stories. A second traumatic experience was his marriage at the age of seventeen to a rich man's daughter whom he grew to love, but whose father soon forced him to divorce, after Berdyczewski was caught reading *maskilic* (enlightened) texts. In 1887, Berdyczewski entered the Volozhin Yeshiva and published his first article, "Toldot Yeshivat Etz Hayyim" (History of the Etz Hayyim Yeshiva [*Ha'asif* 3]). In 1888 he married for the second time, only to be divorced within a year. In 1889 he visited Odessa (a gathering place of Jewish intellectuals), where he became acquainted with the most important Hebrew writers of the time, including Mendele Moykher Sforim and Ahad Ha'am. At the end of this year, he left Poland, first for Germany, where he enrolled in Breslau University, and later for Switzerland, where, in 1896, he received a Ph.D. in philosophy from Berne University with a dissertation titled "Über den Zusammenhand zwichen Ethik und Aesthetic" (On the Connection Between Ethics and Aesthetics). In 1902 he married Rachel Romberg, who also became his main literary collaborator. They lived in Breslau until 1911 and then moved to Berlin, where they lived until his death November 18, 1921.

Micha Josef Berdyczewski.

Anthologies

Berdyczewski's most distinctive works include a multivolume compilation of Jewish legends, three in Hebrew and two translated into German by his wife. For him, the creation of anthologies involved not merely assembling materials but creating a literary genre that examined the historical and philosophical dimensions of the unique structure of Jewish existence.

His aggadic (legend) collections, in Hebrew and in German, reflect his self-conception as both a philosopher of history and a narrator. Berdyczewski approached these anthologies as an historian of culture, collecting different versions of stories and traditions, comparing their details, and assembling them in carefully structured volumes. As a writer he treated each version of a particular story as an autonomous work. Berdyczewski collected his materials from a wide range of sources: from canonical and noncanonical texts, from those central to the tradition as well as marginal to it, and from both authoritative and orthodox works.

Between 1903 and 1905 Berdyczewski prepared two anthologies in Hebrew: *Matam* (Mishnah, Talmud, Midrash) and a collection of Hasidic texts titled *Liqutei reshit ha'ḥasidut* (Extracts from the Origin of Hasidism). The latter project was never completed, though parts of it survive in manuscript form in the Berdyczewski archives

in Israel. At that time Berdyczewski had begun to collect and arrange Talmudic texts containing accounts of disputes with idol worshipers, Christians, and sectarians. Only parts of this work survive in manuscript.

Hayyei Moshe: Ish ha'Elohim (The Life of Moses: The Man of God, 1904, published by Emanuel Bin-Gorion in Tel Aviv, 1961) was Berdyczewski's first anthology in the domain of biblical literature, and in it his revolutionary cultural and poetic spirit is already conspicuous. To connect the verse fragments of the biblical texts, Berdyczewski had to delete words or make other kinds of linguistic modifications. As in his contemporary critical approaches to biblical scholarship, he was also struggling to pose new questions about the authorship of the Bible and about the history of Israel in antiquity. In his approach he relied primarily on the traditional commentaries to the Bible and Talmud.

Between 1906 and 1914 Berdyczewski published *Me'otsar ha'aggadah* (From the Treasures of the Aggadah [1914]). This anthology contains 533 legends, divided into two parts: the first, "Minni qedem" (From Antiquity), includes legends and tales of the lives of the ancient Hebrews from the creation of the world to the talmudic age; the second, "Aggadot am" (Folktales), consists of legends and traditions from the lives of Jews scattered throughout the Diaspora from the Middle Ages to modern times.

The other anthology, *Tsfunot ve'aggadot* (Hidden Texts and Aggadot [1924]), which Berdyczewski regarded as his masterpiece, was an expanded edition of *Me'otsar ha'aggadah,* which appeared under a new title and contains 783 legends.

Mimekor Yisrael (From the Fount of Israel [1939]), Berdyczewski's best-known anthology, occupied him for most of his life and was published posthumously by his son Emanuel Bin-Gorion. This anthology contains approximately 1,000 fictional stories as well as folktales from the Bible, Talmud, and Midrash, up until the period of Hasidism. Berdyczewski collected from Jewish sources the aggadic texts verbatim, in their original language, and in the rewritten form in which they appear in *Me'otsar ha'aggadah* and *Tsfunot ve'aggadot.* His work is thus a fusion of the original texts, which bear the seal of folk literature as transmitted from generation to generation, and the personal, subjective creativity of an individual author's voice. He arranged the texts according to their motifs, national, religious, folkloric, and so on, adhering as closely as possible to their chronological order. He aimed to retain their folkloric character precisely because he saw the endeavor as an act of restoration. For this reason, too, he chose to present different versions of the same story, including rejected versions, such as those of the Samaritans, the Karaites, the Shabtiens, and so on, thereby giving scope to a multiplicity of voices—a feature of the tradition that, in his view, characterized Jewish culture throughout the generations.

In his comprehensive introduction to the English-language edition of *Mimekor Yisrael,* folklorist Dan Ben-Amos comments on the "light" involvement of the anthology's author. In his view this does not diminish its importance as a monumental presentation of the evolution of popular Jewish literature and as a founding text for the scholarly study of Jewish folktales and Jewish folklore.

These anthologies represent a merger of two disciplines: folk tradition and literature. Into the fabric of folktales of all generations, Berdyczewski wove his own weft and in this way created "new, yet old" constructions, a narrative that present the idea and the method of his entire *oeuvre.*

Die Sagen der Juden (Legends of the Jews [1913–1927]) consisted of five volumes; three volumes of which were published during Berdyczewski's lifetime, and two volumes after his death. All the volumes contain ancient myths and aggadot, midrashim, fables, tales, and stories, all linked to biblical stories. Berdyczewski collected the material from hundreds of sources, some of which were easily accessible and others highly arcane, from printed books and from manuscripts, and from every layer of Jewish literature, from Talmud and Midrash to Kabbalah and Ḥasidut. In *Die Sagen der Juden,* Berdyczewski kept to his sources and did not alter the text other than to translate it into German.

Der Born Judas (The Spring of Judah [1916–1923]) contains approximately 1,000 fictional tales that were copied and printed over a millennium, from the early Middle Ages to the beginning of modern times. Berdyczewski sought these stories from dozens, if not hundreds, of books and collections, including banned and apocryphal sources, and he gathered, copied, assembled, and arranged the material according to chronological, and thematic, and, at times, poetic criteria. This collection is distinguished by its artistic and scholarly editing: adherence to the version of the sources (in translation), the addition of references for every Aggadah and story, with notes and an index at the collection's end.

Like all his literary works, these anthologies were acts of recovery and restoration, attempts to return the treasures of Aggadah to the Jewish people. But with the German anthologies Berdyczewski wanted to restore to world literature itself the legends of Israel and the Jewish folktale. By compiling a classic collection of these legends and folktales, he wished to place the legends of Israel among the other great collections of folk literature that historians consider the timeless assets of the nations of the world.

Narrative Art

In addition to his work as a collector and editor of Jewish lore and legend, Berdyczewski also wrote dozens of stories and three short and one long novel (*Miriam*), which are considered classics of modern Hebrew literature.

Berdyczewski viewed the novel *Miriam* as his cultural and artistic testament, and he completed it in 1921, just two days before he died. The novel serves a medium for assembling multigenerational knowledge and traditional wisdom as preserved in such ancient literary forms as myths, legends, tales, and proverbs. In the book's poetic or narrative dimension, Berdyczewski was not content simply to transmit information by imitating his sources; rather, he sought to reinscribe the tales in a historical framework (namely, the modern period) and in a specific literary genre (the novel).

In the Aggadah, Berdyczewski found the same principles he observed in the history of the Jewish people, and it is the main component in his concept of the Jewish culture. The world of the legend supplied him with the proof for the folk of Israel's heterogeneity: a Jewish-historical heterogeneity—of sects, trends and outlooks; a Jewish-human heterogeneity—of the plethora of Jewish mental faculties. In his search after the origin of the Jewish individual and national spiritual and instinctive existence, he reached the cultural layers of spiritual, imaginative, emotional, and instinctive heritage.

Zipora Kagan

See also: Anthologies.

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BEREGOVSKI, MOSHE

See: Russia, Jews of

BERNSTEIN, IGNATZ

See: Poland, Jews of

BIALIK, HAIM NACHMAN (1873–1934)

Known as the national poet of Israel, Haim Nachman Bialik contributed substantially to the resurgence of Hebrew literature and the modernization of the Hebrew language in the twentieth century. His poems reflect both the trials and sufferings of his childhood and those of the Jewish Diaspora. The integration of authentic folkloristic elements in his poetry is one of Bialik's cardinal innovations, and he devoted his life to the translation and adaptation of folk songs, folktales, and midrashic legends.

Early Life and Works

He was born January 9, 1873, in a Hasidic environment in Radi, Volhynia, Ukraine, then part of the Russian Empire, among uneducated Ukrainian pitch makers, wood cutters, and wood merchants. In his autobiographical writings, he called his birthplace a village, although historians have identified Radi as a remote suburb of Zhit-

Haim Nachman Bialik. *(Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary)*

omir, a town in which the extended Bialik family owned a spacious house. When Bialik was seven years old, his father, Isaac Joseph, a simple wood merchant, died after an incurable illness. To protect him from poverty and ensure his access to an education, Bialik's mother, Dina Fiva, sent him to live with his paternal grandfather.

There the young talented boy faced the animosity of his kinsmen—uncles, aunts, and cousins who were jealous of his talents and made his life intolerable. He was brought up under the strict Orthodox supervision of his grandfather, Yaakov Moshe, a retired wood merchant, and his step-grandmother, a descendant of the Hasidic *tzaddik* from Vilednik, who used to tell the small child popular legends and Hasidic folktales. One of the poet's later poems, "My Late Mother" (אמי זכרונה לברכה), is often interpreted as a personal poem, based on autobiographical materials. However, its subtitle, "One of the Tales of the Rabbi from Vilednik," might hint at possible Hasidic origins and suggests that much of the poet's so-called autobiographical writing was, in fact, based on impersonal, collective experience.

At the age of sixteen, Bialik succeeded in convincing his reluctant grandfather to allow him to begin a new phase of his life as a student of the Talmud at the Volozhin Yeshiva in Lithuania. In this northern yeshiva,

he was meant to spend six years of laborious studies, after which he was to return home with a rabbinical ordination. But the *mitnagdic* (Orthodox, but opposed to Hasidism) atmosphere at the yeshiva influenced the young poet, who started writing satirical poems about rabbis and *tzaddikim* admired by the Jewish masses. At that point, he was unable to decide which path to take in his incessant search for identity; this state of confusion is reflected in his ambivalence toward the Hasidic ways of life. On the one hand, Bialik's early poems, most of which remain unpublished, include derogatory ones, such as "A Public Fast for the Liberation of the *Tzaddik*" (תענית ציבור לעצירת צדיק) or "The Repenting Sinner" (הבעל תשובה), which oppose Hasidism in the sharpest and most satirical manner. On the other hand, at about this same time, he started writing some long poems on legendary themes, which reveal the first signs of Romanticism, thus reflecting a more favorable attitude toward simplicity.

After only seven months of Talmud studies, Bialik decided to leave the yeshiva and move to Odessa, an important center of Hebrew literature and Zionist activity. At this early stage, still under the influence of the somewhat naive Zionist writings of the Jewish-Russian poet Simon Frug, Bialik wrote long dramatic poems, such as "The Queen of Sheba" (מלכת שבא) and "Jacob and Esau" (יעקב ועשיו), based on Hebrew legends and their German or Russian variations. Neither poem bears any resemblance to the Yiddish-like folk songs written by Bialik in the years 1906–1910, which were defined by the author himself as pseudo folk songs. Nevertheless, many of these early poems, whether published or not, are permeated with a folkloristic spirit and are sometimes interwoven with quotations from authentic Yiddish folk songs. A close reading of these early experiments reveals the young poet's ambition to compose popular and melodious poems intended for public performance, accompanied by music and choreography.

Bialik's first published poem, "To a Bird" (אל הציפור), was printed in *Pardes* (a Zionist periodical edited by Yehoshua Ḥone Ravnitsky under the aegis of Ahad Ha'am) and gained instant admiration in several literary circles. The poem was highly praised for its "simplicity" and "folkloristic" nature. The speaker in this poem is indirectly characterized as a poverty-stricken old simpleton holding many superstitions typical of the provincial and uneducated Hasidim; however, the poem does not ridicule this old man's simplicity and ignorance but, rather, treats his emotional outbursts with empathy and love.

This was the first in two series of "simple" poems, most being dramatic monologues, the speakers of which are *faux-naïf* literary *personae,* reminiscent of stock characters from contemporary Yiddish prose, delivering their words in a pseudo folkloristic style and in a familiar Yiddish-like tone. The speakers in these dramatic monologues—a milkman in "Advise Within

Prayer" (עצה בתפילה); a penniless provincial teacher in "The Hope of the Poor" (תקוות עני); an abducted child who becomes a soldier in the tsarist army and after many years of military service becomes a tailor, in "Jona the Tailor" (יונה החייט); an old bourgeois who derives all his knowledge from the Hebrew newspapers *Hamelitz* (המליץ) and *Hatzphira (*הצפירה), in a newly discovered poem, titled "A Letter" (איגרת), and so on—are all imitating the style and themes of Mendele Moykher Sforim's and Sholem Aleichem's heroes, but this time in Hebrew, not in Yiddish, and in poetic lines, not in prose.

These original poems were censored by Ahad Ha'am, Bialik's sponsor, who owned and supervised most of the Zionist press in Odessa. Ahad Ha'am was a most important and influential figure, and as a Zionist seeking the establishment of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine, he opposed Yiddish and traditional themes from the Diaspora. Due to his severe judgment, which originated in his dislike of the Yiddish language and his incessant support of the Hebrew Renaissance, Ahad Ha'am unwittingly harmed Bialik's early aspirations. Soon after the first Zionist congress (1897, in Basel), Bialik wrote his first short story, "Aryeh the Brawny" (אריה בעל גוף); a year later, he wrote and published his first nursery rhymes and his first Yiddish poems. In many of his "canonical" poems, the reader can discern a radical change: the old speaker, as was typical of Bialik's nineteenth-century poems, was replaced by a young and pure child who opens his eyes in the morning (a symbol of the nation at its dawn). All of these generic and stylistic changes stemmed from the need to address a wide reading public and to win the hearts of as many Jewish communities as possible in their struggle to enhance Ahad Ha'am's likelihood of becoming the head of the growing Zionist movement.

Folkloristic Influences and Elements

In 1901, *Judische Volkslieder in Russland,* a collection of Yiddish folk songs with many local versions, encompassing a wide range of genres and topics, was edited and published by the prominent Jewish Russian ethnographers Saul Ginsburg (Ginzburg) and Pesaḥ Marek. The appearance of this prestigious anthology had an enormous impact on Bialik's career and almost instantly liberated him from the outworn neoclassical rules imposed upon him by the conservative Ahad Ha'am. Consequently, Bialik was encouraged to pursue simplicity and understatement and to discard national pathos. These traditional folk songs, connected and intermingled with reminiscences of the poet's early childhood, filled Bialik with a deep desire to write Hebrew imitations, thus creating a new genre in modern Hebrew literature.

His first folk song, "Betwixt Tigris and Euphrates" (בין נהר פרת ונהר חידקל), soon became the symbol of the

Hebrew renaissance. In a letter to his colleague and friend Alter Druyanow, the compiler of Jewish anecdotes, Bialik wrote joyfully about his satisfaction at the creation of a new genre—the Hebrew folk song—which appeared instantly, without predecessors or precursors. Folk songs are normally the product of generations of tradition, but Bialik created literary "folk songs," pseudo naive in style and in content, in a modern language that had just awakened from generations of dormancy. A set of five folk songs published in *Hashiloach* (1907–1909) was followed by a second set of eight folk songs, published in *Ha'olam* (1910). Most of these poems are delivered by a female speaker whose yearning for a bridegroom drives her to tragicomic utterances, resulting in a tour de force of irony and empathy. Some are delivered by an unlucky husband or a miserable father who succumbs to the yoke of troubles. Due to his prolonged stay in Warsaw (where he served as the literary editor of *Hashiloach*), Bialik had a close relationship with I.L. Peretz, leader of the Warsaw literary circle and himself a great admirer, practitioner, and distributor of folklore. This friendship influenced Bialik's writing to a great extent and, under the influence of Peretz's neo-Hasidic stories, Bialik adapted and enlarged an anecdote "The Short Friday" (יום שישי הקצר), treating the Hasidic rabbi with both love and disdain.

Peretz's influence on Bialik had many manifestations: on the one hand, Bialik's style became "lower" and more quotidian but, on the other hand, it became more fantastic, childlike, and dreamlike, and thus further from realistic everyday experience. Some of Bialik's seemingly simple poems, most of them composed in Warsaw, were also inspired by pseudo naive poems and *lieder* written by the German-Jewish Heinrich Heine, while others are sophisticated adaptations of authentic Yiddish folk songs and nursery rhymes. This folkloristic trend in Bialik's writing can be easily traced in his "canonical" works as well. Simultaneously, Bialik translated some legends by the Brothers Grimm and several tales by the Danish author Hans Christian Andersen from German into Hebrew. Motifs from these legends and folktales permeated his poems and short stories, enriching them with a new spirit, hitherto unknown in modern Hebrew literature.

The turn of the century was also a time of far-reaching cultural programs, planning the future of the Jewish renaissance in Eretz Israel. At this time, Bialik framed his ambitious "Compilation Program" (תכנית הכינוס), a nationwide cultural program aimed at the creation of definitive editions of selected Hebrew texts (out of the innumerable texts written in 2,000 years of Jewish existence in the Diaspora). Within this detailed program, Bialik symptomatically dedicated only a small portion to Hasidism. To his colleague, the folklore compiler Simon Ravidowitch, Bialik described the unedited folklore materials as "a patchwork of worthless rags," unfit for publication. In his opinion, these "raw" materials should be adapted

and rephrased by talented writers before becoming a part of the renewed national tradition. This elitist attitude toward unpolished folklore resulted from his many years of apprenticeship in the Odessa school.

During his three-year stay in Berlin (1921–1924), having escaped the Communist Revolution and nascent Soviet Union along with twenty-one families of Hebrew writers, Bialik became fascinated by German children's literature, in which he found unlimited resources for his adaptations of midrashic legends and tales, titled "Once Upon a Time" (ויהי היום). Some of them are adaptations; others are original multifaceted works of art. These complex works, such as "The Legend of Three and Four" (אגדת שלושה וארבעה) or "A Stalled Ox and a Dinner of Herbs" (שור אבוס וארוחת ירק), "The Baron of Onion and the Baron of Garlic" (אלוף בצלות ואלוף שום), and "The Book of Genesis" (ספר בראשית), all based on ancient Hebrew texts, were also inspired to a great extent by German folktales, but soon became an integral part of the renaissance of Hebrew and Israeli culture. One of the adaptations of "Once Upon a Time," a legend about King David in the cave, was influenced by the German legend about the German king and Roman emperor Frederick I (Barbarossa) and by its modern Hebrew adaptations in poetry and in prose.

Later Life

Upon his immigration to Eretz Israel in 1924, during the Fourth Aliyah (the fourth wave of Jewish immigration from Europe to Israel), Bialik settled in Tel Aviv and founded a new publishing house. In Tel Aviv he republished his key anthology *The Book of Legends* (ספר האגדה), in which he edited old Hebrew legends from the time of the Mishnah and Talmud. He agreed to serve as a teacher of Aggada in the Tel Aviv branch of the Hebrew University (some of his lectures were published posthumously in two volumes) (דברים שבעל-פה). He also edited, together with Alter Druyanow, a periodical devoted to ethnography and folklore, *Reshumot* (רשומות), the first documentation of folklore of the Eastern and Western Jewish communities. Through his publishing house, Bialik also printed a book of children's poems, *Poems and Verses for Children* (שירים ופזמונות לילדים), including nursery rhymes, many of them based on authentic folk songs from the Ginsburg-Marek collection. In his last months, Bialik composed the poem "Of Grandchildren" (על שילשים), which was intended to become a hymn for the city of Tel Aviv and consequently a popular song. However, due to his untimely death on July 4, 1934, following surgery, the poem left only a temporary cultural mark.

Bialik's children's songs are still taught in Israeli kindergartens, despite their Ashkenazi rhythm and their difficult vocabulary. His *Book of Legends* (ספר האגדה) was for many years a textbook used in high schools. Some of his legends from *Once Upon a Time* (ויהי היום) appeared

as theatrical adaptations, and some of his folk songs are still sung in various musical adaptations.

Ziva Shamir

See also: *Reshumot.*

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BIRTH

In Judaism, childbirth is much more than just the physiological means of propagation. In Jewish tradition, God is a partner in conception who oversees the spiritual growth of the embryo in the womb and the safe delivery of the child. The baby boy becomes a member of the Jewish community upon his circumcision, usually on the eighth day after birth, whereas the baby girl is welcomed into the community, if at all, with blessings. The mother's birth experience ends with her postpartum purification (Lev. 12).

Jewish folklore surrounding birth results in part from the religious view of this essential process and in part from the considerable emotion that accompanies the long wait for the newborn's safe arrival. The religious understanding emerges from the rabbinic-moralistic approach to birth as well as from the mystical perspective of this process, both of which have influenced women's behavior in childbirth throughout history. The predominant emotions in childbirth are the natural fear of pain and tragedy and the eventual joy when all goes well. These emotions were especially acute in the face of high mortality rates among both infants and mothers in childbirth before the arrival of modern medicine. Jewish customs helped expectant parents to channel these emotions in religiously acceptable ways.

The Mishnah (*Shabbat* 2:6) states that women die in childbirth on account of their own sins. Rabbis taught that righteous women were excluded from God's decree to Eve, "In pain shall you bear children" (Gen. 3:16). But Jewish traditional women, who were familiar with this verse, believed that the pain of childbirth is
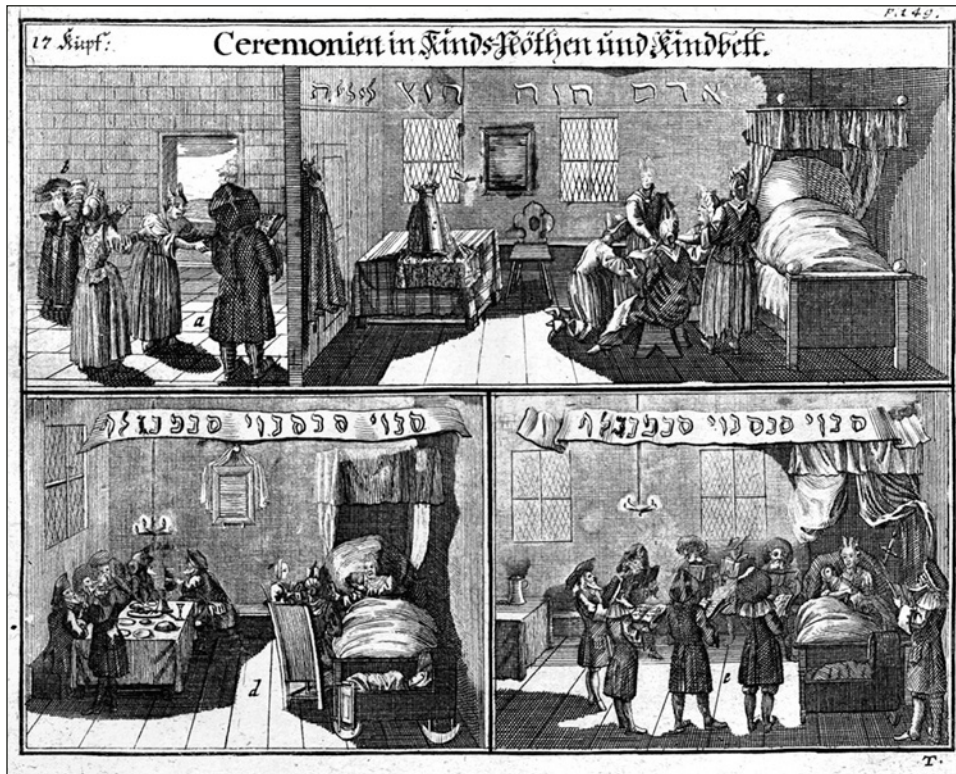
"Ceremonies for Woman in Labor and Confinement," from P.C. Kirchner, *Jüdisches Ceremoniel,* Nuremberg, 1724. The engraving depicts events related to the first week in the life of a new Jewish male baby in early 18th century Germany. *(Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary)*

divine punishment for Eve's sin, which is imposed on all women—even those who may be more righteous than Eve. Prayer remains the usual way to seek divine help and mercy during childbirth, as it is at other times of danger. Yiddish-speaking and Italian Jews have recited special supplications in the vernacular that address all aspects of the anxiety surrounding childbirth. Kabbalists and Hasidim developed techniques to increase the power of prayer, for example, by making use of divine names and angels, reciting specific Hebrew meditations and Aramaic incantations, and repeating certain biblical verses. A worried husband could turn to an intercessor skilled in this powerful prayer for help during his wife's labor. Women soon to give birth have also repented, given money to charity, and lit candles in the hope of easing delivery. The mystical understanding of childbirth stems from the medieval kabbalistic view of the relationship between what happens on earth and what occurs in the divine realm. The Zohar envisaged the *shekhinah,* the female principle in the divine world, as a pregnant hind that gives birth only when the supernal serpent bites open her birth canal. The serpent opens the path for the soul's descent to the human baby in the earthly world, enabling birth simultaneously in the world above and below. The serpent is the source of evil and the cause of pain. Yiddish, Sephardic, and Judeo-Arabic birth incantations have combined the exhortation of Exodus

11:8 ("Depart . . .") for the baby to leave the womb with the zoharic metaphor.

Jews have more commonly imagined the evil force at work during birth in the form of a female demon, usually named Lilith. The ancient myth of a winged female demon that attacks women in childbirth and kills newborns was a popular explanation all over the Jewish world for the frequent tragedies associated with childbirth. The myth offered a way of visualizing danger and taking precautions to protect against this danger. Since late antiquity, Jews employed magical formulas, in incantations and inscribed on amulets, to protect against this demon and related evil spirits. In addition, they shut all openings to the room where the birth was taking place and ensured that kosher *mezuzot* (parchment inscribed with specified Hebrew verses from the Torah) were affixed to the doorposts. A version of the myth was sometimes written out on the amulet as well as the names of certain protective angels. Usually, divine names and other Hebrew inscriptions were added for extra protective power.

Many Jews have used sympathetic magic, imbued with religious meaning, in their efforts to secure divine help and cope with their fear. An object that has absorbed or is otherwise associated with holiness is sometimes brought to a woman giving birth in the hope that its holiness will protect the woman. To give just a few examples, Jews in Georgia and Turkistan used the *parokhet* (the curtain of the ark) to cover the woman's head during birth. Ashkenazi

Jews bit into an *etrog* (citron used in the celebration of Sukkot), associated with Eve's biting the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. Some Moroccan-Jewish women have worn the belt of a holy man during birth or supplicated for help at the tomb of such a saintly rabbi. Many women in Israel today put a book of psalms or other prayers under their pillow for spiritual help when they give birth.

The tales about the female demon who harms Jewish women giving birth were told in many Jewish communities around the world. There are other birth-related motifs in Jewish folktales, however. While the unusual birth story of Moses is remembered at Passover each year, unusual birth stories have been attributed to other Jewish leaders as well, such as to the kabbalist Isaac Luria (Ha'Ari) and the founder of Hasidism, the Ba'al Shem Tov. The tale of a woman who suffers many years of childlessness before she is rewarded with the divine blessing of the birth of a child who grows up to be a great man was a favorite in Jewish communities around the world. Such a woman conceives after her husband performs a good deed or a rabbi has prayed for her or writes her an amulet. Another common motif concerns the midwife who delivers a demon or some other nonhuman form. In Jewish folktales, birth is a miraculous event that brings reward to the righteous or punishment to the wicked and strengthens faith.

When all goes well, birth is celebrated as family and friends visit, bringing gifts and blessings. While Jewish law dictates the ritual of circumcision through which the baby boy enters the community of Israel, the baby girl is publicly welcomed according to local custom, if at all. Often she is blessed in the synagogue on a Shabbat morning or at a party in the home. The Jewish customs during the first week after birth evolved from the combination of fear for mother and baby (who are frail, vulnerable, and still not out of danger) with the desire to celebrate. Clothing worn by the new mother (such as the beautifully embroidered headdress of the Sephardic woman in the Ottoman Empire and the dress of the Yemenite woman) and the decorations in the "lying-in" room often carried artistically embellished amuletic inscriptions, to heighten protection against demonic danger. Customs that answered the need for extra anti-demonic protection on the days and night before the circumcision included special prayers and even (in some communities) a ritual with an iron blade to exorcise harmful demons.

Women visitors during the first week after birth often shared the parents' happiness in song, sometimes accompanied by musical instruments. The women's welcoming songs and lullabies sung in communities around the world in the vernacular differ from the Hebrew liturgical poetry (*piyyutim*) sung by men rejoicing at a circumcision. The Yiddish melodic and lyrical tradition differs from the Judeo-Spanish and Judeo-Arabic; each community had its own traditional birth songs.

Michele Klein

See also: Amulets; Circumcision; Demon; Folk Music and Song; India, Jews of; Lilith.

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BLESSING GOD

In ancient times, blessings, like curses, were considered to have the power of causing something to happen. Yet the Hebrew noun for blessing, *berakhah,* is derived from the verb *b.r.k,* which literally means "a knee"—thus implying falling on one's knees and asking for a blessing from God, rather than blessing others from a more powerful bodily posture. The blessing of God or of the name of God is performed daily by religious Jews. It is a way of acknowledging that all things come from God and that He is the source of all blessings. Yet it is not to be interpreted as if humans actually bless or praise God for having brought about the deeds mentioned in the blessing. Such an interpretation is considered arrogant, for God is perceived as, above all, not needing human blessings. Rather, blessing God should be understood as describing the manifestations of God (the word "blessed"—*barukh*—to be read as an adjective). Thus awareness of God, and gratitude for God's deeds, are shown in relation to every aspect of life (Maimonides, *Mishneh Torah* Berakhot 1:4).

The blessing of God is a part of all formulated prayers, both obligatory (such as the "Shema" and the "Amidah") and occasional, whether performed in congregational worship or said individually, in private prayer. Hence God is blessed—and thus remembered—at all times, because blessings are said before enjoying pleasures (such as partaking of food and drink), before performing religious duties

(most biblical and rabbinic commandments, such as lighting Sabbath candles), and before liturgical thanksgiving or praise (such as the morning benedictions, in which one thanks God for awakening). God is to be blessed not only in everyday activities but also on exceptional occasions, such as upon witnessing an unusual natural phenomenon (e.g., volcano, waterfall, glacier), visiting a place where miracles have been performed in the past, seeing a king, or when rain falls after a drought, and after escaping a danger, as well as on any "new occasion." God is to be blessed not only for the good things that he bestows but also for the bad (*m. Berakhot* 9:5; *b. Berakhot* 54a): even at times of bereavement, one blesses God for being the "Righteous Judge" (*Barukh dayyan emet*).

The blessing of God appears in the Bible, usually using the formulation "I/we will thank Thee, O Lord" (*Odekha adonai; odeh adonai, hodu la-adonai;* e.g. Isa. 12:1; Ps. 9:2; 33:2; 105:1). These benediction formulas are alternately used also in the Dead Sea Scrolls, yet it is the phrasing "Blessed art Thou, O Lord" (*Barukh attah, adonai*), appearing only twice in the Bible (Ps. 119:12; 1 Chr. 29:10), that has become the fixed formulated phrase in prayers. If the blessing opens the prayer, this formula is followed by the epithets "Our God, King of the Universe" (*Eloheinu, melekh ha-olam*), to be followed either by a few words of praise regarding the occasion or by a longer text.

The rabbinical discussion of benedictions, including the formulation of individual blessings, is contained in the Mishnah tractate *Berakhot* and in the Gemara in both Babylonian and Yerushalmi Talmuds. The discussion addresses issues such as regarding the way in which God is to be addressed and described in the blessings (e.g., in the familiar second person or in the exalted third person, in the end resulting in a combination of both). Other blessing formulas are mentioned, and translations of blessings into vernacular languages—such as Aramaic—are permitted, even if they are not accurate (*b. Berakhot* 40b, 54b). The talmudic sage Rabbi Meir (a Tana of the fourth generation) declared that it is the duty of every Jew to recite a hundred benedictions daily (*b. Menahot* 43b), a deed attributed to King David (Num. Rab. 18:21)—and the cause for later compilations of "a hundred daily blessings" such as the "Order of Blessings" (*Seder berakhot*) published in Amsterdam in 1687. Yet, using the fixed benediction formula on occasions such as private spontaneous prayers invented by an individual, as well as saying blessings in vain, were both forbidden (*b. Berakhot* 33a, based on Exod. 20:7). Today, the phrase "Blessed be the Name" (*Barukh haShem*) is used by even nonreligious Jews on innumerable daily occasions, especially to mean "all is well" (thank God) whenever one is asked how one feels.

It should be mentioned that the phrase "to bless God" is also used as a euphemism, actually referring to the cursing of God's name. The wife of Job advises him to "Bless God and die" (Job 2:9), and in the Babylonian Talmud one of the seven Noahide Laws (*Sheva mitzvot bnei Noach*) prohibits blasphemy of God's name, literally forbidding blessing of the divine name (*Birkhat ha'Shem, Sanhedrin* 56a).

Raphael Patai and Ayelet Oettinger

See also: Balaam; Prayer.

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BLOOD LIBEL

The "blood libel" is the false allegation, fabricated by anti-Semites at various times and in various places, and still part of anti-Semitic propaganda, that Jews use Christian blood to make *matzoh* for Passover. This charge, which essentially slanders the Jews for practicing ritual cannibalism, is the darkest point in the relations between Jews and Christians (and between Jews and Muslims). The earliest known blood libel took place in the English town of Norwich in 1144. After a Christian boy named William was found dead, the local Jews were accused of his ritual murder. Since then, similar libels have been propagated in other European countries. In all of them Jews have been alleged to employ human blood in their rituals, especially in their preparations for Passover.

The blood libels lodged against Jews over the centuries are the most prominent examples of the genre of "evil folklore" or "anti-Semitic folklore." They fall into two main categories: the blood accusation and ritual murder. Both feature prominently the motif of sacrificing a human victim and using his or her blood for ritual purposes. These false charges have been repeated, both orally and in writing, from the twelfth century to the present. In most instances they led to the death of innocent Jews, who had been accused of murdering a child and were unable to prove their innocence through both advocacy and legal proceedings. The blood libel lost none of its potency over the centuries, as shown by the fact that in the nineteenth century alone as many cases of attacks on Jews occurred as in all previous centuries since the twelfth combined.

The Scholarly Literature on the Blood Libel

Noting the central Christian ritual of consuming the consecrated wafer that represents the body of Jesus and

drinking the sanctified wine that symbolizes his blood, in 1991 the scholar Alan Dundes proposed that the Christian blood libel is Christians' projection of their own rites onto the Jews. Christians' guilt feelings about the symbolic consumption of the body and blood of Jesus led them to project their ritual onto the Jews.

Similarly, the historian Ora Limor asserted that Christianity, which rested on a narrative of crucifixion-sacrifice-redemption, projected its beliefs onto the Jews, who were required in a paradoxical fashion—by means of the blood libel—to confirm the foundational beliefs of Christianity over and over again. Hence the recurrent allegations of the murder and crucifixion of a Christian boy.

Blood libels generally erupted during Easter week, when the Jews were celebrating Passover or sometimes—depending on the calendar cycle—Purim. According to Cecil Roth, this timing is the key to understanding how the blood libel came to be accepted as truth. There was an old Purim custom of hanging or burning Haman (the wicked protagonist in the Purim story, who intended to kill all the Jews) in effigy—an example of the practice of sympathetic magic, the metaphorical destruction of all the Jews' enemies.

In cities where Jews lived alongside Christians, there was no way to keep the latter from witnessing this Purim custom. It struck bystanders as bizarre and inevitably led to complaints against the Jews. This is corroborated by the fact that in March 1222, Jews were arrested in Stamford, England, because of "a disrespectful spectacle deriding the Christian faith." Christians viewed the Jews' Purim customs as grotesque and were frightened and alarmed by them. It is also plausible that, from a distance, the Haman dolls used in these ceremonies looked like children. From this it was a short leap to imagining a ritual of child sacrifice. This Christian misunderstanding of a Purim custom was one of the factors that produced the conviction that Jews practiced ritual murder.

Christian anti-Jewish propaganda in general and the blood libel in particular were not directed outwardly, as an attempt to persuade the Jews to accept baptism, but inwardly. The Church's resounding failure to convert the Jews rendered their continued existence a theological paradox of the first order. For the Christian world, Judaism became a secret cult operating according to vague and arcane laws and practicing secret and satanic rituals. For the Church, the blood libel served the goal of creating an image of the Jew as demonic and inhuman. In practice, the Church "used" the fears derived from the Jews' presence as a misunderstood minority; this is why it did not combat the blood libel but, on the contrary, externalized the inner fears of Christians and increased hatred against Jews.

Magdalene Schultz maintains that the repeated accusations that Jews murdered Christian children were a product of the rampant neglect of children in the Christian society of the Middle Ages, with its often fatal consequences. Rather than accepting responsibility for this negligence, Christian communities blamed the Jews for ritual murder. A bull by Pope Gregory VIII from the twelfth century, who sought to put an end to the charges that the Jews were responsible for the death of Christian children, noted that it was absolutely certain that the Jews were not guilty of the (frequent) deaths of Christian children.

Stories of Revenge and Deliverance Legends

In the harsh reality of recurrent blood libels, Jewish communities all over Europe developed two folktale types: the first, the "revenge story," includes tales of triumph in the messianic age, when Israel returns to its greatness and contemplates the downfall of the other nations. This type also embraces the dirges and liturgical poetry (*piyyutim*) that express the wish that the redemption include vengeance on the nations doing harm to the Jews.

The second type, the "deliverance legend," draws on actual blood libels. These tales were told in various communities as an inversion of and response to the false narrative. Generally they recount an attempt to condemn a particular Jewish community or individual and relate how divine assistance or their own wisdom saved the Jews from the gentiles' rage. Here the suffering caused by the blood libel is expressed poetically and becomes an instrument to express the collective distress.

Deliverance Legends

Deliverance legends constitute a mixed literary genre, combining characteristics of the historical legend with elements borrowed from sacred legends and sometimes incorporating novelistic elements as well. Deliverance legends are set in a defined time and place; even if the events are distanced somewhat because the time and place are not specified, their social and historical background is clear to listeners or readers: Judeophobia and the attempts to translate this emotion of hate into deeds—murder and destruction—that require a legal grounding in "facts."

Unlike the historical reality of the ruthless consequences of blood libels, in which the anti-Semites' purposes were usually realized—Passover was not celebrated and, in most cases, the Jews suffered torture, death, massacre, or martyrdom—deliverance legends are based on the minority of cases in which the community was saved, usually at the very last moment, only one step before the abyss, and celebrated a happy ending.

The legends of deliverance recounted in the cruel reality of annual blood libels express Jewish society's

veiled hope that the libel will be disproved, the decree repealed, and the Jews delivered by means of a miracle, a supernatural act, or intervention by heavenly powers, whether directly or by means of a righteous man, a divine emissary on earth. The punishment of those who spread the libel, with which these legends conclude, also expresses the narrators' and listeners' hidden longing for justice and fit retribution for wicked deeds.

Other characteristics are borrowed from legends about Jewish saints (*shevaḥim*) or miracle workers, which center on a holy person who becomes an object of veneration, identification, and emulation, reinforcing conventions of holiness and appropriate social behavior. In addition, because the God of Judaism has no physical form, the saint serves as an instrument for religious identification by the members of the community and is in practice a "sacred intercessor." The saint's wisdom and resourcefulness save the community from destruction. Some deliverance legends are marked by strongly novelistic motifs, such as the unforgettable adventures of those accused and the many human dilemmas encountered by the protagonists.

According to Aarne-Thompson folklore classification, legends of deliverance belong to a Jewish oicotype AT 730 (Israel Folktale Archives) "Deliverance of a Jewish community":

> AT*730 D: Blood libel: The murdered child is brought back to life and testifies.
> AT*730 E: Blood libel: "He who keeps Israel will neither sleep nor slumber."
> AT*730 F: Blood libel: A missing child who is thought to have been murdered by the Jews is found alive and well.
> AT*730 G: Blood libel: A dream leads to the discovery of a bottle of blood, which has been placed in the holy ark of the synagogue.

The opening passages of these legends generally specify the time of the action. Generally this is said to be when people are preparing for Passover, although some legends begin "many years ago"; these are generally not realistic and include fantastic elements such as the resurrection of the murdered child by a pious Jewish man so that the child can identify the murderer and clear the Jews of the crime.

Next comes the introduction of the three parties characteristic of this folktale. The triangle found in all these legends consists of the wicked person who makes the false charge, the pious man who defends the Jews, and the authority or tribunal that must render a verdict in the case. The order of appearance of the cast of characters is not uniform, and sometimes one side is introduced before the other.

The identity of the false accuser depends on the location of the storytelling community. A story that takes place in Prague will cast a wicked priest in this role, or, alternatively, a Jewish apostate who cooperates with the priest and levels a false charge against his former coreligionists. A story set in Afghanistan will feature a Muslim child who accuses the Jews of trying to kill him.

The accuser usually alleges that the Jews murdered an innocent child in order to use his blood in their Passover *matzoh*. Sometimes, though, the charge is merely of attempted murder, because the Jews' wicked designs were supposedly frustrated by fictitious witnesses who will be called to testify at the trial.

The figure of the Jewish holy man who saves the community or the accused also depends on the geographic location of the narrating community, for every community incorporates into its tales features of its own saints and righteous men.

The third player is the ruler, whose identity also varies as a function of the setting. He may be a king (whether in an Eastern or a Western country) or a religious authority (e.g., the pope). The non-Jewish police commander is another frequent character whose role is to determine the truth.

Generally this third character appears twice: first, when the libel is made public and the authorities ask the Jews to prove their innocence, and, second, toward the end of the story, when this character sits in judgment and identifies the murderer or the false witness.

In some blood-libel legends the discovery of the truth takes place in a gentile setting, such as the royal court or a court of law. Legends that center on a vial of blood found in the synagogue reach their denouement when the accusers and judges enter the synagogue, that is, a sacred and protected Jewish domain. Such tales are dominated by the Jewish space, the space of the saint or righteous man—the synagogue where he prays, studies, and performs the duties that a human being owes to God. When the gentiles penetrate this sacred space, they are invading territory that is not theirs, injecting the profane world into the sacred space. Because this penetration cannot be pardoned, the Jews triumph and the gentiles decamp swiftly after their error has been exposed.

These legends have a happy ending, in which the accuser's lies are exposed and the Jews are able to celebrate Passover joyously or return to their prayers (if the story is set on the day before the fast of the Ninth of Av).

The Functions of Deliverance Legends

Folklorists distinguish several key functions that deliverance legends perform for the storytelling society: lionizing a key Jewish figure, entrenching the belief that every Jew has the power to deliver the community, and reinforcing traditional Jewish values. The libel against the community is rebutted by the wisdom and piety of

the local rabbi or community leader. The Jewish hero saves the community after a dream that warns of the impending libel or as a result of the righteous man's extraordinary resolve. The righteous man is a savior who stands up against the enemies of Israel.

A key Jewish figure, a supernatural character who appears in many legends, is the prophet Elijah. His eminence, magical powers, and glory are prominent in these legends and impress not only the Jewish community but also the gentiles, who are astounded by his power. This reinforces the prophet's prestige and standing in the storytelling society. In addition, Elijah is linked with the approaching holiday of Passover, for the miracle that he effects, which staves off the pogrom and saves the Jewish community, makes it possible for them to celebrate Passover.

Legends of deliverance teach their audience that not only saints but, in fact, any Jew with sufficient devotion and determination can save the community from destruction.

Deliverance legends attempt to cope with two recurrent problems of Jewish society in the Diaspora. In many deliverance legends, it is a Jewish apostate who libels the community. He provides Jewish society with a way to deal with the problem of apostates who metamorphose into vicious anti-Semites and intimate the fate that these people, whose apostasy has stripped them of all moral scruples, can expect.

These legends also try to cope with the abandonment of traditional Judaism. In some of them, the gentiles point an accusing figure at Jews who have turned their backs on tradition. The fact that Jews who have discarded religious observance are the targets of the blood libel is supposed to teach the community that it must remain united and traditional and that no good can come from forsaking tradition. Rather than creating a sense of security, it in fact increases vulnerability; gentile society is suspicious of such persons and does not accept them.

The hallmark of the deliverance legend is that it deals with the blood libel and the reality of the perpetual threat to the Jews' lives while soothing the Jews and preserving their humane values. Despite the bitter relations with the outside world, the legend encourages ethical behavior within the Jewish community, including charity and concern for others. It harnesses external events to its own needs while dealing with them and trying to imbue the Jewish storytelling society with moral values.

The ethical nature of the legends is manifested by the way in which they are the antithesis of the sweeping indictment leveled by Christians and Muslims. Whenever the blood libel surfaces, the gentiles condemn all Jews; but the Jews blame only the specific accuser for the libel against them. If, in fact, no one is guilty, they do not demand that the ruler punish the "messenger," that is, the person sent to spread the libel by some outside agent.

The gentiles' judicial ritual that displays narrow-mindedness, evil, and the impression of a rigged game is contrasted with the wisdom of the rabbis and community leaders, by whose merits the Jews ultimately obtain justice, despite the bias of the tribunal.

Some of these legends fashion a chain through time that links Passover—which reminds Jews of their past—with the present, that is, the communities that suffer because of the false accusations against them, and also with hopes for the future: redemption in the form of a new and strong Jewish state, in which Jews will no longer feel persecuted and will no longer live on the margins of society.

Shai Rudin

See also: Passover.

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BRIDE PRICE

According to the Bible, in the patriarchal age it was the custom among the peoples of Mesopotamia and Canaan for the father or representative of the groom to pay a purchase price, or "bride price" (from the Hebrew word *mohar*), to the father of a maiden, or to the person who had jurisdiction over her, so that he would give her away to be wed. The sum paid reflected her value as a useful member of the family, because after marriage the bride would usually dwell with her husband in his father's house; hence, his family would gain the help that her family would lose. The bride price asked for by the father, and agreed upon by the parties, was determined—as in any trade—by the quality of the goods. Virgins could command a higher price, and custom seems to have fixed their bride price at a definite sum (Exod. 22:15). An adulteress was bought for only "fifteen pieces of silver and a homer of barley and a half-homer of barley" (Hosea 3:2).

If the groom did not have sufficient means, he would "work off" the bride price, as determined by the bride's father. For example, Jacob had to serve Laban for seven years for each of his two daughters (Gen. 29:18–20). A father could also stipulate marrying off his daughter as a reward for performing some extraordinary feat. King Saul, for example, let David know that for his daughter Michal he wanted no bride price but "a hundred foreskins of the Philistines," his enemies (1 Sam. 18:25). Similarly, Caleb declared that he would give his daughter Achsah to whoever "shall smite Kirjath-sepher and capture it" (Judg. 1:12–13).

The bride price was usually accompanied by precious gifts (*mattan*) given by the groom to the bride herself, as can be deduced from the story of Eliezer, the servant of Abraham, who gave garments and ornaments of gold and silver to Rebekah when he betrothed her for his master's son (Gen. 24:22, 50–53). Hamor, the Hivvite the prince of the land of Canaan, offered to pay Jacob as much "bride price and gift" as Jacob wanted, if only he would give his daughter Dinah to his son, Shechem (Gen. 34:1–12). The Bible does not specify what was to be done with the bride price if the marriage agreement was broken by either of the two parties.

In postbiblical times the bride price custom gradually disappeared as a result of difficult economic conditions in the land of Israel. While in biblical times everyone married young, by the second century B.C.E. men preferred to postpone marriage, especially because one could no longer afford to be married and to study at the same time. By the talmudic era, bachelorship became common. Under these circumstances, there was no place for the old bride price institution. Fathers no longer expected any material gain from their daughters' marriages. On the contrary, they often gave rich dowries to daughters as an inducement to marriageable men. (In biblical times it was not unusual for a bride to bring certain property with her to her husband's home upon marriage [cf. Gen. 24:59–61, 29; Judg. 1:14ff.; 1 Kgs. 9:16], but this was optional.) In the talmudic era the custom became established for the father of the bride to provide his daughter with a dowry of at least 50 zuzim, which was the equivalent of the price of 180 grams of silver (*m. Ketubbot* 6:5), but a father of means would give considerably more.

In the first century B.C.E., Simeon ben Shatach, head of the Pharisees, declared that the bride price should be superseded by a marriage contract (*ketubbah*), in which the groom merely wrote the sum to be paid to his wife in case he divorced her or at his death. In general, this amount was 200 zuzim if the bride was a virgin at the time of marriage and 100 zuzim if she was a widow or a divorced woman. This reform not only facilitated marriage but also made divorce more difficult, thus protecting women from being arbitrarily divorced by their husbands.

In addition, historians learned from marriage contracts found in the Cairo Jewish archives that the custom of paying a bride price was still maintained in the Middle Ages by Jews living in the Middle East. Sometimes it is clear that this was carried out merely as a custom, because the sum paid to the family of the bride was less than the sum given to the groom as dowry. Yet in some Jewish communities in Muslim countries, the custom of the bride price was not accepted. The bride price was paid mainly as gifts, given not only to the bride but also to her relatives, or it was in the form of a nominal payment. If the bride's father could afford it, he gave the bride price to his daughter (e.g., for buying household items), rather than using it for himself. Today, the custom of paying a bride price, in its various forms, has disappeared from Jewish society.

Raphael Patai and Ayelet Oettinger

See also: Marriage.

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BRITH-MILAH

See: Circumcision and Birth Ceremony for Girls

BRONNER, SIMON J. (1954–)

Simon J. Bronner is a folklorist who has helped shape the field of Jewish cultural studies emerging in the early twenty-first century and contributed studies on Jewish ritual, material culture, and narrative. He has contributed generally to folklore studies and American studies, especially in the areas of psychological, ethnographic, and historical approaches and "practice" theory.

Born in Haifa, Israel, on April 7, 1954, Bronner was raised in the United States by Yiddish-speaking parents from Poland who had survived the Holocaust. His background led him to study ethnic identity and the structural and psychological implications of Jewish expressiveness within a mass society. In 1981, he received his Ph.D. in folklore from Indiana University. Among his first published works was a 1982 structural study of writer-humorist Leo Rosten's use of traditional Jewish strategies in his popular literature. Bronner's primary fieldwork in Jewish folklore was with groups of Holocaust survivors in the United States and resulted in a series of articles exploring the uses of memory and narrative performance by contemporary Yiddish-speaking conversation groups (*vinkln*) and historic hometown associations (*landsmanshaften*). These included examinations of legends told about the old country in new surroundings.

Bronner taught Jewish cultural topics at Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg, with which he began an association in 1981, and was the lead scholar in the campus's Holocaust and Jewish Studies Center. He also taught at Harvard University, the University of California at Davis, Osaka University in Japan, and Leiden University in the Netherlands. During the 1990s, he conducted fieldwork in the folk arts of the ultra-Orthodox communities of Detroit for the Michigan State University Museum. He continued this material culture perspective with studies of the sukkah (a shelter made of branches and leaves that is used especially for meals during the Jewish harvest festival Sukkot) as a symbol for piety among and between contemporary Orthodox and non-Orthodox communities. In the area of Jewish ritual, his psychological interpretations of the rise of the bar mitzvah in the United States as arising out of father-son conflicts and the postmodern functions of "invented traditions," such as the *simchat bat* (baby-naming ceremonies for girls), drew scholarly attention. In these various ethnographic and historical projects, Bronner's interpretations were distinguished by the social psychological questions that they raised about the rationale for Jewish expressiveness, especially on the part of individuals identifying as Jews who had suffered culture loss and were in the process of evaluating their relation to both Jewish and non-Jewish communities.

Organizationally, Bronner led the Jewish Folklore and Ethnology section of the American Folklore Society, an association of scholars who study and communicate knowledge about folklore throughout the world, and was appointed associate editor of its journal, the *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Review,* from 1996 until it ceased publication in 2002. In this capacity, he advocated for the maintenance of Jewish studies within American folklore and at the same time sought to internationalize this endeavor, making connections between Israeli, American, and European folklorists through publications and conferences, such as one on "Modern Jewish Culture" in Wrocław, Poland, in 2008. Also in 2008, Bronner launched the Jewish Cultural Studies Series of books for the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, based in Oxford, United Kingdom, joining folklore to the interdisciplinary movement to create an intellectual space for the Jewish subject in cultural studies. In the inaugural volume, titled *Jewishness: Expression, Identity, and Representation* (2008), he differentiated studies of Jewish culture from interpretive Jewish cultural studies by noting the latter's emphasis on representational theory: how Jews view and differentiate themselves among other Jews as well as the way they distinguish and align their cultural profiles to non-Jewish others. As editor of the series, Bronner followed the first volume with others on the themes of Jewish domestic traditions and adaptations of Jewish ritual in modern times.

Matthew F. Singer

See also: United States, Jews of.

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BROTHER-SISTER MARRIAGE

Marriage between brother and sister was the practice among the royalty and the higher nobility in several countries of the ancient Middle East, as it gave a classic solution to the problem of keeping property within the family. Biblical legislation lists marriage with a sister among marriages that are incestuous (גִּלּוּי עֲרָיוֹת —*gillui arayot*) and are punishable by premature death caused by God (*karet*). The biblical lawgiver specifies that the term "sister" includes also half-sister, whether from father or mother, whether born of a legal marriage or out of wedlock (Lev. 18:9, 11; Deut. 27:22). Rabbinical literature extends the law also to doubtful

cases, forbidding marrying even a stepsister, because of emotional closeness (*b. Sotah*, 43b). Incest is one of the three cardinal offenses (together with murder and idolatry) that a man may not commit even in order to save himself, or others, from certain death (*b. Sanhedrin* 74a; *t. Shabbat* 15:17). The closest family relationship legally permitted for marriage was between cousins or uncle (principally the mother's brother) and niece.

The rules against incest—including brother-sister marriage—appear in the Bible with the warning that Israelites must not imitate the practices of the Egyptians and the Canaanites (Lev. 18:3). Yet marriage between half-brother and half-sister is reported in biblical stories as occurring among the founding fathers of the nation and without any condemnation: Abimelech, king of Gerar, took Sarah, the wife of Abraham, to be his wife, believing her to be Abraham's sister. After being warned by God in a dream not to touch her, "because she was a man's wife," Abimelech reproached Abraham for lying. Abraham answered, "She is indeed my sister, the daughter of my father but not the daughter of my mother, and so she became my wife" (Gen. 20:12). A second biblical story portraying the custom of sibling marriage as a natural thing in Mesopotamian society occurs much later, at the time of King David. When Amnon, son of King David, fell violently in love with his half-sister Tamar and was about to rape her, she pleaded with him, "Nay, my brother, do not force me . . . do not do this wanton deed. . . . I pray thee, speak unto the king, for he will not withhold me from thee" (2 Sam. 13:13), thus testifying it was not a taboo.

The gap between the deeds of the Jewish ancestors and the strict biblical prohibitions on the subject has been explained in postbiblical and talmudic literature by the claim that in ancient times, everyone was subject only to the Noahide law of incest, which was far less comprehensive than that of the Torah (*b. Sanhedrin* 58a–b). According to Nehorai, before being given the Torah on Mount Sinai, the Israelites preferred to marry their sisters, therefore they grieved and wept "with their families" when Moses told them that they must abandon this practice (*Sifre beha'alotkha,* 32, on Num. 11:10). From a different point of view, researchers interpret the biblical laws as a way to tackle the ethical and legal problems that lawgivers encountered in their reading of the tales. It may also be an attempt to imply that Sinaitic laws dated from the patriarchs (a tendentious implication helpful to postexilic leaders, when trying to impose laws that may have been from their age).

Another issue in brother-sister marriage regards the question of how humanity propagated after the birth of Cain and Abel. According to rabbinic lore, both Cain and Abel had twin sisters born with them, and Abel's twin sister became Cain's wife. According to another version, each of the sons of Adam was destined to marry his own twin

sister, and Abel's twin sister was exceedingly beautiful so that Cain desired her, and this jealousy led to Abel's murder (*Sifra* Kedoshim 10:11; Jub. 4:9–11). The Book of Jubilees (33:14–16) explains that not only did Cain's marriage to his sister precede the laws against incest but also that Cain had no choice but to marry her, in order to beget sons. Only starting with the fourth generation of humankind (Book of Jubilees 4:15, 16, 20, 27, 28), or even the second generation (Josephus Flavius, *Ant.* 2:5), is it claimed that men could marry their cousins instead of their sisters.

Other references to brother-sister marriage in post-biblical and rabbinic literature are incidental. One story is that of the son and daughter of Ishmael ben Elisha, the high priest, who were captured after the destruction of the Second Temple by two different Roman masters. The masters decided to marry the two exceptionally beautiful slaves, so that they could share in the proceeds of the children born of this union. The two young captives were put together in a room at night, but instead of coupling, each sat in a different corner, wept, and prayed. At daybreak, the brother and sister recognized each other, embraced, and cried until their souls left their bodies, and they died (*b. Gittin* 58a). The proximity between brothers and sisters was used to express great affection, surpassed only by the love of parents for their children (Songs Rab. 3:25). In the apocryphal literature, husbands who are very fond of their wives call them "my sister" (Add. Esth. 4.9, Tob. 5:21, 7:15, 8:4), and a mother-in-law calls her son-in-law "my brother" (*Tobit* 10.12), a terminology that can also be interpreted as an unconscious desire for the law of incest to be nullified.

In the Kabbalah literature, the concept of brother-sister marriage developed symbolically. In the realm of divinity, brother-sister marriage is an established state of relationship between the *sefirot*, the ten spheres of divine manifestation. Two of those *sefirot* are *Ḥokhmah* (Wisdom), also called *Abba* (Father), and *Binah* (Understanding) also called *Imma* (Mother). They unite, and Mother conceives and gives birth to *Tiferet* (Beauty), also called *Ze'ir anpin* (Small Face). Then Mother becomes pregnant again and conceives *Malkhut* (Kingdom) also called *Nukva diz'er* (Female of the Small Face). The Son and the Daughter *Ze'ir anpin* and *Nukva* (body and mind) unite and become groom and bride, as written in the Song of Songs *Aḥoti kalah* "my sister, [my] bride" (4:9, 10, 12; 5:1). They become the supreme model for all human beings. Thus, although marriage of brother and sister is not allowed in the Torah, it is possible in the realm of the above, through divine marriage. According to this explanation, Abraham and Sarah could be married despite being siblings, because of their holiness.

Raphael Patai and Ayelet Oettinger

See also: Abraham.

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BUBER, MARTIN

See: Anthologies; Germany, Jews of

BULGARIA, JEWS OF

The earliest evidence of Jewish life in Bulgaria dates back to the first century C.E. and indicates that the predominant gentile cultural influence was Greek. After the Iberian expulsions of the fifteenth century, Sephardic language and culture rapidly became dominant in the Balkan Peninsula, overtaking and eventually eclipsing the earlier Greek (Romaniote) influences. Until Bulgarian independence from Ottoman domination in 1908, there was little to differentiate the Jews in Bulgaria from the larger Sephardic population of southeastern Europe. It was only with the dominance of modern nationalism among the competing ideologies of nineteenth-century Europe and then Bulgarian independence that the concept of the Jews in Bulgaria as a distinct community was realized.

Language

The Jews of Bulgaria have been linguistically bombarded over the past century. They emerged from the five

centuries of Ottoman rule speaking Ladino at home and in their neighborhoods. For trade and official business they spoke Turkish, Bulgarian, and often Greek. Hebrew was taught only to boys, and this only sporadically and primarily for religious purposes.

The emergence of Bulgarian nationalism and independence reestablished the preeminence of the Bulgarian language in the country. Dormant for five centuries, Bulgarian was designated as the official language of the emerging nation. Soon, all but the eldest Jews had mastered the language, and, for many, it replaced Ladino as the first language at home. Ladino became the language of the working class and rapidly fell into disuse. By the time of the mass immigration of the Jews in Bulgaria to Israel after World War II, only the oldest and poorest Jews spoke it as their first language.

The establishment of francophone schools in Bulgaria by the Alliance Israélite Universelle, an international Jewish organization founded in Paris in 1860 to protect the human rights of Jews worldwide, at the end of the nineteenth century introduced French as the language of learning and culture for the Jews for a brief period. With the rise of Zionism as the dominant Jewish ideology, which supported the reestablishment of a homeland for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel, the ouster of the Alliance, and establishment of community-controlled and -administered schools that taught in Bulgarian and Hebrew, French soon disappeared from the Jewish neighborhoods. By 1920, its widespread instruction virtually ceased.

There was no equivalent in Bulgaria of the non-Zionist Jewish nationalist movements that existed in Eastern Europe during this period. There was no movement to champion Ladino as the Jewish Labor Bund, a Jewish socialist party active in Poland and Russia, championed Yiddish. Jewish nationalism in Bulgaria manifested itself in the Zionist movement, with Hebrew as its most potent cultural symbol.

Hebrew was taught to all Jewish schoolchildren, and several societies were founded to encourage its development, but these attempts to establish it as the first language of the Jews of Bulgaria were not successful. Nevertheless, Hebrew served as an important rallying point throughout the mid-twentieth century and, though not widely spoken, was a focus of pride and identification. The rudiments of Hebrew gained in the Jewish schools of Bulgaria served the immigrants well after their arrival in Israel.

Bulgarian was the first language of the immigrant generation, but after the immigrants arrived in Israel it was largely abandoned and replaced with Hebrew. The adoption of Hebrew was viewed as an ideological imperative by most immigrants, and linguistic competence became a source of pride and a symbol of successful assimilation. Many immigrants whose Hebrew was less

than fluent were embarrassed at what they felt was a significant deficit in their "absorption" into Israeli society. They often explained that in the early years they were so busy working to feed their families that they had no time for formal Hebrew training; many noted that hard times had interrupted their education.

What occurred, then, was a rapid linguistic shift from Ladino to Bulgarian to Hebrew. Most immigrants to Israel had some competence in all three languages. The least-assimilated of the immigrants, the last generation to live in the original Bulgarian enclave of Jaffa, sometimes spoke a mixed ethnolect of Ladino, Turkish, Bulgarian, and Hebrew.

The first Israeli-born generation usually knew little if any Bulgarian, and the third generation knew none at all. This was viewed as natural and proper, and no attempt was made to encourage the use or learning of the language, either by the immigrants themselves or their children. There are no Bulgarian ethnic schools or courses in Bulgarian language or culture in Israel. The Bulgarian library in Jaffa, once a vibrant center of cultural life, by the late twentieth century catered exclusively to older immigrants who were unable to learn to read Hebrew.

The rapid decline of the Bulgarian language was evidenced in the fate of the newspaper *Far* (Lighthouse). Once a daily, by the 1980s it appeared twice a week, the standard joke among readers being that one would read the obituaries to see if one was still alive. Nevertheless, the Bulgarian language can still function as a vehicle for ethnic interaction, even among the younger immigrants. With new immigration and contact with the few thousand Jews remaining in Bulgaria after the fall of communism in that country in 1989, the Bulgarian language has enjoyed a temporary usefulness and reprieve.

Holidays and Celebrations

To Israelis of both Bulgarian and non-Bulgarian origin, the Jews from Bulgaria were well known for their secularism, and the notion of a religious Bulgarian was considered a contradiction. Jaffa's only Bulgarian rabbi was infamous for riding his motor scooter to watch the Bulgarian team, Maccabi Jaffa, play on the Sabbath, when neither travel nor sport is permitted by Jewish law.

Although worship in synagogues involved a minority of the Jewish population in Bulgaria, this secularization did not diminish the observance of Jewish holidays and festivals in the home. Indeed, of all the affectual cultural realms, the holidays elicit the warmest memories and continue to be the main focus of Bulgarian communal life in Israel.

The fact that the secularization of Jewish life in Bulgaria did not affect the celebration of religiously based holidays may be explained in three ways. First, as is the

case with most religions, Jewish festivals are cultural as well as religious events. Passover, for example, is celebrated by many secular Jews as a festival of freedom, marking the liberation of the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt, omitting the hand of God in the execution of the affair. Because Bulgarian Jewry was a cultural as well as religious minority, both religious and secular Jews could continue to celebrate. The few purely religious holidays, such as Rosh Ha'Shana and Yom Kippur, suffered as a result of secularization. In Israel, they are observed by few Jews of Bulgarian origin.

Second, the adoption of Zionist ideology did not preclude the celebration of Jewish festivals. Although largely secular, the Zionist movement adapted much Jewish symbolism to its cause, though Jewish history was seen in terms of secular rather than spiritual forces. Furthermore, as the Jewish holidays are linked to the seasonal cycle in Israel, their meaning to Zionists is all the more potent. Thus, the celebration of Jewish holidays is sanctioned under the aegis of Zionist ideology, and they are national holidays in Israel as well. Finally, most of the holidays are celebrated in the home and are focus of family solidarity and community. They are accompanied by feasting, singing, and conversation, with songs sung in both Bulgarian and Hebrew.

In addition to the Jewish holidays, most Jewish communities in Bulgaria celebrated a purely Zionist holiday, Yom Ha'shekel (Shekel Day). Yom Ha'shekel was originally intended as a day to raise money for the Jewish National Fund—a nonprofit organization founded in 1901 to buy and develop land in Palestine (later Israel), including the planting of trees—but it developed into much more. It became a nationalistic celebration of Jewish solidarity, which faced as much outward, toward the Bulgarian majority, as inward. Most cities and towns with a sizable Jewish population held marches down the main streets, which included youth groups, scouts, bands, school groups, war veterans, and the community leadership. As was common in Bulgaria, all the youth and school groups would wear their distinctive uniforms and carry flags and banners. This public display of militant Jewish solidarity was unrivaled and unimaginable anywhere else in Europe during the first half of the nineteenth century. Of course, Yom Ha'shekel was irrelevant in Israel, and after immigration one of the most overt symbols of community pride and solidarity for the Jews of Bulgaria was lost. It passed without much regret, however, as the fulfillment of its own ideology, *mizug galuyot* (assimilation of the exiles).

Bulgarian Christian and national holidays were considered little more than days off from work or school. In Israel, September 9, the day the Soviet Red Army entered Bulgaria in 1944, was celebrated by a few old communists with a lecture or poetry reading in the Bulgarian library in Jaffa. Until recently, Purim was celebrated in the Bulgar-

ian clubs in Jaffa, usually with an Israeli band that knew some Bulgarian tunes. Fewer people went to synagogue in Israel than had gone in Bulgaria, and holidays were celebrated at home with family and friends in a way little different from the way in which most secular Israelis celebrate. Holidays are a time when Bulgarian-Jewish culinary skills are on display, and it is in this realm that the culture of the Jews of Bulgaria manifests itself with the greatest persistence.

Foodways

The kitchen is the primary arena in Israel for the expression of Bulgarian-Jewish culture. It boasts a unique cuisine, a blending of Bulgarian, Turkish, and Spanish cooking, modified to comply with Jewish dietary law. It seems that the palates of the immigrants have been resistant to change. The similarities in the produce available in Israel and Bulgaria have made the retention of Sephardic cuisine relatively easy. Even after Bulgarian is no longer spoken in the home, when few physical vestiges of the old country remain, and contacts with other Bulgarians have become rare, Sephardic dishes still appear on the table. Sephardic cooking has even become a symbol of Bulgarian ethnicity. Sammy Burekas is a fast-food chain serving Bulgarian specialties, and just as third- and fourth-generation American Jews will make Sunday pilgrimages to the few remaining kosher restaurants on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, so Bulgarian and non-Bulgarian Israelis make occasional pilgrimages to Jaffa to sample the food in the Bulgarian restaurants.

Performing Arts

The absence of unique Bulgarian-Jewish folkloric forms of expression in other genres holds for the performing arts as well. In this area it is especially important to differentiate ethnic folklore from the folklore of ethnicity.

Even among the most Israeli of Bulgarian immigrants, phrases of Bulgarian will be spoken, songs occasionally sung or hummed, and stories from a common childhood told. The folklore of ethnicity retains some active expression. The Tsadikov Choir, founded in Bulgaria, was reestablished in Jaffa. Today its repertoire is largely Israeli, although a few Bulgarian songs are still included. Even these are sung mostly in Hebrew. Like the players on the Maccabi Jaffa soccer club, once a symbol of Bulgarianness in Israel, most of the members of the choir are not of Bulgarian origin.

The most active locus of Bulgarian expression exists in the least-assimilated group, the older generation in Jaffa. Men still gather daily at coffeehouses to converse, drink coffee, tea, or Arak, and play cards, dominoes, and backgammon. They also get together in the local clubs on

holidays to celebrate. With each passing year, however, their ranks thin, and as they thin, the last identifiable representatives of a lore that self-consciously withered passes as well.

Guy H. Haskell

See also: Languages, Jewish; Spain, Jews of.

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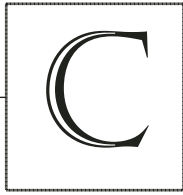
CAHAN, Y.L. (1881–1937)

Y.L. Cahan occupies an honored place in Jewish folkloristics as one of the most important scholars of East European Yiddish folklore, particularly Yiddish folk songs.

Born in Vilna (now Vilnius, Lithuania) in 1881, he moved to Warsaw at the age of eight. There he began collecting and documenting folk songs under the inspiration of poet and author I.L. Peretz. In 1901, Cahan emigrated to London, where he lived for three years. In 1904 he moved to New York City, making his home there until his death in 1937. Like most Jewish folklorists from Eastern Europe of the time, Cahan was self-taught. By profession he was a watchmaker, but he devoted the majority of his time to collecting and studying folklore. In parallel to his collection efforts, he devoted time and energy to studying the theory of folklore, examining key issues such as the sources of Jewish folklore, the relationship between Jewish folklore and international folklore, the relationship between oral and written composition, and evaluating the authenticity of folklore collections.

One can learn about his approach to the collection of folklore from his treatment of the issue in his various articles, the majority of which were published in Yiddish. His method examined both the relationship between collector and informant and the relationship between collector and material. With regard to the first relationship, Cahan spoke of the need to cultivate a close bond with informants before the transcription process and insisted on the appropriate interaction in the transcription situation, including a precise, word-by-word transcription and the fullest possible documentation. With regard to the relationship between collector and material, Cahan believed that collectors must specialize in a particular genre that suits them. He was cognizant of the importance of the cultural context and held that collectors must study the nature of the tradition that they intend to record. Cahan's position about the ideal collector-scholar is highlighted in his demand that collectors develop the ability to distinguish between what he called "authentic" and "inauthentic" folklore.

Cahan's key concern was to define the genre of the folk song. Here his prime criterion was age, that is, the length of time that the song circulated among the people; but he also stressed the importance of melody, for he maintained that only the combination of words and melody together expresses the people's soul. Cahan distinguished between authentic folk songs and songs sung in the style of folk songs, which he considered

Y.L. Cahan. (From *Shtudies Vegn Yiddisher Folksshafung, 1952*)

popular music. He accepted the philological comparative approach regarding the universality of folk songs—that they are not specific to a particular culture, even though the culture endows its songs with its own special nature. Cahan challenged the view of Yiddish literary critics who held that the word "love" was not part of the Yiddish lexicon until the middle of the nineteenth century, demonstrating that the Jewish masses sang love songs in Yiddish as early as the sixteenth century.

Cahan kept close ties with the Ethnographic Committee of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in Vilna, Poland, although his methodology was generally regarded among scholars as more selective and critical than the institute's. The Ethnographic Committee accepted him as an authority in the discipline, maintained ongoing contacts with him, and sent him the materials they collected, asking for his opinion. Cahan was also invited to be the first lecturer at a course for YIVO collectors in Vilna in 1930.

Because of the massive scale of his activities as a collector and the breadth and depth of his scholarship, Cahan's work inspires Jewish folklore scholars to this day.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Poland, Jews of.

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CAIN AND ABEL

The narrative concerning Cain and Abel, the first two sons of Adam and Eve (Gen. 4), comes immediately after the depiction of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden and their exile. The story provides a link between the sins of the parents and the continuing moral degradation of later generations, as depicted in the story of the generation of Noah, who is a descendant of a third son, Seth.

While the exposition briefly describes the birth of each son and their occupations (Cain, the first-born, is a tiller of the soil while Abel is a shepherd), the main part of the narrative focuses on the story of Abel's murder by Cain, seemingly motivated by God's acceptance of Abel's offering of "the firstlings of his flock" and not that of Cain's offering "from the fruit of the earth." Scholars have suggested that underlying this narrative is a tale concerning the traditional conflict between the agricultural and nomadic ways of life known also in Sumerian mythology, but there are no indications of the significance of such a theme in the present context.

Instead, the narrative concentrates on the emotional and ethical stances of the sinner and his relationship to his deed, through the deft use of dialogue between God and Cain: Cain experiences disappointment, jealousy, anger, denial of responsibility, contriteness, and fear of punishment, while God entreats, warns, rebukes, punishes, and pardons. The language is rich and evocative, especially in the divine speech, and uses imagery containing folkloristic elements: Sin is described as a "coucher" or lurker at the door, indicative of the lurking "demon" (*Akkadian rabisum*), whose urge is strong but not irresistible; Abel's blood "cries out" to God from the earth, which has "opened its mouth" to take the brother's blood but is subsequently rendered infertile for Cain; Cain's sin is a "burden." The punishment of Cain is to be a wanderer, but in answer to Cain's fear of retribution, God places a "sign" on Cain to ward off potential avengers, with the warning that any attempt to kill Cain will itself be avenged "sevenfold." Cain ultimately does settle ("leaving the presence" of God, as he himself is aware), in the figuratively named land of Nod (lit. "wandering"), situated east of Eden. These elements, however, are subordinated to the ethical and religious themes of the narrative: the complex relationship of worship to piety, the nature of human free will, the horror of homicide (the sevenfold

repetition of the word "brother" points out the centrality of the fraternal relationship, contrasting with Cain's initial response, "Am I my brother's keeper?"), the assumption of an a priori moral law, and the divine importance and social consequence of humankind's deeds.

Later readings of the story, found in the apocryphal literature, in authors Philo and Josephus, and especially in the midrashic collections, expand upon issues arising from the questions occasioned by the many gaps and ellipses in the biblical narrative: What caused God to accept the one sacrifice and not the other? What did Cain say to Abel immediately before the murder (verse 8), and how is this connected to the murder itself? How did Cain kill Abel, and what happened to the body afterward? Why did Cain not receive capital punishment for his crime, and who did he fear would kill him during his wanderings? What was the essence of the "sign" affixed to him by God, and what was its purpose?

Most of the later expansions may be connected in one way or another to the language of the text: Thus the use of the Hebrew verb "*yada*" (to know, to have experience of) in the first verse depicting Eve's first pregnancy is interpreted by one tradition to imply that Adam merely "knew" that Eve was pregnant but that the carnal intimacy was actually with the serpent, the true father of Cain. Additional words in the text suggest that twin sisters were born with them. God's preference for Abel's offering is explained by the pointedly superior quality of that offering ("the firstlings of his flock and of their choicest parts") to that of Cain (expressed simply as "the fruit of the earth"). The glaring textual gap in verse 8, in which Cain's speech to Abel before the murder is omitted, is filled in variously: The brothers' quarrel concerned either a division of property, or the proper place for the building of the future temple, or a woman.

According to another view, their argument concerned theodicy: Cain complains of the apparent arbitrariness of divine justice, while Abel upholds the consistency of God's responses to human deeds. The fact that the murder took place "in the field" suggested that Cain killed Abel with a stone (other suggestions are by a cane, a sword or a stick, or by strangulation); but the unusual locution "the bloods of Abel" (verse 10) suggests that Cain stoned his brother repeatedly, not knowing exactly on what part of his body he might inflict the mortal blow, until he struck his neck. Abel's soul did not rest until his body could be buried; the custom of burial was learned by Adam and Eve from viewing a bird bury its mate. Cain's fear of retribution is linked to the desire of the entire animal kingdom to avenge Abel's death, but God did not allow Cain to be killed, because no life had been taken previously and Cain could thus not have realized the finality of death. The enigmatic "sign" with which Cain is marked is explained variously as an omen of nature (sunrise), a

dog (for protection), a horn (for defense, or as a mark of shame), or leprosy. Later tradition translates the Hebrew word "*ot*" as "letter," thus explaining the sign as a letter (of the alphabet, or a letter from God's name) inscribed on Cain's face or arm, intimating the magical power of the word, especially of the divine name.

Cain's death is not mentioned in the biblical account. Some early sources suggest that he died in the flood; others say that he died in an act of divine righteous retribution when the stones of his house fell in on him (Cain having killed Abel with a stone). But the "sevenfold" revenge of verse 15 is linked in later sources to another mention of the "sevenfold revenge of Cain" by his great-grandson Lamech (the seventh generation of man), whose enigmatic boast of "killing a man" in verses 23–24 gave rise to the medieval story of the blind Lamech's inadvertent slaying of Cain, who, due to his horn (the sign), was mistaken for an animal. This tale was retold numerous times throughout the medieval period in both Jewish and Christian circles and became the subject of works of literature, drama, art, and biblical illustrations.

Thus the motifs originating in interpretation of the biblical text form the basis for later tales and continue to develop, appearing as well in the Christian and Islamic traditions. Indeed, folklorists have suggested that the biblical tale of Cain and Abel, as it developed and was enlarged upon, influenced the growth of folktales such as those of the tale-type "Two Brothers" (Aarne-Thompson no. 303).

Paul Mandel

See also: Adam; Brother-Sister Marriage; Eve.

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CANADA, JEWS OF

The folklore of Canadian Jews is rich and multifaceted. By reviewing the unique history and migration patterns of Canadian Jews, one can begin to understand what makes Jewish folklore in Canada different from Jewish folklore in other countries, particularly the United States. The later immigration patterns of Jews to Canada contribute to the understanding that there is a narrow gap between the immigrant generation and contemporary Canadian Jews. Through this lens, immigration narratives, early occupational folklife, and foodways are understood in their unique contexts. These historical circumstances contribute to the building blocks for understanding Jewish folklore in Canada.

History

Although Jewish migration to the New World began as early as the seventeenth century, these first settlers (mostly of German and Sephardic descent) are not representative of the larger waves of East European immigration that followed approximately two centuries later, which came to typify the majority of North American Jewish populations. These periods set a dramatic shift in the makeup of Jews in both the United States and Canada. While the 1880s to the 1920s represent peak times of growth for both countries, Jewish migration to the United States swelled from about 1880 to 1900, whereas in Canada, the majority of East European Jews arrived between 1900 and 1920.

In 1924, when the United States placed restrictions on immigration, Jews fleeing political and religious persecution in Europe continued to arrive in Canada, although this became increasingly difficult, as Canada had begun to tighten its immigration policies as well. The 1930s and 1940s represent the bleakest period of immigration because of economic and racist policies in both countries. In the years after the conclusion of World War II, however, Holocaust survivors sought refuge in both the United States and Canada. Statistics reveal that while the actual number of Holocaust survivors was greater in the United States, the proportion of survivors who arrived in Canada, compared to the pre-existing Canadian-Jewish population, exceeds that in the United States. Survivors comprised only 3 percent of the American but 16 percent of the Canadian-Jewish population. In Canada, other notable waves of immigration that followed include tens of thousands of French-speaking Moroccan Sephardic Jews who settled in Montreal from the late 1950s through the 1990s; approximately 6,000 Hungarian Jews who fled Hungary after the failed 1956 revolution; tens of thousands of Soviet Jews who began arriving in the 1970s; and thousands of Israelis, who continue to immigrate mostly to the urban centers of Montreal and Toronto.

The gap between the early migration patterns in both countries is the puzzle piece that reveals how the texture of contemporary Jewish life in Canada differs from that of Jewish life in the United States; that is, contemporary Canadian Jews are one step closer to the immigrant generation. In the United States, connections to *Yiddishkeit* (the "Jewish way of life," as translated from the Yiddish of Ashkenazi Jews), traditional Eastern European Jewish food, and affiliations to Jewish social, political, and cultural organizations are rooted in the past and for the most part exist through revival and memory culture. Conversely, in Canada, because the bulk of East European Jews arrived later, many traditions and customary ways of life are learned from immigrant family members and continue to be practiced today. The majority of Canadian Jews born to the generation that is known as "Generation X"—born in the mid- to late 1960s and 1970s—have had at least one set of immigrant grandparents from whom they are likely to have heard Yiddish spoken first-hand. This experience is far less common for American Jews of the same generation—in their case, it would have been their great or great-great grandparents who first came to America.

Another key difference to consider regarding the two groups is the distinctive geography of each of these countries. Canada's vast terrain is not nearly as populated as the United States, and there are fewer large cities. Consequently, Jewish populations are smaller, estimated to be 350,000 in Canada, compared with approximately 5.6 million in the United States today.

The largest concentrations of Canadian urban Jews can be found in Toronto and Montreal, whereas in the United States there are dozens of cities that are notable for their Jewish populations. The small number of urban centers in Canada adds one more layer to the story of Canadian Jewry. By contrast, there are countless small-town Jewish communities scattered throughout the country (for examples of specific communities, see Kahn 1988 and Medjuck 1986; for a comprehensive overview of Jewish life across Canada from 1738 to 1990, see also Abella 1990). Many of these towns share similar histories, beginning with an influx of Jewish immigrants during the 1920s and 1930s. Although the communities were small, Jewish newcomers—like their urban counterparts—established synagogues, Jewish schools, fraternal organi-

Sukkah Ushpizin Plaque, inviting the guests from above. By M.M. Spitzer, Montreal, Canada, 1947. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

zations, and cemeteries and burial societies. While it was common for Jews in small communities to set up their own businesses—for example, groceries, dry goods stores, tailor and clothing shops—many Jewish immigrants also established themselves in the "junk" trade, which included car parts and scrap metal. Immigration and personal-experience narratives have added significantly to family folklore, as well as to the cultural landscape of these small towns (see Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1974 for further study of the role of narrative in Eastern European Jewish culture).

Early Urban Jewish Occupational Folklife

Work life differed greatly in the small towns compared to the urban centers, where the majority of immigrants toiled in the textile and fur factories that were the back-bone of Toronto and Montreal. While small community enterprises often become local landmarks and remained family businesses for several generations, the Jewish labor movement was a one-generation phenomenon. Today, although the urban Jewish population continues to rise, the once-bustling small Jewish communities have experienced a rapid decline in recent years. Synagogues are closing, young people are moving to the urban centers, even the handful of remaining original residents, now elderly and unable to live independently, are once again leaving their homes to begin a new chapter in their lives. Many follow their adult children to nearby cities. Sometimes they move in with and are cared for by their families; more commonly, however, they move to Jewish-run assisted-living facilities, retirement, and old-age homes.

Despite the large-scale commonalities and differences between Canadian and American Jews, Jews are an ethno-specific group. At the same time, they are by no

means homogeneous. They come from diverse countries and regions, hold various political, cultural, and religious beliefs, and speak myriad languages.

Shmatte Business

In the urban centers of Toronto, Montreal, and Winnipeg, work in the garment trade—known in the Yiddish vernacular as the *shmatte* business—thrived at the peak of immigration. To work in the factories was more than a job, as many immigrant workers brought with them the ideas and ideals that laid the foundation of the Jewish labor movement in Canada. As unions formed, affiliated fraternal organizations and mutual benefit societies (*landsmannschaften*) were established as well, along with organized cultural and political activities. Different unions represented various ideological viewpoints: socialist, communist, Zionist, and non-Zionist. Because many workers were secular Jews, the unions and affiliated organizations offered community and support for recent immigrants, as did synagogues and religious schools for more religiously observant Jews. In Toronto, many factories were located along Spadina Avenue. Consequently, the Spadina streetscape thrived with Yiddish theaters, bookstores, delis, dairies, and fraternal organizations. These eateries, venues, and shops were frequented mainly by factory workers and were important gathering spaces for many Jewish immigrants. At the heart of Spadina Jewish life and labor activity was the Labour Lyceum—a co-op of several unions, formed in 1913—the central meeting spot for various union members, as well as the site of dances, social functions, and lectures. As longtime Toronto resident Mayer Kirshenblatt recalled, the Labour Lyceum "was in the heart of the Jewish immigrant neighborhood in Toronto. All the unions for the needle trades and furriers had their offices there" (Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2007: 133).

Of course, Jews were not only factory workers; in many cases, they were the factory owners, foremen, and bosses as well. Because ideologies varied dramatically, conflict was not uncommon. In his memoir *A Life on the Jewish Left,* Morris Biderman recounts how his father and his fellow workers organized and formed a union. They worked for M. Granatstein and Sons in Toronto. Their boss, Mendel Granatstein, known as Reb Mendel, had started out as a rag peddler with a pushcart. After Granatstein established his own business, rag peddlers would bring their wares to his shop and dump them "on long tables, where they would be sorted, baled and taken to the mills for reprocessing into cloth" (Biderman 2000: 18). Biderman's father was a "sorter." Morris recalls having to deliver something to his father at work one day: "At first I couldn't see any people at all. The haze created by the dirt rising from the rags and clothes on the long tables

could be compared to a haze in a steam room" (ibid.). The men worked long hours and received pitiful wages. Most were religious and, although the work was grueling, they were grateful to have a Jewish boss who allowed them to take off the Sabbath so that they could attend synagogue services. But they had to make up for it by coming in on Saturday nights. Finally they decided to organize a union, and after confrontations with Reb Mendel and making a case to the arbitration board, the men eventually won their case: No longer did they have to work on Saturday nights, they were able to work fewer hours during the week, and they also received small raises.

Opposing Political Views

The well-known saying "two Jews, three opinions" holds true even within groups of left-wing factory workers. Opposing political beliefs between union members sometimes caused entire unions to fall apart, as was the case for the fur workers in Toronto in the 1930s. Rifts also were apparent in political organizations. For example, the Workmen's Circle/Arbeter Ring, which was founded in the United States in 1900, was affiliated with various unions, offered sickness and death benefits, and had (and continues to have) branches in cities in the United States and Canada. Canadian members subscribed to their newspaper, the *Forward,* and sent their children to Workmen's Circle Yiddish language and history classes (*shules*) and summer camps. Even within the Workmen's Circle, however, there were political divisions, mostly concerning opposing attitudes toward the Russian Revolution and communism. This created a split within the organization, and thus, newly created communist fraternal and cultural organizations were established in both the United States and Canada.

In 1926 in Toronto, a local organization, the Labour League, was formed. Later it would become a national organization, the ongoing United Jewish People's Order (UJPO), a socialist-oriented, secular cultural and educational organization with chapters in Winnipeg, Calgary, and Vancouver. Morris Biderman, who led the expansion and creation of the UJPO, recalls the early days of the Labour League:

> [It] provided all the benefits that the old *Landsmannschaften* provided except the synagogue. In addition, the Labour League provided sick benefits of eight dollars a week for 15 weeks, and death and funeral benefits. It bought a parcel of land on Dawes Road for a cemetery. It had a credit union which was very popular. Members preferred to take out loans or deposit their savings at the credit union rather than a bank—as depositors they received their share of any profit the credit union made at the end of each year, and most importantly, the banks were strange and cold

institutions and immigrants preferred not to deal with them. (Biderman 2000: 50)

In this way, these organizations provided benefits to Jewish immigrants, allowed them to conduct their business in Yiddish, and enabled them to establish their own communal structures within what was often a hostile environment toward Jews. The UJPO continues to attract membership in contemporary Toronto. Its community secular Passover Seder and secular High Holiday services draw members and nonmembers with progressive ideals to celebrate Jewish holidays outside the traditional synagogue setting. Like the Workmen's Circle/Arbiter Ring, the UJPO also has a *shule* and a summer camp (see Reiter 2004 for further information about gender roles in the UJPO and Camp Naivelt).

Canadian Jewish Foodways

Because the majority of contemporary Jews live in either Montreal or Toronto, a handful of food items are both Jewish and unique to the Canadian cities where they originated. These foodways represent public and regional treats. Toronto blueberry buns and Montreal bagels reveal the historic and contemporary presence of Ashkenazi Jews in each of these cities. Other directions for foodways research might include traditional Jewish meal preparations at home, Sephardic foodways, and the impact of more recent Jewish immigrants on the Jewish foodways of their communities.

Blueberry Buns

In Toronto, blueberry buns (Yidd., *shtritzlach*) are a popular Jewish bakery treat, although aficionados would be hard-pressed to find them in other Canadian cities. Blueberry buns were once prepared at home, however this is no longer a common practice. A blueberry bun is made from sweet yeast dough that is filled with fresh cooked blueberries. A baker of these buns rolls out the dough, covers it with blueberries, folds the dough over, and twists the corner ends to keep the blueberries from spilling out. Before they are put in the oven, the tops may be brushed with egg white and sprinkled with large sugar crystals. Ready to eat, they are oval-shaped, about six inches long, and three inches wide. The blueberries are completely contained in the dough; the food item they most resemble is a pocket pizza, which is equally messy to eat.

Blueberry buns were first sold commercially at the original Health Bread Bakery in 1928. The shop later expanded to include several popular locations throughout Toronto. The original owner of the shop was Annie Kaplansky. One of her sons, Morris Ben, known as "Kip," quit school at the age of fourteen to help run the bakery.

At the time, Jewish bakers in Toronto made bread and buns only, but Annie soon realized that her bakery could be different from the others. Along with bread and buns, the Health Bread Bakery also began to sell cakes and pastries, including blueberry buns. No one is certain of the origins of blueberry buns, but it is thought that Annie brought the recipe with her when she immigrated from Rakow, a small town in Poland. Although the Health Bread Bakery was the first to serve blueberry buns outside the home, many other Jewish bakeries across Toronto followed its lead. Some bakeries pride themselves on selling blueberry buns only as a seasonal treat, in order to reassure customers that the blueberries are indeed fresh, not frozen. Other bakeries carry them year-round. For some older Jewish Torontonians, blueberry buns bring back memories of times when they would bring them to their cottages on summer weekends or had them as a special treat in childhood. Ann Moran, who worked at a Toronto bakery, recalled: "People would line up like four deep to take them to the cottages, and we also had a driver who would go to the two locations [in "Cottage country"] that needed them. . . . [He] would go twice a week—he had standing orders. He had bread and blueberry buns" (Gould 2003).

Bagels

Montreal bagels are unlike any others: They are slightly sweet and chewy, boiled in honey water, and baked in a wood-fired oven. They have a distinctive shape as well: The rolled dough is quite narrow, and the hole is larger than that in most other bagels. Traditionally they are sprinkled with sesame seeds. There was a time when Montreal bagels were available only in their namesake city. After visits home, Montreal ex-patriots would bring home bags of their beloved bagels to freeze and enjoy over time. In the early 1990s, perhaps due to the relatively large influx of Montreal Jews to Toronto, several "Montreal-style" bagel bakeries opened in various parts of the capital city. Montrealers, however, considered them "inauthentic" and not as tasty as the originals. In recent years, one of the best-known bagel bakeries in Montreal, St. Viateur, began shipping its bagels to shops in several Canadian locations, from Ontario to Newfoundland. Montreal bagels freeze remarkably well and are said to be at their best after being thawed and toasted.

Most Montreal bagel bakeries also sell cheese bagels, which despite their name, are not actually bagels. Like a danish, cheese bagels have a slightly flaky dough, are shaped like a horseshoe, and are filled with sweet cheese filling, not unlike the filling of a dense cheese blintz. Unlike blintzes, however, cheese bagels are enjoyed at room temperature and may be picked up and eaten by hand. They can also be warmed and served on a plate

with a dollop of sour cream. Like blueberry buns, cheese bagels are virtually unknown outside their native city; and although they may be found at the Montreal-style bagel bakeries in Toronto, they are often overlooked by those who have never tasted them, especially because the name, cheese bagel, implies something very different from what it actually is.

Conclusion

Existing scholarship about Jewish folklore and ethnography in Canada is relatively untapped, with the majority of studies focusing on urban, Ashkenazi experiences. For information on Canadian small Jewish communities, see Kahn (1987), and Medjuck (1986 and 2000). For work on Sephardic experiences and traditions in Canada, see Cohen (1988) and Train (2006). Jewish folklife in Canada is as diverse as its population, and deeply embedded in the context. By highlighting several folklore genres, including narrative, early occupational folklife, and foodways, we have seen but a glimpse of Canada's heterogeneous and fluid identity. Jews in Canada are multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-denominational. While it is difficult to separate the various elements that represent Jewish Canadian folklife, we might consider how other genres would open up new doors into academic inquiry, for example: folksong and music (see Lam 2009, and Posen 1975), creative ritual and rites of passage, material culture, and memory (see Kirshenblatt and Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2007), and family folklore. Each would present new avenues with a variety of stories and histories. And yet, each genre needs to be examined within a specific context. As such, while there is no one story of Jewish folklife in Canada, various genres and contexts reveal certain aspects of what it means to maintain and perform Canadian Jewish cultural identities.

Jillian Gould

See also: United States, Jews of.

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CEMETERY

The Jewish cemetery is known by many different names, such as *Beit ha'ḥaim* (The House of the Living), *Beit olam* (The House of the World), and *Beit almin* (The House of Eternity). According to Jewish tradition,

death is but one of the phases in the human life cycle, and the dead continue to lead a social life and maintain social relationships after their physical death. As more than simply a burial place, the cemetery and what goes on there necessarily reflect the beliefs and values of the Jewish community. All funeral and burial arrangements are thus social practices governed by Jewish moral codes that instruct individuals on how to depart this world in accordance with how they lived and died within the context of a given community.

Burial

A traditional Jewish burial takes place in a communal framework and the deceased may be interred only in a cemetery belonging to the community, in the presence of ten adult Jewish males (a minyan), as a minimum requirement. Moreover, participation in the funeral, even if only from a distance of about six feet, is considered morally binding upon the members of the community. This is true even if meeting the obligation demands taking time off from studying the Torah, according to the Babylonian Talmud ("Anyone who does not come and attend [the funeral] might just as well have spilt

blood" (*Sotah* 46:2). The burial ceremony is organized by a *ḥevra kadisha* (burial society), which is run by community volunteers. Their work is considered an act of true kindness because they do not expect to receive any material reward for their efforts; consequently they have a special honorable status within the community.

As the funeral draws to a close, the officiating individual at the burial service releases the deceased from all commitments to others that might have taken on during his or her lifetime. Then, on behalf of the community, the officiator proceeds to beg the deceased's forgiveness for any unintentional disrespect toward him that may have occurred during the burial preparations. In many communities, care is taken to separate men and women during the funeral, especially on the way back from the burial service. Judaism requires burial at a dedicated site. The tradition was that the deceased is buried at the location where he or she lived, providing there is a cemetery there; only when no suitable cemetery exists there can the deceased be transferred for burial in another city. Burial at a location other than the place where the deceased lived is regarded as an insult to the dead who are buried in that same cemetery where the funeral should have taken place: "The dead lie there enraged because this was a

One of the largest Jewish cemeteries in the world, situated on the slopes of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. Hundreds of thousands of Jews are buried in this hallowed spot. *(AP Photos)*

disgrace to them" (*Sefer ḥasidim* 1992: 26). The remains of the dead may not be exhumed for reburial at another Jewish cemetery unless respect for the dead demands such an action, the only exceptions being the explicit request made in advance by the deceased to transfer his or her remains elsewhere or to transfer them for burial in the Land of Israel.

Arrangement and Behavior

The cemetery is fenced off, and adjoining it is house for the cemetery attendant, which contains a room for the purification of the dead. A serious demeanor is required at the cemetery; eating and drinking are forbidden, lest these actions show disrespect for the dead. Animals are not allowed to graze on cemetery grounds and neither is the gathering of herbs considered proper. But fruit growing on trees in the cemetery may be eaten, as long as the trees have not been planted directly on the graves. Different cemeteries exist for people belonging to different religious groups within Judaism, as well as for people from different Diaspora communities. In addition, burial customs and rules of behavior in the cemeteries vary among different ethnic groups, and some even partake of the traditional mourners' meal following the burial while still on the grounds of the cemetery. The general rule in such cases is that the traditions of the forefathers must be upheld as though the Torah itself commanded them.

The cemetery should be located at a minimum distance of about 75 feet from the city (*Bava Batra* 25a). The deceased is buried in a single grave, and the distance between the graves should be six spans (or *tefaḥs,* about four-and-a-half feet) according to the ancient mandate: "The dead should not be buried one alongside the other unless a partition separated them" (Ganzfried 1989, 482:3). However, when the Black Death devastated Europe during the Middle Ages and the death rate grew exponentially, the burial of more than one individual in the same grave was sanctioned. This easing of the strict rules was accompanied by clear guidelines and on condition that the burials took place simultaneously—the dead man or woman could be buried with his or her son or daughter or with the son or daughter of the son or daughter.

The deceased must be laid to rest as soon as possible, except on Shabbat or Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), when no burials may take place. All the burial procedures are carried out by Jews, and non-Jews may perform the task only in certain circumstances, such as burials that take place on Jewish holidays. In Jewish tradition coffins are not normally used when burying Jews because the corpse must remain in direct contact with the soil in order to abide by the biblical tenet: "For you are dust, and to dust you shall surely return" (Gen. 3:19). However, despite this tradition, a simple coffin made of

wood is sometimes used for burials. In these cases, earth is spread at the bottom of the coffin, in which holes have been made to allow contact between the corpse and the dust of the earth. In the Diaspora, if the mourners happen to have a handful of earth from the Land of Israel, then they scatter this earth over the bottom of the coffin, on the deceased's body, usually in the area where he was circumcised (if the deceased was a man) or in other cases on the eyes and mouth. After the funeral ceremony is over, the mourners traditionally remove their shoes or put sand in them, and before reaching their home they wash their hands and in some traditions their faces and eyes as well, to purify them. Members of the priestly class (Heb., *cohanim*) are not permitted to approach the dead or the cemetery lest the impurity associated with death defile them.

The precise location of each grave is not incidental. A special plot is previously set aside for the community's leaders, an area is designated for the priestly class, and a separate area is allocated to those considered sinners because they were heretics, apostates, and agnostics. A man is not buried between two women or, conversely, a woman between two men. In some cemeteries, men and women are allocated separate rows or even two different burial plots. A special plot is reserved for women who died in childbirth, while another separate area is reserved for children's graves, and yet another plot for infants who died at birth or were stillborn. Any individual who had turned his or her back on the community or who had been excommunicated from the community was buried apart, that is, moved outside the fenced area (Eisenstein 1917, 43). Individuals who took their own lives or who were regarded throughout their lives as evil are assumed to have been possessed by an evil spirit or to have been driven mad by suffering; they are therefore buried on the outskirts of the cemetery.

Because the Jewish cemetery is a kind of microcosm, reflecting the community's values and social hierarchy, the deceased's perceived status after death must be consistent with that individual's status within the community while alive.

Visiting Graves

The dead are believed to have special powers and influence and community members therefore turn to them in prayer or bury notes beside their graves entreating them to plead for mercy on behalf of the living (*Ta'anit* 16a), as they can influence God to be merciful. This custom is very common beside the graves and tabernacles of the righteous (*tzaddik*). In times of distress, when plague, pogroms, or other calamities threatened, the members of the community used to organize and pay for weddings at the cemetery between a couple of invalids or orphans, in the belief that the wedding canopy erected in

the cemetery would put an end to the plague and dispel the danger. To organize a wedding for such a couple was viewed as an act of charity, and according to the Jewish belief charity can prevent death.

The concept of the resurrection of the dead is associated with the cemetery, as indicated in the "Vision of the Dry Bones" recounted in the Book of Ezekiel, in prophecies relating to the End of Days, and in the main principles of Jewish faith as outlined by the medieval Torah scholar and Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides. Consequently, the dead are purified and dressed in shrouds made of white linen cloth that have neither fringes nor ties, as an indication that the resurrection of the dead is involved. At the end of the funeral service, the mourners exit by a different route than the one by which they had arrived, in an effort to mislead the demons who are lying in ambush for them. As they go, the mourners pull up clumps of plants and then toss them behind their backs, acts that hint at the resurrection of the dead and the renewed growth of the departed. This belief in the resurrection of the dead also leads to the idea of ensuring that the body remains intact, and therefore visitors place a stone on the deceased's grave, as a reminder of an ancient custom whereby a heap of stones was erected on the grave to prevent the jackals and hyenas from tearing off parts of the dead body, thus damaging its integrity.

Because death is but one phase in the human life cycle, in Jewish tradition the dead continue to lead a social life and maintain social relationships after their physical death. Therefore, one should not bury "The evil person beside the righteous individual, or even a person who was moderately righteous and honest beside an exalted devout person" (Ha'ḥasid 1992). In addition, "two people who hated each other all their lives should not be buried beside one another, lest in death too they will not find rest together" (Ganzfried 1989, 482:6). These beliefs extend beyond the individual. During the period when fierce arguments raged between the Ḥasidim and their bitter opponents, the *mitnagdim,* for example, special separate plots were set aside in cemeteries for the Ḥasidim and the *mitnagdim.*

Spirits and Demons

The cemetery serves as a meeting place for the spirits of the dead (*Berakhot* 18). A single grave should not be allowed to remain by itself in the cemetery because, according to folk belief, such a grave attracts demonic forces, namely the *hizoni'im* (lit., "outsiders"—a type of demon) and the *klipot* (lit., "peels"—another type of demon), which accompany the Angel of Death and try to grab hold of the deceased's body (Berechiah 1858, 12). Thus, the lone grave in a cemetery must be guarded until another grave is added, so that spirits and demons

will not abuse the dead. In cases in which there is an open grave awaiting a burial, it should not be left uncovered because the demons can summon a dead person after his burial there and consequently such a grave must be filled with earth.

During the Holocaust, the sanctity of Jewish burials and cemeteries was violated, as the burial process of individuals and the use of mass graves were carried out without regard for the basic rules and relevant Jewish traditions. Cemeteries became an area where people were concentrated and executed as well as a hiding place for the Jewish, and a location for personal encounters and bartering and trade because of their isolation.

Rivka Parciack

See also: Death; Demon; Tombstones.

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CHARMS, BOOKS OF

Books of charms or charm and remedy books (*sifrei segullot urefu'ot*) are literary texts written and distributed at different times and in numerous places throughout the world. They contain varied advice pertaining to issues of physical health, spiritual fortification, and protection of the home and the individual. As such, these books take the form of prescriptions grouped alphabetically according to the different problems that a person might encounter in the course of a lifetime or according to the human being's body parts and organs. They also provide instructions for what should be done in one or another particular case. Within these prescriptions lies a multifaceted world of thought and action, combining Jewish religious belief in punitive and rewarding supernatural forces with the knowledge of nature's substances

and of the ways in which these substances are controlled and used as means of maintaining a sound life.

These books are eclectic works spanning different eras and areas. Today, as in earlier times, they constitute a dynamic literary genre, evolving in accordance with the needs and experiences of each generation. Most printed charm books are known to scholars from their places of origin in eighteenth-century Europe, from which scholars believe they spread.

Hebrew-language charm books share their structure and characteristics with charm and remedy books produced by other cultures and in other languages. Their Jewish sources are apparent in the historical materials that they use, as well as in the contents of the charms themselves. Books of this kind, both printed and handwritten, can be widely found in most Jewish communities, written in their respective languages combined with Hebrew words and verses. Their compilation of material rooted in Jewish thought and literature, as well as their accumulation of knowledge providing solutions to everyday problems, may be how these books found their way to private and public bookshelves, where they occupy a respected place alongside the Bible, the Talmud, and the Zohar.

Charm books are bought today as gifts for sick friends, new mothers, and family gatherings, and by people not familiar with the Jewish tradition.

Titles, Authors, and Place and Time of Origin

Books of charms are anonymous in authorship. Their titles refer to the names of angels (*Refael ha'malakh*) (Refael the Angel), to archaic or lost books mentioned in the holy scriptures (*Toldot Adam*), to parts of phrases written in the Bible (*Mifalot Elokim*), or to the problem they deal with (*Sefer zekhira; Mar'eh ha'yeladim*). In some rare cases the name of the book carries a clue as to the identity of the person responsible for gathering the material (*Amtaḥat Binyamin*).

Modern scholars believe that it was primarily scholars who conceived of and wrote the first aforementioned published charm books in Hebrew, as seen in the work of *ba'alei-shem* (Masters of the Name), one generation before the appearance of the Jewish mystical rabbi Ba'al Shem Tov in the eighteenth century. According to the texts on the covers and within the books themselves, they are a collection of and gleanings from different print sources, manuscripts, or oral traditions, among them also the writings and deeds of the well-known errant *ba'alei shem.*

The origins of the first published books were in Germany (Zoltsbach, Hamburg, Berlin, and Wilhelmsdorf) during the first two decades of the eighteenth century. Their later editions indicate a move eastward (to the Lemberg [Lviv]-Zholkov areas) and to the north (Grodno [Hrodna]–Nowy Dwór). Beginning in the middle of the nineteenth century, they appear to have centered in larger cities such as Lemberg, Warsaw, and Vilna (Vilnius), and from there moved to the south, toward the Hungarian-Romanian border. The routes of migration coincide with those of the development of print of eighteenth-century rural Hebrew books in Europe and with the migration of Jewish community clusters within the continent.

The chronology of the books' editions indicates that most were published in the second half of the nineteenth century. The large number of editions is related to the proliferation of printing houses and the growing competition among them. Charm books were published by some of the biggest printing houses of that time and bore endorsements by well-known figures. Renewed editions were produced by the joint effort of the printing houses and the publishers, with the support of the wealthy, influential, and enterprising people in the community.

A comparison of various editions of charm books against the original texts indicates that few changes were made in later editions. When changes were made, they involved mainly the addition of passages taken from various sources or the omission of material that had been added by an earlier editor, such as endorsements, prefaces, and conclusions. These changes occurred both because the charm book is an eclectic work intended to offer practical advice to those in need and because its uses in the hands of expert healers and their needy public vary.

Literary Form, Structure, and Sources of the Books

The books draw on eclectic works from different sources. All refer in some way to the general maintenance of good health and to the avoidance of harm—such as theft, highway robbery, fire, plague, and disease—as well as to the curing of specific illnesses and the eradication of their causes, among them someone's having cast an evil eye, witchcraft, and nocturnal emission. These and other subjects in the books are in no particular order or degree of elaboration. Some of the books are noteworthy for the way that they associate good health and the chance for complete recovery with the observance of Judaism's commandments (mitzvot) and moral precepts.

The charm books generally contain short units presented as medical prescriptions. Each prescription's structure is symmetrical, opening with a statement of a problem and concluding with a schematically phrased solution. The body of each prescription refers to various remedies—whether from nature or verses—and details the methods of their preparation and use.

The main types of the prescription-charm (*segullah*) containing verbal elaboration are, according to their definition in the books: incantation, amulet, prayer,

oath, and exemplum. Although the distinctions between them are not always clear, prominent among these prescriptions are texts familiar from oral and written narrative tradition and folk custom prevalent in the Jewish world.

Aside from their use of Bible verses and of quotations from the Talmud, the Midrash, the *Hekhalot*, and *Merkava* literature, some of the books contain passages taken from other literary works, which are indicated by name or attributed to certain figures. These sources include a collection of Hebrew works from Lurianic Kabbalah and from the literature of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century Ḥasidei Ashkenaz (loosely translated, the "Pious Ones of Germany"), a Jewish group of in Germany led by Rabbi Judah the Pious, as well as a number of works in Yiddish or German and medical essays, some influenced by medieval neo-Platonic philosophy and some presented in the name of contemporary physicians.

Among the quoted texts are stories of miraculous rescue, taken from ancient literary works and attested to by the authors' contemporaries. These relate to an age-old tradition dealing with the use of secrets (*sodot*) and names (*shemot*), tying together ancient, medieval, and modern figures whose actions constituted an attempt to create a human being (*litzor adam*) or to interpret the Book of Creation (*Sefer yetzirah*). These figures include King Solomon, the prophet Jeremiah, Shimon Ben Sira, Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai, Rabbi Sa'adiah Gaon, Nachmanides, Eleazar ben Judah of Worms, Nathan of Gaza, and Solomon Molkho, the impact of whose actions was still powerfully felt at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The Ritual and Its Function

The prescriptions in the books' units contain detailed instructions to which strict adherence was required for the maintenance of physical health and for the restoration of harmony—both within a person's body and between the individual and the social and cosmic environment.

Charms that combine plants, animal parts, and verbal formulae are largely missing from the texts compiled in these books of charms. In most cases, it appears as if the contents were carefully chosen by the authors from among Judaism's prominent literary sources. In addition to drawing from the Jewish canon and from works attributed to Jewish authors and figures, charms also contain substances and objects related to everyday Jewish observances and holiday customs. The magical element, which is the power activating the charm's components, operates according to the laws of both similarity and contagion (magic by contact). These components, furthermore, are locked together by preparatory rituals such as purification, fasting, and prayer. The magical element is strengthened by the choice of objects sanctified by their role as cultural symbols.

The material contained in the books reveals that even when the instructions call for a verbal formula, its enactment requires a series of ritual actions to ensure the formula's success. At times these actions involve the healer, at times they involve both the healer and the patient, and at still other times they are performed on the verse itself and on the material on which it is written.

The actions and their chosen substances are rooted in an esoteric tradition based both on universal magical behavior and on the rules for expounding the Scriptures. These find expression in explicit and esoteric techniques, in magical squares, and in phrases combining the patient's name with the names of planets and angels. The methods for performing these actions are apparently known to the authors of the books, and the instructions that they provide seem to be intended for carriers of this tradition.

A person writing out one of the book's charms or recommending a healing prescription found within it is continuing an ancient tradition. This tradition ties together an individual with his or her future, a Jew with the Lord's commandments, and illness with the means of overcoming it.

Charms and Remedy Books in Contemporary Israel

Books of this kind have been published in Israel (then Palestine) since the second half of the nineteenth century. Folklorists believe that Reuben ben Abraham's book *Sefer ha'sgullot* (Jerusalem, 1865) is the first charm book published in Palestine. Like others published at the time, it derives from charm books printed in Europe, as well as from the Hebrew literary works that these books cite as sources, such as works attributed to Rav Hai Gaon (a medieval Jewish scholar who served as Gaon of the talmudic academy of Pimpedita during the early eleventh century) and others.

The main characteristics of charm and remedy books published in Israel until 1950 include a connection between the books' editors (authors, publishers, or printers) and the world of medicine; an attempt to address an audience of mixed ethnic origin and social or ideological orientation; the addition, in some cases, of fate books (*sifrei goralot*) and of books offering solutions to and interpretations of dreams; and the addition of charm books published mostly in times of crisis. The expanded distribution of Israeli charm and remedy books since the 1960s is intended to address the needs of the numerous immigrants from Asia and Africa. Two trends in the books' publication—the publishing of "authentic" manuscripts deemed ancient and holy, and the elaboration of the European books through the addition of various passages and pictures—continued throughout the twentieth century. Extensive monetary assistance from the rabbinical establishment in the publication and

distribution of charm books has become apparent since 1980, mostly due to the change in political power and the legitimization of folk ethnic culture in all its aspects.

Although those who produce the books fall within the religious sector, the target audience of the twenty-first century extends into secular areas as well, and consumers can be found even in the shopping centers of Israel's larger cities. Today charm and remedy books have become a commercial success due to their association with alternative medicine, such as herbal remedies and cures for fertility problems or mental anguish. The relatively simple means of reissuing editions and of adding color, in this age of photocopiers and computers, has lowered the price of the books and made them easily accessible to all.

Handwritten charm books are held by public and private collections and in private hands. Many of them are copies made of the printed editions that had reached remote countries during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some of them are written in the local spoken language using the Hebrew alphabet and are bound along with parts copied from medical books and manuscripts originating in the Middle Ages.

Charm and remedy books are intended for a wide target audience, and they address health issues for which the medical establishment does not offer solutions. At the same time, they also serve as handbooks for experts, who are among the few familiar with the ancient tradition of their use.

Hagit Matras

See also: Folk Medicine; Magic.

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CHELM, THE WISE OF

Chelm is a commercial city near Poland's eastern border, southeast of Lublin. The Jewish community there dates to the twelfth century. In 1939, Jews in Chelm numbered about 15,000, almost half the population. During the Holocaust, the Nazis exterminated the entire Jewish population but for fifteen survivors.

Yet, in Jewish folklore and humor, the city of Chelm is a Jewish city. Ever since the nineteenth century, Chelm has been perceived not as a real place but as a legendary Jewish town whose inhabitants acquired a reputation for being good and well meaning, though foolish. The *Chelmer ḥakhomim* (Wise Men of Chelm) are portrayed as people confused by everyday life. Therefore, they are ceaselessly beset with problems and crises. Sometimes one *Chelmer* or another comes up with a solution, but traditionally the problems are brought before a council of seven sages, who rack their brains thinking, as is their custom, "for seven days and seven nights," until they come up with an answer.

The *Chelmer*s' solutions are generally impractical and involve twisted and lopsided logic. Yet Chelm foolishness is not mere stupidity. Rather it can be seen as a sort of backward logic that satirizes the process of Jewish theological reasoning.

Stories of a town inhabited by fools are not particular to Chelm. They exist in the folk humor of various lands, cultures, and historical periods (for example, Abdera and Beothie—the land of fools—in old Greece, Gothamin in fifteenth-century England, Compenin in the Netherlands, and towns such as Shildo [or Shildburg] and Teterovin in Germany). Even confined to the Jewish milieu, other Jewish communities—such as those in Poznań, Poland—were also called "towns of fools," and it was only after the nineteenth century that Chelm became the sole town to be characterized this way. Lacking any grounding in reality, the designation as the town of fools was perhaps applied to Chelm because of the proximity in sound to the Hebrew word *ḥolem* (dreamer), and as gullible fools, detached from reality, Chelm's fools can be perceived as daydreamers. In any case, the term *Chelmer ḥokhem* has become proverbial, designating naive, foolish simpletons, of whatever provenance.

It is very probable that the Jewish tales about the fools town originated in the German milieu, influenced by a German book of folktales about the town of Shildburg. This book was first translated in 1597 into Yiddish (under the title *Shildburg, A Short History*) and became immediately popular in central and eastern Europe. Chelm stories were first compiled in 1867, in a small booklet published anonymously in Vilna by Avrohm Ytshak Dvorzshetsky, titled *Lightning Jokes and Laughter*. During the twentieth century the literature

Illustration from F. Halperin's "Ḥakhmei Khelm." Warsaw 1926.

of *Chelmer* stories grew immensely, mainly in Hebrew and Yiddish. Tales were compiled into Chelm story collections and anthologies of Jewish humor. Many Chelm tales were redacted as children's literature. They also became the basis of literary works, such as *The Fools of Chelm and Their History,* by Isaac Bashevis-Singer, or *Chelmaxioms,* by Allen Mandelbaum. The Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa hold thirty-one stories about Chelm's fools, in addition to three stories told by Moroccan Jews about *Chelmer ḥakhomim* from the Atlas Mountains.

Raphael Patai and Ayelet Oettinger

See also: Poland, Jews of.

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Chibut Hakever

See: Afterlife

Circumcision and Birth Ceremony for Girls

The Hebrew phrase "*brith-milah*" (lit., "covenant of circumcision") refers to the rite of removing the foreskin from the penis of an infant boy to symbolize his entry into the community of the Jewish people. Each element of the phrase, *brith* and *milah,* is often used separately with this meaning—the former mainly (but not exclusively) for the ceremony, the latter for the procedure itself.

The rite of circumcision has two unique features. First, the person who fulfills this precept does not do so out of knowledge and choice, considering that an eight-day-old baby can neither consent nor object to it. Second, the infant acquires the merit of the precept without personally deciding to fulfill the commandment. This feature lies behind the traditional blessing for the newly circumcised boy: "Just as he has been brought into the covenant of our father Abraham, so may he be brought to the Torah, the marriage canopy, and good deeds"—that is, may he fulfill all other precepts with the same immediacy and lack of hesitation.

Circumcision, performed by a *mohel*, a Jewish man adept at performing circumcision, was the first commandment given to Abraham. This is why it is known as the covenant of our father Abraham. Those who fail to perform this precept are held to have violated the covenant.

Abraham was ninety-nine years old when God appeared to him and said: "As for you, you shall keep My covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations. This is My covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your descendants after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You

shall be circumcised in the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between Me and you" (Gen. 17:9–11). The Torah repeats this injunction, briefly, in Leviticus: "On the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised" (Lev. 12:3)—five short words in Hebrew, which encapsulate how a male child joins the Jewish people.

Fulfillment of the precept of circumcision reconfirms the covenant between God and Abraham on a daily basis. Failure to observe it is punished with social excision: "Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken My covenant" (Gen. 17:14). Or, as the talmudic sages put it, "one who violates the covenant of our father Abraham . . . has no share in the world to come" (*m. Avot* 3:15).

The Time for Performing the Rite

The prescribed time for circumcising a newborn is on the eighth day of his life. The biblical specification of the eighth day is understood to mean that the rite should be performed then, even on the Sabbath or a festival (including Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement). The only excuse for delaying circumcision is danger to the infant's health. Valid reasons for postponing a circumcision include low birth weight (today set at less than 6 lbs.) and jaundice. The eighth day is determined by starting the count with the day of birth. For a boy born in the daytime, the circumcision will take place on the same day of the following week; if he is born after sunset, it will be a week from the next day (because the halakhic day begins at sunset). Some are meticulous about holding the ceremony in the morning (and often in the synagogue immediately after the morning service), because "the zealous are early [to perform] their religious duties" (*b. Pesaḥim* 4a).

From Birth to the Circumcision

In keeping with both biblical mandates and Jewish tradition, family and friends engage in a several rituals and ceremonies surrounding the circumcision.

The *Shalom Zakhar*

On the first Friday night after a boy is born, the parents invite their relatives and friends to an after-dinner reception known as a *"shalom zakhar."* Scholars provide several explanations for this term. Some hold that it is based on the talmudic dictum that "when a male [*zakhar*] comes into the world peace [*shalom*] comes into the world" (*b. Niddah* 31b). Another suggestion is that "the Sabbath is called peace [*shalom*]*, and the birth of* a male child brings peace between a man and his wife" (*Sefer ha'te'amim*). Or perhaps the guests come to help the infant remember the Torah that he studied while in his mother's womb. According to the Talmud (*Niddah* 30b), an angel comes and teaches the entire Torah to the developing fetus. But at the moment of birth, the angel comes and slaps the infant on his mouth, shocking him to forget all that he has learned, so that he must acquire it again by his own efforts. This is the source of the custom of serving various kinds of pulses—the food of mourners—at a *shalom zakhar,* to indicate that the infant is mourning the loss of his learning. A reason for eating cooked chickpeas or lentils is their round shape, which symbolizes the life cycle. A folk tradition links chickpeas (Yidd., *arbes*) with God's promise to Abraham that "I will multiply [*ha'rboh arbeh*] your descendants as the stars of heaven" (Gen. 22:17). The *Kitsur Shulḥan arukh* (163:8) also mentions the custom of a modest feast on the Friday night before the circumcision, to which it assigns the status of an "obligatory celebration." The customs of the *shalom zakhar* include reciting the verse "May the angel who has redeemed me from all evil bless the lads. May my name be perpetuated through them, as well as the name of my fathers, Abraham and Isaac, and may they increase into a multitude on the earth" (Gen. 48:16).

On the Sabbath before the circumcision, the father is honored in the synagogue by being called up to the Torah reading. A special prayer and blessing are recited for the health of the mother and newborn.

The Precircumcision Vigil

In Eastern Europe, the night before a circumcision was known as Wachnacht. During this vigil relatives and friends would gather by the new mother and infant to recite psalms and prayers. The custom has two roots. The first was the need to guard the infant from evil spirits, who are thought to be particularly eager to cause harm then. The other was anti-Jewish persecution over the centuries, including a ban on circumcision. Such a decree was issued in the second century B.C.E. (1 Macc. 1:48) by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV. A new ban on circumcision, issued by the Roman emperor Hadrian (second century C.E.), was one of the provocations that led to the Bar Kochba uprising in Judea, in which Jews attempted to defend their faith and establish an independent State of Israel over parts of Judea. When such decrees were in force, people would go to the home of the newborn the night before the circumcision so that their oppressors would not realize that the banned rite would be performed on the next day. The Talmud (*b. Sanhedrin* 32b) refers to the feast held the night before the circumcision as a sign that it would take place the next day. It is customary

for the *mohel* to take part in this feast when he comes to make sure that the infant is healthy and that the circumcision can proceed as scheduled.

Inviting Guests

The traditional Jewish custom is that the parents do not invite people to attend the circumcision, merely notify them when and where it will be held. This derives from a statement in *Pesaḥim* (113b) that those who do not take part in the obligatory feast associated with the performance of a precept are banned by heaven; the Tosafists (medieval rabbis) explained that the reference is to the circumcision feast. Accordingly, to spare the feelings of those who cannot attend because of excommunication, the custom is to issue an announcement rather than an invitation.

The Liturgy

The day of the circumcision ceremony is a holiday for the three adult participants—the father, the *mohel,* and the person who holds the baby during the circumcision (*sandak*)—and they wear their best clothes. Because of the festive nature of the day, the morning service is modified in the synagogue where these three pray: the prostrate supplication (the *taḥanun*) is left out; the *mohel* recites the passage "You made a covenant with him" (Neh. 9:8b–11); and, if the circumcision is on the Sabbath, the martyrs' elegy "Merciful Father" (*Av ha'raḥamim*) is omitted.

The Functionaries

By preference, a circumcision is performed in the presence of a minyan (a quorum of ten Jewish adult males, age thirteen or older). Among the father's obligations toward his son is that of circumcising him (*b. Qiddushin* 29a). Accordingly, a man who knows how to circumcise is to perform the rite himself. If the father lacks this skill, the *mohel* serves as his deputy, according to the basic halakhic principle that a man's deputy is tantamount to himself for every matter.

The *mohel* must be an expert in the laws of circumcision and skilled in its practice. The sages learned that only someone who is himself circumcised can circumcise others; consequently the *mohel* must be a Jewish man, and neither a woman nor a gentile.

There is a custom among *mohels*, still practiced today, of keeping a register in which they record the names of every infant they circumcise. Such registers from various Diaspora communities are historical documents of the first importance.

The word "*sandak*" derives from a Greek word meaning "guardian" or "protector." Serving as *sandak* is a very great honor, usually given to one of the grandfathers or to an important guest. Many are reluctant

to accept this role, however, because it gives them too close a look at what the *mohel* is doing. According to the Midrash (Bereshit Rabbah 49:2), "Abraham took a knife forthwith and held his foreskin and was about to cut it, yet he was afraid, being an old man. What did the Lord do? He put forth His hand and held it with him, while Abraham cut. For it says, Thou art the Lord God, who didst choose Abram . . . and didst cut [*madest*] a covenant with him (Nehemiah 9:7 f.). Now it is not written, 'and did cut a covenant for him,' but 'And did cut a covenant with him,' which teaches that the Lord held [the foreskin] with him" (Soncino translation). This is the source of the custom of making a pious and respected man the *sandak.* In addition to the three adult participants, Ashkenazi communities added many other honors: the intercessors or godparents (*kvater* and *kvaterin*) who bring the infant from his mother to the place where the circumcision takes place, the guest who receives the honor of placing the infant on a designated ornate chair termed the Elijah's Chair, and finally the guest who carries the infant from Elijah's Chair to the *sandak.* This custom does not exist among Sephardim, who consider it disruptive to the infant.

Elijah's Chair

The custom of designating a special ornate chair, which stands in the synagogue all year long, to serve as Elijah's Chair during a circumcision dates back to the time of the Geonim, the spiritual leaders of the Jewish community of the early Middle Ages.

The role of the prophet Elijah in the circumcision ceremony is expressed in two verses in the last chapter of the book of Malachi: "Behold, I am sending My messenger to clear the way before Me, and the Lord whom you seek shall come to His Temple suddenly. As for the angel of the covenant that you desire, he is already coming" (Mal. 3:1). The end of the chapter identifies this angel: "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet" (v. 23). Why is Elijah the angel of the covenant? According to *Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* (chapter 28), Elijah was punished for slandering Israel. The Midrash explains that in the time of the united monarchy everyone circumcised their sons. When the kingdom split into two—the kingdom of Ephraim and the kingdom of Judah—those in the northern kingdom abandoned the precept. The zealous Elijah adjured God to withhold rain and dew from the land. After the prophet fled Jezebel's wrath, he told God that "the people of Israel have forsaken Your covenant" (1 Kgs. 19:10). To which God replied, "by your life, Israel will never perform a circumcision unless you are there to see it with your own eyes." And this, the Midrash concludes, is why the sages ordained that a chair be set aside for Elijah, "the angel of the covenant," at every circumcision.

The Circumcision Procedure

The circumcision procedure has three parts: cutting the foreskin, turning back the skin that covers the glans, and sucking out blood from the wound.

The procedure prescribed by the *Shulḥan arukh* (Yore De'a. 264:3) is as follows: "One cuts the foreskin—all the skin that covers the glans—until it is uncovered. Then one turns back the thin membrane beneath it until the glans is totally exposed. After that one sucks the member until the blood is removed from distant parts so that there will be no danger (any *mohel* who does not suck is disqualified for the task). Finally he applies a poultice or pad or medicinal powder to it to stop the bleeding." In modern times, widespread objections to sucking the wound emerged. Today many *mohel*s employ special implements—a glass tube, a piece of cotton wool, or a pad with a disinfectant on it—rather than their mouth.

The Festive Meal

The "great feast" that "Abraham made . . . on the day of the weaning of Isaac" (Gen. 21:8) is the source for the festive meal served immediately after the circumcision ceremony. Expositors of the biblical text explain that the word הגמל (weaning of) can be divided in two: הג, whose numerological value is eight, and מל (circumcised): thus, "Abraham made a great feast on the eighth day [when] he circumcised Isaac." The feast is an obligatory part of the celebration; all or some of the guests take part—preferably at least a minyan. The meal is a very happy occasion, for another child has joined the Jewish people. Some explain the letters of the word *milah* as an acronym: "he will make a feast for all those invited." The grace said at the conclusion of this meal includes special additions appropriate for the occasion.

Naming the Infant

The parents choose a name before the circumcision ceremony. (For a newborn daughter, they do so before the first Sabbath after her birth. When the father is called to the Torah on that day, the prayer for mother and infant includes a public announcement of the girl's name.)

There may be several motives behind the choice of a name. The most common is the desire to perpetuate the name of a relative. Among Ashkenazim this generally means preserving the memory of a departed relative, for example, a grandfather, grandmother, brother, or sister. Since World War II, many Jews have sought to pass on the name of relatives who perished in the Holocaust or on the battlefields of Israel's wars. Many babies receive two names, either in memory of two ancestors or so as to add a contemporary name to that of the departed relative. Sephardic and Middle Eastern Jews often name a child after a living grandparent.

Another source of a name is an individual deemed worthy of emulation. In this way the parents express their identification with a special person (prophet, king, leader, or actor) whom they admire, expressing their closeness and affinity to him or her. For example, many Israeli parents named their children for Israel's prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, after his assassination in 1995.

Still another motive involves a spiritual or religious influence. Some people, especially observant Jews, believe that a child's destiny is determined by his or her name. This leads them to avoid naming a child for someone who is not respected. Today all of these reasons, which were of great influence throughout Jewish history, have been overwhelmed by a preference for names that simply appeal to the parents, for whatever reason.

The *Hollekreisch*

The *hollekreisch* was a custom of the Jews of central Europe in the Middle Ages. At this ceremony, the child was given a secular name for daily use, totally different from the name announced at the circumcision or in the synagogue. Solid evidence for this ceremony exists from the tenth and eleventh centuries, but scholars believe that its origins may go back to the fifth or sixth century.

The word *hollekreisch* is a compound of the Hebrew word *ḥol* (secular) and *kreisch* (Ger., calling out): thus "announcing the secular name." Some scholars have interpreted *kreisch* as an acronym for the Hebrew *keryat shem* (giving a name), but this conjecture seems to lack any basis in fact.

Whereas boys were the main focus of three or even four ceremonies—the *shalom zakhar* on the first Sabbath after birth, the circumcision, the *hollekreisch* on the fourth Sabbath (or a weekday), and finally, for some, the *pidyon ha'ben* (Redemption of the Firstborn) on the thirtieth day—of the four, only the *hollekreisch* was a festive celebration for a newborn girl. It was often (though not always) held on the Sabbath, after morning services in the synagogue, and restricted to women, without the presence of the father and male siblings.

The Customs of Various Communities

Throughout history, various Jewish communities around the world have added their own special rituals and customs to the circumcision procedure.

Germany

Before the infant is brought to the circumcision ceremony, an adult hangs a chain of gold or silver coins around the child's neck. The diapers used to swaddle him are laundered and set aside to be used for another precept.

Twelve candles or lamps are lit in honor of the circumcision, one for each of the tribes of Israel. These are set aside after the ceremony, to be used for another precept. The removed foreskin is burned on a special wax candle with twelve wicks.

During the first few days of the newborn's life, the father recites the Shema (a declaration of faith in one God, after the first words in Deut. 6:4) before retiring next to his wife's bed, as a charm to protect her and the infant.

Iraq

The congratulatory blessing for the birth of a son is *siman tov* (may it be a good [celestial] sign); for a girl, it is *mazal tov* (may it be a good [zodiacal] constellation). On the Friday night after the infant's birth family members hold a *shasha,* in which a pitcher is smashed and sweetmeats, including popcorn, are tossed to the guests, especially the children. If the newborn is a girl, her name is announced at this time.

The *ikad al-yas* (binding of the myrtle) is held on the evening of the eighth day, following the circumcision. The family's friends and acquaintances are invited to sing hymns and play music.

Kurdistan

The Sabbath before the circumcision is called the "Sabbath of the Father." The father, who receives particular honors on this day, invites many guests to the service, which includes a special prayer.

Libya

Colored drapes—usually red—are hung on either side of the door of the room or hall in which the circumcision ceremony is held. Some folklorists trace the custom to the time of the Inquisition, when the conversos (crypto-Jews) were afraid to hold the ceremony as prescribed by Jewish law, with a qualified *mohel* and in the presence of ten men. Because they could not announce it, they would hang red curtains, alluding to blood, so that people would know that a circumcision ceremony was to be held in the house and enter of their own accord.

Morocco

Between the birth of the infant and the circumcision ceremony, neighbors and relatives gather every evening in the new mother's home for the *tahdid,* a ceremony during which they recite verses against the evil eye and sing liturgical poems. Then a member of the household takes a knife, representing a sword, and waves it toward the walls and corners of the room where the mother and child are lying. While doing so they recite the verse "they that entered—male and female of all flesh—went in as God had commanded him; and the Lord shut him in" (Gen. 7:16). The intention is to chase away the evil spirits who, according to common belief, come to harm newborn infants.

Tunisia

When a boy is born, family members hang a special sign to protect the child and mother on the door of her room. The Sabbath between the birth of the infant and the circumcision is called *Shabbat siman tov* (the Sabbath of the good [celestial] sign). The evening before the ceremony is the *bilada* (vigil); visitors to the parents' house are regaled with a lavish spread.

Modern Observances for Newborn Girls

Today, family members conduct the following observances in honor of newborn girls.

Shalom Bat

On the Friday night after the birth of a girl, some families hold a *shalom bat,* a gathering at which family, friends, and special guests celebrate the joyous event and pray for the health of mother and daughter. On Shabbat morning, when the father is called to the Torah in the synagogue, the prayer for the health and well-being of mother and infant includes a public announcement of the girl's name.

Zeved Bat

The *zeved bat* (after the Hebrew word "*zeved*" [gift]) is a special feast to honor the birth of a daughter. Although its roots lie among Middle Eastern Jews, in the last quarter of the twentieth century it became common in Israel and abroad. Some scholars see its spread as an expression of modern feminism, which postulates equal rights and obligations for women and men.

There is no set time for holding a *zeved bat.* Whenever it is held, the name of the newborn girl is usually announced.

Joel Rappel

See also: Abraham; Birth; Elijah the Prophet; India, Jews of.

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COSTUME

Costume has always been a marker of Jewish identity, despite the fact that no universal Jewish costume evolved. Although certain dress codes are associated with the Jews, every Jewish community created its own unique variation of dress, a product of its historical and cultural setting.

Several principal factors have determined Jewish dress throughout the ages: (1) Halakhah, the legal system of Judaism from biblical times to the present, as well as Jewish codes of conduct and customs; (2) restrictive decrees and edicts by non-Jewish authorities in countries where Jews lived, as well as Jewish communities' own regulations; and (3) prevailing local styles and codes regarding clothing.

Halakhah

Biblical precepts concerning dress are few and determine only a small number of aspects of Jewish costume. Later halakhic rulings regulated dress codes and interpreted the biblical injunctions. The explicit biblical precepts refer to attaching fringes to men's dress and the prohibition on wearing a garment made of a mixture of wool and linen. Some scholars deduce that the covering of women's hair and the distinctive sidelocks (*peyot,* per Lev. 19, 27) worn by Jewish men are also biblical precepts. Biblical precepts also exist for the tefillin, or phylacteries (small leather boxes containing holy and protective texts that are attached to the forehead and the left arm during morning prayer; see Exod. 13:9, 16, and Deut. 6:8, 11:18). Today these are ritual accessories to which utmost importance is attributed, but in talmudic times some scholars wore them throughout the day.

Tzitzit

According to the books of Numbers and Deuteronomy, men should attach fringes or tassels (tzitzit, pl. *tzitziyyot*) to the four corners of their garments. These fringes and tassels serve as constant reminders of faith and of the religious precepts a Jew must follow (Num. 15:37–41; Deut. 22:12). In biblical times, fringes were attached to outer garments. Over time, as dress styles changed, two separate ritual garments evolved to fulfill this precept: the prayer shawl (tallit), a rectangular fringed shawl worn for praying and for important events in the Jewish life cycle; and tzitzit or *tallit katan* (small tallit), worn at all times by Jewish men. Jews attribute religious, mystical, and symbolic meanings to these objects and believe they have protective powers.

Sha'atnez

Sha'atnez is the prohibition on wearing clothes made of a mixture of wool and linen (Deut. 22:11). This prohibition is related to the issue of hybridism: the mingling of plants and animal species. No explanation or reason is given for these prohibitions, and as a result many com-

Prayer shawl, worn to fulfill the tzitzit commandment. Cotton. R 157/112. Central Yemen, early twentieth century. *(© The Israel Museum by Avraham Hay)*

mentaries and exegeses have attempted to understand its meaning and purpose.

Because it is not outwardly visible, *sha'atnez,* though adopted to this day by observant Jews, is not a distinctive mark of Jewish dress. In many communities in the past, tailoring became a prevalent Jewish occupation in order to be able to control the combination of fibers and textiles used for clothing. Today, with the advent of mass-produced clothing, special laboratories are required to determine whether a particular garment contains the forbidden mixture.

Two key tendencies govern halakhic rulings concerning dress. One is segregation from the gentile environment: "Nor shall you follow their laws" (Lev. 18:3), as is stated generally in the Bible. More specifically, relating to dress, the renowned medieval Jewish scholar Moses Maimonides stated: "One must not follow in the ways of those who worship the stars nor imitate them either in dress or hairstyle" (*Mishnah Torah, hilkhot avodat kochavim* 11:1). In Christian Europe, for example, mandatory head covering for Jewish men undoubtedly evolved because it was the opposite of the prevalent Christian practice of removing one's head covering upon entering a church.

The second major concern of halakhic rulings regarding dress involves modesty, as in the requirement to be decently dressed and covered during prayer (*t. Berakhot* 2:14, second century C.E.). This precept was later interpreted as imposing a separation between the upper part of the body, considered spiritual and pure, and the lower part, considered mundane and impure. Among the Hasidim this division of the body acquired a rich symbolic meaning and is expressed by the belt (*gartle*) donned ritually before prayer.

The equivalent item among women was the apron, the purpose of which was to cover and protect their reproductive organs. These aprons, worn either under or above the skirt or both, were considered a symbol of modesty and magically protective. The wearing of aprons persisted among East European Jewish women and, after almost vanishing, has made a comeback among some of the ultra-Orthodox women who wear them while lighting Shabbat candles and on festive occasions. They regard them as charms that will bring them well-mannered children. According to Halakhah, the most basic requirement of modesty for women is the covering of a married woman's hair.

Restrictive Decrees and Edicts

Apart from halakhic rules, Jewish costume was determined by restrictive decrees issued by the gentile authorities in the countries in which Jews lived in the Diaspora. These laws required Jews to wear special garments, prohibited them from wearing particular fabrics and colors, and obliged them to mark their dress with badges.

In Muslim lands the edicts began with the eighth-century laws of Caliph Omar II, which required that all non-Muslims be distinguished by their clothing, the external manifestation of their lower legal status as "infidels." This distinction had far-reaching legal and social implications, and it served as a tool for maintaining ethnoreligious hierarchies and boundaries. Such Muslim laws were the conceptual guidelines justifying practical restrictions imposed by different rulers. The decrees did not deal with entire outfits, but pertained mainly to the colors and quality of fabrics, and sometimes to particular components of dress such as headgear or footwear. In Bukhara, for example, the Jews had to wear ropelike belts as a distinctive mark.

Infidels were supposed to wear dark colors such as black or dark blue (some places had specific colors for Jews and others for Christians). Green was reserved for Muslims because it is the holy color of Islam. Jews were not allowed to use luxurious fabrics, as was enumerated in the edicts. There were also restrictions pertaining to the cut and size of the garment. In Turkey, the size of the turban was of great significance: the larger the turban, the higher the rank of its wearer. Thus, the edicts restricted the length of the turban fabric and the width of the cloak permitted to Jews. In Afghanistan, even in the twentieth century, Jewish men could only wear gray turbans.

In medieval Europe, the Church councils imposed similar restrictions. In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council issued the well-known dress restriction as a means of impeding the mingling of Christians with Jews and Muslims:

> Therefore, that they may not, under such pretext resort to excusing themselves in the future for the excesses of such accursed intercourse, we decree that such (Jews and Saracens) of both sexes in every Christian province and at all times shall be distinguished in the eyes of the public from other peoples by the character of their dress. Particularly, since it may be read (in Numbers 15:37–41) that this very law has been enjoined upon them by Moses. (Rubens 1967/1973, 81)

These decrees also included the wearing of a badge. The badge varied in shape and color as well as in the place where it was required to be displayed. The Jews were also obliged to purchase these badges from the government.

All these edicts and restrictions were intended to mark the Jewish population and set them apart from others, thereby degrading and humiliating them. The spirit of this distinction did not disappear altogether and was revived during World War II by Nazi Germany by the imposition of the centuries-old yellow badge to distinguish Jews from the general population.

The reaction of the Jewish population to these differentiating restrictions was not altogether negative.

In many cases, as can be expected, the restrictions were resented, but in some instances they were accepted positively as they were consistent with Halakhah and the desire of the Jews to differentiate themselves from others by their clothing. In some cases these restrictions were given different explanations and a symbolic interpretation. For example, it was held by Moroccan and Tunisian Jews and the Jews of Sana'a in Yemen that the wearing of black imposed by the authorities was undertaken willingly and was considered a sign of mourning, that is, commemorating the destruction of the Temple. These restrictions were at times corroborated by communal regulations and sumptuary laws called *takkanot,* which were issued by Jewish communities. Referring mainly to women's attire, such restrictions instructed women to refrain from wearing luxurious clothes, above all with gold decorations and opulent jewelry, when in public. The restrictions had two purposes: first, to avoid arousing jealousy among non-Jews, as it was feared that excess finery in Jewish dress might bring about additional edicts by the authorities; second, to avoid internal tensions between rich and poor families within Jewish communities. These regulations limited excessive finery in weddings and other festive occasions but allowed some exceptions.

> Velvet for dresses, even for linings, is forbidden to women and girls, with the exception of black velvet. The bride may wear any kind of velvet under the canopy during her wedding . . . any type of skirt which is stiffened with a hoop of wire or . . . other devices is forbidden to married and single women . . . even small children. . . . From today until further notice, no silk dresses of two colors should be made for women, with the exception of dark grey and brown. (Fine: 20 thalers.) Whoever offends openly or in secret will be excommunicated and treated as someone who has sinned against God. (From the Jewish regulations for clothing and weddings, Hamburg, Germany, 1715)

Such rules and regulations provide important historical sources for the study of dress codes in each community.

Prevailing Local Sartorial Styles and Dress Codes

The great variety of Jewish traditional attire prior to modernization attests to the marked influence of the surrounding culture on each Jewish community. Historians maintain that the attire of the Jews resembled more closely that of their surrounding culture than that of Jews living in other places, notwithstanding the distinctive marks and badges imposed on Jews.

Yet costume was not only conceived as an indicator of ethnoreligious boundaries but also as a means of defining group identity within the Jewish communities; for example, there was the "great dress" worn as a bridal and festive dress by urban Spanish-Jewish women (descendants of the Jews expelled from Spain in 1492) in Morocco. This sumptuous outfit, made of metallic thread embroidered on velvet, was strikingly different from the local Muslim costumes. It strongly resembled Spanish costumes of the sixteenth century and preserved many of their stylistic traits. In Morocco, this dress became an identity mark of urban Spanish Jews vis-à-vis the local rural Jews, and it was one of the symbols of the preservation of Spanish heritage, which was a source of pride to this group. However, it is not certain that in Spain this dress was in fact worn by Jews. Within Morocco, there were also variations on this dress, each belonging to a certain town, for example, Fez, Rabat, and Mogador.

Another feature thought to be typical or recurring in Jewish costume in different places is the so-called anachronism in Jewish dress. Historians have observed that Jews in many communities had a tendency to retain dress styles long after they had been abandoned by the surrounding gentile society. After a while these anachronistic clothes or items of dress were appropriated by the Jews and considered later to be exclusive to them and even an identifying trait. The best-known example of this phenomenon is the Hasidic or ultra-Orthodox costume, which is derived from the Polish eighteenth-century nobleman's costume and was appropriated and preserved by the Jews until it became distinctive attire exclusive to them. Another example is the sheetlike wrap and veil, made of pastel-colored silk interwoven with metallic thread (*izar*), worn by Jewish women in Baghdad until the 1950s. Such a wrap had been prevalent among Muslim women in earlier times but in the early twentieth century Muslim women changed their dominant attire to a plain black wrap and the older fashion was considered a distinctively Jewish outfit.

The conflict between the desires to integrate and to isolate Jewish society from the surrounding gentile cultures was strongest in Europe in the period of emancipation and modernization during the nineteenth century. As European society enabled Jews to become equal citizens, some Jews wanted to assimilate and not to be distinguished by their dress, while others saw this assimilation as a great danger to the preservation of Jewish religion and culture. The Reform Jews changed their traditional garb to fashionable modern costume. This change was accompanied by debates over head-covering and related matters. These dress reforms caused a strong reaction among some of the East European Jews centered in Hungary. They urged Jews to cling more strongly to tradition in every domain of life, and dress was considered a central aspect of this tradition.

Preserving traditional attire down to the minutest detail has turned the dress of ultra-Orthodox Jews into a kind of uniform by which they are recognized worldwide. It is also considered a protective mechanism against sin.

Esther Juhasz

See also: Hair Covering, Women; Head Covering, Men; Tzitzit.

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CUSTOM

See: Minhag (Custom)

CUSTOM BOOKS

See: Minhag Books

CZECHOSLOVAKIA, JEWS OF

The modern state of Czechoslovakia existed throughout most of the twentieth century. Czechoslovakia was a democracy in the interwar period and a Soviet-ruled communist country from the late 1940s to 1989. Since the collapse of all east European communist regimes in 1989–1990 and the nonviolent demonstration termed the Velvet Revolution, Czechoslovakia has been divided into the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

In previous centuries Czechoslovakia was part of the Hapsburg or Austro-Hungarian Empire and included these regions in whole or in part: Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Slovakia, and Carpatho-Rus (or Sub-Carpathian Rus). These regions were and still are ethnically and culturally diverse, including Germans, Hungarians, Poles, Roma people, and, in significant numbers until World War II and the Holocaust, Jews.

As for the Jews of historical Czechoslovakia, a well-known humorous saying goes that there are Czechs and Slovaks, and there are Czechoslovaks: the Jews. In the mid-nineteenth century, following the emancipation of the Jews in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Jews gradually became affluent compared to the majority of Russian and Polish Jews. This situation enhanced immigration from Poland, Russia, and eastward to Austria-Hungary as a whole.

In the Czechoslovak Republic of the interwar period, the country's Jews numbered approximately 600,000, approximately 350,000 in Bohemia and Moravia, 150,000 in Slovakia, and 100,000 in Carpatho-Rus. This population was largely urban, educated, and employed in industry and free occupations (e.g., doctors, lawyers), compared to those in the Russian Empire, who were mostly in the middle and lower classes and had agricultural occupations. The Jews in the Czechoslovak Republic varied in their religious observance, ranging from ultra-Orthodox to secular and assimilated. Yet in the eastern Carpatho-Rus region, Hasidic culture proliferated and included the courts of Munkács, Sepinka, Koszow, Vizsnic, Nadworny, Sanok, and Belz.

On the eve of World War II and in its early stages, Jews in Czechoslovakia (more precisely of Bohemia and Moravia, as Slovakia now became an independent state, and Carpatho-Rus was ceded to Hungary) numbered approximately 118,000. Most of the them perished in the Holocaust. In May 1945, approximately 30,000 remained, the majority of whom immigrated to Western Europe and Israel.

Folklore

Historical and cultural writing about the Jews of Czechoslovakia, either as a whole or as distinct regions and communities, exists mostly in German, though some of it has been translated into English. Much of this writing is by people of Czechoslovakian-Jewish origin. A significant portion is devoted to commemoration of past communities and their memory-sights such as synagogues and cemeteries. Quite a few Holocaust sur-

Exterior view of the Old-New Synagogue, built in the thirteenth century, in Josefov, Prague. It is said that the body of the golem lies in the attic of the synagogue. *(Alfred Eisenstaedt/Time & Life Pictures/Getty Images)*

vivors coming from these communities have published memoirs about their past life in Czechoslovakia, suffering in the Holocaust, and loss of families and entire communities. In terms of life-history or life-narrative writing and scholarship, these writings amount to a significant documentary and narrative corpus portraying Czechoslovakia's vanished communities and mourning their destruction.

Dating back to the early twentieth century, the oral traditions speak about the golem (a homunculus or anthropoid) allegedly made by the late sixteenth-century Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague, called the Maharal. According to the legend, the Maharal created the golem in order to save the Jews of Prague from the blood libel they were accused of. The folk legend became well known thanks to Polish-Jewish writer Yehudah Yudel Rosenberg. Rosenberg molded together folk and literary materials in his stories about the figure and wonders of the renowned Maharal of Prague, and especially the golem narrative. Earlier, German-Jewish writer Berthold Auerbach has partially included this figure and tradition in his work.

Folklorist Ilana Rosen has devoted several works to the oral lore of the Jews of Carpatho-Rus, at present the western part of Ukraine. These works study the legendary lore of the region's Jews in Czechoslovakia between the world wars and their religious and everyday life, personal narratives about Zionism, and Holocaust memoirs. The folk narratives of all these formerly Carpatho-Russian (or, more precisely, Rusyn) Jews are available at the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa.

Ilana Rosen

See also: Golem.

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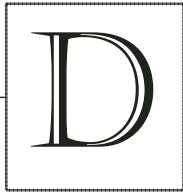
Danilevich, Hershl

See: Poland, Jews of

David, King

King David, founder of the Davidic dynasty, reigned over the united kingdom of Judah and Israel between approximately 1040 and 970 B.C.E. Historical and folk elements appear in the Hebrew Bible and in post-biblical literature in which he is depicted as a wise Jewish ruler who brought the disparate tribes of Israel together as a united nation. Amid periods of trials and tribulation, David is seen as a successful warrior, diplomat, and philosopher.

Folk Elements in the Bible

Modern biblical perspectives about King David are divided into two main narrative cycles: (1) the story of David's ascent to the throne (1 Sam 16:30); and (2) the so-called "Succession Narrative," which centers on King David's court (2 Sam 9:20; 1 Kgs 1:2).

In the story about David's rise to the throne there are many folktale motifs. Such is the case in the story of David and Goliath (1 Sam 17). The pattern of the rise of the rejected son to the throne is common to the stories of both Saul and David. The relevant components are that there is an aging father with three sons, the sons are sent on a fatal mission, the youngest son is rejected by his brothers, and the brothers fail to follow instructions, resulting in dire consequences.

The aging father has three sons or more. This is apparent in the story of David. In 1 Samuel 16 one reads about the seven sons of Jesse. Yet in 1 Samuel 17 only the three oldest sons had left and gone with Saul to the war (v. 13). In the story of Saul there is no mention of any brothers, but perhaps Saul's words, "But I am only a Benjaminite, from the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my clan is the least of all the clans of the tribe of Benjamin" (1 Sam 9:21), which are usually interpreted as humble politeness, could also be perceived of as a variation on the motif of the youngest brother.

His sons are sent on a fatal mission. Such a mission could be presented either as an ordeal, to find out which of the sons is the worthiest, or as a rescue expedition in which they must find a miraculous remedy to the father's illness. Here, a significant contrast begins to emerge: While Saul's mission (1 Sam 9) could hardly be identified as fatal, in 1 Samuel 16 it is David's task to cure the king's illness, while in 1 Samuel 17 David's elder brothers have gone to the war with Saul, and David, the youngest son, is sent to find out how his brothers are and to "bring some token from them." Thus, it is David who, as a messenger, even in the early stage of the plot, becomes the bearer of the significant turning points of the events.

The youngest son is rejected by his brothers. When they realize that David has succeeded in fulfilling his mission where they failed to do so, they plot against him in order to deprive him of his achievements. Since there is no mention of any brothers of Saul, he is not apparently rejected. But the contempt and rejection might be implied in the repeated, ironic question "Is Saul also among the Prophets?" (1 Sam 10:11, 12; cf. 19:24), and could therefore be identified as a variation on this motif. This model is much more evident in David's case. In the scene of the prophet Samuel's arrival at the house of Jesse (1 Sam 16:6–13), David's existence is forgotten by all participants. It is only after all his brothers fail to be chosen and Samuel asks, "[A]re these all the sons you have?" that Jesse has to admit that there is still the youngest, who is tending the flock. In the second story, 1 Samuel 17, David is even blasted by his older brother, who becomes angry with him and says: "Why did you come here . . . I know your impudence and your impertinence. You came down to watch the fighting" (v. 28).

On their way, the elder brothers fail to follow the instructions that were offered them by a disguised magician. In Saul's story, it is Saul himself who fails to follow Samuel's instruction. The most conspicuous and typical motif, which is also the key point of the tale, is that of the instructions, here described as "signs" given by Samuel to Saul after Saul's anointment as king (10:2–7). This is mainly due to the fact that, as Samuel predicts, "once these signs have happened" to Saul, he "will become another man" (v. 6). But when it comes to the final instruction, according to which Saul must wait seven days for Samuel

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intention to stress the contrast between the two, in order to enhance David's name and to belittle Saul, who failed to recognize to what extent he owed his position to God and his messenger Samuel.

Folk Elements in Post-Biblical Literature

Postbiblical literature is the main source for stories that constitute a significant conversion of King David's image from that of historical figure to legendary symbol. King David is portrayed as an eternal figure. The words of a well-known folk song, "David, King of Israel is alive and enduring," are the quintessence of such a view. Many talmudic stories ascribe to David idealized traits that present him not only as a model of perfect leadership but also as a divine paragon. He is depicted as a person whose spirituality overcomes his earthly and corporal being. While in the biblical account David appears first as an independent youngster, the postbiblical literature emphasizes that God had assigned David to his special role even before his birth. This idea is possibly the grounds for further elaborations of David in the Midrashic literature: that he was born circumcised like Joseph, Moses, Job, and the Messiah, that after his death his body remained fresh (*b. Bava Batra* 7a).

The talmudic discussion on whether the world was created because of Moses's merits or because of David's (*b. Sanhedrin* 11; 99a) also attests to David's elaboration in the Talmud. It is not surprising, therefore, that according to other sources David is endowed with the gift of prophecy (*JT Berachot* 2) and is able to predict all his deeds and enterprises (Midrash Hagadol to Deut. A 17). All this was motivated by the need to establish an image of David as the anointed king and the predecessor of the messiah, that is, the embodiment of hopes for the future. This may also shed light on the tendency in the Talmud to vindicate David of having committed any sin. According to the Talmud, David was innocent even in the case of Batsheva and Uriah the Hittite: "[H]e who says that David sinned is but wrong" (*b. Shabbat* 56a). Thus, King David was interpreted in a way befitting a mythical hero who will save the Jewish people in the future in the figure of the messiah.

The varicolored image of David has been a source of inspiration for many folk literary works and narratives through the ages. In the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa, sixty-eight folk narratives about David are recorded from oral tradition and attest to his central role in Jewish folklore.

Shamai Gelander

See also: Folk Narratives in the Bible; Solomon, King.

King David playing the harp. From The North French Hebrew Miscellany (folio 117b), written and illustrated in northern France ca. 1278. Ms. 11639. *(©The British Library Board)*

to come and present burnt offerings, he fails to do so and prefers to offer the sacrifices by himself.

The main point of this motif is the fact that Saul was actually "made" by the man of God and by his signs. Speaking in terms of folktales, Saul was "bewitched" by Samuel. It is here that one cannot ignore the sharp contrast between Saul and David: While Saul became "another man" because of Samuel's acts, David is consistently described as a hero who made his way to the throne by himself and succeeded mainly because of his personal qualifications. In his case, there are no "signs" or other enigmatic directions. When David was first brought to Saul's court, he had already earned his fame and was not brought before the king as an anonymous person; Saul's courtiers already know him as "a stalwart fellow and warrior, sensible in speech, and handsome in appearance, and the Lord is with him" (16:18). Even in the story of David and Goliath, David prides himself as one who "has killed both lion and bear" (17:34–36). Thus, the folktale motifs in the descriptions of the beginnings of Saul and David seem to join in the service of the historiographer's

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See also: Folk Narratives in the Bible; Solomon, King.

DEATH

The human focus on the inevitable end of life, with its attendant fears, has created a mass of beliefs, ceremonies, and customs. There is a wealth of material on dying, death, and mourning in the Bible and the rabbinic literature. The *Shulḥan arukh,* which, at the end of the sixteenth century, codified Halakhah and custom, has more than 300 different provisions related to death and mourning. Many additional customs associated with death and mourning have been added in modern times. In addition, Jewish communities around the world developed their own unique customs, partly as a result of contact with non-Jewish society.

The distinction between life and death is emphasized by the symbolic meanings attached to the corpse. Death is associated with ritual impurity. In the Mishnah a corpse is designated as the ultimate and absolute source (literally, the "father of the fathers") of impurity. Every contact with a dead body is defiling, and the impurity is transmitted through contact, in a chain of descending severity, by human beings and objects. This belief required complex purification rites, based on water mixed with the ashes of a red heifer, described in the Bible (Num. 19) and the rabbinic literature (*Parah*). One tradition associated with the strict demarcation between life and death, still observed today, is that members of the priestly caste (*cohanim*) may not enter a cemetery (Lev. 21:1–3, 11).

Yohrzeit Plaque. Zittau, Czech Republic, 1890. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

Nevertheless, Judaism has always placed a strong emphasis on the obligation to treat the deceased with respect, manifested in meticulous concern for the dignity of the body—washing it, wrapping it in a shroud, and burying it without delay. These actions can be seen as stages in the separation of the dead from the world of the living and their conveyance to the realm of the dead. The funeral itself is a ceremonial farewell; the prayers recited as part of the service express acceptance of God's judgment: "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

In Israel today, most funerals are conducted by burial societies (*ḥevra kadisha*) according to the traditional rites. Secular groups have attempted to create an individualized alternative ceremony that may include eulogies, readings, music that was dear to the departed, and leaving flowers on the grave.

Despite humankind's fear of death, Jewish folk belief does not look on the world of the dead as menacing or frightening. The dead can and do help the living in various ways. Consequently, the latter visit the grave and ask the departed to serve as an intercessor and advocate for the living; or go on pilgrimages to the burial sites of famous holy men, to request individual and communal relief (for example, rainfall in years of drought); or visit the cemetery to invite a dead person to attend a wedding.

Such an easy relationship between the world of the dead and the world of the living is possible as long as each group remains in its own domain. When this balance is violated—as in the case of those who were not buried properly or those who failed to complete a task while they were still alive—the dead can find no repose and are left suspended between the two worlds until they have rectified the omission. In these cases a violent encounter might break out between the living and the dead. A dybbuk—the spirit of a dead person that invades the body of a living person—is a famous example of this.

Although death is inevitable, it has an ideal form: that of Moses, who, according to the Midrash, died by a divine kiss (*Deut. Rab.* 11).

The various genres of Jewish folklore detail many ways of dealing with death and everything related to it. Numerous proverbs, too, refer to death. Nor is it absent from popular jokes, which sublimate the fear of death by means of humor. In material culture the accent is on the preparation of shrouds and tombstones.

Mourning rituals are a further aspect of how death is regarded. The rending of one's garment in response to the news of the death of a close relative, mentioned in the Bible (Gen. 37:29, 34; Lev. 10:6; 2 Sam. 1:11; Job 1:20), has become part of the rabbinic Halakhah. Some scholars believe that this represents a mitigation of the slashing of the flesh and tearing of the skin by mourners, a custom still known in some Jewish communities such as those in the Middle East.

Specific mourning rituals correspond to the progressive passage of time after burial—the first seven days (shiva), thirty days, and twelve months. The first seven days, when the immediate relatives of the deceased gather together and the community sees to all their needs, serve to sustain individuals and community and to allow them to work through their grief while remaining within the world of sacred values, including the belief in divine justice. At the end of the thirty days, it is customary for the mourners to visit the cemetery and place a marker on the grave. The mourning period includes several rites, such as a ban on cutting the hair and trimming the beard and on any manifestation of joy. After twelve months of mourning, it is customary to visit the cemetery each year and place a small stone on the grave.

The Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa hold more than 500 stories concerning death and all that is related to it.

Raphael Patai

See also: Afterlife; Cemetery; Dybbuk; Lamps and Candles; *Qinah* (Lament); Stones; Tombstones.

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DEATH BY KISS (*MITAT NESHIQAH*)

See: Angel of Death

DEMON

In Jewish religious doctrine and folklore, a demon is a liminal supernatural being whose main function is to annoy, tempt, harm, or kill human beings. The belief in demons is a major theme in Jewish discourse through-out time, appearing in juristic legislation, rabbinical commentaries, mystical texts, philosophical debates, proverbs, parables, and numerous folktales. In all Jewish diasporas, many customs are still preserved that aim to tame the influence of demons and protect against their harmful intentions. Modern academic research on these phenomena is yet another indication of their continuing importance.

Demons are referred to in general by several generic terms and seldom by a definite name (such as *Yosef Sheda, Agrat Bat Maḥalat, Na'ama, Shamadon*), but the main figures are known specifically: Asmodeus, the king of demons; Samael, the Angel of Death; and Lilith, the killer of babies and delivering mothers.

According to traditional Jewish views, demons are part of creation, of God's surveillance over the world, and of his means of punishing humans. They were first created in liminal time, during the twilight preceding Shabbat eve and the conclusion of the world's creation (*m. Avot* 5:6). According to some sources they lack a body (*Gen. Rab.* 7:6), the essential feature that prevents them from overpowering the world (Zohar 1:48a). Like humans, they eat, reproduce, and die, and, like angels, they have wings, can fly, and know the future (*b. Ḥagigah* 16a). Their feet are like those of a vulture (*b. Berakhot* 6a); they have a shadow but not a penumbra (*b. Yevamot* 122a).

These characteristics prevailed over centuries, but other features, influenced by local traditions, were added in the different diasporas. Babylonian amoraic sources contributed detailed information on demons, based on Babylonian non-Jewish belief. According to them, demons are multiple and are found anywhere. They burst into humans' public places, even during Torah study gatherings (*b. Berakhot* 6a), and are therefore a constant threat to people. Among the Ḥasidei Ashkenaz of the twelfth century, demonic figures from Germanic folklore such as vampires, witches, and werewolves were added to the Jewish concepts.

There are certain spaces and times that are completely under the control of demons. They dwell in liminal space, such as ruins, deserts, and forests (Dan 1986), and invade any desolate, filthy, and unorganized human space (*b. Ḥullin* 105b). The particular times of day and historical periods believed to be under demonic influence reflect the stress and anxiety caused by changes and transitions. Night is the preferred time of their activities (*b. Pesaḥim* 112b). During Shabbat they have no influence over this world, but at the end of Shabbat, they regain their powers (Zohar 1:14b). A preferred time for demonic activities is during the lunar eclipse (Tishby 1996: 363). The demon Ketev Meriri is active during the period called Beyn Ha'metzarim (*Num. Rab*. 12:3), the driest time of the year, from the seventeenth of Tammuz to the Ninth of Av, corresponding historically to the period of the siege

on Jerusalem and the destruction of both the First and Second Temples.

The main passages in the human life cycle, such as birth, weddings, and death, are viewed as being under demonic threat and require community surveillance (*b. Berakhot* 54b; Trachtenberg 1977). Diseases, mental illness (*b. Me'ila* 17a–b), impotence, epilepsy, drunkenness (*Tanḥuma* Bereshit: 58), nightmares (Oxford 1567, 149b), erotic dreams (*y. Shabbat* 1:3) and brutal death are also viewed as caused by demonic actions.

Relations between humans and demons are intricate. Demons are mostly responsive to human behavior caused by sins, but they can also initiate the confrontation. These relations vary from fierce struggle to erotic encounters and mutual assistance. Physical contact between the two is possible, and it includes kidnapping, rape, and physical struggle, although it may not always be violent.

Demons may copulate with humans, males and females, causing the birth of a multitude of demons. The model for these strange relationships is the first human couple, Adam and Eve, who, according to early midrashic traditions, lived apart for 130 years after Abel's death. During this period, they each copulated with demons (*Ber. Rab.* 20:28). This belief was further developed in the Zohar, which is the source of a present-day custom practiced in Jerusalem, according to which sons are not allowed to be present at their father's funeral, out of fear that they may be hurt by the envious demons' offspring, born from the father's nocturnal emissions.

Intertwined in Jewish ethical views, demons are used to educate sinners and reinforce social and religious norms. Solitude, seen as a withdrawal from society, is a threatening situation seized upon by demons: A man sleeping alone in a house is in danger (*b. Shabbat* 151b). Breaking an oath is punished by demons, as demonstrated in the medieval folktale "Ma'aseh Yerushalmi" (The Story of the Jerusalemite). (Numerous versions of this folktale are collected in the Israel Folktale Archives [IFA] at the University of Haifa.)

There are also a few instances in which demons help humans. They can reveal secrets about the demonic world and ways to overcome their influence (*b. Pesaḥim* 110a). Asmodeus assisted King Solomon in building the Temple (*b. Gittin*: 68a–b). Demons can help save the people of Israel (*b. Me'ila* 17a–b), and, in some instances, humans are the ones who help demons (*Lev. Rab.* 24:3).

A special technique known as evoking "oil demons" (*sarey kos vesarey shemen*) is based on calling for the assistance of demons to appear on shiny surfaces, in order to reveal hidden treasures, retrieve missing people and items, and expose thieves. This technique was practiced among gentiles (Deiches 1913) and Jews alike; it is mentioned by the amoraic (*b. Sanhedrin* 67b, 101a), their medieval commentaries (Rashi on *b. Sanhedrin*), and the Ḥasidei Ashkenaz (Oxford 1567: 49a, 114a, 115b, 137a). Among

Moroccan Jews, a related technique called *instinzal* is still used.

Demonic power and influence were also invoked by magic techniques in order to cause harm. Jewish tradition provides various strategies by which to avoid and to fight demons' impact. Some of these have a Jewish cultural context, and others are universal. The ones in the Jewish context are mostly preventive, such as observing mitzvot, studying Torah, praying, and giving to charity. Some prayers, such as the Shema (a declaration of faith in one God, after the first words in Deut. 6:4), are considered especially effective (*b. Berakhot* 5a). The righteous are also able to protect the congregation. For their special place and good deeds, major biblical figures such as the Three Fathers and Elijah are considered protectors against demons. Keeping the Jewish festivals protects people from and prevents demonic attacks (*b. Yoma* 20a; *Pesaḥim* 109b; *Rosh Hashanah* 16a–b). The Ḥasidei Ashkenaz strongly recommend avoiding any contact with them (Dan 1986; Gudman 1968).

Jewish versions of the universal stratagem by which demons can be avoided and resisted have three different aspects:

1. Engage in a face-to-face struggle using noise, light, symbolic weapons, salt, gestures, incantations, and spells. Scholars interpret some of the procedures during rites of passage as a magical performance whose goal is to scare away demons (i.e., the *hilulu* cries of women, the vibrant red color applied in the henna ceremony preceding a Jewish wedding). Preventive amulets, widespread in the Diaspora, were used to target demons that caused death, birth, diseases, and epidemics. Magic bowls from seventh century C.E., Nippur, Iraq, bear incantations against harmful demonic influence (Montgomery 1913; Naveh and Shaked 1985).
2. Fight demons by offering them a bribe. For example, the scapegoat sacrificed on Yom Kippur (Lev. 16:8–10) is viewed as such by the Zohar (Zohar 3:63a–b).
3. Disguise oneself or an event. Crying and screaming at weddings are explained as a means to disguise the joyful event as a sad one.

All these strategies demonstrate the human fear of the dangerous world of demons and the way human beings fought against them.

Idit Pintel-Ginsberg

See also: Asmodeus; Cemetery; Lilith; "Ma'aseh Yerushalmi," The Story of the Jerusalemite; Magic; *Mezuzah*; Samael.

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DEMONOLOGY

Demonology is defined in two key ways. One is the systematic doctrine of a given culture, based on its specific beliefs regarding demons. In this context, demonology explains methodically the nature of demons and the various principles and reasons for their presence and actions in the world. It provides knowledge about the means of protection from and prevention of their nefarious acts. The second definition of demonology derives from the academic research carried out by scholars who study the belief in demons as it emerges in various cultures and from the perspective of various disciplines.

In Judaism, demonology as a systematic, unified doctrine within the culture was not seen from biblical times until the thirteenth century. Different and at times contradictory notions and beliefs about demons, their nature, and their acts are scattered in various texts. Several sources, including biblical references, Babylonian demonology, midrashic literature, and Kabbalah doctrine, can be discerned in the development of Jewish demonology.

In the Bible, demonological material is scarce and appears only in a few verses ("They sacrificed to demons" [Deut. 32:17]; "They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to demons" [Ps. 106:37]; "satyrs shall dance there" [Isa. 13:21]; "and the satyr shall cry to his fellow" [Isa. 34:14]). Its contribution to later Jewish demonology is terminology and basic concepts regarding demons' nature.

The Babylonian Amoraim (third to sixth centuries C.E.) introduced numerous elements of Babylonian demonology to Jewish demonology and enriched it tremendously. The Amoraim added to the biblical material many new notions and details about the nature and actions of demons, together with detailed and wide-ranging recommendations about the means to prevent their influence.

This trend continued in the midrashic literature, in which extended stories about demons can be found. A very interesting phase in Jewish demonology occurred in the twelfth century among the Ḥasidei Ashkenaz, a social and ethical movement in medieval German Jewry, which was considerably influenced by German folk beliefs. Rabbi Judah the Pious compiled numerous stories using German terminology and concepts, such as vampires, cannibals, witches, and werewolves, and incorporated them into his religious worldview and ascetic ethics.

A more systematic approach to demons within Judaism was initiated beginning in the thirteenth century. Several Spanish kabbalists, called the Gnostics, compiled numerous ancient traditions concerning demons. They attempted to analyze, categorize and incorporate them within their worldview, adding their own concepts. The major kabbalistic text reflecting this trend is *Treatise on the Left Emanation,* written by Rabbi Isaac Hacohen in the

thirteenth century. These notions were introduced in the Zohar and further developed in the Lurianic Kabbalah of the sixteenth century, and they have continued to flourish among the Hasidic since the eighteenth century.

Jewish demonology has an eclectic nature and was open to outside influence, an inclination that has continued to the present. It is recognizable in the latest phase of Jewish demonological development in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Jews across the Diaspora absorbed local demonological material and incorporated it into their ways of belief and customs. Jews in North Africa were influenced by Arabic demonology and brought these notions with them into the cultural and even the political agenda of the State of Israel after they immigrated there in the twentieth century. Since the flow of immigration by Soviet Jews in the late twentieth century, influences of Slavic and Christian demonologies have begun to surface in folktales. This trend is relatively recent and requires further research. The Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa contains hundreds of folktales influenced by non-Jewish Eastern and Western demonology.

Jewish demonology's impact on Jewish culture is wide-ranging. It can be found in folktales, customs, rituals, visual arts, artifacts, and folk medicine, as well as in Halakhah, judicial cases, psychology, literature, theater, film, everyday Hebrew language, and academic research.

Idit Pintel-Ginsberg

See also: Demon; Magic.

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DIALECT STORIES, JEWISH-AMERICAN

Jewish-American dialect stories refer to jokes featuring the inappropriate use of Yiddish words or speaking in a Yiddish accent in English-speaking America. Defining the genre, folklorist Richard Dorson in 1960 distinguished the kind of story told by second- or third-generation Jewish children of immigrants about their first-generation elders—a kind of "esoteric" or in-group humor—from the "exoteric" or out-group humor that may appear to disparage Jews. The latter frequently appears in collections as recitations featured on the vaudeville stage or even as part of anti-Semitic slurs, while the former, in Dorson's words, features "the mimicry of Yiddish intonation and pronunciation by American-born Jewish storytellers, whose mimetic talent delights responsive audiences" (1960, 112). While the story may appear to parody the Yiddish of immigrants, it often extols the generation's mettle. The genre has not been

defined by structure, although Dorson and folklorists Stanley Brandes and Simon Bronner after him have posited functional and thematic consistencies in the stories. It is common to find dialect stories that create a structural incongruity in the dialect "punch line." Here is an example:

> Two little boys are coming home from Hebrew school, and a matron comes up. One of the boys, who happens to be schooled in politeness, offers her a seat, and she says, "Much obliged." The boy immediately sits down again.
>
> Sammy says to him, "What's the matter, Ben, how come you sat down?
>
> "Well, I wanted to offer her my seat, but when I got up to give it to her, she said, 'Moishe, bleib' [Yidd, "Moishe, stay"]. (Dorson 1960, 159)

In many of the stories, the structural incongruity may be the immigrant's attempt at English rather than speaking in Yiddish:

> This boy went to rabbinical school in New York and he comes home and he's got this scraggly little beard that the kids wear in Orthodox seminaries, and his long sideburns allow his hair to curl and he's got a black suit on and black shoes, long overcoat, and he is also wearing a black hat. He's got a prayer shawl around him, and he's already beginning to bend over, and he's carrying a great, huge book of the Commentaries underneath his arm. He arrives at his family's home for the first time on vacation and knocks at the door. His mother opens the door and looks at him and says, "Hey Sam, come here, look at Joe College!" [*accented*]. (Dorson 1960, 122)

A common variant of this story reverses the role of the school as an assimilationist experience:

> A Jewish family sent their son to a fashionable boarding school to learn good English.
>
> "Please, you being sure titch him right," the father told the headmaster.
>
> "You need not have the slightest concern whatsoever," replied the headmaster. At the end of the school year the father called on the headmaster. "Und how is my boy doink?"
>
> "Dun't esk!" said the headmaster. (Dorson 1960, 168)

Other stories feature a Yiddish accent throughout but may refer to a trait of the immigrant generation:

> These two fellows, Abie and Ike, were going to take this excursion boat. And so their friend said, "I vouldn't take de boat if I vas you, zince you don't how to swim." So Abie says, "Ve vant de trip, ve vant de trip, so ve take the boat." The boat rams another boat and sinks. The friend is worried about Abie and Ike, since the casualty list was almost a total affair. Several days elapse, and the friend sees Abie and Ike again talking to one another, and asks with great surprise, "Zince you couldn't svim, how come you two got saved?" Then Abie says, "Vell, it was yust like zis. Ve yust started to talk to one another, and ze fust zink you know, ve came right to shore." (Dorson 1960, 166)

The first-generation referred to in these stories is from the "great wave" of immigration that occurred between 1880 and 1920 and formed the basis for an urban Ashkenazi culture fondly referred to by later generations as "*Yiddishkeit*." The use of dialect jokes does not seem to be prevalent among tradition-centered Jewish groups such as the Ḥasidim, who still use Yiddish as an everyday language. Judging by the material Dorson gathered from Jewish tradition-bearers at colleges where he worked, the telling of the dialect stories expressed simultaneously the speakers' emotional attachment to the first immigrant generation and their dramatic separation from it as assimilated Americans. The jokes were typically meant for other second- or third-generation Jews, as is apparent from the contents of the jokes, which required understanding the Jewish references.

The dialect jokes have persisted, however, into fourth and fifth generations, suggesting a different nostalgia-building function for many secularized Jewish-Americans. Brandes, for example, writing almost twenty-five years after Dorson, suggested that a related modern function is that the dialect joke objectively describes a "certain type of sensitive speech event" (1983, 233): the attempt by Jews to obscure their ethnic origins, which invariably fails when their real or former identity is revealed through accented speech patterns. The jokes may vary in their ethical message: In some, such as the headmaster story previously quoted, the multicultural consolation of a different ethnic identity is that others may be the ones to change, rather than Jews themselves. It is possible to interpret this as a use of folklore for fantasy or wish fulfillment, however, rather than as a tool of social change. In other stories, there is no consolation but a use of humor to deal psychologically with the anxiety of losing Jewish religious and cultural identity as Jews advance professionally by assimilating to the host American society.

Over time, the content of dialect jokes told by generations further removed from the immigrant generation alters, and, in Brandes's thesis, comes to emphasize "the Jewish American's preoccupation with and insecurity about ethnic identity." Brandes concludes: "Paradoxically, Jewish dialect stories bear witness to the perpetuation of a tradition at the same time that they describe

its demise" (1983, 239). The stories require a Jewish cultural knowledge of *Yiddishkeit* that mingles with American regional references to localized Jewish experience in different areas of North America (such as New York City or the Deep South), thus implying a sense of Jewish identity shared by teller and listener. Yet the structural incongruities that create the humor are based on a historical and social understanding of generations that have abandoned the external signs of Jewishness in language, dress, and hair.

Simon J. Bronner

See also: United States, Jews of.

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DOWRY

See: Bride Price

DREAMS

Throughout history, dreams have challenged those who interpret them with their often elusive and complex significance. In all cultures, dreaming is regarded both as an important medium for understanding the workings of the human psyche and as a principal means of communicating directly with supernatural entities, whether gods, demons, or the spirits of the dead. Jewish culture since biblical times has risen to the challenge of dream interpretation in a wide variety of ways and in fruitful dialogue with the surrounding cultures.

Biblical Literature

The dreams that appear in biblical literature can be divided into two main types: the revelation dream, or theophany (from the Greek: "appearance of God"), and the allegorical dream. The theophany presents the dreamer with a direct and lucid revelation either from God or from another divine entity. God "comes" to a person in the night and stands before him or her: "And God came to Abimelech in a dream of the night" (Gen. 20:3). In this type of dream, the message is usually clear and direct and therefore the dreamer requires no interpretation.

The theophany is common to all cultures in the ancient period: Descriptions of it are found in Sumerian sources (Gudea's dream), in Egyptian sources (Merenptah's dream), and in many Greek and Roman sources. One of the most prevalent ways of dreaming for the purpose of divination involved incubation-sleeping in a temple—in the belief that there was a greater chance of a dream visitation from the god in such a location (see, e.g., Sam. 1:3 or the Greek tradition of sleeping in the asclepion, a healing temple sacred to the god Asclepius).

The second type of dream that appears in the Bible is the allegorical dream, which contains enigmatic imagery. The biblical view of such dreams is ambivalent. The dream of a king or ruler is considered a portent of success or failure (compare, for example, the dream of the pharaoh, in Gen. 41, with the dreams of Xerxes as they appear in Herodotus, and the dreams of the caesars in Suetonius). Yet the Bible tries to minimize the prophetic element in allegorical dreams because of their potential exploitation by false prophets (Jer. 23:5; Zach. 10:2) and also because any operative conclusion based on an enigmatic text is inevitably complex and open to multiple interpretations.

Nor is this ambivalent view of allegorical dreams limited to biblical literature. The ancient Greek epic poet Homer wrestled with the question of their interpretation in the *Odyssey* (Song 19:560–570); the second-century diviner Artemidorus Daldianus in his great work the *Oneirocritica* (The Interpretation of Dreams) divided allegorical dreams into two types, those that provide information about the future and those that relate to events of the day, and which, he claimed, have no special significance.

The same sort of ambivalence can be found in the Apocrypha, some books of which, such as the *Wisdom of Ben Sira,* discount the veracity of dreams, while others, such as the Book of Enoch, use dream visions to describe Enoch's voyages through heavenly realms.

The Literature of the Talmud and Midrash

In the Talmudic approach to dreams and their religious and cultural significance, one finds many inspired insights into the phenomenon common to the Greco-Roman and Persian civilizations of the period. The longest and fullest account of dreams in rabbinic literature appears in the Babylonian Talmud, *Berakhot*

55a–57b. There are also significant discussions on the subject in the Yerushalmi Talmud, *Ma'aser Sheni*, and in the Yerushalmi Midrash Lamentation (Eikah) Rabbah, in addition to scores of pointed references to dreams and dreaming throughout the Talmud and Midrash. The German scholar Alexander Kristianpoller was the first to compile, sort, and organize most of the talmudic and midrashic texts concerning dreams in his book *Traum und Traumdeutung,* published in 1923.

There are three basic aspects of dreams addressed in talmudic and midrashic literature: significance of dreams, stories that deal with dream interpretation, and indices that catalogue and differentiate between different types of dreams. As to the first field, the literature presents a broad spectrum of approaches to the source and significance of dreams, starting with the view of the dream as a message sent by God, which, through proper interpretation, reveals its meaning and imparts information with respect to the future. Sayings such as "A dream is one-sixtieth of prophecy" (*Berakhot* 57b), or the story of the meeting of Abaye and Rabba with the dream interpreter Bar Hedya (*Berakhot* 56a–b), which assumes that the dream contains specific information concerning the future, can be understood in this light. Here the dreamer is the passive recipient of a dream from an external agency (a god, angel, or demon). The correct interpretation of the dream message will make possible an accurate forecast of the future. This approach was widespread in ancient times and has parallels in the writings of Stoic philosophers and thinkers such as Quintus Cicero as presented by his brother Marcus Cicero in his work *De Divinatione.*

In contrast to the above, some texts completely negate the prophetic authority of the dream, such as the words of Samuel, in *Berakhot*, that, based on a verse from Zechariah, call bad dreams "vain dreams." This approach, too, has parallels in the Greek and Roman world, as in the relentless position Marcus Cicero took in his answer to his brother, denying dreams any prophetic authority whatsoever. Between these two extremes, one finds positions that attribute only a limited authority to dreams, as in the words of Rabbi Brachya, "Though part of a dream may come true the whole does not come true" (*Berakhot* 55a). Another approach sees certain dreams as products of the uninhibited assimilation of the events of the passing day. This position was prevalent in the Greco-Roman world and was articulated both by Plato and by Aristotle in his comprehensive discussion of sleep and dreams.

Midrashic literature is full of references to the status of the dream interpreter and his skills. Statements such as "There were twenty-four dream interpreters in Jerusalem" (*Berakhot* 55b) reflect the central cultural and social status held by dream interpreters. The literary traditions that describe the interpretive meeting itself as in the story of the woman who asked Rabbi Elazar and his students to interpret her dream (*Lam. Rab.* a), or in the account of Abaye and Rabba, who asked Bar Hedya to interpret theirs (in *Berakhot* 56 a–b) call attention to the position of power held by the dream interpreter vis-à-vis the dreamer.

An important means available to dream interpreters was the dream interpretation book, usually structured like a dictionary containing lists of assorted symbols and their significance. Such books regard dream symbols as bearing a universal meaning distinguishable from their context in the dream itself and the specific circumstances of the dreamer's life. In *Berakhot* (56b–57b) scores of symbols are arranged according to subject matter (animals, prayers, wishes, sexuality, etc.) together with the meaning of the symbol.

The history of dream interpretation books is long and varied; as early as the nineteenth century B.C.E. one finds an Egyptian book that classifies dreams according to whether they are favorable or unfavorable (*Hieratic Papyrus* published by Gardiner [1931]). From the library of Ashurbannipal, king of Assyria in the seventh century B.C.E., clay tablets have survived bearing many dream symbols and their interpretations. The most important dream book in the Greco-Roman world is the aforementioned book of Artemidorus, which contains several hundred dream symbols arranged according to subject. This book was widely read and translated into many different languages.

The Middle Ages

Along with the enduring trends in rabbinic literature, one finds a number of specifically medieval features in dream interpretation. Amid the scientific-philosophical debate on the source and significance of the dream, the Torah scholar and Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides proposed the theory that the ideal prophetic dream is the result of harmony between the profusion of the mind and the power of the imagination. When this harmony is upset, especially when more weight is given to the faculty of the imagination, the result is vain dreams that do not predict the future (*Guide for the Perplexed,* chapter 2, 36–38; Eight Chapters 1)

The Zohar draws a distinction between the dreams of evildoers deriving from the powers of corruption and the dreams of the righteous, which derive from the angelic realm. During the Middle Ages there was widespread popular literature featuring dream description and the use of dreams as part of a narrative plot in which the dream serves to advance the plot and bestow power and knowledge on the hero. One example of this type of literature is in the *Sefer ḥasidim* (Book of the Pious) attributed to Rabbi Judah the Pious from the thirteenth century. This work contains many dream descriptions, the majority of which relate to the dead and their accounts of what they experience in the upper worlds, in keeping with the cultural

conventions of reward and punishment. Another dream work worth noting is the sixteenth-century *Mefasher ḥalmin* (The Interpretation of Dreams), by Rabbi Shlomo Almuli, with its discussion of the sources of dreams and glossary of dream symbols.

The Modern Age

The most notable dream book of the modern age is undoubtedly *The Interpretation of Dreams* by the founder of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, published in 1899, though not all of Freud's ideas are new or original. Relating to the two classical aspects of dream analysis, the source and significance of dreams, Freud made the familiar claim based on earlier sources and the scientific research of his time that dream content issues from the events of the passing day. As for their significance, Freud made the equally unoriginal claim that dreams represent wish fulfillment. What is truly innovative in Freud's thought is his recognition that a dream has two levels, one manifest and the other latent. At the latent level, a process of censorship takes place in the dream because of its taboo or threatening contents. The role of the psychoanalyst is to identify this censored content and through it expose the real wishes of the dreamer. Freud's theory of interpretation created an entire system of basic concepts like displacement and integration.

Parallel with psychoanalytic literature, and as a result of the importance of dreams in modern culture, scores of popular books on systems of dream interpretation and classification can be found today. These draw on earlier literature, particularly the Babylonian Talmud and the interpretive traditions of the Middle Ages. Books such as *Pesher ha'ḥalomot* (The Meaning of Dreams) or *Milon ha'ḥalomot* (The Dictionary of Dreams) are readily available, affording readers the traditional means for understanding and interpreting their own dreams. Although the popularity of books on dream interpretation is a function of modern Western culture, paradoxically, the books themselves show a preference for traditional methods of interpretation and ignore, almost completely, the ideas and achievements of modern psychoanalysis.

Haim Weiss

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DRUYANOW, ALTER (1870–1938)

Alter Druyanow was a folklorist, publicist, historian, and Zionist leader. His literary work includes articles, descriptive writing, and literary criticism. He is well regarded in scholarship for his editorship, with Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky and Haim Nachman Bialik, of the first four volumes of *Reshumot,* a periodical devoted to the study of folklore (1919–1926). His other well-known works include *Sefer ha'bediḥa ve'ha'ḥidud* (The Book of Jokes and Witticisms), first published in Frankfurt, Germany, in 1922, and the essay "From the Roof of Great Synagogue," which relates the story of the Jewish synagogue in Druya, first published in the journal *Bustenai* in 1934.

Druyanow was born in Druya, Lithuania (now in Belarus), on July 6, 1870. When he was sixteen, he joined the Hibbat Zion, a Zionist movement that began in the 1880s and advocated a revival of Jewish life in Eretz Israel (Land of Israel). Between 1900 and 1905 he served as secretary of the Odessa-based committee for the settlement of Eretz Israel, arriving there in 1903. In 1905 his Zionist activity took him to Vilna, then the center of the Zionist movement in Russia, where he helped found the Russian Zionist Center and became its secretary. In 1906 Druyanow immigrated to Haifa. In 1909 he was invited by Ahad Ha'am (pseudonym of Asher Ginsberg, 1856–1927) to edit *Ha'olam,* the official weekly of the
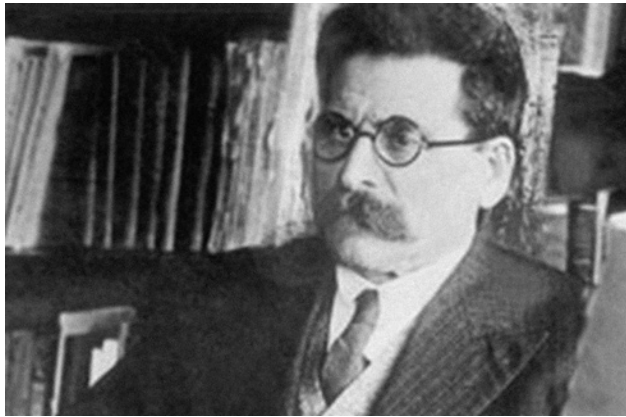
Alter Druyanow. (From *Selected Writings, 1943–1945*)

Zionist organization, and returned to Vilna. Later he continued to edit the newspaper from Odessa. During World War I he became an active member of the Committee to Help Jewish War Refugees, visiting many of the devastated Jewish communities. He continued his Zionist activities as a member of the Russian Zionist Center. In 1921 Druyanow moved permanently to Eretz Israel as part of a group of Hebrew authors and settled in Jerusalem. For the first year he served as the office manager of the Dvir publishing house and then as manager of Jaffa–Tel Aviv Savings and Loan Bank. Unchallenged by the job, he resigned to devote himself to writing.

Like most Zionist folklorists of his time, Druyanow wrote in Hebrew. *The Book of Jokes and Witticisms,* although written in Hebrew, was collected mostly from Yiddish sources. This book is the zenith of Druyanow's work, representing almost three decades of effort. The collected material from both written and oral sources required laborious editing and arrangement of more than 3,000 Jewish jokes. Druyanow applied meticulous guidelines in order to provide a distinctively Hebrew setting to the folklore he discovered in diverse sources, supplemented by notes about sources and variants. In the third edition, the jokes were organized into thirty-five topical chapters, including "Storekeepers and Peddlers," "Rich and Poor," "Ḥasidim and Mitnagdim," "Gluttons and Topers," and "Physicians and Patience."

The introduction to the first edition, comprising three main sections, is an important contribution to the study of Jewish jokes and humor. Druyanow compared European humor and Jewish humor. He saw European humor as distinguished by its use of puns and wordplay, whereas Jewish humor relies primarily on the "intellectual Midrash." According to him the typical European joke requires the cloak of linguistic technique; it is typically a matter of linguistic ambiguity, while the typical Jewish joke is typically a matter of conceptual ambiguity. To cite one example:

Caleb Letz is drinking coffee at a Jewish coffeehouse. When he finishes and goes over to the counter to pay, the owner says to him: "Reb Caleb, what do you think of my coffee?"

"Your coffee," replied Caleb "has one great advantage, but also one great deficiency. The advantage is that it does not contain any chicory. But the deficiency is that it doesn't contain any coffee, either." (Druyanow in Bar-Itzhak 2010, 129)

We find here the duality of the covert inside the overt. Caleb does not expose the secret of the coffee's mediocrity; on the contrary, he seems to be covering over and concealing it. Precisely because of this, however, the secret leaks out and is revealed "by accident."

According to Druyanow's analysis, normally, Jewish coffee contained both chicory and coffee, and the two are combined in our mind to produce the idea of coffee. Nevertheless, "coffee" that is all chicory and contains no coffee is also called coffee, and so is pure coffee without chicory. Thus the absence of chicory by itself does not negate our normal idea of coffee, nor does the absence of coffee. But Caleb suggests a greater feat: He says that we should make room in our minds for an image that in fact is inconceivable—"coffee" that contains neither chicory nor coffee.

The inner technique of these jokes is a combination of ideas that are ostensibly tied together by a thread of a particular necessity—logical, psychological, or descriptive. When we reach the end of the thread, we discover that it was never there at all—only its image—and the combination that it tied together has evaporated. The jester assigns substance to a seeming possibility of meaning, even though he knows that this substance is quite absurd.

Druyanow also points out that hairsplitting is the heart of Jewish humor. Jewish jokes are based on an internal technique that involves thought. This stimulus and its sudden disappearance give the Jewish joke its particularly sharp flavor, as illustrated in this joke:

Pini of the long beard was sitting and studying by candlelight: "A person with a long beard is a confused person" (*b. Sanhedrin* 100b). Rashi explains, "Someone who has a thick beard is a fool." Pini looked at his beard and considered the matter—what could he do about the situation? To shave is forbidden; to leave the beard the way it is made a statement about himself. He thought hard until he found a solution. He measured two hands-breadths of his beard and brought the rest close to the burning candle. The fire flamed up, burned the entire beard, and scorched Pini's face. Pini added a note in the margin of the Gemara: "Tried and proven." (Druyanow in Bar-Itzhak 2010, 134)

Another reason the Jewish jokes are so sharp, according to Druyanow, is that they are really mockery rather than comedy, and mockery by its nature is always assiduously honing its arrows and smearing them with poison so that their wounds will not be inconsequential.

The Jewish joke makes fun of everything, because the joke gives the Jews the ability to rebel against everything. Jews rebel not only against their external oppressors; they express their rebellion against their internal subjection and oppressors as well, against the enslaving jobs, against the other sex, against rich Jews, against clerics, and even against God himself.

Druyanow's essays repeatedly demonstrate his strong link to folklore, the landscapes of his youth, his hometown of Druya, and the Jewish people, and their way of life. One essay with a strong folkloristic vein is "From the Roof of the Great Synagogue," which tells the story of the synagogue in Druyanow's hometown of Druya. He describes how the synagogue was central to the life of the town and its role in the lives of individuals, both their daily lives and their rites of passage—from circumcision, through marriage, and until death. The origins of the synagogue are associated with a legend whose hero is the local rabbi, Rabbi Mikhali. According to this account, the synagogue was built by Duke Sapiecha to express his gratitude to the rabbi for blessing the infant in his wife's womb, thanks to which the child lived, after the duke had lost four other children soon after birth. There are other legends associated with the synagogue; for example, about Isaac the sexton, who, when he left the synagogue every night, notified the dead with three knocks of a brass ring that the synagogue was now available for them to pray. According to another legend, none of the fires that swept the town ever damaged the synagogue because the building and its Holy Ark were destined to be transferred to Jerusalem when the messiah comes. Under the synagogue, according to another legend, there is a tunnel that reaches all the way to Jerusalem.

Druyanow died on May 10, 1938. In his will he wrote: "It is well known that I leave behind neither wealth nor property, but only these compositions, with which I have bound up my soul and they are my reward for all my toil" (Druyanow 1969).

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: *Reshumot.*

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DUNDES, ALAN (1934–2005)

A folklorist at the University of California, Berkeley, and professor of anthropology and folklore at the university beginning in 1968, Alan Dundes was a key force in establishing the study of folklore as an academic discipline in the United States. He edited and wrote several dozen books.

Dundes was born in New York City on September 8, 1934. The son of Maurice Dundes, an attorney, and Helen (Rothschild) Dundes, he received his bachelor's degree from Yale University in 1955. He served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Navy from 1955 to 1957, before attending Indiana University, from which he received his master's degree in 1958 and his Ph.D. in 1962.

In examining Dundes's studies on Jewish folklore, two perspectives were taken by later scholars: the first relates to the ways in which Jews perceive their own folklore, through which they express attitudes and values associated with Jewish tradition and customs, while the second relates to the ways in which Jewish folklore is perceived among non-Jewish communities. In his paper "The J.A.P. and the J.A.M. in American Jokelore" (1985), Dundes explored how Jewish Americans feel about and cope with their tradition and origins, by examining the stereotypes of the Jewish American Princess (JAP) and the Jewish American Mother (JAM), as displayed in a joke cycle popularized in the United States in the late 1970s and early 1980s. His analysis brought to light the ambivalence of American Jews, who seek out their roots in order to create a sense of identity but, at the same time, wish to overcome patterns that might be considered ridiculous and old-fashioned by both Jews and non-Jews, exposing the sensitivity of an oppressed and persecuted people. Dundes used the JAP joke cycle in
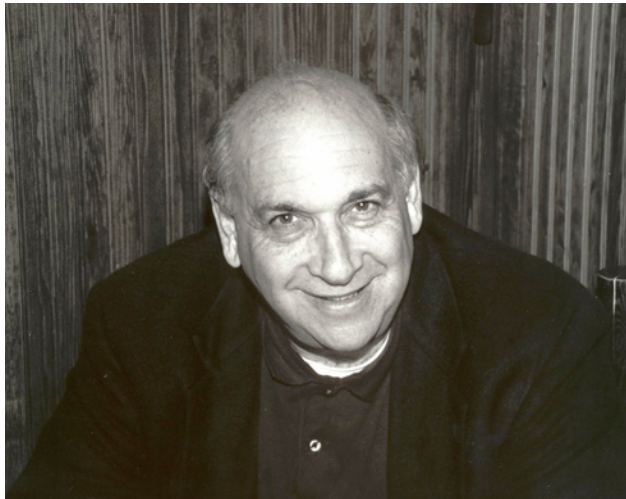
Alan Dundes. *(Photo by Simon Bronner)*

order to demonstrate the mechanism of self-hate, because the JAP jokes, mostly told by Jews, present a negative stereotype of young Jewish women.

In his essay "A Study of Ethnic Slurs: The Jew and the Polack in the United States" (1971), Dundes argued that the function of humor in Jewish tradition, as well as American Jews' ambivalent attitudes toward identity issues, finds its expression not only in the JAP joke cycle but also in the way in which Jewish stereotypes are portrayed in non–Jewish-American folklore. Dundes further noted that in modern American society there is a fear among Jews that they may be losing their identity due to numerous conversions to Christianity or because of massive intermarriage with non-Jews.

These aspects are reflected in non–Jewish-American folklore, as well as in Jewish-American humor. Among the functions of humor in Jewish tradition, Dundes argued that the use of stereotypes and the concept of "national character" are sometimes not humorous at all but, rather, present the dangerous sides of folklore, that is, racism and extreme nationalism. A terrifying example is present in the jokes about World War II, especially those about Auschwitz, mostly told in West Germany in the 1980s ("Auschwitz Jokes," 1983). Dundes wrote that these jokes demonstrate that anti-Semitism is far from dead in Germany, as well as in other places throughout Europe, North and South America, and elsewhere. He also revealed and emphasized the anti-Semitic messages expressed in many kinds of folklore. This is the main focus of his casebook *The Blood Libel Legend* (1991), which explores how the blood libel (which asserts that Jews killed Christian children, using their blood for the purpose of preparing Passover *matzah*) contributed to the widespread persecution and killing of Jews.

The attempt to present the Jewish figure as displayed in Christian folklore had been made by Dundes, together with the scholar Galit Hasan-Rokem, in the casebook titled *The Wandering Jew* (1986). The authors stress that the popularity of the legend of the Wandering Jew among Christians emerged from its pivotal reflection of Jewish-Christian relationships.

Dundes used a psychoanalytical approach in order to explain the connections between religion, humor, folklore, racism, and other human rituals and behavior. In his book *The Shabbat Elevator* (2002), Dundes focused on the topic of "circumventing custom," with a special emphasis on the ingenious ways Jews have devised to avoid performing any item on the extensive list of activities forbidden on the Sabbath.

Dundes took a multifocal approach to understanding the Jewish folklore phenomenon, by not only adopting the psychoanalytic approach but also by integrating it with anthropological views and structural analysis. Employing this perspective, he devoted several of his studies to discussing the numerous issues relevant to Jewish folklore, such as the Flood Myth, biblical stories, and the study of proverbs. In his article "Proverbs and the Ethnography of Speaking" (1964), cowritten with E. Ojo Arewa, Dundes presented the "ethnography of speech" approach, together with a wide range of social uses and cultural situations in which Yiddish proverbs are encountered. Several decades later, other scholars made use of some of the ideas raised in this article, in particular Beatrice Silverman-Weinreich in her paper "Towards a Structural Analysis of Yiddish Proverbs" (1981), which Dundes included in his book *The Wisdom of Many* (1981), coedited with Wolfgang Mieder.

Dundes's multifocal perspective also finds expression in his book *Holy Writ as Oral Lit* (1999). In this book, the Freudian analytical conceptualization that he adopted in many of his other studies is used with other approaches to shed light on his interpretations of many biblical episodes, such as the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Flood, the creation of woman, and issues concerning names and numbers.

In an essay included in his book *The Flood Myth* (1988), Dundes interpreted the Flood as a cosmogonic projection. Rather than taking a psychoanalytical approach to the Flood Myth as a creation myth, as other scholars had done, Dundes suggested viewing it as a *re*-creation myth, by relating the myth to gender issues.

Dundes's serious in-depth study of Jewish humor, along with biblical, theological, and historical issues, and issues such as anti-Semitism, is what makes Dundes's contribution to Jewish folklore research so comprehensive and such an accurate reflection of Jewish folklore and tradition in itself. Dundes died on March 30, 2005.

Ravit Raufman

See also: Blood Libel; United States, Jews of.

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DYBBUK

In the terminology of early modern Ashkenazi Jews, "dybbuk" is a term for a deceased soul who has entered and possessed a living person. The term is a contraction of *davuk miruaḥ ra'ah* (adhered to by an evil spirit), the standard idiom in medieval Hebrew sources for describing a person who is possessed. Jewish sources dating to antiquity describe cases of spirit possession, though few narrative accounts are extant in the literature for the thousand years preceding the famous dybbuk stories that emerged in sixteenth-century Safed. Approximately a dozen narratives of sixteenth-century provenance served as models for the next 300 years of dybbuk possessions and their literary memorializations. Gedalyah Nigal assembled nearly all such accounts—some eighty in all—in his work *Sippurei dybbuk besifrut Yisrael* (Dybbuk Stories in Jewish Literature).

Dybbuk in the Sixteenth Century

In Jewish sources from the sixteenth century on, the dybbuk, or possessing spirit, is generally taken to be a human soul. This distinguishes the early modern Jewish idiom both from its Jewish antecedents and from its contemporary Christian and Islamic analogues. Christian and Islamic traditions regarded possessing agents as devilish beings and condemned notions of "ghost" possession as heretical.

The doctrine of reincarnation assumed unprecedented centrality in sixteenth-century Jewish thought; this apparently accounts for the new tendency in this period to regard spirit possession as a form of transmigration. In this new etiology, the possessing agent was thought to be a soul whose sins were so egregious that he was denied admission to *Gehinnom,* the purgatorial realm that purified even sinning Jewish souls so that they might thereafter graduate to the paradisiacal Garden of Eden. Stuck between worlds, the soul sought respite in the body of a human. This "host" or victim might also enable the dybbuk to access a kabbalistic exorcist powerful enough to purify his soul and facilitate an admission to *Gehinnom* after all.

A new etiology also gave rise to a new and different approach to exorcism. Whereas exorcism techniques had always sought to expel the intruding spirit to save the possessed, the new approach incorporated a clear, if secondary goal: to save the dybbuk from his awful fate whenever possible as well. Kabbalistic terminology (which did not adopt the more colloquial term "dybbuk" outside early modern Europe) referred to the possessing agent as an *ibbur* (impregnation). Although references to a good soul who had become impregnated in the body of a living person for the latter's benefit as a dybbuk are rare, they do exist. More typically, kabbalistic works distinguish between good and evil impregnations and thus cast the exorcist as something of a midwife, responsible for the safe delivery of the impregnated spirit. (Benign impregnations were generally left untreated, as the good souls were thought to depart when their work was complete.) The idiom of pregnancy and its gendered implications is reinforced by the fact that women outnumbered men as victim-hosts by two to one in the extant narratives. (This statistic is in line with synthetic studies carried out by anthropologists who have surveyed global research on spirit possession.)

As a culturally dependent phenomenon, dybbuk possession has disappeared in modern Jewish social settings. Very few cases were documented in European Jewish com-

Scenes from *The Dybbuk*, a production by the Habimah Players of Israel. *(Nina Leen/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images)*

munities during the twentieth century; sectors of North African and Ethiopian Jewish communities continue to recognize forms of spirit possession, reflecting degrees of relative isolation from modern European cultural sensibilities. Contemporary rabbinical authorities who do not dismiss the plausibility of the phenomenon have explained the curious disappearance of dybbuk possession in various ways, suggesting that God's concealment has been intensified in the modern era or that S. An-Ski's eponymous play *The Dybbuk* made dybbuks seem so ridiculous during the first decades of the twentieth century that none cared to appear in that role thereafter.

Literature About the Dybbuk

The historical study of dybbuk possession is based on a number of distinct types of literature. These include grimoire-style books of magic providing exorcism techniques, kabbalistic books that delve into the phenomenon from a theoretical point of view, and possession accounts. In this last category scholars have distinguished between "reports" and "stories"; the former are presented with careful attention to the details of the participants and the witness(es) who recorded the events, while the latter are presented at a level of abstraction that obscures the historicity of the case. These different types of accounts also tend to appear in various literary contexts, with the reports published as independent chapbooks or as appendices to rabbinical works and the stories appearing in anthologies of wondrous tales. Both reports and stories were most frequently published for their didactic value, as a dybbuk is a powerful witness to life after death, reward and punishment in the afterlife, and the like. Tales of successful exorcism also redounded to the credit of rabbis, who thus demonstrated their magical prowess. Hasidic tales of dybbuk possession place a far greater emphasis on the exorcist than do tales from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. If the earlier tales focus on the cruel

fate of the dybbuk and the lessons to be learned about the cost of sin and faithlessness, Hasidic tales aggrandize the role of the rebbe-exorcist. In so doing, the dybbuk tale becomes something of a subgenre of Hasidic hagiography. Exorcising spirits is just one more miracle that the Hasidic rebbe can do. And he can do it without the ceremonial intricacies of the hoary magical techniques deployed by non-Hasidic kabbalist-exorcists. One story has the rebbe exorcise a dybbuk with no more than a piece of Shabbat cake. It should be noted that the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa contain two dybbuk stories collected in the course of contemporary fieldwork; this would indicate that such legends continue to circulate orally.

The Dybbuk, by S. An-Ski

Today the term "dybbuk" is known chiefly from An-Ski's famous early-twentieth-century play (written and reworked by An-Ski between 1912 and 1917 in both Russian and Yiddish), in which the playwright drew upon the stories that he discovered during his 1912 ethnographic expedition to Jewish shetls in Eastern Europe to create a romantic drama with mythic resonance. Although An-Ski drew many elements from classical dybbuk tales, the scenario that he depicted was unprecedented: The dybbuk is the true love of his victim, and the possession is ultimately a consensual union of love in defiance of the arranged marriage into which she has been compelled. The play, in its Hebrew translation (1918) by Haim Nachman Bialik, ushered in the era of modern Hebrew theater in the seminal production of the Habima Company. Although critical estimations of the work's artistic merits have been mixed, the play has consistently attracted authors and musicians interested

in reviving and revising its raw materials, including the Italian composer Lodovico Rocca, who based an opera on the play; the composer Leonard Bernstein, whose ballet *Dybbuk* premiered in 1944; and Pulitzer Prize–winning playwright Tony Kushner, who rewrote *The Dybbuk* in 1998.

Yossi Chajes

See also: Afterlife; An-Ski, S.; Death; Magic.

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E

EDOT: A QUARTERLY FOR FOLKLORE AND ETHNOLOGY

Edot: A Quarterly for Folklore and Ethnology was a periodical begun by Raphael Patai and Joseph J. Rivlin and published by the Palestine Institute of Folklore and Ethnology, which Patai had founded in Jerusalem in 1944. Patai was also the vital force behind the periodical, whose title translates as "Ethnic Groups." In all, three volumes of the journal, each totaling more than 300 pages, appeared between 1945 and 1948.

The journal originally contained articles in Hebrew with summaries in English, but beginning with volume 3, the two editors resolved to publish complete English translations of the major articles. After Patai left Jerusalem for the United States in 1947, he entrusted his friends Saul Angel and Colin Malamet to shepherd the last issue to press. It was duly published early in the summer of 1948, with a note signed by Angel and dated "Shavu'ot Eve, 5708, in the days of the siege of Jerusalem."

In an article in volume 1 of the journal, Patai distinguished the fields of folklore, ethnology, and anthropology. He noted the aspects that mark the folklore and ethnology of the Jewish people and, in the spirit of the times, described the role of Jewish traditions and national aspirations for the Land of Israel as factors uniting the Jewish people in the Diaspora. Patai's emphasis was on the urgent need for research on Jewish communities and their oral traditions, and for this purpose he sought out not only scholars but also laypeople with knowledge of the customs and beliefs of particular Jewish communities:

> The written sources on which such research must rely are safely preserved in great libraries in different places in the world. If we do not do the work, scholars of future generations will be able to accomplish it. But it is otherwise with the folklore and ethnology of the Jewish communities living today. Living customs, oral traditions, wherever they still exist, are in mortal peril owing to the uncertain conditions of life.

Such a statement, as well as the title of the periodical, may be taken as a declaration of Patai's intentions in founding the journal and reflects as well the urgent task he assigned to it.

The contents of the journal divide its areas of interest into seven categories (which do not form separate sections in each volume). They are:

1. Essays and research
2. Customs and traditions
3. Texts
4. Questions and answers
5. News from the Institute
6. General news
7. Books and listing of books received

The leading contributors to *Edot,* in addition to Patai and Meir (Max) Grünwald, one of the great figures in Jewish folklore, included Moshe Attias, Avraham Ben-Ya'akov, Shmuel Ben-Shabbat, Meir Benayahu, Ya'akov Braslavsky, Yehuda Leib Zlotnik (Avidah), Yosef Neumann, and Menahem Ezuz. The American Melville J. Herskovits, who was chairman of the Committee for International Cooperation in Anthropology, contributed information about the discipline worldwide.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Patai, Raphael.

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EGG

The egg is one of the most basic human foods: It is nutritious, readily available, easily cooked, and convenient to carry around. As such, it has always been a common and welcome component of the Jewish kitchen.

In addition to its culinary benefits, the egg is an archetype, universally symbolizing birth and fertility. It reflects humankind's contemplation of the mystery of a new life, as a new living creature emerges from a hard and inert object. Its white color ambivalently represents holiness, coldness, and despair, on the one hand, eternity and hope, on the other. Its oval shape is a common symbol for infinity and as such is related to mourning. In Jewish traditional culture, the egg symbolized "new life," which became "cultured" (according

to Claude Lévi-Strauss's terminology) through cooking and coloring.

In traditional daily life, the egg was a useful object: as a measuring unit, six eggs were a "log" (0.54 liter, 18.25 fl oz [U.S.]). Its hard membrane served as a small oil container, which allowed oil to drip into a receptacle to be used as an oil candle (*m. Shabbat* 2:4).

The egg is ritually intertwined with both the Jewish life cycle and the yearly cycle. Hard-boiled eggs are a main ingredient in the meals offered to mourners (*seudat havra'ah*). At weddings, eggs symbolizing fertility are a central feature in the customs of numerous countries. In Russia, the bride entered the *ḥuppah* (the portable canopy under which the bride and groom stand) with an egg hidden between her breasts. In Morocco, the bride was seated on a vessel filled with eggs and rainwater. In other places, an egg was rolled under her seat. The groom ate eggs for forty days after the wedding. The couple is fed with eggs. Breaking eggs during a wedding is a common custom, explained as a sign of the remembrance of the two Temples' destruction: in 586 B.C.E. by the Babylonians and in 70 C.E. by the Romans. Its source may be a magical means intended to expel evil forces, which according to the Babylonian Talmud (Brachot 54b) may oppose and harm the wedding attendees.

In the Jewish yearly cycle, its most central occurrence is at the Passover (Pesaḥ) Seder. Although not mentioned in the Passover Haggadah, the egg is one of the Seder plate's required symbols, in memory of the *ḥagigah,* the festive sacrifice offered in the Temple in addition to the paschal one, as explained in the *hilhot pessah* in the *Shulḥan Arukh*, *Orah Haim* section, paragraph 473:4. The egg generally symbolizes resurrection and life after death. It is also the symbol of the People of Israel: As the egg hardens the more it cooks, so the more its people are persecuted the more Israel's stubbornness increases (*A Pesaḥ Haggadah with Commentaries by Rabbi Moshe Sofer, the Chatam Sofer* [1762–1839]). Diverse customs regarding the egg on Passover exist among the different Jewish communities. In some, the number of eggs placed on the Seder plate is the equivalent of the participants. In others, the egg is eaten with saltwater at the beginning of the meal. The saltwater stands for a reminder of the sea of tears shed over the Temple's destruction.

In some communities, the Seder plate egg is not to be eaten on the same day as the Seder itself. Eating it the day after is believed to fulfill all wishes and is a sign of good luck in the year to come.

The egg is present also at the festivities ending the seven days of Passover. Libyan Jews bake special bread with an egg on top. On the Moroccan Mimuna, celebrating the end of Passover, the main symbol is a plate filled with flour in which are placed five eggs, five fava beans, and five dates.

Other events on the Jewish calendar include eggs. On the eve of the Ninth of Av, the custom is to eat an egg dipped in ashes, as a sign of mourning the Temple's destruction. On Lag Ba'Omer, in Russia, the children used to bring to the *cheder* colored hard-boiled eggs. In Hungary, the congregation sent a plate of eggs to the community officials. The *ḥevra kadisha* (burial society) used to collect eggs from every household for the community meal that occurred in the evening. According to folklorist Yom-Tov Lewinsky, the reason offered for these customs is that eating eggs between Passover and Shavuot was a sign of mourning the late first-century Judean sage Rabbi Akiva and his pupils. On Lag Ba'Omer the mourning ends. In order to differentiate between the mourning eggs and the festive ones, the latter are colored.

The egg is included in special dishes on the Jewish holidays Ḥanukkah (latkes, or potato pancakes), Purim (Moroccan bread topped with hard-boiled eggs), Passover, and Shavuot. The egg is an important ingredient of the Shabbat meal. Chopped boiled eggs mixed with onions are traditionally served at the second Shabbat meal. The custom is to abstain from eating eggs at the end of Shabbat due to its connotation of mourning. Sephardic Jews serve browned boiled eggs (*ḥaminados*) on every festive event as a symbol of life and its mystery.

Zeharia Goren

See also: Symbols.

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ELIJAH THE PROPHET

A prophet in Israel in the ninth century B.C.E., Elijah appears in the Hebrew Bible, Talmud, Mishnah, Christian Bible, and the Qur'an. He figures prominently in Jewish folklore as the "messenger of the covenant" (between God and his people) and as the hero of dozens of folktales. The volume of references to Elijah in folklore and tradition stands in marked contrast to that in the canon. His career is extensive, colorful, and varied.

In the Bible

According to the books of Kings, Elijah was a miracle-worker: He raised the dead (1 Kgs. 17:22), brought fire down from the sky (1 Kgs. 18:38 and 2 Kgs. 1:10), caused heaven to rain (1 Kgs. 18:45), divided the waters of the Jordan River hither and thither with his mantle (2 Kgs. 2:8), and ascended to heaven on a whirlwind (2 Kgs. 2:11). According to the prophecy of Malachi, "Behold, I will send you the prophet Elijah before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord" (Mal. 3:23), Elijah is thought to be the precursor to the coming of the messiah. Based on this prophecy, both Jesus and John the Baptist are frequently thought to be Elijah in the New Testament. Elijah is also mentioned as a prophet who sent a letter to Jehoram (2 Chr. 21:12). According to the commentary of Rashi, this letter was sent by Elijah after ascending to heaven.

In Talmud and Midrash

Elijah is mentioned in the Talmud and the midrashic literature more than a hundred times. The expression "Till Elijah will come" appears in the end of many halakhic discussions where the rabbinical scholars do not come to a clear agreement (*m. Bava Metzi'a* 3; *b. Berakhot* 32b). The meaning of this expression is that they leave the final decision to the day that Elijah will reappear, that is, the time of the messiah. The word *teku*, which often appears in the Talmud at the end of unsolved arguments, is an Aramaic word (*teku* from *tekum*), meaning "It will stand up"; that is, it will remain unsolved, but in the folk tradition this word is understood as an acronym: "Tishbi [i.e., Elijah] will settle questions and problems." The expression "Elijah years," mentioned in Babylonian Talmud, indicates years with no rains. According to Babylonian Talmud, Elijah has "the keys of rains" (*Ta'anit* 23a).

The talmudic and midrashic literature contain many legends about the revelation of Elijah, usually to religious scholars but sometimes to ordinary people (*Avot de'Rabbi Nathan* A:2; *b. Berakhot* 6b). In his revelations he appears either in his own form (*b. Berakhot* 3a; *Shabbat* 33b) or disguised as a simple man (*Nedarim* 50a), as an

Brith-milah chair plaque recalling the Chair of Elijah, Italy 1800. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

Arab (*Berakhot* 6b), as a witness in a trial (*Berakhot* 58a), as a horseman (*Shabbat* 109b), as someone who belongs to foreign people (*Ta'anit* 21a), and even as a prostitute (*Avodah Zarah* 18b).

Sometimes Elijah plays the role of a messenger (*Shabbat* 33 a) or a mediator between heaven and earth (*Ḥagigah* 15, 2; *Bava Metzi'a* 59b), or a lifesaver (*Qiddushin* 40a). Elijah can also appear in a dream (*Ber. Rab.* 83, 4).

Elijah is counted between nine people who entered the Garden of Eden when they were still alive (*Masekhet Derekh Eretz* 1:18). Because he is considered a living man, he is obliged to follow Jewish law; therefore he would come back neither on holidays nor on Sabbath (*b. Eruvin* 43b). Because of this he is expected to come on the conclusion of the Sabbath (*Havdalah*), and his name is connected in the folk tradition with this time.

According to the Babylonian Talmud, the cave where Moses stayed in Mount Ḥorev (Cleft of the rock; Exod. 33:22) is the same cave where Elijah stayed (1 Kgs. 19:9). This cave was one of the Ten objects that were formed at the end of creation, before Sabbath (*b. Mo'ed Qatan* 26a; *Megillah* 19b). These sayings were the primary source of many legends about the Elijah cave.

In the Babylonian Talmud there is a story about the Babylonian amora Rabba bar Abuha, who meets Elijah in a cemetery and asks him why, being a *cohen* (descendant of the priestly class), he enters a cemetery (*Bava Metzi'a* 114b). In his commentary to this place, the medieval biblical scholar Rashi explained that this question is based on the identification of Elijah with Phinehas. According to the ninth-century midrash of *Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer*, Elijah and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar (Num. 25), are the same man (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* 28 and 46). This identification is based upon the similar description of the zeal of Phinehas and the zeal of Elijah in the Bible. This is also the opinion of the medieval Jewish philosopher Gersonides (Rabbi Levi ben Gershon, or Ralbag, 1288–1344) in his commentaries to Judges 6:21 and I Kings 17:1. This tra-

dition found its way to the *piyyutim* tradition of the Jews of North Africa (e.g., the *piyyut* "Eroch mahalal nivi," by Rabbi David, son of Aharon Hasin (1722–1792), and to *coplas* (stanzas) in Ladino by Isaac, son of David Shulima, in the second half of the eighteenth century.

In Folk Tradition

In the folk tradition Elijah is considered "the messenger of the covenant." This epithet is mentioned by the prophet Malachi (Malachi 3:1) in the same chapter as the one that tells about the coming of Elijah (Mal. 3:23). In *Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* the epithet "the messenger of the covenant" is interpreted as "the messenger of the circumcision" (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* chapter 28) and it is the first time in the midrashic literature that the custom of preparing a special seat for Elijah is mentioned. Later in the Zohar, this custom is mentioned again (Zohar on Genesis, Va'yigash 209b).

In the folk tradition Elijah is linked to the Jewish holiday Pesaḥ, or Passover, even though he is not mentioned in the Passover Haggadah. There is a custom of putting a big glass of wine on the table as a part of the Passover Seder ceremony. The source of this custom most likely is the saying of Rabbi Tarfon about drinking a fifth glass of wine during the reading of "Hallel hagadol" (The great Hallel) (*b. Pesaḥim* 118a). The four glasses of wine stand for four verses of salvation in the Torah (*y. Pesaḥim* 10, 37c) and because Elijah is considered the herald of the salvation the fifth glass is dedicated to him. Some folk traditions developed following this relation, such as the belief that Elijah appears during the Seder and drinks from his glass. According to another folk tradition, the door to the house where the Seder is taking place is opened in order to invite Elijah to join in. Another reason for the relation between Elijah and Passover is the resemblance between Moses and Elijah that appears in the Midrash (e.g., *Psiqta Rabbati* 4:4).

Elijah is the hero of many folktales. In his source book of Jewish folktales, *Mimeqor Yisrael* (1975), Micha Josef Berdyczewski dedicates an entire chapter to Elijah legends.

Elijah appears in 609 folktales held by the Israel Folktale Archives at the University of Haifa (136 stories from Eastern Europe, 85 from Iraq and Kurdistan, 43 from Sephardic Jews, 14 from Syria and Lebanon, 167 from North Africa, 74 from Central Asia, 65 from Yemen, 10 from Israel, and 15 stories from non-Jewish communities).

The folktales that deal with Elijah largely express the aforementioned midrashic traditions: Elijah teaches famous rabbis and studies the Torah with them. He reveals himself to ordinary people in reality or in dreams. He helps needy people by giving them money, miraculous objects, or advice. He often appears near Passover or dur-

ing the Passover Seder. Sometimes he appears as an old man with a white beard or disguised as a poor man. In many stories he is a miracle worker and saves people from death. In some stories he saves an entire community from blood libel or oppressors. In other stories he tests people, punishes the sinners, and rewards those who give to charity. In still other stories he helps people to find spouses.

Yoel Perez

See also: Blood Libel; Circumcision; Demon; Haggadah of Passover; India, Jews of; Jerusalem and the Temple; Magic; Passover.

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ELISHA BEN-AVUYAH

Elisha Ben-Avuyah was a Tanna (rabbinic sage of the Mishnaic period) who lived in the first half of the second century C.E. and is considered one of the great sages of his day. However, he later renounced Judaism, after which he was called "*aḥer*" (another person) among the scholars. Most of his friends abandoned him, except for his disciple, the Jewish sage Rabbi Meir.

Ben-Avuyah was born in Jerusalem to a prominent family. He became well known for his sayings that emphasize the importance of good deeds alongside the study of the Torah (*Avot de'Rabbi Nathan* 24). His saying: "Learning in youth is like writing in ink on clean paper, but learning in old age is like writing with ink on blotted paper" (*Avot* 4:20) was interpreted by some researchers as a reflection of antagonistic relations between him and Rabbi Akiva, who started to study in old age.

The story of Ben-Avuyah appears in tractate *Ḥagigah* in both Talmuds (*y. Ḥagigah* 82:1; *Hag.* 15:b). The

famous story is about four scholars who were engaged in esoteric philosophy (entered the Pardes): Simeon Ben Azzai, Simeon Ben Zoma, Aher (Elisha Ben-Avuyah), and Akiva Ben Joseph (Rabbi Akiva). Each responded differently to divine secrets that they encountered. Ben-Avuyah "destroyed the plants," that is, became a heretic.

The Yerushalmi Talmud makes it possible to interpret Ben-Avuyah's apostasy as a result of the profound shock he suffered after the failure of the Bar Kochba revolt, the major rebellion of the Jews of Judea against the Roman Empire, Rome's punitive operations, and his great disappointment in divine providence and justice, evident in his question: "Is this the Torah and this its reward?" (*y. Ḥagigah*). The Babylonian Talmud explains Ben-Avuyah's sin as the effect of his mystic endeavors; he was thought to believe in two supreme beings, that is, in the duality of the deity. The Babylonian Talmud tells about his sins in scheming against the scholars and assisting the Roman authorities in forcing Jews to work on the Sabbath, and even visiting prostitutes. The text claims that heretical books were seen to fall from under his arms and that he showed a preference for Roman culture.

There are many stories about the relationship between Ben-Avuyah and Rabbi Meir, after his apostasy. Rabbi Meir refused to sever relations with him, in spite of criticism by various scholars. He called upon his associates to bear in mind the days before Ben-Avuyah's apostasy, when he was a great scholar. A famous story tells how Ben-Avuyah rode past Rabbi Meir's seminary on the Sabbath. When his students told Rabbi Meir about it, he interrupted his lesson, went out to his former teacher, and accompanied him, discussing the subject that he was teaching and trying gently to persuade him to repent. According to the tradition, Rabbi Meir stayed by his side while he was dying and tried to make him reflect on repentance; it seemed to him that his teacher died a penitent.

The figure of Ben-Avuyah preoccupied scholars; it raises serious questions about the reasons for his sins, the relationship between Ben-Avuyah and Rabbi Meir, and scholars' ambivalent attitude toward him after he had left the fold. Even contemporary scholars express interest in him, while discussing the relationship between the prevailing consensus and the rebel. Some consider him a sinner and wonder what his motives were; others perceive him as a fighter against the all-embracing political power of the religious hegemony in his generation, apparent in the teachings and the path taken by Rabbi Akiva. In 1947 Moshe Shamir published the story "On His Horse on the Sabbath," imagining the inner world of Elisha Ben-Avuyah, a sage but bitter at heart.

Yael Poyas

See also: Meir Ba'al Ha'Nes, Rabbi.

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ELLIS ISLAND

Opened on January 1, 1892, Ellis Island, located in New York harbor, New York, became the premier U.S. immigration station in the early decades of the twentieth century. In operation until 1954 (with greatly reduced numbers of entrants after 1924 due to a strict quota system), the station "processed" more than 12 million passengers arriving via steamship. By most estimates, more than 3.5 million Jews came from Eastern Europe between 1880 and 1920. In addition to its function as an immigration facility, Ellis Island is a symbol of the immigration experience and the subject of much Jewish folklore.

Ellis Island as a Symbol of Passage

To immigrants, both Ellis Island and the nearby Statue of Liberty have represented the enormous possibilities of the new world. On the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty, "The New Colossus," an 1883 sonnet by the poet Emma Lazarus, expresses Americans' idealized self-image of its welcome of immigrants: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free. . . . I lift my lamp beside the golden door." Immigrants arriving by boat would react with commotion and wonder at the Statue of Liberty, a symbol of arrival on American shores. However, they still had to go through the process of interview and inspection at Ellis Island—a source of great anxiety, as, even after the lengthy journey, newcomers might still be turned back. The folklore of Ellis Island highlights the stresses of the passage from the old worlds to the new. Crossing from Ellis Island to the mainland of the United States was symbolic of self-transformation, with all the potential and dangers involved. It could bring joy to many but also sadness and despair. For immigrants the passage through Ellis Island was a microcosm of their transformation over time into Americans.

From 1855 to 1890, immigrants were examined and processed through Castle Garden, America's first official immigration center located on an island off the southwest tip of Manhattan. "Kesselgarden" is the Yiddish pronunciation of Castle Garden. Kesselgarden came to be used as a noun to describe confusion and chaos. The word became so well known that some Jews mistakenly referred to Ellis Island as Castle Garden.

At Ellis Island, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) provided assistance and guidance to new Jewish immigrants. The HIAS had representatives on site, providing translation services, trying to prevent deportations, and even lending some Jews the $25 landing fee. Immigrant Aaron Domnitz was impressed that Ellis Island provided an official who spoke Yiddish: "A big strange country recognized my language that I had brought there with me from abroad as an official language. In Russia and Germany, I did not receive any such privilege."

Pre-Emigration Folklore

Pre-emigration Jewish folklore related to Ellis Island has been found in Eastern Europe. For example, before arriving some emigrants revealed that they expected roasted chicken and roasted pigeons to fall from the sky and that the streets would literally run with milk and honey. Other lore relates to the trip and arrival, as well as to early life in America. This folklore includes songs, narratives, beliefs, jokes, and material culture. The later lore addresses themes such as a greenhorn's (newcomer's) awkwardness and attempts to "pass," some of which is portrayed in vaudeville skits such as "Mendl and Yentl" or "Cohen on the Telephone."

Songs in Eastern Europe express the range of emotions concerning emigration. Often men would leave home first and send for their family after they had established themselves. Songs by wives and mothers left behind feature their hopes and fears. Sholem Aleichem's 1892 poem turned song, "Shlof, mayn kind" (Sleep, My Child), expresses the wife's longing for reunion with the child's father in America, a paradise where challah can be eaten not just on the Sabbath and holidays but every day. In contrast to this positive vision of the future, two "letter songs" reveal the current pain of separation and loss. In "A briv fun Amerike," the poet M.M. Varshavski recites a letter about a son's disillusionment in America, weeping bitterly at the separation from his mother. A mother's yearning for a letter from her son is the theme of Solomon Shmulevitz's beloved song, "A brivele der mamen" (A Letter to Mama). In the 1939 film of the same name, one of the last Yiddish films made in Poland before the Nazi invasion, the mother flees to America and, inspired by the Statue of Liberty on her way into the country, she hopes to find her son again.

In contrast to the sincere emotions of these songs, other songs of parody, such as "Long Live America with Its Dollars," mock the paradisiacal images of America, showing it instead as a corrupting force. For the sake of dollars, the singer is ready to marry a shrew or a cripple. "Let my bride be deformed/As long as she has an aunt in America."

The processing of immigrants is the focus of an "Ellis Island" song by Solomon Shmulevitz. It tells of a suffering Jew seeking to improve his life. But instead of the welcome promised in "The New Colossus," he is interrogated and turned down. "Oh, Ellis Island . . . how big and terrible you are. Such outrages can only be committed by evil spirits." Only evil spirits can justify the outrage of being refused entry into the new haven.

Later songs reveal other forms of suffering, the pain of those who have made it to "the goldene medina" (golden country). Many are songs about oppressed workers. During a strike, a goon attacks "Motl the operator" and kills him. "Di griner kuzine" (greenhorn cousin) arrives in the new world lively and dancing with bright cheeks "like red oranges." After years of deadening work, her cheeks "have turned completely green already . . . 'to blazes with Columbus' country!'" Morris Rosenfeld, the poet of the sweatshop, was known for his descriptions of exploited workers. In "Mayn yingele" (My Little Boy) of 1887, an exhausted father sings to his little boy, whom he can never see when awake due to his long and tiring workday. "Shmulik, Gavrilik," with text by I. Ringgold and music by G. Mendelson, tells of two childhood friends in Europe who play at horse and rider. When they grow up, the rider becomes a boss in America, the "horse" ends up an exploited factory worker.

Folklore of Arrival

Narratives of arrival at Ellis Island reveal moments of connection and disconnection. Immigrant oral histories tell of their lack of kosher food on board ship. Of those who refused to eat *traif* (nonkosher food), many arrived malnourished and vulnerable to deportation on medical grounds. Some ships provided a non-*traif* table in their dining room and served there, for example, a daily dose of potatoes and herring. (By 1911, the HIAS had a kosher kitchen installed at Ellis Island.) A kindly gesture by some of the ships' captains just before arrival: Each of the women was given a piece of candy and each man a pipe and tobacco so as to "sweeten" the last memory of their unpleasant experiences in steerage. In contrast, many sailors were upset with Jewish women who continued to light Sabbath candles in the steerage section of the boats.

Immigrants could be stranded at the island for weeks or months because a relative or sponsor failed to meet them. Others were detained for health reasons. Trachoma was the

cause for many a hopeful immigrant to be returned to the country of origin. A folk belief dictated that immigrants should not let the inspectors put the hook in their eyes (as was done for the ophthalmic check) for fear that their eyeballs would fall out.

First Encounters

Objects common in America were seen as symbolic of high status by immigrants when they were first encountered. Joseph Parnes, an immigrant of 1921, was convinced that his aunt was a millionaire because she had a full bowl of sugar. Immigrant narratives reveal a whole series of wondrous "first encounters" with objects or practices. Narratives describing these firsts show bewilderment and excitement at, for example, evening lights, a lit ballpark, a urinal, chewing gum, a corned beef sandwich, oranges, grapes, and Jell-O. But the most commonly cited novelty was the banana, which none of the immigrants had ever seen before. Several admitted that they assumed it was to be eaten as is, and they devoured both its peel and the fruit within.

Abraham Cahan's 1896 novel *Yekl,* about Jewish immigrants on the Lower East Side of New York City in the late 1800s, includes a striking Ellis Island encounter scene. The meeting of the husband, Yekl—now known as Jake—who has been in America for three years, with his newly arrived wife and son provokes an irreparable crisis in the couple's life. The encounter between old and new world in one family (vividly portrayed in *Hester Street,* the 1975 film based on the novel) is paradigmatic of similar meetings expressed in narratives, jokes, diaries, letters, plays, and memoirs. Jake is mortified by the traditional dress and wig of his wife, Gitl. "They don't wear wigs here. . . . Here one does not wear even a kerchief," he tells his incredulous wife, so accustomed to covering her hair, the custom for Orthodox Jewish wives in Eastern Europe. She finds that his clean-shaved, beardless face and clothes make him look like a *poritz* (Polish gentile nobleman). Gitl is scandalized that the family will be traveling and handling money on the Sabbath.

The painful mismatch between the recently Americanized swell, Yekl, and his fresh-off-the-boat wife and child reveals areas of discord highlighted at Ellis Island. Immigrant assimilation and acculturation issues continued to be points of contention within the Jewish community for decades. Some of the issues to be resolved included men and women's clothing styles; hair, including facial hair, as a sacred symbol; language spoken (Yiddish vs. English); a Yiddish accent in English; emotionalism; and hygiene. Of note also are the contrasts in cultural values, such as respect for traditional Jewish learning vs. admiration for the more aggressive American money-oriented culture.

As American Jews have looked back on their family histories, constructing tales of the old world and transition to America, a number of sentimentalized narratives and folk beliefs have emerged. Among them is the belief that their Americanized names were mistakenly changed at Ellis Island. In actuality, due to the care with which names were recorded on the ship's manifest and the fact that translators were available for over thirty different languages, it would have been very rare for such a mistake to be made. Yet the joke about the Jew whose American name had been changed to "Sean Fergusson," because he had "already forgotten" (*shoyn fargessen*) the American name he had decided on, is still widely believed to be based on fact.

A newer source of material culture folklore emerged in the late twentieth century with Americans' renewed interest in family roots and heritage and with the opening of Ellis Island and the Statue of Liberty as a national museum of immigration in 1990. The Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island Foundation shop features folk art memorabilia, recreations of traditional objects, and creative reimaginings of immigrant life scenes, all of which assist American Jews in their search for roots of community and family heritage.

Ilana Abramovitch

See also: United States, Jews of.

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ELZET, JUDAH (AVIDAH, YEHUDA LEIB)

See: Poland, Jews of

ENGEL, JULIUS

See: Russia, Jews of

Aaron as High Priest, from The North French Hebrew Miscellany (folio 113b), written and illustrated in northern France, ca. 1278. The British Library (Ms. 11639). *(Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY)*

Balaam and the angel. Manuscript illustration from the Rutland Psalter, ca. 1260. *(HIP/Art Resource, NY)*

Cain and Abel, from the Sarajevo Haggadah. *(National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo).*

Traditional image of Jerusalem embroidered with polychrome wool on punched paper. Jerusalem, ca. 1900. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

David with the head of Goliath. Detail from "Three Rabbis of Old / Dayyeinu" (Łódź, 1935). From the Szyk Haggadah. *(The Robbins Family Collection. Reproduced with the cooperation of The Arthur Szyk Society, Burlingame, CA, www.szyk.org)*
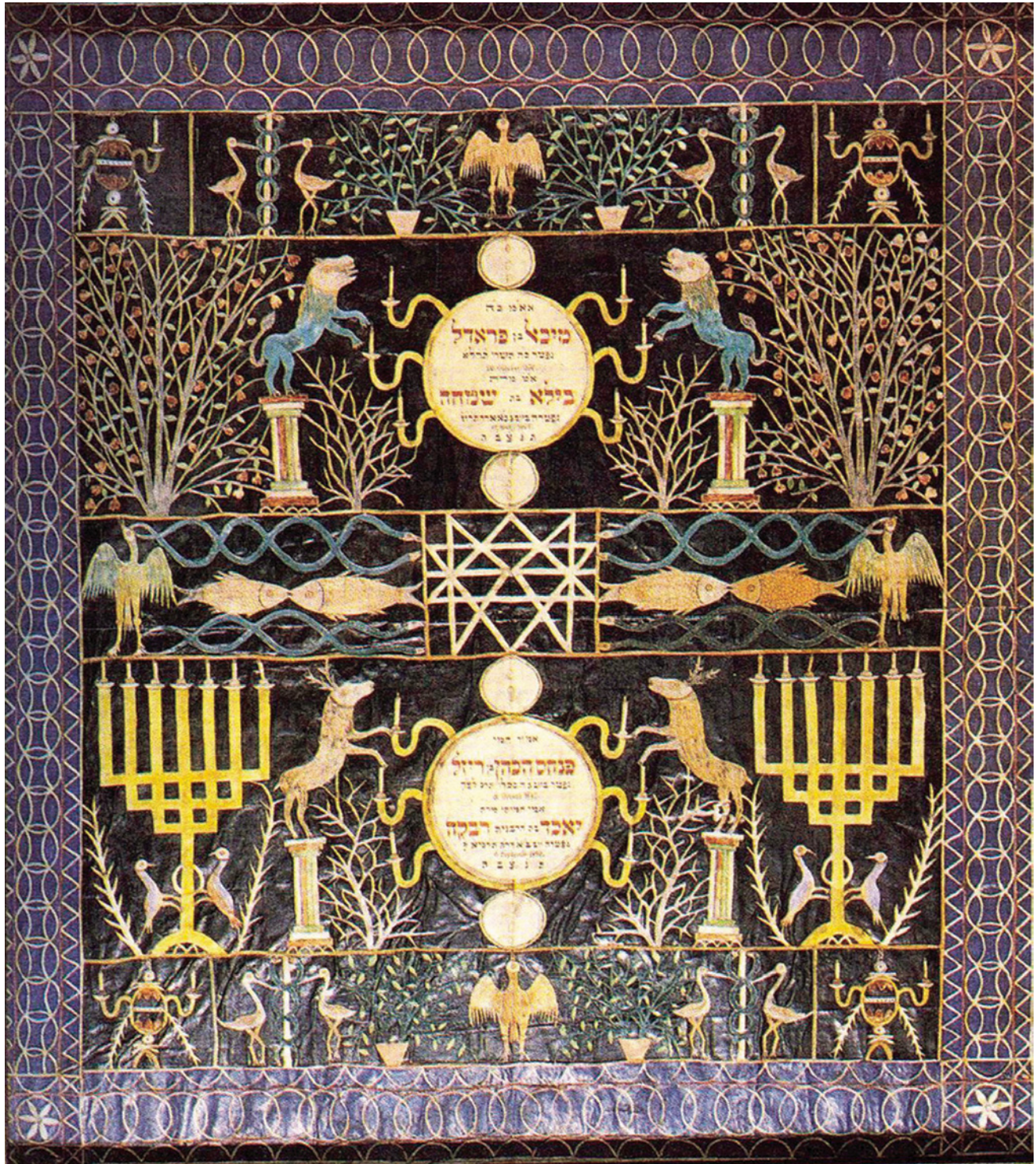
Memorial plaque. Poland, ca. 1867–1880. *(Anonymous owner, Haifa)*

Queen Esther begs King Ahasuerus for clemency toward the Persian Jews. Page from *Megillat Esther*, biblical book of Esther, read during the Purim Festival. Persian written in Hebrew letters, eighteenth century. *(Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY)*

Illustration of the four questions to be asked at the Passover Seder. From the Szyk Haggadah, ca. 1940. *(Fotosearch/Getty Images)*

Ketubbah. Iran, 1859 *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

Esther before Ahasuerus, King of Persia. From The North French Hebrew Miscellany (folio 260b), written and illustrated in northern France ca. 1278. Ms. 11639. (©The British Library Board)

ESTHER

Esther is the central character in the story of Purim, as told in *Megillat Esther* (Esther Scroll, one of the five books that compose what is known as the *Megillah*). She is described as the daughter of Abihail and the niece of Mordechai (*Megillat Esther* 2:15).

The Book of Esther relates the tale of Queen Vashti, the wife of King Ahasuerus (464–483 B.C.E.), who refused to appear at a large party to be held in the Persian kingdom's capital city, Shushan. Vashti's disobedience leads to her expulsion and to the king's search for a new, beautiful maiden to wed.

The king chooses an orphan named Hadassah, or Esther, who has been raised by her uncle, Mordechai. When Mordechai learns that a royal adviser, Haman, wants to slaughter the Jews of the land, he asks Esther, who has (at Mordechai's bidding) heretofore refrained from revealing her religious origins to the king, to use her influence and make an appeal to save the Jews. Under Persian law, to beseech the king without an invitation to do so entailed mortal risk. After fasting for three days, Esther turns to the king and invites him to a party. There, Ahasuerus asks Esther what she wants; she replies by asking the king and Haman to attend another party the next day. At this event, Esther reveals to the king Haman's plot to murder her people. Outraged, Ahasuerus leaves the hall. Haman then prostrates himself atop Esther's bed, pleading for his life to be spared. When the king enters and sees Haman atop Esther's bed, he thinks that his intention was to seduce her, and so he orders Haman and his sons to be hanged on the same tree where Haman had conspired to execute Mordechai.

Commentators have argued that this novelistic tale is an adaptation of a Babylonian myth about Babylonian gods opposing their rivals. In this Mesopotamian mythology, Mordechai is called Marduk, and Esther is Ashtar.

The story of Esther is rife with folk symbols and signs, including the motif of the simple maiden from the lower classes becoming queen, the sharp polarity between heroes—who represent different social classes and different ethnicities—and commoners, and the dramatic trio of personages.

Esther is a humble Jewish maiden who becomes the queen of Persia. She is the true hero of the *Megillah,* which is named after her, and she brings salvation to her people. As the story recounts, in contrast to Vashti, "who hath not performed the commandment of King Ahasuerus" (1:20), Esther did as commanded by Mordechai (2:20). In other words, Esther grasps what Vashti fails to comprehend, namely, that the man is the king of the home, just as a king rules over his kingdom.

Esther can be characterized as an obedient woman (10:2), so when Mordechai asks her to beseech the king in a way that violates local law, she hesitates about breaking this norm. Only after a three-day fast is she prepared to risk her life.

Under the assumptions of the story, Mordechai and Esther belong to the king. Esther belongs to him physically, and Mordechai is his servant. But the Book of Esther underscores that the pair do not belong exclusively to Ahasuerus; instead, the two also belong to their people. Their national affiliation is emphasized as both a source of the drama and a source of inspiration to be emulated.

Esther says to Ahasuerus: "For how can I endure to see the evil that shall come unto my people? Or how can I endure to see the destruction of my kindred?" Then King Ahasuerus says to Esther and to Mordechai, "Behold, I have given Esther the house of Haman, and him they have hanged upon the gallows because he laid his hand upon the Jews" (Esth. 8:6–7).

Postbiblical literature emphasizes Esther's beauty and mentions her as one of four beautiful women in the world (Sarah, Rahab, Abigail, and Esther) (*Megillah* 1:16). In addition, Esther's rectitude and virtue are stressed: she is identified as a prophetess (*Megillah* 1:14), as modest (*Targum Esther* 7:2; *Agadat Esther* 16:2), and as a pious upholder of religious commandments (*Midrash Zuta* 118).

In some Jewish communities, it is the custom to eat lentils and beans at the Purim feast, to commemorate Esther's pious virtue: Esther refrained from eating meat at Ahasuerus's palace, instead satisfying herself with lentils.

Aliza Shenhar

See also: Esther Scroll; Purim.

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ESTHER SCROLL

Reading the Book of Esther from a scroll (Heb., *megillah*) constitutes the primary commandant of the holiday of Purim. The story of the miraculous deliverance of the Jews of the ancient Persian Empire from the hands of Haman, is read in the synagogue with a special cantillation twice during the festival—once on the eve of the holiday (following the evening prayer) and again on the morning thereof (after the Torah reading). As the Jews were saved by Queen Esther, women are also obliged to listen to the reading (cf. *b. Megillah* 4a). Of the five scrolls in the Bible, each of which is read on a different holiday, only the Book of Esther is traditionally referred to as a *megillah* (*Megillat Esther*). Indeed, since the talmudic period it has been customary to write the book on parchment in the form of a scroll, and the rules governing its production and writing are basically the same as those of a traditional Torah scroll.

The Talmud and later halakhic sources (in particular, Moses Maimonides's *Mishneh Torah* and Joseph Karo's *Shulhan arukh* [The Set Table]), dedicate special discussions to the materials, form and method of writing the Esther scroll. As with the Torah scroll, the Esther scroll should be inscribed on one side of the skin of a kosher animal, which is cleaned and prepared for writing according to strict rules. The Jewish scribe (*sofer*) must

pronounce every word before inscribing it, and the text is written in square script, in durable black ink, in even lines (marked with a stylus or ruler) into elongated columns. There are, however, differences between the Esther scroll and the Torah scroll, and the former is traditionally not considered on the same level of holiness as the latter. The size of the Book of Esther influenced the scroll's appearance, and it is much smaller than the Torah scroll, usually containing fewer lines per column and rolled only on one roller.

The number of lines per column in the scroll is not fixed, but the minimum is eleven lines—to accommodate the complete list of the sons of Haman (Esth. 9:7–9, plus a word that precedes and follows these verses), which should be pronounced "in one breath." The list of Haman's sons is arranged in two narrow columns separated by a nine-letter space so that they appear like "half bricks set over half bricks and whole bricks over whole bricks" (*Megillah* 16b). The symbolic meaning of this peculiar arrangement is that if a "brick" is "removed" the entire structure collapses. (In some eighteenth-century scrolls this idea is enhanced by depicting the ten sons on the gallows between the two columns). Similarly, the letter "vav," which begins the name of Haman's youngest son, Vaizatha, is written in the bottom line larger than the other letters—as its design is symbolically taken to represent the pole upon which Haman and his sons were hanged.

Over the ages, the scribes of the Esther scrolls attempted to make the association between God and Esther's story and the concept of "hiding" (based on the interpretation of her name with the Hebrew root *str* (to hide) as she hides her identity and lineage) evident. Accordingly they developed a system of showing God's "hidden" presence in the scroll, though his name is never specifically mentioned in the Book of Esther. The most common feature of the scroll is that consecutive columns begin with the word "*hamelekh*" (the king) (in some cases written in larger upper case letters), taken as referring to the King of Kings (usually when it is not qualified by Ahasuerus). A scroll of this type, referred to as *megillat hamelekh,* is considered more valuable than a "regular" scroll, since it is more difficult to plan and inscribe. Some scribes referred to God's name in another way: They searched for verses where the four letters of the personal name of God in Hebrew (Tetragrammaton) appear in a consecutive order (e.g., the last letters in Esth. 7:7) and wrote them in larger or boldface letters so that they are immediately visible to the scroll's users.

Art historians do not know when and under what circumstances artistic embellishment of the personal Esther scrolls began. However, episodes from the Book of Esther, in particular, the triumph of Mordechai, Esther's uncle, are found in Jewish art since late antiquity. Thus, the earliest depiction of this topic, whether Christian or Jewish, appears on one of the central panels in the wall paintings of the Dura Europos synagogue, dated 244/45 C.E. Subsequently, scenes from the Purim story are found in medieval Hebrew Bible manuscripts and *maḥzorim* (prayer books for Rosh Ha'Shana and Yom Kippur), especially from Germany and Italy. The earliest extant illuminated Esther scrolls are, however, later—emanating from sixteenth-century Italy—one of which, from 1564 Venice, was surprisingly inscribed by a woman, Stellina, the daughter of Menaḥem. The Italian Renaissance, in which the Book of Esther attracted the attention of some leading artists (e.g., Sandro Botticelli, Andrea Mantegna, and Paolo Veronese), provided the appropriate cultural background for the emergence of this craft. Well-to-do Italian Jews, individuals or families, who liked to surround themselves with objets d'art that enhanced their Jewish environment, adopted the custom of commissioning personally decorated scrolls. As a symbol of their status and wealth, the patrons of some of these scrolls embedded in them their family's fictitious coat of arms. The heraldic device appears at the beginning of the scroll, or at the top of each text column, set in an elaborate cartouche. At times it is also found atop the elaborate silver case made to house the scroll. The cylindrical (or polygonal) silver (or silver filigree) cases made in Italy and elsewhere were often produced by master silversmiths, who usually provided them with a crank handle to roll the parchment through a vertical slot. Simpler cases were made of copper, tin, and wood, but some ivory cases survived as well.

The decoration and illustration of Esther scrolls reached its height during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the true golden age of this unique art form in Italy and other countries in Europe, in particular, the Netherlands. Long after the invention of printing and the decline of illuminated manuscripts, Jewish patrons continued to commission attractive hand-illuminated parchment Esther scrolls. The decorations fill the spaces designated by the scribes above, below, and often also between the text columns. The large demand for an illustrated Esther scroll led the makers to produce engraved decorations, printed from copper plates, while the text was still copied by hand.

The artwork in the Esther scroll, whether painted by hand or engraved, may be divided into two types, decorative designs and figurative scenes, both of which form attractive frames around the text columns. The decorative scrolls have delicate floral motifs, scrollwork patterns, and geometric designs, while the figurative illustrations usually depict the Esther story in great detail, one episode after the other, as in a comic strip. The episodes usually refer directly to the text column in the center but often include extrabiblical and midrashic elements. The narrative scenes are often set in exquisite landscapes or contemporary buildings. Prominent are also scrolls that are predominantly decorated with ar-

chitectural elements—arches, columns, cornices, bases, and capitals—which divide the text columns into separate units yet create an overall stately appearance. Some craftsmen in Italy and the Netherlands employed also a paper-cutting technique, producing extremely delicate borders with decorative designs or even whole cutout scenes and figures.

Although historians note that most of the folk artists who decorated the scrolls were Jewish, only a few of them inscribed their names (e.g., Moses Pescarol of seventeenth-century Ferrara). In some cases, Christian craftsmen were employed as well, and the engraved scrolls with the most widespread influence in Italy were created by the eighteenth-century Venetian engraver Francesco Grisellini. A Jewish engraver who won great popularity and success in this field was Shalom Italia (1619–1664?), who was born and raised in Mantua, Italy, and went to Amsterdam, where he produced some of the best-known engraved Dutch scrolls.

Some of the Italian Esther scrolls open with the benedictions recited before and after reading the scroll or dedicate a separate sheet to this purpose. In both cases it was common to decorate this page as well. In addition to decorative designs and biblical episodes, Italian scrolls feature many representations, including allegorical representations, nude putti, the signs of the zodiac and the twelve tribes, heavenly Jerusalem, and scenes depicting the daily life of the Jews of the time. In the last category are scenes related to the celebration of Purim, such as sending friends and family gifts of food or drink in a basket (called *mishlo'ah manot* or *shalah manot*), merrymaking, and masquerades. These and some other scenes related to the Esther story reflect the influence of the popular Italian commedia dell'arte on the Jewish community and contain invaluable material for the folklorist.

In the Netherlands, a leading center of the engraving arts in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the copper-engraved scrolls were preferred to the hand-illuminated examples. Pen-and-ink illustrations were likewise common. As in Italy, the costumes of the heroes and villains and the background of some scenes clearly show the association with contemporary theater. Scholars have also pointed to the popularity of the Esther story in Dutch art of the time, and the possibility of mutual influence between the two cultures. Outside Italy and the Netherlands figurative representations in Esther scrolls appear among the Ashkenazi communities in German-speaking areas: Germany, Austria, Bohemia, and Moravia. Many of the attractive scrolls from these lands were produced by the scribe-artists of the Moravian School of Hebrew illumination (e.g., Aaron Wolf Herlingen of Gewitch or Meshullam Zimmel of Polna, Bohemia), who illuminated other types of parchment manuscripts, in particular, Passover *Haggadot*. Noteworthy are also the fine silver cases from these regions, at times engraved with the triumph of Mordechai or other central episodes in the Esther story. Some figurative scrolls are also from Poland and France (Alsace), and one of the late-eighteenth-century Alsatian scrolls shows the execution of Vashti, the daughter of King Belshazzar of Babylon, modeled after the beheading of Marie Antoinette on the guillotine.

In the Sephardic world (excluding Italy and the Netherlands), Esther scrolls were decorated mainly with floral, architectural, or other decorative designs. Examples come from Turkey, Greece and the Balkans, and Morocco. The scrolls from Istanbul are characterized by exquisite gold or gold-plated silver cases in delicate filigree technique, which wealthy families considered a favorite wedding gift, bestowed upon the bridegroom during Purim. In other major cities (for example, Salonika and Corfu), fine ornamental silver cases were produced as well. In the lands of Islam and the East, decorated scrolls were not as common and examples are known mainly from Iraq, Iran, India, and simply decorated isolated examples from other communities (e.g., Kurdistan). Notable are the colorful scrolls of Baghdad, which feature in large capital letters along the upper border a long list of names of the genealogy of Mordechai (tracing him back to Abraham), while the bottom border, with the letters inscribed upside down, contains names from Haman's genealogy, going back to "wicked Esau."

The art of the illustrated scroll, which declined in the nineteenth century, was revived in the twentieth, when some Jewish artists began to create new designs in the spirit of the old tradition. Noted artists of the Bezalel school, Ze'ev Raban (1890–1970), in particular, created scrolls with images showing the influence of Persian miniatures mixed with Western-orientalist symbolic elements, typical of the school's ideal style. Along with the new hand-illuminated scrolls, graphic artists in Israel issued colorfully decorated printed Esther scrolls, which were by far less expensive and thus popular especially in the early days of the young state. With the improvement of living conditions and renewed interest in Jewish tradition, young artists, including women, revived the art of the hand-illuminated scroll. Interestingly, the hanging of the traitor Haman and his sons, one of the most popular scenes of the Esther scroll produced in the Diaspora in the past, is played down or missing altogether in many of the twentieth-century scrolls made in the Israel.

Shalom Sabar

See also: Esther; Purim.

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ESTHERKE

Estherke is the heroine of a well-known Jewish Polish folk legend of the same name that recounts her relationship with Casimir (Kazimierz) III the Great. Casimir (1310–1370), the last ruler of the Piast dynasty, reigned from 1333 until his death. In the historical record his name is associated with the Jews by virtue of his confirmation of the privileges granted by Bolesław of Kalish (the Statute of Kalisz, 1264) and their extension to the entire country of Poland in 1334.

According to the first written version of the legend, found in David Ganz's sixteenth-century chronicle *Zemah David,* "King Casimir of Poland took as his concubine a Jewish girl named Esther, a beautiful virgin with no peer in the land. She remained his wife for many years. The king showered great favors on the Jews because of her, and she obtained from him writs of benevolence and freedom for the Jews." Versions taken down from the oral tradition similarly note her efforts on behalf of her people.

The legend revolves around a sexual relationship between a Jewish woman and the king of Poland, in violation of a strict Jewish taboo. Nevertheless, the bond is not condemned and is even accorded a certain legitimacy.

This is a well-known type that can be traced back to the biblical Queen Esther. The relationship is justified on the grounds that it is essential for the survival of the Jewish community as a whole. The heroine's behavior is understood as an act of self-sacrifice on behalf of her people.

The legend was used to explain the privileges granted to the Jews and their expansion by Casimir. It circulated orally in various communities, each of which added elements of local color. In Radom it was used to explain the name of the city. In Lublin her grave was supposed to be located in the old Jewish cemetery. The construction of the Great Synagogue in Kuzmir (Kazimierz) was said to have been Casimir's gift to Estherke. She was said to have embroidered the curtain of the Holy Ark in that synagogue, with its central motif of a fire-breathing monster; the local Jews identified it with the serpent in the Garden of Eden, which seduced Eve. Magical powers were ascribed to the curtain. It was hung in the old synagogue only on festivals, during which it was guarded day and night by members of the burial society. The curtain became a tourist attraction, drawing visitors to Kuzmir to see it and to hear the legend of Esther and Casimir. Two local tour guides became renowned for their renditions of it. Both the folk versions and the written accounts are full of associations with the story of the biblical Esther. That association was reinforced by the Kuzmir custom of putting on Purim plays (Purimshpil) about Estherke and Casimir.

Many literary works based on the legend of Estherke and Casimir were written, in both Yiddish and Polish. The scholar Chone Shmeruk discussed the topic at length in his work *Sifrut Yiddish be'Polin* (Yiddish Literature in Poland, 1981). Hebrew retellings include J.H. Kronenberg's children's book *In the King of Poland's Palace* (1966). S.Y. Agnon turned the folk legend into a literary legend, first published in German as "Estherkas Haus" (1916). Its Hebrew version, "The Heart and Eyes," was first printed in the daily *Ha'aretz* on September 29, 1943, and later included in Agnon's *Poland: Legendary Tales* (1925).

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Poland, Jews of.

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ETHIOPIA, JEWS OF

The Beta Israel (Falasha) of Ethiopia—or, as they are more commonly called today, the Ethiopian Jews—may be per capita the most talked about and written about group in the world. Every time they are "discovered" and "rediscovered," a flood of articles and books has ensued. Yet, despite all this attention, many features of Ethiopian Jewish life and folklore remain little understood.

In their homeland, the Beta Israel lived in northwestern Ethiopia in approximately 500 small villages scattered across a vast, predominantly Christian and Muslim, territory. Although similar in appearance to their non-Jewish Amhara and Tigrinia Ethiopian neighbors, the Beta Israel were an occupational as well as a religious minority. Their religion was rooted in the Hebrew Bible, whose commandments they meticulously observed, all the while believing in the coming of the messiah and a return to the legendary Jerusalem. At the beginning of 1977, fewer than a hundred Ethiopian Jews lived in Israel, whereas by the middle of 1998—following two major airlift operations in 1984 and 1991, respectively—most of the Beta Israel community had arrived in Israel. At the beginning of 2010, the Ethiopian Israeli community numbered more than 120,000.

Folklore

When considering the folklore of this group, it is essential to bear in mind that seldom has any community undergone so dramatic, complete, and irreversible a change in so short a period. The Beta Israel's ways of life have been a focus of academic study and have inspired far-reaching speculations regarding this unique group's history and identity. Yet in reviewing these studies, it becomes clear that the various expressions of their culture and folklore have been researched to different degrees, with some fields receiving much greater scholarly attention than others.

The Beta Israel folk traditions share much in common with local Ethiopian traditions but also exhibit characteristics reflecting the group's Judaism and the centrality of Jewish identity, including the intensive negotiations conducted by the group with its non-Jewish neighbors. The life-cycle rituals of the Beta Israel traditionally comprised two parts, a religious and a more general, social part. While the first was conducted by religious leaders and directed toward the members of the group, the social part, particularly in weddings, funerals, and memorial services, was open to guests from neighboring communities and in many ways resembled celebrations held by the neighboring groups. In this part, a clear line was marked by the eating of different meat, although this did not keep them from celebrating together.

Religious Rituals

Circumcision, a ceremony that is highly symbolic in Judaism as ritualizing the special covenant between God and the Jews, was perceived as less significant for their Jewish identity, because Ethiopian Christians, like the Jews, conduct the same ceremony on the same day, the eighth day following the birth of a male child. An additional category of biblically based rituals had to do with female fertility and birth. Based on a verse from the Bible (Lev. 15:19), during their menstrual period, Beta Israel women were confined to a separate hut ("the house of blood") situated on the periphery of the Jewish huts in the village. A fence of stones demarcated the impure area from the rest of the village dwellings, and only after performing a purification ritual were the women allowed to rejoin the community. Beta Israel also considered the postpartum period impure (forty days after the birth of a boy, eighty days after the birth of a girl), in accordance with Leviticus 12:2–6.

The Beta Israel's distinct religious rituals include the holidays mentioned in the Bible, which were maintained according to Ethiopian-Jewish tradition and later influenced by extra-Ethiopian Jewish influences. A unique holiday to Ethiopian Jewry is the Sigd. The Sigd is an annual pilgrimage holiday observed in Ethiopia on the twenty-ninth day of the eighth month of the Ethiopian calendar and treated with importance equal to the biblically proscribed holidays. As a unique Jewish-Ethiopian holiday, the Sigd is still observed by the group in Israel.

Crafts

The Beta Israel specialized in specific crafts—smithery and weaving for men, pottery for women. They traditionally prepared vessels for agricultural work and cook-

tims or of recently buried cadavers that they were said to exhume and use for alimentary and ritual purposes. The Christians took special care to protect themselves from this alleged offense.

Oral Tradition

In the traditional rural society of the Beta Israel, literacy was the privilege of a small group of primarily religious leaders who, like their Christian counterparts, linked religious praxis with scripture by reading publicly from the holy books written in the liturgical language Ge'ez, which was not understood by the majority of the community. This engendered the development of a very rich oral tradition that includes a wide range of genres and a high level of sophistication, refinement, and the use of mnemonic devices. The oral tradition of the Beta Israel comprises a wide corpus of biblical stories, folktales, myths, tales, and legends, as well as other folk genres such as proverbs, riddles, and fables, which were transmitted orally from generation to generation. Certain genres in the expressive folklore of the Beta are shared by its non-Jewish Ethiopian neighbors. One example is the use of spoken expressions with multiple and hidden meanings known as "Wax and Gold," which require a high level of language mastery and symbolic understanding. Most of the Beta Israel folktales overlap with pan-Ethiopian folktales, such as legends of King Solomon and the queen of Sheba, trickster stories of Abba Gäbrä-hanna, or animal stories, but Beta Israel also have their own stories of historic encounters and competitions between Jews and Christians, stories of Jewish martyrology, and tales of Jewish holy sites. These unique Jewish themes continued to evolve as the Beta Israel came into contact with world Jewry and, even later, with the group's immigration to Israel.

The Jewish orientalist Dr. Jacob Faitlovitch was one of the first to undertake the transcription of the oral tradition of the Beta Israel. On his visits among the Beta Israel in Ethiopia, between 1904 and the Italian conquest in 1936, Faitlovitch transcribed more than sixty Amharic folktales told by various storytellers in the Jewish community. Fifty-eight of these stories were published posthumously by his student, Mordechai Warmbrand. They were published in Hebrew, based on the manuscript that Faitlovitch left behind. Unfortunately, the manuscript did not contain data as to the identities of the storytellers or the location, date, or circumstances of the telling. All historians know is that the stories were collected during Faitlovitch's various visits in Ethiopia before the Italian conquest and that all were transcribed from Amharic-speaking Jews.

Since their arrival in Israel, sporadic attempts have been made to record the oral traditions, literature, and customs of the Jewish community in Israel. One such ex-

Jewish Ethiopian potter, 1984. *(Courtesy of Galia Sabar)*

ing, although since the late twentieth century, due to increased contact with world Jewry, female potters have also begun producing figurines, usually of biblical characters, for tourists visiting their villages. The Beta Israel specialization in smithery and pottery was treated with ambivalence by neighboring groups.

Magic

The realm of magic is another shared yet separate folkloric realm. While the Jews of Ethiopia fully share popular Ethiopian conceptions of magic, their neighbors have accused them of possessing supernatural powers. They were perceived as *buda,* the mythical Ethiopian hyena that possesses the power to transform into human form during daytime and thus crosses the boundary between human and nonhuman. Although the image of the *buda* is also associated with other groups in Ethiopia, Beta Israel's Christian neighbors related it to Beta Israel's Jewishness, tying it to traditional anti-Jewish accusations. As hyena people, the Beta Israel were feared for their "eating," that is, their sucking the blood of living vic-

ample is the collection known as *Tarat Tarat: Folk Tales as Told by Ethiopian Jews,* by Tamar Alexander and Amela Einat, in which almost 200 stories were recorded. As in the case of Faitlovitch's collection, however, the stories were published in Hebrew and not in their original languages, so the stories underwent various adaptations before their final appearance in print, usually without preserving the Amharic or Tigrinia original.

The dramatic change undergone by the group after their immigration to Israel is manifested in the various forms of folklore, particularly those connected with language. The importance of oral tradition in the Beta Israel culture is fast disappearing due to a loss of influence and close contact with the elders and replacement of traditional dialects with spoken Hebrew. The various spoken forms of folklore are thus undergoing dramatic transformations that reflect the overall changes affecting the group.

Ethiopian Jews Today

One present-day trend in the folk traditions of the Ethiopian Israelis is the romanticization of the pre-immigration past, which offers an idyllic and often ahistorical view of life in Ethiopia. Another direction in contemporary folk traditions can be called its "folklorization." This term refers to attempts to preserve elements of Ethiopian culture, including dance, song, folk songs, proverbs, and traditional arts such as pottery and weaving, outside the context of their conventional social structure. Through the organization of dance troupes and arts cooperatives, small groups of Ethiopians are able to participate in the reenactment of traditional arts and crafts. In most cases, however, the products of such groups—whether music, sculpture, dance, or woven materials—differ markedly from what was produced in Ethiopia and often reflect the wider non-Jewish Ethiopian environment or the impact of Israeli life on Ethiopian Jews.

Thus, the new forms and folk traditions emerging in Israel are more characteristic of an ethnic minority within a multicultural society. These new forms bring out the Ethiopian and not the Jewish aspect of the Beta Israel identity. There is a growing number of Ethiopian folk dance groups as well as craft objects on which the colors of the Ethiopian flag, reminders of village life in Ethiopia, and animal figures are featured prominently at the expense of Jewish topics expressed in Beta Israel folk art while in Ethiopia.

Hagar Salamon

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EVE

The Bible offers two accounts of the creation of Eve, the first woman and the mate of the first man, Adam. In one version, she is created by God, equally with man

(Gen. 1:27; 5:2); in the other account, she is formed out of one of Adam's ribs. Since Adam lacked a "helper fit for him," a rib is taken from him while he is in a deep sleep (Gen. 2: 19–24). When Adam rises from his sleep and sees Eve, he cries, "She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Gen. 2: 23); only after the fruit of the tree is eaten is she called "Eve" by Adam ("The man called his wife Eve because she was the mother of all living" [Gen. 3:20]); this transpires after everything is already created by Adam and God. (This, incidentally, marks the only time in the Bible a male names his wife.) The creation of woman from the body of a man reverses gender roles, in that Adam plays the role of mother. The scholar Erich Fromm has stated that this reversal is a remnant from a matriarchal age, in which the mother played a dominant cultural role.

In the Bible

In the biblical story, Eve sins and causes Adam's sin. She is tempted by the serpent to violate the ban on eating from the tree of knowledge; subsequently, she tempts Adam. As a result, Adam is ordered to die and Eve is cursed by the pain of childbirth and by subordination to her husband (Gen. 3:1–16). Later, Eve gives birth to three children, Cain, Abel, and Seth.

The myth that reinforces the male's superiority and obscures the woman's divine identity attained privileged status in Western culture because it conformed to patriarchal values. Feminist criticism has thus intensively analyzed various aspects of the story of Genesis that underscore the "official" hierarchy: God is the creator, Adam is the son of God, and Eve is the daughter of Adam. Her place in this hierarchy (God-man-woman) does not stop her from crossing gender borders. Her declaration after the birth of Seth ("God has appointed for me another child instead of Abel, for Cain slew him" [Gen. 4:25]) differs in tone from her statement after the birth of Cain ("I have gotten a man with the help of the Lord" [Gen. 4:1]), in that it conveys a measure of humility and does not refer to a feminine creative role in cosmic creation. Eve continues to relate to fertility and procreation as an exclusive transaction between God and herself, yet the tragedy of Abel's murder by Cain is a kind of punishment exacted against pride.

According to some scholars, female gods ruled in all myths of an ancient Garden of Eden. Male gods make their appearance only when matriarchal culture is supplanted by patriarchal society; at this stage, the male gods take the mantle from female ones. A serpent is almost always found in these myths; when it leaves its cave at the start of spring, it symbolizes the revival of forces of nature. For this reason, it is found alongside Eve.

In Oral Traditions and Legends

Eve's image intrigued religious thinkers and the popular imagination and is evoked intensively in oral traditions and ancient legends. In Apocrypha, Eve is praised as the helper-cushion given to Adam (*Sefer tuvia* 7:6), whereas *Sefer hanoch* brings up her sin and cites the name of the angel, Adriel, which leads her to the illicit act—in Islamic faith Adriel becomes the angel of death. *Life of Adam and Eve*, which is devoted to the creation story and to Adam's sin, relates Eve's attempts to atone for her sin via ascetic self-mortification; here, Eve herself confesses to the serpent's temptation, and her sin, death, and burial are described.

There is an interpretative tradition in the Midrash in which Adam is seen as an androgynous figure who must be divided into two sexes. In an attempt to resolve Genesis's two accounts of Eve's creation, a legend arose in which Adam's first mate is said to be Lilith.

Some interpreters suggest that Eve was God's third attempt at creation. In the second attempt, God allowed Adam to see her in the processed creation, with bones, flesh, muscles, and blood. The result revolted Adam and hence was removed by God (*Ber. Rab.* 158:46–163; *Midrash Avkir* 133, 135; *Avot de'Rabbi Nathan* 24).

Eve's creation and her sin play a prominent role in the New Testament (1 Cor. 11:8–10; 2 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:13–14). Paul's interpretation of the gravity of the sin and its results for humanity gave rise to the Christian conception of original sin (Rom. 5:11–19).

The founders of the Christian church compared Eve to the Virgin Mary. Eve was the mother of all in a material sense and cast sin on humanity because she heard the voice of the serpent; Mary was the mother of all in a spiritual sense, and she redeemed the world, because she heard the voice of the prophetic angel.

In contrast to the midrashic texts, the works of Hellenistic-Jewish philosopher Philo Judaeus do not depict Eve as the victim of the serpent. Instead, the serpent acts as an emissary of woman, which is identified with sexuality and fertility. Eve is sentenced to remain in the carnal realm, and female sexuality is seen as the source of all evil, as well as the source of the misanthropy that plagued Western culture.

In Jewish folklore, a description whose origins are in India (Israel Folktale Archives, no. 9584) shows the parallel creation of man and woman on the sixth day, but the naked, wise woman is removed at Adam's request and is replaced by a quiet, naive woman. Despite the fact that she is created out of the male ideal, the woman tempts Adam into eating the apple, which gets caught in his throat when he discovers which tree it has come from. The tale's conclusion: "Since then, men have an Adam's Apple, which is the part of the fruit stuck in the throat of the first man." In this manner, the didactic bite is taken

out of the story and replaced by a humorous, entertaining element, a happy ending that appears in popular lore.

Folk motifs associated with Eve are widespread in world oral literature. They include Eve dreams of Cain, Abel (Thompson motif D1812.3.3.7); Eve names female animals (Thompson motif A2571.0.2); Adam learns animal language from Eve (Thompson motif B217.8); the devil tempts Eve (Thompson motif A 63.6); monkeys from children are hidden by Eve when God visits her (Thompson motif A1861.1); Satan's coupling with Eve (Thompson motif G303.12.7.1); tears from Eve leaving paradise become trees (Thompson motif A2612.1); persons from the underworld who are offspring of children hidden from God by Eve (Thompson motif F 251.4).

Aliza Shenhar

See also: Adam; Lilith.

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EVIL EYE

See: Folk Belief; Folk Medicine

EXEMPLUM

In its most basic sense, the exemplum is a short tale presented as a factual report of an actual event. The element of authenticity is particularly important in light of the tale's function, namely, to persuade its listeners (or readers) to accept it at face value and behave according to its counsel. The roots of the literary genre extend back to the ancient world, in which it constituted an element of Hellenistic rhetoric. Some scholars see in the New Testament and the writings of the church fathers the model followed by medieval writers and preachers. Writers of the Middle Ages tended to see exemplum in all types of literature: fable and animal tales, legends, fairy tales, myths, and humorous anecdotes. Nonetheless, most medieval authors who employed the exemplum made the fundamental assumption that it was a moral anecdote, told to teach a moral and influence behavior.

The definition of exemplum cannot rest solely on function. Not every tale drafted into service automatically becomes an exemplum. The construction of the plot must be preconceived to provide moral guidance. A tale can be regarded as an exemplum when it leads its protagonist from sin to punishment, from precept to reward, or from sin to precept and when the moral imperative is wrought deep in the tale's structure. Reducing the definition of an exemplum to its functional component would make every folktale an exemplum and, in so doing, utterly abolish this genre's raison d'être. Preachers, orators, and moral leaders did indeed customarily draw tales of all sorts to model various modes of behavior and ideas. But there is no justification for viewing these as exemplary tales. They are, rather, examples of folktales' interchangeable functions. Conversely, the tales that should be regarded as exempla are those created, whether by the religious leadership or other circles, to constitute a paragon of conduct and moral guidance; the conceptual model being anchored in the construction of the tale itself.

The second half of the twelfth century and the first half of the thirteenth are considered the "golden age" of exemplary literature in Christian Europe. The great collections of exempla were written during this period, each comprising hundreds of tales. Yet the European exemplum existed hundreds of years before the written collections, and for many years after the vast majority were set down in writing in those collections, they were still widely told orally. These developments in medieval culture must have had influence over or connection with the Jewish culture of the day. Indeed, it is not by chance that the largest collection of exemplary tales in Hebrew literature, *Sefer ḥasidim* (Book of the Pious), was born of the same period and place.

The flourishing of the exemplary genre in Jewish culture should not be attributed solely to external influence. Two prime collections of exempla predate *Sefer ḥasidim.* They are *Midrash of the Ten Commandments* and *An Elegant Composition Concerning Relief After Adversity.* Both of these works emerged among the Jewish society living in the region of Arab cultural influence, and both make extensive use of rabbinical Aggadah. Internal development—that is, the influences of rabbinical literature on medieval

Jewry—laid the foundations for the exemplary genre in medieval Jewish culture, while the possible influences of Muslim culture helped it along. It is known that as early as the eighth and ninth centuries in Islamic culture there developed the literature of the *adab* and the *faraj*—ethics, seemingly customs passed along by means of entertaining literature. This literature made much use of tales to instruct and guide and earned wide popularity in the Muslim world as early as the ninth and tenth centuries. Further evidence of this supposition can be found in the composition that historians consider the first exemplary work in Christian culture: the eleventh-century *Disciplina clericalis* of Petrus Alfonsi. Alfonsi, originally named Moshe the Sefaradi, converted from Judaism and became an influential figure in the Christian world of his day. The book of ethics-through-tales that he wrote does indeed preach Christian values, but the construction of questions and answers according to which it is arranged, and most of the tales that it comprises, originate in Arabic culture—Alfonsi's own, prior to his conversion. In other words, as a Jew in Spain, Alfonsi was influenced by Arabic culture, hence his propensity for using tales to spread moral and religious values. The example of Alfonsi indicates that Jews living amid Islamic culture employed the genre of the exemplum before its broad dispersal in the Christian world could influence them.

Scholars distinguish between two basic techniques of conceptual signification in the exemplum: analogy and metonymy. The former mainly uses parables (*mashal*), which substantiate a complex idea by means of a story or simple situation drawn from practical, everyday life or from the classical literature. This technique suffuses medieval Jewish culture; it is found in ethical literature, Jewish philosophy and Kabbalah, and in fable literature (Berechiah ben Natronai ha'Nakdan, the genre of the *māqāma* [i.e., rhymed narrative]). None of these, however, became folk traditions. The metonymic (or pradigmatic) technique presents a model of behavior for emulation should one find oneself in a similar situation. Rather than equating or likening one thing to another, this exemplary model builds realistic situations, so that, when confronted with one, the person will have a ready model of behavior. This view of the exemplary mechanism overlaps with the definition of the aforementioned type: the demand of a given behavioral norm is ingrained *in the construction of the tale,* not tacked on to its end or determined by the tale's context.

A typical example of this model is the narrative theme in which a dead man appears, tells of his fate in the world to come, and links it to his actions while among the living. The theme is a constant model reappearing in many tales, including some from the European literature of the day. This recurrent tale type enables storytellers to proceed swiftly and without impediment to the moral lesson that warranted their telling of the tale—the import of the dead man's actions. In one exemplum this could be the purposeful recitation of grace after meals, in another the melodious recitation of the benedictions in the synagogue. Other tales promote observance of the Sabbath, honoring one's father and mother, and so on. The expediency of such exemplary narrative patterns is apparent. Medieval preachers, sermonizers, and moralists could weave these ready-made "exemplary models" into any homily and easily inject them with the message that they sought to impress upon their congregation. The practice bears comparison with the way that the folk singer-poet could extemporaneously draw upon oral poetry's ready-made epic patterns during a live performance. For this reason a narrative pattern like that of the dead man returning to the domain of the living was widely utilized in the medieval traditions of Christians and Jews alike.

Scholars of the exemplum in medieval Christian culture view it as an outstanding mediating factor between the elite, educated culture and the broad strata of the folk. Early on, Pope Gregory I, called the Great (pope from 590 to 604 C.E.), emphasized the power of the exemplum to influence through concrete examples and lauded its superior efficacy as compared with a formulation of abstract ethical rules. Jacques de Vitry, a noteworthy Christian preacher of the early thirteenth century (he was appointed bishop of Crusader-held Acre in 1216), argued that "the keen-edged sword of argumentation has no influence on the common man" (Mosher 1911, 13). In his opinion, heartening and entertaining examples were indispensable to the edification of one's audience. Only an inexperienced sermonizer, continued Jacques de Vitry, ignorant of such tales' power to influence, would disdain them. Many other preachers complained, "When God is spoken of, the listeners fall asleep, yet to hear stories, they awake at once" (ibid.). The samples of exemplary tales in Jewish culture of the Middle Ages indicate a similar trend. Experienced educators and moralists, such as Rabbi ben Jacob Nissim of Kairouan and Rabbi Judah the Pious, made intensive use of tales. They did so precisely because they recognized that the religious and social truths with which they sought to inculcate their congregations could "pass" most efficiently via the tale. In other words, the transfer of values from the religious, educated elite to the masses took place likewise among Jewish scholars by means of stories, and from this perspective it parallels the process of transfer in Christian society.

The difference between the largest collection of exempla in medieval Jewish literature, *Sefer ḥasidim,* and Christian collections of exempla, is that the latter collected tales from the oral traditions. Not so with Rabbi Judah the Pious, who created his own exempla. Indeed, the large majority of tales included in the great Christian collections—for example, Petrus Alfonsi's *Disciplina clericalis;* Jacques de Vitry's *Sermones vulgares;* Walter Mapp's *De nugis curialium;* Etienne de Bourbone's *Speculum*

naturalis; Jacobus de Voragine's *Legenda aurea;* Caesarius of Heisterbach's *Dialogus miraculorum*—are consummate folktales. They existed in the folk traditions of the Middle Ages in writing and orally, and they were copied from one collection of exempla to the next. The situation is reversed in *Sefer ḥasidim:* of the more than 400 tales that it comprises, only some thirty can be defined as folktales. In *An Elegant Composition,* Rabbi Nissim offered numerous rabbinical tales in the course of literary copying, tales that never became a part of folk tradition. The reason for this difference, it seems, lies in the Christian preachers' choice of tales already familiar to the populace as folktales. They recognized them as having already crossed society's "barrier," thus they were easily employed to transmit religious messages. Conversely, Jewish religious leaders, such as Rabbi Judah the Pious, sought to transmit new messages to their society, such as the system of values of German Pietism. They had to do this by means of tales that, like the viewpoints they came to express, were previously unknown. For this reason, only a few of the tales created by Rabbi Judah the Pious became folk traditions, and only those tales that existed as folk traditions before Rabbi Nissim of Kairouan collected them in his book remained as such thereafter. The reason for the absorption or rejection of an exemplum by folk traditions is connected not only with its narrative character (although this is certainly a basic condition) but also with the nature of the values that it seeks to disseminate.

Most of the exemplary tales known to contemporary readers from the folk traditions, as opposed to doctrinary works such as *Sefer ḥasidim,* deal with themes connected to daily life. These include interpersonal and sexual relationships and family purity; the Sabbath; charity and concern for the poor; relations with non-Jews; human attributes such as deceit, hypocrisy, dress and external appearance; and food. When an exemplum addresses values of a sectarian nature, such as asceticism and extreme purity (as in *Sefer ḥasidim*), or a deep theodicean conception (as in *An Elegant Composition*), then the exemplum does not "pass" the social barrier and does not becomes a folk tradition. The exemplum's power lies in its ability to express society's social and moral outlook, its basic hopes and anxieties, and to utilize them to dissemi-

nate and inculcate the values espoused by the religious leadership. An exemplum that promises its hero a fine reward only in the world to come, such as most of the exempla in *Sefer ḥasidim,* cannot become a folk tradition and fill a didactic role among the broad strata. Wealth, offspring, lofty social status, greatness in Torah—these are both a concrete reward in observable reality and the returns promised in the folk exempla to those who fulfill the desired norms. Hunger, disease, death, sterility, bereavement of children, exile and conversion are the comeuppance of the sinner. Both punishment and reward assuredly reflect the deep anxieties and overt and secret hopes deep in the consciousness of medieval Jewry. The exemplum made use of both conscious and unconscious elements to serve its religious and social goals.

Eli Yassif

See also: Fable; *Māqāma*; Schwarzbaum, Haim.

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FABLE

A fable is a short story, in verse or prose, usually involving humor or wit, that has two criteria: the use of characters and purpose. The characters of a fable are mostly animals and sometimes plants or inanimate objects, all of which are personified, speaking and acting like human beings while retaining their animal traits. Some fables use humans or gods as their protagonists. Usually the characters of a fable are types, described by prominent characteristics attributed to them in folk tradition and embodying abstract qualities. The details are secondary to the ideas that they represent. The fable belongs to the field of wisdom and morale literature. As such, its purpose is didactic, designated to enforce a useful truth, illustrating a general moralistic lesson or satirizing human beings. Thus, an animal story becomes a fable only if it is applied to the present and serves to emphasize a parallel situation in the human world, both by moral and by analogous tale. The moral or satire are woven into the story and are often explicitly formulated at the end. The lesson of the fable usually deals with human nature and is therefore beyond time and place, or—in the case of satire—well suited for the target audience. Hence, the moral is understood even if not made obvious in the text.

Fables are ancient forms that exist in every culture, both orally and in writing. The biblical Hebrew word for "fable" (*mashal*) means "a drawing with words" and applies to miscellaneous literary forms: proverbs, riddles, similes, metaphors, interpretive analogies, and allegories, as well as fables. The first fable known in Hebrew is one of Jotham (Judg. 9:8–15, about twelfth century B.C.E.), in which King Abimelech's regime in Shechem is compared to bramble threatening to burn the cedars of Lebanon. In most of the fables in the Old Testament, the protagonists are plants. Usually, biblical fables are followed by an explicit specification of the moral and of the circumstances of the storytelling situation. In particular, the prophets in their rebukes use the fable as a didactic and constructive means of enforcing their truth. For example, Nathan portrays King David as a rich man taking a poor man's (as in Uriah the Hittite) only ewe lamb (= wife) (2 Sam. 12:1–6); and Isaiah compares the sinful people of Judah to a vineyard bearing wild grapes (Isaiah 5:1–7). Ezekiel especially relies on fables in his admonitions (e.g., Ezekiel 17:1–10, 23); he even ascribes their use to the Lord, telling how God has asked

of him "Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable ['*mashal*'] unto the house of Israel" (Ezekiel 17:1). There are Old Testament fables used for the purpose of vituperation, most probably developed with the notion that words are like curses, conveying a magical ability to hurt (similar to the role of the ancient Arab *hijā* satirical poetry that abused foes during war). Such is, for example, the scornful response of Jehoash, the king of Israel, to the declaration of war made on him by Amaziah, king of Judah, his former ally. Jehoash likens Amaziah to a thistle in Lebanon, who aspires marital relations with a cedar in Lebanon and is trampled under the feet of wild beasts (2 Kgs. 14:9; 2 Chron. 25:18).

In talmudic-midrashic literature, there is a distinction between *meshalot shu'alim* (fox fables) and *meshalot kovsim* (fuller fables) (e.g., b. *Sukka* 28a; *Bava Batra* 134a). The first term applies to animal fables, in which the fox is often the protagonist. The meaning of the second term is still ambiguous, since there is no textual evidence to clarify it. The Midrash—like the Bible—specifies almost without exception the identity of the narrators of the fable and the circumstances of its delivery. Fables served as satirical-political weapons, similar to their biblical function. For example, Rabbi Joshua ben Ḥananiah calmed a crowd, furious at Hadrian, by telling them the fable of the crane that picked out a bone from the throat of a lion. Upon claiming its reward, the crane was told to be grateful that it had put its head inside the lion's mouth—and remained intact (*Gen. Rab.* 64:10). Yet talmudic-midrashic literature employs fables mainly as an exegetical medium and an oratorical expedient in public sermons. Fables are observed as a tool "to arrive at an adequate comprehension of the Torah" (*Song of Songs Rabbah* 1:8), and they aided preachers in engaging their listener's attention, such as when Rabbi Yehuda ha'Nasi stimulated a drowsy audience by telling them a fable of a woman in Egypt who gave birth to 600,000 babies at the same time (a reference to Jocheved, as Moses is said to equal this number of people [ibid., 64]. Rabbi Meir (second century) included fables in one-third of his sermons and is said to have known 300 fox fables (b. *Sanhedrin* 38b). Of his contemporary, Rabbi Bar Kappara, it is said that at a banquet given by Rabbi Yehuda ha'Nasi he recited 300 fables for every dish served, so the fascinated listeners ate nothing (*Eccl. Rab.* 1:4). Hillel (first century B.E.) and his students, even the least of them—Rabban Yoḥanan ben Zaccai—are famous as narrators of fables (b. *Bava Batra* 134:1).

Although not all of these examples may be historically true, they depict the way Hellenistic Judaism perceived the image of the sage and the orator. Fables were compiled as literature, without storytelling circumstances, only in the high Middle Ages. Famous compilations are *Matlei de-Sopus* (sixty-seven fables in Aramaic), *Ḥiddot isopet* (twenty of Aesop's fables in florid style),

and *Mishle shu'alim* by Berechiah ha'Nakdan (119 animal fables gathered from non-Hebrew medieval bestiaries, especially that of Marie de France). The latter belongs to the *māqāma* genre, and indeed many *māqāmat* interlaced their plots with fables, most of which were from Arab sources (often Indian or Persian origin), some from Christian sources (Greek origin), and some made up by the authors themselves. Fables were common also in Jewish philosophic literature of the period, such as *Ḥovot ha'levavot* (Duties of the Heart), by Rabbi Bahya ben Yosef ibn Paquda, and especially in Kabbalah literature, such as *Sefer ha'bahir* (The Book of Brilliance) by Nehunia ben ha'Kana (1176). The philosophic-kabbalistic fable helps the reader comprehend and deepen the process of philosophical understanding. It always embodies more than is conveyed in the explicit text and thus becomes a central instrument in the hands of the philosopher.

After the Middle Ages, prevailing Hebrew fable compilations were translated into Yiddish, sometimes changing the moral. The first book of this kind is *Kuhbuch* (Cow Book, Verona 1595). Yet, the fable preserved its position only in Hasidic literature, which perceived stories as the most pronounced form of expressing the mythical history of divinity, the world, and Israel (e.g., the sermons of Rabbi Ya'akov Krantz—The Maggid of Dobnow, 1741–1804, and the stories of Rabbi Nachman of Breslav, 1772–1810). Modern Hebrew fables are few, such as Y.L. Gordon's verse translation of Jean de La Fontaine and Ivan Krylov fables, and original fables written by Ephraim Kishon and Ezra Flysher. Fables comprise only 2 percent of the stories held by the Israel Folktale Archives at the University of Haifa.

Raphael Patai and Ayelet Oettinger

See also: Folk Narratives in the Middle Ages; *Māqāma*; Parable; Proverb; Schwarzbaum, Haim.

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FEFER, ITSIK

See: Russia, Jews of

FOLK ART

The art created by and for Jews while living as a traditional society, whether in Christian Europe or in the Islamic East, falls largely under the category of "folk art." Although recognized artists and architects were in rare cases involved in the creation of works of art commissioned or used by Jews (e.g., the engravings that Rembrandt made for the book *Piedra gloriosa* by the Dutch rabbi Menasseh ben Israel (Amsterdam, 1655), the vast majority of known examples were produced by folk artists and craftsmen, whether Jewish or not. Several categories are generally included in this field: (a) ritual art for the synagogue (for example, the Torah case and its appurtenances); (b) ritual objects for the year cycle (e.g., Sabbath candlesticks and spice boxes); (c) decorative objects in life cycle (e.g., illustrated marriage contracts and wedding rings); (d) ritual objects for the home (e.g., *mezuzah* cases and *mizraḥ* tablets—ornamental tablets placed on the east wall of Jewish homes in Central and Eastern Europe to indicate the direction toward Jerusalem) (see: *Mezuzah*; *Mizraḥ*); (e) Hebrew (and other Jewish languages) manuscript and book illustration (e.g., illustrated *Haggadot* and Esther scrolls); and (f) synagogue architecture. Though they are not considered ritual objects, the field might also include selected categories of material culture and decorative ethnographic objects, such as bridal jewelry and specific Jewish costumes.

Although the Second Commandment (Exod. 20:4) and related biblical and rabbinical texts limited the scope of "graven images" and representational art in Judaism (see below), the field of ritual art generally enjoyed a special elevated status and shaped the development of this field over the ages. This is closely associated with the ages old rabbinical concept of *hiddur mitzvah* (beautification or adornment of the commandment), which calls for the production of aesthetically pleasing ceremonial objects in the service of performing the commandments (cf. *b. Shabbat* 113b). The rabbis of old derived this concept from the verse "This is my God and I will beautify [lit., glorify or enshrine] Him" (Exod. 15:2), while the worship of God in the "beauty of holiness" (cf. Ps. 29:2) gave impetus to the beautification of the sacred synagogue space and the evolvement of its decorative implements.

As a result, the vast majority of Jewish folk art evolved as a functional or utilitarian art—that is, aesthetically enhanced objects and books created for ceremonial or other religious use. Several other factors determine the nature of traditional Jewish art as folk art. Firstly, it is created and transmitted within a clearly defined group, and not intended for people outside this group. In the past centuries it was a minority group that developed in each geographic region, East and West, and in a given time, its own canons of taste, which mirror the local decora-

tive styles and tastes but often infiltrate them through "Jewish eyes." By and large, the models and forms tend to show little variations and the makers and their audience commonly preferred traditional components, structures, content, and subject matter. And, finally, the folk artist in a traditional Jewish society was not given a formal or academic training; talented craftsmen were attracted to create objects for members of their communities, and often the sons inherited the craft from their fathers (Jewish female folk artists are known only in isolated cases).

Scholars and Scholarship

When the scholars of the nineteenth-century German movement *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (the science of Judaism) defined the various fields of Jewish literature and culture, Jewish art was not one of them. The prevalent notion in this period was that this aspect of Jewish life was not worthy of serious research because Judaism denies visual images and one should not question whether Jewish art ever existed. The first researchers to deal with visual aspects of Jewish culture were Christian scholars, such as the French archaeologist Louis-Félicien de Saulcy (1807–1880), who served as the consul of France in Jerusalem and in 1858 published a book dealing with artistic creativity in biblical times (*Histoire de l'art judaïque*). The first Jewish scholar in the field was the Hungarian David Kaufmann (1852–1899), who was interested in a vast spectrum of Jewish disciplines, including Jewish art and archaeology. Kaufmann's seminal articles deal with the problem of art in rabbinical literature, synagogue interior decoration, ancient floor mosaics that were excavated during his lifetime, and Hebrew manuscript illumination. In 1898, Kaufmann collaborated with other scholars on the publication of the first monograph in the field, namely, the fourteenth-century Sephardic Sarajevo Haggadah (*Die Haggadah von Sarajevo: Eine spanisch-judische Bilderhandschrift des Mittelalters* [Vienna: A. Hölder, 1898]).

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, for the first time scholarly attention was drawn to the study of Jewish ceremonial artistic objects. It was at this time that collections of ceremonial art were first established (e.g., that of Isaac Strauss in Paris) and exhibited to the public (e.g., the Anglo-Jewish exhibition in London, 1887), and the first Jewish museums opened in some European capitals (e.g., Vienna, 1897; Frankfurt, 1901). While some publications accompanied these events, the real impetus to studying Jewish ceremonial art scientifically was given by yet another Christian scholar, the German Heinrich Frauberger (1845–1920). Frauberger served as the director of the Industrial and Crafts Museum (Kunstgewerbemuseum) in Düsseldorf, and his curiosity to investigate this topic was aroused when a local architect sought his advice on the design of a Jewish tombstone. In

1901 Frauberger established in Frankfurt the Gesellschaft zur Erforschung jüdischer Kunstdenkmäler, (Society for the Research of Jewish Art Monuments), which engaged a number of Jewish scholars (mainly Rudolf Halo and Erich Toeplitz) and issued an illustrated periodical, edited and largely written by Frauberger himself.

Scholarly interest in Jewish art increased in German-speaking regions in the 1920s and 1930s. Some of the prominent names include the curator of the Berlin Jewish Museum, Karl Schwarz (1885–1962), who was later invited by the mayor of Tel Aviv, Meir Dizengoff, to head the new Tel Aviv Museum. His most important work, *Die Judn in der Kunst,* which appeared in Berlin, in 1928, dealt more with what he defined as "art of the Jews" rather than "Jewish art." A year later appeared another important work, that of the German-Jewish art historian Ernst Cohn-Wiener (1882–1941), *Die judische Kunst: Ihre Geschichte von den Anfangen bis zur Gegenwart* (Berlin: Martin Wasservogel, 1929)—a serious attempt to systematically describe the development of Jewish art, as it was known in these years.

While these scholars worked in relative isolation and did not endeavor to advance further research in the field, three other writers were more successful in promoting scholarly interest, as they published many more books and articles on many aspects of Jewish art, including ceremonial objects. The first of the three is the German-Jewish art historian Franz Landsberger (1883–1964), who turned to Jewish art only after the Nazis refused to allow him to continue his work in general art at the University of Breslau. From 1935, when his first work on Jewish art appeared, until his death, he published numerous studies. In 1938 he fled Germany for England and subsequently was invited to lecture on Jewish art at the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati and later also to serve as the director of the school's museum of Judaica. His essays and books, published in English, include topics such as the *mezuzah* (a piece of parchment inscribed with specified Hebrew verses from the Torah) and its decorative case, old-time Torah curtains, illuminated marriage contracts (*ketubbot*), ritual implements for the Sabbath, and Ḥanukkah lamps (a representative selection of which are presented in J. Gutmann, ed., *Beauty in Holiness: Studies in Jewish Customs and Ceremonial Art* [New York: Ktav, 1970]).

The second, Rachel Wischnitzer (1885–1989), was born in Russia, educated in Heidelberg and Paris, and established herself in Berlin before moving to the United States, where she worked for many years and taught Jewish art at Stern College for Women at Yeshiva University in Manhattan, New York. Trained as an architect, Wischnitzer published two major books in English about synagogue architecture: one on American synagogues (Philadelphia, 1955) and the other on European synagogues (Philadelphia, 1964). Her third English book deals with the messianic symbolism in the

paintings of the newly discovered third-century Dura Europos synagogue (Chicago, 1948). While she was still in Berlin, Wishnitzer coedited *Rimon* (1922–1924), a richly and beautifully illustrated periodical dedicated to the arts in Jewish life, which appeared in both Hebrew and Yiddish (under the title *Milgroim*). In Berlin she also issued her first book, dealing with the meaning of Jewish symbols (*Symbole und Gestalten der jüdischen Kunst,* Berlin, 1934)—a topic that underlined many of her studies. Her prolific writings in the field remain the basis for research on central issues of Jewish art, though her interpretations are not always accepted among contemporary scholars.

Third, Mordechai Narkiss (1897–1957) was the first Jewish art scholar to work in the Land of Israel and publish most of his work in Hebrew. Following his immigration from Poland to Israel in 1920, he served as the chief assistant to Boris Schatz, the founder of the Bezalel School of Art in Jerusalem (1906). In 1925 Narkiss was appointed the director of the newly established Bezalel's Museum (later the Israel Museum). In this role Narkiss systematically acquired Judaic objects and Hebrew illuminated manuscripts (including the noted "Birds' Heads Haggadah") and gradually dedicated more and more time to researching Judaic objects. His education as a yeshiva student, sound knowledge of the decorative arts, and mastery of several European languages undoubtedly provided him with the tools required for a proper research in the field. Narkiss wrote on Jewish art in a scientific manner—unlike the "amateurish" writing of other scholars, whose work he harshly criticized in the several book reviews that he published. His most important work is the monograph that he dedicated to the history of the Ḥanukkah lamp (Jerusalem: Bene Betsalel, 1939). This innovative work presented for the first time a thorough analysis of a single Jewish object, from its inception in the talmudic period, to the modern period, and throughout the Jewish Diaspora. Narkiss's interaction with immigrant Jewish groups from different parts of the world led him to consider the visual heritage of the Jews from the lands of Islam, a topic nearly entirely neglected by the scholars who preceded him. Notable in this respect is his pioneering small book on the handicrafts of Yemenite Jews (Jerusalem, 1941), which established the methodology for future studies on the material culture of the communities under Islamic rule.

In 1957, the year of Narkiss's untimely death, another major contribution appeared, *Jewish Art,* edited by Cecil Roth (1899–1970) and Zusia Efron (1916–2002). The first edition included eighteen articles by various experts, who systematically discussed the development of Jewish art from biblical times to the modern era. The book was first published in Hebrew and then translated into several languages, in an expanded edition that included new illustrations (first English edition, 1961). Although he was a historian by training, Roth, whose name appears on all subsequent editions of the book, was attracted to Jewish art and published many articles on the topic but never made the topic his main field of research. However, unlike other historians of Judaism, he often drew attention to the visual world in his historical studies. Despite its many faults, *Jewish Art* continues to be the standard textbook on the topic to this day.

In the 1950s and 1960s several other scholars joined the field and made Jewish art their primary topic of research. The first is the American (non-Jewish) scholar, Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough (1893–1965), who dedicated many years to the interpretation of visual symbols in the talmudic period. His massive thirteen-volume work, *Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period* (1953–1965), features nearly every Judaic object and work of art known at the time. Although his methodology and conclusions have been generally rejected by scholars, his comprehensive volumes continue to be a major resource, and he is credited with drawing attention to the importance of visual culture in the talmudic period. Another American scholar, Joseph Gutmann (b. 1923), has been dealing with nearly every aspect of Jewish art, including manuscript illumination, ceremonial objects and customs, and ancient synagogues as well as theoretical questions pertaining to the field. Gutmann's many books and articles have shown the contribution of art to Jewish history and its interrelationships with Christian culture. In Europe the leading scholars in the field have dedicated their efforts mainly to book illumination (e.g., Thérèse and Mendel Metzger of Strasbourg, Gabrielle Sed-Rajana of Paris, and Luisa Mortara-Ottolenghi of Milan).

In Israel, Mordechai Narkiss's son, Bezalel Narkiss (1926–2008), continued his father's work. His publications focused on illuminated Hebrew books and demonstrated their visual sources in the art of the Christian and Islamic societies that hosted the Jewish communities. In 1974, Narkiss initiated publication of the annual *Journal of Jewish Art* (since 1986/1987 titled *Jewish Art*) and in 1979 established the Center for Jewish Art, a research institute at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The Center comprehensively documents Jewish works of art, illuminated Hebrew manuscripts, ritual objects, synagogues, and cemeteries throughout the world. In addition, the Center issues various publications in the field and sponsors international conferences. The University's Society for Jewish Art promotes the field in Israel and publishes *Rimmonim,* the only periodical in Hebrew dedicated to the topic. Several volumes of *Rimmonim* (edited by Shalom Sabar) have been devoted to art and objects connected to life-cycle events.

The pioneering work of the aforementioned scholars paved the way for and is currently continued by a number of institutions and younger scholars in Israel, the United States, and Europe. At the Hebrew University of Jerusalem classes in Jewish art and material culture are

offered by the Departments of Art History and Jewish and Comparative Folklore, both of which allow students to earn academic degrees in the field. Other institutions include partial programs—such as Bar Ilan University in Ramat Gan and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York City. Some of the scholars that have taught in these and other schools include Vivian Mann (ceremonial art), Evelyn Cohen (Hebrew manuscript illumination), Bracha Yaniv (the Torah case and its appurtenances), and Shalom Sabar (*ketubbot*, Jewish folk art and rituals, magic and amulets, postcards, holy sites). Recent developments in the field led to the establishment of two new periodicals: *Ars Judaica*—an annual of Jewish art (in English), issued by the Department of Jewish Art at Bar Ilan University (edited by Bracha Yaniv, Mirjam Rajner, and Ilia Rodov; first volume appeared in 2005); and *Images—A Journal of Jewish art and Visual Culture*, issued by Brill (Leiden), and edited by Steven Fine, Vivian Mann, and Margaret Olin (first volume: 2007).

Important contributions to documentation and research of Judaica are also made through the activities of the curators of Jewish museums worldwide. The results of the fieldwork conducted by museum staff members not only culminate in temporary exhibitions but are preserved in the accompanying catalogs, which often contain a number of pertinent essays. Some of the major exhibitions that pointed at new source materials and directions of research in the field include, first and foremost, the publications of the Ethnography Department at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem (in particular the pioneering catalogs dealing with the arts and daily life of the Jews of Morocco [ed. Aviva Müller-Lancet, 1973], Kurdistan [ed. Ora Schwartz-Be'eri, 1981], the Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire [ed. Esther Juhasz, 1990], India [ed. Orpah Slapak, 1995], Afghanistan [ed. No'am Bar'am-Ben Yossef, 1998], Yemen [ed. Esther Muchawsky-Schnapper, 2000], and the Mountain Jews of Azerbaijan [ed. Liya Mikdash-Shamialov, 2002]). Some of the Jewish museums in Europe and the United States embarked on similar projects. Noteworthy in this respect are the exhibition catalogs co-edited by Vivian B. Mann of the Jewish Museum in New York City (for example, *A Tale of Two Cities: Jewish Life in Frankfurt and Istanbul 1750–1870* [1982] and *Gardens and Ghettos: The Art of Jewish Life in Italy* [1989]). In Europe the leading Jewish museums sponsored major catalogs as well (for example, *Orphan Objects: Facets of the Textiles Collection,* by the Jewish Historical Museum, Amsterdam, 1997; textiles catalogue by the Jewish Museum, Prague, 2003).

Despite the significant development of research in Jewish art since the mid-twentieth century, the tasks facing scholars are still major and require many more years of groundwork before the foundations of the field are solid. The investigation of art and material culture of the Jews differs from that of other cultures and presents issues that are particular to the development of Judaism and Jewish history. Serious research should take into account the special circumstances in which the objects were created, the Jewish ideas and customs underlying their production and usage, and the influences of the host culture.

Shalom Sabar

See also: Esther Scroll; Goldberg-Mulkiewicz, Olga; Haggadah of Passover; *Ketubbah*; Menorah; *Mezuzah*; *Mizraḥ*; Sabar, Shalom; Shiviti-Menorah; Torah Ark; Torah Ceremonial Objects; Torah Ornaments.

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FOLK BELIEF

Jewish folk belief is predicated on the premise that one can either use words, actions, or symbolic objects to

bring about a desired result or, alternatively, be at the mercy of them. As one elderly Sephardic woman said when asking her daughter-in-law to uncross her arms, "It's silliness, you know, but we say, 'To cross your arms is to cross your luck.'" For many Sephardim, exiled Jews from Spain and Portugal and their descendants, folk beliefs are equated with superstitions and are considered to be silliness (*bovedades*). The Ashkenazim, Yiddish-speaking Jews from Central and Eastern Europe, call them grandmother's tales (*bubbe maises*); and Ibn Ezra of Spain (1092–1167) referred to them as "gossip of old women." However, this one-dimensional perspective, whether held by laypeople or scholars, misses the symbolic principles that undergird folk beliefs, and that forge them into a complex cultural belief system.

In Judaism, the power of the word is linked to the divine source, *Ha'Shem* (God), who spoke the world into being. Thus, for all Jews, the power of speech can be used for good or for ill. To influence the life course of a newborn, for example, Ashkenazi parents select the name following a custom in which one never names a child after a living relative because when the Angel of Death comes, he will not be able to discern whether he is taking the adult or the child. Among the Sephardim, parents are expected to name their children after their own parents, whether living or dead: first for the father's side, then for the mother's side. In his book *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion*, folklorist Joshua Trachtenberg conveyed the importance of the name, whether for the Ashkenazim or the Sephardim. "Outstanding among those beliefs that are universally characteristic of the religion of superstition is the conviction that 'a man's name is the essence of his being.' . . . This doctrine elevated the process of naming a child into one of major importance. The name carried with it all the associations it had accumulated in history, and stamped the character of its earlier owners upon its new bearer, so that the choice of a name was fraught with grave responsibility" (1939, 78).

Name Change

If an individual experiences ill health and no method of treatment brings improvement, then he can change his name. As Hayyim Schauss noted in *The Lifetime of a Jew Throughout the Ages of Jewish History*, "In post-Talmudic times, this practice of changing the name as a remedy in the case of a sickness became popular among the Franco-German Jews and, in time, became a universal Jewish custom" (1950, 76). In this instance, a folk belief passed into religious ritual, since the name change is effected in front of the open Holy Ark, and prayers are recited to let the Ruler of the Universe know of the name change for the stricken one.

Names are also used on amulets, either as a form of protection through the power of the good name or to ward off evil, as in the amulet pinned to the covering of the childbirth bed. On one such amulet, *El Shaddai* (the Hebrew name for God) is at the top, the names of angels arranged to the left and the right, and the name Adam over Lilith (the first wife of Adam, and in Jewish demonology, the killer of newborn children and their mothers) is at the bottom on the right. The positioning of the names symbolizes *El Shaddai*, Adam, and all the angels piling their good on top of Lilith's evil to keep her away from the newborn baby and the mother. In a 1925 article written for the *Journal of American Folklore*, Leah Rachel Yoffie referred to another such amulet used by the Ashkenazim. Pinned to the curtains of the childbirth bed to keep Lilith out, the amulet begins, "These are my names," and all thirteen different names of Lilith are listed so that the demon will not be allowed to enter the childbirth bed by deceitfully using a different name (1925, 385).

Blessings, Curses, and the Evil Eye

Speech also carries the power to bless or to curse. Among the Sephardim, numerous blessings for good health are linked to folk beliefs, most of which are connected to the power of the evil eye (illness or misfortune resulting from expression of greed or envy from one person to another). For instance, the blessing, "May you live and grow like the fish in fresh water" (or "in the sea") likens the individual to the fish in the water, which is protected against the evil eye by the water—either fresh or salt—and by the symbolic association with a fish, which itself is always protected by water and whose eyes, lacking eyelids, never close and see all around because they are positioned on either side of the head.

The complex meanings of the evil eye draw from a heady mix of folk beliefs, the power of speech, the protective power of actions and of objects. One can inadvertently cast the evil eye by simply gazing at an infant, looking at the beauty of a new bride, or commenting on the good fortune of a businessman. As Schauss notes, one can cause harm to another "unintentionally with the evil eye—by a tacit glance, or by a look coupled with a word in praise of beauty, health, strength or any other desirable quality" (1950, 85). Among the Ashkenazim about whom Schauss wrote, this is called *barufn* ("spellbound by being called") or *baschrien* ("spellbound by being shouted at") (85–86). One protects oneself against mistakenly causing the evil eye by uttering one of numerous protective sayings: the Ashkenazim, for instance, say *kein ayine hore* ("no evil eye"); the Sephardim, *leshos de mozotros* ("far from us"); and among Syrian Jews, *beli ayin hara* ("without evil eye"). One is careful, particularly at times of good fortune, to shield oneself from envy, whether by denying that one has good fortune or by hiding good fortune. To

It was a Jewish folk belief that if, on Hoshanah Rabbah, a person cannot see the head on his shadow, he will die in the coming year. From *Sefer Minhagim*, Venice 1593.

the query, "How do you feel?" one might reply, "Not so good; really, not so good!" Or one might shield a beautiful child from one who has not seen him or her before (Schauss 1950, 87).

Since it is demons that are called forth by the evil eye, much is done to distract them from the source of good fortune and fertility. The bridegroom, for instance, smashes a glass at the conclusion of the wedding ceremony, among other explanations, to drown out the cries of "Mazel tov!" ("Good luck!") from those in the congregation, and thus not call forth the spirits at this time of joy. Trachtenberg added another detail to the crushing of the glass: "The custom combined an attempt to frighten off the demons with noise, and a direct attack upon them" (1939, 173). The bride is veiled to hide her from the evil spirits, and the groom is rushed to the "wedding chamber before the bride . . . before the demons, recovering from the bombardment to which they had been subjected, prevented him from enjoying his newly won connubial happiness" (174).

Numerous objects are used to protect against the evil eye. For the Ashkenazim, a red ribbon or string is tied around a crib to ward off the evil eye from the infant. Among the Sephardim, a blue bead is pinned to a child's garment, for blue is thought to ward off the evil eye. Or a sprig of rue is often tucked under the baby's blanket, for the spirits are driven away by the astringent odor of the plant. A braided string of garlic can be hung at the doorway, or a clove of garlic or a sprig of rosemary can

be tucked into a young child's shirt pocket, with the expectation that the odor will repel the spirits. Young children and women can wear gold amulets, for the gold will enchant the spirits so that they cannot cause harm. A young woman might tuck an iron nail inside her coiled braid, because iron is protective against evil. Mizraḥim often place a knife under a child's pillow so that the iron will protect the child from harm.

All of these objects—whether beads, ribbons, herbs, or precious and durable metals—are used to guard boundaries. The boundaries of the person—the head, neck, heart, and hand—are protected by simple amulets. The boundaries of the home—the threshold with *mezuzah* (a small encased parchment scroll inscribed with verses from the book of Deuteronomy), the doorway with an iron horseshoe, or the window with a string of garlic—guard those within the borders from the dangers of the spirits. When a Sephardic woman is outside the protective boundaries of the home, she might exchange a metal item, a coin or a straight pin, with another woman who passes her in the street. This custom of exchange (*kambasear*) is particularly vital for newly married women, pregnant women, or a pregnant woman and a woman who has miscarried. While exchanging the ritualized gifts of metal, the two women say, "You keep your childbirths and I'll keep mine" (Lévy and Zumwalt 2001, 108); in so doing, they signal a hope for a balance in the world of fertility and a desire not to let envy delight the spirits into causing barrenness. When the Arab Jew is out in the desert and sees a strong whirlwind, or *zoba'ah*, sweeping toward him, he shouts, as do his fellow Muslims, "Iron! Iron!" ("*Hadeed! Hadeed!*"), because it is believed that the evil spirits, *jinn*s, are in the whirlwind and that they fear iron.

Repetition

Threefold repetition is crucial in Jewish folk belief. For ritual cures, blessings are repeated three times; the cure itself might be performed nine times (three times three). As Trachtenberg wrote: "Three is the favored mystical number of all times. . . . The number three occurs more often in magical texts than any other. Actions and incantations were to be performed three hours before sunrise, or three days before the new moon, or three days in succession; preparatory rites were to last three days; the magical act comprised three stages, or required three objects" (1939, 119).

Threefold repetition is used for purifying with water (the participant pours water three times on the spot where he or she took fright); sweetening with sugar (one takes three pinches of sugar three times in the mouth and says a protective verse three times); or cleansing with salt (one casts salt three times in the water and splashes the water three times on the face and then throws it into the sea). As a fluid of the body, spittle is protective against

evil. One can spit, or make the sound of spitting—*pu, pu, pu!*—as protection against death when one sees a dead animal on the road. The Ashkenazi mother "licks the child's forehead three times, spitting after each lick" to take away fright (Yoffie 1925, 377). The Sephardic mother licks her baby's forehead three times and recites: "I gave birth to you, I raised you, the fright and the evil eye I remove from you. The cow licks her calf because of love, and I lick [remove] your fright and evil eye" (Lévy and Zumwalt 2001, 102).

One might also transfer evil from one physical realm to another, as the Sephardim do, by casting evil to the depths of the sea. If something bad has happened to one member of the community, then the protective blessing might be said, "May it be as a sacrifice for all the Jews" ("*Kapara ki sea para todos los djudios*"). The reference to sacrifice is to Abraham's intended sacrifice of his son Isaac, with the replacement of the ram, which is enacted during the Rosh Ha' Shana sacrifice of a rooster for a male and a hen for a female as a substitute for their sins. (Lévy and Zumwalt 2001, 82–83). Often offerings or sacrifices are made either to placate spirits or to bless God. Ashkenazim tip a little water out of a glass before drinking from it as an offering to the spirits.

Jewish folk belief represents a complex blend of Jewish religious beliefs and the customs accreted by Jews over the centuries in their adopted countries, whether it be the belief in *jinn*s among the Mizraḥim of the Arab and South Asian realms, the protective color of red among the Ashkenazim, or the blue beads of the Sephardim, adopted from the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire. The meaning of the individual folk belief lies not in its particular geographical or cultural origins, but rather in a larger system of belief that guides daily life and provides an ethos for right and proper conduct, in order to maintain or reestablish balance in the world. Evil spirits must be placated through gifts of sweets—honey and sugar—or through kind words and complimentary references. The interactions with close kin and neighbors must be based on proper behavior. And these actions are all taken in the name of God ("May the Lord guard me from all evil") so that life might be filled with blessings, as in the words of the Sephardic prayer, "Paths of milk and honey, good paths."

Isaac Jack Lévy and Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt

See also: Demon; Folk Medicine; Magic; *Minhag* (Custom).

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FOLK DANCE, JEWISH AND ISRAELI

The spontaneous outburst of hora dancing following the 1947 United Nations declaration of a Jewish state is one of the most embedded collective memories of the Jewish modern era. Israeli folk dancing took part in a national project to create a new physical and cultural Jewish Israeli identity—a process known as the creation of "modern tradition." Its initiators proudly declared their Zionist ideological goal of creating new dances for the renewed Jewish people in the Land of Israel.

Despite the commonly held notion that folk dances have a profound past, Israeli folk dances are relatively new. Yet the new creation, which emerged in the mid-twentieth century, is based on Jewish and non-Jewish folk dances, which do have an old legacy. The dances began as a cluster of components that were mostly imported from the gentile countries of origin of Jewish immigrants and mixed with folkloric elements of native inhabitants of the Land of Israel. The basic repertoire includes: (1) dances of Sephardim and Ashkenazim of the old Jewish Yishuv, (2) Eastern European wedding dances and Eastern European male Hasidic dances, (3) European non-Jewish peasant dances that were brought by Ashkenazic immigrants, (4) Eastern non-Jewish folk dances that were brought by Sephardic immigrants, (5) Jewish Yemenite dances, and (6) folk dances of native minorities, especially Arabic.

A synthesis of these dances produced an original form called "new Israeli folk dance." The original context of dancing—its purpose, steps, and body gestures—had been changed. Step elaboration, new body inclinations, and especially a typical new "spirit" defined the new dancing. Liveliness, easiness, vitality, liberty, joy, and physical and emotional expressiveness were portrayed in Israeli folk dancing, which became a symbol of the new Jewish Israeli spirit.

From Biblical and Talmudic Times to the Eighteenth Century

The Hebrew Bible is the earliest source of Jewish dancing, and different words describe the varied purposes of dance. These terms are used to characterize dancing

practice specifically or occasions of joyousness and play-fulness in general. For Miriam the prophetess (Exod. 15:20) and Yiftah's daughter (Judg. 11:34), *meḥolelot* (dance) is an expression of glory and survival; Shilo girls are described performing dance (*ḥalot bameḥolot*) (Judg. 21:21) in vineyard festivity in order to present them-selves for marriage. When the Israelites built a golden calf, they "rose up to play" in its presence (Exod. 32:6), which can be understood in Hebrew as laughing or playing. In contrast, King David *meḥarker* and *mephazez* (leaping and dancing) with religious enthusiasm when he appeared before the Ark of the Covenant (2 Sam. 6:14,16). Dancing expresses mourning (*misped*) and happiness (*rikud*) (Eccl. 3:4). Masses of people, cheer-fully crowded together, are understood as celebrating or circling when they *ḥogegim* (celebrate). (1 Sam. 30:16; Liber Psalmorum 42:5).

Most of the descriptions in the Talmud deal with dance as connected to rituals performed in the Temple. The festivals mentioned are associated with the agricul-ture cycle and expressed in the three pilgrimage festivals: the spring harvest festival on the eve of Passover, Qzir ha'Omer (Lev. 23:10), the summer fruit festivity of Shavuot Bikkurim (Lev. 23:16), and the autumn festival of Sukkot Asif (Deut. 16:13). A special festival at the end of Sukkot is Simchat Beit ha'shoeva. This festivity has passed through many transformations during Jewish history and persists today. In biblical times it celebrated the water-drawing ritual performed in praise of God at the tabernacles. Its importance and liveliness are embodied in the statement "One who has not seen the ceremony of the drawing water has not seen happiness in his lifetime" (*m. Sukkah* 5:1).

The Talmud also mentions other dance customs. Burning torch dances (*Sukkah* 5:4), exemplified in the dance of Raban Shimon ben Gamliel and girls dancing on Yom Kippur and on Tu Be'Av (*m. Ta'anit* 4:8), refer to dances performed during mishnaic times to reproduce biblical dances. A main talmudic concern in relation to dance is the issue of "dancing before the bride" and the protection of a woman's modesty on her wedding day. Dancing ensured the joy of the newly married couple, and although it was considered as a "Mitzvah dance" and encouraged in the Talmud (*Ketubbot* 16:1), mixed dance between the bride and other men in the wedding party was problematic. The "Mitzvah dance" evolved into a form that enabled men to dance with the bride without direct physical contact by wearing a glove or using the bride's handkerchief for separation.

From medieval times, dances became more secu-lar in character. In Spain, dances were abundant and elaborate within the Jewish community. Famous folk and theatrical dances attributed to Jewish creators and performers include the beggars' dance and death dance, both of which recall dramatically the medieval plague. Citations of celebrations without specified dances appear in reference to Purim. In Italy, joyful Purim festivals overlapped the Christian carnival and borrowed customs from it. The resulting infusion of masquerade created dramas that reenacted the Jewish story of Queen Esther.

From the twelfth to the seventeenth century, East-ern and Central European communities created special "dance houses." The Tanzhaus served wedding celebra-tions. Documented wedding dances from Eastern Europe include shere and sherele, challah dance, berogez dance (quarrel dance), and sholem dance (peace dance). The lat-ter were danced by two members of the community who, taking the happiness of the celebration as an opportunity, reconciled their conflicted relations through their dance. Another dance with social meaning was the freilech, a type of spiteful dance directed toward the hostile gentile envi-ronment. In contrast, the goat dance and other animal-like dances were borrowed from the rituals of gentile farmer neighbors and performed at Jewish weddings.

Eighteenth-Century Hasidic Dancing

Eigtheenth-century Eastern European Hasidic dancing can be considered an authentic Jewish religious form of dance, due to the Hasidic point of view that assumes dancing can bring a person closer to God. The Ba'al Shem Tov considered dance a tool that would lead to de-votion and ecstatic religious experience, and as a way of serving God with joy. This simple and physical activity was open to everyone regardless of religious or economic status. The egalitarian Hasidic idelogy was expressed in the tight circle of enthusiastic men dancing with their rabbi. The Hasidic dance is simultaneously an expres-sion of body and of soul, which become fused in the spiritual experience of dance. The sources of these dance movements are vague. Historians find that some of the movements and the songs accompanying them derive from gentile customs, yet the movements clearly possess symbolic meaning with Jewish imagery. There are clues for internal symbolic and even mystical meaning of the cycle gestures, deriving from Kabbalah.

Today, Jewish religious dancing can be seen in the synagogue during Purim, Simchat Beit Hashoeva, and especially during Simchat Torah, when men dance encir-cling the space (*hakafo*t) while holding the scrolls of the Torah. Outside the synagogue, traditional dancing occurs during rites of passage and at religious celebrations, such as on the death anniversary of saintly rabbis (*hillulah*), for example, that of Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai, held in Meron, Upper Galilee, on Lag Ba'Omer (the thirty-third day after Passover).

The Nineteenth-Century Old Yishuv and Origins of Israeli Folk Dance

Historians know very little about the folk dances of the Old Yishuv, the Jewish community in Eretz Israel, before the first immigration of 1881–1882 to 1903. The Jewish Yemenite inhabitants had a developed and complex religious male dance that was performed during celebrations. Ashkenazim (Jews from Central and Eastern Europe) and Sephardim (exiled Jews from Spain and Portugal and their descendants) danced in traditional contexts that reaffirmed Jewish community life. People danced at family celebrations such as weddings, circumcisions, and bar mitzvahs, and on holidays including Simchat Torah, Beit Hashoeva, and Lag Ba'Omer. Among Eastern European Jews, the wedding "Mitzvah dance" with the bride was widespread. In the late eigtheenth century, Ba'al Shem Tov's followers brought the Hasidic dances to the Old Yishuv. The First Aliyah brought religious Jews from Eastern Europe who had similar dancing folklore.

The 1910s and 1920s: Dances of the Jewish Pioneers

The religious aspect of dance was the salient difference between the Old Yishuv and the First Aliyah immigrants, as compared to the immigrants from the Second Aliyah (1904–1914) and the Third (1919–1923). The immigrants of the Third Aliyah were young and secular. The idealistic among them turned to a new socialistic way of life. These young pioneers (called *ḥalutzim*) danced not only on religious occasions but also as a part of daily routine. For them, dance created the possibility of relief, physical intimacy, and strengthening of body and soul. Those immigrants brought with them the secular non-Jewish peasant dances. The most significant of these was the circular hora dance from Romania, which became a symbol of the *ḥalutz*. Other European dances adopted were the polka, mazurka, krakoviak, kozachok, and rondo. Two main reasons explain the successful acceptance of the hora. First, the social circular dance symbolized the new Zionist-socialist ideology: equality, solidarity, and unmediated contact with one another and with the earth. Second, a shortage of women inhibited couples' dancing. The pioneers also brought openness to the natives' folklore, adapting the Arabs' debka and Circassians' circassia.

The *ḥalutzim* danced spontaneously, yet they were not professional dancers. The first professional dancer to arrive was Baruch Agadati, in 1919. His dance ura glilit (known as hora agadati) was created in 1924 and is considered the first genuine Israeli folk dance. Another

important professional dance figure was Rina Nikova, a pioneer of classical and biblical ballet, who came from Russia in 1924. She formed the Biblical Yemenite Ballet Company, a classical ballet group inspired by Yemenite folklore. In 1920, Gurit Kadman emigrated from Germany, becoming one of the seminal figures in the Israeli folkdance movement. She was followed by two other important figures who contributed to the creation of Israeli folk dances: Lea Bergstein came in 1925 and Rivka Shturman in 1929. Both emigrated during the Fourth Aliyah (1925–1929).

The 1930s: Ceremonial Celebrations on the Kibbutzim

The early 1930s marked the historical beginning of a deliberate search for ceremonial festivals that could express the new rural way of life in the new land. The originators of this development were inspired by different motional and emotional sources. For example, Bergstein created in 1931 the first secular peasant ceremony, "shorn wool festivity." Similarly, Cheshka Rosenthal, who emigrated from Poland in 1921 with no Jewish education, created the "first fruits festivity" based on her acquaintance with the Polish farmers' festivals. Other dance creators looked for ways to revive the old Israelite ceremonies as they were imagined, especially the three pilgrim festivals (Passover, Shavuot, and Sukkot). Professional level, style, and artistic influences differed as well. Gertrud Kraus, the most prominent dance artist of the Yishuv, who came from Germany, contributed her modern expressionist style. Yardena Cohen, an Israeli-born choreographer, was influenced by a "Canaanite" style. Sara Levi-Tanai bestowed her Yemenite inspiration to compose Israeli folk songs and dances and in 1949 founded the Inbal Dance Theatre Company. Other initiators, such as Bergstein and Ilse Dublon, abandoned artistic dance in favor of the folkloric. Dublon, who emigrated from Germany in 1936, is known for her famous *maim, maim* (water, water) folk dance, used at the water festival she created.

The 1940s: Institutionalizing Israeli Folk Dances

The early 1940s began the mass creation of folk dances considered by scholars to be authentically Israeli. The first dances, which elaborated upon ceremonial festivals of the kibbutzim, circulated to a wide urban audience. By 1944, the first folk dance festival took place in Kibbutz Dalyah, presenting twenty folk dances, among them eight new Israeli dances, before 3,500 spectators. The Dalyah Festivals, as they were called, continued until 1968 and were replaced by the Carmiel Dance

Dance festival in Kibbutz Dalyah. Israel, 1968. *(Courtesy of Lavon Archive)*

Festival, still active today. The first Dalyah Festival was the basis for the establishment of the Inter-Kibbutzim Dance Committee of the Histadrut Labor Union in 1945, which became the Folk Dance Section in 1952. This national section was the institutional initiator of Israeli folk dancing as a widespread social practice. It controlled all activities relating to Israeli folk dances, choosing the "appropriate" dances that would be popularized, conducting studios for training instructors, exporting Israeli folk dances abroad, and establishing *harkadot* that encouraged Israelis to participate in the national activity. The section shut down at the beginning of 2000 due to budget difficulties and loss of leadership.

Jewish and Non-Jewish Dances in Israeli Folklore

From 1971 until the early 1990s, the Section for Fostering Ethnic and Minorities Dances in the Histadrut operated along with the Folk Dance Section. The proj-ect supported ethnic dance preservation, revival, and performance in order to keep ethnic folklore alive and to inspire the creation of new dances. The groups who were encouraged to preserve their dances were Jewish immigrants from countries in Asia and Africa: Yemen, Kurdistan, Libya, Morocco, Bukhara, Georgia, India, Ethiopia, and the Israeli minorities—Arabs, Druze, and Circassians. Except for the Yemenite dances and Eastern European Hasidic dances, all other ethnic group dances have no proven Jewish affinity; they were adopted from non-Jewish sources but danced on Jewish occasions.

Yemenite Dance

In addition to Hasidic dance, Yemenite dance is the other salient Jewish dance for two reasons. First, it is performed together with traditional Yemenite Diwan liturgy that contains lyrics of great Yemenite and Sephardic Jewish poets. Second, Yemenite dance has a clear Jewish connection with movement: the dancer's finger

movements mimic the finger gestures that accompany the cantillation while praying. Yemenite and Hasidic dances have some characteristics in common: they share ecstatic religious passion, they are exclusively male, and in both groups a few talented men perform a complicated "acrobatic show" in order to amuse their friends. Yet, the most important shared characteristic is that the dances convey a hidden Jewish symbolic meaning. Women's dances are much quieter and more restrained than their male counterparts, and lack religious ecstasy.

Arab Dance

It is significant that the varied Arab debka steps were well absorbed into Israeli folk dances. There are even Israeli folk dances called "debka" that contain typical steps, but mostly not in their pure form. The Arab dances that were incorporated into Israeli folk dance were utilized as a significant symbol of a shared Jewish–Arab Israeli folklore. Moreover, since the 1950s, Israeli folk dances have become more and more "'oriental" through the assimilation of Arab and Eastern Jewish dancing folklore. According to folklorist Gurit Kadman (1969), the "Yemeni step" and the Arab "debka step" are the most prototypical movements of Israeli folk dancing.

Development of Israeli Folk Dances and Their Present State

The character of Israeli folk dancing has changed profoundly throughout its history. Dance morphed from a collective dance of a small community, where everyone knew each other and danced holding hands, to an activity involving masses of strangers who seldom knew or touched each other. Live music was replaced by electronic equipment. Once a socialist volunteer effort, Israeli folk dancing fell into the arena of capitalist interests. Sephardi activists replaced the Ashkenazi European choreographers and administrators. The centralist national dance sections that managed the field deteriorated and fell apart.

Despite these changes, several features are clear: Israeli folk dancing is a social act, a powerful national symbol, and a popular leisure activity. People from various backgrounds, ethnic origins, and ages dance together. They participate in a pleasurable physical activity, meet new people, and engage in an act that affords opportunity to create romantic relationships. Many Jews in Israel and throughout the world prefer Israeli folk dances to popular foreign dances (such as Latin and ballroom dances) and describe a strong emotional connection to the dance steps and the melodies and lyrics that accompany them. According to mid-1990s statistics (Ronen 1994), ap-

proximately 250,000 people in Israel dance regularly and an even larger number of people engage in Israeli folk dancing throughout the world. In 2010 there were more than 6,000 Israeli folk dances, created in both Israel and abroad, compared with just eight in 1944. Many questions accompanied their creation—Can these dances be considered folklore? Do they have a value? How can the value be measured and who should be the judge?— allowing for a new generation of scholars and participants alike to answer them.

Dina Roginsky

See also: Kadman, Gurit.

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FOLK MEDICINE

Folk medicine is rooted in domesticated religion or the religion of the home. In traditional Jewish societies, various cultural groups—whether Ashkenazim (Yiddish-speaking Jews from Central and Eastern Europe), Sephardim (exiled Jews from Spain and Portugal and their descendents), or Mizraḥim (Jews from the Middle East and North Africa)—connect illness to the spirit world, as spirits are called forth to do their evil bidding by means of words, thoughts of envy, or the public display of good fortune. Thus folk medicine is an intricate mix of knowledge, usually passed orally without recourse to written cures, about medicines that draw on a pharmacopoeia of ingredients readily available in the home. The heart of folk medicine lies in the curer, who is usually, but not always, the woman of the house. The simpler remedies are used for recurring physical ailments. For a headache, folk medicine dictates that one take a potato or a cucumber, slice it thin, and then tie the slices around the forehead. For a stomachache, one soaks a handkerchief in *raki* (anisette liqueur, a favorite among the Sephardim), sprinkles it with pepper, and then places it on the stomach as a poultice. For a sore throat, one gargles with warm saltwater. For eye infections, one rinses the eye with urine from a child. However, Jewish folk medicine is much more than herbs and potions—it is a complex belief system that keeps the universe in order.

To Transfer the Illness and Evil

Household ingredients appear deceptively simple but carry a spiritual punch. The urine from a child, for instance, can bathe an infected eye, or it can be used in a more complex cure to remove the effects of the evil eye (illness or misfortune resulting from expression of greed or envy from one person to another). One throws salt in the toilet, urinates on it, and pronounces words to the effect that the evil is transferred to the salt; and as the salt dissolves, so does the evil. Thus the evil is transferred from the person by means of the urine, which is ritually powerful and protective, to the salt, which can absorb and dissolve the evil due to its curative elements. The illness can also be transferred back to the one who wished evil on the stricken one, to a body of water, to a fish, or to an animal. One can swallow a clove of garlic to strengthen the heart or to counter high blood pressure, but garlic can also be used to ward off evil spirits. The herb rosemary can be used as a simple aromatic tea, or a mother can tuck a sprig of rosemary in her child's pocket as protection against the evil eye. Thus in folk medicine, there is no such thing as a single-stranded explanation for the efficacy of a curative ingredient. In modern scientific terms garlic does have health benefits for the heart and is used to combat high blood pressure with its sulfur compound allicin, an amino acid. But for Jewish folk medicine, the curative powers of garlic are not scientific; they are spiritual. The power of garlic is connected to its strong odor: The spirits smell it and are repelled. During the waning hours of Yom Kippur, one can crush a sprig of rue, hold it under one's nostrils, and inhale its astringent odor as an antidote to the shakiness and weakness of the body that comes after a night and a day of fasting. But the power of rue is much greater than as an antidote against fainting during Yom Kippur: Tuck it behind the ear of a bride, or under the pillow of a new mother, or in the blankets of a baby, and the spirits give its harsh odor a wide berth.

Folk Medicine as a Symbolic System

Folk medicine is part of a symbolic system that relates the individual to the right and proper spiritual balance of the community. Indeed, in folk societies, this is equal to the right and proper spiritual balance of the universe. The folk curer knows that there is seldom a recurring ailment, no matter how simple, that is not connected to the spirits. Thus, spirits must be appeased in order for the physical ailment to be cured and spiritual torment to dissipate. The curer treats the stricken one with medicines for the body and for the soul. Perhaps an individual has insulted the spirits by throwing dirty water into the street without realizing that this was the pathway of the spirits. As a result of her careless action, she is struck by recurrent nightmares and manifests strange erratic behavior, both of which indicate that she is in the grip of the spirits. The curer tells her to take sugar water to clean the spot where the dirty water had splashed, to address the spirits ("I meant you no harm, I wash away the evil"), and then to drink some of the water used to wash the spot. The curer will then say, "And, in the name of God, the cure was good." Water sweetened with honey or sugar can also be used in the night air (*al sereno*). The afflicted person drinks the water in small sips in the morning while reciting blessings with each sip. Folk medicine practitioners believe that the curative power of the cool night air, and particularly of the morning dew, which is a cool mist, contributes to the healing, along with the sweetness of the honey

or sugar and the spiritual power of the blessings. Thus inherent in the cure of the night air is the hot/cold dichotomy of the Greek humoral medical system of the Hippocratic school (800–50 B.C.E.): The evil eye is hot, upsetting health; the night air and mist are cold, restoring a healthy balance. And the prevalence of the use of sugar as a cure links the Sephardic folk medical system to the Arab pharmacopoeia, which spanned from Persia to Spain and which drew from the Greek humoral system (711–1492).

Linked as it is to the concept of spirits, Jewish folk medicine poses a challenge to the doctrinal or rabbinical tradition, for which there is only one God. While some rabbis—including the seventeenth-century Judah Lirma of Belgrade and Abraham ben Isaac Antibi, the nineteenth-century leader of the rabbinical body of Aleppo, among others—vociferously opposed any practices based on the belief in spirits or cures derived from magical belief systems, other rabbis, such as Hayyim Palache, a prominent nineteenth-century rabbi of Izmir, adopted a more benign attitude. As long as the practice, even that of the complex magical cure of enclosure (*indulko*), did not hurt anyone and as long as there was no evil intent involved, then it was permitted.

The Evil Eye

Central to the Jewish folk medical system is the evil eye complex, which is intricately linked to the power of speech. The spirits, euphemistically called *los buenos de mozotros* (the good among us) or *los de abasho* (those from below) by Sephardim and the *shokhen afar* (Heb., dwellers of the earth) by Ashkenazim, are particularly resentful of the good fortune of humans. Lying in wait, they are called forth when they hear someone carelessly commenting on the luck of the newly wed, the good fortune of the pregnant woman, the bounty of the nursing mother, or the beauty of a healthy, well-fed child. The spirits pounce. They bring all manner of illness. As one Sephardic woman said, "No matter the harm, it was always the result of the evil eye." The spirits had been called forth through the power of speech and in just such a way can be kept in abeyance through protective utterances. The statement "Oh, what an ugly baby, I spit in your eye!" accompanied by mock spitting is a twofold protection offered by a Russian-Jewish great-grandmother and her friends in Chicago in the 1970s, who all uttered this phrase over the infant great-grandson, to the astonishment of his mother, who knew nothing of the explanation for such seeming insults. "The German Jews, as well as the Russian and Polish Jews, will preface or add to every word of praise or compliment, some expression that is designed to ward off [the evil eye]. The German Jews . . . say 'unbeschrien,' while the Russian and Polish Jews say, 'kein ayine hore' (no evil eye)" (Yoffie 1925, 375).

Items serving in folk medicine. *(Courtesy of Rosemay Zumwalt)*

In addition to protective sayings, one can also use simple objects, such as the blue beads of the Sephardim and Mizraḥim or the coral bead of the Ashkenazim to keep away the evil eye. Other common objects used to protect Ashkenazim and Sephardim against demonic agents include the following: iron for its purifying power and strength, salt for its medicinal use and as a protective substance to drive away the spirits, and gold for its purity and sparkle, used to bedazzle the spirits and draw them away. One of the most treasured medicines among the Jews of Izmir and Rhodes, *mumia* (from desiccated bones of the dead or preferably from the foreskin of a circumcision) is used to assist those suffering from fright (*espanto*); serious illness, such as cancer; or mental anguish. Rabbis and other learned men among the Ashkenazim, Sephardim, and Mizraḥim (especially those from Iraq, Uzbekistan, and Yemen) prepare themselves ritually to write amulets on parchment with esoteric verses in Hebrew and Aramaic. Among the Ashkenazim, once completed, the amulets were blessed by a good Jew (*gitter yid*) before they were worn around the neck, tied as they were in a piece of cloth, or stitched in a triangular leather pouch.

If a medicinal folk cure fails to work, then the people make recourse to divination, whether by the Sephardic practice of casting molten lead into cold water (*echar*

livianos), to read in the shape taken by the lead the cause of misfortune, or one of the many Ashkenazic methods of interpreting the shapes assumed by drops of oil or melted wax floating on the surface of a basin of water.

For complex cures, the curer recites a ritual prayer laden with complex symbolism, for the release of all types of harm, whether it be from the evil eye or evil speech. The intent is to cast off the evil spirits that have invaded the body as a result of fright or the evil eye. Among the Sephardim the performance is carried out predominantly by women (*muestras madres* [our mothers]). The lengthy, detailed healing incantations (*prekantes*) are divided into four types: the one against the evil eye (*prekante de ojo malo,* or *ayin arah*), the one against mental anguish (*prekante de chefalo*), the one against engorged breasts (*prekante de pelo*), and the one of the serpent, used against fever blisters, danger, and anguish (*prekante de kulivreta*). The incantations of *pelo* and *kulivreta* have some similarity with medieval pan-Hispanic formulae. If none of these incantations bring any relief, the Sephardim perform the most complex dreaded cure of ritual enclosure, the *saradura* or *indulko.* Among the Ashkenazim, complex incantations involve the identification of the stricken one, the appeal to ancient masters of magic, the naming of biblical and classical Greek personages, the injunction to do things in reverse, and the use of numbers with the intent to destroy an enemy's power.

In a world filled with spirits waiting to do harm, folk medicine performed by people known and trusted in the community offered both comfort and ever-present hope for a restoration of health and good fortune. If the spirits could not be kept at bay through the glitter of gold, the smell of garlic, or the protective power of spittle, then they could be appeased through offerings of sugar water, or sent on their way with ritual verses that would spiritually counteract their power. And over all, the Lord of the universe watches as believers ask for, in the words of the Sephardic prayer, "Paths of milk and honey, good paths," and "may the Lord guard me from all evil."

Isaac Jack Lévy and Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt

See also: Animals; Charms, Books of; Demon; Folk Belief; Magic; Plants.

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FOLK MUSIC AND SONG

There are two meanings of the concept "Jewish folk music" (throughout this entry "music" includes vocal and instrumental genres unless otherwise specified). One applies to the sphere of music-making in Jewish communities that was defined as "folk" by Western scholarship after the second half of the nineteenth century. The other one refers to the contemporary musical repertoire included under the label of "Jewish folk music." The first meaning reveals ideologies that classify music-making into binary categories of "high," "art," "elitist" or "urban" versus "low," "popular," "folk" or "rural"; the second results from practices of music-making that are generated by modern and postmodern social motivations such as "nostalgia," "revivalism," and "exoticism."

If "folk music" is understood in the first sense, as the spontaneous and authentic creation of a people (whereas "people" stands for a nation, an ethnic group, a religious association, or any other social configuration) whose members identify a consensual corpus of orally transmitted music as a symbolic construction of their historical self, then all Jewish music is "folk music." However, a deeply rooted idea in early Jewish music research associates "folk music" with the "secular" realm in Jewish life, that is, outside the liturgical order. This modern conceptualization of "folk music" grew from the slow decline, since the eighteenth century, of the religious authority that regulated traditional Jewish communities until then. The exposure of European Jewish intellectuals to the emergent concepts of "nation" and "national music," in both its German and Russian modes, beginning in the second half of the nineteenth century strengthened the idea that a separate, nonliturgical space for Jewish musical creativity always existed. Stylistic features did not define what "Jewish folk music" was but, rather, its contexts of performance (outside the liturgy), gender (women), or social pedigree of its performers (professionals, street musicians, outcasts, etc.); the language of the songs (Jewish vernaculars); or the use of musical instruments (traditionally not employed in the liturgy). Overt ties, sometimes identity, with non-Jewish musical repertoires were considered another sign distinguishing Jewish "folk" from liturgical music.

All these assumptions, accepted a priori by researchers in the early twentieth century, are unsustainable even though they still impinge on how surveys of "Jewish

Torah binder depicting musicians. Germany, 1866. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

music" are mapped out. They appear in their most pristine phrasing in the influential book by Abraham Zvi Idelsohn (1882–1938), *Jewish Music in Its Historical Development* (1929). This book is emblematically divided into three parts whose lengths are meaningful, too: "The Song of the Synagogue" (pp. 1–354), "Folk-Song" (pp. 355–468), and "The Jew in General Music" (pp. 469–492). "Every nation that possesses its own soil, that has made a history for itself and that has created an individual atmosphere must, according to the established premises in musical science [i.e., musicology}, have [*sic*] its own folk-song," remarked Idelsohn at the opening of part 2 (p. 357). This assertive statement, taken straight from the discourse of nineteenth-century romantic nationalism, immediately gives rise to a problem as articulated in a rhetorical question: "Are the Jewish people a nation?" His answer: "yes," but it is "a special people" whose survival relies on its "spiritual culture," and he added, "This spiritual nationality brought forth a folk-song as distinctive as the people itself." Such idealism led him into untenable conclusions: "If by folk-song we understand words of war and drink, of carnality and frivolity, then the Jews have no folk-songs. Jewish folk-song, like Jewish life in the last two thousand years, nestles in the shadows of religion and ethics" (Idelsohn 1929, 358); countless Jewish "folk songs" do not follow such a definition.

Problematic as they were, these early perceptions nurtured the pervasive idea that an authentic Jewish "folk music" did exist and that it could be mapped out. By the second half of the twentieth century, this view had become entrenched in public discourses and in a massive cultural production (printed anthologies, commercial recordings, electronic media, Internet sites, educational programs in schools, informal workshops, summer camps, and more), acquiring a substance of its own that no contemporary scholar can ignore. This entry treats traditional views of "Jewish folk music" as well as contemporary practices associated with this concept, leaving aside the unique development of the modern "Hebrew" or "Israeli folksong" in Palestine/Israel.

Geography and History

Geographical and historical variables determined what was included under "Jewish folk music" by collectors and scholars. In this context, one must distinguish between the music of Jews under the Christian and Islamic spheres. Made essential in the course of time under the labels of "Ashkenazi," (in the sense of "Eastern European") and "Sephardic," or "Eastern," (in the sense of non-Ashkenazi), these two major and crude categories of "Jewish folk music" present strikingly distinct features; their relative representation in research and in contem-

porary practices of "Jewish folk music" emanate from these features.

Under Islam, Jews had access to various registers of musical creativity, from simpler, short forms to complex genres performed at the courts and based on elaborated modal frameworks, such as the Arabic *maqam.* Following this variety, a clear distinction between the repertoires of men and women emerged and it became conceptualized by early researchers as "learned music" (of men) versus "folk music" (of women). Yet, when the "Eastern" or "Sephardic" Jews (both terms were used sometimes indistinctly) became conceptualized by European Jews as their internal Other in the process of the modern Jewish nation-building, all their musical lore became perceived as "ethnic." Christendom, unlike Islam, did not grant Jews access to the "learned" music of the non-Jewish society that was developed for service of the Church and in the ruler's courts until the late eighteenth century. Music-making by Jews in premodern Europe was confined to community contexts and inspired by the surrounding peasant cultures or urban popular genres. Exceptions were Jewish courtiers in medieval Spain, some Italian communities of the late Renaissance, and the affluent Portuguese or Western Sephardim as well as individual German Jewish merchants after the seventeenth century; that is an issue usually disregarded by nationalist-oriented historiography because it implies the uncomfortable idea of differences of class in traditional Jewish societies. With the advent of the Haskala (often called the Jewish Enlightenment)—a late-eighteenth- and nineteenth-century East European intellectual movement among Jews that formed to familiarize them with European and modern Hebrew languages and with secular education as supplements to the curriculum of traditional schools and rabbinical academies—as the consumption and performance of Western "art" music started to become more accessible to Western European and, later on, the East European Jewish bourgeoisie, most of the "old" Ashkenazi or the "traditional" music from the East European Jewish towns (shtetls) became conceptualized as "folk music." For the Jewish intelligentsia (*maskilim*), the "musical Past" turned into another uncharted area of primordial Jewish ethnicity in need of documentation.

From this concise review, a lack of consistency in early definitions of "Jewish folk music" emerges. The hypothesis that the dialogue with the surrounding non-Jewish musical culture was an exclusive feature of "folk music" is untenable, as Jewish liturgical music and other religious repertoires were as open to the neighboring music as any "folk music" was. Influenced by the evolving ideas of "nation" and the role of folklore in processes of nation building, early-twentieth-century Jewish scholars at first redeemed liturgical Jewish music-making from any dubious authenticity. Eventually, this search for "uniqueness" in Jewish music spread to areas conceptualized as "folk," as Idelsohn's previously quoted statement unequivocally shows. From this point on, collecting, arranging, publishing, and even composing "folk music" became an assiduous activity of modern Jewish musicians and musicologists. Modern labeling of registers of music-making in traditional Jewish societies resulted, in sum, from perceptions of European Jewish scholars toward Jewish Others, whether the "Eastern" or their own pre-*maskilic* past still alive in the East European Jewish towns of the early twentieth century.

Traditional Contexts of Performance and Genres

Traditional Jewish folk music was associated with assigned social functions: rites of passage, popular religious festivals, communal celebrations, and for entertaining purposes. Repertoires of folk songs developed around the rituals of the life cycle: the first days after the birth of a male infant (*shemirah,* to "protect" the baby from evil spirits), circumcision at the age of eight days (*brith-milah*), name-giving to a baby girl (*zeved habat*), the entrance of young boys to adult society at the age of thirteen years (bar mitzvah), engagement (*erusin*) and wedding (*ḥuppah ve'kiddushin*), and the observance of periods of mourning (shiva, the first seven days; *shloshim,* the first month; the first year, etc.). The wedding was the richest event musically speaking. It consisted of a series of events, usually spanning for more than a week, including gift exchanges, public displays of the dowry, ritual bath of the bride, ceremonial hairdressing and dressing of the bride, in Islamic countries the henna ceremony the night before the wedding (during which red vegetable dye is applied to the hands and feet of the bride), the ceremony under the canopy and the seven blessings (*sheva berakhot*), the reading of the Torah by the groom in the synagogue on the following Sabbath, and the first meal cooked by the bride. The songs described the customs associated with the rituals and their meaning and treated the roles and characteristics of the participants. All in all, unaccompanied songs in vernacular Jewish languages performed mostly, but not exclusively, by women were predominant over instrumental music. Religious hymns in Hebrew performed by men were often sung to melodies of folk songs in the vernacular.

Jewish instrumental music, especially dance music for weddings and other community celebrations, developed particularly in Europe from the medieval period on. The use of instrumental music in weddings was always encouraged by the talmudic deed (mitzvah) "to rejoice the groom and the bride" (*Talmud bavli, Gittin, Tossafot* 7a, 7b). A caste of semiprofessional musicians, called *klezmorim* (from the Hebrew *klei zemer* [musical instrument]), emerged in diverse areas of Europe, developing

Postcard of Jewish musicians, Morocco, 1954. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

a variegated repertoire that included traditional Jewish dances (e.g., freylekhs, sher) as well as folk music from the co-territorial musical cultures (Moldovan, Romanian, Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, etc.). Similarly, rich folk instrumental repertoires developed in Caucasian, Kurdish, and Central Asian Jewish communities.

Religious folk festivals marked by community gatherings outdoors, as the Moroccan Mimuna (on the night of the seventh day of Passover) or the Kurdish Sehrane (intermediate days of Sukkot), served as important settings for the performance of folk music. Other festivals rich in vocal and instrumental music mark the anniversary of the death of saintly rabbis (*hillulah*), which sometimes include the pilgrimage to their tombs' sites. A major example was (and still is) the *hillulah* of Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai held in Meron, Upper Galilee, on Lag Ba'Omer (the thirty-third day after Passover).

Private occasions for making folk music include family situations, such as the singing of lullabies. Folk songs were also used as an educational tool, for example, for the teaching of the Hebrew alphabet in elementary schools. The singing of epics, of either Jewish content (biblical episodes or events related to the history of the community) or adopted from the surrounding culture were found in locations such as Kurdistan, the Caucasus, India, and Persia. The function of these songs was to entertain and edify the family and the community. Finally, many folk songs just expressed "personal" or "private" relations, such as songs of love, separation, and longing.

Jewish Folk Music Research and Institutions

While early Jewish music research in Germany, France, England, and Austria-Hungary stressed liturgical mu-

sic as its almost exclusive focus, Russia became the center and inspiration in the processes of conceptualizing, researching, and creating "Jewish folk music" until the beginning of World War II. Conventionally, folklorists consider the publication of Saul Ginsburg (Ginzburg) and Pavel (Pesaḥ) Marek's *Evreiskie narodnye pesni v Rossii* (Jewish Folksongs in Russia) (1901), the first major and systematic collection of Jewish folk music. This project was launched by an appeal of the authors to the public at large to submit songs rather than rely on fieldwork. It reflected the growing awareness of the modern Russian Jewish bourgeoisie that their traditional heritage was fading and that an alternative secular and national Jewish musical culture has to draw on "authentic roots." Similar perceptions developed in the same period among East European Jewish immigrants in the United States, shortly after their arrival (e.g., Cahan [1912] for Yiddish songs and Kostakowsky [1916] for instrumental music).

Following the rise of national music schools in Europe, the Society for Jewish Folk Music was established in St. Petersburg in 1908, inspired by composer, collector, arranger, and music critic Joel Engel (1868–1927). The society's members focused on the collection, transcription, publication, and public display of Jewish folk music in concerts and lectures. In 1912, Engel joined S. An-Ski's legendary ethnographic expedition, which was organized by the Jewish Historical and Ethnographic Society to research the Russian Pale of Settlement (territory within the borders of tsarist Russia, where the residence of Jews was legally authorized). Young Jewish composers, such as Joseph Akhron, Mikhail Gnesin, Alexander Krein, Moshe Milner, Solomon Rosowsky, and Lazare Saminsky, become members of the society. In contrast to their west European Jewish contemporaries, who retreated from

their ethnic and religious roots to boost their acceptance into the general music scene, these artists sought diverse syntheses between "art" and Jewish "folk music." By 1913, the society already had more than 1,000 members and branches opened in seven cities. The political and economic collapse that followed the 1917 revolution halted the activities of the St. Petersburg branch. Many of its leading members emigrated to the United States, Europe (Berlin, Vienna, Vilna, and Warsaw), and Palestine. Inspired by the Russian model, the Society for the Promotion of Jewish Music was founded in Vienna in 1928, by composer and cellist Joachim Stutschewsky, a pioneer in the research of klezmer music. Pioneering work in Jewish folk song research was also carried out in independent Poland by the Warsaw group led by Noyekh Prilutski (Noah Prylucki), the Vilna Jewish Historical-Ethnographic Society, and YIVO (an acronym for Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut) Ethnographic Committee (founded in 1925), later to become the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in New York City. Moscow remained, however, an active center through the 1920s under the leadership of David Schor, who stressed composition and performance over ethnography. The short-lived World Center for Jewish Music in Palestine (1936–1940) may be seen as a slightly later offspring of these institutions but with a Zionist orientation.

When individuals identified with the communist regime became dominant among the Russian-Jewish intelligentsia, they demanded a reorientation of music research that would meet the requirements of the Jewish proletariat. A towering figure in Jewish folk music research during the early Soviet period was Moshe I. Beregovski (1892–1961). Trained at the Kiev and Saint Petersburg conservatories, where he studied composition, he was recruited in 1917 to catalog and analyze the musical materials from An-Ski's ethnographical expedition. In 1919, Beregovski established and directed the musical division of the Jewish Culture League in Kiev and served as its director until it closed in 1921. After the dissolution of the Jewish Historical and Ethnographic Society in Leningrad (at the end of 1929), most of its musical collections were transferred to Kiev and, in February 1930, were given to Beregovski for safekeeping. He was nominated as director of the Music-Ethnographic Cabinet of the Ethnographic Section of the Jewish Cultural Institute under the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. From 1930 to 1949, he amassed 1,200 cylinders of field recordings and thousands of written documents collected by him and his predecessors in Russia and Ukraine and published important studies in Russian. His projected five-volume collection and study of East European Jewish folk music was truncated by World War II and the deterioration of Jewish life under the Soviet regime; only one volume appeared in 1934. The remaining volumes were and are being released posthumously in Russia,

mostly after the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991; the United States; and Israel. Beregovski's approach differed greatly from that of nationalist-oriented scholars such as Idelsohn. He stressed the strong interaction of Jewish with non-Jewish folk music and the changing patterns of Jewish musical ideologies, lamenting the lack of attention paid by scholars to workers' and revolutionary folk songs. The extent to which Beregovski's own ideological agenda emanated from sincere conviction or was determined by the oppressing exigencies of the Stalinist era remains open to question.

While working mostly among "Eastern" Jews in Palestine (1907–1921) and later on at Hebrew Union College in the United States (1921–1935), A.Z. Idelsohn's scope of "Jewish folk music" was, geographically speaking, wider than Beregovski's, focused on "spiritual" repertoires (as previously implied) and was divided along the ethnic "Eastern/Western" lines. "Eastern" folk songs included mainly nonliturgical religious repertoires in Hebrew and Aramaic (e.g., *zmirot,* "table songs" for the Sabbath meal, the songs for the end of the Passover Seder, or the poems of the Yemenite Jewish *diwan,* collections of Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic devotional poetry sung by men) and, to a much lesser extent, Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) songs. Most of the melodies of these folk songs were borrowed, according to Idelsohn, from the surrounding cultures (contradicting his own hypothesis about the "purity" of Jewish folk music). The "Ashkenazi" lore consisted, in addition to "religio-ethical folksongs in Hebrew and Judeo-German," of the German Jews, songs in the "Jewish idiom called 'Yiddish'" from the "Eastern European ghettos" (all these concepts are from Idelsohn 1929: chap. 19). Idelsohn did not consider the "Hasidic song (*nigun*)" a folk song (unlike Beregovski, who defined it as a "folk song without words"), but as a unique Jewish phenomenon that deserves separate treatment in spite of its clear intersections with all other types of Ashkenazi music (liturgy, Yiddish folk song, and instrumental music). Also, the repertoires of the klezmorim (the contemporary concept of "klezmer music" did not exist at the time) and the *badchonim* (jesters) are singled out and defined by Idelsohn (1929: chap. 20) with the clumsy concept of "song in folk style."

Parallel to the activities of the early Russian/Soviet research school and to Idelsohn's work, a lesser-known development in Jewish folk song research was the early interest of two Sephardi scholars from Turkey, Abraham Danon and Abraham Galante, in documenting traditional songs in Ladino, especially romances, the prestigious genre of medieval epic-lyric Hispanic poetry. They were partly motivated by the "rediscovery" of the Sephardic Jews in the early twentieth century by prominent Spanish scholars, such as Ramón Menéndez Pidal (who published a catalog of Ladino *romances* as early as 1907), and musicians such as Manuel Manrique de Lara (who did fieldwork in East-

ern Mediterranean Sephardic centers in the early 1910s). Obsessed with their "declining" traditions, Sephardic intellectuals engaged in the publishing of collections of folksongs sponsored by state and academic institutions and ethnic organizations (e.g., World Sephardic Federation) as a strategy of cultural survival. The most well-known figures in this field were the composer Alberto Hemsi (1898–1975), who in 1920–1940 systematically collected Ladino folk songs around the Mediterranean rim; Leon Algazi (1890–1971), who recorded Sephardic immigrants in Paris; and Isaac Levy (1922–1977) and Moshe Attias, both of whom worked among Sephardic Jews in Israel. *Chants judéo-espagnols,* the four-volume anthology published by Levy between 1958 and 1971, became the major source of the "Ladino folk song" revival in the second half of the twentieth century.

Folk songs of Jewish communities that were beyond the cognitive map of Jewish music researchers until late in the twentieth century left few traces in the literature. These include the rich Judeo-Arabic folk song repertoires from western North Africa, for example, the Moroccan *arubi* or *malhun* (simple strophic songs for weddings and other occasions) genres, and the Middle East, including the Baghdadi (so-called Iraqi) repertoires. All these remained utterly unknown, even in their modern popularized incarnations recorded commercially from the 1930s to the 1960s, except for limited pockets in Israel, France, and Great Britain. A similar fate suffered the "Cochini" Jewish folk songs in Malayalam, a vernacular dialect of Tamil from Kerala, India; the Kurmanji folk songs of the Jews from Iraqi Kurdistan; the Juhuri and Azeri repertoires of the Mountain Jews from the eastern and northern Caucasus; and the rich Persian, Uzbek, and Tajik songs of the "Bukharan Jews" (the Central Asian communities of Samarqand, Bukhara, Tashkent, and Dushambe), all of which were practically unknown to early scholars. The only exception was the 1928 survey by Robert Lachmann (1940) of Judeo-Arabic folk songs performed by Jewish women from the island of Djerba (off the coast of Tunisia). Lachmann, as Beregovski did during the same period in relation to Ashkenazi songs, noticed that these "Jewish folk songs" bear the musical characteristics of non-Jewish Tunisian folk music genres.

But not only had the exotic "Eastern" traditions remained outside the public recognition of "Jewish folk music." "Minor" urban traditions at the heart of Central Europe, such as the Jewish street musicians of Burgenland (Hungarian Várvidék, Ővidék, or Felsőőrvidék, today the easternmost state of Austria), remained uncharted as well until the late twentieth century, when all that is left of these musicians and their music are vague reminiscences. Perhaps this music was not considered by researchers because it bordered too closely on a new and encompassing music category, "popular music," the modern and postmodern re-embodiment of "folk music."

In the aftermath of World War II, the map of Jewish folk music research was totally reconfigured. Centers became firmly established in the United States, Israel, and Western Europe. YIVO moved its operations to New York City, becoming a meeting place for the collection and study of East European Jewish folk music. The establishment of the Jewish Music Research Centre at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and of a Department of Music and the National Sound Archives at the Jewish National and University Library in 1964 is another landmark in the twentieth-century study of these music traditions with unprecedented access to the lore of immigrants from all corners of the Jewish world in comparison with earlier music folklore research in Europe and Palestine. To enumerate all the prolific research carried out in the final decades of the twentieth century by so many scholars in almost every field and genre of Jewish folk music would be impossible. More detail on this research can be found in the online "Thesaurus of Jewish Music" of the Jewish Music Research Centre (www.jewish-music.huji.ac.il). The strong East European research tradition of Jewish folk music persisted after World War II and the Holocaust under the most strenuous material and physical circumstances, with researchers such as Izaly Zemtsovsky in Russia and Gisela Suliteanu in Romania as lonely torch bearers. With the fall of the Iron Curtain, a renaissance of interest in Jewish folk music has taken place throughout Eastern Europe as well.

Modern Jewish Folk Music

Following the mass migrations and urbanization processes that almost all Jewish communities experienced beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, traditional folk music gradually declined or completely disappeared. Deep changes in the traditional contexts of performance, technological developments, and professionalism in music production altered musical needs, aesthetic sensibilities, and tastes. World War II and the Holocaust further accelerated these processes, even though folk songs during the war fulfilled an important affective social function at the time.

Yet the concept of "folk music" did not vanish from the new Jewish centers of the post–World War II period. Following its research, traditional music became the object of diverse kinds of adaptations and reworking, adjusting it to the new social circumstances. Most "Jewish folk music" of the modern period was conceived anew from traditional sources or flatly invented. Scholars, collectors, performers, composers, lyricists, educators, impresarios, and other Jewish and non-Jewish cultural agents launched a process of canonization, establishing a market for "Jewish folk music" that drew on traditional music as much as it created it. The electronic media had a crucial impact on this development. "Jewish folk music," reconstructed and arranged,

anthologized, and commercially recorded in Europe, the United States, and the Middle East, substituted for live performances in traditional contexts. Clearly, only those traditions that enjoyed strong institutional backing—Yiddish/klezmer and Ladino songs, as sonic representations of the "Ashkenazi"/"Sephardic" divide—survived these processes and dominate the mediated Jewish soundscape today.

The collapse of old Jewish community divisions based on ethnic and geographical provenance (except for the Soviet Union/Russia) and the formation of large multiethnic Jewish urban conglomerates in Israel, the United States, Great Britain, France, Canada, Argentina, and elsewhere contributed to the dissemination and consolidation of hybrid styles of Yiddish and Ladino folk songs. The bulk of songs in these languages, distributed globally in print and in recordings from the second half of the twentieth century onward, were not part of the traditional repertoires. Rather they were "made" by identifiable composers during the modern period. The American Jewish musical theater, for example, played an important role in shaping the repertoire that circulates as "Yiddish folk songs." Another source was the musical settings of poems by *maskilic* Yiddish poets, which in many cases consisted of the adaptation of older melodies to these new texts. Songs in this language conceived by early composers or performers as Eliakum Zunser (1840–1913) even preceded scholars in publishing reworked traditional or new folk songs (e.g., Zunser 1891 and 1898). However, in the second half of the twentieth century the printed anthologies of folk songs were the medium that fixed the canons of Yiddish and Ladino folk songs while at the same time providing sources for the revivalist movements. Such was the aforementioned anthology of Ladino songs by Isaac Levy as well as the influential Yiddish song collections printed in 1963 by Ruth Rubin and in 1972 by Eleanor Gordon Mlotek, both of which partly relied on rare earlier collections and enjoyed several reprints. The posthumous work by Rubin includes many Yiddish songs from premodern layers that survived in oral tradition into the twentieth century and were documented after World War II.

Old styles of folk music were also revived or re-created after a period of decay, the case of klezmer music being the most notable and global. Reconfigurations of Jewish identity among American-born Eastern Ashkenazi Jewish babyboomers in the 1970s were among the main forces behind the American klezmer revival. Nostalgia and, later on, the filling of the "Jewish cultural void" in postmodern Europe (especially in the ex-major Jewish centers, such as Germany and Poland) provided further impetus to the globalization of klezmer music to a point where it became a synonym for "Jewish music." It is illustrative of the contrasting modes of postmodern Jewish musical identity that klezmer music in Israel is mostly confined to ultra-Orthodox Ashkenazi circles.

Through the export of the klezmer movement from the United States and Western Europe to Eastern Europe, the Yiddish folk song too finds its way back to its geographical cradle in Lithuania, Russia, and Ukraine, where new circles of folk singers have evolved and even some new composition of Yiddish folk songs has taken place. The reconstruction efforts of old Jewish folk repertoires from surviving non-Jewish musicians in East European areas such as Maramureş in Romania (Hung., Máramaros) are also an interesting new trend.

Finally, the new age Jewish "soul" music created in the spirit of the American folk revival of the 1960s for the neo-Hasidic and American liberal synagogue market is usually defined today as "Jewish folk music," too. Initiated by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach and continued with success by artists such as Debbie Friedman, this "folk music" is a striking example of an invention of tradition.

Actively performing "Jewish folk music" or consuming it are modern markers of Jewish identity or acts of memorialization of past Jewish presence in places where Jews do not reside anymore. Jewish choral associations, schools, youth movements, cultural centers, and less informal and yet highly institutionalized sing-along meetings (such as the Hava Nashira! network in the United States) comprise its new contexts of performance. But, above all, the concert stage is the main live venue for the display of these repertoires. While nostalgia and the signification of Jewish identity are among the main social motivations behind the public consumption of "Jewish folk music," its appeal to larger, non-Jewish global audiences as a genre of "world music" creates a lucrative market that attracts artists from various strands.

Edwin Seroussi

See also: Folk Songs and Poetry, Judeo-Spanish (Ladino); Folk Songs, Israeli.

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FOLK NARRATIVES IN ISRAEL

During the twentieth century Jews migrated to Israel from Europe, Asia, and North Africa. The most recent waves of immigration, during the 1980s and 1990s, were from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union. The immigrants brought with them their cultural heritage, including folk narratives from their countries of origin. Ethnic identity in Israel differs from what Jews knew in the past. In Israel they experience their ethnic identity as Jews among Jews, which is quite unlike the ethnic identity of Jews among non-Jews in the Diaspora. Zionist ideology—which holds that the Jews are a people or nation like any other and should gather together in a single homeland—aspired to eradicate the cultures brought from the country of origin and to fuse the various Diasporas into one Israeli collec-

tive. Nevertheless, each ethnic group has maintained its unique traditions, although they have evolved and are framed within the larger Israeli society. The Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa contains some 24,000 tales classified by the narrator's country of origin.

Ethnic Tales

Although the ethnic tale is associated with the traditions that the immigrants brought with them, its development has been influenced directly by the encounter with the Israeli milieu. Immigrants rely on the folklore genres and the set of concepts and symbols derived from their original homes to cope with their new environment, but these genres and concepts are themselves transformed by this encounter. Thus ethnic folklore is transmuted in ways that leave it quite different from that of its country of origin. The change in general linguistic environment in which Hebrew is dominant, the new social and geographic reality, and often the transition from traditional to modern economy and communication affected the performance of folk narratives. The stories acquired features that are associated with Israeli life. Among them it is possible to distinguish the following:

1. The language component. Bilingualism varies in the performance of narratives, ranging from the sprinkling of a few Hebrew words in a story told in the language of origin to a complete Hebrew performance.
2. The nomenclatural component. Names of Israeli places, heroic figures, and local metaphors occur in traditional tales.
3. The thematic component. The encounter between immigrants and their new country generates social, economic, and religious conflicts. Immigrants incorporate themes about these conflicts of immigration and adjustment in the narration of traditional narratives. Folktales may thus function as a coping mechanism.

Narratives of Immigration and Integration

As in other situations of immigration, the traumatic change is a source of narrative creativity. The recurrent themes in the Israeli narratives of immigration concern adjustment to the new landscape, to new foodways, and to the forced change in occupation. Relations with other immigrant groups, interaction with Arab society, and integration into the Israeli social structure also feature prominently in these tales.

Myths of Israeli Society

The relatively brief historical experience in Israel is a source of an emergent Israeli mythology of heroism that molds the collective memory of the society. These are narratives that foster and support the cultural value system of a society that was forged through recurrent military struggles. While some of these mythic symbols draw upon ancient heroic stands, such as at the siege of Masada during the first Jewish-Roman War against the Roman Empire, others relate to modern historical events and periods, such as the siege of Tel Ḥai in 1920; the period of Zionist settlement expansion in the British Mandate for Palestine from 1936 to 1939, known as the Tower and Stockade campaign; and the disappearance of the Israeli navy submarine *Dakar* in 1968. Many of these tales evolved within the Israeli formal educational institutions and social and national organizations such as youth movements and the armed forces. They became part of the canonic narrative mythology. Outside of these channels, in oral circulation and the popular media, these themes are subject to parody and demythologization.

Local Narratives

A local narrative tradition emerges in villages and small communities. These tales concern the early days of the settlements, significant historical moments, and episodes associated with local characters and places. Within this category, the kibbutz narratives have a distinct position. There exist two contrasting, yet simultaneous, tendencies in these narratives. The first is a tendency toward mythization. By glorifying the past and presenting normative models for behavior, these tales function to mold personal and group interaction within the community and provide positive evaluation and interpretation of historical values and concepts of kibbutz society. The second is a tendency toward demythization. Not only do young narrators express this tendency in their stories as part of their intergenerational struggle, but also older storytellers who belong to the founding or first-born generation do so as part of their self-reflection. These communities have become self-conscious of their own narrative tradition and have created a center for their documentation, such as the archives in Beit Ha'Shita, Ramat Yoḥanan, and Ein Ḥarod.

Chizbat Humor

There are humorous narratives that are identified with the Palmach, the elite units of the Jewish underground during the last years of the British Mandate for Palestine. According to the popular image, these stories were told

in the evenings around the campfire, as members of the Palmach entertained themselves. With the publication of a collection of these tales in 1956, *Yalkut ha'kzavim*, this genre came to symbolize quintessential Israeli humor, called *chizbat* humor. However, the term is borrowed from dialectal Palestinian Arabic in which it is the feminine plural form of the word *chizba* (a lie). Although the stories themselves include, in addition to original tales, Hebrew versions of Arabic, traditional Jewish, and internationally known narratives, they express the symbols and views of Israeli youth in their attempt to distance themselves from the Diaspora cultural heritage. The *chizbat* is always associated with Israeli reality, often containing a grain of truth. It deals with real events and real people who are familiar to the narrating society. Its language is Hebrew, interspersed with words in Arabic, Yiddish, Russian, and English. After the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, there was a marked decline in the narration of these tales, although a popularly published additional collection in 1967, *Kifak hey*, purported to prove the opposite. In the transformation of the genre, the narration remained but its content changed, and today the term refers to horror stories told by teenagers around the campfire.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Bar-Itzhak, Haya; Folk Narratives, Immigration and Absorption; Kibbutz, Folklore of; Shenhar, Aliza.

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FOLK NARRATIVES IN RABBINIC LITERATURE

Folk narratives abound in the classical rabbinic literature of late antiquity, also known as the talmudic-midrashic literature, in works such as the Mishnah (edited in the Galilee in the early third century C.E.) and Tosefta (ca. the same period as the Mishna), but even more so in the later Talmud Yerushalmi or the Palestinian Talmud (created in the Galilee and in coastal Caesarea in the early fifth century C.E.), the Talmud Bavli or the Babylonian Talmud (created in northern Mesopotamia ca. fourth to seventh centuries C.E.), and the various Midrash compilations created in Palestine, Mesopotamia, the Balkans, and southern Europe until around the end of the first millennium C.E. All these works were created collectively and transmitted anonymously, which reinforces the identification of many narratives in them as folk narratives according to the definition of folk narrative as collective rather than individual creativity.

Comparative research has shown that there are a large number of internationally recognized folk narratives and other folk literary genres in rabbinic literature, many of which have been illuminated in monographic studies. Folk narratives appear in the four major, partly overlapping discursive contexts characterizing rabbinic literature in general: (1) Bible interpretation, in which the narratives characteristically elaborate on events or biographies that are represented in the Hebrew Bible; (2) halakhic negotiation, in which rulings of ritual and legal character are debated and reiterated in various stages of the formation of the corpus and the narratives serve as examples to prove various claims of the discussants; (3) oral sermons delivered in the synagogue and accordingly addressing a wider audience than the two previously mentioned contexts, in which the narratives serve rhetorical

as well as didactical purposes; and (4) aggadic, literary passages that may display an interpretative, historical or philosophical paradigm. These contextual frameworks in which folk narratives appear in rabbinic texts frequently report real or contrived situations of verbal exchange, thus sometimes also contributing to historians' knowledge of contextual elements of narrating and narrator-audience interaction characteristic of the period.

The folk narratives of rabbinic literature share many characteristics with folk narratives of the ancient world that have been transmitted in written documents. They pertain to the ethnographic aspects of the lives of the communities in which these documents have been created and often enable the inclusion of a wider social context than the one prescribed by the predominantly learned and elite institutional contexts from which the texts themselves grew. In addition to the rich ethnographic information included in most other parts of the rabbinic textual corpus, they serve as a rich source for learning about the everyday life of the rabbis who created the texts as well as their contemporaries: women, non-Jews, unlearned Jews. Yet they present the vivid materializations of rabbinic fantasy and imagination. In addition, rabbinic folk narratives may often be infused with didactic and moral messages reflecting the values and norms of the socializing institutions of the rabbis. Some folk narratives of rabbinic literature may, however, be interpreted as subversive, with reference to the norms and values usually considered dominant by later interpreters of the corpus, especially with regard to sex, to the emergent religion of early Christianity, and to the adequate stance toward the Roman rule—all of which are proven to be presented in the rabbinic texts in multivocal, nonuniform modes of thinking.

Folk Literary Genres

From the commonly recognized genres of folk narrative, rabbinic literature privileges the legend. The most common subgenres of the legend are biographical legends, historical legends, and mythical legends. The dominance of the legend genre in rabbinic literature displays the general claim of the corpus to a referential mode of narrating, rather than a mimetic or an imaginary mode of narrating. In addition to the legend, the folk literary genre of the parable—a brief, succinct story that illustrates a moral or religious lesson—is amply distributed in the rabbinic literature.

Biographical Legends

Biographical legends often composing rather complex biographical cycles related to the most important figures of the corpus, such as Hillel the Elder, Rabbi Akiva, Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanos, and Rabbi Yehuda Ha'Nasi, among others. In most cases the bio-

graphical legend cycles do not appear sequentially but rather are scattered in sources of varying provenances and periods. The biographical legends of rabbinic literature have constituted the major source for reconstructing the historically conceived biographies of these figures, a practice that is criticized by contemporary scholars. In addition, these legends have shaped the patterns of the biographical legend genre in all later Jewish traditions in Hebrew as well as in other Jewish languages.

Historical Legends

Historical legends describe events of national importance, in particular, the tragic events of the Roman domination in Palestine during and after the destruction of the Second Temple of Jerusalem by Vespasian and Titus in the first century C.E. and of the period of religious restrictions and the subduing of the Bar Kochba uprising by Hadrian in the second century C.E. Unlike the biographical legends, the historical legends, especially of these national catastrophes, have been accrued to cycles found mainly in three sources: Babylonian Talmud tractate *Gittin*; Midrash Lamentations Rabbah (*Eikha Rabba*); and The Sayings of Fathers of Rabbi Nathan (*Avot de'Rabbi Nathan*). They, too, have been used as historical sources for the events that they report and more critically as sources for the attitudes of the rabbis and their contemporaries toward those events.

Mythical Legends

Mythical legends are especially related to biblical figures whose lives and deeds are mythologized in the rabbinic texts exhibiting miracles and other supernatural events, such as Solomon's use of supernatural helpers and agents in building the First Temple of Jerusalem (Babylonian Talmud tractate *Sanhedrin*) or the appearance of a phoenix like bird in the Creation narrative (Genesis Rabbah, or *Bereshit Rabba*).

Parables

The didactic purposes of rabbinic texts, especially those of the sermons, call for parables and fables as narrative renderings of the principles propagated by the rabbis. The rabbinic parable genre and its close relative the fable (or animal tale)—both identified by the emic term "*mashal*" (analogy) often also referring to proverbs—display many parallels with other culturally related textual corpora, especially the parables of Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels and the Greek and Latin Aesopic fable tradition, both emerging in the first and second centuries C.E. The rabbinic parable repertoire also includes a large number of parables belonging to an original subgenre, emergent in Jesus's parables, however developed and proliferated by the rabbis, termed the "royal parable,"

which involves staging a king and other individuals from his family, his court, or his kingdom in a short dramatic exchange. The royal parable's ideological and rhetorical structure is based on a standard replacement of God by the symbolical figure of the king, whereas the other actor of the parable in most cases is Israel.

Women and Femininity

It is in the folk narratives and other folk literary genres that rabbinic literature—predominantly expressing the patriarchal values of the institutions that it grew in, especially the talmudic academia of late antique Palestine and Babylonia—allows for the enunciation of women's voices. They may be mentioned as actual narrators but more often as central actors in the plot of the narratives. The Mishnah and the Talmud include whole tractates pertaining to female matters, such as purity and impurity of the female body and a woman's rights and obligations with regard to marriage and its dissolution. Female functions with regard to popular medicine—especially the care of infants and midwifery—the making of food, and religious ritual also may occur and elicit narratives where women are central figures. The aforementioned Lamentations Rabbah specifically focuses on women, as it associates the topics of the Roman oppression, the destruction of Jerusalem, wars, and suffering with women's role as lamenters. There are also many martyrological legends in the Lamentations Rabbah featuring women as the protagonists, among them famous "woman and her seven sons," popularly known as "Ḥannah and her seven sons" following a later version of the narrative.

Although folktales are sparse in rabbinic texts, they do exist, and some relate to international tale types created by Antti Aarne and Stith Thompson in their Aarne-Thompson folktale classification system, such as: AT 41 and AT 670* in Ecclesiastes Rabbah ("Kohelet Rabba"); AT 928 and AT 1689 in Leviticus Rabbah ("Va-yikra Rabba") and in Ecclesiastes Rabbah; AT 655, AT 655A, and AT 1533 in Lamentations Rabbah; and AT 734* in the Babylonian Talmud. The folktales of rabbinic literature often display various degrees of ecotypical adaptation (oicotypes), including adjustments according to the cultural and poetic paradigms of rabbinic literature, to the general framework, however, they also open up the rabbinic corpus to otherwise uncharacteristic values and ideas.

Folk narratives in the rabbinic corpus appear also in intergenre combinations, the favorite ones being with proverbs that are in general very frequently applied in the texts of the rabbis. Riddle tales, dream tales, and novellas, as well as tall tales, are some of the folk narrative genres also found in the corpus.

Scholars recognize rabbinic literature as the most significant mine of Jewish folk narratives. Their research was initiated in the nineteenth century in the wake of the emergence of folk narrative scholarship in Europe. The Hebrew Renaissance of early Zionism adopted them as the main source for constituting a Hebrew folklore to replace the folk narratives of Jews in the languages of the Diaspora, and they were anthologized by some of the central figures of modern Hebrew literature such as Haim Nachman Bialik and Micha Josef Berdyczewski (Bin-Gorion) and in English for the biggest Jewish Diaspora community by Louis Ginzberg.

Galit Hasan-Rokem

See also: Hasan-Rokem, Galit; Rabbinic Literature.

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FOLK NARRATIVES IN THE BIBLE

Any study of biblical folklore narrative is best based on the concept that this is not an independent genre within biblical literature. In its present state, biblical literature consists of a fine blend of various literary forms, all of which have been harnessed by the authors for one unique purpose, namely, to convey their religious and moral ideology. Thus, in a close reading of any given biblical narrative it might be difficult to clearly discern the point at which storytelling ends and historiography begins. No historiographer, for instance, could have witnessed and documented the pillowtalk between King Ahab and Queen Jezebel (1 Kgs. 21:5–7). Yet it is only this dialogue, in which Ahab reports to his wife his unsuccessful negotiation with Naboth, who refused to sell his vineyard to the king, that enables one to fully understand the crucial gap between two concepts, namely, between the concept of kingship in the ancient Middle East, as represented by Jezebel (and Ahab), and the Israeli sacred traditional concept of land ownership, represented by Naboth. The narrator uses the difference between the words of Naboth and their recitation by Ahab in order to yield their different principal concepts. It is here, therefore, that the key to the full significance of the conflict is to be found. This is how the story turns out to be much more than a mere clash between an atrocious queen or her greedy husband and their humble subject, a most prevalent folklore motif; it turns out to be an illustration of a tragic conflict between two antagonistic principles of tradition and faith. We may therefore conclude that here the folklore motif is to be seen as an inseparable component of the entire story, here used as an essential device to convey the moral message and teaching of the whole story.

Folklore Motifs and Types

The aforementioned narrative illustrates the way by which historiography and folktale join together at the service of ideological teaching. To the best of scholars' knowledge, this, as a rule, is the case in most and perhaps all occurrences of folklore motifs or components in biblical narratives. Yet it is not only where historiography is concerned that one may distinguish the very unique way by which biblical literature uses folklore motifs: Most naturally, such motifs form the basic core of the legends, tales, novellas, and fables. All throughout the Bible the reader meets a vast number of universal motifs. Such are the motifs of the barren woman or the childless man who are granted a son by God; the wanderer who is lost in the desert; the rejected son or brother; the son who is condemned to death by his own father; the trickster who surmounts his adversary; the beautiful woman who is held captive by a greedy monarch; the motifs of animals sent by God to punish a prophet who has neglected his mission; prophets who perform miraculous cures; stories about miraculous victories over enemies; and many others. In all these some observations can be made.

Whenever a certain motif reappears in two or more different narratives, one may rightly be challenged to perform an encompassing comparison between the relevant texts and to discover the implicit mutual reflection between them. The repeated occurrences of motifs, especially when structured as type-scenes (that is, a set of scenes, or related to scenes [place, action] already familiar to the audience) or when including similar expressions and word combinations, appear as carrying an implied dialogue between them, thus serving as internal biblical interpretation: Whenever one text alludes to another, both of them are enriched by an additional meaning. The story of the prophet Elijah who, when falling asleep in the desert of Beersheba, is encouraged by an angel of God to rise and eat and drink (1 Kgs. 19:6–8) alludes to the story of Hagar, Sarah's slave-woman whom an angel of God saves from dying of thirst in the same desert (Gen. 21:17–21). The likeness between these two stories seems to be intended to lead the reader toward further considerations about the relations between God and the prophet and about the ways by which the prophet should carry out his mission.

Yet any comparison between occurrences of the same motif also demands awareness to both their immediate and wider context. Therefore, for the full exposure of message and teaching, it is impossible to isolate any single motif from its surrounding narrative. This leads one to conclude that folklore motifs are only one inseparable component of the story-cycle within which they appear, never to be seen as independent stories.

Another kind of fusion between folklore characteristics and ideological teaching can be traced in the stories of the Patriarchs. In Genesis 12:10–20 one reads about the arrival of Abraham and Sarah to Egypt: "When Abram entered Egypt, the Egyptians saw how very beautiful the woman was. Pharaoh's courtiers saw her and praised her to Pharaoh, and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's palace" (vss. 14–15). Here both the exaggerated stress on Sarah's beauty and the rapidity of the rumor's spreading through all classes up to the highest rank may certainly be identified as folklore components. Yet it seems that this very story, especially so by its three recurrences (Gen. 20, 26:6–11), implies the idea that in a foreign territory or as subjects of foreign rulers the family's honor is at stake. Thus, by touching one of the most sensitive points of ancient social codes, the authors stress the importance of national independence. The folk motif is therefore here used as a chariot to rally national consciousness. Yet initially, in the early stages of its history, this story

might have been a typical nomad folk motif, in which the narrators enhanced their tribal pride by boasting about their ancestors, whose women's beauty was irresistible, and who, as tricksters, contrived to gain richness by deceiving a whimsical foreign ruler.

Accordingly, one finds that in biblical narrative some of the most prominent goals of folktale retreat to the background, to obtain only secondary importance. Such are the need to entertain, to arouse astonishment, or to expand the listeners' imagination by carrying them to remote or even imaginary scenes. But for a very few exceptions, biblical narrators do not indulge in elaborate descriptions of beauty or richness. One can find such exceptions in the story of King Solomon (1 Kgs. 5:2–8, 7:1–12) or King Ahasuerus (Esth. 1:3–7). Yet in the first example this might be justified by the narrator's intention to enhance the image of Solomon, the builder of the temple in which God chose to dwell or to establish His name, and to depict him as a very great monarch. In the story of Ahasuerus, the narrator uses these descriptions as one of the devices of political satire. Even the detailed description of Goliath (1 Sam. 17:4–7) is meant to stress the contrast between the giant as a perfect "war-machine," who boasts his physical strength, and David, who puts his trust in God. One may therefore conclude that whenever one can trace folklore characteristics within biblical narratives, they are most likely sublimed into ideological illustrations.

Even if one can generally trace the various stages of the formation of biblical narrative corpus, there is no sound evidence to the existence of preliminary oral traditions. In their present state, biblical narrative texts display a stage of development that is remote from any putative oral origin. At most, one could identify some remainders of the art of oral storytelling in some formulas of direct speech. This is the case in folklore study today as well: Scholars agree that there is no way of tracing back the primal story. Accordingly, it might be erroneous to assume that any tale type or folk motif could be identified as the basic core or early stage of the narrative within which they occur; the previously demonstrated story of Naboth and Ahab is today conceived of as a relatively late story, from the Persian period.

The Study of the Folktale in the Bible

The study of the folktale in the Bible may find a most significant contribution in the works of the twentieth-century scholar Hermann Gunkel. By initiating the method of form-criticism, he shifted the central weight of modern biblical research from historio-literary criticism toward the basic literary units. Motivated by the concept that any Near Eastern literature is mainly char-acterized by the reference of each literary form to the needs of a defined situation, he attempted to discover the formation of literary patterns. Some of his followers maintained that Gunkel's method fails to refer to individual literary units, on the one hand, and to the wider context, on the other (Hempel 1930; Lods 1950; Sellin-Rost 1959). This, among other reasons, led biblical research toward a further expansion, including the origins of biblical law and the relations between cult and ritual—and literary forms (known as the "Myth-and-Ritual" movement, as expressed in the works of Sigmund Mowinckel, Ivan Engnell, G. Widengren, and Rolf Rentdorf), although they mainly dealt with biblical poetry. Most of these scholars followed Gunkel in their attempt to discover the oral origins of the various literary forms. One might therefore observe a gradual shifting of the major trend of biblical research toward holistic methods of close reading.

The Folkloristic Approach

As a rule, one may rightly conclude that the major trends in modern biblical research are similar to those in folklore studies. There, too, is a prominent shift of weight from the historical and diagnostic trends toward the holistic trend. Accordingly, Eli Yassif maintains that in order to fully understand the contribution of the folktale to the biblical narrative, on the one hand, and the purpose of any sophisticated biblical story in its present form, on the other, one should identify the fundamental folklore patterns that are embedded in them. Even if the historical process of their crystallization is hardly retraceable, still one can discern the main stages of development, not only by conjecture but merely by revealing the patterns of early cultures in the biblical stories, according to their various genres or subgenres: the myth, the legend or sage, the fable, the novella, and the cycle of stories. In all these, the patterns are mainly subordinated to the principle of polarity (see the exposition of the Jacob cycle, Gen. 25:19–34). This principle is based on the plot pattern of the folktale and its fundamental worldview. It is the polarity between the story's motivating elements presented in the opening episodes that is responsible for the design of the development of the plot. Thus, the pattern of the plot in the myths or of the magic tales consists of a steady contiguity of stages or "steps." But, for instance, since the story of Jacob's struggle with the angel is not a completely preserved myth but, rather, an episode or a remainder of a mythological story, only five such "steps" are discernible. These are: (1) The hero is forced to move from one place to another (Jacob's journey to Haran); (2) the hero and his evil adversary are involved in a physical struggle (Genesis 32:24–28); (3) the hero is "marked" or signed: the princess or another hero mark him with some iden-

tifying sign, or else he is given a ring by which he would be identified in a further stage (vss. 25–32); (4) the hero defeats his adversary (v. 26); and (5) the hero completes his mission successfully (Jacob crosses the river).

In the story of Job, for instance, this principle of polarity is apparent in three different forms: (1) The polarity between God and Satan; (2) the polarity between Job and Satan; and (3) the polarity between Job and his wife and friends. Yassif maintains that should readers choose to interpret the story of Job in accordance with the model of the first polarity, they should also sort the story as a myth. Yet, by following this pattern, Job would not be the real hero of the story but rather would be conceived of as an instrument in the hands of the supreme powers (God and Satan). But according to the polarity of the second model, Job presents a typical situation of a legend, that is, the legend of a holy man, for this is how the real conflict is between the representative of humankind and the chief instigator, Satan. Yet it is by the third model, that of Job versus his wife and friends, that the supreme and supernatural powers are excluded and the story focuses on the human relationships of human society. It is here that the meaning of the legend is mainly social, rather than theological or mythological.

More folktale patterns are discernible in other literary sorts or genres. The cycles of the patriarchal narratives follow the patterns of the saga, the stories of the Exodus join together to form the patterns of travel stories, and the biography of Samson consists of a series of stories, each of which tells about a different event of the hero's life. Yet Yassif also points out that even though the repertoire of the biblical stories apparently resembles that of other early cultures of the Middle East, it displays proportions of its own among the variety of genres. The most prevalent theme is that of the hero, his environment and his world, and the authors were anxious to select only such themes and motifs that served their purposes, that is, the process of demythologization and the enhancement of the monotheistic faith. This is why readers will not find humoristic anecdotes, magic tales, erotic stories, or animal fables—themes that doubtless furnished early Hebrew folk traditions—in the Bible.

Shamai Gelander

See also: David, King; Esther; Solomon, King.

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FOLK NARRATIVES IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The Hebrew story, or folk narrative, in the Middle Ages was, especially in its beginning, under the heavy influence of the previous period: the haggadic story in the Talmud and Midrash. The development of the Hebrew story in the Middle Ages was long and complicated, because of the rich narrative world of rabbinical sources, in the domain of genres, thematic diversity, literary style, and complex function. This is visible in the fact that many medieval compositions are still called midrashim and that a high percentage of the stories in these compositions were adapted from the Talmud and midrashim and were not medieval in origin.

The first Hebrew composition containing mainly folk narrative traditions, from the eighth to the ninth century, is the *Midrash of the Ten Commandments,* an anonymous collection of stories occasionally connected by short homiletic passages. Its author as well as its readers saw in it a continuation of midrashic literature. It is built around the biblical verses and their midrashic interpretation and includes in the course of its discussion some narrative illustrations to support it. It is possible to see in each of the ten chapters of this composition a separate "midrash," based upon one of the Ten Commandments. Here, however, lies the main difference. The ethical component in this composition is

very limited, presumably because the readers found this part less important than the others. The author paid his debt to his cultural and religious norms (so that his composition would be legitimized) but placed the main artistic emphasis on the folktales. While the midrashic sections of the composition were borrowed verbally from talmudic literature, most stories were new and unknown previously in Jewish literature and are long and developed narratives. The *Midrash of the Ten Commandments* is a typical example of the process of "continuation and change" marking Jewish folklore of the Middle Ages.

Although the vast majority of Hebrew narrative compositions of the Middle Ages were anonymous, scholarship has shown that at least two of them—*Midrash of the Ten Commandments* and *The Alphabet of Ben Sira*—were produced in the cultural expanse of Babylonia and Persia during the ninth to tenth centuries. These are the first texts in the history of Hebrew literature with an unreservedly literary orientation, which can be defined as collections of artistic fictional tales, almost entirely devoid of overt ideational-didactic objectives. (In comparison to the earlier two periods in the history of Jewish culture—the biblical period, in which the narrative was written and considered as sacred history, and the rabbinical period, in which the rich narrative had a clear purpose of didactic and homiletical function—only in the early medieval period did Hebrew literary creativity take a new direction.) Scholars surmise that two principal factors influenced the creation of these story collections. First, the numerous story collections of a similar nature were scattered throughout the talmudic literature. The intensity of this phenomenon was not overlooked by the storytellers and compilers of the medieval period. But the phenomenon would not have unfolded, it seems, if not for the second factor: the existence of story collections in Arabic in the same cultural region. *Kalila we-dimnah, The Tales of Sendebar,* and early versions of *The Arabian Nights* were widespread in Babylonia and Persia at the time; Jews too were familiar with them. The combination of the two influences, namely, the internal legitimization by means of borrowing literary models from the talmudic literature and the inclination to adopt literary models from the Arabic culture were what, to all appearances, led to the barrier-breaking new phenomenon in Jewish culture.

A substantial portion of medieval folktales are included in historiographical compositions, commentaries to Scripture and the Talmud, *geonic responsa* (a rabbinical term denoting an exchange of letters in which one party consults another on a halakhic matter), and the various midrashim produced during this period. However, the collections of tales are indeed of greater importance for understanding the folk narrative of the period, as they comprise only—or primarily—tales and covering broad ranges. The story collections themselves were created from the folk traditions by writers or compilers who wrote them in order to be read

(especially aloud). The absorption and transcription of the folk traditions involved reworking, editing, and organizing the material. These were, in other words, full-fledged literary creations (in medieval terms). In works such as *The Alphabet of Ben Sira,* the author shortened tales to make them fit the framework of the new composition and rewrote them to express his own ideational or narrative proclivities; in the family saga *Megilat Aḥima'atz* (The Chronicle of Aḥima'atz), the chronicler collected his family's surviving traditions, worked them into a chronological framework of his own, styled them in the medieval mosaic style, and set them in rhyme. The same was done in most of the other compositions.

These compositions bring together different stories from various sources and different topics. They express, perhaps more than any other literary genre of the time, the emergence of Hebrew prose as a unique art: *The Alphabet of Ben Sira,* built as a framework narrative and including outstanding subversive stories; *An Elegant Composition Concerning Relief After Adversity,* by Rabbi Nissim of Kairuan in the eleventh century, composed as a moralistic work, but positioning in its center the stories, not the mores; *Sefer ha'Ma'asim,* from twelfth-century France, constructed according to the literary patterns of European exempla literature; and the important *Sefer ḥasidim*—the basic document of the German Pietists in the thirteenth century. It was not intended to be a literary composition, however, its author, Rabbi Judah the Pious, included here about 400 stories, thus creating one of the most interesting narrative compositions of the Middle Ages.

In all of these, the folk traditions are identifiable, but the compositions themselves must be treated differently. Scholars distinguish between the folktales that constituted the basis or the raw materials for the narrative compositions of the Middle Ages and the cultural process that turned these folk traditions into literature. The narrative compositions of the Middle Ages constitute only one context in which testimony survived of the medieval Jewish folktale.

The genre of the "rewritten biblical story" is the main component of the midrashic literature and continued to be created extensively in the Middle Ages. However, when the biblical stories were told in the Middle Ages, they appeared not in the context of a homily, as in the midrashim, but as a full prose narrative that tore itself from the bounds of the biblical verse and created an almost independent narrative. Such are the compositions *Midrash va'Yosha, The Chronicles of Moses, Ma'aseh Avraham,* and especially *Sefer ha'yashar,* written at the end of the Middle Ages. Each one of these compositions, as well as many others, uses the biblical story as a nucleus for a new, developed, and independent fictive narrative, in which its world and style are that of the Middle Ages.

Another important genre of the Hebrew prose is the historical narrative: the legend. Although generally the tendency was to consider this genre as belonging to the historiographical writing of the Middle Ages, it is clear today that most of the compositions in this genre are fictional, not historical "documents." First and foremost of these compositions is *Sefer Jossipon,* an anonymous work describing the period of the Second Temple, written in southern Italy in the tenth century. It is based on the historical narrative of Josephus Flavius, but its author selected portions from Flavius's book, added to the narrative rabbinical and medieval material, and created a "historical novel" typical of the Middle Ages. Another historiographical work, the eleventh-century *Megilat Aḥima'atz* from southern Italy, is a saga of the Aḥima'atz family over the previous 200 years. Its author, Aḥima'atz ben Paltiel, collected family traditions, committed them to writing in a highly stylized Hebrew, and in rhyme. It is thus the first rhymed prose in the Hebrew literature of the Middle Ages. Another historical narrative, *Sefer ha'zichronot* (Book of Memory), from early-fourteenth-century Germany, tells the history of the Jewish people from the creation of the world to the end of days—the messianic period—and thus belongs to the popular historiographical genre in its period—the universal history. Another important characteristic of this work is that it is a collection of dozens of full or fragmentary medieval compositions that the author of *Sefer ha'zichronot* considered "authentic documents," which he organized and framed as a part of Jewish historical memory.

In the later Middle Ages, one of the refugees from Spain, Gedaliah Ibn Yahya, wrote *Shalshelet ha'Kabbalah,* one of the most controversial historical books of the time. Gedaliah presented the intellectual history of the Torah sages from the beginning to his own days. When he described the history of the great sages of the Middle Ages—Rashi (Solomon ben Isaac), Maimonides (Moses ben Maimon), Nachmanides (Moshe ben Nachman), and others—he used dozens of saints' legends that he had heard and read, and so he became one of the most important contributors to Jewish hagiographical writing in the later Middle Ages.

Another popular genre of the time was the bestiary and fable. Medieval people were fascinated with the origin, character, and behavior of animals, and even more so with their resemblance to human beings. In the Hebrew prose of the time, the *Alphabet of Ben Sira* and *Igeret Ba'alei Ḥayyim,* the earlier bestiaries were created in the East. Fables appeared also in the context of other works, as in the talmudic commentaries of the Torah scholar Rav Hai Gaon of Iraq and Rashi in France. However, the peak of this genre in Jewish culture was the thirteenth-century French author Rabbi Berechiah ha'Nakdan, who created *Mishle shu'alim* (Fox Fables)—one of the largest, most sophisticated collections of fables in European literature.

Eli Yassif

See also: Animals; Anthologies; Fable; Legend; Midrash; Schwarzbaum, Haim; Yassif, Eli.

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FOLK NARRATIVES, IMMIGRATION AND ABSORPTION

Stories of immigration and absorption/integration are personal narratives of immigrants and their descendants about the reasons for, expectations of, ways of, hardships during, and results of the transition from the country of origin to the country of destination. Although Israel has always been a country of immigration, research in immigration stories has intensified there since the 1990s.

Scholars differ in their perception of the phenomenon. Some define the uniqueness of the Israeli stories in terms of homecoming and aliyah (ascending), while others perceive it as a typical example of narratives about immigration. The stories of immigration that circulate in the communities of those who came to Israel from various countries (Morocco, Yemen, Tunisia, Poland, Bulgaria, the former Soviet Union, Ethiopia, etc.) are not the same. The differences result from both the different types of hardships experienced by these groups and their diverse cultural backgrounds. Many stories of new Israelis are influenced by traditional Jewish legends about miraculous transference from the Diaspora to the Land of Israel and contain supernatural elements. Thus the airplanes that flew the Yemenite Jews to Israel are portrayed as the wings of eagles, because this was the legendary way of getting there anticipated in that community's folklore. Although the expectations are usually positive, the encounters with other Jewish communities, with the climate, and with strange flora and fauna can be traumatic. For example, a recurrent motif of settlement in Tunisian stories is the motif of darkness even when the narrators came to their new homes in daylight; Polish and Russian Jews tend to perceive Israeli flora and fauna as monstrous; Russian and Ethiopian Jews experienced stress during their first meetings with the Jews of a different skin color. Gender issues are extremely popular in the stories of Jews who came from the Muslim countries, but they are less prominent in the repertoire of the European Jews who came to Israel in the second half of the twentieth century.

The great wave of immigration in the 1990s brought to Israel approximately 1 million people from the former Soviet Union, Jews and non-Jews. Known in general as "Russians," they nevertheless form several subcommunities, for example, Bukharan Jews, Mountain Jews (Tats), and Georgian Jews. This group of immigrants came as largely secular urban dwellers with Russian as their native language, although many of them also had a good command of the languages of other Soviet republics such as Ukrainian, Georgian, or Armenian. Jewish languages such as Yiddish and Judeo-Tat were in use mostly as a complementary vernacular.

Much of the recorded folklore is in Russian and consists of such genres as jokes, proverbs, sadistic verses, songs, and personal narratives about immigration, whether due to anti-Semitism or other reasons, including economic difficulties or the need to flee the zone of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. Personal narratives tend to be structured either as jokes or as novellas. Yet sometimes prophetic dreams and lucky coincidences function as substitutes for miracles and can produce contemporary legends. Rare in the folklore of Russian-speaking Ashkenazi Jews, references to the Holy Scriptures and Jewish legends are usually found in the narratives of Mountain Jews. Some motifs and expressions in the personal narratives are of folk origin; others allude to the New Testament or Russian or Soviet literature and form a kind of neofolklore or postfolklore. Nekludov's term "postfolklore" is used for the texts that are created according to folk schemes but do not coincide with the traditional definition of folklore. Russian and Soviet folklore did not arrive in Israel frozen in time and is not limited to the reproduction of familiar texts. Many of its protagonists came to jokes from history, fiction, films, and fairy tales. Characteristic of this path were the jokes of V.I. Chapaev (the hero of the civil war, the main character of the novel by D. Furmanov, *Chapaev* and of the film *Chapaev* by G. Vasiliev and S. Vasiliev), Shtirlits (the protagonist of Yu Semenov's novel and T.

Lioznova's film *Seventeen Moments of Spring*), Baba Iaga and Father Frost (both are magical characters from Russian fairy tales). Like other heroes of Soviet jokes, they have all "become Israelis" and thus are subjects to the absorption process. All of them have retained a distinctive appearance and characteristic patterns of behavior. In a few instances, the same is true of the spirits of Russian demonology, for instance, the *domovoi* (house spirit), who is sometimes an active character in the personal narratives. Israeli realities are also reflected in new images and present new conflicts, for example, between "Russians" and "Israelis" in general or "Russians" and "Moroccans" in particular, between secular and religious citizens, and between Jews and Arabs. The folklore of the former residents of the Soviet Union in Israel circulates mostly within the immigrant community, in formal and informal gatherings alike, and is distributed orally and in print by the Russian-language mass media and on various Internet sites.

Larisa Fialkova

See also: Folk Narratives in Israel.

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FOLK NARRATIVES, SEPHARDI

The Judeo-Spanish folktale is a narrative that for generations was transmitted in oral or written form by narrators who were and still consider themselves members of the Sephardic community, that is, descendants of Jews who were expelled from Spain in 1492 and dispersed throughout the world, but most particularly, throughout the Ottoman Empire and northern Morocco. The narrator is fluent in, or at least familiar with, the Judeo-Spanish language (Ladino) and culture. The members of the group define the narrative as "our story," which is imbued with themes, figures, social norms, and symbols that the narrating community identifies as uniquely Judeo-Spanish. Through the stories, the group expresses its cultural "self" as distinct from that of other groups.

Judeo-Spanish cultural identity is revealed mainly through: (a) its relation to the common canonical Hebrew texts such as the Bible, midrashic literature, and the Talmud, through translations into Judeo-Spanish, and elaborations upon them in that language (the most important work in this category is *Me'am lo'ez,* a widely studied commentary on the Tanakh written from ca. 1730 over a hundred years by different authors); (b) its relation to the country group origin, Spain's culture and history, as expressed in folk narratives, particularly those concerning Spanish origins as generally described in family sagas, geographical and spatial elements such as the Spanish landscape, cities, and localities, the treatment of time, and the use of historical figures and historical events (such as the Spanish Inquisition); and (c) the relationship of Sephardic culture to the surrounding culture. The local geographical identity of the host country is expressed in

the folk narratives of each particular community, such as Salonika, Izmir, and Tetuan. A special place in the Sephardic narrative is devoted to Jerusalem, as Sephardim have lived there continuously since the expulsion and consider that fact of great significance to their identity.

These three components of Sephardic identity are expressed variously in the different literary genres. The legends clearly reflect the Sephardic world: they relate to historical figures such as Maimonides (Moses ben Maimon), Rabbi Isaac Luria (Ha'Ari), Rabbi Hayim Falachi, Rabbi Hayim de la Roza, Rabbi Vidal Angel, and Rabbi Refael Meyuhas—various religious leaders whose names reflect leading rabbinical families in the Sephardic communities. They relate to historical events such as the expulsion, the Inquisition, or blood libels in Saragosa and Jerusalem. But even fairy tales express Sephardic characteristics, not only when they are told in Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) but also through interwoven proverbs and expressions or by describing customs and ways of life typical to the group. Jokes are told about Joha, the humoristic Sephardic character, and about Makeda, the Sephardic town of fools. All genres reflect norms and values that Sephardic Jews have adopted in accordance with their self-image. They perceive themselves as generous, tolerant, and sensitive to family lineage and honor. Customs that are typical of the Sephardim and redolent of local food, holidays, folk beliefs, rituals, and home remedies are often described in these stories.

Anthologies of Sephardic narratives have been published all over the world in different languages, such as Ladino, Spanish, Hebrew, English, French, Italian, and German. The stories have been recorded from different Sephardic communities, including those in Israel, Turkey, Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Morocco, Canada, and the United States. Most of the authors of these anthologies are of Sephardic origin and have recorded stories from their own tradition. In the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s, Matilda Koén-Sarano, one of the most widely known contemporary collectors in the Ladino language, published twenty extensive bilingual anthologies, in Ladino, Hebrew, Italian, and English. Scholars who have studied Sephardic literature and folk narratives published on the subject include Reginetta Haboucha, whose *Types and Motifs of the Judeo-Spanish Folktales* (1992) is a fundamental work on the typology and classification of Sephardic tales; Elena Romero, who wrote *La creación literaria en lengua sefardi* (1992), a general survey of the written Judeo-Spanish literature; Paloma Diaz-Mas, who wrote a chapter on Sephardic folk literature in her book *Sephardim: The Jews from Spain* (1993); and Tamar Alexander, whose *The Heart Is a Mirror: The Sephardic Folktale* (2008) extensively analyzed Sephardic folk literature.

In 2012 the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa contained 24,000 stories, of which 1,550 are Sephardic. A breakdown of this category according to the geographic provenance of the stories is as follows: Israel, 841; Turkey, 384; Spanish Morocco (Tetuan and Tange), 99; Bulgaria, 87; Greece, 83; Yugoslav, 51; and Isle of Rhodes, 5.

Tamar Alexander

See also: Alexander, Tamar; Attias, Moshe; *Oseh Pele*; Spain, Jews of.

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FOLK SONGS

See: Folk Music and Song

FOLK SONGS AND POETRY, JUDEO-SPANISH (LADINO)

Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) folk songs and poetry, created on the shores of the Mediterranean basin and in North Africa in countries where Sephardic Jews settled after their expulsion from Spain in 1492, are multifaceted and diverse. Scholars generally divide Judeo-Spanish folk poetry into two main categories: genres deriving from the Spanish and the pan-Hispanic heritage, known before the expulsion, such as the *romancero* (Spanish ballad) and *canciónero* (Span., *lírica*) and genres drawing on Jewish heritage after the expulsion, such as *coplas* (strophic rhymed prose).

The Judeo-Spanish *romancero* is of central importance in the folk poetry of this culture. A literary genre linked to European literature of the Middle Ages, the Spanish ballad is an epic-lyric poem, handed down by oral tradition, usually in song form. More than any other literary Spanish genre, the Spanish ballad became embedded as one of the central folk poetry genres preserved in Judeo-Spanish literature. The Sephardim not only maintained its historic poetic themes and format but also developed it into new directions that were more suitable to the spirit of the Jewish world, such as "The Husband's Return" and "The Abduction of Helen of Troy," ballads that serve as good examples of adopting non-Jewish themes for Jewish educational purposes. Researchers have noted that the repertoire of ballads preserved by Sephardic Jews is one of the most important and most reliable representations of Judeo-Spanish culture over the generations.

Some scholars claim that the lyric songs known as *canciónero* are probably fragments of ancient epic poetry. Some maintain that Judeo-Spanish lyric poetry originates in Spanish tradition from before the expulsion and that those exiled from Spain carried with them in the Diaspora countries not only epic-lyric poetry but also lyric poetry, which took root among the Sephardic Jews. Others claim that it is preferable to look for origins of the lyric song in Balkan culture, which was much closer geographically to and in immediate contact with Sephardic culture, which actually became more distanced after the expulsion from Spain. Scholars argue that the melodies used in singing Judeo-Spanish folk poetry are not relics of an Iberian tradition but reflect the musical influence of surrounding cultures in the countries of the Sephardic diaspora. Lyric song has an important position in Judeo-Spanish folk poetry and is related to Jewish life cycle events. It was mostly employed by women, who would recite *canciónes* at events that celebrated Jewish life, for example, songs for births and new mothers, wedding songs, songs for funerals, songs for children's games, and Zionist folk poetry.

The Sephardic *copla* does not necessarily fulfill all the criteria for folk poetry, being a genre that originated in written tradition but ended in oral tradition. *Coplas* were created into the Judeo-Spanish tradition as an original poetic attempt to give voice to written Jewish sources by offering a poetic commentary in Judeo-Spanish to the events and festivals of the Jewish life cycle, such as the "Las coplas de Purim" (Purim Coplas). The *copla* genre is integrated with folk tradition. Many testimonies of *copla* songs acquired through orally transmitted tradition are found even today in the hands of researchers, such as Samuel G. Armistead and Elena Romero, but the method of transmission from written tradition to oral tradition, and vice-versa, has not yet been analyzed enough. Very few *coplas* survive in the current tradition of Judeo-Spanish poetry. In recent years, some contemporary Judeo-Spanish poets have tried to revive the *copla* genre by offering new texts to the classic tunes, particularly by writing *coplas* on the Holocaust.

Shmuel Refael

See also: Folk Music and Song; Greece, Jews of; Spain, Jews of; Turkey, Jews of.

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Folk Songs and Poetry, North African

As in all traditional societies, the folk songs and oral poetry of North Africa (Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco) have sustained daily life, life-cycle events, and festivals of the North African Jews, in the various dialects and languages that they spoke in the region, including Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Spanish (Ladino), and Judeo-Berber. Beginning in the Middle Ages, if not before, music (with sometimes some rudimentary instruments) has most likely always accompanied the poetic texts performed in several contexts of life. In North Africa, oral poetry was performed by Jewish women and men, but some genres were the appanage of women, such as lullabies and mourning songs in local Jewish languages. Like in other Jewish areas, these oral poetic texts generally developed universal lyric and romantic themes, typical to Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors, which often were the very source of the texts performed by Jews. In fact, only themes and motifs that are specifically Jewish and concern the tragic Jewish history or the Jewish communal life offered matters to original communal creation that developed in various traditions of Jewish oral poetry.

Although Jewish communities were set in some parts of North Africa in ancient times, in the third century B.C.E., in Libya, for example, in other parts of North Africa one can find documentation about traditions of Jewish folk poetry only for the past five centuries. That is due to the necessary oral performance and transmission of these folk poetic and musical texts as well as to their practice by the less-educated people of the Jewish community and to the condescension of the well-read rabbinical elite for these folk texts, which do not always respect their authoritative censorship concerning subjects of love affairs and sentimental life. The lack of printing facilities in North Africa until the mid-nineteenth century was also an obstacle to this documentation. With respect to manuscript sources, it is principally from the nineteenth century that historians have testimony about Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Spanish folk songs in North Africa, when the Judeo-Berber tradition was never documented by writing because of the long oral tradition of Berber culture among Jews as well as non-Jews. As such, this discussion is mostly based on fieldwork research that scholars have led among informants in Israel, France, and Morocco.

Jewish folk culture in North Africa is mostly Judeo-Arabic from the ninth century, after the reinforcement of the Arab military and political presence in North Africa in an environment of Berber speakers. On the one hand, the communal Jewish culture continued the written and oral Jewish tradition that consolidated Jewish identity in this environment, which was Arabo-Berber hereafter, and kept strong ties with Hebrew and Aramaic founding texts of the rabbinical culture, the study and exploitation of which in the form of exegetic, homiletic, and halakhic interpretations accompanied and enriched it continuously. On the other hand, the communal culture maintained permanent contact with Arabic culture, which was imported to North Africa after the invasion of Arab troops and was perceptible in the Middle Ages principally in urban centers such as Kairouan in Tunisia, Fes in Morocco, Tlemcen in West Algeria, or Tripoli in Libya, and with the native Berber culture, which was mostly rural. Thus, it evolved in a continuous interaction with folk Muslim culture and borrowed from it not only its Arabic urban dialects but also a large narrative corpus of tales and legends, a large corpus of poetic and musical texts, practical knowledge, manners of thinking, and magic beliefs and ways of life, which sometimes were in entire contradiction to Orthodox Jewish traditions. This Judeo-Arabic culture owes to these various sources and inspirations its Jewish, Arab, and Berber basic syncretism that determined it until the twentieth century and oriented its borrowing of Arabic poetic and musical genres, folk and classical, as well as its production and performance of original new texts in the numerous contexts of Jewish communal and family life.

Due to the diversity of its themes and forms, Jewish oral poetry in North Africa has built a bridge between these various sources and inspirations. It sings the good fortunes and the misfortunes of love as well as the misery and pain of life in some local ballads, Muslim or Jewish by origin, but principally in a poetic genre, the origin of which most likely dates back to the Middle Ages. It is the *Arubi* genre (the poetry of nomads), with short texts of five or seven verses, sung with a constant melody, that varies from one area to another and was certainly introduced in North Africa by nomadic Arab tribes. These songs were performed by women at family evening festivities, such as the night before the circumcision of a newborn son and the eve of weddings, or in the swing games of the bride, when the friends of the bride kept her company and sustained her before her departure to her husband's home or at the Sabbath after that. Other similar genres, such as the *ta'lil* (cheerful poetry) in Tunisia and the *tshergi* (oriental poetry) in the Tafilalet area in Morocco, have the same lyric and romantic themes and the same small

Chorus from the synagogue "Em Ha'Banim" (the mother of sons). Casablanca, Morocco, 1949. *(Courtesy of Haya Bar-Itzhak)*

forms. Conversely, Judeo-Arabic oral poetry laments the tragic events of Jewish history in long lyrical and epic strophic texts that refer to the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem and to the exile of Israel. These texts were performed individually by women at home during the mourning period of the seventeenth of Tammuz to Ninth of Av, and by men at the synagogue as a part of the peculiar liturgy of the day of fasting, the Ninth of Av. In southern Tunisia, women also sang epic texts on biblical themes. Other genres of folk songs, with supple forms, Jewish or Muslim by origin, were performed at the birth of a male child, at bar mitzvah ceremonies, at the numerous ceremonies of traditional weddings, and in particular at henna ceremonies, during which henna paste was applied to the hands and the legs of the bride (or, in Morocco, even on her hair). These folk texts, which relate to the life-cycle events, often refer to social and family situations and even to the peculiar ceremony during which they are performed. Wedding texts also celebrate the beauty of the bride and the good fortune of her virginity through the use of numerous metaphors. As for the last stage of life, Jewish women specialized in mourning for the deceased in their family or another family by reciting traditional lyric strophic texts, which describe the exceptional merits of the deceased and the severe pain caused by the separation. In some communities, some Jewish women were known as professional mourners. They were sometimes invited by leading Muslim families to mourn their departed, especially influential men.

After the expulsion of Jews from Spain and Portugal at the end of the fifteenth century, a new communal culture arose in northern Morocco, in communities such as Tetuan, Tangier, and Larache (and their descendants in Gibraltar beginning in the eighteenth century and in Oran beginning in the nineteenth century). As a result of contact between the descendants of the Jews in exile from Spain and Portugal, Judeo-Arabic speakers, and Muslims, a hybrid language developed in this Arabic and Berber environment called Haketía, which was based on medieval Castilian, Hebrew, and dialectal Arabic components. In these Judeo-Spanish communities, Jewish and non-Jewish medieval traditions of Castilian oral poetry continued and even flourished, with integration of new texts and new

melodies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This exploitation of previous traditions helped to safeguard orally dozens of medieval texts in the romance epic genre, which disappeared from the performance traditions of speakers in Spain. Almost all these romance texts refer to the deeds and adventures of Iberian Christian kings and aristocrats and to good and evil deeds of other non-Jewish figures. The preservation of these romances was assisted by joint melodies, which greatly contributed to their memorization and performance over the centuries. Other texts, lyrical and descriptive but few in small number, develop Jewish specific themes, which refer to biblical figures and matters, to communal figures, to Jewish founding values such as the Torah and Torah study, and to the biblical story of Purim and other Jewish festivals. These Jewish original strophic texts, termed *coplas,* were, like the romances, often performed individually by women as lullabies and in groups at night or family festivities, and at life-cycle ceremonies.

As for Judeo-Arabic oral poetry, special texts were also produced and performed at life-cycle ceremonies. The numerous Judeo-Spanish wedding songs celebrate the beauty and the youth of the bride, the preparation of the bride's dowry, the choice of the ideal groom, the risks of marriage, and the eventual tension with the new mother-in-law. They were performed in groups at the various family ceremonies as well as at the *matesha* (Arabic, swing) ceremonies, with some peculiar songs referring to the situation and to the choice of a future groom by the young friends of the bride. At birth, humorous songs exalt the birth of a male child and comment satirically about the birth of a girl. At the end of life, *endechas* (laments) were performed at home by women. In Judeo-Arabic tradition, in addition to these personal songs of mourning, other long strophic *endechas* refer to the tragic destruction of the First and Second Temples and were performed by women during the days of mourning, from the seventeenth of Tammuz to the Ninth of Av, and by men in the liturgy of the Ninth of Av.

In North Africa contacts between Jewish communities and Berber culture preceded those with Arab culture and the development of Judeo-Spanish culture. Nevertheless, scholars have little information about ancient interactions between Jewish oral texts in Berber and the poetry of their Berber environment during that period. Only for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries do scholars have documentation about Judeo-Berber, that is, the Berber spoken by Jews in bilingual communities (where Judeo-Arabic was the communal language) as well as in monolingual communities (where only Berber was used by Jews). In fieldwork research among Judeo-Berber and Berber speakers in Israel and Morocco, scholars have concluded that Judeo-Berber culture was not comparable to Moroccan Judeo-Arabic and Judeo-Spanish cultures, in the sense that until World War II monolingual Judeo-Berber speakers lived in small and isolated communities,

scattered in the High Atlas and Anti-Atlas mountains in Morocco. They were poor and lacked the intellectual and spiritual leadership necessary to develop a whole Jewish culture based on the Jewish traditional Hebrew and Aramaic founding texts and on the various dialects of Berber. In fact, Judeo-Berber and Berber were used by Jews only for daily family and communal interaction and for their interaction with their Muslim neighbors, and not for Jewish literary and intellectual creation, whether poetry, narration, or biblical and talmudic exegesis. Nevertheless, much oral Berber poetry is performed by Jews in their ancient communities (and even today in Israel on the occasion of family occasions such as weddings), but it is based almost totally on non-Jewish songs and texts.

The dancing and singing in moving rows in groups of the *ahwash* (dance) genre was performed by Muslims as well as by Jews at festive ceremonies, seldom jointly by dancers and singers, men and women, of the two communities. The traditional *ahwash* musical texts develop universal themes of love affairs, of relations between people, and of panegyric addresses to governors and influential figures, often in allegorical and metaphorical ways, and were sung by men and women with very personal allusions and implications. According to Jewish and Muslim testimonies, some talented Jews, who led groups in the role of *rais* (leader of a musical group) in their communities, were known as authors of *ahwash* songs, and some of them could perform not only the *ahwash* corpus but also texts of lyric ballads (*lqisst*) and even of religious Muslim prayers in Berber. Scholars have recorded a few oral Berber texts that are specifically Jewish, particularly some bar mitzvah and wedding songs, which are similar to, and perhaps even adaptations of, Judeo-Arabic ones.

In conclusion, Jewish oral poetry in North Africa clearly shows the syncretic character of the local folk Jewish culture. However, Jews' interactions with Muslims and Christians and the profound integration of a large part of this oral poetic repertory by Jewish performers, men, and women, indicate the ambivalent strategies developed by the Jewish communities toward the culture of their neighbors and their rejection of another part of this non-Jewish repertory, particularly the texts referring directly and overtly to religious affairs in Islam or Christianity. The adoption of many non-Jewish texts by Jewish communities is due principally to their joint melodies and rhythms, which have played a great role in their festive and social performance and helped to facilitate their memorization over centuries. It is also the melodies and music of these oral texts that primarily contributed to the way that Jews performed ancient texts in family and social contexts, and ultimately preserved them.

Joseph Chetrit

See also: North Africa, Jews of.

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FOLK SONGS, ISRAELI

Shirei Eretz Israel (Songs of the Land of Israel {SLI}) are folk songs of the modern State of Israel. Eretz Israel (The Land of Israel) connotes the geographical area where the Jewish people have dwelled since antiquity. In modern terms, however, Eretz Israel denotes the area of Zionist settlement before statehood (1948). While the Jewish State was eventually called "Medinat Israel" (The State of Israel), the prestate term "Eretz Israel" survived in the name of this musical genre, providing it with a sense of physical connection to the ancient motherland. This name endows the folk song genre with strong national, emotional, and, at the same time, nostalgic overtones. Due to its complexity, the concept needs to be approached critically in its historical, social, and cultural contexts as a twentieth-century creation, as well as in relation to the diverse meanings attached to the songs.

SLI express the collective experience of creating a new Israeli society ("we shall build our country," as one song says) by stressing topics such as love of the land, agriculture, peace, and war. Some of the songs were written by unknown composers, while others were composed by well-known ones, were recorded and performed in public, and were published in songsters (songbooks). In spite of their being written down, SLI are also orally transmitted through communal singing (*shirah be'tzibur*), the typical pattern of consumption of this genre. Communal singing, or a public sing-along, is led by an instructor playing an accordion, piano, or guitar, sometimes using slides or sheet music for the lyrics. In these gatherings there is no division between "performer" and "audience." From time to time, the instructors teach new songs, effectively transmitting the corpus orally. In sum, SLI blend patterns of traditional folk music with characteristics of modern, mediated popular music.

However, a modern musical culture created during a relatively short period of time in the twentieth century with the intervention of the electronic mass media cannot be compared to traditional music cultures forged over centuries. As the scholar Bathja Bayer wrote: "We used to examine the Israeli song according to one criterion, its illegitimate birth (i.e., being too 'legitimate' disqualifies its candidacy to be considered as 'folk'). We should not judge a song according to how it was conceived but according to its function. If it functions as a folk song, as in the old deep-rooted cultures, there is no reason to deny its status as 'folk'" (1968, 74).

Despite the continuous presence of Jews in the Land of Israel for over 3,000 years, modern Israel is a country of immigrants with very diverse cultural backgrounds. For the first European settlers, called *ḥalutzim* ("pioneers"), their arrival to Israel in the late nineteenth century was an opportunity to make a revolution in their way of life, by negating the stereotyped image of the old Diaspora-Jews (immersed in an old religious way of life, docile and unable to defend themselves, living on petty commerce, etc.) and by creating the image of the "New Jew."

This new image linked the early settlers to Cna'an (the biblical name for the Land of Israel), an imagined country of farmers and shepherds. This idea, combined with the strong socialist background of most of the first settlers, was translated into the attempt to build an agricultural society based on the kibbutz (collective agricultural settlement). Furthermore, these Jewish settlers are a special case of immigration. Their firm decision to abandon the "old Diaspora culture" could not lead to the adoption of the culture of their new homeland simply because such alternative culture was not available; it had to be invented.

Although most of the immigrants shared a common ancient religion and history, this background was insufficient to create a new, unifying expressive culture common to all. Therefore, the "invention" of a folk song canon, "those repertoires and forms of musical behavior constantly shaped by a community to express its cultural particularity and the characteristics that distinguish it as a social entity," as defined by Philip Bohlman (1988, 104), was one of the most important tasks undertaken by the *ḥalutzim* and their descendants.

Due to the lack of professional composers and lyricists, during the formative years (ca. 1880–1918) of the Jewish settlement in Palestine (Yishuv) folk songs were conceived mostly by amateurs, sometimes setting new texts in modern Hebrew to existing tunes, Jewish and non-Jewish, imported from their former homelands (Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Germany, Romania, Hungary). Sometimes, they also used tunes of their Arabic-speaking neighbors as a symbolic attempt to assimilate into the local Middle Eastern environment.

Beginning in the second decade of the twentieth century, a new generation of composers and lyricists began to write original Hebrew songs that would become the backbone of the new Israeli musical culture. Among these early writers were the composers Daniel Sambursky, Matityahu Shelem, David Zehavi, Mordechai Zeira, Yedidia Admon, Nachum Nardi, and later Imanuel Zamir and the lyricists Ya'akov Orland, Natan Alterman, Alexander Pen, and Itzḥak Shenhar. Music was also set to poems by Haim Naḥaman Bialik, Rachel, and many other canonical Hebrew poets. Among the contributors to the SLI repertoire after the War of Independence (1948) are composers Alexander (Sasha) Argov, Moshe Vilensky, Neomi Shemer (who also wrote the lyrics to most of her songs), Nurit Hirsh, Nachum Heiman, and Yair Rosenblum and lyricists Yeḥiel Mohar, Ḥaim Ḥefer, Rachel Shapira, Dudu Barak, Ehud Manor, and Yoram Tehar-Lev. Most of the Hebrew songs created by these artists reflect the daily experience of the Israelis, their feelings, hopes, ideals, and frustrations, functioning in this sense as true folk songs. The dissemination of the songs was through songsters (*shironim*), and later also through radio broadcastings. Yet the communal singing performed in the kibbutzim and in the emerging new cities remained the main venue of transmission. Composers used to lead these communal sing-alongs and seized such opportunities to teach their new songs. Hence, though the songs were written by well-known composers and lyricists and were usually printed in songsters, they functioned as folk songs and communal singing turned them into a type of secular Israeli prayer.

The majority of the SLI corpus was written before the mid-1970s, when Israeli pop/rock became the dominant style of Israeli popular music. This time frame further defined the status of SLI as "'folk music' in the local national context, symbolizing the formative years of nationhood" (Regev 2000, 230), whose function was "to unify people through communal singing" (Hirshberg 1995, 146).

As an invented folk tradition, SLI have very close relations with the new Israeli folk dances that were set to the tunes of these songs and performed in both amateur (community) and professional folk-dancing contexts.

Talila Eliram

See also: Folk Music and Song.

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FOOD AND FOODWAYS

Jewish foodways are the foods and food practices of Jewish communities and individuals. Such foodways subsume the cuisines that have evolved within Jewish communities and the food-related performances that emerge around the preparation of food, its consumption, the liturgy and para-liturgy of food-related blessings and song, and cleaning up. Jewish foodways are informed by *kashruth* (Jewish dietary laws), the patterns of the Jewish life-cycle, the foodways of co-territorial peoples, and the shared Jewish requirements involving the Jewish ritual calendar, including the Sabbath.

Jewish Dietary Laws

Jewish dietary laws shape the everyday life of those who follow them. They separate Jews from non-Jews, and frequently from other Jews, and fill the most mundane activities with significance. Every bite of food at any time of day reincorporates the law into the body of the consumer. The cryptic and complicated prohibitions of Leviticus regarding animal foods have been expanded by centuries of rabbinical commentary to apply to almost any food that one might encounter. Even raw fruits and vegetables, theoretically the foods most ritually fit for use according to Jewish law and therefore the most kosher food there could be, must be meticulously examined for bugs and dirt.

Jewish dietary laws, as outlined in the Hebrew Bible, fall into three basic categories: prohibition of the consumption of blood, prohibition of the consumption of certain categories of animals, and prohibition of the combination of milk and meat products.

Blood

Consumption of blood is prohibited in Leviticus 17:14 on the grounds that an animal's blood is its life (Deut. 12:16–23, 15:23). In practice this requires that meat be thoroughly soaked and salted to remove any blood before it can be cooked, and eggs must be examined for blood spots before they may be consumed, cooked, or added to a recipe.

Forbidden Animals

Certain categories of animals are forbidden in the Hebrew Bible. Among creatures from the sea, only fish with fins and scales are suitable for consumption (Lev. 11:9–12; Deut. 14:9–10). The Hebrew Bible provides a list of "unclean" birds in Leviticus 11:13–19 and Deuteronomy 14:11–18, implying that any bird not named is "clean." Because the unclean birds are scavengers and birds of prey, all such birds came to be considered unclean. Among land creatures, only ruminants, animals with a split hoof that chew a cud, are suitable (Lev. 11:3–26; Deut. 14:6–8).

The Combination of Milk and Meat

The most important facet of observance of dietary law, and the one that most distinguishes a kosher kitchen, is the separation of milk and meat products. This practice is traced to the three instances in the Pentateuch (Exod. 23:19, 34:26; Deut. 14:12) in which the children of Israel are forbidden to cook a goat in the milk of its mother. Whether or not these verses are the source of the prohibition remains in dispute among scholars. The separation of meat and milk continues in the body of the consumer, requiring that one wait a short period after consuming milk or milk products before eating meat, and a rather longer period of several hours after eating meat before drinking milk.

In practice, meat and milk products are never cooked together and never served at the same meal. Kosher kitchens have completely separate sets of cookware, dishware, and cutlery for handling meat and milk products.

The details of observance of the dietary laws cannot all be inferred from the Hebrew Bible itself or from the Talmud, a multivolume elaboration on the commandments of the Pentateuch completed in the sixth century. The immediate source upon which *poskim,* rabbis who decide questions of Jewish law and custom, base Jewish practice is the *Shulḥan arukh* (The Set Table), written in the mid-sixteenth century by Rabbi Joseph Karo, and expanded with the commentaries of Rabbi Moses Isserles (also known by the acronym Remo). In fact, the actual determination of what is or is not acceptable in a kosher kitchen is made not by scholars who have studied the intricacies of Jewish dietary laws but by the cooks, almost always women, who are making the food itself.

By the nineteenth century many Jews had shrugged off the restrictions of *kashruth* entirely, but even when dietary laws are honored in the breach, Jewish cooks may make symbolic or humorous gestures in the direction of some kind of Jewish observance, as when homemakers of the former Soviet Union prepare "kosher pork."

The Jewish Life-Cycle

Special festive or symbolic foods underline and amplify significant rites of passage and renewal within the Jewish life-cycle. Foods associated with birth, childhood, and marriage are rich and auspicious. Foods associated with death and mourning comfort and nourish the bereaved while emphasizing the message that life must go on. In medieval Ashkenazi communities, boys tasted sweet foods (such as honey) symbolically connected to the Torah when beginning their studies, a ritual that

Pumpkin *koyletsh*, a festive Jewish bread. *(Courtesy of Eve Jochnowitz)*

continues in some of them. In some cases parents and teachers will perform oral transmission of the Torah to a child, as in North African communities, where a baby receives a pointer that has passed over every word in the Torah as a teething toy. Such traditions make concrete the expression *Torah shebe'al-pe* (oral law).

The foods prepared and eaten by Jews in all parts of the world resemble the foods of the local non-Jewish populations more than they resemble the foods of Jewish communities in other places. Local ingredients define the flavor and style of Jewish cooking just as local food practices are adopted and adapted to suit Jewish needs. In many cases, however, identical foods might have very different meanings within co-territorial Jewish and non-Jewish cuisines. Foods considered sacred or quintessentially Jewish in context, such as *plov,* the rice and lamb preparation considered the national dish among the Bukharan Jews, baked zucchini among the Romaniote Jews of Ioannina, blintzes and borsht among the Ashkenazi Jews of Eastern Europe, and the savory meat pies of the Sephardic tradition all exist as unmarked, everyday foods among local non-Jews.

The Jewish Ritual Calendar

Foods with special significance are a major part of the celebration of many Jewish holidays. The holiday of Passover restricts consumption of many foods. The Jewish year contains six fast days, Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement); Tisha Be'Av (Ninth of Av); the Seventeenth of Tammuz, which commemorates the breach of the walls of Jerusalem; the Tenth of Tevet, which commemorates the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem; and the fasts of Esther, before Purim, and Gedalia, after Rosh Ha'Shana, on which all food and drink are prohibited. The Sabbath, the seventh day of the week observed from Friday evening to Saturday evening as a day of rest and worship, has its own food observances.

The New Year

The Talmud mentions five foods to be served on the eve of the Jewish New Year (*Horayoth* 12A and *Kerituth* 6A): *kra* (squash), *rubia* (black-eyed peas), *karti* (leeks), *silka* (beet greens), and *tamar* (dates). The Talmud provides no reason for these particular foods to be eaten at the New Year, but subsequent rabbinical commentators suggested that the puns on the names of the ingredients were part of blessings for the New Year. The blessing recited for black-eyed peas at the New Year is "*She'yirbu zekhuyoteynu*" (may our merits be multiplied). It is for this reason that within the Ashkenazi world, carrots became another traditional New Year's dish; in Yiddish the word for "carrots," *mern,* is a homophone for the word "to multiply," *mern.*

Sweet foods, such as honey, are considered auspicious for the New Year, as are apples and pomegranates, in particular, because of their multitude of seeds.

Passover

The Passover holiday marks the greatest departure of Jewish food practices from local non-Jewish foodways. For the eight-day duration of the holiday (or seven days within Israel), Jewish practice eschews all *hametz* (leavened grain), and unleavened bread, or *matzah*, becomes both a symbol of the liberation from slavery and a staple food. Every Jewish community has some form of *matzah*, the only food Jews are specifically commanded to eat in the Hebrew Bible.

The narrowest definition of leavened grain is grain that has been in contact with moisture for more than eighteen minutes. Grain in this case refers to the five grains mentioned in the Mishnah (Challa 1:1) as those from which bread can be made: wheat, rye, oats, spelt, and barley. Ashkenazi tradition also prohibits rice, legumes, and other grains (*kitniyot*). More broadly, leavened grain refers to any grain product at all except *matzah* itself; any oils or derivatives from any grain product, including the starches and glues in many paper plates; any leavening agent; and any food or utensil that has come into contact with any of the above. In modern practice, many observant communities avoid any foods not specifically permitted for Passover—a potentially huge category of foods.

The Sabbath

After Passover cookery, cooking for the Sabbath is the most notable practice that distinguishes Jewish foodways. Traditional slow-cooking meat and bean stews such as *cholent* (Yidd.) or *ḥamin* (Heb.) exploit strate-

through the Soviet Union with her two children. After returning to Poland in 1946, she joined the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw as a curator of its newly created museum, the Warsaw Jewish Historical Institute Museum. She also worked with the Central Committee of Jews in Poland, an organization that provided legal, educational, social care, cultural, and propaganda services in the postwar years, researching how it was possible for Jews to maintain a traditional Jewish lifestyle during the war.

In 1950 Frenkel left Poland for Israel and took up residence in Haifa. Between 1956 and 1980 she worked as a scientific employee at the Haifa Museum of Ethnography and Folklore. In Haifa she created a center promoting interest in both traditional and modern Jewish papercuts. With the goal of reviving this form of traditional folk art (most Jewish papercuts were destroyed during World War II), she organized competitions for the artists and exhibitions of their works. Her articles were published in Polish-language magazines in Israel, as well as in the Jewish press in the United States.

The crowning achievements of her research are her works about traditional Jewish papercuts: "Wycinanka żydowska w Polsce" (The Jewish Paper-Cut in Poland) (1929), *The Art of the Jewish Paper-Cut* (1996), and the entry on "Paper-cuts" for *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (1972). Her most important works on the traditional folk-culture of Polish Jews are two articles she wrote for the *Journal of Jewish Art:* "Little-Known Handicrafts of Polish Jews in the 19th and 20th Centuries" (1975) and "Notes on the Costume of Jewish Women in Eastern Europe" (1980).

Frenkel died on June 7, 1984.

Olga Goldberg-Mulkiewicz

See also: Papercut.

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G

GASTER, MOSES (1856–1939)

Moses Gaster was a late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century folklorist, rabbi, and Zionist leader. In his work and writings, he emphasized the written form of folklore materials over the oral form and argued that the modern European fairytale originated in early modern Europe and reflects its society and history.

Gaster, born in Bucharest on September 17, 1856, studied at the University of Breslau and the Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau, where he was ordained in 1881. Gaster received his Ph.D. in comparative phonetics from the University of Leipzig in 1877 and returned to his native Romania as a rabbi and Jewish leader. He was expelled from Romania in 1885 for defending persecuted Jews. He emigrated to England, where he began teaching Slavonic literature at Oxford University in 1886. The following year, he became chief rabbi of the Sephardic community, a position he held until his retirement in 1918, and a central activist in the Zionist movement, which pushed for the reestablishment of a Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel.

Despite these accomplishments, Gaster viewed his folkloristic scholarship, including his studies of Romanian folklore and culture and of Jewish folklore and literature, as his main intellectual activity. His major publications in the first area were *Literatura Populara* (1883), a popular history of Romanian folk literature, and *Chrestomatie Româna* (1891), a comprehensive anthology of early Romanian literature, a field of study that he founded.

As a folklorist Gaster was a man of his time. He participated in the great folklore debates of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century, the Indo-European debate on the origin of folktales, the mythological approaches of Friedrich Max Müller, the anthropological methods of Andrew Lang, and the written folklore of Albert Wesselski. As president of the Folklore Society of Great Britain during the peak of its activity from 1907 to 1908, he influenced the foundational stages of the study of folklore.

Gaster was, first and foremost, an ethnographer of oral and written folklore texts. A survey of the collection of his articles, *Studies and Texts in Folklore, Magic, Medieval Romance, Hebrew Apocrypha and Samaritan Archaeology* (1928), shows that most of them are dedicated to unknown folkloric material. The third volume of this collection is

Moses Gaster, 1904. (From the journal *Ost und West*)

dedicated to the publication of Hebrew and Aramaic folklore and literary texts discovered and edited by Gaster.

Gaster's method is defined today as comparative folklore. He saw the ultimate goal of his studies as the search for the Ur text, as can be seen clearly from the condensed monographs on Jewish folktales he published between 1880 and 1881: All of them start with a presentation of the Jewish folk tradition and continue by linking them to Eastern or European folklore of ancient or medieval periods, which he viewed as the origin of this tradition.

The contribution of Gaster to folklore theory can be seen mainly in two areas: the stubborn opposition to the Finnish approach, that is, the claim for the total orality of folk narrative, which he opposed strongly, emphasizing the written form of folklore materials. His second influential contribution to the folkloristic theory was in the generic domain. In some of his well-known works he entered with his usual vigor into the great debate over the origin of the modern European fairytale and claimed, in quite a modern voice, that they originate in early modern Europe and reflect its society and history.

Gaster died on March 5, 1939.

Eli Yassif

See also: Kabbalah; Schwarzbaum, Haim; Yassif, Eli.

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GASTER, THEODOR H. (1906–1992)

Theodor Herzl Gaster was a London-born American biblical scholar who made significant contributions to the study of Jewish holidays, comparative religion, ritual, and mythology. He achieved popular renown for his translation into English of the Dead Sea Scrolls in his book *The Dead Sea Scriptures* (1956), as well as his one-volume abridgment in 1959 of James Frazer's thirteen-volume work *The Golden Bough* (1890), to which Gaster contributed updates, corrections, and extensive annotations. In folklore studies, he was known as a prominent advocate of the "myth-ritual school," which offered ancient ritual origins for later developments of myth and customs.

The son of the renowned Romanian-born folklorist, rabbi, and Zionist Moses Gaster, Theodor Gaster was born on July 21, 1906, and named after Moses's friend and leader of the Zionist movement Theodor Herzl. He received his undergraduate degree in classics at the University of London in 1928 and his M.A. in Near Eastern archaeology at the same institution in 1936. Gaster served as curator in the Department of Egyptian and Semitic Antiquities at the Wellcome Research Institution and Museum in London (1928–1932, 1936–1939), before moving to New York in 1939 to begin work at Columbia University on a Ph.D., which he completed in 1943. He taught part time at Columbia beginning in 1942, and in 1945 he became head of the Hebraic Section of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. In 1944, he began a long-term relationship as a visiting professor at Dropsie College in Philadelphia (1944–1966). Gaster was also a visiting professor at various universities throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, holding international posts at the University of Rome, University of Melbourne, and University of Leeds. In 1966, he secured his first permanent full-time academic post as professor of religion at Barnard College in New York City.

Like his folklorist father, Theodor had a command of many languages, was versed in biblical and ancient studies, and had a global comparative approach to cultural traditions. Both were profoundly interested in the biblical roots of modern traditions, but Theodor explored ritual and custom more than did his father, who specialized in narrative studies. Theodor made a contribution to epic and myth with his translation and editing of *The Oldest Stories in the World* (1952), showing sources of narrative in the ancient Middle East. He applied his father's diffusionist explanation for the similarity of folkloric items globally; that is, the similarity owed to the migrations of people, particularly Jews, who spread folklore into new environments. Both Gasters considered Jewish folklore diverse rather than a unified body of material and characterized its creative adaptation to different host societies in the Diaspora as taking "alien" material and giving it a new spiritual meaning.

More than his father, however, the son applied James Frazer's evolutionary theories of ritual origins for contemporary customs, whose classic study he updated and condensed into one volume, titled *The New Golden Bough* (1959). The Frazerian influence is evident in explanations of Jewish customs as survivals of pagan customs from ancient periods. He interpreted the Jewish observance of Passover, for example, as a remnant of primitive seasonal rituals that had been adapted to Jewish tradition in different communities. It acquired its Jewish name, he argued, because as a magical procedure, its essential purpose was to ensure that demons would pass over and spare the household or clan from harm. Unlike other cultural evolutionists, who viewed such remnants as an irrational retention of customs that had lost their meaning in modern times, Gaster contextualized rituals within Jewish history and proposed functions for them that explained their persistence. In *Passover: Its History and Traditions* (1949), he observed that Passover is rooted in the tenets of Judaism for active redemption rather than passive freedom, and, writing in the aftermath of the Holocaust and the birth of the State of Israel, he observed that the performance of the Exodus story at Passover served new functions of social justice and Zionist movements. In addition to this volume, his studies of Jewish holidays and folklife include *Purim and Ḥanukkah in Custom and Tradition* (1950); *Thespis: Ritual, Myth, and Drama in the Ancient Near East* (1950); *Festivals of the Jewish Year: A Modern Interpretation and Guide* (1953); *The Holy and the Profane: Evolution of Jewish Folkways* (1955); *New Year: Its History, Customs, and Superstitions* (1955); and *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament* (1969).

After his retirement from Barnard, Gaster once again became a visiting professor at many universities, including the University of Florida and Yale University. The University of London awarded him a D.Litt. in 1971, and he received honorary degrees from Kenyon College and

the University of Vermont. He moved to Philadelphia in 1988 to accept a fellowship from the Annenberg Research Institute. Gaster died on February 2, 1992.

Simon J. Bronner

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GEORGIA, JEWS OF

Georgia is situated in the southwestern region of the Caucasus Mountains, bounded on the southeast by Azerbaijan, on the south by Armenia and Turkey, and on the west by the Black Sea. The population is heterogeneous, with approximately two-thirds Christian and the remaining one-third consisting of various minority ethnic groups. The local residents call their country "Sakartvelo," and its people "Kartveli*.*" The name "Georgia" was coined in the European languages during the Crusades and derives from the name the Persians used for the inhabitants, Gorji. The Russian word *"gruzin"* originates from this name.

Tradition ascribes the arrival of the first Jews in Georgia to the Assyrian exile of the Ten Tribes of Israel in 724

B.C.E. The Jewish communities, which speak the national language of the country, are scattered throughout Georgia in cities, towns, and villages; their dwellings vary, from village houses with earthen floors, which are polished with water and oil, to Western-Russian-style houses complete with lace and a samovar (a metal urn, often with a spigot near its base, traditionally used in Russia to heat water for tea). Jews, who live in separate neighborhoods with a synagogue at the center, are mainly engaged in trade. The Jewish museum established in 1933 in the capital, Tbilisi, was closed down by the ruling Soviet government in 1950, and its treasures were moved to the Georgian Academy of Sciences and various museums in Tbilisi.

Emigration from Georgia to Israel commenced in the nineteenth century and resumed in the early 1970s, with Georgian Jews leading the struggle to open the gates of the Soviet Union to emigration. About 30,000 Jews, constituting approximately half the country's Jewish population, immigrated to Israel during this period, followed by another wave of immigration in the 1990s. Today only about 10,000 Jews remain in Georgia.

Customs and Ceremonies

Georgian Jews are eastern in terms of their geographic location, the style of their prayer, and many other aspects of their lifestyle. However, as Eastern Jews they are unique because their country of origin is Christian rather than Muslim. Their history is based on a common destiny shared with other Georgian groups, and the relationship between them is presented as harmonious. The community is very close-knit and has a strong affinity for tradition without being extreme. The *ḥakham* (sage) is a central figure who fulfills several roles, such as mediator in situations of intracommunity conflict, teacher, cantor, *mohel* (ritual circumciser), *shoḥet* (ritual slaughterer), and officiator at wedding ceremonies. He participates in religious ceremonial feasts and draws Jews closer to faith and tradition through his sermons. He and others embellish their speech with folktales and proverbs. Approximately a hundred folktales and 232 proverbs from Georgia have been preserved in the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa.

The Jews wore traditional Georgian dress until the beginning of the twentieth century, when they began to combine it with European clothing. After their immigration to Israel, this blend of tradition and innovation was also manifested in the combination of traditional and Western medicine, forms of exchange and gifts, and many other customs. During the Jewish festivals that mark the cycle of the year, members of the family and the community gather and celebrate together with a festive meal and mutual exchanges of gifts. Because family constitutes the primary basis of the social fabric, its traditional customs

were preserved even when changes occurred in other spheres. Although life-cycle customs differ considerably among various regions of Georgia, the principal family ceremonies performed throughout the country are associated with birth, marriage, and bereavement.

Birth

During a woman's pregnancy and confinement, charms to protect the expectant mother are hung on the wall and placed in her bed. The baby's crib, which is decorated with typical Georgian ornaments, is also surrounded with charms. Baby boys are carried on a pillow, which is covered with silk scarves, in a procession from his home to the synagogue, where his *brith-milah* (ritual circumcision) will be performed. During the procession, the baby is handed to barren women or couples who have only girls, for good luck. At the end of the circumcision ceremony the *mohel* waves a piece of cotton wool dipped in the baby's blood and the crowd looks on and chants: "Israel, Israel."

Marriage

Of all the life-cycle ceremonies, weddings are the most important. Parents usually arrange the match. In exceptional cases, the young couple choose each other independently. Thereupon would follow a staged abduction of the young woman by the man that ended in marriage. The wedding itself reflects the family's socioeconomic status in the community; hence it is customary to invest vast financial resources in it. Wedding invitations are decorated with a photograph of the couple and typical Georgian motifs, such as grapes, bottles of wine, and drinking horns.

The wedding ceremony is traditionally held in the bride's home. The groom's mother takes wax and honey according to the height of the groom to prepare a candle that will be lit during the ceremony. The candle is extinguished with wine and then set aside to be lit at the circumcision of the couple's offspring if they have a boy. The groom's prayer shawl (tallit) serves as the canopy (*ḥuppah*), under which the bride and groom stand during the ceremony. The groom's candle and a round Sabbath loaf (*challah*), symbolizing fertility, are carried to the wedding banquet in the groom's home, led by a band at the head of the procession. Wine plays an important role in the lives of Georgian Jews, and thus the wedding includes ceremonial drinking and toasts to the groom, the bride, and their families. At the wedding, the bride's mother and groom perform a special Georgian folkdance, *kabaluli* (acceptance), which represents the changing status of the bride. The wedding guests perform a dance during which the men pass banknotes to the women, who pass them on to the band at the end of the dance. Another typical custom is publicly documenting the wedding gifts.

Bereavement

The bereavement customs of Georgian Jews are noteworthy for their originality. One is the custom of burying a woman with her marriage contract (*ketubbah*). A deceased man is laid out in his home in the center of the room, with lighted candles at his head and feet. When he is taken out of the house, it is customary to close the door and knock on it three times to guard against further death in the house. Dirges, songs or hymns of grief and lamentation, with musical accompaniment, are sung during the funeral procession. The gravestones of Georgian Jews are very large and ornate, and it is customary to adorn them with a photograph of the deceased. Women spread the clothes of the deceased on the gravestone. In many Georgian communities, it is customary to place the clothes and a photograph of the deceased on his or her bed for the entire yearlong mourning period.

Illness

Like their neighbors, Georgian Jews believe in supernatural powers. The spirits of diseases, called *"batonebi"* (lords), play an important role in the Georgian-Jewish folklore. They manifest themselves in body rashes, such as rubella. When a person falls ill, the spirits come to dwell in his or her home and must be appeased. The room is decorated in red cloths in their honor, sweetmeats and flowers are brought for them, and they are entertained with music and dancing.

Maya Melzer-Geva

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GERMANY, JEWS OF

In 2001, the new Jewish Museum in Berlin, designed by renowned architect Daniel Libeskind as a symbol of the fragmented, "return" of Jewish history and culture to Germany, opened its permanent exhibition with the title "2000 Years of German-Jewish History." Public reactions were ambivalent. It is impossible, even in the context of this encyclopedia, not to mention the fact that Germany under the National Socialist regime of Adolf Hitler was the country where the decision to completely annihilate Jews and Jewish life in Europe was devised and partly carried out between 1933 and 1945. All modern discussions of Jewish life in Germany or German-Jewish culture take place under this shadow. Studies of Jewish folklore are, at the same time, studies in the politics and culture of memory.

The Early Years

Although Germany was not an independent country in central Europe 2,000 years ago, there are early traces of Jewish life in German lands as part of the Roman Empire. The first reliable document refers to the community of Cologne in 321. It deals with the legal status, privileges of, and restrictions on this community. From then on, scattered information can be assembled to put together a picture of a growing Jewish community in Ashkenaz in present-day Germany and northern France. It was only under Charlemagne around 800 C.E. that professional restrictions against Jews became relevant. Freed from military service, Jews held occupations in trade and commerce, especially money lending. Around 1000, the most important communities were those of Speyer, Worms, and Mainz (assembled together under the Hebrew acronym "Shum"). Bishop Rüdiger of Speyer invited Jews to his town because, as a famous letter puts it, he wanted to "make a city out of it": In his privilege of 1084 he wrote: "I Rüdiger called Huozmannus, the bishop of Nemetis and surroundings, that contributed to the establishment of Speyer as a city, thought it is right to add to her welfare by accepting Jews." This privilege was confirmed by Emperor Heinrich IV in 1090. Worms developed into a center of Jewish learning, and in 1034 its first synagogue was built. The famous Torah scholar Rashi (Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac) of Troyes (France) studied in Worms around 1060.

Life in the Middle Ages

The period of the Crusades saw large-scale destruction of Jewish communities both in the Rhineland and in southern Germany. Persecutions and expulsions reached a decisive level around 1348–1349, when Jews were accused of spreading the "Black Plague." Their departure for Poland marks the beginning of the east European Ashkenazi communities and the development of the Yiddish language.

German-Jewish life in the Middle Ages was characterized by a large degree of spatial separation, frequent expulsions, and the establishment of new "creative centers." The Jewish existence in urban quarters such as *Judengassen* (Jewish streets) and *Judenhöfen* (Jewish yards) has been regarded by scholars in an ambivalent way: On the one hand, the separation meant exclusion, yet, on the other hand, it made the development of Jewish learning and communal life possible. Continuing expulsions from the cities led to the creation of Germany's rural Jewry (*Landjudentum*), a very specific culture with an impressive continuity, especially in southern Germany, on which no known research has been conducted. One interesting example of east European influences on Jewish life in Germany is the painted wooden synagogue in the small town of Schwäbisch Hall. This disregard might be due to the high visibility of urban Jewish communities, mainly in Frankfurt am Main and Berlin. Frankfurt has been infamous for the creation of its *Judengasse*, which came close to a ghetto in early modern times. Like other ghettoes in Italy and France, the gates were opened only by Napoleon's invading troops.

The Settlement in Berlin

The beginning of a new era can be seen in the invitation to thirty Jewish families who were expelled from Vienna to settle in Berlin. In 1671, the Grand Elector of Brandenburg invited these families to settle in Berlin but did not allow them to build a synagogue. The first synagogue in the city was built in 1714, the next one—
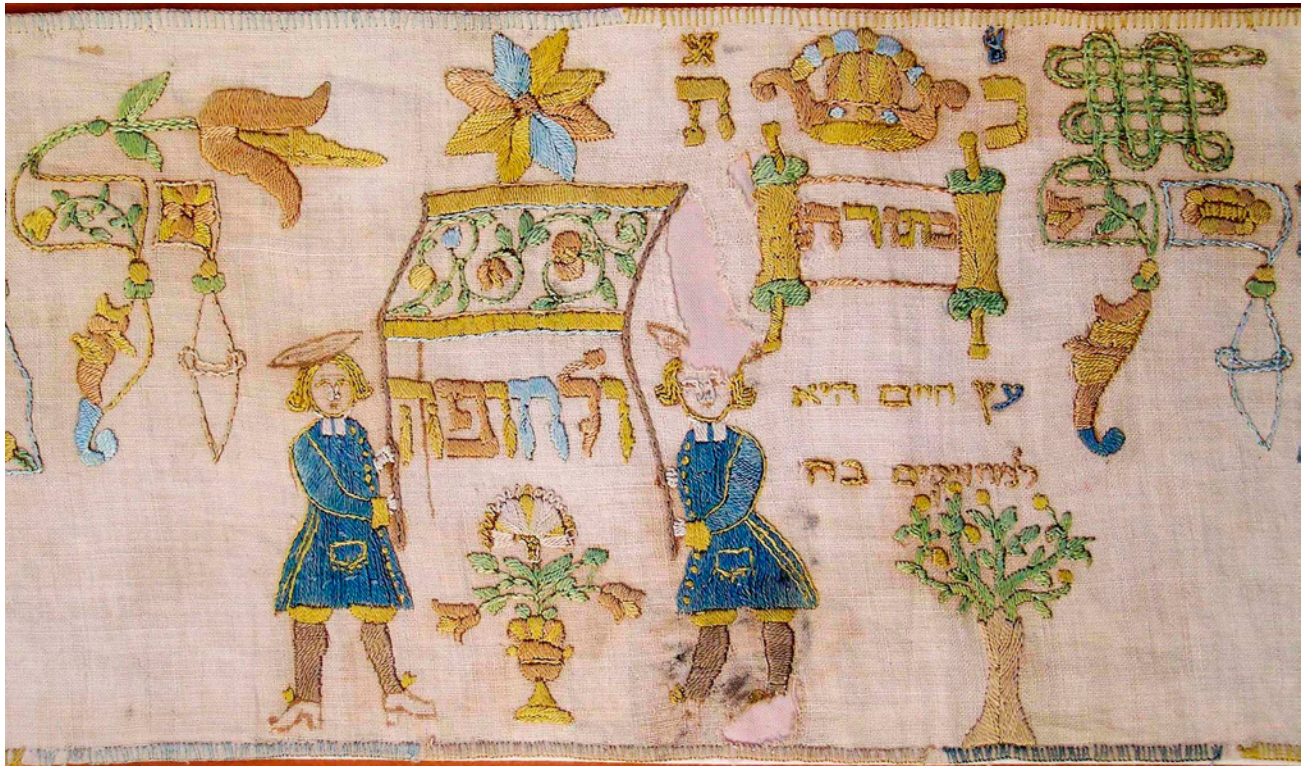
Torah binder, Germany, 1719. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

with the exception of a private synagogue—came in 1866. The 150 years between these two dates represent a rich period in German-Jewish history. The processes of integration and assimilation as well as continuous immigration from Eastern Europe made the community grow substantially in numbers and brought about some decisive intellectual and cultural developments that are important for Jews worldwide.

In 1743, Moses Mendelssohn came from Dessau to Berlin. His life can be described as a balance between religious observance and a growing openness toward German society and language. Mendelssohn's translation into German of the Hebrew Bible opened the way to the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment)—a movement among European Jews that advocated adopting Enlightenment values, pressing for better integration into European society, and increasing education in secular studies, Hebrew language, and Jewish history—first in Berlin and throughout Germany, and then (transported by the "Berliner," Jews from Berlin) throughout Eastern and Western Europe.

The High Institute for the Scholarship of Judaism

The consequences of enlightenment and reform, and widespread assimilation into German society, led in a way to the creation of modern Orthodoxy (established by Azriel Hildesheimer's Berlin Rabbinical Seminary in 1869). In 1818 Leopold Zunz published his text *Etwas über die rabbinische Literatur* (Something About the Rabbinical Literature), which heralded the beginning of modern Jewish studies. One year later, Eduard Gans, Leopold Zunz, Immanuel Wolf, and others founded the Verein für Cultur und Wissenschaft der Juden (Institute of Jewish Culture and Scholarship) in Berlin. Their notion—and construction—of the "Jewish people" was inspired by German intellectual traditions from Georg Hegel to Johann Gottfried von Herder. In 1862, the Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judentums (High Institute for the Scholarship of Judaism) was founded, also in Berlin. Studies of Jewish folklore formed part of the program, alongside traditional areas, and at least two leading figures of the Institute, Moritz Lazarus and Heymann Steinthal, became active in the newly developing area of German folklore as well.

On a more secular level, a critical attitude of the consequences of assimilation also led to a new awareness of "things lost." This can be described as the beginning of a Jewish Renaissance, the search for tradition as well as the beginning of collections and research projects in the field of Jewish folklore. Historical awareness stands at the beginning of this process, with Heinrich Graetz's "Volkstümliche Geschichte der Juden" (Oral History of the Jews) as the single most important work. The search

for so-called Jewish antiquities led in some cases to the integration of Jewish cultural artifacts in museum exhibitions, for example, at the Dresden "Hygiene-Ausstellung" in 1911. At the same time, this "invention of tradition" formed part of a new awakening of Jewish identity, both religious and secular.

The Study of Folklore

In 1898, Rabbi Dr. Max (Meir) Grünwald founded, in Hamburg, the Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde (Society for Jewish Folklore), the first institution to study Jewish folklore at an academic level. Leading German-Jewish historians and folklorists played an important role in the general study of German folklore. Grünwald established Jewish folklore studies as interdisciplinary *Kulturwissenschaft* (cultural studies), building on Herder's collection of folk songs and other German folk traditions, and published the journal *Mitteilungen der Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde* until 1929 (Grünwald emigrated to Jerusalem in 1938).

Scholars identify two distinct periods of Jewish Renaissance in Germany. The first was from the turn of the twentieth century to the beginning of World War I, with an emphasis on Hebrew language and the idea of creating "Jewish art" in paintings and illustrations as well as in literature and poetry, which was clearly influenced by the Zionist movement that supported the reestablishment of a homeland for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel. The second period was during the critical years of Germany's Weimar Republic (1918–1933). For both periods, the "turn" to Jewish history and culture is interpreted by scholars in the general framework of increasing identity crises: the oft-cited "German-Jewish symbiosis," which seemed to be so successful during the course of the nineteenth century, had been shattered by growing anti-Semitism and the need for Jews to develop a clearer self-image. Many Jewish fantasies were oriented toward Berlin; the keyword for the integration of Jewish as well as non-Jewish endeavors was—as mentioned both by Heinrich Graetz and German novelist Theodor Fontane—the "Berlin-Jewish Spirit," an urban state of mind with Berlin as the place where a minority, ready for modernity, encountered a city that was free of the heavy traditions of the past.

At the same time, growing criticism of life under urban conditions led to two distinct developments: On the one hand, a "return" to an imagined—and idyllic—German-Jewish past, especially in the countryside (e.g., in the village stories by Berthold Auerbach); and, on the other hand, represented in journals such as *Ost und West* (East and West) or *Der Jude* (The Jew), a search for "authentic" Jewishness that German Jews such as Martin Buber tried to find in Eastern Europe, in Hasidic stories, in a romantic image of life in the shtetl (village). This

second development was strengthened during World War I, when German-Jewish soldiers, such as Sammy Gronemann, Arnold Zweig, and Hermann Struck, encountered traditional Jewish communities in Vilna and Bialystok in Russia.

Their publications (Zweig/Struck, *Das ostjüdische Antlitz* [The East Jewish Physiognomy], 1920; Gronemann, *Hawdoloh und Zapfenstreich* [*Havdalah* and the End of Daily Activities], 1924) managed to soften the existing differences between an established German-Jewish community and East European immigrants during the years of the Weimar Republic. The Jewish community opened the Jewish Museum in Berlin on January 24, 1933, a week before Adolf Hitler's rise to power. Instead of presenting classical elements of folklore such as clothing, food, or housing, the museum should be considered a witness to the Jewish contribution both to literature and the arts and to democracy in Germany.

Under the Nazi Regime

In the "new ghetto" after 1933, German Jews managed for a couple of years to reassemble their threatened communities under the umbrella of the Reichsvereinigung der Juden in Deutschland (Confederation of Jews in Germany)—the title of the organization was invented by the Nazi government—with new institutions of learning and culture. But beginning in 1936 life was made increasingly impossible for Jews in Germany, making emigration the only solution. Today, German-Jewish cultural traditions can be found—shattered, in remnants and memoirs—in cities such as New York, Tel Aviv, or Buenos Aires. The "Yekkes" (nickname for German Jews) created new forms of cultural transfer that researchers have yet to study completely.

The Post-Holocaust Years

More Jews lived in Germany after 1945 than before 1933: displaced persons, most of whom wanted to leave the continent of the Holocaust as quickly as possible. Those who stayed, for a variety of reasons, built up (West) Germany's postwar Jewish communities, made up of members who were sitting, as it were, on "packed suitcases." Only after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the beginning of a large wave of immigration from the former Soviet Union have new forms of Jewish life developed in both East and West Germany. Another noteworthy phenomenon is the growing interest in "things Jewish" among non-Jews in Germany, with a rising number of memorials, museums, and cultural festivals: an attractive façade behind which Jews in Germany try to lead their lives as normally as possible. The Neue Synagoge (built in 1866, attacked in 1938, destroyed in 1943, left as a ruin until 1989) has been

rebuilt, and its golden cupola has become one of the sights of the new Berlin. But the inner room, once built for 3,000 visitors, has been left empty.

Joachim Schlör

See also: Charms, Books of; Circumcision; Demon; Grünwald, Max; Illuminated Manuscripts; Kabbalah; Languages, Jewish.

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GINSBURG (GINZBURG), SAUL

See: Anthologies; Poland, Jews of; Russia, Jews of

GINZBERG, LOUIS (1873–1953)

The Jewish scholar Louis (Levi) Ginzberg was a longstanding professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York City and among the foremost talmudic and rabbinical students of the late nineteenth century.

Born in Kovno (now Kaunas), Lithuania, on November 28, 1873, Ginzberg was a scion of a long line of rabbinical families that traced back to Simon Günzburg (1506–1586), who owned, at one time, the only extant complete manuscript of the Babylonian Talmud, the Munich manuscript, which dates to 1334. Among the most prominent rabbis of his ancestral lines are Rabbi Moses ben Israel Isserles, the Rama or Remu (c. 1525–1572), and Elijah ben Solomon Zalman, "the Gaon [scholar] of Vilna," known by his acronym Ha-GRA[E], "Ha-Gaon Rabbi Eliyahu" (1720–1797). A child prodigy, Ginzberg studied first with private tutors in Kalinin, near Moscow, and in Naishtot-Sugint (Zemaiciu-Naumiestis),

Louis Ginzberg. *(Ratner Center Archives at The Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary)*

Lithuania, his mother's hometown, to where his family moved, and later at the yeshivas of Telzh (Telsiai) and Slobodka, Lithuania. He intended to study at the famous Volozhin (Wolozyn) yeshiva, but on his way, during a prolonged stay in Vilna, his health deteriorated and, in order to recuperate, he joined his family, which, in the meantime, had moved to Amsterdam.

This move turned out to be critical for his education, which shifted from traditional Jewish institutes of learning to European universities. First, Ginzberg completed, in two years, his studies for a high school diploma in Frankfurt am Main in 1890 and then moved to Berlin, planning to study at the Rabbinical Seminary for Orthodox Judaism (founded by Rabbi Azriel Hildesheimer in 1873) and at the University of Berlin at the same time. However, disappointed with the level of Judaic studies at the seminary, he enrolled only at the University of Berlin, in 1892, first studying mathematics and then switching to Oriental studies.

As a student in Berlin, Ginzberg wrote for local newspapers: theater criticism and brief essays in art and literature, as well as his first and only book of poetry, *Gedichte* (Basle, 1894). In 1894, after two years in Berlin,

he traveled to Kovno at the urging of his father to report for a medical examination to join the army; he failed the exam and thus was excused from military service. Yet, while in Kovno, he received rabbinical ordination. Upon his return, he enrolled at the University of Strasbourg, where he studied for four years with the leading orientalist Theodor Noeldeke (1836–1930). He received his doctorate in Semitic languages from the University of Heidelberg in 1898.

A withdrawn offer for a faculty position from the Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati left Ginzberg stranded in New York in 1899. Instead of teaching, he joined the staff of the *Jewish Encyclopedia* and wrote 405 of its entries, many of which are classic statements on their respective subjects. When Professor Solomon Schechter became president of JTS in 1902, he appointed Ginzberg, at the age of twenty-nine, to become a professor of the Talmud, a position he held for the rest of his life.

Ginzberg's profound erudition and phenomenal memory established him as a major scholar in both Halakhah (Jewish law) and Aggadah (homiletic and non-legalistic elements in classical rabbinic writings), but his contribution to Jewish folklore in particular is apparent in his approach to, and synthesis and analysis of, the Aggadah. In 1901, Judge Mayer Sulzberger (1843–1923), one of the founders of the Jewish Publication Society (JPS) of America and for many years the chairman of its publication committee, asked Ginzberg to write a small popular edition of Jewish legends to be published by the JPS. This undertaking turned into the seven-volume *Legends of the Jews* (7 vols.,1909–1939), which has become the cornerstone of research in the Jewish folklore of the Second Temple and the talmudic-midrashic periods. Limiting his studies to traditions about biblical personalities and events as they are presented in the literatures of the late antiquities and the medieval periods and the literature of the Ḥasidim, Ginzberg sought to expose the currents of oral, subliterate, folk traditions that vibrated through Jewish societies. Fragmentary narratives, ambiguous exegeses, incidental phrases, and floating metaphors were the building blocks that he used to reconstruct the narratives and personalities of the Bible as they were known to subsequent generations. Delving into the Midrash, he was able to discover themes in Jewish traditions that only infrequently had reached the literary surface. The Apocrypha, the pseudoepigraphy and the writings of the church fathers, who formulated the doctrine of Christianity in its first centuries, allowed him to discover the oral traditions about the Bible and those that developed alongside the scriptural text.

The Legends of the Jews, together with his studies of Halakhah such as *Geonica* (1909) and his continuous work on the *Commentary on the Palestinian Talmud* (1941–1961), established Ginzberg as a leading scholar in Judaic studies. His annotations in *Legends* and several propositions

in his essays revealed that he considered Jewish folklore the backbone of Jewish tradition. At its 300th anniversary in 1936, Harvard University conferred upon him an honorary doctorate in theology. On this occasion he delivered a lecture, "Jewish Folklore: East and West" (1937; reprinted, 1955, 1960), which succinctly articulates the method and theory that guided his studies in Jewish folklore.

Ginzberg died on November 11, 1953.

Dan Ben-Amos

See also: Anthologies.

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GOLDBERG-MULKIEWICZ, OLGA (1933–)

Olga Goldberg-Mulkiewicz is a professor and folklorist whose contribution to the study of Jewish folklore is in the area of folk arts and traditional crafts (including papercuts) and the traditional culture of East European Jews. Her research projects include the traditional shtetl (town) in the contemporary memory of Jews and Poles and the forms and functions of traditional Jewish jewelry, with special reference to the jewelry of Yemenite and Iraqi Jews.

Goldberg-Mulkiewicz was born on February 21, 1933, in Gorlice, Poland. She studied at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków from 1952 to 1956. She earned her Ph.D. from the University of Lodz in 1967 before immigrating to Israel, in that year.

When Goldberg-Mulkiewicz started to teach at the Hebrew University, after her emigration from Poland in 1967, she was the only scholar in the Jewish Folklore Program who dealt not with verbal folklore but with folk art and material culture. She brought to the Hebrew University the archive of Giza Frenkel and extended it, documenting contemporary Jewish papercuts in Israel. As a result of this project she organized exhibitions of contemporary Jewish papercuts at the Museum of Diaspora in Tel Aviv and the Folk Art Museum in Lowicz, Poland.

One of her main contributions to the study of folklore and ethnology deals with folk arts and crafts and process of change.

Goldberg-Mulkiewicz books include *Ethnographic Topics Relating to Jews in Polish Studies* (1989) and *The Old Homeland in the New, The Traces of Polish Jewish Culture* (2003). Most of her articles in ethnological scientific periodicals were published in Israel and Poland.

During her career, Goldberg-Mulkiewicz taught and researched in the Department of Folk Art at the Polish Academy of Science from 1955 to 1961; the Department of Ethnology at the University of Łódź from 1961 to 1967; the Department of Jewish and Comparative Folklore at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem from 1969 to 2001; and the Department of Ceramics at Bezalel—the Academy of Arts, in Jerusalem, from 1973 to 1975. She was a visiting professor at the University of Warsaw, the University of Łódź, and Jagiellonian University in Kraków.

Goldberg-Mulkiewicz serves as adviser to several institutions: the Israel Museum, Jewish Ethnography Department (1980–1983); the Babylonian Jewry Heritage Center, where she is also a member of the Academic Committee (2005–present); and the Israel Ministry of Education.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Papercut.

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GOLEM

A golem (Heb., body without soul) is a homunculus or anthropoid; a manlike creature created by man using mystical or technological means. There is evidence of traditions from ancient cultures in Egypt, China, and Greece of statues that came alive when life was poured into them. Well known is the statue of a woman created by Prometheus of Greek mythology, called *veritas*

(truth), and the one created by his apprentice, called *mendacio* (lie); both became living creatures. In these ancient traditions the creation of anthropoids was connected to the worship of idols and to the need to prove that these targets for worship not only were material objects but also were able to have a life of their own. In the Jewish tradition of late antiquity, Enosh, a grandson of Adam, was asked to demonstrate how God created the first man. He mixed dust and water and out of it shaped the form of a man. Than he blew life into its nostrils, but Satan entered him, and soon people started to worship it as a god. This was the beginning of idolatry.

Only once does the word "golem" appear in the Hebrew Bible (Ps. 139:15), and it is connected there with the creation of the first man. The later interpretations of this text, especially in talmudic literature, present the golem as one stage in the twelve-hour process of the creation of man by God (*b. Sanhedrin* 38b; Midrash *Genesis Rabbah* 24:2). This affiliation of the golem with the creation of Adam is one of the most widespread characteristics of the Jewish traditions in medieval and later periods.

Another important element of the golem traditions is the role attributed to the first Hebrew mystical book, the *Sefer yetzirah* (The Book of Creation) in the process of the anthropoid's creation. This small and most influential Hebrew composition was created in late antiquity. It presents the letters of the Hebrew alphabet as the foundation of God's deeds: the creation of the world and of human beings. If, according to this composition, God created man by means of the letters of the alphabet, then the mystics could imitate his employment of the letters and create a man in the same way. Thus, *Sefer yetzirah* became the most important source of magical knowledge used in the attempts to create man in late antiquity and in the Middle Ages.

The most influential passage in the Babylonian Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 65b) tells of the learned Rava who created a golem as an intellectual exercise and then returned it to dust. Other rabbis used to create a calf every Sabbath eve while they were studying *Sefer yetzirah,* and then they ate it. These legends, which medieval Jews accepted as true, were the proof that proper knowledge of the practices described in *Sefer yetzirah* is the key to the mystery of creating man, and so the book was studied in depth and followed faithfully by magicians and mystics.

Almost all Jewish mystical and magical trends of the Middle Ages connected the creation of the golem to their systems and practices. From the folkloric point of view, of special interest are the narrative traditions developed by and around the German Pietists of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Their interest in all magical aspects of everyday life, and their deep beliefs in the possibility of changing reality by means of mystical practices, made them interested and involved in efforts to create humanoids. The cycles of legends told about the central figures

The statue of the Maharal (Rabbi Loew) by L. Saloun. Statuary on the corner of the new old town hall, Prague, 1908–1911. *(John Phillips//Time Life Pictures/Getty Images)*

of the movement—Rabbi Samuel the Pious and his son Rabbi Judah the Pious—revealed they were involved deeply in the creation of the golem. A typical legend is that about the sixteenth-century folk healer and mystic Rabbi Elijah of Chelm. He "made a creature out of matter and of form and it performed hard work for him for a long period of time, and the name of *emet* [truth] was hanging upon his neck, until the rabbi saw that the creature formed by his own hands grew stronger and stronger. . . . Rabbi Eliyahu, the master of the mystical name of God, was afraid that he would be harmful and destructive. He quickly overcame him and removed the name [*emet*] from his neck, and it turned to dust."

This narrative appears in many and varied forms in Hebrew manuscripts and early prints, which attests to its popularity in both oral and written traditions. It also raised, for the first time explicitly, the moral question of the legitimacy of repeating the most important of God's deeds—the creation of man—for personal benefit. As in the talmudic legends previously mentioned, when the golem was created as an intellectual exercise, as a manifestation of pride, or for personal benefit (to be eaten, or to serve the master), it becomes dangerous and has to be eliminated.

The most popular golem legends, which connect the creature to the sixteenth-century Rabbi Judah Loew of Prague (called the Maharal of Prague), attempted to resolve the moral prohibition of creating the golem. The legends appear only in late sources of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century, but they started as oral, local legends of the Jewish community of Prague much earlier. They were adapted quickly in the folklore of many Jewish communities, and then by general, non-Jewish folklore and popular culture. According to these legends, the great scholar and mystic Rabbi Loew created the golem following the ancient Jewish practices, in order to save the Jews of Prague from the blood libels (allegations that Jews engaged in human sacrifice) they were accused of at that time. The golem, that invincible creature, which no weapon or fire could harm, was used by the rabbi as the sole soldier and guard of the Jewish community. After the danger passed, the rabbi took him to the attic of the Altneuschul—the ancient synagogue of Prague—and there removed the sacred name from him (as Rabbi Elijah of Chelm had done before), and the golem became a pile of dust that exists in the closed attic of the synagogue to this day. The most important publication of this cycle of legends is the chapbook *Nifla'ot Maharal* (The Miracles of the Maharal, 1914) by Yehudah (Yudel) Rosenberg, the rabbi and storyteller. Rosenberg created out of these scattered traditions a composite, literary work that had immense influence on the dispersion of the golem myth in twentieth-century Western culture.

The message of these legends is that humankind may cross the limits of humanity and attempt to imitate God only when it is done for a moral cause. Any other motive, whether rooted in pride or greed, is punished. This cycle of legends was further elaborated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, and it reflects the attitudes and concerns of Jewish and non-Jewish culture of the time, such as the reactions to and attitudes toward the pogroms in Eastern Europe, and the attraction and fear of the new technological advances that were changing the world at the time.

Eli Yassif

See also: Czechoslovakia, Jews of; Yassif, Eli.

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GRAUBARD, PINHAS

See: Poland, Jews of

GREECE, JEWS OF

The Jewish community of Greece was one of the most ancient to exist outside the Land of Israel, dating back to the Roman and Greek periods. Testimony to the presence of Jewish communities in Salonika (Thessaloníki) and Veroia can be found in the New Testament (Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians). The Jewish Romaniote communities in the cities of Corfu, Ioannina, Salonika, Patras, Chalcis, and Thebes spoke Judeo-Greek and used the prayerbook *Maḥzor Romania*.

Exile and Resettlement

During the first half of the fifteenth century, Greece was conquered by the Ottomans. The majority of the Jews were expelled from the cities and by royal decree were settled in Istanbul. At the end of the fifteenth century, Jews expelled from the Iberian Peninsula (1492) reached Greece and most of them settled in the city of Salonika. Other places of settlement were Larissa, Veroia, Florina, and Kavala, in which Spanish hegemony was established, and Ioannina, Arta, Patras, Trikala, Chios, Crete, and Corfu, in which Romaniote hegemony continued to prevail.

The largest and most important community resided in Salonika. In addition to the ancient Romaniote synagogue Etz Ha'Ḥaim and the Ashkenazi synagogue in the city, the exiles of the Iberian Peninsula and of Sicily and the Kingdom of Naples set up synagogues according to their areas of origin such as Old and New Catalan, Evora, Portugal, Old and New Lisbon, and Old and New Sicily. At the height of its glory, Salonika had thirty-two synagogues among its various communities, in addition to family synagogues and religious schools (*batei midrash*). During the first years of their settlement in the city, conflicts arose between the Spanish exiles and the Romaniotes and among the exiles themselves over the prayer version, language, and religious customs, such as ritual slaughter (*sheḥita*) and marriage. Each community preserved the prayer versions and customs according the traditions of community origin. In the congregation of Aragon, for example, they prayed according to the *Aragon Maḥzor*, in congregations originating in Italy and Sicily they used the Jewish prayer book of the Italian Jews, and the Ashkenazim and Romaniotes prayed according to their customs. Over the years the influence of the Castilian immigrants increased and the language of prayer was Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish (Ladino). At the same time, a supracommunity organization was formed that was intended to preserve the peace among the different congregations and to maintain religious, social, and economic order of the general community.

The Spanish exiles and forced converts from Portugal who returned to Judaism during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries brought with them a wealth of human resources, assets, and new technologies. A cloth-weaving industry was established that provided uniforms for the Ottoman army, and international commercial activities were developed with Jewish and Christian communities around the Mediterranean, based on a network of family ties. In Salonika, as in other cities of the Empire, great spiritual figures, heads of Talmud academies (*yeshivot*), rabbis, and intellectual circles settled down. Sages who were active in the city include Joseph ben Solomon Taitatzaq (1465–1546), Yitzhak Aderbi (1520–1584), Joseph Karo (1488–1575), Ya'akov ben Habib (ca. 1450–1516), and his son Levi ben Habib (1480–1541), Shmuel de Medina (1506–1589), Moshe Almosnino (1518–1581), and others who founded printing presses and published the writings of local sages and of those in other communities.

Messianic Movments— Shabbatai Zvi

In the seventeenth century a deep crisis occurred in the Jewish world. In the wake of the appearance and Islamic conversion of the false messiah Shabbatai Zvi (1666), thousands of Jews in the Ottoman Empire, the Mediterranean, and Central and Eastern Europe converted to Islam. The large and important centers of the Sabbatean sect were in Izmir and Salonika. The loyal followers of the Sabbatean sect who continued in the early generations of its founding to speak and pray in Ladino and maintain family ties with relatives who had remained Jewish called themselves the "Believers" (*ma'aminim*), but the Jews called them by the derogatory term *ma'aminikos* and *minim* (apostate), while the Muslims called them the *Dönme* (Turk., the converted). The Sabbatean sect was a mystical sect linked with the Sufi and Dervish orders. They held special festivals that were celebrated according to the Muslim (or Islamic) calendar such as "Tu Be'Shvat," and the Ninth of Av, the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple, was celebrated as a day of joy and festivities because it was the birthday

Soustiel-Pilo family, 1921, Salonika (modern-day Thessaloníki), Greece. *(Courtesy of Gila Hadar)*

of Shabbatai Zvi. In 1923, after the Treaty of Lausanne, which recognized the boundaries of the modern state of Turkey, and the agreement for an exchange of population between Greece and Turkey, the members of the Dönme sect were forced to leave Salonika.

Twentieth-Century Transitions

At the end of the nineteenth century, political and social changes occurred in the Ottoman Empire, among them an opening to the West. The walls that had surrounded the ancient cities were destroyed, and railway lines were laid that brought the West to the East. The travel time for exports and imports was shortened, and modernization, industrialization, and education arrived in urban areas. The Alliance Israélite Universelle schools were founded, and commercial, cultural, and religious ties began to be extended between the Ottoman Jews and other Jewish communities. Francos, mostly Jews of Italian origin, were active in modernizing the city and the community. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Jews in Salonika constituted a demographic majority; most establishments in banking, trade, and industry were Jewish owned; workers in tobacco factories, cloth weaving, and in the port were Jews; and newspapers were published in Ladino and in French. The official day of rest in the "Jerusalem of the Balkans" was Friday, but in the city of Salonika, the port, businesses, trade, and industry all came to a halt on the Jewish day of rest, Saturday.

The Young Turks revolution of 1908, led by a coalition of college students and dissident soldiers, ended the sultanate of the Ottoman Empire and forced Sultan Abdul Hamid into exile in Salonika. His residence-in-exile was the luxurious villa built at the end of the nineteenth century by the banker and industrialist Moïse Alatini. The revolution unleashed freedom and equality that permitted the surfacing of heretofore dormant forces and dreams. Greek, Muslim, and Zionist national associations were established, and at the same time the Socialist Workers' Federation labor union, whose membership was largely Jewish, was founded.

In October 1912, as a result of the Balkan wars, Salonika came under the jurisdiction of the Greek government. The transition from a port city that had served as a crossing point for goods being sent from the east to the west and to central Europe into a marginalized local port paralyzed economic activity in the city. In August 1917 a large fire broke out in the city that burned approximately 60 percent of the Jewish commercial and residential areas, synagogues, libraries, and archives. In 1925 the city was emptied of Muslims, and their place was taken by hundreds of thousands of Greek refugees expelled from Asia Minor as part of The Treaty of Lausanne (1923) and the agreement for an exchange of population between Greece and Turkey. Many of the Jews, realizing that the era of "Jerusalem of the Balkans" had passed, migrated to France, Italy, the United States, South America, and Palestine. By the 1930s, from 72,000 to 80,000 Jews remained in Greece, of whom 50,000 were in Salonika.

During World War II, a few Jews from Salonika managed to escape expulsion and extermination by the Nazi regime. A higher percentage of Jews from smaller cities that were under Italian occupation, such as Larissa, Castoria, Ioannina, Trikala and Patras, managed to flee and join the Greek resistance. Many of the Jews of Athens were saved from expulsion and extermination with the help of the Greek underground, which gave them refuge and provided them with false identification documents. About 60,000 Greek Jews were sent to the extermination camps, 48,000 of them from Salonika. In 1943, with the expulsion and extermination of 87 percent of the Greek Jews, most of them from Salonika, the 450-year period of flourishing and prosperous Jewish settlement ended.

Greek-Jewish Folklore and Culture

Greek-Jewish folklore resembles the folklore of the Ladino-speaking Spanish exiles who had settled throughout the Ottoman Empire in Jerusalem, Istanbul, Izmir, Bitola (Monastir), Sarajevo, and Sofia. Some variations among them were due to significant events in the community; however, their similarity is due to not only shared speech and customs on the Iberian Peninsula but also their social and political unity as subjects of the Ottoman Empire. In the residential quarters (Turk., *mahale*) members of different communities lived side by side. Every quarter was named according to the synagogue, mosque, or church to which its residents belonged. Thus, to some extent, cultural proximity resulted from social proximity.

Jewish folklore and culture were influenced mainly by the Jewish life cycle, festivals, and days of commemoration. The variations among Spanish Jews followed their daily routines, the four seasons, the fires, the plagues, the catastrophes and the miracles.

Throughout the period of the Jewish settlement in Greece in general and in Salonika in particular, Jewish creative works were written in Hebrew and in Judeo-Spanish (Ladino). Alongside the Torah and halakhic culture, responsa, sermons, and customs, secular and religious poetry was written, ancient Hebrew and Iberian customs and traditions were preserved, and innovations were introduced in the verbal and musical traditions and customs adopted from the various peoples that had settled in the region.

Traditional Literature and Prayer Books

Literary works, mainly those relating to Halakhah, were written in Hebrew. One of the most popular and widely disseminated works among the Spanish Jews in the Ottoman Empire was *Ein Ya'akov,* a collection of the legendary (aggadic) material in the Talmud. The book was completed and published by Rabbi Levi ben Habib, one of the leading sages of Salonika in the generation of the expulsion, and the son of Rabbi Ya'akov ben Habib who was among those exiled from Spain and Portugal. In the eighteenth century Rabbi Ya'akov Culi (1689–1732) began writing a commentary on the Torah in Ladino called "Me'am lo'ez" because the "Hebrew language was forgotten by the Jews and they rarely study the Torah." The book is a comprehensive anthology of halakhic literature, homilies of the sages, the Zohar, *Ein Ya'akov,* religious practice (*halakhot*) and *dinim* (laws), constructed according to the order of the weekly Torah portions. He published the *Book of Genesis* and two-thirds of *Exodus*. The *Book of Genesis* was first printed in Constantinople in 1733 and in Salonika in 1798. The work was completed by other sages, such as Rabbi Yitzhak Magriso of Constantinople, Rabbi Yitzhak Yehuda Abba of Salonika, and Reina Cohen, a young woman from Salonika wrote the commentary on the book of Daniel that was published in 1901. The books of "Me'am lo'ez" gained wide popularity among all the communities of Sephardic Jewry that enjoyed reading the book during the course of the workday, before going to sleep, in the synagogue, and with the family on long winter evenings.

During the sixteenth century *Siddur de las mujeres,* a prayerbook that had been written especially for women, was published (this rare text can be found today on the Web site of the National Library in Jerusalem). Over time the women's prayerbook was combined with "reading the Shema on going to bed." This version contains intercalations of popular religion for women. In the prayers, in addition to the forefathers of the nation, mention is made of local saints, such as Rabbi "Sukkat David" (David Serrero, d. 1715) and "Adon [Heb., Master]) Menashe, whom God delivered from the frying pan" (according to legend). Menashe, King of Judah, who repented at the end of his life, was included in the category of saints in the prayers of women because the frying pan was an important utensil used by a woman in the service of her husband and family.

Synagogues

Various traditions can be found in the names and customs of synagogues. The synagogues were named after the provinces and cities of origin of the exiles who arrived in Salonika, for example, those of Catalan, Aragon, Castile, Evora, and Lisbon. But in addition to these names, the synagogues were also known by special nicknames, such as the names of plants, animals, and objects. The use of these special nicknames was forbidden during the year and could be mentioned publicly only on Simchat Torah, a celebration marking the conclusion of the annual cycle of public Torah readings, and the beginning of a new cycle. Apparently, the secrecy and the laws of

permission and prohibition of each congregation were meant to strengthen group solidarity and affiliation to the community. For example, the nickname of the Evora synagogue was "rice." The synagogue congregants refrained from pronouncing the word "rice" throughout the year and instead called it *granos di oro* (Ladino, grains of gold). On Simchat Torah they cooked rice, and each person in the congregation would taste it and say the word "rice" aloud.

Songs and Musical Traditions

In Greece three musical traditions existed as prayers and as popular songs. The tradition of the Greek-speaking Jews (Gregos or Romaniotes) continued to exist mainly in the communities of Ioannina, Arta, Patras, Chalcis, and Crete. The Spanish-Portuguese musical tradition was maintained by those exiled from the Iberian Peninsula, mainly in Salonika, Veroia, Castoria, and Larissa. The influence of the Italian tradition is recognizable mainly in the prayer style of the communities of Corfu and Rhodes and was the practice in communities of Italian and Sicilian origins in Salonika. Liturgical and popular songs in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were heavily influenced by Ottoman music and Italian opera.

Romanceros

The *romancero* (romance) is an epic-lyrical ballad on a variety of subjects, some of them imaginary and some derived from ancient sources such as the Bible, the classical world, and European ballads. They form a part of long, rhymed chronicles recounting brave deeds, love, hate, and death. The original *romanceros* sung in medieval times in Spain were not preserved in full, neither on the Iberian Peninsula nor among the descendants of the exiles in the countries to which they had come because this was orally transmitted poetry. Mothers would sing *romanceros* to their children as lullabies, and lovers would sing love sections from *romanceros* to express their heartfelt emotions. The *romancero* was also a special way to transmit tradition and values such as honor, loyalty, and codes of behavior. *Romanceros* also served as dirges on the Ninth of Av and as laments for mourners.

Coplas

A *copla* is a narrative poem telling a story in rhymed stanzas. Unlike *romanceros*, *coplas* were about Jewish subjects and were sung at festivals. Examples include the "Complas de Purim," which tells the story of the *Megillah,* was part of the celebration of Purim; a "Complas de las Frutas" (Song of fruits) sung at a festive meal on Tu Be'Shvat; the *coplas* of Shavuot about the giving of the Torah and the love of the Torah by the people of Israel; and the *coplas* about the birth of Moses and Joseph. There were also secular *coplas* such as "Tehilot He'ḥatzil" (Hebrew, glory of the eggplant), which refers to social life, gender, immigration, and love through thirty-five eggplant dishes.

The *Cansoniero*

At the end of the nineteenth century, *cantigas* or *canticas,* popular secular poetry songs that dealt with daily life, love, disappointment, distress and joy, developed in Ladino. The most popular and best-known poets whose poems were put to music were Yacob Yoná and Moshe Kazes. The melodies were of local Turkish and Greek songs, Italian operas, passadoble (a typical dance from Spain), tango, foxtrot, and popular songs from films.

Cemeteries and the "Ziara"

One of the sites where ancient traditions and legendary heroes existed and were revived was the Salonika Jewish cemetery, destroyed by the Germans in 1943. In the cemetery, especially at the graves of the great rabbis, the Jews found comfort. In spite of the fear of impurity and demons (*los de abasho*, or those underneath), legends of help and salvation were woven by the people about the rabbis buried there, such as Rabbi David Serrero, to whom miraculous cures were attributed, including making barren women fertile. On Rosh Ḥodesh Elul and on Rosh Ḥodesh Nissan, Jews would go to the cemetery for the "Great Ziara" (pilgrimage to the tombs of holy men).

The cemetery was a holy place and source of comfort for women who would visit the graves of the righteous with the members of their family on every Rosh Ḥodesh, where they would share both their woes and their happy occasions.

Folk Medicine

In addition to well-known doctors such as Amatos Luzitanos (sixteenth century), other famous physicians in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as Dr. Moise Mizrahi, Dr. Enrico Periera, and Dr. Jacques Nissim Pasha, who were active in Salonika, used folk medicine; amulets and the casting out of devils were widespread. According to the responsa literature, written during the Ottoman Empire, there was great demand for medicines and magical methods to cure ailments, and Christians and Muslims used to apply to Jewish rabbis for blessings and amulets. Similarly, in times of trouble and distress Jews appealed to Muslims and Christians alike for help.

Until the beginning of the twentieth century there was an ancient practice of healing known as the Indolco, which was widespread in Salonika and throughout the Sephardic Diaspora in the Ottoman Empire. Nearly every illness was attributed to the evil eye or to fear. Some women were skilled in the healing arts and were known for their ability to expel the dybbuk (demon) that usually possessed women. In the nineteenth century the rabbis of the Ottoman Empire signed an agreement that forbade women to engage in

the Indolco, but this practice continued and many made use the services and folk medicine that were provided cheaply by elderly women with healing powers.

Naming Conventions

The perception of time was concrete, linked to a place and important events that occurred in that period. People did not know how to indicate their exact age. Age was indicated according to periods of the year, proximity to festivals, or special occasions that had left their mark on the individual and the community. Sons who were born in the month of Nissan were called Nissim; those born in the months of Av and Elul, which are the "months of mercy," were called Raḥamim. Names such as Yom Tov (Heb., good day) were given to boys born during festivals. Boys born on the Sabbath were called Shabbatai, and girls were given the name Shabtula. In order to keep the Angel of Death away from people who were fatally ill, they were given "curative" names such as Hayim Vida, (which means "life" in Ladino and Spanish) and Raphael (Heb., God will cure), or they were sold to family relatives and were called Merkado or Merkada ("bought").

The circumcision ceremony (*brith-milah*) and the bestowing of a name to a son took place publicly. The names given to sons included biblical names of Jewish forefathers, such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, and Solomon. However, the ceremony for naming a girl, the "Fadamyento" (Ladino from Portuguese), also called "Siete Candelas" (seven candles), was a private family event. What mainly characterized the birth of a daughter in the Sephardic Diaspora was silence. This silence is crystallized in Ladino proverbs such as "*Estash cayados, como ke vos nasiera ija*" (You are as silent as if you had given birth to a baby girl).

Girls' names indicate that the chosen name was intended to influence the character, nature, and favorable destiny of the child. All the names of Spanish origin, such as Alegre (joy; Heb., Simcha), Vida Buena (good life), Vellida (valuable), Jamila (Arabic, beauty), Bella (beauty), and Gracia (grace), expressed the desire and promise for a good and happy life.

Food and Nutrition

Foods were chosen according to the four seasons, and every festival had its own special delicacies. On the Sabbath and festivals, special foods were prepared, including cheese-filled pastries (*bourekas*), goose eggs, and ḥamin. On Rosh Ha'Shana (the New Year) baked pastries (*rondechas*) filled with pumpkin and cheese were offered. On Tu Be'Shvat, ḥamin "*beshalah*" was served according to the name of the weekly Torah portion. On Passover (Pesaḥ), fried spinach cutlets, leeks, and potatoes were prepared, and for breakfast a mixture of *matzah*, honey, and eggs fried in oil was served. Without these special foods it was considered that the festival was not observed properly.

Women sent food that they had prepared to brides and bridegrooms during the seven days after a wedding and to relatives and neighbors after a death in the family. Wealthy women donated food to public kitchens. Women breastfed or gave their milk to orphans whose mother had died in childbirth or who did not have enough milk to feed their babies. They shared bread with the poor, birds, dogs, and street cats, creating a network of charity.

Over the course of the twentieth century, the history of the Jewish community in Salonika has mostly been lost to large fires, migration, and the assimilation of the younger generation. Today approximately 5,000 Jews live in Greece, and memories of the Spanish and Romaniote Jews of the past survive primarily in literature and museums of Salonika and Athens.

Gila Hadar

See also: Languages, Jewish; Spain, Jews of; Turkey, Jews of.

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GRÜNWALD, MAX (1871–1953)

Max (Meir) Grünwald was a German-Jewish rabbi and folklorist whom scholars consider the founder of Jewish folkloristics.

Grünwald was born in Hindenburg, Upper Silesia, on October 10, 1871, and was educated at the gymnasium of Gleiwitz and entered the Theological Seminar in Breslau in 1889. As rabbi, he served as the spiritual leader of two distinguished Jewish congregations, first in Hamburg (1895–1903), where he began to officiate at the age of twenty-four, and then, for the next thirty years, until his retirement, in Vienna (1903–1933).

As a proponent of Zion, Grünwald envisaged the Land of Israel as the center for a future cultural and religious renaissance of the Jewish people. To this end, he worked, especially during World War I, for the well-being of the Jewish settlers in the Holy Land, which he had visited for the first time in 1912. He was also active in the advancement of Jewish national religious education.

Grünwald's main place in Jewish history is, however, as a scholar. In 1896, while serving as a rabbi in Hamburg, he issued a public appeal stressing the importance of collecting Jewish folklore ("Sammlungen jüdischen Volkskunde"). This appeal was accompanied by a detailed folklore questionnaire (Fragebogen).

The manifesto—which reached all concerned through the Jewish press, including newspapers in Eastern Europe, where it was published in Hebrew translation—led to the establishment in 1897–1898, in Hamburg, of three pioneering enterprises: the first Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde (Society for Jewish Folklore), which aimed at promoting understanding of the inner life of Jews; the first exclusively Jewish Ethnographic Museum; and the

Dr. Max (Meir) Grüwald. *(Edot journal, 1947)*

first Jewish folklore journal, *Mitteilungen zur Jüdischen Volkskunde.* These three scholarly vehicles were each signal events, marking the beginning of the study of contemporary Jewish cultural history and folkways within the realm of organized Jewish scholarship

Of the three institutions that were both established and maintained by Grünwald's efforts, the third proved to be the most important. Not only was *Mitteilungen zur Jüdischen Volkskunde* published for thirty consecutive years, but also it included within its pages an abundance of unrecorded samples of Jewish oral traditions and material culture originating in various communities and ethnic groups. Many of the published traditions stemmed from Spanish Jews and were rendered in Judeo-Spanish.

As editor of the journal, Grünwald encouraged his collectors, readers, and writers to pursue direct contact with the living traditions and their bearers; his interest in contemporary attitudes, usage, and artifacts was genuine and innovative.

Grünwald's constant administrative and technical concern for the continuity of the society, of the museum, and especially of *Mitteilungen zur Jüdischen Volkskunde,* did not detract from his scholarly work. The bibliography of his publications consists of more than 800 works (in seven

languages), including more than twenty books. Most of his works show an awareness of Jewish contemporary life: More than 100 of them have as their theme the folkways of the Jewish people and constitute a most important contribution to all fields and genres of Jewish cultural heritage and folk tradition.

Grünwald spent the last fifteen years of his life, from 1938 to 1953, in Jerusalem, where he witnessed the establishment of the State of Israel and its first challenging years. He died on January 24, 1953.

Dov Noy and Yoel Perez

See also: Germany, Jews of.

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HAGGADAH OF PASSOVER

The Haggadah (lit., "recitation") first and foremost recounts the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt. It consists also of halakhic and midrashic texts, psalms, *piyyutim* (sing., *piyyut;* liturgical hymn), benedictions, and prayers. This ensemble is combined with a festive meal called a Seder (Heb., order), which takes place on the eve of the fifteenth of the month of Nissan as instructed in the Bible (Exod. 12:18). Together they are meant to remind and to commemorate the Exodus.

At the time of the second Temple, the Seder consisted of eating roasted meat (as a reminder of the roasted lamb eaten before leaving Egypt), with *matzah* (unleavened bread, pl., *matzot*, commemorating the unleavened bread that was eaten with the lamb), *maror* (bitter herbs, eaten alongside of the roasted lamb, which symbolize the bitterness of slavery in Egypt), and *ḥaroset* (a mixture of chopped fruit, usually apples, spices, and wine, symbolizing the mortar used by the Hebrews to build Pithom and Raamses); drinking wine; and reciting the *Hallel* (Ps. 113–118), which is still included in the Haggadah. The text of the Haggadah as we know it today did not yet exist. Its composition began in the first century C.E.

The Haggadah of the *Tannaim*

The foundations of the Haggadah were laid in the Mishnah. The first, most ancient text of the Haggadah, still read today, appears in the Mishnah, *Pesaḥim* (chapter 10). It was elaborated upon in the Babylonian Talmud (*Pesaḥim,* 114 ff). According to Shmuel and Ze'ev Safrai's *Haggadah of the Sages*: *The Passover Haggadah* (1998), the appearance of the *tannaim* (sages of the mishnaic period [ca. 70–200 C.E.]) of Yavneh, such as Rabban Gamliel and Rabbi Akiva, in this last chapter of *Pesaḥim* means that it was added after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E., when Yavneh became the spiritual center of Eretz Israel (the Land of Israel). The rituals of the Seder, specified in chapter 10, reveal the powerful influence of Greek and Roman practices at festive meals of the period, but are adapted to uniquely Jewish symbols particular to the Passover holiday. For example, the Greek and Roman custom was to eat a festive meal while reclining on the left arm and eating with the right hand from a small table placed in front of each person. The Mishnah follows this custom and requires that Seder participants recline during the ceremony. The Yerushalmi Talmud (*Pesaḥim* 10:37b) ties this secular custom to the Seder and explains its significance: "Since it is customary for slaves to eat while standing up, here we recline as we eat to announce that we emerged from slavery into freedom."

At Greek and Roman feasts it was also customary to pour a cup of wine at the beginning of a meal. In the Jewish tradition, this cup was reserved for the *Kiddush* (Heb., sanctification; a blessing recited over wine). The Mishnah elaborates on this tradition, instructing that three more cups will be poured. These irregularities justify the Four Questions recited at the beginning of the Seder. Certain exegeses of the *tannaim* do not appear in the Mishnah and were added later. They were not written especially for the Haggadah, but were taken from previously existing biblical exegeses.

In spite of Greek and Roman influence on the Seder, the *Kiddush*, the reading of the Haggadah, and the recitation of the *Hallel*, together with the symbolic foods, endow this ceremony with a uniquely Jewish character.

The Haggadah of the Amoraim and the Geonim

At the time of the Amoraim (sages of the period between 200 and 500), several texts, such as the story of the five rabbis in Bnei Brak, were added to the Haggadah.

By the ninth century, the core of the Haggadah had already been crystallized. Several versions of a written Haggadah were completed in Babylonia by the Geonim (sing., Gaon*;* heads of the yeshivas, or rabbinical schools) in the Babylonian cities of Sura and Pumbedita), including Seder Rav Amram Gaon and Siddur Rav Sa'adiah Gaon (both are prayer books). The Geonim added some new texts, among them the version of the Four Questions as read today, as well as several midrashim*.* The text of the Geonim *Haggadot* (pl. of Haggadah) is the text used today. Fragments of *Haggadot* from Eretz Israel reveal that, while their text differs from the Babylonian text, it matches that of the Mishnah. The text of the Haggadah was completed in the eleventh century.

The Haggadah of the Middle Ages

After the eleventh century, various Jewish communities adopted the Haggadah of the Geonim*.* During the Middle Ages, slight changes were made in the text, and new *piyyutim* were added. Two *piyyutim* by Rav Sa'adiah Gaon were added to the Yemenite Haggadah. Another *piyyut,* "*Va'yehi ba'ḥatzi ha'laylah*"(And it happened in the middle of the night) was taken from a *krovah* (a *piyyut* recited during morning prayers on festivals by the cantor in the synagogue) by Yanai that originally was not related to Passover. It was first added to the Ashkenazi Haggadah and later to the Italian and the Balkan *Haggadot.* Another *piyyut* that has no direct link to Passover

is "*Ki lo na'eh*" (To Him it is becoming). It was added to the Italian and Ashkenazi *Haggadot* and might have been recited by the Jews of England before their expulsion in 1290. "*Adir hu*" (Strong is He) was sung by the Jews of Avignon during feasts and found its way into the Ashkenazi Haggadah.

"*Eḥad mi yodeah*" (Who knows one), based on a German peasant's song and the Aramaic "*Ḥad gadya*" (One only kid) also originating in a popular non-Jewish song, was added to the Ashkenazi Haggadah, probably to amuse children so that they would not fall asleep. These songs were not added to the *Haggadot* of Spain and the south of France, where "*Pesaḥ Mitzraim*" (Passover in Egypt) and "*Mi'beit aven*" (From the house of evil) were incorporated instead.

Illuminated *Haggadot*

During the Middle Ages, it was customary for at least each male Seder participant to have a copy of the Haggadah, which made it one of the most common books in circulation. *Haggadot* were added to prayer books or written as independent volumes. Due to their popularity, a unique iconographic tradition, consisting of textual, ritual, and biblical illustrations, was created. In addition, the Sephardic, Ashkenazi, and Italian communities added a local iconographic tradition. The Yemenite Jews refrained from illustrating their manuscripts, while from the Balkans only two illustrated *Haggadot* survived, both decorated with traditional themes.

Sephardic *Haggadot*

All the Sephardic *Haggadot* in existence today are independent volumes, mostly dated to the fourteenth century. They are characterized by a cycle of biblical illustrations that precede the text. In some *Haggadot* this cycle depicts the story of the Exodus. Such are the Hispano-Moresque Haggadah from 1280–1290, the earliest Sephardic Haggadah known today, or the Rylands Haggadah. Other *Haggadot* start with illustrations from the book of Genesis. The Sarajevo Haggadah opens with the first day of Creation, while the Golden Haggadah starts with Adam naming the animals. Some cycles also illustrate the preparation for the Seder, thus imparting important historical and ethnographic information. The Sephardic Haggadah opens with the words "*Atan mi'pirka*" (in Aramaic: One comes from the synagogue). The text continues: washes a cup, pours wine into it, and says the benediction over it (i.e., the *Kiddush*). Several of these *Haggadot* thus feature an illustration of the synagogue. In one, an elevated pulpit (*bimah*) made of ornamental wood stands in the center of the synagogue, its four corners decorated with golden finials. The *ḥazan* (cantor) stands on the *bimah* reading from the Haggadah. In the Sarajevo Haggadah, behind

Sacrifice of Isaac. From Bird's Head Haggadah, 180/57 fol 15v. Germany, ca. 1300. *(© The Israel Museum, Jerusalem by Ardon Bar-Hama)*

a similar *bimah,* the Holy Ark, its doors open, is seen in the wall. It contains three Torah scrolls wrapped in richly decorated mantles and topped with golden crowns. These scenes undoubtedly depict accurately the Sephardic synagogue of the period.

In the Hispano-Moresque Haggadah a set of full-page illustrations depicts in detail the Seder preparations: making metal utensils kosher for Passover by placing them in boiling water, and the glass utensils in the water of the ritual bath (*mikveh*); preparation of the *matzot,* from kneading the dough to placing them in the oven; the preparation of the *ḥaroset* with a mortar and a pestle; distribution of *matzot* and *ḥaroset;* cooking the Seder's festive meal; roasting the paschal lamb and setting the table. A portion of these illustrations appears in other manuscripts such as the Golden Haggadah, in which an additional illustration depicts mother and daughter cleaning the house with the aid of a broom and a long-handled brush, while the father and son conduct the search for leaven (*ḥametz*). The father, holding lighted candle, is using a wooden spoon to clear the leaven out of a niche and into

a bowl held by his son. The Barcelona Haggadah reveals several unique Seder rituals. Among them, the Seder basket (not a plate), covered with a cloth, is placed on the head of a child sitting at the table while the father lifts the cloth. The *matzah* depicted in Sephardic *Haggadot* is very big and decorative. The *maror* is represented by an artichoke. The text illustrations are adjacent to the decorated initial word panels. The margins are ornamented with stylized scrolls into which are sometimes integrated small animals and hybrids.

Ashkenazi *Haggadot*

The earliest illuminated Ashkenazi Haggadah known is included in a miscellany written and illuminated in northern France in ca. 1285. Only seven illustrations, quite schematic, adorn the Haggadah. They include the Seder table, the pouring of the second cup of wine, the Hebrews in bondage in Egypt, and roasting of the paschal lamb. The most common illustrations of the *matzah* and the *maror* are missing. It is quite probable that when this Haggadah was decorated, an iconographic program already existed, but no visual proof survives. All other existing Ashkenazi *Haggadot* originate in Germany. Another Haggadah, in a fifteenth-century miscellany, provides the first eschatological depiction featured in a Haggadah—the entry of the messiah into Jerusalem and the subsequent resurrection of the dead. The earliest independent volume of a German Haggadah is the Bird's Head Haggadah, dated to ca. 1300. It is rich in illustrations, most of which can also be found in Sephardic *Haggadot.* Yet while in the latter the story of Exodus is told in a separate cycle, here it is integrated into the text pages, depicted mostly in the margins, as was customary in Ashkenazi *Haggadot.* In spite of the traditional iconography, the four sons are missing. Two eschatological illustrations depict the Righteous entering Paradise and the Heavenly Jerusalem.

YaKNeHaZ, the mnemonic acronym for remembering the order of the benedictions in the *Kiddush* when the Seder falls on a Saturday night, suggested to German Jews the phrase "*jag den Has*" (hunt the hare). Therefore, in German *Haggadot*, a scene of a hare hunt sometimes accompanies this mnemonic device. Unlike the stylized *matzah* and *maror* in Sephardic *Haggadot,* in Ashkenazi *Haggadot* a small round *matzah* and a bunch of *maror* leaves, held by seated men, are depicted.

The First New York Haggadah, an Ashkenazi Haggadah written and decorated by Joel ben Simeon, in the fifteenth century, contains unique text illustrations for the *piyyutim* at the end of Haggadah as well as a depiction of the messiah entering Jerusalem. This depiction always accompanies the text of "*Shfokh ḥamatkha*" (Pour out thy wrath), which contained about twenty verses, all of them maledictions against Gentiles. According to Israel

Yuval's *"Two Nations in Your Womb": Perceptions of Jews and Christians* (2000), these maledictions were part of what he calls "avenging redemption." According to Yuval, the annihilation of gentiles was a major component in the eschatological vision of Ashkenazi Jews. Thus the visual expression of the eschatological hopes in the Haggadah, presented by the scene of the arrival of the messiah, accompanies the maledictions of "*Shfokh*."

Two similar illustrations in the Cincinnati Haggadah and the Ashkenazi Haggadah, depicting a man searching for leaven in a cupboard with the help of a bunch of feathers, demonstrate the difference of this ritual in the Sephardic and the Ashkenazi communities.

Three other *Haggadot* are related by their iconographic program. Their illustrations, unusually large in number, consist of textual, ritual, and biblical illustrations, many of which are based on the Midrash. They are accompanied by captions of forced rhymes such as *"Tomnin ha'ḥametz ve'habar pen yigarer bo ha'akhbar"* (one hides the leaven and the grains, lest it will be dragged by the mouse).

Italian *Haggadot*

Italian Jews did not have a tradition of illuminated *Haggadot.* The vast Italian *maḥzorim* (sing., *maḥzor;* a prayerbook for festivals and special Sabbaths. The Italian *maḥzor* contains the prayers for the whole year) included the Haggadah text with no illustrations, except for the *matzah* and the *maror.* Their frequent appearance created a local iconographic tradition of a hand holding a round *matzah* and another clutching a bunch of leaves of *maror.* The earliest depiction of the two is found in richly decorated Haggadah in a prayer book dated to the thirteenth century. Here, a third hand is depicted, holding an egg, one of the symbols on the Seder plate (symbolizing the *korban ḥagigah* (festival sacrifice) that was offered in the Temple).

From the beginning of the fifteenth century, many independent *Haggadot* were made in Italy, copied by Ashkenazi scribes for Ashkenazi patrons. The situation in Germany—persecutions and expulsions—obliged many Jews to emigrate, and they settled in northern Italy, either in Lombardy or Veneto, where they retained their old customs and traditions. Therefore, the *Haggadot* created for these Jews were richly decorated with marginal illustrations. Joel ben Simeon contributed more than anyone else to this tradition. It is quite probable that it is he who created the depiction displayed across an opening of the Egyptian army chasing the Israelites as they flee Egypt. Joel ben Simeon added a humorous touch to his *Haggadot,* such as his depiction of a man holding a bunch of leaves of *maror* and pointing at a woman resting on a long sword, as if to say "how bitter it is to have a wife whose tongue is as sharp as a sword." Unlike Sephardic and Ashkenazi *Haggadot,* Italian Haggadah did not include "*Shfokh ḥamatkha.*" In 1454 Joel ben Simeon, a scribe as well as an

illuminator, produced a Haggadah that was meant for a potential Italian buyer, for its text follows the Italian rite, and it is richly decorated but has no illustrations. In this Haggadah Joel added a note in small letters, stating that in some communities it is customary to recite "*Shfokh,*" thus introducing a new text to the Italian Haggadah.

The Schocken Haggadah (ca. 1400) is yet another Haggadah of Ashkenazi rite, written by an Ashkenazi scribe. It was decorated by a non-Jewish illuminator who worked in Milan, in the atelier of the illuminator Giovannino de Grassi, who worked for the duke of Milan. The illustrations of the Haggadah reveal, on the one hand, the direct influence of the iconography of the Hispano-Moresque Haggadah and, on the other hand, the stylistic influence of the *Tacuinum Sanitatis,* a medical-botanical encyclopedia, a copy of which was produced in de Grassi's atelier. A depiction of the labors of the month at the end of the Haggadah includes the tasks of feeding and slaughtering pigs. Their presence suggests that Ashkenazi Jews in Italy had assimilated to the local, less-restricted, Jewish environment.

Printed *Haggadot*

The first Jewish printing press was established at the end of the fifteenth century. The earliest printed Haggadah known today was published in 1482, in Guadalajara, Spain, by Solomon ben Moses Alkabetz. In Prague, in 1526, the printer and publisher Gershon Cohen, son of Solomon Katz, and his brother Gronem Katz, produced a printed illuminated Haggadah, the earliest complete Haggadah in existence today. Ḥayyim Shaḥor, who added his initials and was assisted by another artist, made the woodcuts presenting the various traditional illustrations.

In 1560, the printing house of Giacomo Rufinelli collaborated with the Jewish printer Isaac ben Samuel Bassan to produce the Mantua Haggadah. Its typography as well as the subjects of the illustrations were influenced by the Prague Haggadah.

The Venice Haggadah was printed in 1609 by Giovanni di Gara for the Venetian Jewish publisher Israel Zifroni of Guastalla. The three languages that appear in the Haggadah—Judeo-Italian, Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), and Yiddish—show that the intended users were not only Italian Jews but also Jews who emigrated from Spain and Germany. The illustrations in this Haggadah are based on illustrations in *Haggadot* of Ashkenazi rite from northern Italy, such as the *Haggadot* of Joel ben Simeon, or the Florsheim Haggadah from 1502.

In 1629, Moses ben Gershon Parenzo prepared for the Venetian printer Bragadini a new edition of the Venice Haggadah that included the commentaries of Abravanel as abridged by Rabbi Judah Leon de Modena. This edition required a new page layout, used in all subsequent editions of this Haggadah. The Amsterdam Haggadah was published in 1695 by Moses Wiesel with the commentaries of Abravanel from the Bragadini edition. Its copper engravings were made by the proselyte Avram bar Jacob, who copied them from *Icones biblicae,* the series of biblical illustrations of Matthaeus Merian from Basel. At the end of the Haggadah he added a map of the wanderings of the tribes, the first Hebrew map in a Haggadah.

The illustrations of the Amsterdam Haggadah served as a prototype for a group of illustrated *Haggadot* in manuscript produced in eighteenth-century Germany, Moravia and Austria.

Twentieth-Century *Haggadot*

In the twentieth century, *Haggadot* from Eretz Israel and the State of Israel are decorated with landscape photographs from the Holy land. The illustrations in the modern *Haggadot* were often influenced by current events. The horrors of the Holocaust are reflected in several *Haggadot* made at the time in the concentration camps or by survivors. Many *Haggadot* were produced for Jewish soldiers who fought in World War II. Special *Haggadot* were published for the Israeli army. The kibbutzim (pl. of kibbutz) produced their own *Haggadot* that mix traditional texts and illumination with new ones related to the spring and to kibbutz life. Today, Israeli and other artists continue to create *Haggadot* influenced by the medieval tradition of the Haggadah, and its text, script, and illustrations.

Yael Zirlin

See also: Iconography; Illuminated Manuscripts; Jerusalem and the Temple; Passover.

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HAGIOGRAPHY

Hagiographies are narratives praising prominent religious figures, which developed in Hebrew as a specific genre of literature in the sixteenth century. Often termed "the literature of praise" (*sifrut ha'shevahim*), hagiographies feature one of two types of protagonists: ancient Jewish sages and martyrs (biblical and talmudic characters) or medieval scholars, rabbis, and martyrs. There is no Hebrew translation for the word "hagiography," and the subject does not have the same role in Jewish culture as in Christian culture, because there is no equivalent in Judaism for the religious status of a saint.

Some sections of the biblical narratives—stories concerning the patriarchs, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Jeremiah, and Naomi—can be described as hagiographical, but scholars question whether such terminology is really helpful in understanding these narratives. There exists a wider and more variegated range of hagiographic material among the biographical stories concerning the talmudic sages, most notably the *tannaim*, the Jewish sages in Eretz Israel in the first and second centuries C.E. Most of these materials can be better described as exempla, but some hagiographic elements can be identified, especially concerning major figures such as Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai. Among these, a special subgenre can be discerned—the stories describing the martyrdom of sages (mainly in the context of the Bar Kochba revolt against the Roman Empire); scattered talmudic materials were collected and elaborated in the narrative work known as "The Ten Martyrs," which was written in the circles of the Jewish mystics of that period, known as Yordey ha'merkavah (The Descenders to the Chariot),

describing in chilling detail the sacrifice (*kiddush ha'shem*) of these sages.

Some of these biblical and talmudic narratives were developed into more distinct hagiographic cycles during the Middle Ages. However, the great leaders, thinkers, and writers of the Middle Ages were not the subject of hagiographic narratives during that period. Some Jewish movements had an antihagiographic tendency: the *Sefer ḥasidim* (Book of the Pious), for instance, written by Rabbi Judah (called the Pious) ben Samuel of Regensburg around 1200, includes hundreds of stories of various kinds—exempla, fables, narratives about martyrdom—but hardly a name is mentioned; the heroes remain anonymous, without a biography or background. In kabbalistic literature of the Middle Ages, especially the Zohar, there are hagiographic stories, but they relate to the ancient *tannaim*, not to contemporary kabbalists. Medieval leaders became subjects of hagiographic narratives only in the sixteenth century, when Jewish creativity in this genre began to flourish. The earliest extant hagiographic cycle is, paradoxically, one dedicated to the Pietists in Germany of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Ḥasidei Ashkenaz, whose leader was Rabbi Judah the Pious. A cycle of nearly forty tales is dedicated to him; his father, Rabbi Samuel the Pious; and other rabbis of that time, describing miracles that they performed and their supernatural knowledge. These stories were probably collected in Hebrew manuscripts in the fifteenth century (though some of them are related to authentic works of these rabbis). They were included in the great Yiddish collection of stories, the *Ma'aseh Book (*or *Mayse Bukh;* Story Book).

A sixteenth-century historical work, *Shalshelet ha'Kabbalah* by Rabbi Gedaliah ibn Yahya in Italy has elements of hagiographic cycles around the figures of Rashi (Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes), the eleventh-century biblical and talmudic interpreter, and Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, the Ramban (Nachmanides), the great Torah commentator and kabbalist from Gerona in the thirteenth century. Later, detailed hagiographic cycles were written about twelfth-century figures, including the commentator Abraham Ibn Ezra and the Torah scholar Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (Maimonides). In all these cases, the hagiographic stories came into being several centuries after the lives of their heroes, and in most of them the content of the stories has nothing to do with the actual life and thought of these rabbis. Two subgenres of this evolving hagiographical literature exist: One is the stories about exorcism of an evil spirit (later called a "dybbuk," by great rabbis, a usage that almost became standard in praising a great religious leader; and so-called anonymous hagiographies, stories about the hidden righteous men whose devotion and good deeds sustain the existence of the world (*lamed vav tzaddikim*, the thirty-six righteous men). Most of these

stories originated in the nineteenth century, though they often contain traditional elements.

The first example of a hagiographical cycle emerging immediately after the death of its hero is that of Rabbi Isaac Luria (Ha'Ari), the great kabbalist of Safed (1534–1572). A collection of letters sent by an East European scholar, Rabbi Solomon of Dreznitz, who traveled to Safed, was published under the title *Shivhei ha'Ari* (In Praise of the Ari). These letters, sent from Safed to Eastern Europe in 1609 and after, included many stories about the deeds of Luria and his kabbalistic circle. Soon afterward, a typically hagiographic collection, titled *Toledot ha'Ari* (The History of the Ari), became very popular; it described the hero's miraculous birth and supernatural deeds. These collections became the paradigmatic model for several similar works in later centuries, most notably *Shivhei ha'Besht* (In Praise of the Besht), featuring Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, the founder of the eighteenth-century Hasidic movement. Several of the stories included in this work (which was printed in 1815) deliberately follow those told about Luria. Numerous hagiographic stories were written by the followers of the messiah Shabbatai Zvi and his "Prophet," Nathan of Gaza, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. A selection from a personal diary of Luria's disciple, Rabbi Ḥaim Vital, was published under the title *Shivhei ha'Rahu* (In Praise of Rabbi Ḥaim Vital).

The most important body of Jewish hagiographic creativity, both in Hebrew and in Yiddish, is the Hasidic or neo-Hasidic cycles of narratives that constitute the genre known as "Hasidic Tales."

Joseph Dan

See also: Ba'al Shem Tov (Besht); Legend; Safed, Legends of.

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HAIR COVERING, WOMEN

According to Halakhah, the collective body of Jewish religious law, a married Jewish woman is required to cover her hair. The showing of the hair is considered erotic and therefore immodest. This ruling does not appear explicitly in the Bible, but it is deduced from the treatment of a suspected adulteress whose hair is uncovered or disheveled by the priest as a sign of humiliation (Num. 5:18). The sages considered the covering of a

Women's head covering (*mehdor*). Horsehair interwoven with silver thread; cloisonné enameled silver pendants, inlaid with glass. Tiznit, Morocco, mid-twentieth century. The Zeyde Schulmann Collection. *(© The Israel Museum, Jerusalem by Avshalom Avital)*

married woman's hair so vital that they allowed the husband to divorce his wife unconditionally if she exposed her hair immodestly (*m. Ketubbot* 7:6).

The practice became pervasive and universal throughout the Jewish world. In some Ashkenazi communities it became customary to cut or shave a woman's hair shortly before or after her wedding. Some women attempt to leave no hair

uncovered, while others allow some parts to be seen, following the traditions of their particular community. The custom of wearing wigs was adopted by Jewish women in Europe in the sixteenth century, when it was fashionable for both men and women, and it is still considered an option for head covering among Orthodox Jewish women. In several places in Morocco, in Bukhara (now in Uzbekistan), and in Georgia, Jewish women's coiffure incorporated false hair that served as a partial wig. Such is the elaborate *mehdor* headgear of the Jewish women of the Sous region on the southern coast of Morocco, made from silver and interwoven with the hair of a horse's tail, two locks of which frame the woman's forehead. The wearing of wigs is a highly controversial issue to this day among members of the different Orthodox groups, some of whom claim that the display of hair, even false hair, does not satisfy the prohibition to conceal it.

With the passing of time, both the manner and style of head covering have taken many forms, differing greatly from one place to another. In the past, a woman's head covering attested to her marital status as well as to her socioeconomic status, her place of residence, and communal affiliation. In Sana'a, Yemenite-Jewish women wore the distinctive *gargush,* hoodlike headgear that concealed the hair, the forehead, and the neck. It distinguished the Jewish woman from the Muslim woman and the Jewish woman of Sana'a from Jewish women of other localities. Every woman had several hoods, the most sumptuous of which was the full golden hood (*gargush mezahhar merassaf*), decorated with gold, silver filigree pieces, and several coins. All these riches formed part of the woman's dowry, which she received from her father and were used as her cash reserve.

Today the distinctions among head coverings are less geographic and more religious, as they attest to both religious group affiliation and degree of religiosity. Satmar Hasidic women in New York and Jerusalem wear similar head coverings: a scarf concealing their hair entirely, sometimes with padding under it or a small piece of synthetic wig in front, or a synthetic wig worn under the scarf. The women of some Jerusalem Hasidic courts shave their heads and cover them with a tight black scarf. Belz Hasidic women wear a wig and a small cap on top of it, while Sephardic women in Israel today do not wear wigs but fashionable hats and scarves.

Esther Juhasz

See also: Costume.

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Ḥ ANUKKAH

Ḥanukkah (Heb., dedication), also known as the Festival of Lights, is an eight-day festival that begins on the twenty-fifth of Kislev and commemorates the rededication of the Holy Temple of Jerusalem after its defilement by King Antiochus of Syria in the second-century B.C.E. Jewish tradition, as encapsulated in the "Al hanissim" (For the Miracles) prayer specific for the holiday, traces Ḥanukkah's origins to the uprising led by the Maccabees (Hasmoneans) against the Greeks to liberate parts of the Land of Israel from the Seleucid Empire and as a commemoration of the victory of the few over the many. During the festival, the *ḥanukkiyah* (Ḥanukkah menorah) or special nine-branched candelabrum that originated among the Jews of Spain, is lit in the following way: One candle is lit on the first evening, two on the second evening, and so on, with one additional candle kindled each night so that the number corresponds to the day in the festival (the ninth candle is used to light the others). Although Ḥanukkah is a holiday, work is permitted.

Meaning and Name of the Holiday

The following text, which dates from the period of the Geonim (seventh to mid-eleventh centuries), accepts the narrative of 1 Maccabees and rejects the account that appears in the introduction to 2 Maccabees, in the "letter to the Jewish brothers in Egypt"—"see that you keep the Feast of Booths in the month of Kislev" (1:1–9) and, in greater detail, in the body of the book (10:5–8):

> It happened that on the same day on which the sanctuary had been profaned by the foreigners, the purification of the sanctuary took place, that is, on the twenty-fifth day of the same month, which was Kislev. And they celebrated it for eight days with rejoicing, in the manner of Sukkot, remembering how not long before, during Sukkot, they had been wandering in the mountains and caves like wild animals. Therefore bearing ivy-wreathed wands and beautiful branches and also fronds of palm, they offered hymns of thanksgiving to him who had given success to the purifying of his own holy place. They decreed by public ordinance and vote that the whole nation of the Jews should observe these days every year.

According to this version of the festival, Ḥanukkah is really a deferred Feast of Tabernacles, a second Sukkot, which the same source links to the descent of heavenly fire onto the altar when Moses dedicated the portable sanctuary in the wilderness—a miracle repeated in the times of Solomon and Nehemiah (2:10–13). Hence the holiday is also referred to as "the Feast of Booths and the Feast of the Fire" (1:18). If this is the origin of the holiday, however, Ḥanukkah was instituted as a one-time substitute for Sukkot in a year when the latter had not been celebrated. Why, then, did it continue to be observed each year, even though Sukkot could be celebrated at the appropriate time?

These sources leave the connection between the name of the holiday and its content and symbols unclear. As evidence of this vagueness, consider the various derivations of the name offered by Jewish tradition. For example:

1. "Consequently these days are called Ḥanukkah, that is, they rested (Heb. *hanu*) on the twenty-fifth (Heb. *kh*) of Kislev" (the fourteenth-century *Sefer Abudarham*). This leaves unresolved the question of what they rested from: the war? their enemies?

2. Some interpret it as an acrostic of the Hebrew phrase "eight lamps and the Halakhah is according to the School of Hillel" (ח' נרות והלכה כבית הלל): that is, the eight lamps are to be lit following the procedure stipulated by the School of Hillel (adding a new light each night; contrast this with the tradition of the School of Shammai, which stipulates beginning with eight lights and removing one each night). Even though all scholars acknowledge that this cannot be the true source of the name, some rabbinic arbiters have cited it to resolve halakhic questions.

3. It refers to the "dedication of the altar" and other sacred vessels. This explanation can be traced back to 1 Maccabees (4:47, 56).

4. "The meaning of Ḥanukkah . . . is that it was called by this name also on account of the dedication of the sanctuary that took place in the time of the prophet Haggai. . . . It was built on the twenty-fourth day of the ninth month, which is Kislev, and dedicated the next day. They called the days of the miracle of the lamps that took place at that time of year 'Ḥanukkah' on account of the dedication of the house" (Rabbi Jacob Emden, eighteenth century).

5. The name alludes to completion of the work on the sanctuary: "The festival of Ḥanukkah was given to commemorate Moses' dedication of the sanctuary in the wilderness."

Josephus refers to it as the "feast of lights," because, he says, the deliverance came as a sudden burst of light. "Ḥanukkah" as a freestanding name appears for the first time in *Megillat Ta'anit* (late first–early second century C.E.), in which the festival is defined as such (with a ban on mourning and fasting, etc.).

Lighting the *Ḥanukkiyah*

There are multiple traditional explanations for the lighting of the *ḥanukkiyah*. One of them relates that the Maccabees could not use the menorah in the Temple, because it had been defiled, and replaced it with seven (in a later version, eight) iron spits, which they covered with wood and used as a candelabrum. This tradition links the lighting of the lamps to the Maccabees' victory and actions. An alternate tradition emphasizes the legendary miracle: "When the Greeks entered the Temple, they defiled all the oils there. When the Hasmonean dynasty prevailed and defeated them, they searched and found only one cruse of oil, set aside with the seal of the High Priest, which contained sufficient [oil] to kindle only one day; but a miracle was effected through it and they lit [the lamp] from it for eight days" (*b. Shabbat* 21b). This tradition has become the core of the holiday in the Jewish national consciousness and the foundation of the halakhic stipulations that the menorah be placed in public view to advertise the miracle and that the candles and their light may not be used for any profane purpose. After the lighting of the *ḥanukkiyah,* most communities sing the hymn "Ma'oz tsur" (Rock of Ages).

This hymn was evidently composed in Germany. Its author (indicated by the initial acrostic) was named Mordechai, but we know nothing more about him. The text seems to have been composed in Germany in the thirteenth century, in reaction to the bloody anti-Semitic persecutions of that period. Some have identified the author with Rabbi Mordechai ben Hillel of Nuremburg, murdered along with his family in the Rindfleisch massacres (1298). This conjecture rests on three known facts: (1) There as a Mordechai ben Hillel who lived in Nuremburg. (2) He is the author of a volume of halakhic novellas and several hymns, all of which bear the acrostic signature Mordechai. (3) Although more than 700 Jews were massacred in Nuremburg, his name is always emphasized. What is more, accounts of the massacre report that the number of victims was equal to the "vengeance of the blood of your servant" (= 730), a phrase that appears in the hymn. "Ma'oz tsur" refers to Ḥanukkah only in the fifth of its six verses, "Greeks mustered against me in the time of the Hasmoneans." In Germany it was customary to omit the final verse, because of the phrase "avenge the blood of your servants." Some scholars believe that "reject *Admon* ["the red one"—a synonym for Edom]—who stands in the shadow of the icon" alludes to the Holy

Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa (1121–1190), one of the leaders of the Third Crusade.

The traditional melody of "Ma'oz tsur" is based on three German folk songs popular in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It is not the only tune used, however; the musicologist Eliyahu Hacohen has collected many others, notably those sung in the courts of Hasidic rabbis.

Scholars note that Ḥanukkah falls around the shortest day of the year, December 21. In antiquity, many societies celebrated festivals associated with the expulsion of the darkness. They lit torches and lamps as part of a magical ritual to chase away the darkness and bring back the sun from the world of death. An ancient echo of this notion appears in the talmudic legend that Adam, seeing that the days were getting shorter, feared that his death was imminent. When he saw the days starting to lengthen, he celebrated an eight-day festival.

As noted, Halakhah stipulates that the *ḥanukkiyah* be lit in a place that is in public view—such as a window sill facing the street—"in order to advertise the miracle." This halakhic ruling might hark back to the ancient custom of lighting the lamps out of doors. Only in later generations were they brought inside that house, out of fear of hostile eyes.

Ḥanukkah as Women's Holiday

Ḥanukkah is a women's holiday as well. It is the only one that requires their active participation, inasmuch as they, too, have a halakhic obligation to light the *ḥanukkiyah* (*b. Shabbat* 21a). This might be linked to ancient rituals or to women's special role in ancient society as the guardians of the hearth and perpetual fire. Jewish tradition associates the story of Judith, who decapitated the Assyrian general Holofernes, with Ḥanukkah. Another tradition links the Maccabean revolt with Ḥannah, the daughter of Mattathias and sister of Judah Maccabee.

Dairy foods and cheese are eaten in commemoration of Judith's miraculous adventure. In Sephardic communities, women celebrate a special festival on the first and last days. The *id al-banat,* or Feast of the Daughters, which several Sephardic communities mark on the New Moon of Tevet (coinciding with the sixth or sixth and seventh days of Ḥanukkah) might be a carryover of such customs.

Ḥanukkah Games

The birthday of Jesus—December 25—also has a tie to Ḥanukkah. European Jews referred to Christmas Eve as *nitl nakht* (from the Latin *natalis* or "birthday"), when they cowered in their homes to avoid being attacked by Christians. Some believe that this enforced seclusion produced the family games that are customary on Ḥanukkah: chess, checkers, cards, and the game played

with the Ḥanukkah top, or dreidel. The dreidel has become one of the most conspicuous symbols of the holiday. It dates to ancient India, where letters representing the four winds were engraved on its four sides. The dreidel games originated in Germany, where the letters inscribed on the four sides were N (*nichts* = nothing), G (*ganz* = all), H (*halb* = half), and S (*stell ein* = ante up). The Jews used the corresponding Hebrew letters and explained them as an acronym associated with the Ḥanukkah story: "*nes gadol hayah sham*" (a great miracle happened there). In Israel *sham* (there) has been replaced by *poh* (here).

The etiological story that accompanies the dreidel game recounts that when the Greeks banned the Torah, the Jews gathered to study it anyway. Whenever the lookout alerted them to the approach of Greeks, they would start spinning the dreidel. Thus the Greeks found gamers rather than scholars.

Ḥanukkah Pilgrimages

The Jewish national renaissance in the second half of the nineteenth century and the Jews' return to their ancestral homeland of Palestine, beginning in late 1870s, seem to have resuscitated Ḥanukkah as well. The various associations of the holiday, with its roots in the miracle of the cruse of oil, roused the spirit of a people aspiring to freedom and independence, battling assimilation, and glorifying self-sacrifice and bravery. Ḥanukkah became the holiday of the Maccabees, the Maccabees became the symbol of the generation, and Ḥanukkah became the holiday of the generation. The custom arose of making a pilgrimage to the tombs of the Maccabees, identified (mistakenly) in Modi'in, the home of the anti-Greek freedom fighters. Starting in the 1940s, the Young Maccabee Athletic Association, a youth sports group made up of Jewish athletes, instituted a torch race beginning in Modi'in and continuing through the entire country, ending at the president's house in Jerusalem, where the torch is used as the *shammash* to light the *ḥanukkiyah*.

Children's Celebrations

In Western countries, notably Germany, since the late Middle Ages, it has become customary to give children presents, evidently under the influence of the gifts given to children on Christmas, the date of which (December 25) falls very close to Ḥanukkah. The Sephardim of the east and the Land of Israel held Ḥanukkah parties for children. In Jerusalem children would go from house to house singing songs in Ladino and asking for gifts of oil, flour, garlic, and onions. After they had received these commodities, they would thank the givers, bless the householder, and conclude their song with the lines, "now they have given to us, may God give them a bless-

ing." In Ladino this celebration was known as *miranda de ḥanuka* (Ḥanukkah festal board).

In Damascus children would meet at the rabbi's house before parading out with swords in their hands, tall caps on their heads, and weapons on their belts, as if preparing to go out to do battle with the Greeks. In Aden children—dressed in a special blue outfit (blue alluding to "heavenly mercy" and recalling the wonders performed by God for the Jewish people)—made sulfur bombs to commemorate the Maccabees' bravery. In Yemen children went from house to house bearing a lit candle inside a small paper lantern. Each night of Ḥanukkah they visited a different house, where they would hang their lanterns on the wall and enjoy a festive meal. On the last night of the holiday a special dinner was held, in which the teacher also participated.

In Iran bands of children, especially those from poor families, visited houses and carried a brazier of burning coals and a bag full of *aspand* (Syrian rue) seeds, which pop when thrown into the fire and were used as a charm against the evil eye. Outside each front door they sang a song in Judeo-Persian, requesting food, and the householder gave them a silver coin. One member of the group would twirl a handful of the *aspand* around the corners of the house or the donor's head and then throw it into the brazier. When it exploded, they all cried out, "May the enemy's eyes burst like this *aspand*."

In Baghdad they would bring honey biscuits and other sweets to the school and distribute them to the children after the *ḥanukkiyah* had been lit. The gifts for schoolchildren were usually booklets for Ḥanukkah: the story of the miracle, the blessings and thanksgiving hymns for Ḥanukkah, a songbook for Ḥanukkah, and a "menorah"—a sheet with a picture of a menorah and passages about the holiday printed on it.

Burning Antiochus

"Antiochus burning" was a favorite among the children in various Sephardic communities, along with another fire ceremony—burning the leftover oil and wicks of the *ḥanukkiyot*. In Yemen children collected these in their homes, along with used mats, to toss into a huge bonfire in the square outside the Jewish quarter, around which they sang and danced.

Jewish children in northern Iraq made an effigy of rags and old clothes, stuck a pipe in its mouth, attached a large candle to its hand, and called it "Ḥanukkah." They went from house to house with this doll, demanding gifts for the holiday. On the last day of the holiday they plucked out its beard and hurled it into a bonfire, to joyous cries of "Antiochus! Antiochus!"

The custom of collecting the leftover wicks of the *ḥanukkiyah* was also practiced among Jews in Persia. They were piled on a special copper tray. The head of the household would light them, recite Psalm 30 ("A Song for the Dedication of the House"), and throw nuts and parched grain onto the tray, around the burning wicks. The children raked up the treats and competed to see who had collected the most.

In various communities, the leftover wicks of the *ḥanukkiyah*, sanctified by their intended use, were employed for folk medicine. In Yemen, when Ḥanukkah was over, the children would collect the wicks and bring them to their teacher, who would squeeze out the oil that remained in them and put it aside. Whenever a boy was injured during the year, the teacher would smear a dab of that oil on the wound as a charm to promote rapid healing.

Because the Torah reading for the last day of Ḥanukkah ends with the passage "this [was] the dedication of the altar" (Num. 7:84), the day is known as "this [is] Ḥanukkah." Shortly before nightfall of this day, many Ḥasidim, too, conduct a festive burning of the leftover wicks.

Festive Meals and Parties

Although festive meals were optional, over the generations they took on the character of a religious precept and many songs and hymns were written for them. On the first night of the holiday, Ḥasidim gathered at the rebbe's house to sing and dance after the *ḥanukkiyah* was kindled.

The Jews of Syria, Yemen, Kurdistan, and Persia also hold Ḥanukkah parties. In most communities it is customary to serve doughnuts fried in oil, to commemorate the miracle of the cruse of oil. In Libya, for example, they eat *sfenj* (deep-fried strips of soft dough). Mothers sent them to their married daughters, much as gifts of food are sent to family and friends on Purim. Many families also sent these fried cakes to the elderly residents of senior citizens' homes and to the elementary school pupils and teachers.

In Yemen, after lighting the *ḥanukkiyah*, the men would sit down together to eat *ja'alah* (roasted legumes and dried fruits). The folk tradition associates the eating of beans and nuts on Ḥanukkah with the heroism of the woman and her seven sons, who, after they were arrested and brought before Antiochus, refused to partake of the gentiles' foods and ate only nuts. (A similar story is told of Esther at the court of King Ahasuerus.)

In several European communities, notably Hungary and the adjacent countries, a standard dish at the Ḥanukkah feast was bread fried with garlic, whose pungent aroma was unmistakable. The custom was explained as a way for the Jews to separate themselves, through the scent of garlic, from the Christians, who were celebrating Christmas; some said that the smell of the garlic would keep away the Christian students who frequently assaulted Jews on Ḥanukkah.

In popular sermons it was said that one should serve an especially fine meat dish on Ḥanukkah, because the line in the weekly Torah portion, "slaughter and prepare an animal" (Gen. 43:16), is an anagram of "[a] slaughtered [animal] is fine for Ḥanukkah."

In some Hasidic communities the third Sabbath meal on Ḥanukkah consisted of dairy foods and cheese, to commemorate the miracle of Judith, who fed cheese to Holofernes.

Joel Rappel

See also: Ḥanukkah Lamp; Lamps and Candles.

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ḤANUKKAH LAMP

The central object associated with Ḥanukkah, the Jewish winter Festival of Lights, is appropriately a candelabrum, traditionally known as Ḥanukkah lamp or Ḥanukkah menorah (מנורת חנוכה), and in modern Israel commonly referred to as a *ḥanukkiyah* (חנוכייה). Indeed, lighting the lamp constitutes the primary ritual of the holiday.

Although the establishment of Ḥanukkah is discussed in 1 Maccabees, written by an anonymous Jewish author after the restoration of an independent Jewish kingdom in Judea, circa 100 B.C.E., the reasons for, and the order of lighting, the lamp are not mentioned. Rather, they appear centuries later in the tractate *Shabbat* of the Babylonian Talmud. According to the talmudic version, lighting the lamp commemorates the "miracle of the oil," which took place upon the purification of the Temple by the Maccabees. The story relates how the Greeks defiled all the consecrated olive oil of the Temple, and all that the Maccabees found was a single cruse (vessel) containing only enough oil for one day; however, this small quantity of oil miraculously burned for eight days (the time needed to prepare new oil). Thus, eight lights are traditionally kindled, one for each day, and, following a discussion between the Jewish sages of Beit Shammai and Beit Hillel, the accepted order is that "on the first day one light is lit and thereafter the lights are progressively increased" (*Shabbat* 21b). In talmudic times it also became common to place the lit lamp outside the doorway or by the window of the house in order "to publicize the miracle." The rabbis of old also ruled that, since lighting the lamp is intended solely for this purpose, one should not use or "enjoy" the lights for any other purpose. These talmudic precepts and rulings, elaborated upon by later halakhic authorities, formulated not only the traditions associated with lighting the Ḥanukkah lamp but also exerted influence over the development of its physical appearance: the materials used and the shape and design that it assumed in many communities over the ages.

No lamp that can be definitively identified as a Ḥanukkah lamp survived from the talmudic period. Scholars assume that the typical pear-shaped clay lamps provided with a fuel reservoir and a wick—the most common method of illumination throughout the Roman Empire—were used by Jews for Ḥanukkah as well. Thus, a line of single clay lamps was apparently arranged on a vertical basis, each day adding an additional lamp. Another common type in the Greco-Roman world was the multiwick lamp with a central oil reservoir, made of various materials (clay, bronze, stone), which, in the case of the Ḥanukkah lamp, could be provided with the required eight nozzles. The two types of lamps were apparently adorned with simple decorative and symbolic designs, known from numerous Jewish oil lamps of this period.

Regardless of whether talmudic traditions continued without interruption, kindling individual lights rather than a single lamp has been common down to the modern era in some communities, especially those culturally associated with "Persia." Thus in Iran, Afghanistan, and Bukhara, Jews used simple individual ceramic, glass, or metal cups, which were lined up vertically. Perhaps reminiscent of the talmudic tradition are also block-form stone oil lamps carved with the needed depressions for oil. Such lamps were common among two communities in Islamic lands: Yemen and in the Atlas Mountains of Morocco. Though the extant lamps were produced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, support for the hypothesis that they continue an ancient tradition is represented by the stone lamp, which is probably the earliest of its type. This lamp was discovered in the medieval Jewish quarter of Avignon, France, and scholars date it to the twelfth or thirteenth century. It is a stone block with eight depressions for the oil, and its front side is carved in square

year or more probably the gates of messianic Jerusalem (cf. Ezek. 48:30–35). All these lamps have a feature that has become common to this day: a ninth spout for the *shammash* (servitor), fulfilling the talmudic precept that the lights may not be used. The place of the *shammash* was not fixed in this period, and it stood either to the side of the eight spouts (left or right) or at the top of the back panel.

After the expulsion from Spain in 1492, Sephardim carried this type of lamp, and early modified examples have survived from Italy. Proof of the antiquity of this type in recent times is found again in a Muslim country, Morocco, where a popular type of Ḥanukkah lamp used by the Sephardim is similarly shaped, featuring a stylized Gothic rose window—a motif foreign to the local non-Jewish Moroccan arts—as well as the arcade of Moorish arches, though their symbolic meaning has been apparently lost and their number varies.

Some of the most attractive extant Ḥanukkah lamps were created in Italy during the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Under the influence of the Italian decorative and industrial arts, highly ornate examples were produced on Italian soil—decorated with designs inspired by the art of ancient Greece and Rome—Tritons, centaurs, nude mermaids, urns, masks, cupids, and the Greek myth of the judgment of Paris. Other lamps emphasize architectural designs, highlighting favorite elements in the Italian urban landscape beginning in the late Middle Ages—crenellations resembling the Palazzo Vecchio of Florence or Siena, a dome echoing Renaissance architect Filippo Brunelleschi's brick cupola of the Piazza del Duomo in Florence or a harmonious arcade of three arches supported by classical pillars, recalling the façade of Leon Battista Aleberti's Basilica di St. Andrea in Mantua. These elements filled the Jews with pride in the host culture and at the same time expressed the view of the ideal messianic temple. Some of the lamps contain the coats of arms of the rulers who hosted the Jews. Among the few Jewish motifs adorning these lamps that are noteworthy is the figure of Judith, who in the Jewish folklore of Italy has become the chief heroine of Ḥanukkah. Her sculpted figure holding a narrative, sword crowns several lamps, while in others she is shown beheading Nebuchadnezzar's invading general Holofernes in the tent, as depicted in the Second Temple narrative, the Book of Judith—just as she was depicted by the great Renaissance masters, in whose works Judith symbolized modest civic courage and wisdom.

In Germany and Eastern Europe the back-wall Ḥanukkah lamp became common only in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. New materials were introduced as well. In Germany the simpler pewter was used to craft the more modest Ḥanukkah lamps, while in Eastern Europe they were often made of ceramic. However, the most common material in Eastern Europe was brass, sometimes interpreted in a midrashic manner as the most appropriate

Ḥanukkah lamp, brass. Fez, Morocco, ca. 1875. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

Hebrew letters with the verse "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is light" (Prov. 6:23). Indeed, it is this biblical verse that the Babylonian *amora* Rav Huna (ca. 216–297) associated with Ḥanukkah (*Shabbat* 23b), though the holiday is not mentioned in the Bible.

In medieval Europe a new type of Ḥanukkah lamp appeared, provided for the first time with a back panel that allowed hanging it on the wall. Cast in bronze or copper alloy, these lamps replaced the clay and stone lamps and made metal the favorite material for the elaborate Ḥanukkah lamps for centuries to come. In an important example of the new type, from thirteenth-century France or Germany (held in Temple Emanu-El, New York), the triangular back panel is decorated with a pair of lions, dragons, and the aforementioned verse from Proverbs. Similar cast lamps with triangular back panels are known from Provence or Spain. Commemorating the rededication of the Temple and Jerusalem, the back panel of these lamps is reminiscent of the most elaborate building type in Christian Europe at the time—the Gothic cathedral. Thus it features a "rose window" centered above an arcade of twelve Moorish arches. The number of arches is consistent in the few extant examples and thus could imply the number of the tribes or the months of the

metal for the this object. The more affluent families in Germany and Poland commissioned elaborate personal silver Ḥanukkah lamps, at times produced by the leading silversmiths (non-Jewish), occasionally decorated with attractive figurative images, in particular—as in Italy—the story of Judith. Much more common were less expensive, simpler lamps, made of pewter or unmarked tinplate. These are smaller standing "bench type" lamps, provided with four legs to place on a table or the windowsill. The engraved decorations consist mostly of geometric and floral designs and at times bear the names of the owners, indicating that some of them were given as wedding gifts. While the ones made of silver might bear the insignia of the family (e.g., the Rothschilds), some simpler examples show implements of the owner's craft (e.g., carpenter). Another popular type, known from Germany, Bohemia, and Poland, is made of small crudely cast pewter chairs, crafted in a manner that is somewhat reminiscent of the lead dreidels (tops) produced by children. In addition to the small domestic lamps, synagogues had large standing ones echoing the design of seven-branched Tabernacle menorah. This type of lamp is depicted in the popular seventeenth- to eighteenth-century Ashkenazi *Minhagim* (books of customs).

The domestic standing bench type of Ḥanukkah lamp won much popularity among many communities—from Poland and Germany to Austria, Bohemia, Alsace, and the Netherlands, in addition to North Africa. The designs and motifs in the east European copper-alloy bench-type lamps are most imaginative, depicting intricate geometric and architectural designs, as well as pairs of heraldic lions, deer, and eagles, and recalling the "holy animals" found in the folk art of Polish Jewry and executed in the technique of "open work" evoking the beloved papercuts. A curious feature of many of these lamps is that they have two servitors or, rather, candleholders—perhaps used for the Sabbath lights during Ḥanukkah or merely for symmetry. Alsatian bench lamps, often simply crafted of tin plate, exhibit yet another unique feature: Some have double or more sets of eight oil containers, serving other members of the family who light the Ḥanukkah lamp together. Dutch copper-alloy bench lamps were often hand hammered, and the repertoire of the folk artists included a wealth of Jewish designs, such as *menorot* (lamps), Stars of David, blessing Cohanic (priestly) hands, Hebrew inscriptions, and naive human figures, including the biblical scene of the pair of spies carrying a cluster of grapes (Num. 13:23). The Dutch lamps bear a striking resemblance to those of Morocco, attesting to the close ties between the urban Moroccan Jews and selected communities in Europe, the Netherlands, in particular.

Side by side with Western motifs, the Moroccan and other North African Ḥanukkah lamps demonstrate the influence of Islamic culture and its designs. While in Europe the Jews were not always able to produce their own lamps, in North Africa as well as in other lands of Islam the metal craftsmen were Jews and thus created their own Ḥanukkah lamps. Yet they betray the local culture, and the designs display elements such as Islamic architectural details, arabesques, or even the star and crescent of the Ottoman Empire. Noteworthy are the hanging metal lamps of Iraq and India, which are provided with rings used to hold large glass cups for the oil. North African, Iraqi, and Syrian and those produced in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Israel feature protective designs and symbols, in particular pairs of birds and peacocks serving to protect the house, eyes to guard against the evil eye, and *ḥamsas* (outstretched hands) to safeguard the people who use the lamp. In addition, the Baghdadi lamps of the early twentieth century often bear the words "ben porat Yoseph" (taken from Jacob's blessing to his beloved son Joseph [Gen. 49:22]), which attest to the central place of Joseph as a righteous and holy figure (Yosef ha'tzaddik) among the Jews of Islam and in Islamic society in general.

With the advent of the Bezalel art school in Jerusalem in 1906, new types of Ḥanukkah lamps became increasingly common. Under the influence of the Zionist movement and its concept of the "New Jew," the heroism of the Maccabees—who established religious and political freedom for the Jews—which was largely belittled in the previous generations, came to the fore. The Ḥanukkah lamps produced by the leading Bezalel artists and craftsmen incorporated symbols and scenes that reflect the ideology of the Zionist movement, which supported the reestablishment of a homeland for the Jewish people in the Land of Israel. One scene depicts the Maccabees purifying and rededicating the Temple of Jerusalem, while others show the ancient Jewish coins of Roman Palestine as a symbol of Jewish sovereignty and independence. This trend continued throughout the century and culminated in the young State of Israel of the 1950s and 1960s. In this period the Ḥanukkah lamps proudly showed the heroic, ancient figures of the Maccabees as lions, as well as the new pioneers (*ḥalutzim*), contemporary Jewish (and Israeli) soldiers, sacred historical monuments that reflect attachment to the past as well as strength (in particular, David's Tower), and prominent emblems of the state such as the menorah. Moreover, in some lamps the candleholders were actually reused gun shells or the main section was crafted from a gun handle. Many of the lamps were designed in workshops by anonymous artisans of the time and were industrially marketed as souvenirs, disseminating the ideals and hopes of the young state.

In the final decades of the twentieth century, modern trends and artistic designs emerged, especially from the United States and Israel. Artists of the "New Bezalel" school, such as Ludwig Worlpert and David Gumbel, created lamps that apply modernist smooth surfaces and clean-line designs into Jewish ceremonial art. Ameri-

can artists on occasion emphasized the connection of Ḥanukkah to life in free America. In a noted example by Mary Rockland Tupa (1975), the candleholders are made of plastic Statues of Liberty and the lamp is covered with dime-store American flags. Other artists created Ḥanukkah lamps that reflect their personal style as well as contemporary artistic trends. Side by side with the new trends, anonymous craftsmen and commercial makers continue the production of simple and relatively inexpensive Ḥanukkah lamps.

Shalom Sabar

See also: Ḥanukkah.

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HASAN-ROKEM, GALIT (1945–)

Galit Hasan-Rokem is the Max and Margarethe Grünwald Professor of Folklore at the Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She studies the folk literary aspects of ancient rabbinic literature; proverbs, especially Jewish ones; folklore in Israel, with special reference to ethnic and national variation; and folklore theory, especially structuralism, feminism, hermeneutics, and mobility. Her contributions to the study of Jewish folklore include a system-

atically interdisciplinary scope, theoretical innovation, and international emphasis, significantly contributing to the international recognition of Israeli folklore studies, beyond the study of Jewish folklore, consequently attracting international students and research projects.

Born in Helsinki on August 29, 1945, Hasan-Rokem was educated at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, under the tutelage of Professor Dov Noy, and at the University of Helsinki with Professor Matti Kuusi and Lauri Honko; she received her Ph.D. in 1978. Her paremiological work includes *Adam le-Adam Gesher: Proverbs of Georgian Jews in Israel* (1993) and articles in various journals, especially *Proverbium—Yearbook of International Proverb Scholarship,* of which she has been assistant editor since 1984. She established the Proverb Indexing Project at the Hebrew University's Folklore Research Center. Hasan-Rokem's work has been published in more than eight languages. Her publications include *The Web of Life: Folklore in Rabbinic Literature, The Palestinian Aggadic Midrash Eikha Rabba* (Tel Aviv, 1996; in Hebrew); trans. and rev. as *Web of Life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature* (Stanford, 2000); and *Tales of the Neighborhood: Jewish Narrative Dialogues in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley, 2003). Hasan-Rokem's edited volumes include *The Wandering Jew: Essays in the Interpretation of a Christian Legend* (co-edited with A. Dundes) (Bloomington, 1986); *Untying the Knot: On Riddles and Other Enigmatic Modes* (co-edited with D. Shulman) (New York, 1996); a special issue on folk and popular culture of *Theory and Criticism* 10, 1997 (in Hebrew); *The Defiant Muse: Hebrew Feminist Poems from Antiquity to the Present* (co-edited with S. Kaufman and T. Hess) (New York, 1999); *Jewish Women in the Yishuv and Zionism: A Gender Perspective* (co-edited with M. Shilo and R. Kark) (Jerusalem, 2001) (in Hebrew), rev. in English, Hanover, 2008. She is co-editor, with Professor Regina Bendix, of *The Folklore Companion* for Wiley-Blackwell.

Hasan-Rokem served as president of the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (1998–2005), became an honorary member in 2005, served on the Folklore Fellows International Executive Committee and Advisory Board (since 1993), and served on the International Committee of the American Folklore Society. In addition, she significantly contributed to developing the Hebrew University Folklore Program (founded by Noy) into a full-fledged bachelor's, master's, and Ph.D. program and, with Tamar Alexander, to the founding of *Jerusalem Studies of Jewish Folklore* and the annual Israeli Inter-University Folklore Conferences in 1981, as well as to teaching and research cooperation with Palestinian, Scandinavian, German and U.S. scholars. Hasan-Rokem served as a visiting professor at several universities, including the University of California at Berkeley, University of Pennsylvania, University of Chicago, and Ben-Gurion University and served on the editorial board of central journals in folklore and Jewish studies. Her students teach at research univer-

sities in Israel and elsewhere. Hasan-Rokem is a published poet and poetry translator in Hebrew and has had her poetry published in translation around the world.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Folk Narratives in Rabbinic Literature; Rabbinic Literature; Wandering Jew.

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HASIDIC TALES

In the larger canon of Hebrew and Yiddish literature, Hasidic tales are oral or written stories that originated with Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer (also known as the Ba'al Shem Tov or the Besht), the founder and charismatic first leader of Hasidism, a religious movement within Orthodox Judaism that gained popularity in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Rabbi Ephraim of Sadlikow and Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, two grandsons of Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, testified that their grandfather used to tell stories as a part of his teachings. This special attachment to the narrative form is attested by other sources, especially the numerous quotations from the Besht's sermons, which are incorporated in the work of Rabbi Jacob Joseph of Polonoi, the disciple of the Besht, who was the first Hasidic author to be published. The fables and narratives included in the four volumes of his writings contain a great deal of narrative material, even a story similar to one found in *The Decameron.* Despite this early devotion to narratives, the Hasidic tale is a late phenomenon, which peaked only between 1863 and World War I in Hebrew and Yiddish. Before 1863, the scope of Hasidic production in this field was very narrow: the famous collection of stories of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, which are cast in the form of folktales, published in Hebrew in 1815; two small volumes of the biography of Rabbi Nachman, written by Rabbi Nathan of Nemirov, his disciple (Shivḥei Moharan and Ḥayei ha'Rav); and the great collection of narratives about the Besht, *Shivḥei ha'Besht* (In Praise of the Besht), also published in 1815. These works were followed by satirical, anti-Hasidic renderings of their format and content by Joseph Perl, starting with *Megale temirin* (The Revealer of Secrets, 1819). In addition to these, the scores of Hasidic works that expressed the ideas of the emerging Hasidic movement and presented its teachings were almost exclusively homiletical, that is, collections of sermons, often in the order of the portions of the Torah reading in the synagogue every week.

The most influential work among these early expressions of narrative creativity was *Shivhei ha'Besht,* which followed earlier examples of Jewish hagiography, especially the collections of stories about the great sixteenth-century kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria of Safed (Ha'Ari). This work includes some authentic historical material concerning the life of the Besht, but around it a legendary biography was structured, including many of the traditional components of narratives about religious heroes. Several layers of supernatural stories were included, beginning with stories about the Besht's knowledge of secrets and culminating with stories about miracles, especially ones concerning healing the sick and saving people in danger.

The great surge of "Hasidic" collections of stories, mostly hagiographic in nature, began with the work edited by Michael Ha'levi Frumkin, *Kehal Ḥasidim* (1863), which was followed in the same decade by half a dozen other collections by Frumkin and other writers who adopted the same format. Frumkin was an ex-Ḥasid, a dropout from the Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidic sect who later became a *maskil* (enlightened one) and the editor of the

Haskalah (Enlightenment) journal *Ha'kol* (The Voice). He wrote the hagiographical biography of the founder of Chabad, *Shivḥei ha'Rav* and was the main power behind the vast production of "Hasidic" narratives, which were started by non-Ḥasidim and ex-Ḥasidim and later copied by the Ḥasidim themselves and further developed by neo-Hasidic writers such as Yehuda Steinberg, I.L. Peretz, Shimshon Meltzer, and, above all, Martin Buber. Thus the fictional image of Hasidism as a movement based on the telling of stories took root.

Peretz identified "Hasidic stories" and "folktales" and contributed more than anyone else to the developing image of Hasidism as a popular and humanistic phenomenon, dedicated to establishing social justice and led by charismatic leaders.

Buber started his literary career with an adaptation into German of the stories of Rabbi Nachman and the Besht, and later, the Great Magid, Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch. His most influential work is *Or ha'ganuz* (The Hidden Light), a collection of fables, stories, and epigrams drawn from many Hasidic works. This great enterprise was integrated with a scholarly thesis, which insisted that the popular narratives and epigrams represented the essence of the message of the Hasidic movement and that they should be read like the Japanese koans of Zen Buddhism. Gershom Scholem and Rivkah Shatz-Uffenhemer wrote detailed refutations of this thesis, insisting that Hasidism is best expressed through the hundreds of volumes of homiletical-kabbalistic works.

Most of the "Hasidic" narrative literature published before World War I was written not for the Ḥasidim proper but for Jews who distanced themselves from traditional society and began to be integrated in modern society in the cities of Central and Eastern Europe. Experiencing nostalgia for the world in which they grew up, these urban Jews bought and read stories that glorified the image of the great Hasidic leaders and their wonderful deeds. Nostalgia, rather than worship, is the major motive for consuming this literary genre. Religious and ethical teachings hold a marginal place in these volumes. In many cases, the editors included traditional, pre-Hasidic Jewish stories and folktales, adding an opening sentence stating that this or that rabbi used to tell this story on the eve of a certain holiday, thus transforming it into a "Hasidic" story. Later Hasidic groups followed this format and published collections of stories about their great leaders.

The Hasidic worldview, and especially the Hasidic theory of the leadership of the *tzaddik*, provided a theological basis for the flourishing of hagiographic narratives in and around the movement. It was the first time that a belief in a superhuman intermediary between humans and God appeared in Judaism, and it served as the basis for the belief that the dynasty of each *tzaddik* represents God and is responsible for the worldly welfare and spiritual redemp-tion of the community led by it. In this way the figure of a religious hero, who has a unique relationship with the divine and therefore supernatural powers, became theologically valid in a Jewish context. The *tzaddik* (and not the Ḥasid) became the hero of these hagiographic narratives.

In recent decades a unique hagiographic body of narratives has emerged around the figure of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the seventh and last leader of Chabad, who spent most of his life in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and whose followers believed in his personal messianic mission. Stories about his knowledge of the hidden and of the future circulated widely, enhancing the faith of his followers in his divine, redemptive powers.

Joseph Dan

See also: Ba'al Shem Tov (Besht).

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HEAD COVERING, MEN

Jewish men's head covering was conceived as a sign of religious submission and respect to higher authorities and before God. The practice of covering a Jewish man's head is not mentioned in the Torah, and in the Babylonian Talmud it is a custom practiced only by certain people, such as Torah scholars, and at certain times, such as during prayers and benedictions. It has become obligatory only in the past few centuries.

In the sixteenth century, when the *Shulhan arukh* (the code of Jewish law) accepted by all Jewish communities was written, men's head covering was not yet universal

or compulsory. The code stated that covering the head was a sign of a God-fearing Jew and especially important during study and prayer (*Oraḥ ḥayyim* 2:6; 151:6). In Christian countries the Jewish covering of the head in the synagogue is said to have evolved in distinction to the practice of uncovering one's head as a sign of reverence, while in the Muslim world Jews were no exception to the general practice of covering their heads. In many Christian and Muslim lands, Jews were required to wear a hat, the shape and color of which would serve to identify them as Jews. Well known is the medieval pointed Jewish hat called the "*Judenhut,*" by which Jews were identified, and which is clearly seen in both Jewish and Christian depictions of Jewish life.

The wearing of a double head covering—a skullcap and a hat—known today among the ultra-Orthodox, evolved among Jews in Austria-Hungary and Germany in the eighteenth century, when head covering had already become normative. It was a way of dealing with the etiquette of the surrounding society, which demanded the removal of the hat as a gesture of respect. Thus wearing a skullcap under the hat did not leave the person bareheaded under any circumstance and functioned as a counterreaction to lenient views regarding covering the head.

Covering the head with a hat or skullcap only, as practiced today by Orthodox Jews, was part of the controversy between reformists and traditionalist groups in the nineteenth century, as some Reform Jews did not accept the obligation to cover the head at all times as binding. Among some Reform Jews the skullcap is worn during prayer and other ceremonial occasions only. Today, especially in Israeli society, covering of the head or failure to do so creates a distinction between secular and observant Jews. The type of covering indicates socioreligious, ideological, and political affiliation. For instance, the crocheted skullcap (*kippah srugah),* which is associated with Israel's national-religious community, has become its symbol and even name. (It was a mark of identification of the National Religious Party, commonly known in Israel by its Hebrew acronym MAFDAL before dissolving in 2008). Today the various types of crocheted skullcaps signify the segmentation of this sector of Israeli society.

Esther Juhasz

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HEBRON

Hebron, located in the southern part of the Judean mountain range, along Israel's watershed, is at a strategic crossroads traversed by foreign armies and merchants for thousands of years.

Hebron is the only city whose date of establishment is specified in the Bible: "Now Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt" (Num. 13:22), attesting to its antiquity. The city was famous for its agricultural and industrial products and became a major commercial settlement. Hebron and environs also abound in ancient burial caves, identified as the tombs of biblical figures according to both Jewish and Muslim tradition. The central site in Hebron is the Cave of Machpelah, purchased by the biblical patriarch Abraham as a family burial plot, as recorded in the Bible (Gen. 23:1–20). The building above the cave is identified as one of King Herod's monumental construction enterprises. The Cave of Machpelah is one of the most sacred places in the Land of Israel for both Jews and Muslims. Since the Middle Ages, visitors and travelers, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, have included descriptions of both the city and the cave in their journals.

The unique structure of the cave, which actually contains two caves, hence its name Machpelah (double), the stairs leading to the cave floor, and the strong wind buffeting all who enter are all common themes in stories about Hebron. Another aspect of Hebron frequently mentioned in Jewish literature is the effect of local historical events on the city and its residents. The Christian and Muslim conquests of Hebron are retold and reinterpreted according to each writer's outlook and beliefs.

Hebron stories are based on several key images that reflect the city's unique essence, derived from source materials including the Bible, rabbinic literature, Kabbalah, Hasidism, and travel accounts. The principal image is that of the Cave of Machpelah as the burial site of the patriarchs (Abraham, his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob) and the matriarchs (Sarah, Abraham's wife; Rebecca, Isaac's wife; and Leah and Rachel, Jacob's wives). Hebron thus became the venue of a sovereignty dispute, reflected in historical claims of Esau's right to interment there, constituting the national and religious infrastructure of historical differences between Jews and non-Jews over the right to control Hebron and ownership of the Cave of Machpelah. The site became a focus of religious ritual, reflected in prostration and prayer at the graves of the patriarchs, seeking their intervention in securing the salvation of their descendants. Sources describe the patriarchs as protective figures who "awake from their slumber" to pray and seek mercy for the Jewish people.

Kabbalistic and Hasidic literature call the Cave of Machpelah the "gateway to paradise," a concept refined through sensuous descriptions combining various motifs: the marvelous sight of heavenly light shining forth, candles at

Cave of Machpelah, Hebron, Israel. *(Courtesy of David Wilder)*

the heads of the patriarchs, and a pleasant fragrance throughout. The cave is perceived as an intermediate space linking this world and the next, joining heaven and earth.

Prayers at the Cave of Machpelah and the site's status as a transition space to the next world also associate its image with eschatological aspirations. The Midrash declares that the impending Redemption will be due to the merit of the patriarchs interred at the Cave of Machpelah, who will be the first to be informed of it.

Since the Middle Ages, journals kept by both Jewish and non-Jewish travelers visiting Hebron depict the Cave of Machpelah as a paradise on Earth, using literary connotations associated with a *locus amœnus* in Western culture and literature and a "perfect place" in Asian cultures.

All such sources configure Hebron as a cultural symbol. Stories about Hebron, retold in many Jewish communities throughout the world, emphasize cultural and religious images through the ages. The powerful bond between the Jewish people and the patriarchs buried in the cave is represented by two major archetypal symbols: the great father—symbolized by the patriarchs, especially Abraham—and the great mother—exemplified in the setting of many local Hebron legends and in the Cave of Machpelah, as a symbol of the womb. Most folkloric stories describe magical or supernatural intervention of

one of the patriarchs in favor of the Jewish community. The patriarchs and matriarchs listen to their children's prayers and intervene to protect and rescue them from all kinds of physical and spiritual threats and dangers.

Many Jewish folktales concerning Hebron are defined as place legends or local legends because they are ascribed to a specific locale, explain some local geographic feature or name, or describe local traditions and customs. Local legends are short, etiological, and etymological. They repeat the same themes in different parts of the world, adapted to each site's unique features. Local legends represent the storyteller's point of view and seek to reveal and reflect the individual's voice as well as those of the collective, including voices that are otherwise concealed or silent. Local legends such as those of Hebron are a useful index of the community's interests and imagination. The city's space, buildings, and streets are the location in which the stories take place. Space and place presented in the literary text become one of its critical categories. Other geographical settings would have created a different story, fashioned according to the space and place in which they unfold.

The most famous local legend about Hebron is called "Asiri le'minyan" (Tenth Man for a Quorum), describing Abraham's miraculous revelation to the people of Hebron

on the evening of the Day of Atonement as the tenth man required to complete a quorum for public prayer. At the time the story is said to have taken place, there were few Jews in Hebron and they could not conduct services on the holy day if they did not have at least ten men. According to legend, Abraham perceives their intense sorrow over their inability to fulfill their religious obligations. He descends, disguised as a poor wayfarer, completing the quorum and praying with the community throughout the evening and the following day. At the end of the long fast, all the grateful worshipers want to invite him for a meal, but he has disappeared. That night, the synagogue attendant has a dream in which Abraham tells him that he joined them for prayers because he saw how sad they were about being unable to pray properly on the holiest day of the year. In commemoration of that supernatural event, the synagogue was called the Beit Knesset Avraham Avinu (Synagogue of the Patriarch Abraham). To this day, the synagogue is an integral part of the Jewish community of Hebron.

Yael Ereli

See also: Abraham.

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HELL (*GEHINNOM*)

See: Afterlife

HERSHELE OSTROPOLER

Hershele Ostropoler, also known as Hershel of Ostropol, was a popular Jewish folk hero. The subject of countless tales, Hershele is portrayed as a jester who is mainly known for his jokes, jibes, and witticisms. He resembles jesters of other cultures, such as the Flemish Till Eulenspiegel and the Turkish Hoja Nasreddin, yet his traits are unmistakably Jewish, as are his jokes and witticisms.

Some scholars believe that Hershele was a historical person who lived in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, and whose surname derives from the town of Ostropoli (Ostropol, in Poland), although he was ostensibly from Balta, Ukraine. The main conflict between Ostropoler's folkloric and historical identities rests in scholarly attempts to attribute historical truth to the details mentioned in the folktales about him, thereby confounding fiction and reality.

However, as the poet Itzik Manger correctly points out in his 1980 *Prose Writings,* the historical facts about Hershele are of less importance than his contributions to Jewish folklore. According to the folktales, Hershele was a poor Jew whose clothes had seen better days. He wandered from city to city and town to town, telling anecdotes and making clever remarks and quips. His cleverness may occasionally help him fill his empty stomach, but it cannot provide the means to escape his extreme poverty. His wisdom lies in his ability to laugh at the hardships of poverty and at those who cause them. In this way, Hershele is the imaginative creation of people who, like him, were stuck in the quagmire of destitution and its attendant pains. They found comfort in their hero's ability to laugh at these problems and to mock and ridicule the cold-hearted. Hershele turns the wealthy, religious functionaries, and rabbis of distinguished lineages into the butt of his jokes and quips. Here is a typical example:

> A rich man is walking around the bathhouse in search of the attendant. He meets Hershele. Hershele recommends himself as an expert in flogging bathers with soft twigs. The rich man is convinced, but Hershele demands payment in advance. After receiving the money, he tells the rich man to lie down on the top bench, promising to return soon.
>
> The rich man lies down and waits. When the steam starts choking him, he gets up from the bench and runs into Hershele.
>
> "Why didn't you come flog me?"
>
> Hershele chuckles: "Well, it's like this, Mr. Rich Man, you really deserve a flogging, but because this time you lay down all by yourself to receive it, I forgive you."

Many jokes are told about Hershele and Rabbi Baruchle (Baruch) of Medzhybizh, grandson of Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, the Ba'al Shem Tov, said to have been prone to melancholy.

> Rabbi Baruchle was traveling on the road, ailing and melancholy as usual. His factotum, Hershele, found him an inn. All night long, a baby was crying there. In the morning, the rabbi complained to Hershele: "Why did you set me up in this inn, where a baby cried and didn't let me sleep?"
>
> Hershele answered the distinguished rabbi, who always took great pride in his illustrious lineage—he was the grandson of the Ba'al Shem Tov: "Rabbi, do you think that was an ordinary baby? It was actually a grandson, and the Jewish people still have much to suffer from grandsons."

In various places in Eastern Europe, similar traits were ascribed to other Jewish jester heroes much like Hershele, such as Efraim Greidinger, Shaike Faifer, Motke Habad, Lebenu Gottsbunder, and Shmerel Shnitkever.

The Hershele Ostropoler stories provided inspiration for many authors. This was the case, for example, with Babel's "Shabbos Nahamu" (1918) and two essays by Itzik Manger, "Hershele Ostropoler" and "The Anecdotes of Hershele Ostropoler," included in Manger's posthumous *Prose Writings* (1980). Many anecdotes can be found in Alter Druyanow's *Book of Jokes and Witticisms* (1922). Although Manger believed that Hershele had not yet received the literary treatment that he deserves, the jester lives on in Jewish folklore and continues to amuse and delight new generations.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Poland, Jews of.

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Ḥevra Kadisha

See: Cemetery; Death

Historical Ethnographic Society of Vilna

See: An-Ski, S.; Poland, Jews of

Holle Kreisch

See: Circumcision

Holocaust Folklore

Holocaust folklore concerns both folkloristic phenomena created during the Holocaust and the memory of the Holocaust in modern folklore, for example, in proverbs, anecdotes, personal narratives, rituals, and material culture.

Jews in the countries occupied by Nazi Germany experienced the Holocaust in different ways. The Jews of Poland, which was conquered by Germany as early as September 1939, suffered loss of civil rights, financial barriers, hunger, resettlement in ghettos, raids, and, finally, deportation to concentration, death, or forced labor camps or factories, all for as much as five years for those who survived the ordeal to the end. The Jews in Hungary, by contrast, suffered a short and intensive period of about a year, starting from the German invasion of Hungary in March 1944, during which they were placed in ghettos for a few weeks and then sent to the aforementioned camps. Jews in North Africa were imprisoned in camps, where they suffered famine and disease, but they were never subjected to mass deportation, thanks to the German defeat on the North African front.

These examples illustrate the ensuing differences in the responses of Jews in different countries and communities as expressed in Holocaust folklore and literature. Considering these differences, scholars infer that in places where the period of persecution lasted longer, there was enough time to create and organize artistic and folkloristic activities, such as concerts, plays, and shows, or to write and compose diaries, stories, poems, nursery rhymes, songs, and so on and then retain them either in writing or in memory. By contrast, in places where the acute period was short and intense, there might have been some artistic and folkloric creation, but the Holocaust experience and its effects were expressed mainly in the aftermath of World War II and continues to the present.

Memorial Books and Personal Narratives

The tradition of memorial (or *yizkor*) books had existed for centuries before the Holocaust and generally is em-

ployed for the commemoration of the community's deceased. However, after the Holocaust, memorial books became verbal monuments in which and by which the community as a whole, with its organizations and specific individuals in it, such as rabbis, teachers, and righteous and ordinary people, were commemorated. Usually only a small portion of these books is devoted to the Holocaust, whereas larger parts describe the community's history, personages, and education and welfare systems. Also, whereas the other parts were written by the editor(s) of the book and were based on documents and other literature, the Holocaust part is made up of individual testimonies by survivors of the community. Aside from being elegiac, the tone of these narratives is compassionate toward other community members and Holocaust victims in general and is largely devoid of criticism of them. By contrast, in the personal memorial literature that has flourished in the past few decades, stress is placed on the life and history of the individual writer or storyteller. Criticism or even outright indictment is more readily expressed in these memoirs than in communal books.

Other than in written accounts within communal or personal books, Holocaust testimonies, which folklorists view as personal narrative, are also recorded on audio- or videotape. Large-scale documentation projects have been conducted by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, Israel, the Fortunoff Video Archives for Holocaust Testimonies at Yale University, and the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation in Los Angeles and other centers in the United States. The live recording of these narratives or testimonies magnifies their persuasive and affective force much beyond the power of written accounts. If one views this phenomenon from the point of view of contemporary folkloristic contextual and performative approaches to the study of oral lore, then one might conclude that folklore serves as a main medium for the understanding of modern and postmodern horror and its effect on humanity's memory and expression.

Musical and Verbal Folklore

Whereas the aforementioned prose literature refers to the Holocaust retrospectively, folk songs were a powerful means of coping with the hardships of life in ghettos and camps during the time of these experiences. Musicologist Moshe Hoch, who is of Polish-Jewish descent, devoted an inclusive study to music in and about the Holocaust. His *Voices from the Dark: Music in the Ghettos and Camps in Poland* (2002) shows that folk songs turned out to be as survivalist as the people singing or humming them. Survival in this sense means a variety of interplay modes between old and new lyrics and tunes, the most interesting of which is the writing and singing of new lyrics created to accompany old or tra-

ditional tunes. Such songs were often named after the camps in which they were composed, or after certain people, professions, or peer groups, such as the gypsies in the camps.

Concerning other kinds of verbal or musical folklore, there is little evidence of the preservation of the more traditional and classical modes and genres of folklore such as legend and fairytale, except for Hasidic hagiographic stories devoted to the magical rescue of eminent figures in the community. The main reason for this lack is the annihilation of the natural storytellers and audiences for this type of creation and interaction, that is, women (especially mothers) and children, who were the first to be exterminated. Still, in cases where there was a possibility of documenting everyday life and lore during the Holocaust, evidence of these entities survived and outlived its creators, as in the case of Shimon Huberband's (1987) documentation of Jewish ghetto religious and cultural life, including jokes and daily anecdotes. From another angle, present-day Holocaust verbal lore sheds new, often a grim, light upon earlier data. Haya Bar-Itzhak's work (2001) on the legends of origin of the Jews of Poland, which after the Holocaust were transformed into elegiac stories of destruction, illustrates the vitality of this lore as well as the inevitable imprint of the Holocaust on Jewish diaspora lore in its aftermath.

In her article "Women in the Holocaust," Haya Bar-Itzhak refers to the difficulties in dealing with Holocaust narratives from a folkloristic perspective and claims that folklore studies provide insights that historical research cannot provide.

As for conceptual and behavioral data of folkloric beliefs and custom, there are many examples in Holocaust narratives and other sources of the phenomenon of confusion and loss of belief in the values of the past and in its power structures. The tension or void between the known and the unknown or unexpected created alternative mental and symbolic systems of providing answers and instructions for coping with daily life in the shadow of death. German-Jewish novelist Jurek Becker's *Jacob der Lügner* (Jacob the Liar) (1975), about a ghetto inmate who lies about having a hidden radio set and who "quotes" positive, good "news" items that he has supposedly listened to, is one good example for this kind of mechanism. Other examples stressing the tension between the known and controllable to their opposites and the attempt to fill the void between them are supplied in Nachman Blumental's essay "Magical Thinking Among the Jews During the Nazi Occupation" (1963). Blumental cites mechanisms such as not calling a thing or an action by its name and avoidance of mentioning names of evil people, which attest to "magical thinking," that is, people believing that their thoughts and words influence reality.

Material Culture

Material culture, or the folklore of objects and ornaments, is the least prevalent aspect of folklore in the discussion of folklore in and of the Holocaust. The reason for the dismissal of an otherwise significant part of a people's life as well as an entire academic field is due to the fact that the Holocaust itself was as destructive and annihilating to objects as it was to lives. In that sense, one can more easily discuss the empty space left by the destruction and robbery of household items and liturgical objects, referred to as the financial aspect of Jewish suffering in the Holocaust, than existing or preserved objects. To this, one might add the final stripping to nakedness of the deportees to concentration camps, a point referred to in Holocaust literature (for example, in the works of Primo Levi) as reduction to virtual nonexistence as well as a powerful means of humiliation and repression.

In the aforementioned personal accounts, whether in the communal memorial literature or in the personal memoirs, one often comes upon touching accounts about keeping certain objects such as prayer books, pictures, working tools, dishes, or clothing items in all circumstances and against all odds. Notwithstanding these personal items, there are also a few examples of objects created in the camps, such as prayer books rewritten from memory on used cement bags, or memories, letters, and bulletins inscribed upon any accessible paper, cloth, clay, stone, or furniture. Due to the increasing awareness of the academic and educational value of such objects and deeds, salvaged objects and stories are made known to a wide public by printing photographed and facsimile versions of them.

If in ordinary times folklore relates to the study of tangible objects, then in the case of the folklore of the Holocaust, much of the material culture that would usually be part of a people's life in a place for centuries is irretrievably lost, although in some cases the memory of parts of it still vibrantly exists. As for the stories, songs, proverbs, and other verbal entities referring to the Holocaust phenomenon and memory, one should be aware of the extent to which even these seemingly extant materials are often lacking or laconic, due to the difficulty of coping with the traumatic imprints of the Holocaust and providing meaning to the telling and the things told.

Ilana Rosen

See also: Czechoslovakia, Jews of; Hungary, Jews of; Poland, Jews of.

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HOSHANA RABBA

See: Sukkot

HUMOR

The term "Jewish humor" is problematic for a number of reasons. The word "humor" itself has had various meanings over the course of history, and in order to examine humor historically, an unvarying meaning must be specified that can be uniformly applied at all points in time. In the context of this entry, humor is considered a deliberate amusement-provoking stimulus. It may inspire smiling or laughter, a disposition to smile or laugh, or even the effort to suppress a smile or laugh. On the surface "Jewish humor" would seem to refer to those amusement-provoking stimuli created, purveyed, and enjoyed by Jews. But there has never been an attempt to assess the range of such materials or their relations to the corpus of international humorous expression. Rather, the term has been employed to denote humor that is believed to typify Jews— that is, humor that reflects Jewish experience, Jewish modes of thought, Jewish character, or Jewish values. In other words, a concern with "Jewish humor" is less a concern with the humor of Jews than with what is distinctive about the humor of Jews.

The idea that the spirit of a national or ethnic group was embodied in its oral literature—its myths, epics, and folk songs—crystallized in the late eighteenth century. Only in the nineteenth century did the notion develop that humor was a positive trait, an expression of the character of a people, and, ultimately, an indication of civilized status. But in that same century, Jews were accused of lacking humor and, consequently, the mark of a civilized humanity.

Until the latter part of the nineteenth century, there seems to have been no claim to a special relationship between Jews and their humorous expressions. From that point on, however, Jews dedicated themselves to demonstrating that they possessed a lively humor, that it had its own peculiarities, and that their humor characterized them as a nation since time immemorial. Scholars, essayists, and rabbis revisited traditional sources and historical and literary texts to discover an unbroken lineage of Jewish humor since their birth as a people.

Traditional and Historical Sources

They looked to the Bible for the earliest instances of humor, such as Elijah's sarcastic invective against the priest of Baal when the god failed to respond to their sacrifice: "Shout louder! After all, he is a god. But he may be in conversation, he may be detained, or he may be on a journey, or perhaps he is asleep and will wake" (1 Kgs. 18:27). They also cited Samson's comment "Had you not plowed with my heifer, you would not have guessed my riddle" (Judg. 15:18), when the solution to his insoluble riddle was betrayed to the Philistines by his wife. Also explored were rabbinical sources for instances of comic tales and witticisms. There is the story in Lamentations Rabbah (1:8) of the Athenian who brings a broken mortar to a Jewish tailor to sew back together. The tailor agrees to make the repair if the Athenian will first weave the necessary threads from sand. The motifs of such tales were often international (H10121.1 *Task: making a rope of sand*) and not distinctly Jewish.

Undoubtedly, there is material that has been identified as humor in the early sources that was not intended to arouse laughter (e.g., many biblical puns or the tales of Rabbah bar bar Ḥannah in the Talmud), as well as humor that may have been intended but is no longer recognizable. Despite numerous examples of humor in biblical, talmudic, and midrashic texts, when the early rabbis came to comment on humor, laughter, or satire in general, they were likely to condemn it. "Rabbi Akiva said laughing and levity accustom a man to lewdness" (*Pirqe Avot* 3:13; see also *Eruvin* 21b and *Pesaḥim* 112b). In principle, the rabbis would seem to have considered humor a prelude to sin and alien to, rather than representative of, Jewish life.

Medieval and renaissance Jewish sources were also recalled for their satirical or parodic content: for example, Immanuel di Roma's *Maḥberot* (Notebooks), overall a serious work punctuated with humorous elements; Kalonymous ben Kalonymous's *Even boḥan* (Touchstone) and *Massekhet Purim* (Tractate of Purim), the latter of which described the customs of Purim parodying the style of the Talmud; and Leon de Modena's poem in praise of gambling (to which he himself was addicted), itself a parody of a poem ascribed to Abraham ibn Ezra that condemned gambling.

Also highlighted as evidence of Jewish high-spiritedness and humor was the festival of Purim, with its masking, noisemaking, and celebration. According to an injunction in the Talmud (*Megillah* 7b), one was supposed to drink until one could no longer distinguish (*ad de'lo yada*) between cursing Haman and blessing Mordecai. Purim spiels—Purim poems, plays, and parodies—were performed and are documented as early as the sixteenth century. Noted, too, were *maggidim,* itinerant preachers who roamed Europe from the Middle Ages through the eighteenth century and who sometimes employed parables, wit, and humorous narratives to convey their spiritual and moral messages, as well as *badchanim,* professional wedding jokers and jesters who amused the wedding party—sometimes with lewd or scurrilous remarks and sometimes with parodies of sacred texts.

Nineteenth-Century Jewish Perspectives

Jewish humor of the nineteenth century is epitomized in three figures—Ludwig Börne, Moritz Gottlieb Saphir, and Heinrich Heine. These writers (born Jewish, though all converted to Christianity) were well known and widely read, and not only by Jews. None attempted to hide his Jewish ancestry, and each was ready to satirize Jews as well as anti-Semites. Heine was at once the best known and the most admired and despised. Much of his work was nothing less than an attack on the values, concepts, and personalities of his day. His *Reisebilder* (Travel Pictures) satirized the notion of the self-improving nature of travel (*Bildungsreise*) revered by the romantic consciousness of his age. His poetry often parodied the clichéd forms, diction, and style of contemporary verse by juxtaposing its pretentious language with the low language of the street. When directed at particular individuals—such as Count August von Platen—his wit was withering. This led to a claim that Jews were devoid of genuine humor, which is tolerant but, instead, were addicted to wit, which is aggressive and malign. However, it was largely because of Heine, Saphir, and Börne that Jews and humor became linked in the public imagination. The three came to epitomize Jewish

humor, and they are largely responsible for making the term *"Judenwitz"* (Jewish wit) one of both censure and delight in late nineteenth-century Europe.

Conditions in Eastern Europe also contributed to the sense of a Jewish humor and the sense of that humor as distinctive and special. Economic dislocations, legal restrictions, and waves of pogroms prompted two and a half million Jews to migrate from Eastern Europe between 1881 and 1917. The difficult conditions that east European Jewry endured gave their humor a particular poignancy. Humor that thrived in the midst of suffering suggested that the humor functioned not as idle entertainment but as a vital mode of expression. It was regarded as a mechanism to promote endurance and evidence of a resilient spirit. This admixture of humor and suffering was prominent in Sholem Aleichem's literary vignettes of East European Jewish life, so his humor and Jewish humor in general came to be conceptualized as "laughter through tears." This perspective was extended as well to the humor of Jews in Central Europe with the rise of Adolf Hitler and to the Jews of the communist bloc under their repressive regimes.

Jewish Humor in America

The linkage of Jews and humor was further enhanced by the Jewish experience in America. Growing out of the Yiddish theater established in New York in the 1880s, immigrant actors crossed into Yiddish vaudeville and mainstream vaudeville, rendering comic ethnic types and highlighting the clash of ethnic languages and customs in the new American culture and environment. The career of many of these actors—for example, Molly Picon, Menashe Skulnik, and Sophie Tucker—spanned Yiddish theater, vaudeville, and mainstream American radio, film, and television. Vaudeville provided the major training ground for American-born Jewish entertainers who would become the national comic stars of American radio and television: Jack Benny, Milton Berle, Fanny Brice, George Burns, Eddie Cantor, George Jessel, the Marx Brothers, and Phil Silvers. Comics such as Sid Caesar, Danny Kaye, and Jerry Lewis found their way to media stardom through work in the "Borscht Belt," the chain of Jewish vacation resorts in the Catskill Mountains of New York. These figures were so popular that in some sense they personified American comedy in the 1940s and 1950s.

However, to the extent that they succeeded in national venues, their Jewish identities were accordingly suppressed. Only in the 1970s and 1980s, with the end of the myth of the "melting pot" and the rise in ethnic consciousness and identity politics, did comedians like Woody Allen, Jackie Mason, and Mel Brooks, who traded on peculiarities of Jewish language and stereotype, again become prominent. By this time, however, the dominance of Jewish comics in the national media was coming to an end.

Humor in Israel

That Jewish humor was an a priori conceptualization based on selective evidence is perhaps most clearly demonstrated by the almost complete exclusion from consideration of the humor of Jews outside Europe and the United States. Writers and scholars have ignored the humor of Sephardic communities as well as the humor of the communities of the Middle East. The idea of a Jewish humor was born in Europe in response to an emancipated, yet stigmatized, Jewish minority. Humor of other Jewish communities not seen as arising from such conditions earned little or no consideration. The same might be said about humor in Israel. Even though Israelis have utilized all the genres and media of comic communication and have generated vast quantities of comic material that responds to peculiar circumstances and conditions in their society, Israeli humor has not been successfully integrated into the category of Jewish humor. Indeed, a number of scholars have suggested that Jewish humor is incompatible with and alien to a Jewish state. One reason for this sense of an unbridgeable chasm between Jewish and Israeli humor is that much Israeli humor is inaccessible to outsiders, depending as it does on nuances of the Hebrew language and local Israeli experience. Another is that Israelis, in seeking to shape a new national identity, deliberately distanced themselves from those qualities that were viewed as characterizing the Jews of Europe. But the most important reason is that in Israel, Jews are not a stigmatized and vulnerable minority. Israel did not reproduce the sociological conditions that gave birth to the conception of Jewish humor. The only humor in Israel that has been accepted into the category of Jewish humor are those materials that were collected and published in Israel but derive from European sources.

Despite the great number of books and essays that have been written on Jewish humor, much serious research remains to be done. This research, however, needs to abandon the notion of so-called Jewish humor and embrace the close study of the humor of Jews in their social and cultural contexts, wherever and whatever these might be. Jewish humor is an artifact that no longer captures the conditions under which Jewish life is lived in the twenty-first century and as such requires new paradigms.

Elliott Oring

See also: Chelm, The Wise of; Dundes, Alan; Hershele Ostropoler; Joha; Oring, Elliott.

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HUNGARY, JEWS OF

Evidence of Jewish life in ancient Hungary (Pannonia and Dacia) exists as far back as the Roman era, but Jewish community life in the country started only after the beginning of the second millennium, as shown by legal and commercial documents concerning Jews. In the period of the Ottoman conquest (1526–1676), the status of the Jews improved, with Jews from distant regions, including Sephardic Jews from Asia Minor and the Balkans, joining the local Jewish community. During the seventeenth century, under the Austrian Hapsburg rule, the Jewish community of Buda became prominent.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, still under the Hapsburg reign, there was a wave of immigration to the country, mainly from the east but also from Moravia in the west. The immigrant Jews settled mostly in villages. After 1783, Jews were allowed to settle in the royal towns and cities as well. These settlers lay the basis for the formation of Hungary's Jewry of the modern era. As of the mid-nineteenth century, the so-called Jewish question—a term that encompasses the issues and resolutions surrounding the unequal civil, legal, and national status of minority Ashkenazi Jews—preoccupied the country's legislative authorities as well as its social and cultural circles. The government's general tendency was to grant the Jews civil rights. Jewish participation in the revolution of 1848–1849 and the resulting war for independence from Hapsburg rule enhanced this tendency, because many Jews had proved their loyalty to the Hungarian people. Finally, in 1867, Hungarian Jews were emancipated and started to establish a strong position in the country's political, financial, and cultural life.

In 1895, the Jewish religion was officially acknowledged as one of the state's accepted religions. At the same time, political anti-Semitism developed among conservative right-wing circles and was led mainly by the gentry. During World War I, many Jews of all convictions and degrees of religious observance served in the Hungarian army, many of them as officers, and suffered losses in life and property.

As for internal Jewish life, the Jewish community maintained a tension between Orthodox and assimilationist tendencies. After the 1830s, the Haskalah (Enlightenment) movement among European Jews—which advocated better integration into European society and increasing education in secular studies, Hebrew language, and Jewish history—spread to the country. In the 1860s Hungarian Jews were emancipated; that is, they were granted full citizenship in return for their endorsing a modern, secular way of life. In response, Hungarian Jewry split into three streams that varied in their attitude toward preservation of traditional religious values as opposed to adoption of modern secular ones. The three streams were: the Orthodox, the Reformers (or Neologists), and the Status Quo. The Orthodox stream opposed modernization and advocated strict adherence to Halakah, while at the same time declaring loyalty to the Hungarian State/Nation. The Neologist stream advocated adoption of modern, liberal values while still preserving Jewish tradition. The Status Quo stream stuck to the pre-emancipation religious style, in which the two extremes were less pronounced. The Orthodox and the Neologist streams now composed the majority of Hungarian Jewry, whereas the Status Quo (or status quo ante) was a minority group. Rabbi Moses Ḥatam Sofer's dynasty (1702–1839)—which maintained a strong Orthodox Jewish perspective through communal life, Jewish education, and an opposition to Reform and radical change—maintained its influence on the Jews of the country's western and central regions. Hasidism, a branch of Orthodox Judaism, spread in the north, with leading figures such as Rabbi Moses Teitelbaum, founder of the Satmár dynasty. Rabbi Haim Elazar Shapiro, the Munkácser rebbe, was prominent in Carpatho-Russia, as were the dynasties of Belz, Sepinka, Vizhnitz (Hung., Vizsnic), and Zanz/Sanok (Hung., Cánz) in the country's northern and eastern regions. Although Hungarian Jews were not opposed to the idea of Chibat Zion (Love of Zion) and attachment to the Land of Israel, the Zionist movement, which called for the reestablishment of a Jewish homeland in the Land of Israel, attracted only a minority of the country's Jews, mainly youth of different religious and social circles, but was largely opposed by the Orthodox and the assimilationists.

Theodor Herzl, who was born in Budapest and in his youth moved to Vienna, where he remained until his death, grew up in an assimilated family. Facing anti-

Passover plate, ceramic. Hungary, 1935. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

Semitism personally and as a journalist covering the Dreyfus affair made Herzl recognize the need of the Jewish people to have their own state. In the World Jewish Congresses of the turn of the century he developed political Zionism, which sought international acknowledgment before practical Zionism in the form of a foundation of settlements in the Land of Israel.

In 1919, the Communist regime came to power in Hungary. Its government, led by Béla Kun, included several Jews in the upper ranks. This fact accentuated the wave of anti-Semitism known as the "White Terror" that followed the suppression of the Communist revolution. In the interwar period, the Hungarian Jewish community was cut in half, as a result of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy's dismemberment after World War I. During this period, the majority of the country's Jews lived in the capital city of Budapest and other provincial towns.

By mid-1941, the Jewish population was estimated at about 800,000, as a result of the annexation of regions in the country's north, east, and south, from Czechoslovakia, Romania, and Yugoslavia, respectively. Thus Hungary was rewarded for its membership in the Axis with Nazi Germany and Italy. At this time, following the example set by Germany in the anti-Semitic Nuremberg Laws, Hungary's legislative authorities began to diminish the rights of Jews through a series of so-called Jewish Laws. The first action against the Jewish population occurred in summer 1941, following the victories of the Axis on the eastern front. The Office for Aliens' Control (KEOK) expelled to Galicia approximately 20,000 Jews whose Hungarian citizenship was in question, where in Kolomyya, near Kamenets-Podolsky, they were shot by SS units assisted by the Hungarian army, events that came to be known as the Kamenets-Podolsky massacre. In addition, the Hungarian government established Jewish labor battalions, made up of young males, and a few smaller units of Jewish women. Many of the men were led to the eastern front, mostly on foot, and employed in construction and other odd jobs. Their food rations were meager, and they received no clothing. These units consisted of about 50,000 men, of whom approximately 5,000 survived the war.

In spring 1944, the Nazi army invaded Hungary and started to take measures against the country's Jews like those they had imposed in other occupied countries. Within months, all the country's Jews, except the capital's residents, were gathered together and sent to extermination camps in Auschwitz-Birkenau or to other forced labor camps. About a hundred thousand Jews remained

in Budapest, where they suffered raids and were moved to ghettos by the Nyilas, the militia of the right-wing Arrow-Cross party, which came to power at this time. Many Jews in the capital suffered from hunger, some found refuge in foreign embassies, such as the Swedish and Swiss "Safe Houses," and they were all liberated in January 1945 by the Red Army. Of the country's 800,000 Jews, fewer than half survived the Holocaust.

After the war, all anti-Jewish legislation was legally abolished, although anti-Semitic sentiments remained in the minds and hearts of the population. Two pogroms (anti-Jewish riots) occurred in 1946, when Jews returned to their past provincial towns and claimed the property left behind by their families. In 1950, the aforementioned three religious streams were unified, although the Orthodox remained largely autonomous even within the unified organization. The old aristocratic Jewish leadership was now replaced by a new pro-Zionist one. The 1956 Prague Spring uprising against the Communist regime created an opening that allowed about 20,000 of the remaining Jews to leave the country.

The Hungarian Jewish community currently numbers about 100,000, most of whom live in the capital. After the 1990s, with the end of the Communist regime, the Hungarian Jewish community became more expressive and outspoken about its hitherto-suppressed identity. Many Holocaust memoirs by Jews appeared in Hungary during the last decade of the twentieth century, and a large number of Jewish youth joined Jewish organizations and schools. At the same time, political anti-Semitism also surged in this period, reminiscent of the interwar period.

Hungarian-Jewish Folklore and Culture

Scholars divide the folklore of Hungarian Jews during the Austro-Hungarian era up to the Holocaust into two main streams determined by the nature of the community living and creating it. Ultra-Orthodox communities were inspired either by the Ḥatam-Sofer dynasty and spirit or by Hasidism. Both these circles rejected modern spirits and tendencies, whether Haskalah oriented, Zionist, or socialist-Communist. In addition, non-Hasidic communities emphasized learning and enacting mitzvot (commandments or dictates) but opposed mysticism, veneration of saints, and the folklore that ensued from such phenomena. By contrast, Hasidic followers stressed and developed precisely these tendencies and activities. Among them one can count the journeys to and by Hasidic rabbis, which often included storytelling on the way and during the Sabbath meals, Hasidic dances on holidays and celebrations, song composition or adoption from the gentile rural environment to accompany prayer or chant texts, and the creation of specific foodways, clothing rules, and style.

Most of these items, as well as their documentation, are irretrievably lost, together with and as a result of the demise of this portion of Hungarian Jewry in the Holocaust. Nonetheless, as part of the effort to reconstruct at least part of these lost treasures, present-day Hungarian folklorists and ethnographers have been able to present and study at least the memory of this community as it existed until the beginning of the Holocaust. Thus, folklorists Ilona Dobos, Ilona Nagy, and János Fiala, to name a few, studied Jewish legends and their influence on the surrounding Christian environment. Other scholars are studying ethno-music accompanying Jewish liturgical life, holiday customs, and beliefs, fears, and wishes shared by this largely lost Jewish community.

The majority of Budapest Jews who survived World War II were Neologist, secular, or atheist or converted to Christianity. A significant number of these Jews remained in Budapest. In writing and interviews, Nobel laureate Imre Kertész, a writer and Holocaust survivor, often declares his reservations about Hungarian society together with his clinging to it. This tension characterizes many pre- and post-Holocaust Hungarian-Jewish writers, artists, journalists, and thinkers, who to this day identify themselves as "Hungarians of Moses's religion," in spite of the rejection and persecution they or their ancestors have suffered throughout modern Hungarian history. The preoccupation with this love-hate relationship has found its expression in the works of many Jewish writers, artists, and scholars as well as, to a much lesser extent, in the oral lore, personal narratives, and life histories of ex-Hungarian Jews, including Holocaust survivors, who may be more resigned to their status as outsiders within Hungarian society.

It may be due to their predicament simultaneously as insiders and outsiders that present and past Hungarian Jews have adopted the Bergsonian dual stance of simultaneous empathy and detachment and thus have become famous for their sense of humor and humoristic creation. The 2002 Israel Prize winner Efraim Kishon (Ferenc Kishont) is one example, as are Israel Folktale Archives folktale collector Gershon Bribram and French writer of Hungarian origin Adam Biro.

Ilana Rosen

See also: Hasidic Tales; Languages, Jewish; Romania, Jews of.

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Ḥ*UPPAH*

See: Marriage

I

Ibn Ezra, Abraham
(c. 1092–1167)

Abraham Ibn Ezra, a Jewish writer-philosopher of the Middle Ages, is a popular figure of Jewish folktales. Stories about him taken from a wide variety of printed sources and unpublished manuscripts are included in *Inyenei Ibn Ezra,* an anthology edited by Naftali Ben-Menahem (1950), and approximately thirty oral stories are contained in the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa. The sixteenth-century Rabbi Gedaliah ibn Yaḥya wrote of Ibn Ezra in *Shalshelet ha'Kabbalah* (1586) that he heard many stories about his affairs and deeds. This remark is evidence that the narrative tradition surrounding Ibn Ezra circulated as early as the sixteenth century.

The most conspicuous feature of the Ibn Ezra stories is the duality of his character. A hapless, impoverished wanderer, he is yet a great poet, philosopher, Torah commentator, and miracle worker. Narrative tradition has him appear suddenly where Jews are in trouble, save the community, and disappear, like the prophet Elijah. When he wanders disguised as a poor, ignorant man, society scorns and mocks him, but when the community discovers his identity, they regret their poor treatment of him and search him out to pay him honor.

This transformation in the community's attitude toward him functions for the simple reader/listener as wish fulfillment. The simple man on the fringe of society hopes one day to prove how wrong society was about him and ultimately enjoy the respect he deserves.

The famous story about Ibn Ezra's marriage to Judah Halevi's daughter illustrates this aspect of duality: the discrepancy between his appearance and his real value. Judah Halevi—the wealthy, celebrated and esteemed poet—leaped up one day with an oath to wed his daughter to the first Jew to come before him. The first man to appear is Ibn Ezra, dressed in rags and pretending to be ignorant and boorish. Yet the oath, which at first seems a hasty caprice, turns out to be part of a divine plan, when the greatness of Ibn Ezra is revealed to all.

Still, Ibn Ezra remains poor. He gives up the treasures and comforts of this world so as not to lose any of his reward in the next. When a powerful king offers Ibn Ezra vast riches, he gives it all to charity.

Not merely poor, Ibn Ezra is also unlucky. Perhaps these stories stem from the historical detail that he was also an astrologer who dealt regularly with questions of luck and fortune.

When Ibn Ezra tries to sell shrouds in a town afflicted by the plague, the plague ends and nobody dies. When he tries to sell lamps, a gentile man chases him out of the market. The folktale turns the lyric metaphor written by Ibn Ezra into inverted reality: "Were candles my wares, the sun would not dim until my demise."

At the same time, Ibn Ezra appears in the stories as a rescuer of Jews. He fearlessly stands up to rulers and kings to save the Jewish community from harsh decrees. When he was a captive, he answers three questions put to him by the king and in exchange asks for the deliverance of the Jewish community as a whole.

Ibn Ezra has the ability to perform miracles to rescue the Jewish community. He causes horns to grow from the brow of the sultan of Morocco and refuses to remove them until the sultan swears never again to persecute the Jews.

Ibn Ezra, like the prophet Elijah, has magical powers. The stories of his sudden appearances and mysterious disappearances are based on the biographical fact that he was a wanderer, staying with a given community only a short time before going on his way.

Ibn Ezra can make himself invisible and pass through solid walls at will. In one story he does so to extricate a Jew from prison. He can make himself look like someone else and travel vast distances in the blink of an eye. He carries out all his marvelous deeds in God's name and through use of the Tetragrammaton (four Hebrew letters for the name of God). He would never exploit his powers for personal gain or pleasure; he employs them only to save his people.

Many folktales describe an encounter between Ibn Ezra and Maimonides and between Ibn Ezra and Halevi. Although, historically speaking, no encounter with Maimonides could ever have taken place, a firm bond did exist between Halevi and Ibn Ezra. In one story Halevi even appears to Ibn Ezra after his death and asks him to join him because he sorely misses his friend.

The goal of these stories is to prove Ibn Ezra's superiority over both the medieval Jewish philosopher and Torah scholar Maimonides and the Jewish philosopher-poet Judah Halevi. Ibn Ezra corrects Halevi's poetry and helps him when he falters, and he assists the Jewish community where Maimonides has failed.

The numerous stories about Ibn Ezra and their borrowing of motifs from tales about the prophet Elijah, the most important character in Jewish folktales, prove Ibn Ezra's importance in the Jewish narrative tradition. The stories about Ibn Ezra fulfill the deep human need for communitas (Turner 1974): the wish of marginal, rejected individuals for recognition in the structured society as well as their sense of superiority over it. Though poor

and scorned, Ibn Ezra rescues the Jewish community and writes great poetry and profound biblical commentary. The society that initially rejected him for his outward appearance ultimately pays tribute to him.

Tamar Alexander

See also: Magic.

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ICONOGRAPHY

In the history of art, iconography refers to the content of the work of art, its meaning and its sources, either visual or textual, rather than its technique, composition, and style.

The definition of Jewish iconography is somewhat complicated, for Jewish artists also employed non-Jewish themes. Some subject matter, mainly biblical scenes and heroes, also appears in Christian and Muslim iconography. The use of non-Jewish themes in Jewish art had started in antiquity. It is well demonstrated in the sixth-century mosaic from a synagogue on the seashore in Gaza. The mosaic shows Orpheus, who is using his lute to charm the wild animals surrounding him. The scene that originates in Greek mythology has its meaning entirely changed with the addition of the word "David" inscribed in Hebrew above the lute. Orpheus, the mythological musician and poet, becomes King David, "the sweet psalmist of Israel" (2 Sam. 23:1).

A depiction of Abraham and the three angels in a twelfth-century Bible from Canterbury is not considered as Jewish art, yet no one would doubt the Jewishness of this same scene in a Jewish miscellany that was written and illuminated in northern France. Even Jewish genre scenes cannot always be considered Jewish iconography. The interior scene of a synagogue in a Spanish Haggadah is a perfect example of Jewish iconography of the fourteenth century. But an etching by Rembrandt from 1648 showing Jews in a synagogue would be considered Dutch art. Representation and subject matter, then, are

Burial society's beaker for the annual banquet, Prague, Bohemia, 1713. *(© The Israel Museum by Yoram Lehmann)*

not the sole determinants in identifying iconography as Jewish; context is vital.

Original Jewish iconography appears in the Passover Haggadah. The depiction of ritual items, such as the Seder plate or the *matzah* and the *maror* (bitter herbs), or of rituals themselves, such as the scene of *Havdalah* (separation; a ceremony at the conclusion of the Sabbath that separates the Sabbath from the weekdays) that appears in the Ashkenazi Haggadah, are found only in a Jewish context. It is important, however, to distinguish between iconography and an iconographical model. For example, while the Haggadah theme of the four sons is entirely Jewish, their iconographic model is the non-Jewish theme of the Ages of Man (*De aetatibus hominis*).

There are themes unique to Jewish iconography, such as those dealing with eschatology. Among them are the three eschatological animals—the bull (*shor ha'bar*), the leviathan, and the legendary bird (known as *bar yokhani* or *ziz*)—that will be served in the righteous meal in Paradise

with the arrival of the messiah. In the miscellany from northern France the models for the three eschatological animals were taken from the *Bestiary,* a medieval book about real and imaginary animals that had Christian moral and allegorical meaning ascribed to them.

After the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E., the Jews considered the Bible as its replacement, and therefore, in the Middle East and Spain, it was called *mikdashyah* (Temple of God). An iconographic tradition, this time completely Jewish, developed in Hebrew Bibles from Middle East and from Spain. This tradition depicted the implements of the Tabernacle-Temple as an expression of the eschatological hope for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Other themes are found in Christian and Muslim iconography, and it is the objects depicted therein that identify them as Jewish. When the binding of Isaac is depicted on a church altarpiece made in 1181 by Nicolas of Verdun, it prefigures the crucifixion This same scene, depicted on large platters used at circumcision and *pidyon-ha'ben* (redemption of the first-born) ceremonies, serves as a reminder of the covenant between God and Abraham and his descendants.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Bohemian Jewish burial societies (ḥevrah kadisha) adopted a local custom of using illustrated beakers that was incorporated into a unique iconography. The custom was to drink wine from this beaker in the annual banquet held on the traditional anniversary of the death of Moses. The illustration on the beakers depicted a burial procession with the members of the *ḥevrah kadisha* dressed in their special attire, one of them often carrying an alms box. The scene was accompanied by the words *tzedakah tatzil mimavet* (charity will protect against death). Exclusive iconography still decorates ritual objects made today.

Yael Zirlin

See also: Illuminated Manuscripts.

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ILLUMINATED MANUSCRIPTS

The appearance of illuminated Hebrew manuscripts as historians know them today corresponds to the appearance of the Hebrew codex. Although the first literary source that testifies to the existence of codices among the Jews is dated to the eighth century, at present, the earliest known Hebrew codex is dated to the tenth century and so is the first illuminated manuscript.

Scholars have no proof as to the existence of illuminated Hebrew scrolls during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Those who support this possibility cite the existence in the Dura Europos synagogue of wall paintings depicting biblical cycles, and the appearance of Jewish midrashim in Christian manuscripts of the period. Those who oppose it counterargue that since the Church fathers adopted Jewish exegeses and legends, there is nothing surprising in the appearance of illustrated midrashim in Christian manuscripts.

One should bear in mind that the illuminated manuscripts in existence today constitute only a small portion of those produced between the tenth and fifteenth centuries. The illumination in these books was meant mainly to decorate the text, sometimes to enlighten it.

Almost all the Hebrew illuminated manuscripts in existence were produced in the Diaspora, in the countries in which the Jews resided, first in the Middle East and later in Western Europe. The illumination in Hebrew manuscripts is anchored in the local art of the countries where they were produced. Over time Jewish illuminators developed a Jewish iconography manifested mainly in Passover *Haggadot,* in copies of the Bible or the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) and in prayer books. Beside a crossed borders Jewish iconography, we find local Jewish iconographic traditions, particular to certain communities. The models used were often not Jewish and derived from local art, either manuscripts or other media. There is no such thing as a Jewish style.

It is important to note that the Hebrew manuscripts, whether illuminated or not, did not necessarily remain in the countries in which they were produced. They were carried by their owners when they emigrated or were expelled or changed hands when they were sold. Many of them were bought in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Christian Hebraists who later donated them

Miscellany. Decorated colophon of the scribe Benjamin. North of France, 1279–1280. MS. Add. 11639, fol. 306v. *(© The British Library Board)*

Oriental Manuscripts

The earliest known illuminated Hebrew manuscripts were produced in the Middle East: Syria, Eretz Israel (Land of Israel), and Egypt. All three regions were dominated at the time by the Islamic culture. The decorativeness of the Islamic art manifested, among others, in architectonic elements and Qur'an decoration, both ac-

cessible to the Jews. It was adopted by Jewish illuminators and entered the Hebrew manuscripts.

The earliest dated illuminated manuscript known today is the *Saint Petersburg Pentateuch.* It was written in 929 by the scribe Salomon ben Buya'a, and the scribe of the *masorah* and illuminator Ephraim ben Buya'a. *Masorah* [derives from the word "*masore*t" (tradition)—a vast notation system destined to preserve the ancient, accurate version of the Bible. It is divided into the *masorah magna* (large *masorah*)—long comments written in the upper and lower margins—and *masorah parva* (small

masorah)—short comments written between the text columns]. Ephraim ben Buya'a's illumination consists of the *masorah magna* written in micrography (decorative elements formed by minute script; at the beginning, in the Middle East, these were geometric motifs. Later, in Western Europe, additional motifs—objects, animals and human figures—were added) and of carpet pages (ornamental pages consisting only of decorative motifs), in part employing micrography. These elements are characteristic of Oriental manuscripts. The Pentateuch contains, in addition, two carpet pages with a schematic depiction of the Tabernacle implements.

Most of the other surviving manuscripts from the tenth and the eleventh centuries contain only decoration. Most were preserved in the Cairo Geniza (derives from a verb meaning "to hide"; a place in the synagogue or outside in which books and fragments of books containing the name of God were hidden. The best known is the Cairo Geniza, discovered in the nineteenth century in a room in the Ben Ezra Synagogue in Fustat—old Cairo) and originated in Egypt, Syria, and Eretz Israel. Of the Yemenite manuscripts that survived, very few predate the fourteenth century. Like other Oriental manuscripts, they are decorated with carpet pages of floral and geometric motifs, executed in part in micrography. Two fourteenth-century Pentateuch contain a few text illustrations.

Sephardic Manuscripts

In 711 Muslims from North Africa invaded the Iberian Peninsula, occupying most of it. The Reconquista (reconquest of the peninsula by several Christian kingdoms) began in 790. Muslims were slowly pushed to the south, and in 1300 most of the Iberian Peninsula was returned to Christian hands, except for the kingdom of Granada, which was overtaken in 1492. None of the Hebrew manuscripts produced under Muslim occupation have survived. All the existing illuminated manuscripts were produced in the north of the peninsula under Christian rule. Yet the characteristic Muslim decorative elements in Sephardic manuscripts testify to their existence: Micrography in the margins is very common in Sephardic *Haggadot* and Bibles—the latter also contain carpet pages with motifs taken from the Qur'an.

The cities of Toledo and Burgos, both in the kingdom of Castile, were important centers of Hebrew manuscript production. The famous *Damascus Keter* was written and decorated in 1260 in Burgos. In Toledo, in 1277, the earliest copy known today of the Bible was produced. Its decoration includes Tabernacle implements—another Middle Eastern innovation. A similar array of implements appears in two Bibles from Catalonia.

A somewhat different tradition appeared at the end of the fourteenth century in several Bibles from Catalonia, which at the time was part of the kingdom of Aragon. These contain a new element of an eschatological nature, the Mount of Olives, from which, according to the Bible, the arrival of the messiah will be announced. This addition might be related to the pogroms of 1348 against the Jews of Catalonia and Aragon, who, for many years, knew a peaceful and prosperous life. The pogroms were the result of continuous anti-Jewish propaganda by priests and monks since the thirteenth century. In such periods of distress, Diaspora Jews sought comfort and redemption in eschatological expressions.

The Cervera Bible was written in 1300 by the scribe Samuel ben Abraham. His colophon indicates that he wrote the Bible during a ten-month period he was obliged to spend in Cervera, at the time a small village near Toledo, while waiting for his broken thigh to heal. Joseph Hatzarfati (the Frenchman), an illuminator of the Bible, wrote a colophon on an entire page, composed of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic letters. His rich decoration includes several text illustrations. A third person who added his colophon to the Bible is Joshua ibn Gaon, the scribe of the *masorah*. His colophon is hidden in the *masorah magna*, which he wrote in micrography. Joshua ibn Gaon, who worked in the Castilian cities of Soria and Tudela, produced several decorated Bibles. The Cervera Bible served as a direct model for the illuminator Joseph ibn Ḥayyim, who, in 1476, in La Coruña, decorated a Bible, the well-known Kennicott Bible, for Isaac ben Don Solomon di Braga. Although employing an entirely different style, the illuminator copied many of the motifs of the Cervera Bible, including the lettering for the colophon.

The earliest illustrated Haggadah, the Hispano-Moresque Haggadah, was also produced in Castile. Yet most of the Sephardic *Haggadot* were produced in the fourteenth century in Catalonia. Artistically, the group of Catalonian *Haggadot* reveals the influence of the local style. Fourteenth-century Spanish illumination was highly influenced by French and Italian manuscripts. The *Haggadot* reveal a mixture of the French, Italian, and old Spanish styles.

Most of the illumination in Sephardic manuscripts known today was the work of Jewish illuminators, yet there is no doubt that manuscripts were given to non-Jewish ateliers to be decorated. Such is a copy of *Moreh nevukhim* (Guide for the Perplexed), by Maimonides, from 1348, whose illustrations are stylistically related to the non-Jewish atelier of the Master of St. Mark and his main artist, Ferrer Bassa. Several Spanish Jews translated medical, astronomical, and mathematical treatises from Arabic, serving the important function of introducing many important works to the West. Many such treatises were decorated or accompanied by illustrations. For example, some chapters about surgery were taken from the medical encyclopedia, written in ca. 1000 by Abulcasis, an Arab surgeon, and translated into Hebrew in 1258 by the physician Shemtov ben Isaac of

Tortosa, who resided in Marseille. The text is accompanied by drawings of various surgical instruments.

An important school of manuscript illumination was active in Lisbon at the end of the fifteenth century. The existing manuscripts of this school are Bibles and prayer books.

Ashkenazi Manuscripts

The Jews of England left behind no illuminated manuscripts. After their expulsion from England in 1290, they assimilated in their new communities, mainly in France, and if a tradition of manuscript illumination existed, they did not preserve it.

The Jews of France were expelled from the country in 1306. Only four Hebrew illuminated manuscripts have survived from France, all of them decorated in the last quarter of the thirteenth century. Two copies of the Pentateuch were decorated by Jewish illuminators who used non-Jewish models. One of them contains a single illustration: the Tabernacle Menorah surrounded by biblical scenes. In the scene of the binding of Isaac, the altar is covered with an embroidered white cloth, thus resembling a church altar. The bound legs of Isaac, who lies on the altar, form a cross. A golden halo is attached to the head of Aaron, who lights the menorah. The two other manuscripts are a copy of *Mishneh Torah* and a miscellany from northern France, both the work of non-Jewish ateliers. The miscellany was decorated by several Parisian ateliers that worked for the king of France, its court, and the high clergy. We have no proof, then, of the existence of local Jewish iconographic tradition.

The Jewish community in Germany existed continuously throughout the centuries. Hebrew manuscripts were produced in all parts of Germany. Although an original iconography was created, the style of illumination followed the different local styles. In the thirteenth century a unique iconographic tradition for certain *piyyutim* (sing., *piyyut*; liturgical hymns) was created in a group of huge *maḥzorim* that served the *ḥazanim* (sing., *ḥazan*; cantor) in the synagogue. For example, the opening of the *piyyut* for *Shabbat Ha'gadol*, the Sabbath before Passover, "*Iti milevanon kallah*" ("with me from Lebanon O bride" [Cant. 4:8]), was accompanied by a depiction of a bride and a bridegroom. In the *Leipzig Maḥzor* the two are sitting side by side, while in the *Worms Maḥzor* they are standing under a wedding canopy (*ḥuppah*). The same scene, added by a Christian illuminator to a small *siddur* (prayer book), was given a polemical sense with the representation of the bride as a blindfolded crowned woman, in other words, as the figure of the *Synagoga,* the symbol of vanquished Judaism used by the Catholic Church in the Christian polemic against the Jews. The *piyyut* "*Adon imnani*" for Shavuot (lit., "weeks"; a festival celebrated seven weeks after the first day of Passover, and the second

among the three pilgrimage festivals—Pentecost) was accompanied by a scene of the Receiving of the Torah, while the *piyyutim* for Purim were accompanied by the hanging of Haman. The zodiac signs and the labors of the month accompanied the *piyyut* for dew that refers to the Jewish months. In most of the big *maḥzorim* humans are depicted with bird or animal heads, a phenomenon not yet sufficiently understood by scholars.

Another book traditionally illuminated was the Bible. It was either of a standard size or very big when the verses were written consecutively in Hebrew and Aramaic. These books were often decorated with micrography of the *masorah* or as an outline for rich interlaces combining floral motifs and various animals that composed large initial word panels. The German Jews did not adopt the depiction of the Tabernacle implements, and text illustrations are rare in the Bibles; nevertheless, some books were illustrated. The earliest German illustrated manuscript is a Rashi commentary to the Bible written in Würzburg in 1233 and decorated by a non-Jewish illuminator. Some text illustrations within initial word panels appear in an immense Pentateuch made in Ulm between 1236 and 1238. An illustration at the end of the book depicts the three eschatological animals—the bull, the leviathan, and the *ziz*—and the meal of the righteous in Paradise. In Brussels, in 1309, Isaac the scribe, son of Elijah, a cantor in Ochsenfurt, Bavaria, wrote a Pentateuch. The *masorah* was written by another scribe who was also the illuminator. In addition to the decoration, he added several illustrations, such as the spies carrying a bunch of grapes (Num. 13:23) or Samson rending the lion. At the end of the manuscript, on the side of his rhymed colophon, he added a "self-portrait," depicting himself seated on an armchair, wearing an elaborate hat, and accompanied by a dog and a monkey.

A miscellany from 1434 contains, inter alia, a unique series of text illustrations for stories from the Book of the Maccabees and elegies about the destruction of Jewish communities. Some of these illustrations reflect the life of the Jews at the time, such as the woman who bathes in the *mikveh* (ritual bath) while her husband waits in bed.

Most of the illustrated *Haggadot* known today date to the fifteenth century. The Ashkenazi Haggadah reflects an interesting working relationship between the scribe Meir Jaffe, who copied the Haggadah, and the scribe and illuminator Joel ben Simeon, who decorated it; both worked hand in hand with the workshop of the Christian illuminator Johannes Bämler. In a rhymed colophon at the end of the Haggadah, Joel refers to himself as a *tzayar* (painter).

As in Spain, it was also customary to decorate Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah.* Other decorated books were *Sefer mitzvot gadol* (great book of precepts, abbreviated *SMaG*) and *Sefer mitzvot qatan* (small book of precepts, abbreviated *SMaQ*), two codes of Jewish laws. *Meshal ha'qadmoni,* a

Prayer book for the whole year according to the Italian rite. Manuscript on parchment. North Italy, fifteenth century. Opening fols. 115v–116, beginning of Passover Haggadah. *(National Library of Israel)*

popular book of rhymed fables that was written in Spain in the thirteenth century by the Jewish poet Isaac ben Solomon ibn Sahula, was also often decorated.

Italian Manuscripts

The Italian iconographic tradition was never as well established as those in Spain and Germany. Italian Jews often decorated books of law and medicine but also the Bible, or parts of it, and *maḥzorim.* Most of the illustrated *Haggadot* are of the Ashkenazi rite and were produced by Ashkenazi scribes for Ashkenazi patrons. Yet the style of their illumination is entirely Italian and follows the local schools of book illumination. The wealthy Jewish families emulated their Christian neighbors and commissioned costly, lavishly decorated manuscripts, to which they often added, as did the gentile Italian aristocratic families, a coat of arms. Wealthy Jews employed renowned non-Jewish illuminators. The Italian manuscripts are noted for the copious detail with which they portray daily life.

Arba'a turim (four parts)*,* the fourteenth-century legal code of Jacob ben Asher, was copied in Mantua in 1435. Among its illustrations are a vivid depiction of the Jewish ritual of the slaughtering of animals and a depiction of a court of law. The medical canon of Ibn

Sina (also known by his Latinized name Avicenna), the eleventh-century Arab physician and philosopher, was translated from Arabic into Hebrew by Nathan Hame'ati, and later from Hebrew into Latin. On the opening page to the chapter that deals with "precautions necessary in collecting urine, before forming an opinion as to its character," an illustration depicts a group of patients carrying vessels containing urine specimens and listening to a diagnosis made by the physician who is holding a pot filled with urine. The sumptuous Rothschild Miscellany depicts several Jewish customs, among them mourning customs: the mourners, dressed in black, are standing by a coffin covered with black brocade. Another illustration depicts the meal of consolation (*se'udat havra'ah*), eaten after a burial. The mourners, a boy and an old man, both dressed in black, with the old man's garment torn, are sitting on cushions on the ground, their food placed on a low table. The guests are sitting at the main table. Several marriage scenes in the same manuscript reflect the extravagant fashion of the time.

In 1490, a *maḥzor* was decorated for Elijah ben Joab of Vigevano of the Gallico family. Employing a visual pun, the Gallico family chose a cock as its coat of arms (the Italian word for cock is *gallo*. In fact the name derives from Gallia, the ancient Latin name of France, the country of origin of the Gallico family). This cock appears through-

out the manuscripts. The appearance of the coat of arms of the Norsa family—three male heads—might allude to the relation by marriage between the two families. The liberal attitude among Italian Jews toward women's religious participation yielded two small, decorated *siddurim* intended for a woman. One was written in 1480 by the scribe of Provençal origin, Abraham ben Mordecai Farissol, probably for a woman from the Norsa family, Farissol's patrons during his sojourn in Mantua. The scribe inverted the wording of the morning blessings, writing, "Blessed art Thou . . . who made me a woman and not a man." Another *siddur* was written and decorated by Joel ben Simeon in 1469 for Maraviglia, daughter of Rabbi Menaḥem. In some of the small pen-and-ink text illustrations, Joel replaced the customary figure of a man with that of a young woman in contemporary Italian dress. Thus it is a young woman bowing alongside the text of the confession prayer of Yom Ha'Kippurim or holding a cup of wine adjacent to the *Havdalah* benediction (marking the conclusion of the Sabbath), or lifting a *matzah* in the Haggadah.

The earliest surviving dated Italian illuminated manuscript is a Bible made in Rome in 1284 that contains only decoration. A Pentateuch written in Rome in 1306 contains also text illustrations, such as the illustration at the beginning of Lamentations, which depicts a man with a gloomy face sitting on the ground, lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem, depicted as a walled city, illustrating the opening words of Lamentation "How doth the city [Jerusalem] sit solitary?" (Lam. 1:1).

The production of manuscripts, both decorated and nondecorated, continued to flourish until the end of the fifteenth century. In Spain it was brutally cut off with the expulsion in 1492. Although the activity of the Sephardic scribes did not cease and books were decorated from time to time in the countries of exile in North Africa and the Ottoman Empire, the traditional art of manuscript illumination by professional illuminators ceased to exist. In Germany and Italy decorated printed books gradually replaced illuminated manuscripts.

A short renaissance occurred in the eighteenth century in Germany, Moravia, Austria, and the Netherlands during several years when illuminated *Haggadot* and small prayerbooks were produced by popular artists. They reflect the improvement in conditions for the European Jewish communities that started in the seventeenth century. The active part that the Jews played in the economic and cultural life of their countries resulted in the emergence of a new status, that of the court Jews, who represented the communities before the rulers. This new, wealthy class was a major factor in the short flourishing of handwritten and illuminated manuscripts.

Yael Zirlin

See also: Iconography.

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INDEPENDENCE DAY

Observed on the fifth of Iyar, Yom Ha'atzmaut (Independence Day) marks the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948.

Following the proclamation of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel in May 1948, state officials discussed the establishment of a national holiday to celebrate the independence and sovereignty of the new state. What was then called State Day was celebrated on the anniversary, according to the Hebrew calendar, of the death of Zionist leader Theodor Herzl, which fell on July 27 that year. But this was a one-time observance. In April 1949, Independence Day was enshrined by law as an annual holiday.

Because it was a new observance, with no precedent in Jewish tradition, leaders decided to give the new holiday meaningful content. From the moment that Independence Day was allotted its slot on the Hebrew calendar, state authorities began designing ceremonies and symbols that they hoped would become traditions. Some of these failed to catch on; others lasted for only a few years. Some are still observed today, having been adapted to the changing times.

At first, the emphasis was on decorating the public space in order to convey the symbols of the holiday and create a festive atmosphere. This included flying the national flag, decorating houses and trees with lights, hanging the state seal and national proclamations, and issuing commemorative stamps and postcards. Citizens were encouraged to decorate their homes; some cities held competitions for the best decorations.

Municipal authorities put on large public celebrations for all the residents, both long-time residents and recent immigrants, with the goal of expressing national unity and solidarity. Even though the ceremonies were organized "from the top," the hope was that they would produce spontaneous rejoicing among citizens. Stages were erected in various places, and folk dancing was organized for all merrymakers who wanted to take part. The nature of these mass public events was modified over the years and adapted to the changing Israeli culture. There was also an attempt to give the holiday a family focus, centered on a festive meal with the reading of an Independence Day Haggadah, similar to the one used at a Passover Seder. Although this idea proved unsuccessful, various forms of observance among family and friends, notably picnics and outings, emerged spontaneously over the years.

The formal observances of Independence Day are considered very important. A ceremony on Mount Herzl has been conducted every year since 1950. The lighting of torches on this occasion has become a tradition. Over the years, it became customary to light twelve torches (one for each of the tribes of Israel). The torch lighters are chosen as representatives of the various sectors designated as the theme of that year's ceremony. Also in attendance are representatives of the Knesset (Parliament), government officials, members of the judiciary, chief rabbis, and others. The ceremony has expanded to include a choir, dances, a precision military drill, the exchange of flags among military units, and fireworks. The ceremony concludes with the singing of the national anthem, "Ha'tikvah."

An air display above the Tel Aviv beach on the occasion of the sixty-first Israeli Independence Day (Yom Ha'atzmaut). *(Photo by Oren Peles)*

In the Israeli culture that coalesced, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) came to play a key role on Independence Day, with military parades as a prominent feature of public celebrations. They were a way for the young country to show off its military prowess in public and give expression to citizens' patriotic feelings. In most countries, military parades are held in the capital. Although Israel, too, staged military parades in Jerusalem, they were also held in other cities, in alternation, to allow organizers to give special status to the parade in each town. For example, the parade in Ramle in 1954 marked the fifth anniversary of Jewish settlement there.

Notable military parades were held in Jerusalem to mark the tenth anniversary of statehood (1958) and again in 1968, the year after the Six-Day War occurred, when it was held in reunified Jerusalem.

After 1968 officials decided to hold military parades only in years of special significance. The last parade was held in 1973, marking twenty-five years of independence. Today the parade has been replaced by a flyby of air force jets.

On Independence Day, the media broadcast special programs about Israeli history and society. Since 1958, the International Bible Quiz, for teenagers in Israel and the Diaspora, has been held in Jerusalem and broadcast by the national media.

There is an official ceremony at the president's residence to recognize outstanding soldiers from various units. Another event is the awarding of the prestigious Israel Prizes, which are bestowed on those who have made major contributions in diverse fields of endeavor. These ceremonies, too, are broadcast live.

On Independence Day, some military bases are open to the public. There are also field trips to follow the exploits of fighters, to partake in nature festivals, and that feature competitions of all sorts. In recent years, many museums have offered free admission on this day.

Whereas secular groups endeavor to attach a secular character to Independence Day, the national religious segment of the population uses it to express traditional religious values as well. A special prayer that has been composed for the day is recited in the synagogues affiliated with this sector.

Nili Aryeh-Sapir

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INDIA, JEWS OF

Since Indian Jewish history and circumstances were very different from other Jewish communities, Indian Jewish folk customs appear to be unique in the Jewish world. The Jews of India never suffered anti-Semitism at the hands of their fellow countrymen. The stories, legends, and songs that emerged among all three Jewish communities are not the reactive, defensive type, and are evidently non-Eurocentric, but influenced by local Indian themes. Typical Jewish jokes about anti-Semites, jokes about self-hating Jews, or ethnic slurs, which appear either in Muslim or in Christian lands, are absent from the Indian Jewish repertoire. Prominent are origin myths, legends proving identity, and songs reiterating religious affiliation.

Three Jewish Communities

There are three major Indian communities: the Bene Israel, the Cochin Jews, and the "Baghdadis," many of whom originated in Iraq. Influenced by their Hindu or Muslim neighbors, all three groups developed special Indian folk customs in their religious worship, such as partaking of Indian delicacies on particular festivals or observing unique wedding or burial customs. (Mention is not made here of Judaizing groups in India, such as the Shinlung or "Bnei Menashe").

Bene Israel

The largest of India's Jewish communities is the Bene Israel ("Children of Israel"). They claim that they came from the "North," perhaps as early as 175 B.C.E. By the eighteenth century, under the influence of the British, they began to move out of the Konkan villages south of Bombay (today Mumbai) to the metropolis. By the twentieth century, the majority of the Bene Israel had set up synagogues and communities in urban centers, such as Pune, Ahmedabad, New Delhi, Karachi, and even in Aden. The Bene Israel community boasts a relatively large number of educated members, among them lawyers, professors, doctors, mayors, and authors. After Indian independence in 1947 and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, the majority of the Bene Israel gradually emigrated to Israel. Today, fewer than 4,000 Bene Israel remain in India, largely in the Maharashtra region, and more than 60,000 live in Israel.

Cochin Jews

The miniscule community of Cochin Jews numbered 2,400 people in 1947, of whom fewer than 30 souls remain on the Malabar coast today. After Vasco da Gama's expedition to India in 1498 some non-Indian Jews (the "Paradesi") from Spain, the Netherlands, Aleppo, and Germany settled in Cochin and joined their Jewish brethren. The Paradesi Synagogue was established in 1568. One member of that community who rose to prominence under Dutch rule was Ezekiel Rahabi (1694–1771); he acted as the principal merchant for the Dutch in Cochin and signed his memoranda in Hebrew. They were acclaimed in 1968 when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi celebrated the quartercentenary of the Paradesi Synagogue, and the Indian government honored the community by issuing a commemorative stamp on the occasion.

The Cochin Jews were dispersed in five major settlements in eight communities in Kerala: Cochin, Ernakulam, Chendamanglam, Mala, and Parur. After the establishment of the State of Israel, motivated by Zionism, most of the Malabari Jews emigrated.

Baghdadis

The more affluent Jewish community in India is that of the Jews from Iraq and Syria, often known as the "Baghdadis," who migrated to two major centers in India, Calcutta (now called Kolkata) and Bombay, from the eighteenth century on. The Sassoon dynasty established prayer houses and synagogues and built hospitals, libraries, and schools in those cities for the benefit of Jews and non-Jews alike. In Calcutta, as many as eight Baghdadi synagogues operated regularly, several presses operated, both translating holy texts into Hebrew and publishing original works. After the withdrawal from India of the British, with whom the Baghdadi Jews had associated as non-native Indians, many of the Baghdadis emigrated to England and other English-speaking countries, and a few to Israel. Today, there are fewer than 300 Jews of Iraqi origin left in India.

Oral Traditions of Origins

The literature and folklore of the Indian Jews is grounded in myth and legend, which has a very "Indian" flavor.

The Shipwreck

The Bene Israel origin myth is as follows: The Bene Israel ancestors were shipwrecked off the Konkan coast and lost all their holy books; they only remembered the Shema prayer, which declared their faith in monotheism. The seven men and seven women who survived took refuge in the village of Navgaon, where they buried the

bodies of their relatives and friends. The survivors were offered hospitality by local Hindus, and the Bene Israel took up the occupation of oil pressing, becoming known as *Shanwar Telis,* or Saturday Oilmen, because they refrained from work on the Jewish Sabbath. A similar origin myth is recounted by Chitpavan Brahmins.

Another well-known legend among the Bene Israel recounts that when discovered by the Jew David Rahabi (possibly in the eighteenth century), the Bene Israel observed the Sabbath, dietary laws, circumcision, and many of the Jewish festivals. In order to ascertain whether the Bene Israel were indeed Jews, Rahabi requested that the women prepare him a meal of fish. When they singled out the fish with fins and scales—that is, the kosher fish from the non-kosher fish—Rahabi was convinced of the Bene Israel's Jewish identity and agreed to instruct them in the tenets of Judaism.

Of Copperplates and Cochin

The settlement of the Cochin Jews on the Malabar coast is ancient. Documentary evidence of Jewish settlement in Kerala can be found in the famous Cochin Jewish copperplates inscribed in an ancient Tamil script (dated 1000 C.E.). In that year, during the reign of Bhaskara Ravi Varman (962–1020 C.E.), the Jews were granted seventy-two privileges, which included the right to use a day lamp, to erect a palanquin, to blow a trumpet, and to be exempt from and to collect certain taxes.

One legend holds that they arrived with King Solomon's merchants. The most popular local legend in South Indian Christian repertoires dates the arrival of Jews to Cochin in India to the first century. Thomas the Apostle and Abbanes, an Indian merchant, arrived at Cranganore, the ancient capital of Cochin, on the wedding day of the king's daughter. Thomas recited poetry in Hebrew, and only a Jewish flautist understood him and she fell in love with him. He subsequently converted her to Christianity. However, the legend points to the existence of Jews already residing on the Malabar coast before the first century C.E.

Baghdadi Domestic Scandals

One of the founders of the Bombay community was Joseph Semah, who arrived in India in 1730 from Surat; another was Shalom Cohen, a merchant who settled in Calcutta in 1798. The Jewish merchants, who escaped deteriorating conditions in Iraq, were followed by other Jews, who established thriving businesses in the East, as far afield as Singapore, Hong Kong, and Shanghai. All sorts of stories exist about the character and deeds of the founders of the Calcutta Jewish community. Shalom Cohen left Aleppo for India in 1789, returning to Surat in 1792, where he sent for his wife Seti. Her parents

Married women's pendants. Ernakulam, Parur, India, nineteenth–twentieth centuries. Gift of Raḥel Neḥemia, Jerusalem. *(© The Israel Museum, Jerusalem)*

were reluctant to send her, so he married another woman, Najima in Surat, a marriage which lasted only two weeks. In 1796 he was reunited with Seti. Soon he took another wife, Simḥa. They all lived in Calcutta with ten children. Two half-sisters, Rebecca, Seti's only child, and Sarah, Simḥa's daughter, were married on the same day in 1815 in Cohen's home in Chinsura, and they and their husbands shared a house after the wedding guests returned to Calcutta.

Unique Religious Folk Customs

The religious customs of the Indian Jews have some unique aspects. On Yom Kippur, known as the "The Festival of the Closing of the Doors," Bene Israel arrive in synagogue before dawn so as to avoid contact with other people. They have particular folk customs, such as hair-shaving ceremonies for babies, pilgrimages, and special ways of celebrating the festivals. An unusual feature of Bene Israel religious worship is the intensive belief in Eliyahoo Hannabi. Whereas most Jews believe that Elijah ascended to heaven from a site somewhere

near present-day Haifa in Israel, the Bene Israel fervently believe that he departed on his chariot from a village called Khandalla in the Konkan. Bene Israel go on pilgrimages to the site, which is also revered by local Hindus, who claim that they can see the footprints of Elijah's horses. There, they make wishes for the redemption of vows or pray for thanksgiving. This belief has become a central theme in indigenous novels, for example, by the Bene Israel novelist Esther David.

Among the many unique Jewish customs of the Cochin Jews, mention should be made of the wedding ceremony, when the groom himself recites the benedictions. Under the *ḥuppah* (bridal canopy), he holds a golden chalice containing wine in which the wedding ring, tied to a loop made with seven strings, is immersed. He himself states that he is betrothed to his bride according to the laws of Moses and Israel. He drinks from the cup, which he gives to his bride, and then he places the ring on the index finger of her right hand, with the words "Behold, thou art consecrated to me." A young boy then reads the *ketubbah* (marriage contract), according to "Shingli" (Cochin) custom.

Among the Baghdadi Jews, a complex number of childbirth rituals were devised, for the protection of both the mother and child, including the wearing of charms and amulets or hanging them at the bedside. Often nutmeg, garlic, and a small blue bead were pinned on to the baby in order to safeguard the child against a premature death and avert the evil eye, a look that is thought to be capable of causing injury or ill fortune to those at whom it is directed. Sometimes, when an elderly person died, a piece of the shroud was used to make a garment for the newborn child, to ensure him or her a long life.

Kirtan and Songs

The *kirtan* (Sansk.; lit., "poet," "seer"), popular to this day among the Bene Israel, is one form of communication that, along with ballads, folk songs, and short songs, was characterized by repeated refrains. The *kirtan* was aimed at simple people and had a popular character. Scholars believe the *kirtan* was probably adopted by the Bene Israel sometime toward the end of the eighteenth century. During the nineteenth century, the *kirtan* gained in popularity and consisted of the presentation of biblical stories composed in Marathi verse, the vernacular of the Bene Israel, and sung to Hindu tunes by the *kirtankar* (lead singer of the *kirtan*), usually with musical accompaniment. By the end of the nineteenth century, a special Bene Israel *kirtan* group called Subodh Prakashak had formed in Bombay. Associated with this group was Benjamin Samson Ashtamkar, still remembered today by Bene Israel as the greatest *kirtankar,* who composed many biblical and apocryphal *kirtans.* Today,

kirtans on biblical figures, such as Ḥannah or Moses, are being revived in Israel.

Cochin Jewish Malayalam folk songs, containing special turns of phrase in Judeo-Malayalam, traditionally sung by Jewish women in Kerala, are currently being revived, and a CD has been produced in an international collaborative project. These Malayalam Jewish folk songs cover biblical, wedding, historical, and other themes. In the "Song of Everayi," the narrator tells of one Ephraim the Mudaliyar, accompanied by a Rabbi Abraham the Dutch, who began his sojourn to Cochin in Jerusalem, stopping in Egypt and Yemen and ending up in Paloor Bay in Kerala with a carpenter who constructed the synagogue. According to P.M. Jussay, the Malayalam song reiterates the route the ancient Israelites took to Cochin.

Among the Baghdadis, special songs in Judeo-Arabic were evident at rites of passage, in particular, those associated with birth. A dinner party used to be held the night before the circumcision at which *mezammerim* (singers) sang Hebrew and Arabic songs, learned men read aloud portions of the kabbalistic book, the Zohar, and a musician entertained the guests on a harmonium. At the circumcision ceremony, at home or in the synagogue, the godmother*, takhdumai,* carried the baby boy into the circumcision room and handed him over to the godfather, *sandak,* who then took a seat on Elijah's Chair (according to Jewish tradition, a richly carved and embroidered chair) with the baby on his lap. While the women were shouting, "*Kilillike, kilililee,*" the *mohel* performed the circumcision.

Shalva Weil

See also: Iraq, Jews of.

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INTERNET FOLKLORE

In the current and ever-expanding information era, the Internet plays a central role in the collection, preservation, and study of folklore products. Jewish folklore, with its aesthetic, historical, social, and communicational aspects, has adapted itself to the new technological medium and has also been affected by it. As of 2012, Jewish folklore could be found on a variety of sites, both formal and popular, in Israel and throughout the world.

Two types of folklore sites are found on the Internet. One is formal, including projects aimed at national-social goals. These types of sites are the result of the work of institutional bodies, such as academic institutes, and national as well as social bodies, for example, the Jewish Agency and the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA). The aims of these projects are to preserve and present Jewish folklore and to encourage different aspects of various research activities. The other type of site is informal, generated and maintained by people from the private sector. These sites include blogs and chat rooms, which invite Internet users to participate in a virtual discussion of Jewish folklore, as prevalent in similar Web sites.

Institutional Sites

Examples of central sites that aim to enhance the digital preservation of Jewish intellectual and spiritual properties in Israel can be found, for instance, on the Jewish Agency's portal. This portal includes hypertext links as well as links to sites that deal with cultural heritage, such as the site Jewish Folklore in Israel. This site includes many links to research institutes that deal with Jewish folklore. It also provides links to additional Internet sites discussing folk dancing, folk music, beliefs, and cultural traditions. Many of the Israeli sites refer to international Jewish folklore. One such example is IFA. This archive, located at Haifa University, is responsible for the collecting, printing, and publishing of Jewish and Israeli folk literature. In recent years, the archive has undergone a massive digitalization process in order to preserve the material and present it to the public. This process is accompanied by professional decisions

considering the ways in which the tales can be accessed and organized, such as tale type, motif, oicotypes, key words, and information about the informants. The archive's index can be viewed on the Internet; however, the tales themselves are not accessible to Internet users because of ethical and legal issues dealing with intellectual property and copyright issues, which are currently under consideration.

Another site is the Snunit site. This site was established by the Hebrew University, which has developed educational, Internet-based applications to encourage a multicultural dialogue among children and teenagers. It includes Jewish folktales and links to international folktale sites. Special emphasis is placed on folktales about Israeli holidays in different ethnic communities and tales that deal with Jewish tradition.

Another example of an Internet site concerned with Jewish folklore is the site Or Shalom, which deals with the preservation of Libya's Jewish community. The Or Shalom site presents the Jewish folklore of the Libyan community and focuses on its beliefs, traditions, and habits. It also includes internal links to a folktale archive, which holds both Arabic and Hebrew folktales, and includes various photos and documents.

Another site belongs to the Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Section of the American Folklore Society. This site is devoted to studies of Jewish folklore, folk life, and ethnology. It cooperates with the Committee on the Anthropology of Jews and Judaism of the American Anthropological Association, and the two organizations jointly sponsor the Jewish Folklore and Ethnology (JFE) Section.

Private Sites

One of the most popular folktale sites is the American site Eve Tal, which is concerned with Jewish history, traditions, and folktales, as well as non-Jewish folktales. Another American site is the Laura Simms Storyteller site. This site emphasizes the educational aspects of folklore and includes Jewish folk tales, articles on Jewish folklore, and information about congresses and Jewish folklore festivals around the world.

Other examples of private sites are the Israeli site Ha'mesaper, created by Yehuda Atzaba, and the Center for Folk Tales and Folklore site, created by Yoel Perez. These sites were built to increase awareness of and involvement with Jewish folktales. They present folktales of different genres, including references to aspects of engaging in Jewish folktale research.

Jewish folklore on the Internet also exists in blogs, forums, and chats, in which it is possible to find folk texts that have not undergone editing. These texts appear in a social-virtual context and suggest an interactive application, which enables the texts to elicit responses, changes, and additions, as well as stimulating the appearance of new verses and private, amateur, popular writing. In contrast to the formal sites, in the informal sites, the appearance of the texts is temporary, according to the decisions of the site managers, whose interests may not focus on preserving the material for future generations but, rather, on serving the immediate needs of users.

The Jewish community in Israel and, indeed, Jewish communities throughout the world use these sites for social, personal, and interpersonal needs. For example, there are some sites that present themselves as folkloristic sites, such as Couscous, which deals with Moroccan-Jewish folklore.

In addition, various other sites cover diverse matters such as leisure, trade, commercial, and other issues that include folkloristic texts. An example of a text found on such a site is "Little Red Riding Hood: The Haredi Version!," which appears on a forum of the Web site for Torath Ḥaim be'Oz, an Israeli nationalist-religious group associated with the Ariel youth movement.

Internet Culture and Its Implications

The study of Internet culture and its implications for Jewish and Israeli folklore have yet to be explored. Historians and laypeople alike are witnessing a phenomenon in which virtual space, activated by the Internet, operates as a unique tool to collect old tales along with new versions and contemporary materials. Exposing national projects to the public through the easy accessibility provided by the Internet enables maximum distribution, which could not have existed in the traditional teller-audience situation of the past. The printing and publishing of the tales have also experienced greater momentum because of the preferences and publicity made possible by the Internet. Due to the user-friendliness of the electronic medium, values of solidarity, social consolidation, social identity, and the shared fate of the Jewish community in Israel and abroad have all become more accessible to a wide global audience. For the Jewish community, which has been dealing with these matters for centuries, Jewish folklore on the Internet now plays an important historic, national, and cultural role.

Rachel Ben-Cnaan and Ravit Raufman

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Web Sites

American Folklore Society, Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Section: www.afsnet.org

Center for Folk Tales and Folklore: web.macam.ac.il/~yon/masa/a00.htm

Eve Tal Jewish Folktales: www.eve-tal.com/JewishFolktales.html

Hamesaper: www.mesaper.co.il (in Hebrew)

Israel Folktales Archive: http://ifa.haifa.ac.il

Israeli Nationalistic Channel: www.inn.co.il/Forum/lmf_read.aspx/11795

Jewish Agency: www.ejewish.info/resources/resourceSearchResults.aspx?sText=jewish/

Jewish Folklore in Israel: www.folklore.org.il

Laura Simms Storyteller: www.Laurasimms.com/index.html

Or Shalom: www.or-shalom.org.il/index.asp

Snunit: www.snunit.k12.il/pages/6408

IRAN, JEWS OF

Iranian Jews claim to be the oldest Diasporic Jewish community and constitute one of the oldest minority groups in Iran. Their long settlement means that the place of Jews in Iran over some 3,000 years has been determined by historical events and the changing policies of the ruling authorities. The oral and written traditions of Iranian Jews reflect this long and complex history by recounting their fate under different rulers. There is a shared form to many of these accounts: They tell of a threat to Jewish lives and the ways in which the security of the Jewish population was attained thanks to the actions of a virtuous Jew. In these stories, the ruler (a "king," a shah, or a governor) then becomes a protector of the Jews. Thus the stories Iranian Jews tell include both the harassment that they suffered and the relief that they periodically found from rulers well disposed toward them; they recount both the recurring threats and the temporary victories of Jewish life in Iran. The stories function as political and religious commentary in that they explore the limits of political agency of this minority group and attempt to find a pattern, usually religious, to the turns of fate that Iranian Jews experienced over time.

History

Iranian Jews have been largely absent from both general histories of Iran and, until the late twentieth and the early twenty-first century, from general histories of the Jews as well. Ancient cities that had Jewish populations include Tus, Ctesiphon, Kish, Susa, Ahwaz, Hamadan, and Nahavand, where Jews still live. In 586 B.C.E., when Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the Temple of Solomon and exiled the remaining population, many Jews, according to early Islamic sources, settled in Isfahan, which was subsequently referred to as al-Yahudiya and Yahudistan. In Jewish folklore, Isfahan was an appealing place of settlement because its soil and air were said to resemble those of Jerusalem. Cyrus, the first Achaemian king of Persia (558–531 B.C.E.), who permitted the Jews to return to the restored Temple in Jerusalem, is a hero to contemporary Iranian Jews. Children bear his name, as do Jewish stores and community institutions in Iran and Israel. The Scroll of Esther tells of the attempt to destroy the Jews of Persia, and a shrine in Hamadan today is a pilgrimage site for Iranian Jews, who believe that Esther and Mordechai are buried there. Esther and Mordechai are also popular Iranian-Jewish names.

Jews were granted *dhimmi* (protected) status after the Islamic conquest (642 B.C.E.) and began to settle throughout Persia in such cities as Hamadan, Shiraz, Isfahan, Shustar, Qazvin, Nahavand and Nishapur. The early Muslim caliphates represented a period of high literacy and economic activity for Jews, followed by a decline in Jewish intellectual life and then by a revival of Judeo-Persian literature beginning with the poetry of Shahin in the fourteenth century, Emrani (1454–after 1536), Amina (b. 1672), and the historical works of Babai ben Lotf (alternatively ibn Lutf) and Babai ben Farhad (alternatively ibn Farhad), which document the persecutions of the Jews in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Marzolph 1992, Moreen 2002, Netzer 1996). The rise and fall of court Jews under the Mongols in the thirteenth century have been a source of material for Iranian-Jewish written and oral traditions.

Shi'a Islam was declared the state religion under the Safavids (1501–1731). Shah Abbas I (1587–1629) transferred the capital to Isfahan, which became an important center of Jewish life (Fischel 1953). In 1622, a revengeful Jewish convert to Islam, Abul al-Hasan Lari, instigated a campaign of forced conversions and discriminatory edicts, and under Shah Abbas II, almost all the Jews of Iran were forcibly converted between 1656 and 1662. Eventually, within the next fifty years or so, most Jews were allowed to return to their faith, but the Jewish community never fully regained its members, its cohesiveness, or its religious knowledge. Shah Abbas II, who eventually lifted the restrictions levied against the Jews, became a hero of Jewish folklore. Jews suffered again

Ketubbah, Iran, 1844. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

under Shah Suleiman in 1678, when they were accused of practicing magic; their situation improved under Sunni ruler Nadir Shah (1736–1747), who also makes an appearance in Jewish folklore.

The Qajar period (1796–1926) was a difficult one, marked by a weak central government that could not protect provincial areas (Afary 2002). During this time, European Jews made contact with Iranian Jews, and the Alliance Israélite Universelle, a Paris-based Jewish organization founded in 1860 to educate and protect Jews living in countries where they were not emancipated, established schools throughout Iran in the early 1900s. The years under the Pahlavi regime was considered, despite its shortcomings, to be a Golden Age for Ira-

nian Jews (Menashri 2002). In 1930, Reza Shah Pahlavi (1925–1941) abolished the Law of Apostasy, which had permitted converts to Islam to inherit the property of their relatives. Mohammad Reza Shah (1941–1979) extended further rights of citizenship to Jews, and Iran granted extended de facto recognition to Israel in 1950. Between 1948 and 1974 approximately 63,000 Jews emigrated from Iran to Israel.

More emigration followed the Islamic Revolution of 1979, in which Jews were officially recognized as a minority group, leaving about 25,000 Jews in Iran, compared with 80,000–100,000 estimated to have lived there in the 1970s (Faraheni 2005, Menashri 2002). Iran has the largest population of Jews in the Middle East outside Israel.

The vast majority of Jews in Iran were poor; lists of occupations drawn up by the Alliance Israélite Universelle at the end of the Qajar period show that peddlers formed the largest occupational group. Oral histories collected in Yazd by the author of this entry in the mid-1970s showed a similar occupational profile, with much of the older generation, both men and women, having had experience with peddling. Jews were also musicians and makers of musical instruments; manufactured and sold alcohol; and were weavers, jewelers, gem traders, and religious specialists. Poorer Jews, both men and women, worked in the homes of other Jews or as cooks and custodians of Jewish institutions. Under the Pahlavis, Jews began to attend public schools and to leave the provincial cities for new lives and opportunities in Tehran and Israel. In the modern period Jews sold textiles and antiques and held jobs as teachers in Jewish and public schools, secretaries, small-business owners (and a few big business owners), and engineers. Haj Habib Elqanyan, who founded Plasco, a plastics manufacturing and industrial conglomerate, was tried and executed by the Islamic Revolutionary Court in 1979. Accused of Zionism, "friendship with the enemies of God," and "economic imperialism," he was the first Jew to be executed by the court (Sanasarian 2000: 112; Sarshar 2002: 423). Since the Iranian revolution, Jewish communal life centers around the synagogue and religious activities.

Oral Traditions

Iranian-Jewish oral traditions include Jewish stories, which generally take the form of miracle tales, and stories shared with the surrounding Iranian culture. Jewish stories are those considered appropriate for delivery in sermons and are referred to by the Hebrew word *ma'aseh,* while secular stories are called *qeiseh,* or *dastan,* Persian terms that would not be used for a story with Jewish content. Secular verbal culture—jokes, tall tales, and rhyming songs—is shared in informal social settings. Similar stories are often included in Jewish

oral and written traditions; written sources form the basis for sermons that are delivered in synagogues and at ritual events in private homes and are then retold by women and men in conversational settings. The particular form miracle stories take in community written and oral traditions is also repeated in personal experience narratives.

In his *Comprehensive History of the Jews of Iran* (1991), Habib Levy presents Babai ben Lotf's account of an event that took place under Shah Abbas's reign, noting that he heard a similar story from Haji Benyamin Asil Mazandarani (1818–1938), who never read Babai's book (Levy 1991: 312). He calls the story "Shah Abbas and the Gazelle."

Shah Abbas, visiting Isfahan circa 1615 C.E., while hunting chased a gazelle into an old building, where he saw an old man reading. "'Who are you and what is this place?' The old man replied, 'I am a Jew, and this is the shrine of the Jews.' The king asked, 'Where is the gazelle?' The old man answered, 'That gazelle is Lady Sara, the granddaughter of Jacob, whose house this is.' . . . That visit to the shrine produced a profound effect upon the king." When he returned to Isfahan, he met with the Jewish leaders of Isfahan. "The king addressed them, saying, 'I visited your shrine. Repair it, and go there every Monday and pray for me. I command that the cap of Abu al-Hasan Lari shall no longer be worn'" (Levy 1991: 314, 315). The place where the gazelle was spotted became the shrine of Seraḥ bat Asher (Lady Sara), still a pilgrimage site just outside Isfahan today.

Found in the *Thousand and One Nights,* the theme of a ruler, often incognito, visiting his domains to see how his subjects live is repeated in Jewish folklore. The fortuitous meeting of a ruler and a Jew is even at the origin of the establishment of the Yazdi Jewish community within the city walls (Shargah 1987).

Thus the story of Shah Abbas and the gazelle forms part of the larger genre of Jewish miracle tales in which the Jewish community as a whole benefits from a miraculous event with a Jewish origin that is witnessed by a Muslim ruler. The story of the apical ancestor of the Yazdi Jews, the Rabbi Mulla Or Shargah (d. 1794), is another example (Goldstein 1980). While Mulla Or was studying late into the night one evening, the governor of Yazd saw a shaft of light ascending from the roofs of the Jewish quarter to the sky. His men, sent to investigate, saw that the light extended from Mullar Or's house (in some versions, from his head), a sign, as the governor realized, of Mulla Or's holiness. In recognition, the governor sent him a finely embroidered sheepskin coat, which Mulla Or decided to wear one Yom Kippur. He put it on and then said to himself, "This is too much for me" and cut off its sleeves. A servant of the governor, seeing Mulla Or on the way to synagogue in the transformed coat, raised his hand to strike him for disrespect. The servant's arm

dried in its upright position, and nothing could relieve it. Informed of his situation, the governor said it was a result of the insult offered Mulla Or and suggested the servant go to him and apologize. He did, Mulla Or said a blessing, and the man's arm was cured (Goldstein 1980, 1986; Shargah 1987). Today there is both a yeshiva in Jerusalem established by Yazdi immigrants and an Israeli stamp dedicated to Mulla Or Shargah.

The story is about how religious legitimacy can be gained and expressed. Whatever political agency the community has is seen as an extension of the respect granted by Muslim rulers to Jewish miracle-working holy men. The traditional rituals of seeking protectors were enacted for the representatives of the Alliance Israélite Universelle (Goldstein 1981) and under the Islamic Republic (Goldstein 1981; Hakakian 2004; Menashri 2002: 400).

Reflections of the Mulla Or story can be found in a story told by Yazdi Jewish women in conversational settings and in personal experience narratives. A Jewish woman "many years ago" ordered a velvet coat from a Muslim tailor, who sewed a magical spell into the coat so that she would be "fired up" (with passion) and forced to go to his house whenever she put the coat on. She, like Mulla Or, saved the coat for Yom Kippur, when she put it on to go to synagogue. When she put on the coat, she no longer knew what day it was and went straight to the roof of the Muslim tailor's house. "Impassioned," she threw the coat down, at which point, free of the spell, she realized what day it was and where she was. She threw herself down from the roof and went home. Concluded one storyteller, "I don't know who the girl was. I was a little girl when they told me that such a thing happened" (for further interpretation of these stories, see Goldstein 1986).

Women share stories while visiting, while working with other women in extended households, while educating their children, and while participating in religious activities and votive rituals (Goldstein 2007). Traditional stories and storytelling figure prominently in Iranian women's postrevolutionary memoirs and novels published in the United States and Israel (among them, Goldin 2003, Nahai 1991, Rabinyan 1998, and Sofer 2007). Since its founding in 1955 by Dov Noy, the Israel Folktale Archives, housed at the University of Haifa, has collected more than 800 stories told by immigrants and their descendants from Iran.

Judith L. Goldstein

See also: Esther; Esther Scroll; Languages, Jewish.

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IRAQ, JEWS OF

The Jewish community of Iraq is the most ancient in the Diaspora, existing without interruption for more than two and a half millennia. It created a rich literary heritage in the three languages used by the community for many generations: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Judeo-Arabic.

The Beginning of the Community and Its Creation

Jews were deported from the kingdom of Israel to Mesopotamia by Shalmaneser, king of Assyria (in 721 B.C.E.), and from the kingdom of Judea by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia (in 586 B.C.E.). When Cyrus the Great proclaimed that the exiles might return to Judea (after 539 B.C.E.), only a small group did so. The rest remained in Mesopotamia as a compact population; some moved farther east.

From the second century B.C.E. to the eighth century B.C.E., Babylonia was one of the two main centers of Jewish learning. The Babylonian Talmud, whose final redaction at the end of the fifth century C.E. postdates the redaction of the Yerushalmi Talmud by more than a century, is the longer of the two and achieved a greater level of literary refinement.

The first springs of the folk literature of the Jews of Babylon have become an inseparable part of the heritage of all Jews: These include several chapters of the Bible, as well as exempla in the Babylonian Talmud and in geonic literature. Although the Babylonian sages preferred halakhic (legal) texts and had reservations regarding mythology and legend, certain folk sayings and folk stories found their way into the Babylonian Talmud and the Midrash. Folktales are present in the geonic literature also, but very little of this is found in the writings discovered so far. Scholars have not uncovered written folk literature from the end of the Geonic period in the twelfth century until the eighteenth century, a time of persecution and devastation for the Jews in Babylon. There are, however, extant collections from the beginning of the eighteenth century containing folk narratives.

History and Literary Creativity, Tenth to Seventeenth Centuries

The literary creativity of the Jews in Iraq can be followed until the last Gaons (scholars) in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; the general decline of the Abbasid caliphate and its final devastation by the Mongol invasion in the thirteenth century affected the Jewish communities as well. During the tenth to eleventh

centuries, a steady stream of Jews and non-Jews flowed from Mesopotamia to North Africa (Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco) and Spain by way of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. This stream was blocked by the Spanish Christian Reconquista in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; Spanish exiles did not reach Iraq, however. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, Jews from Iraq and Syria began to move to India, where communities of the "Baghdadi Jews" settled in Calcutta [Kolkatta] and Bombay [Mumbai]. After Baghdad became the center of intellectual life in the Abbasid caliphate, Jewish literature in Arabic evolved.

Today, Jews in Mesopotamia speak the Arabic vernacular of the co-territorial ethnic majority, alongside their own Judeo-Arabic dialect. In Baghdad each of the three main ethno-religious communities—Muslims, Christians, and Jews—speaks its own dialect. The dialects differ somewhat in phonology and morphology. Jews use Hebrew words and roots with Arabic affixes; many foreign loanwords are also used (Turkish, Persian, and, more recently, English and French).

The literature of the thirteenth to the seventeenth century has not yet been fully investigated. An unknown number of manuscripts in Hebrew and Arabic are scattered in various libraries. They contain poetry, translations of various parts of the Bible into the contemporaneous Judeo-Arabic vernacular, and exegetical works.

Literary Folk Creation, Eighteenth to Twentieth Century

In the eighteenth century, Jews from Baghdad started to send manuscripts of their writings for publication in the centers of Hebrew printing in Constantinople and Italy. Among the works are Judeo-Arabic exegeses of liturgical texts for the edification of the reader, as well as homiletic, ethical, and kabbalistic writings. Two rabbis excelled and figure in oral sacred legend: Rabbi Abdallah ben Abraham Somekh (Baghdad, 1813–1889), a halakhic authority who produced a considerable literature of responsa, and Rabbi Joseph Ḥayyim ben Elijah al-Hakam (Baghdad, 1833–1909), whose preaching talents were famous. Collections of his homilies and his *piyyutim* (liturgical poems) are often reprinted. His *Qanun al-nisa* (The Law for the Women; Livorno, 1906) contains moral teachings and expositions of ritual prescriptions in verse (Arab., *saja*) and prose, exemplified by folktales. *Niflaim ma'asekha* (Wondrous Are Thy Deeds) and *Mashal ve'nimshal* (Parable and moral), collections of legends, novellas, animal tales, and parables from ancient sources, contemporary oral tradition, and Rabbi Joseph Ḥayyim's own creations, which he wove into his works and sermons, were culled from his writ-

Traditional costume for an old man, Iraq. *(Museum of the Heritage of Babylonian Jew, Or Yehuda, Israel)*

ings and published in Hebrew in Jerusalem in 1912 and 1913, respectively.

Hebrew printing appeared in the mid-nineteenth century in the Baghdadi communities in India, from which it spread to Baghdad (in 1866). Hebrew printing presses began operating in Calcutta, Bombay, Pune, Cochin [Kochi], and Madras [Chennai] during the nineteenth century. The Indian publishing centers served both the Indian and the Iraqi markets. One of the better-known Baghdadi printers in Calcutta, himself a writer, was Solomon Twina, whose press operated from 1888 to 1901.

The availability of printing facilities led to the publishing of periodicals in Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic from the 1860s on and to the flowering of a typical chapbook literature in the Judeo-Arabic dialect in Hebrew script alongside Hebrew religious literature. This chapbook literature, written in prose and verse in Judeo-Arabic, consisted of expanded midrashic stories about biblical and other figures, such as Joseph, Moses, Saul and David, Esther, the Maccabees, Rabbi Akiva and the

Rambam (Maimonides). Notable for their popularity both in manuscript and print were *Qissat Yusuf al-sadiq* (The Story of Joseph the Virtuous) and *Qissat Ḥannah ve-saba wilada* (The Story of Ḥannah and Her Seven Sons), which were from the Arabic source *Qissat Akhiqar* (The Story of Achikar; Baghdad, n.d. [end of the nineteenth century]).

A second group of chapbooks contained popular Arabic works, mostly of a secular nature, transcribed in Hebrew characters. Of this type are parts of the *Arabian Nights* (Baghdad, 1905), the *Qissat Zaid al-ghulam* (The Story of Zaid al-Ghulam; Baghdad, n.d.), and *Qissat Antar ibn Shaddad* (The Story of antar ibn Shaddad; Baghdad, 1909); collections of parables and proverbs from medieval Arabic literature, such as *Ajab al-azjab* (Wonder of Wonders; Bombay, 1889); *Swalef mukhsinat* (Beautiful Stories; Baghdad, 1923), which also contains tales from Jewish oral tradition; and *Kitab missalli al-waqt* (The Book for Pastime; 3 vols., Jerusalem, 1931), containing a rich collection of stories, songs, riddles, and so on, of an ethical, edifying nature. David Tsemah published four volumes of proverbs and tales in *Amthal al-Daudiyya* (Parables of David; Baghdad, 1929) and two volumes of *Wurud al-Daudiyya* (Flowers of David; Baghdad, 1926–1927); Saleh Isaac Mekamal published tales, riddles, and proverbs in his three volumes of *Kitab Saleh lil imum* (A Book Good for the People; Baghdad, 1927).

Works of this sort were also published in basic Hebrew; they contain mostly sacred legends and wisdom novellas. The earliest collection, *Sefer ha'ma'asiyyot* (Book of Stories), was compiled from Jewish sources by the Calcutta printer Eleazar Araki in 1842. Later, in 1890, a printer in Baghdad, Solomon Bekhor Hotsen, published three collections: *Ma'ase nissim* (Tales of Miracles), *Ma'asim tovim* (Good Tales), and *Ma'asim mefoarim* (Splendid Tales).

Hebrew works by writers of the Jewish Enlightenment movement in Europe were translated into Judeo-Arabic and printed in Hebrew characters. Among them are A. Mapu's historical novel *Ahavat Tsiyyon* (The Love for Zion; Calcutta, 1906) and third-rate nineteenth-century novels such as Eugene Sue's *Les mystères de Paris* (Paris, 1842–43), translated by the printer Solomon Twina from the Hebrew translation of K. Schulmann (Vilna, 1853), printed in Calcutta in 1906.

An exceptional phenomenon in Jewish society at such an early date—the beginning to the end of the nineteenth century—was the collecting of folktales, songs, proverbs, and riddles from contemporaneous oral tradition. Forty collections have so far been recovered; most of these manuscripts are preserved by the Sassoon family of Baghdadi Jews in India in their famous library. This premodern collecting activity seems to have been conducted or initiated by the Baghdadi émigrés to India,

in a nostalgic attempt to maintain their folk culture. No other Jewish group in Muslim countries is known to have engaged in similar collecting.

Eighteen of these manuscripts contain a total of about 4,000 songs. Since they were set down by professional singers and entertainers, a certain measure of polishing and rewriting of the texts should be assumed; possibly, the singers added their own compositions. The songs are written in Hebrew script in both Jewish and Muslim Iraqi dialects and contain numerous Jewish realia. Several of the manuscripts contain pages in an Indian language written in Hebrew script. Technical remarks and colophon are given in phrases taken from the Hebrew manuscript tradition. The songs are custom songs, love songs, lullabies, nursery songs, and children's songs.

To one of the song collections thirty versified riddles in Judeo-Arabic are appended (Sassoon 1932, ms. no. 472). Two collections contain proverbs in prose and verse totaling about 2,000 items (Sassoon 1932, ms. nos. 366, 639).

Five of the manuscripts contain folktales, mostly in Judeo-Arabic, fewer in Hebrew, of all known Middle Eastern genres and tales from medieval Jewish sources. Some premodern collections have been published: *Qissat ahal al-mathal* (The Book of Proverbs; Baghdad, 1880, Bombay, 1886) is a small such collection of proverbs from oral tradition. Single tales and small collections of tales were also published. Yahuda (1932–1934) included in his collection several hundred proverbs, tales, and parables from the oral tradition of Iraqi Jews.

New Recordings from Oral Tradition

Before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, an estimated 100,000 Jews lived in the cities of the Mesopotamian plain. Most of them immigrated to Israel, while the rest settled in overseas countries; 3,000–4,000 remain in Iraq.

In Israel, directed manual (i.e., recorded and transcribed) and sound recording of the oral tradition is currently under way, by private individuals and by public institutions, such as the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) of the University of Haifa, which includes 1,420 folktales recorded from Jewish narrators originally from Iraq. Some of this material has been published in Hebrew.

Yitzhak Avishur

See also: Anthologies; India, Jews of; Languages, Jewish.

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ISAAC

Although mention of Isaac, the late-in-life son of Abraham, in the Book of Genesis extends over nineteen chapters (17–35), his narrative actions are minimal in comparison with the patriarchs between whom he is lodged: Abraham and Jacob. Within Genesis, only chapter 26—relating Isaac's interactions with Abimelech, including passing his wife off as his sister, and his various journeys developing from the first major famine since the time of Abraham—focuses on Isaac alone. It is here that the transmission of God's blessing of fruitfulness to him and his offspring occurs (Gen. 26:24).

The other major narrative episodes in Isaac's story include his birth to a barren mother (Gen. 21:1–8); the *Akedah* (binding) and suggesting, according to Kugal, that he was an unwilling sacrifice, since were he willing, tying him would presumably not have been necessary (Gen. 22); and his transmission of the paternal blessing to Jacob, the "wrong" son (Gen. 27:1–29). Only this last detail entailed any real action by Isaac, and that action was improper in a culture in which primogeniture prevailed. One thus gets a picture of a rather passive hero. In fact, Isaac's passivity is such that he did not even go to find himself a wife; rather, his father sent a servant to carry out this task—though viewed from the point of view of traditional cultures, this approach was customary, as the continuation of the family line, property, and traditions formed the paramount concern in marriage. Furthermore, aside from the sacrifice, the episodes of Isaac's life are shared in one way or another with Abraham and Jacob: barren mother; the sister-wife incident; God's blessing given him for his posterity; and blessing the "wrong" son.

Given the sparseness of unique incidents in his story, it is not surprising that there are relatively few legends about Isaac. Of the patriarchs, Isaac is the only one without a separate section in Louis Ginzberg's magisterial seven-volume *The Legends of the Jews* (1913), and the majority of legends focus on the *Akedah*. This particular incident, perhaps one of the most puzzling and most discussed within the patriarchal narratives, has generated numerous midrashim, some concerned primarily with Abraham, some with Sarah, and some with Isaac, with most showing a mix.

In seeking to understand God's command that Abraham sacrifice Isaac after promising that Abraham would become the father of nations (Gen. 12:2, 17:4) and engender many offspring (Gen. 15:5, 16:10, 17:2), many exegetes attempted to "fill in" the story with different legends, parables, and stories. Furthermore, the opening statement "God put Abraham to the test" (Gen. 22:1) leads one to ask why God sought to test Abraham, for he had already been tested nine times and so presumably had already shown his faithfulness. In response, many commentators have suggested that Satan had a hand in this test, needling God by suggesting that Abraham loved his late-born son more than God, indeed forsaking God in favor of his son. Thus God was provoked into testing Abraham. In one narrative, Satan approached Isaac, intimating that his father was demented, at which point Isaac turned to his father and was reassured that the man (Satan) came only to cause worry. In this story, as in some others, Isaac also asked his father to tie his hands and feet so he would not tremble or behave in such a way as to make a less than perfect sacrifice. Another legend relates that Satan went to Abraham saying that to sacrifice Isaac was to destroy a soul, hence, to commit murder. A related parable seeking to explain—arguably—the incident on Mount Moriah, tells how a king asked a friend to bring a peacock to the royal table, and that friend, having found one and brought it to the table, prepared to slaughter it. At this point the king shouted that he did not ask for a peacock only to slaughter it. In the end a pheasant was substituted for the peacock. In this case, the narrator directly associated the Holy One with the king and Isaac as the peacock.

A series of legends relates the *Akedah* to Isaac's education in different ways. In one Abraham told Sarah that he was taking Isaac for studies in Torah with Shem and his son Eber, where Isaac "will learn the ways of the Lord, for they will teach him to know the Lord . . ." (Ginzberg, *Legends,* p. 129). In another, during the time that Isaac lay on the altar, his soul is reported to have left his body and spent three years in the Celestial Academy, where he saw the treasures of heaven and the future. From the viewpoint of life-cycle rites of passage, one might view this incident as the near death/death experience that forms the transitional or liminal portion of the tripartite rite. Certainly after this

incident Isaac gets married, traditionally representing the achievement of adulthood. In fact, in one story Ishmael taunted Isaac about his late marriage, purportedly at age thirty-seven, arguing that he could not get married any earlier because he had not made the proper sacrifice to God. Ishmael's rationale lay in Isaac's early circumcision, which occurred at eight days old and thus not voluntarily, while he, Ishmael, had submitted to it voluntarily at age thirteen. Ishmael suggested that because of Isaac's willingness to be the sacrifice in his maturity, he was permitted to marry— but he was older than the usual age of marriage.

While tales related to the *Akedah* appear to compose the bulk of commentary about Isaac, the circumstances of his birth, his late marriage to Rebecca, the sister-wife incident, and his blessing the "wrong" son also provided material for the midrashists' work. Some legends have even questioned Isaac's paternity, suggesting that the pharaoh was really his father and that he was conceived while Sarah was in the Egyptian king's court. He was also seen as a man of "unusual beauty," whom an "angel accompanied" to his marriage to Rebecca. And not surprisingly, there are a number of legends and commentary about his blessing of the "wrong" son, Jacob, rather than the first-born, Esau. This action is not, however, unique, for the elevation of the "wrong" offspring is present in other cultures and times, for example, in the twelfth-century B.C.E. Egyptian narrative of the "Contendings of Horus and Seth" and many more recent traditional narratives. At the same time, the sister-wife motif is most clearly shared with—perhaps borrowed from—the Abraham narrative (Gen. 12:10–20, 20:1–17), and its presence elsewhere is minimal or nonexistent.

Overall, aside from the sister-wife episode related in Genesis 26, stories about Isaac occur within the context of tales about his father or his son. He is a patriarch, but he is almost invisible, and the legends attempt to remedy some of this invisibility and give him character that does not appear in the Bible.

Susan Tower Hollis

See also: Abraham; Jacob (Ya'acov); Joseph.

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ISRAEL FOLKTALE ARCHIVES

The Israel Folktale Archives (IFA), named in honor of Dov Noy, was established in 1955 by Professor Dov Noy, under the auspices and framework of the Museum of Ethnology and Folklore of Haifa Municipality. As of 1983 IFA has been located in the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Haifa, with Professor Aliza Shenhar as its academic head. Since the beginning of 1995 Professor Haya Bar-Itzhak has been IFA's academic head. Edna Hechal has served as IFA's scientific coordinator since 1964. Since 2003 Dr. Idit Pintel-Ginzberg has served as IFA's scientific coordinator. IFA's scientific council, composed mainly of senior folklorists at Israel's universities, assembles once a year to discuss topics concerning the archive's activities.

IFA houses the largest collection of authentic Jewish folktales in the world (in 2012, 24,000 folktales were preserved there). This vast amount of material helps provide answers to certain questions about the continuity and change of Jewish oral traditions dating back thousands of years and their relation to printed sources. A limited amount of this material has already been published, mainly in the Israel Folktale Archives Publication Series (IFAPS). The series consists of single collections, in which the folktales are accompanied by comparative notes, data on the collectors and narrators, English summaries, indexes, and so on. The series (1962–1978) includes forty-two booklets.

IFA is the only archive of its kind in Israel. It serves as a center for knowledge and information and is open to researchers, students, and the general public concerned with the cultural heritage of the ethnic communities of Israel. The folktales housed in the IFA were narrated by storytellers from various communities living in Israel—both Jewish (stemming from Africa, Asia, Europe, and America) and non-Jewish (Arabs, Muslims, Christians, Bedouins, Druze, etc.)—and collected by scholars, students, and volunteers.

Two pioneering collecting programs took place, the first one in the years 1977–1979. The Beit She'an Project, in which some 300 folktales were collected by a team (composed of staff members and students of IFA, the Hebrew University, and the University of Haifa) that was sent expressly to Beit She'an in the northern Jordan valley to seek out such materials. The "expeditionary method" was most successful and was followed in 1979–1980 by a similar project in Shelomi, a township in western Galilee. Some 100 stories were collected, by staff members and students from the University of Haifa, from the town's Moroccan-Jewish inhabitants. At the completion of both projects three books were published: *Folktales from Beit She'an* (1981), *Folktales from Shelomi* (1982), and *Jewish Moroccan Folk Narratives from Israel* (1993).

Adjoining the files of the IFA is an archive of students' papers, consisting of some 700 works by B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. students from Israel's universities. These research papers are based on materials stored in the IFA.

With the growth of the number of stories in the archives, concern over the preservation and protection of the material stored there has increased. The first stage of computerizing the folktales—scanning the IFA treasury—responds to the need for their physical preservation. The second stage—building a database and typing the manuscripts—is expected to fulfill the scientific research requirements. As of 2012, speedy access and retrieval of the material was still a goal to be attained.

Edna Hechal

See also: Noy, Dov.

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ISSERLES, MOSES BEN ISRAEL, RABBI (RAMA) (C. 1525–1572)

Rama (or Remu in Yiddish) is the folk acronym (*Ra*bbi *Mo*she) for Rabbi Moses Ben Israel Isserles, who became a legendary figure in East European Jewish folk tradition as a *posek* (Heb., halakhic authority) and *tzaddik* (Heb., righteous man), or miracle-working rabbi. He is critically important for contributing to the code of Jewish law by providing inline commentary to the *Shulḥan arukh* (Heb., lit. "The Set Table"; fig., a code

of Jewish observance) of Joseph Karo. Isserles's work is known as the *Ha'mapah*; it added information on Ashkenazi customs to Karo's emphasis on Sephardic practice. Since 1578, the combined contributions have represented a unified Jewish guide to Jewish observance. For folklorists, the *Ha'mapah* also provides documentation of the variety of practices and their controversies among different Jewish communities in early modern Eastern Europe.

The folklore about the Rama includes legends about his life and character (the mystery of his birth; his purported humility despite having gained great wisdom and wealth; his independent spirit and caring for his students), leaving *shlikhes* (written messages requesting spiritual intervention) on the grave, the tradition of a pilgrimage to his grave on Lag Ba'Omer, a holiday celebrated on the thirty-third day of the Omer and legends concerning the survival of the Rama Synagogue after the Nazi occupation.

The Rama was born in Kraków, Poland, where his father, Israel, was a wealthy leader of the Kraków Jewish community and a talmudic scholar. A Hasidic story relates that the birth of the Rama was a reward for demonstrating Israel's dedication to Sabbath observance. Adding to legends of the Rama's inheritance of wisdom is his name of Moses and the fact that he was the great-grandson of Yeḥiel Luria, the first rabbi of Brisk (Brest-Litovsk). Legends also recount the Rama's precocious grasp of the Talmud in his youth and his deep understanding of the mystical secrets of the Kabbalah. Accounts of his life usually emphasize traits of humility, passion for learning, and empathy for the plight of the underprivileged. The Rama studied in a yeshiva in Lublin, Poland, and upon his return to Kraków, he became chief rabbi, a post he held until his death. He established a rabbinical academy in Kraków and, according to tradition, supported the students himself. Suggesting the remarkable nature of his life, a commonly heard folk anecdote in Ashkenazi folklore states that the Rama lived for thirty-three years, wrote thirty-three books, and died on Lag Ba'Omer. His grave in Kraków was the site of an annual pilgrimage on Lag Ba'Omer by east European Jews until World War II. His highly decorated gravestone is located next to the revered *mizraḥ* or eastern wall of the synagogue (direction of the Temple in Jerusalem) and is engraved with the words "From Moses [i.e., Maimonides] until Moses [i.e., Isserles] there was none like Moses. May his soul be bound in the bond of eternal life." Pilgrims to his grave leave messages written on small pieces of paper requesting spiritual intervention.

The Rama's grave is located in the cemetery of a synagogue in Kazimierz, Poland, known popularly as the Rama Synagogue. It was built by Isserles in 1553 in memory of his wife, who died at the age of twenty.

Considered a sacred site for Polish Jews, the synagogue and cemetery were not destroyed by the Nazis during their occupation of Poland from 1939 to 1945. Many synagogues and cemeteries during that period suffered great devastation, and oral tradition among Polish Jews arose explaining the survival of the Rama site. The general outline of the legend is that the Nazis went to destroy the place but were frightened off by, as it is frequently told, sparks or flames. It is also possible to collect a variant, according to which a Nazi swung at the stone with a sledgehammer, which bounced off and killed him. In another version, the Nazis heard that their families would mysteriously die or disappear if the stone were touched.

The Rama Synagogue is also the site of another legend that has taken on a Holocaust variant. Before World War II, an empty area close to the synagogue, known as the "wedding cemetery," had been surrounded by a fence. According to legend, celebration of a wedding continued into Friday afternoon and the rabbi implored the guests to end the festivities lest they violate the Sabbath. When the guests went heedlessly on with their merry-making, the rabbi placed a curse on them. According to many versions, they were swallowed alive. In some collected narratives, the additional comment is made that the Nazis destroyed the fence but were hurled back when they tried to cross the ground. The narrative reinforces the connection of the Rama with Sabbath observance and the magical quality of sacred places such as the Rama Synagogue.

The Rama became influential by training pupils in his large yeshiva established in the mid-sixteenth century. He died in Kraków on May 11, 1572. He attracted controversy during his lifetime for advocating the addition of secular wisdom to study in the sacred texts. In the twentieth century, the Rama was appropriated as a symbol of the negotiation between Orthodoxy and secular knowledge; and the Conservative movement named its summer camp after him. The still-active Rama Synagogue went through a number of restorations in the late twentieth century and is a destination, sometimes a pilgrimage, as a center for Ashkenazi learning on Jewish heritage tours to Poland.

Simon J. Bronner

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ITALY, JEWS OF

Origins

Jews have lived in Italy for more than 2,000 years. For example, evidence shows that Cicero blamed them for favoring Julius Caesar in factional Roman politics. Unlike Jews elsewhere in Europe, Italian Jews cannot be viewed as newcomers settling among an already existing population sometime during the Middle Ages. Italian Jews have always been Italian—speaking, reading, and writing the vernacular, eating local foods, dressing like others, and conforming to surrounding society in behavior, although not in religion. This pattern goes back to the Middle Ages. In Italy, Jews acculturation has long roots.

Acculturation and Foods

Rome's Jews in particular maintain the dietary habits that were common in the city in the fifteenth century, if not earlier, but which fell out of use and are now back in vogue. In Rome, to eat traditional Roman food means to eat Jewish food Favorites are *carciofi alla giudia* and *fiori di zucca*, fried artichokes and zucchini blossoms; or *concia romana*, zucchini in a brine. Add to this oxtail and tripe, and especially *la carne secca*, dried beef. Traditionally, goose was the special food of Jews living to the north and east of the Apennines, who used pasta in their *cholent*, or Sabbath stew. The Jews in the South and West used the more traditional beans. Until recently, it was thought that the first mention in writing of the word *pizza,* expressed in Hebrew letters, was from circa1340 (today, scholars believe the word now can be dated to 1278, in the anti-Jewish *Pugio Fidei* of the Catalan Ramón Martí, speaking of *pizza romanorum* to describe a flat bread, which means he may have been speaking of Jewish food in earnest).

Geography

Rome has long been the site of a large Jewish community, as was Italy's South in general. Ashkenazi Jews trace the roots of their culture to Apulia, to a mystical figure named Abu Aaron, whose name is also mentioned in the eleventh-century family history written by Aḥima'atz ben Paltiel. Aḥima'atz describes Jewish communities stretched out along the Via Appia, which runs from Rome to Brindisi, built by the Romans and still in use. There were numerous Jews in Sicily. Southern Jewry, though, ended its career in 1492, 1511, and (just a remnant in Naples) 1541; ruled by the Spanish, the fate of Southern Jews was sealed by the expulsion order from Spain of 1492. North of Rome, we hear little of Jews until about the thirteenth century, when Jews opened small loan banks They were given contracts, known as *condotta*, which required them to operate the banks for periods of five to ten years. By the sixteenth century, Jewish communities were to be found all over the North, perhaps the best known being that of Venice, where Jews settled formally only in 1516, with the inauguration of the era of ghettos (Ghetto Nuovo is actually the pre-existing name of the island where Jews were to take up residence).

Expulsions and the Shoah

At the end of the sixteenth century, Jews were expelled from the Duchy of Lombardy (Milan), also a Spanish dependency. Important communities were in Ferrara and Modena. Today's Italian Jewry, actually a mélange supplemented by immigrants from Europe, North Africa, especially Libya, and Iran, is scattered mostly throughout the North and in Rome. Witness to this penetration is the Italian-language Kosher cookbook issued by the Association of Italian Jewish Women that contains recipes from every possible Jewish kitchen. During the Shoah, Jews suffered, but at a much lower rate than in places like Holland and Poland, largely because the Nazi entry was only in 1943, and by June 1944, many Jews were already in Allied controlled territory; the stories of Italians risking themselves to save Jews are many. Italian Fascists, on the other hand, sometimes outdid the Nazi SS in cruelty. The maximum Italian Jewish population, before World War II, was about 60,000, now down to 30,000. Only Rome and Milan have more than one thousand Jews each.

Demography and Diversity

Immigration has characterized Italian Jewry for over 500 years, along with the need for various Jewries to assimilate to each other. Most Sephardim came not directly from Spain, but via a first stop in the Ottoman Empire. Ashkenazi Jews, many in Venice from the sixteenth century, Italianized family names, for example, Luzzatti for Lausitz, Ottolenghi for Esslingen, Morpurgo for Marburg. The Sicilians in Rome seem to have had

Jewish wedding, Italy. The Rothschild Miscellany Manuscript 180/51; fol. 120v. Northern Italy, ca. 1450–1480.
(© The Israel Museum, Jerusalem by Ardon Bar-Hama)

an active strategy of marrying into Italian and Sephardi families. Sephardim may have come in greater numbers to Rome than they did elsewhere in Italy after the expulsion of 1492. In Rome, all groups intermarried, so much so that the Burial Society registry for 1571 instructed people to choose which *edah* (group of origin, or *nazio*, in contemporary terminology) they wished formally to be associated with on the membership rolls. At Venice, the *edah* division was more rigid. The ghetto itself was divided into ethnic districts, based on the time of founding, and one speaks of an old, new, and most recent ghetto, whose borders are still clearly marked. In Rome, few know the real dimensions of the ghetto, thinking for instance, that a cast iron vestibule was a guard house. In fact, it was about 20 meters or more from the ghetto entrance.

Rituals

It is said that the *nusakh* (prayer format and melody) of even Roman Jewry was overlaid by the Sephardi as early as the later twelfth or thirteenth centuries. Nonetheless, it remained distinct, and today one can easily hear the difference between Sephardi and Italian rites. The Italians formed the largest group, the indigenous Jews, who called themselves *loazim*, Italian speakers. The Italian rite has unique aspects, like the unbroken undulation of notes in the blowing of the shofar. Among Sephardim and Ashkenazim, the latter especially, notes are separated by pauses. Heard in the acoustically weak Roman synagogue, the shofar's continuous wail makes one understand why its blowing might have made the walls of Jericho tumble.

Italian Jews also hold a Seder Rosh Ha'Shana a New Year's ritual, which is the eating of nine foods, each with an appropriate blessing that puns and extrapolates from the Hebrew word for the food or its significance. All nine foods are dipped in honey and sometimes cooked into an omelette: they are dates, figs, fennel, leek, chard, pumpkin, pomegranate, the (fictitious) head of a lamb, and a fish head. Other unique rites include removing *sifrei torah*, the Torah scrolls, from the ark at the end of the final prayer, the Ne'ilah, on Yom Kippur; special prayers for the festival of Simchat Torah, and the *mi'mizraḥ*, an evening of song held in lieu of the circumcision party to honor the birth of daughters. Like Sephardim, Italian Jews find it acceptable to consume *kitniyot* (legumes) during Passover, a custom not followed by Ashkenazi. It must be stressed, since many think otherwise, that Italian Jews are distinctly Italian Jews; they are not Sephardim.

Distinctive Names

Family names mostly derive from places Jews may have lived or traveled, for instance, Milano, adopted by a certain Mordechai di Segni (Segni) who traveled to the area of Lombardy to collect communal taxes. Other names are descriptive, such as Astrologo, astrologer, or Scazziocchio, chase away the evil eye, as in *scacciare il malocchio*. There is also the habit of fixed (or nearly fixed) pairings: Vittorio will always be Ḥaim; Mordecai is Angelo. Moise and Angelo seem to have been the hands-down favorites in Rome.

Contemporary Life

In the post-Ghetto period, Jews very quickly assimilated, at an extraordinary pace, until the fascist government of dictator Benito Mussolini and the enactment of his 1938 Manifesto of Race, a set of racial laws that stripped Jews of their citizenship and expelled them from government, university, and other professional jobs. Today, the trend is toward high rates of intermarriage on the one hand, or toward inward turning on the part of the truly observant on the other. The official community describes itself as Orthodox; modern movements like Reform and Conservatism have no real foothold. Communal membership is formal and members pay obligatory taxes. Jews now have the right to devout 0.1 percent of their income taxes to the Jewish community. Until a few years ago, only the church had this privilege among religious communities; it is also possible to donate this sum to political and similar causes.

As from every diaspora community, numbers of Italian Jews have emigrated to Israel. But unlike so many others, Italian Jews, thanks to Italy's proximity as well as the continuity in climate, geography, and many foods, especially olive oil, never feel the need mentally, or even physically, to divorce themselves from their community of birth. Travel back and forth is constant, and many families have members in both countries, cementing reciprocal bonds.

Kenneth Stow

See also: Illuminated Manuscripts; Jerusalem and the Temple; Languages, Jewish.

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J

JACOB (YA'ACOV)

The biblical narrative of Jacob, the third Israelite patriarch (Gen. 25:19–34; 27:1–35:29), like other biblical stories, elicited much exegesis, explanation, and expansion over the millennia. Like his father, Isaac, and his son Joseph, Jacob was born of a barren woman (Gen. 25:21). Other significant episodes in his story that provided material for commentators' discussions include the taking of his older brother's birthright (Gen. 25:27–34); his "stolen" blessing (Gen. 27:1–45); his acquisition of two wives, the first of whom was the "wrong" one (Gen. 29:9–20); his dream of a ladder to heaven (Gen. 28:10–22); his encounter with an unknown contender (Gen. 32:23–33); and his varied relations with his children (Gen. 29:21–50:14).

Although having an unusual birth, as from a barren mother, occurs elsewhere in the Bible and is typical for traditional heroes, Jacob's birth was unusual in two ways: Not only was he a twin, rare in itself, but also he was the second born, grasping his older brother's heel as he emerged from the womb. The difference between these two boys, who had already fought in the womb (Gen. 25:22–23), appeared at birth and continued as the boys grew and developed: The other twin, Esau, was a hairy man, a hunter, a man of wildlife and the outdoors, while Jacob was a man of the tents or camp, the "indoors." Although midrashic sources suggest that Jacob was an educated man due to his place among the tents—that is, places of learning, as Kugel explains—one finds in him an essentially trickster figure, a person who accomplishes much by deceit and manipulation, but, at the same time, also a dreamer, who encounters the divine through dreams, or at least under cover of night.

Narratives relating a struggle between a hunter or pastoralist—that is, one who herds animals, likely on steppes and not close to the city—and a city agriculturalist—that is, one who tends crops on land near the city—appear elsewhere in the Bible (e.g., Cain and Abel), and in other ancient Middle Eastern stories that predate the Bible, notably in the Mesopotamian figures of Enkidu and Gilgamesh and in the mid-twelfth century B.C.E. Egyptian story of the "Contendings of Horus and Seth." In the Mesopotamian narrative, Enkidu was a hairy being who lived with the animals of the steppe until he was civilized by a woman of Uruk and contended with Gilgamesh, Uruk's king; in the Egyptian narrative, Horus, who is the younger and came from the civilized areas of the Nile flood plain, and Seth, the older, who embodies the untamed forces of the desert and border areas of Egypt,

struggled with each other for dominance and the throne, a struggle eventually won by Horus.

This Egyptian tale's elevation of the younger over the older also occurs with Jacob and Esau. In an initial interaction, Esau arrives home so hungry that he willingly sells his birthright to Jacob in exchange for food (Gen. 25:29–34), a questionable act at best. Later, Jacob, in an incident masterminded by his mother, Rebecca, who considers him her favorite, gains the blessing normally given the firstborn from his aged and blind father, who favors Esau (Gen. 27:1–40). This "upsetting" of primogeniture appears not only elsewhere in the Bible—technically Isaac benefited from it—but ubiquitously in traditional narratives, such as folktales in which the youngest of several, usually three, siblings of the same sex inevitably gains the prize.

Next, as he flees Esau's murderous wrath, Jacob goes to Padanarum to the home of Laban, his mother's brother (Gen. 27:42–43), to find a wife from his people rather than from among the Canaanites, as Esau had done (Gen. 28:1–4). After arriving there, Jacob immediately encounters his cousin Rachel at the well, another well-known traditional narrative motif that appears elsewhere in the Bible and in other traditional narratives, for example, in the Homeric "Hymn to Demeter." Desiring to marry Rachel, Jacob worked seven years to earn her (Gen. 29:15–30), but when the wedding was celebrated, it was Leah, the older sister, not the desired Rachel, who was brought to the wedding tent, a fact that Jacob apparently did not realize until the next morning. The trickster was tricked, and various midrashim reflect this irony, stating that on recognizing Leah, Jacob asks her why she had responded when he called her "Rachel" in the night; she, in turn, asks him why he had responded when his father called him "Esau." Episodes in which the deceiver is deceived occur elsewhere in the Jacob cycles of stories, as in Jacob's and Laban's interchanges over the former's desire to return to his home (Gen. 30:25–43) and in Rachel's removal of her father's household gods when they finally did leave (Gen. 31:25–25). The trickery here runs through the family: mother, son, mother's brother, and mother's brother's daughters. These various episodes engendered much commentary from midrashists and others. Comparable trickery appears in the older ancient Egyptian texts, such as the thirteenth-century "Tale of the Doomed Prince" and the many examples in the "Contendings of Horus and Seth," as well as throughout the Homeric epics and hymns and in tales in many other cultures. Ultimately, the trickster accomplishes what is needed for the narrative and its cultural tradition.

Jacob's dream of the ladder on which angels ascended and descended, which occurred during his flight to Padanarum, provided the venue for God's renewal of the promise made to the previous patriarchs of land and descendants (Gen. 28:10–22), again engendering much

commentary from scholars such as Louis Ginzberg, Raphael Patai, and James L. Kugel. Although the content of this dream falls specifically within the Israelite tradition, the importance of dreams appears throughout traditional belief systems—for example, in the Epic of Gilgamesh. Dreams were very much a part of understanding life and foretelling the future, as records of dreams and the existence of dreambooks from different cultures attest.

Jacob's second nighttime encounter (Gen. 32:24–30) appeared as a struggle with a being of unknown origin. The outcome of the struggle, a struggle engendering much midrashic commentary because of its many questions, left Jacob with both a new name, Israel, and a damaged body—but alive and with the sense that he had encountered a divine being, for he said: "I have seen God face to face and my life is preserved" (Gen. 32:30). The midrashists and other commentators were less sure who the adversary was, describing the being with whom he contended variously as God (or his representative) or Samael, otherwise known as Satan. Traditionally, direct encounters with the divine irrevocably change the humans involved, as shown by various Greek myths and epics as well as many other traditional narrative materials. Furthermore, it remains unclear who, if anyone, won the encounter. Precedent for such confusion in this type of encounter appears in the second tablet of the Epic of Gilgamesh, in which Enkidu challenged Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, and they grappled with each other—equally.

Thus in Jacob, one finds a rich biblical narrative with motifs such as his unusual birth, his tangles with the otherworld, and his trickster behavior, all of which are present in other biblical and traditional materials and have engendered many midrashim and other commentary over the centuries.

Susan Tower Hollis

See also: Joseph.

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JACOBS, JOSEPH (1854–1916)

Joseph Jacobs was a prominent folklorist hailed by Richard Dorson (1968) as a member of the "Great Team" of British folklorists at the end of the nineteenth century who combined sociological, historical, and literary perspectives. Dorson and other historiographers often treat Jacobs's contributions to Jewish studies such as *Studies in Jewish Statistics* (1891) and *The Jews of Angevin England* (1893) as historical or social studies separate from his popular folk narrative collections and studies of fables and *märchen* (folktales characterized by elements of magic or the supernatural) such as *English Fairy Tales* (1890) and *Indian Fairy Tales* (1892). Yet his influential diffusionist theories about the origin and spread of folklore and his groundbreaking ideas of the social basis of folklore arise not from a level or class of culture but from the social interaction of individuals in groups in his studies of Jewish cultural migration. Within Jewish studies, he contributed to scholarship contending that Jews constitute a civilization rather than a race and used their folklore as key evidence. Broadly, his distinction as a sociological folklorist is in his concern for the structure of social order and the process by which this order is maintained, and his work with Jewish civilization raised questions about a diaspora group maintaining its social cohesion and traditions in the face of sometimes-hostile host societies.

Jacobs was born on August 29, 1854, in Sydney, Australia, and received a Jewish upbringing. He traveled to England at the age of eighteen to study at Cambridge University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in 1876. He then went to the University of Berlin in 1877 for a year of study in Jewish literature and bibliography before returning to England, where he served as secretary of the Society of Hebrew Literature from 1878 until 1884. His early contributions to Anglo-Jewish history including coediting the *Bibliotecha Anglo-Judaica* (1888) and founding the Jewish Historical Society of England (for which he served as president in 1898–1999) in 1893. He also drew public notice for advocating for social justice for Russian Jews in a series of articles in *The Times* in 1882. Fluent in several languages, Jacobs noticed connections in his historical research between Jewish folktale manuscripts in Hebrew and the European material popularized by the Grimm brothers. He drew attention to his theory that Jews were responsible for transmitting narrative traditions from East to West in "Jewish Diffusion of Folk-Tales," published in the *Jewish Chronicle* in 1888 and reprinted in his notable book *Jewish Ideals and Other Essays* (1896). He served as editor of the Folk-Lore Society's journal *Folk-Lore* from 1889 to 1900 and the compendium of papers from the

1891 International Folklore Congress. An important contribution in the journal was his 1893 essay "The Folk," in which he broke with the prevalent British evolutionary doctrine and signaled a modern definition of folklore by calling for attention to the folklore of the present and to the social context of the folk as well as the content of the lore. In "Jewish Diffusion of Folk-Tales," he expounded on the importance of social context for explaining the similarity of the content of European tales by pointing out the role of Jews in adopting the folk narratives of host societies and spreading them during the medieval period as they experienced multiple migrations. His sociological work expanded when in 1896 he became founding editor of *The Jewish Year Book,* which documented demographic trends in Jewish communities worldwide.

Jacobs's publication in folklore diminished after 1900, when he took on the giant project of editing *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (1906) and teaching at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York City. He resigned his position at JTS to become editor of the weekly journal *American Hebrew,* which was prominent in the development of American Judaism and Jewish letters. The last project Jacobs completed before his death, in Yonkers, New York, on January 30, 1916, was *Jewish Contributions to Civilization* (1919), which included an expansion of his ideas on Jewish diffusion of folktales from India to Europe in the essay "Medieval Jews as Intellectual Intermediaries." In an essay inspired by his research in Spain on manuscript sources for a history of Sephardic Jewry, he pinpointed centers of Jewish translation in Toledo and Naples that brought folkloric material from India to the Middle East, rendering it in Arabic, which Jews translated into Latin for European readers. He estimated that one-tenth of the "common fairy-tale store of Europe" derived from these sources. Jacobs's ideas about the role of medieval Jewish merchants and scholars have been among his most lasting.

Simon J. Bronner

See also: Schwarzbaum, Haim.

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JASON, HEDA (1932–)

Heda Jason is an Israeli folklorist and ethnopoetic scholar living and working in Jerusalem. Her primary contributions to the area of Jewish folklore include the early development (with its founder, the folklorist Dov Noy), of the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA), the conduct of extensive fieldwork in Israel among immigrants from Muslim countries (Yemen, Kurdistan, and others), in the years 1955 to 1963, and the cataloging of Jewish folktale types.

Jason was born in Belgrade on January 31, 1932, and moved to Israel in 1949. Her training included Jewish and Middle Eastern studies and sociology at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (where she earned her bachelor's degree in 1964); folk literature, ethnology, and linguistics at the University of Göttingen, Germany (1963–1964); and anthropology and folklore at the University of California, Berkeley (1965–1966), and at Indiana University, Bloomington (where she received her Ph.D. in 1967).

Jason taught in the Department of Poetics and Comparative Literature of Tel Aviv University from 1968 to 1978. Her interest focused on theoretical problems, using both structuralist methods (based on the work of Russian structuralists) and a semantic approach (based on Max Lüthi's work) and combining them into a unified framework for ethnopoetics.

Jason developed the theory of ethnopoetic genres and presented it in several publications: the swindler novella (ARV 27 [1971]: 141–160); the numskull tale (*Asian Folklore Studies* 31 [1972]: 1–31); the legend of the Sacred (Jason 1975); and the reward and punishment fairy tale (Jason 1988). Her overviews of Jewish folk literature were published in the *Journal of Indian Folkloristics* (1–3 [1978–1980]); and *Asian Folklore Studies* (49 [1990]: 69–108).

Jason published several catalogs for Jewish folktales and Indian folktales throughout her career and a manual for cataloging folk literature in 2000. A general cataloging system for the ethnopoetic genre of oral martial epic was in preparation as of 2012.

Idit Pintel-Ginsberg

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JERUSALEM AND THE TEMPLE

The destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. marks the beginning of a two-millennia-long preoccupation of Jews with the symbolic image of the Holy City and its shrine. In Rome the arch of Titus was erected to commemorate the victory in the province of Judea and the capture and sack of its capital, Jerusalem. One of the relief panels lining the passageway depicts the triumphal procession of spoils brought from the destroyed Temple. The central object is the solid gold seven-branched menorah, carried on the shoulders of the triumphant Roman soldiers. In so doing, the Romans showed that they understood the centrality of this golden object, as it occupies the place ordinarily given to pagan symbols of a vanquished enemy. Indeed, it was in this period that the menorah emerged as the quintessential symbol of ancient Judaism in general and of the destroyed Temple in particular.

The first centuries of the Common Era were a period in which Jewish visual symbolism was shaped and crystallized in Eretz Israel (Land of Israel). Later these symbols were disseminated throughout the Diaspora of the time. The menorah became the central symbol—for it was the object that had been constantly lit in the past, and after the Temple had been destroyed and its lights extinguished, the depiction of the burning lamp came to express the yearnings for the Temple and for its immediate rebuilding. Based on the Midrash, in many depictions the flames of the menorah are shown turning miraculously toward the center to symbolize the presence of the *shekhinah* (divine presence) in the rebuilt Temple. In subsequent centuries, the menorah graced Jewish public monuments—in particular, the colorful mosaics of the ancient synagogues of Eretz Israel—as well as daily artifacts, minor objects, and naive funerary engravings indicating that the deceased was a Jew. Contributing to the success of this symbol was also the fact it was graphically attractive, easy to draw, and immediately recognizable.

Along with the menorah, other symbols of the Temple became common in the talmudic era. In the synagogue and at home, items such as mosaics, capitals, clay oil lamps, and glass featured a single or a group of symbolic images including the shofar (ram's horn), a censer, the Ark of the Covenant, the Table of the Showbread (table in the Temple upon which twelve loaves of bread were always present as an offering to God), and the staff of Aaron—all of which are closely associated with worship in the Temple. Prominent also were the obligatory four species (*arba'at ha'minim*), or four different plant species (palm, willow, myrtle, and yellow citron [etrog]), of the pilgrimage holiday of Sukkot—the central religious and national event at the Temple in the period before its destruction. In the Jewish catacombs of ancient Rome, these symbols appear on golden glass fragments, which originally decorated the bottom of a bowl or a glass (*Kiddush* cup). One of the gold glasses (Museo Sacro, Vatican) actually depicts the Temple of Jerusalem during the holiday of Sukkot—with palm trees and booths around the Temple colonnade. Such depictions reminded Diaspora Jews of the Temple and Jerusalem at their most glorious times.

Architectural representations of Jerusalem were shaped in this formative period as well. A famous talmudic story narrates how Rabbi Akiva (ca. 60–ca. 135 C.E.) made for his wife, Rachel, a special piece of jewelry known as "Jerusalem of gold"—probably in the shape of the city's wall. Although no such piece of jewelry survived, it may be the object depicted in a Purim panel (as the crown of Queen Esther) in the third-century synagogue of Dura Europos, in present-day Syria. A contemporary of Rabbi Akiva and his protégé Shimeon Bar Kochba, the leader of the second rebellion against the Romans (132–135 C.E.), was apparently the first to perpetuate an image of the Temple. On the coins he minted appears the façade of the Temple, not as it looked two generations earlier but as a conventional tetra-style classical structure—an accepted and familiar visual formula for a sacred site at the time.

However, the image located between the central columns was not of a tangible god, as in the Hellenistic temples, but that of the Ark of the Covenant. This feature, which adapts a recognizable form and imbues it with Jewish motifs, came to characterize the depictions of the Temple and Jerusalem in Jewish traditional art to this day.

In subsequent centuries the deep preoccupation with the image of Jerusalem spread to the visual arts of the two other monotheistic religions—Christianity and Islam. Although in each religion the images that evolved reflect disparate ideological, theological, and artistic descriptions of the Holy City, both cultures exerted considerable influence on the development of the images of Jerusalem created by or for the Jewish minorities that resided in their midst. In medieval Jewish art the representation of the Temple and Jerusalem shifted from the synagogue to the world of the book. Fragments of early manuscripts of the Bible manuscripts from the Cairo Geniza (tenth century) are preceded with ornamental pages depicting the Tabernacle implements, the menorah in particular, in a manner somewhat reminiscent of ancient mosaics. From the lands of Islam, this tradition was carried to and elaborated upon in Christian Spain, where the custom had been to richly decorate the preliminary pages of the manuscripts of the Bible with the gold and silver cult vessels that were believed to have stood in Solomon's Temple. Medieval Spanish Jews actually called the Bible *mikdashyah* (Sanctuary of God), and contemporary rabbis drew parallels between the Temple and the Bible (for example, the division of the Bible in three was likened to the three divisions of the ancient Temple). Messianic hopes in depicting cult vessels, that stood in Solomon's Temple, believing they will be used in messianic times, were at times heightened by incorporating into the scheme of the holy vessels a diminutive image of the Mount of Olives—the place from which it is said that the messiah will lead the resurrected at the end of days (cf. Zech. 14).

In addition to biblical manuscripts, depictions of Jerusalem and the Temple had a central place in Passover *Haggadot*, both hand illuminated and printed. The popular concluding expression of the Haggadah, "Next Year in Jerusalem," gave rise to numerous depictions of messianic Jerusalem. The iconography of the city, however, often reflects standard pictorial conventions in the majority culture. Thus, in the Sarajevo Haggadah (Spain, fourteenth century) the Temple resembles a local castle with pointed towers and fitting crenellations, while in the Birds' Heads Haggadah (Germany, ca. 1300) the last page depicts a building that represents "Heavenly Jerusalem" and incorporates obvious Gothic architectural elements. In Ashkenazi *Haggadot* of the fifteenth century and later, Jerusalem of the end of days appears in yet another curious context: the supplication beginning with the word "*shefokh*"—"Pour out Your fury on the nations that did not know you." Recited at the Seder when the door is opened for Elijah, this section in the *Haggadot* is illustrated with the messiah riding on his white donkey, at times accompanied by the messianic herald, Elijah, as they approach Jerusalem—often shown as a medieval walled town.

A Jewish image of Jerusalem that emerged during the Renaissance in Italy and has been in use for some five centuries owes its origins to the Crusaders. When the Crusaders captured Muslim Jerusalem in 1099, they saw themselves as Joshua conquering Canaan or the Maccabees liberating the Temple from the hands of the infidels. The Holy City and its sacred sites were thus given biblical and historical names. In the illustrated maps the Crusaders created, the city is shown as a circular town—echoing the idea that Jerusalem is the center of the world—and on the Temple Mount, the Muslim Dome of the Rock (691 C.E.) is called "Templum Domimi" (Temple of the Lord). The octagonal domed structure thus became well known in European art, appearing in the center of pictures of Jerusalem, at times labeled "Solomon's Temple." The acculturated Italian Jews were the first to borrow this image from the general art of the time and incorporate it into the Jewish visual realm as the historic (or future) Temple of Jerusalem. Thus, for example, on the title page of some Hebrew books printed in sixteenth-century Venice, the unmistakably image of the Dome of the Rock is labeled in Hebrew *beit ha'mikdash* (The Temple), and a ribbon fluttering above the structure is inscribed with prophesy of Haggai 2:9 on the "glory of this latter House," meaning the messianic or rebuilt Temple.

The Renaissance images became more dominant and meaningful in the centuries that followed. In 1609 a Haggadah decorated with innovative woodcuts done by an anonymous folk artist was printed in Venice in three editions—each provided with a translation of one of the languages spoken in the ghetto: Judeo-Italian, Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), and Yiddish (Judeo-German). The picture of messianic Jerusalem depicts the Dome of the Rock in the center of a walled town, approached by the messiah, Elijah, and groups of Jews marching with him from the hills surrounding the eternal city. The miraculous nature of the event is emphasized by depicting the sun and the moon shining at the same time. In addition, the city appears as a harmonious octagonal town, with the houses symmetrically arranged around the central temple—in accordance with the concepts of the ideal city formulated in the humanist mind of the High Renaissance. This vision of an Italian-Jewish ideal city was later transferred to other media—whether illuminated Esther scrolls (Shushan being a prototype for Jerusalem) or embroidered Torah Ark curtains—notably the one produced in Venice in 1634 by Stella Perugia (Jewish Museum, Venice). Similarly, the attractive parchment Italian marriage contracts (*ketubbot*) were at times decorated with a panel depicting messianic Jerusalem—referring to the

ideal home of the married couple, the fruitful housewife, the thriving children—in accordance with the words of Psalm 128, which is recited at wedding ceremonies in Italy. Illustrating Jerusalem at the top of the marriage contract embodied, in addition, the idea of placing Jerusalem above the highest joy (Ps. 137:6).

The Italian images were gradually incorporated into the imagery of other Jewish communities, becoming familiar visual references to Jerusalem in many countries. The most immediate vehicle for the dissemination of the images in the Baroque period was undoubtedly the printed Hebrew book. With the spread of the Hebrew books of Italy, the typography and the images in them became well known throughout Europe, and local printers from Lublin to Berlin, and from Salonika to Istanbul, imitated their designs. Local craftsmen in turn used the small black-and-white images as a source of inspiration for the decoration of local Judaic objects. A noted example is the Italian title page featuring a monumental gateway supported by a pair of twisted pillars, which people believed represent Jachin and Boaz, the two columns that stood in front of Solomon's Temple. Legends were told about their magical powers. After it was copied on the title page of the book, labeled with the verse "This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous shall enter" (Ps. 118:20), the motif became extremely widespread. In Ashkenazi folk art, for example, the Solomonic twisted pillars dominate Torah Ark curtains, mantles, and breastplates, as well as tombstones, *mizraḥ* tablets (see: *Mizraḥ*), papercuts and so on.

Aside from the Italian-influenced Jerusalem-related motifs, there were popular images that developed locally as well. Polish synagogues were painted with a symbolic image of Jerusalem that pictorially resembles east European towns with their typical domes and tiled roofs. The heavenly city of the redemption at times stands in contrast to life in a European town, which symbolized the sufferings of the exile. In the ceiling of the synagogue of Mohilev in Belarus, painted in 1740 by Ḥayim ben Yitzhak Segal, the city of Worms is shown carried by a dragon or the messianic Leviathan. At times the Leviathan is depicted with its tail in its mouth—a motif known already from medieval Ashkenazi manuscripts.

One of the most successful images of Jerusalem was directly taken from Christian art. In 1625–1630 there appeared in Basel a Protestant Bible, illustrated with copper engravings by the Swiss master Matthaeus Merian. Reflecting Protestant ideology of Solomon's Temple as an inspiration for the restored Christian Temple, Merian's imposing structure is enclosed within walled courtyards and surrounded by buildings, above which shines a large sun. This image (and many similar ones) was copied by a convert, Abraham bar Jacob, in a Haggadah published in Amsterdam in 1695. The Haggadah won much renown, and its illustrations served as the basis

for many illuminated Haggadah manuscripts created in the eighteenth century by Jewish folk artists of the "Bohemia-Moravia school." In addition, the pictures of the Amsterdam Haggadah were imitated and recycled in an endless number of printed *Haggadot*—from Frankfurt and New York to Bombay, Baghdad, and Casablanca. Thus, bar Jacob's Christian-based image of Jerusalem became known throughout the Jewish world and is still used to this day.

The desire to become familiar with the important sites of Eretz Israel, even when pilgrimage was not always possible, gave rise to another important category of images of Jerusalem and the Temple. Illustrated hagiographic itineraries, containing descriptions of the tombs of the righteous in the Holy Land and neighboring areas, became common in the sixteenth century. One such text, *Sefer yiḥus ha'avot* (Genealogy of the Patriarchs), became especially popular, and several illuminated copies are known from Eretz Israel and Italy, attesting to the pilgrimage patterns and contacts between the two countries. The illustrations of the holy sites in these manuscripts are stereotypical and naive; they were intended not to provide actual views of the sites but to serve as souvenirs and reminders of the sites. In carrying on the old pictorial conventions, they perpetuate the view of the domed Temple and even feature another structure that harks back to the Crusader tradition, namely, "Solomon's House of Study," set against the Temple. Another pilgrimage guidebook, entitled *Sefer zikkaron bi'Yerushalayim* (printed in Istanbul, 1743), also contains the first picture of the Western Wall, that is, the remaining wall of the Temple—simply drawn as a wall of twelve rows of bricks of varying sizes. Other pictorial renderings of such "travelogues" include tablets with panoramic views of the Holy Land in which the holy sites are marked (one example is the *shiviti* tablet from Istanbul 1838/1839, by Moses Ganbash, which is held at the Jewish Museum, New York) or the colorful Sabbath tablecloths from early-nineteenth-century Italy, in which the tombs of the righteous are arranged in a large circle around the conventional picture of the Temple Mount.

The Italian and Ottoman traditions culminated in the folk art of the Old Yishuv in Eretz Israel (late nineteenth to early twentieth century). The central image of the Temple Mount that emerged in this period shows the Temple in the form of the Dome of the Rock, and "Solomon's House of Study" resembles the al-Aqsa Mosque; the two edifices rise above a brick wall representing the Western Wall, with a row of cypress trees between them—symbolizing the cedars of Lebanon used to build the Temple (cf. 1 Kgs. 6:10, 15–16, etc.). This image gradually became the visual hallmark of the Old Yishuv, appearing on hundreds of ritual objects, *mizraḥ* tablets, sukkah decorations, *ketubbot*, Sabbath tablecloths and challah covers, *Kiddush* cups, calendars, micrographic illustrations, and so on. Objects and documents bearing

the Eretz Israel images were sent to the Diaspora as souvenirs or incentives for donations and thus transformed earlier pictorial conventions in many lands.

In the twentieth century, the "high art" related to Jerusalem increasingly took over the traditional folk images. This process started in the nineteenth century with European orientalist artists, such as the English William Henry Bartlett (1809–1854) or the German Gustav Bauernfeind (1848–1904), who went to the Holy Land and created romantic views of Jerusalem. With the establishment of the Bezalel Art School in 1906, leading Jewish artists (e.g., Ephraim Moses Lilien [1874–1925] and Reuven Rubin [1893–1974]) followed the new artistic movements in producing modernist images of the city, though often emphasizing the Jewish monuments. Naturally there were interrelationships between the "high" and folk imagery—especially in the first decades of the twentieth century. Subsequently, the traditional and idealistic concepts were largely neglected or criticized in the realm of the "high" art, while the folk images were limited predominantly to the domain of ephemeral, functional and daily graphic materials, such as New Year cards, Simchat Torah flags, and Ḥanukkah lamps (see: Ḥanukkah Lamps). These objects emphasized some of the icons that were common in the past—the Western Wall, in particular—along with new Zionist symbols of strength—such as the Tower of David—which became extremely prominent. This tradition culminated in the Six-Day War (1967), when pictures of soldiers liberating Jerusalem and its holy sites dominated the folk imagery.

Shalom Sabar

See also: Menorah; Messiah and Redeemer; Symbols.

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JERUSALEM STUDIES IN JEWISH FOLKLORE, JOURNAL

Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore is a publication of the Mandel Institute of Jewish Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel. The journal was established in 1981 by its founding editors, Tamar Alexander and Galit Hasan-Rokem. Dov Noy—the doyen of academic folklore studies in Israel—has served as chair of the editorial board since then. Other distinguished members of the editorial board are leading folklorists Dan Ben-Amos, Haya Bar-Itzhak, Eli Yassif, Shalom Sabar (joined in 1995), and Hagar Salamon (joined in 2003), all of whom have published several articles in the journal.

The journal appeared more or less biannually until 1985, when it became an annual, with double issues rarely published every second year. Nearly 30 volumes have been published to date. The Hebrew articles are followed by substantial English abstracts. The journal is peer reviewed and publishes predominantly original research. In some cases, historically important essays (by Yehudah Leyb Cahan, Lauri Honko, Robert A. Georges, Venetia Newall, and Amy Shuman) and articles pertaining to a thematic focus (e.g., "Judaica Postcards" and articles by Naomi Schor, Ellen Smith, Shalom Sabar, and Galit Hasan-Rokem) have been translated from other languages. The volumes include three Festschrifts to date, for the following eminent scholars: Dov Noy (volumes 13–14, 1992), Dan Ben-Amos (volumes 19–20, 1997–1998), and Olga Goldberg (volume 27, 2011). In addition to research articles, the journal publishes descriptive essays on the history of folklore research and book reviews.

Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore has had a major role in establishing the academic standards of the discipline in Israel, and of Jewish folklore studies internationally. Its development has paralleled the remarkable accretion of folklore studies in Israel to

encompass its four major research universities: the Hebrew University, Haifa University, Ben Gurion University in Beer Sheva, and Tel Aviv University. After the first Ph.D. of the Hebrew University was given in 1936 to Dr. Raphael Patai (1910–1996), folklore studies were initiated by Dov Noy in the late 1950s and became a full-fledged B.A. program in the mid-1990s, and an M.A. program in 2011. Minor programs were created at Haifa University in the early 1970s and at the Ben Gurion University in Beer Sheva in the 1980s. Tel Aviv University made them a partial requirement in literary studies in the late 1990s. Both senior and junior scholars from all these programs actively participate with articles in the journal, which consequently has become a collective venture of Israeli folklore studies, often in conjunction with the annual Israeli Inter-University Folklore Conferences instituted in parallel with the journal by its founding editors.

Prominent scholars in adjacent fields who have published in the journal include Jacob Elbaum, Ezra Fleischer, Avidov Lipsker, Aliza Shenhar, and Shmuel Werses (Hebrew literature); Yair Zacovitch (Bible studies); Daniel Boyarin, Avigdor Shinan, and Dina Stein (rabbinic literature); Moshe Idel (Jewish mysticism); Joseph Dan, Dov Schwarz, and Israel M. Ta-Shma (medieval Hebrew thought and literature); Hava Turniansky (Yiddish literature); Yoram Bilu, Stanley Brandes, and Harvey Goldberg (anthropology); David Navon (cognitive psychology); Samuel Armistead, Joseph Silverman, Ora Rodrigue-Schwarzwald, Ya'acov Ben-Toulila, and David Bunis (Ladino studies); Edwin Seroussi (ethnomusicology); Bat-Zion Eraqi Klorman and Yaron Ben-Naeh (history); Esther Schely Newman (communication); as well as representatives of the growing generation of academic folklorists in Israel, among them Ilana Rosen, Esther Juhasz, Karmela Abdar, and Yuval Harari.

The journal publishes a wide range of folklore studies, including folk literature and verbal arts in Hebrew and Jewish languages, folk art and material culture, modern genres (such as bumper stickers in Hagar Salamon's work), folk belief, symbolical thought, and rituals, as well as theory of folklore. The articles are accompanied by rich, often colorful, illustrations. A general overview of the articles reveals a predominance of folklore articles on certain ethnic groups, followed in frequency by historical folklore, with a growing portion of theoretical articles as well as studies of contemporary Israeli folklore not defined to any particular ethnic group.

Galit Hasan-Rokem

See also: Alexander, Tamar; Hasan-Rokem, Galit.

Jewish Historical and Ethnographical Society of St. Petersburg

See: An-Ski, S.

Joha

Joha is a well-known character in Middle Eastern and Sephardic folktales. He appears in legends, fairy tales, myths, proverbs, stories, and idioms and expressions, and his name became a household word in Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), Judeo-Arabic, and Hebrew.

The origin of Joha's name is unclear. He is first mentioned in Arabic stories dating from the ninth century. A similar character, Nasr-a-din Hodja, appears in medieval Turkish stories. According to the Turkish literary tradition, such a man existed and is buried in the town of Konya. Eventually, the two characters' names merged, to become Nasr-a-din efendi Joha. During the seventeenth century, Turkish migrants brought this literary tradition to North Africa, where it became intermingled with similar local traditions. Folktales from the eastern coast of Africa and parallel stories in Iraq refer to Abu Nwas. Parallel stories also exist beyond the Islamic world—for example, in Sicily, where the popular fool is named Giufà. The unique shapes this character assumes in each culture reflect the particular context and circumstances in which the tales are created.

Joha has Janus's double face: On the one hand, he is innocent and stupid; on the other, he is a trickster. He is a cheater and is cheated. He sets traps for others and himself falls into traps; he is simpleton and liar, victimizer and victim.

Many of the stories concern the erotic or even pornographic aspects of life, subjects that were not supposed to be discussed openly. The jokes enabled people to get around this taboo. The other side of his ridiculous innocence is his sacred innocence. Here the roles are reversed, for the tales reveal that a man considered inferior by people may be highly regarded by God.

As a literary figure, Joha never dies. He continues to live on in jokes told by the very young as well as the old. In traditional stories he is the king's or the sultan's fool, yet he also moves through time and meets real people, such as Baron Rothschild and Adolf Hitler. He is very familiar with Jewish religious practices (Halakhah), and some stories about him can be understood only in a Jewish context.

The character of the fool and the trickster who makes fun of others fulfills different social and emotional functions in each society. Versions of the Joha stories (or stories of parallel characters such as Hershele) are found among all Jewish ethnic groups. Joha has become a stereotype, not only for the listeners of the stories but also for the fictional characters who appear in the stories.

The character of Joha also figures in modern jokes. Most of the jokes are based on universal humor, such as those about human defects or relations between the sexes. But some stories are unique to Jewish culture or are based on Jewish laws or rituals. Joha the trickster acts for his own good against social norms and institutions. But the innocent simpleton is unable to adapt to the laws of society and nature, and this makes him pathetic or ridiculous.

Tamar Alexander

See also: Spain, Jews of; Turkey, Jews of.

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JOKE

The Jewish joke is a subcategory of Jewish humor. Because jokes dealing with Jews and Jewish subject matter are a form of folklore disseminated through oral tradition, they are perhaps the most popular and best-known form of Jewish humor. When people speak or write about Jewish humor, jokes are often what they have in mind and may serve as their sole examples.

In Christian Europe, Jews were long the subjects of tales and songs—both serious (AT 777, 5921; Child no. 155) and comic (AT 922, 924A, 1656, 1855A). Jews had their own tales that mirrored or reacted to the tales and songs circulating in gentile society. Books of Jewish jokes began to be published only in the nineteenth century. As that century drew to a close, their numbers increased. The publication of Jewish joke books mushroomed in the twentieth century.

The overlap between Jewish and non-Jewish tale and joke traditions makes the definition of the Jewish joke problematic. The suggestion that Jewish jokes are those that "would be pointless if the Jewishness of a character were removed" (Cray 1964, 344 n.4) fails to deal with the fact that many jokes with Jewish characters were and are told outside the Jewish community. Furthermore, many jokes with Jewish characters have analogs in which Jews play no part (e.g., AT 924A, 924B). Jews often transform jokes that they admire, investing them with Jewish characters, customs, and locales. After that investment is made, the "Jewishness" of the joke is often easily accepted.

Because of these problems, a folklorist has suggested that Jewish jokes be restricted to those that are rooted in traditional literary forms: those that emulate formulas in the Torah or the Talmud or otherwise resemble rabbinical exegesis (Noy 1962, 56). Although such an approach would define the Jewish joke as unique to the Jewish community, it would also restrict Jewish jokes to a minority within that community. Few Jews grasp the nuances of language or the principles of exegesis upon which such jokes depend. Defined in these terms, Jewish jokes would constitute only the smallest percentage of the jokes told by Jews about Jewish characters, subjects, and themes.

Jewish jokes became a subject for philosophical speculation and scholarly debate in part because of their prominence in Sigmund Freud's book *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious,* which was first published in 1905. Freud's book was important for three reasons: (1) jokes were theorized as forms of aggression; (2) Jewish jokes were employed to illustrate joke techniques and joke purposes (they account for approximately one-third of his narrative joke examples); (3) Jewish jokes were regarded as distinctive and indicative of the character of Jews. Set within Freud's psychology of joking, Jewish jokes assumed a significance that they might not have otherwise achieved.

The Jewish jokes that Freud included in his book largely dealt with the figures of the *shadkhen* (marriage broker), the *schnorrer* (beggar), and *Ostjuden* (East European Jews). On the surface, the jokes portrayed these characters in a negative light. The *shadkhen* prevaricated, the *schnorrer* was ungrateful, and the *Ostjuden* were dirty and slovenly. Freud regarded such jokes as different from the "brutal stories" told by anti-Semites, however. Although they originated in the Jews' recognition of their own faults, these faults were also related to their own good qualities. Freud claimed not to know whether there were "many other instances of a people making fun of its own character to such a degree" (Freud 1960, 8:112).

Freud also used Jewish jokes as illustrations of particular joke types—most prominently, cynical jokes and skeptical jokes. He defined cynical jokes as those that criticized persons, practices, and institutions. Skeptical jokes involved absurdities that served to attack the certainty of knowledge itself.

Freud's commentary on the Jewish joke influenced the conceptualization of these jokes in the generations to follow. Psychoanalysts situated the Jewish joke more explicitly within a framework of psychopathology. Edmund Bergler (1956) regarded the self-critical Jewish joke as a form of masochism. Martin Grotjahn (1966) and Theodor Reik (1962) concurred, although they believed that the masochism was largely a mask. The self-critical joke was a defensive tactic that served to deflect the Jews' hostility from their persecutors to themselves. In addition, underneath the masochism existed a strong strain of paranoia with its attendant sense of superiority. This superiority expressed itself in the Jewish joke, albeit in disguised form.

Freud's representation of Jewish jokes as skeptical was echoed in later characterizations of the Jewish joke as "especially absurd," rooted in a "crazy logic," or "insane rationality" (Berger 1997, 15; Cohen 1999, 46). In keeping with his illustration of cynical jokes with Jewish examples, Jewish jokes were said to focus on the criticism of man, society, and God in ways distinctive from the jokes of other peoples. However, almost no systematic comparisons of Jewish and non-Jewish joke repertoires have been attempted, so it is difficult to know whether a factual basis exists for such depictions. Forms of talmudic disputation may have led to the assumption that jokes that depended on convoluted logical arguments were intimately connected with this type of religious discourse. The involvement of Jews in movements for social justice may have made the suggestion that Jewish jokes embraced a comprehensive critique of society seem appealing. Some data is available regarding the self-critical nature of the Jewish joke. According to Christie Davies (2002, 17–49), Scots seem to have been as adept as the Jews in creating and purveying self-mocking jokes, although Jews would seem to exceed them in the production of jokes directed against outsiders.

It is possible to piece together the arguments of scholars to create a historical overview of the Jewish joke. Jewish jokes began in Europe as anti-Semitic stories told by gentiles. They were absorbed into the Jewish repertoire of jokes and set in a Jewish milieu (Raskin 1992, 167–168). They were self-critical and masochistic and either reflected the Jews' low self-worth or served to channel aggression away from their persecutors. At best, they were expressions of a Jewish sense of superiority in disguised form (Reik 1962: 228). In the United States, however, where anti-Semitism was greatly diminished and unsupported by government institutions, Jewish hostility became expressible and the Jewish joke took a more openly aggressive stance toward the outside world (Cray 1964, 333; Novak and Waldoks 1981: xvii)—a trend that continues today. This historical overview is not history. It is an amalgam of theoretical perspectives on the Jewish joke. It is a hypothesis that can be validated or falsified only through close attention to the

publications of Jewish jokes throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and by ethnographic studies in our own time.

Elliott Oring

See also: Chelm, The Wise of; Hershele Ostropoler; Joha.

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JONAH, BOOK OF

The Book of Jonah tells the tale of a biblical character identified by scholars as a minor prophet who refused to obey God's command to bring the gentiles into the city of Nineveh or to ask God's forgiveness for his actions. Among Jews around the world, the Book of Jonah is recited as the prophetic lesson (*haftarah*) during the afternoon service on Yom Kippur. Folklorists have studied the book as both an allegory and a parable.

Folklorists argue that although placed in the Bible among the Books of the Twelve Minor Prophets, the Book of Jonah is not a prophetical book per se, because it does not include any of Jonah's prophecies, except the very short one: "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (3:4). Nor is there any definite historical setting to the story, even if it tells about a "historical" person, Jonah, son of Amittai from Gath-hepher (2 Kgs. 14:25). The city of Nineveh, rather than the capital of the great empire of Assyria, is here conceived of as a symbolic representation, namely, "the great city" that is full of

wickedness, the same way in which Tarshish represents the remotest place across the sea or, for that matter, the Land of Uz in the Book of Job. Therefore, folklorists understand the book mainly as a parable, the main purpose of which is to be sought for in its moral teaching.

Yet there is no agreement about the book's central idea: It has been widely accepted among modern scholars that it was meant as a polemic against the nationalistic seclusionism or isolationism, which was based on a negative attitude toward foreigners and which prevailed most extremely in the post-exilic days of Ezra and Nehemiah (ca. 458–420 B.C.E.). Thus, by the way in which the foreigners—that is, the sailors and the people of Nineveh—are portrayed, the story intends to endorse tolerance toward other nations.

This understanding has met opposition based on the fact that although Jonah is implicitly criticized throughout the entire narrative, in which he is repeatedly portrayed in ironic situations, he never utters even the slightest accusation against the foreigners, their religious worship, or their morality. His bitter arguments against the Lord are about His virtues: The compassionate and gracious God tends to turn and relent and decides to withdraw his proclaimed judgment.

Early Jewish commentators stressed the importance of penitence. Accordingly, this is where they found the main teaching of the story (Babli, *Ta'anit* 2). This is why the Book of Jonah has been set in Jewish tradition as part of the ceremonial prayers of the Day of Atonement.

Alexander Rofe maintains that the stress on God's relenting is meant as opposition to the deterministic views that prevailed in earlier times and could be identified in various biblical proclamations, such as "The Glory of Israel will not lie or repent; for he is not a man, that he should repent" (1 Sam. 15:29).

However, the most significant turning points of the plot are based on folktale motifs. These are the mighty wind and the great tempest, which were cast by God as punishment; the lots, which were cast by the sailors to "find out on whose account this misfortune has come" upon them; the huge fish that swallowed Jonah; and the ricinus plant (perhaps a gourd—the meaning of the Hebrew word "*kikayon*" is uncertain), and the worm.

Scholars may understand these folk motifs as literary devices that are used by the author in order to convey theological ideas. The motif of the storm implies the idea of God's unlimited domain over the universe, especially the sea. When Jonah, in his reply to the sailors' inquiry, identifies himself as "I am a Hebrew . . . I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made both sea and land" (1:9), it is easy to identify the polemic trend of these words. The need to emphasize the fact that it was God who created both sea and land is typical to the biblical post-exilic debates (cf. Isa. 42:5) against Mesopotamian or Canaanite mythological concepts, especially the idea

of theomachy, in which the struggle with the gods of the sea (Tiamat or Yam) is most prevalent. Here, the elaborate description of the storm is meant to demonstrate God's total control over the sea.

The story of the huge fish implies another idea as well. Some biblical stories contain motifs of animals, which are sent to punish or to put in place a prophet who failed to complete his mission. These tales betray irony in the fact that, in spite of their natural traits, these animals prove more obedient than the prophet. This is also the case in the story of Balaam and his she-ass (Num. 22:21–35); the story of the Man of God from Judah and the lion (1 Kgs. 13:23–28); another story of a disciple of the prophets and a lion (1 Kgs. 20:35–36); and, in some other way, the story of Elijah and the ravens (1 Kgs. 17:2–6). Yet it seems that it is the motif of the plant and the worm that carries the theological message to its culmination: It is here that both irony against the prophet who cared about the fulfillment of God's proclaimed judgment more than about the life of persons and beasts and the virtue of God's gracious relenting are clearly manifested, in His concluding reply to Jonah: "You cared about the plant, which you did not work for and did not grow. . . . And should not I care about Nineveh . . . in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who did not yet know their right hand from their left, and many beasts as well!" (4:10–11).

Postbiblical literature features a variety of attitudes toward this topic. It was God who planned all of Jonah's adventures in advance, in order to ensure the successful completion of his mission. Therefore, it was God who sent the ship to meet Jonah (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* 10; *Tanḥuma* Lev. 8; *Midrash* Jonah). Jonah was the greatest of Elisha's disciples (*Bereshit Rabba* 21:5). It was he who was sent to anoint Jehu and to predict the destruction of Jerusalem (ibid.), but the people of Jerusalem offered penance and God relented, and therefore Jonah was condemned by the people as a false prophet. His mission was carried out successfully to such a degree that the people of the ship, who represented all seventy nations of the world, decided to circumcise and to convert to Judaism, and the people of Nineveh became just and righteous in all their deeds (Babli, *Ta'anit* 16a; *y. Ta'anit* b, 65, 2). The huge fish was like a great synagogue, and Jonah rescued the fish from the whale. Jonah did not die but entered Paradise in his lifetime, as did his wife, a righteous woman who made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year (Babli, *Eruvim* 96a). But scholars also find that after forty days the people of Nineveh resumed their wickedness and evil ways, and God destroyed their city, and all of them were devoured in the depths of *Sheol* (the underworld).

Shamai Gelander

See also: Folk Narratives in the Bible.

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JOSEPH

The narrative of Joseph, son of Jacob, deemed a novella by many modern scholars, occupies thirteen complete chapters of Genesis (37 and 39–50), not counting the reference to the birth of Joseph in Jacob's story (Gen. 30:23–24) and the apparently unrelated narrative of Tamar and Judah in Genesis 38. Not surprisingly, this narrative has generated extensive commentary from very early times, including many midrashim and one entire Sura in the Qur'an (Sura 12). As the scholar James L. Kugel (1997) has observed, even the earliest variants of the Bible elicited interpretation, and it is these interpretations that explain, expand, and build on the bare biblical texts beginning as early as the Babylonian exile. These interpretations appear in many different venues, among which are the commentaries of early interpreters such as Josephus Flavius and Philo and the midrashim of rabbis from all periods.

The essential episodes in Joseph's story include his birth as the first born from a barren and favored mother, Jacob's second wife (Gen. 30:22–24), but not *the* first born; his interpretation of dreams at three separate points: as a boy (Gen. 37:5–10), in prison (Gen. 40:5–22), and in relation to the Pharaoh (Gen. 41:15–31); his sale by his brothers to traders, who took him to Egypt (Gen. 37:18–28); his attempted seduction by Potiphar's wife (Gen. 39:7–20); his administrative skills, first in Potiphar's house (Gen. 39:4–6), then in prison (Gen. 39:20–23), and finally over all of Egypt (Gen. 41:40–57); his marriage to Aseneth, daughter of the high priest Potiphera (Gen. 41:45); and his relations with his brothers in Egypt (Gen. 42–45). Certain other attributes and actions also played roles in the biblical narrative and related legends: He was openly his father's favorite of twelve sons (Gen. 37:3), for which he was hated by his brothers (Gen. 37:4); he carried bad reports to his father about at least some of his brothers (Gen. 37:2); and he was noted as being very good-looking (Gen. 39:6–7).

These last three attributes and actions, added to Joseph's first two dreams outlining how he would be first among his brothers, even above his father, led his brothers to contemplate his murder. Eventually they settled for his sale to passing traders, who took him as a slave to Egypt, where he was sold into Potiphar's household, an event that set the stage for the rest of the narrative.

Although each episode of Joseph's narrative is interesting in itself, arguably the most discussed incident of the whole story is that of the attempt by Potiphar's

Silver Torah finials, engraved with the blessing to Joseph, Jerusalem, 1930. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

wife to seduce Joseph (Gen. 39:7–20). This episode, in which an older, more powerful female attempts to seduce a younger, virile male, has many parallels in other ancient texts. The closest of these appears in the thirteenth-century B.C.E. Egyptian "Tale of Two Brothers," the opening episode of which relates the failed attempt of an older woman to seduce her young brother-in-law. Other ancient Middle Eastern parallels include a Sumerian story about Gilgamesh and the Bull of Heaven, which appears in somewhat expanded form in tablet six of the Epic of Gilgamesh. In it, the goddess Ishtar attempts unsuccessfully to seduce Gilgamesh. The same motif also appears in the fourteenth-century B.C.E. Ugaritic narrative of Aqhat, in which the goddess Anat seeks unsuccessfully to seduce the young prince Aqhat. In each case, the Egyptian, the Mesopotamian, and the Ugaritic, the male is described as beautiful, and after he refuses, usually explaining his reasons, he is punished in a significant way even though any such liaison would have proved dangerous or fatal to him.

Although the biblical episode is not unique in the ancient world, the various midrashim, explanations, and

other discussions make it appear so, for the content of the biblical text itself raises many questions and thus openings for commentary on topics such as Joseph's physical appearance, the actual staffing of the household on the day of the attempted seduction, the involvement of other women, Joseph's own actions—was he really as chaste as he is presented?—and more. Kugel has brought together much of this material in his discussions in *In Potiphar's House* (1994) and *The Bible as It Was* (1997).

This episode may have gained the most commentary, yet other aspects of Joseph's narrative also resonate with different stories both within and without the Bible, notably the barren-mother motif. Common by this point in the Bible, this motif appears with Sarah and Rebecca as well as Joseph's mother, Rachel, and later Samuel's mother, Ḥannah, and John the Baptist's mother, Elizabeth. The motif is however, neither, unique in the Bible nor the oldest. It appears in the Ugaritic myth of Aqhat and in the thirteenth-century B.C.E. Egyptian "Tale of the Doomed Prince." Each of these tales opens with a king and a queen who lack a son and whose prayers to obtain one are granted, a motif also common in traditional European tales.

The actual biblical text, however, focuses on Joseph's administrative skills, particularly under the pharaoh in New Kingdom Egypt, and he appears to have carried out his duties as the Egyptian ruler wished, suggesting that Joseph administered according to the accepted standards of the day—namely, the precepts as presented in the ancient Egyptian instructional literature and the duties of vizier as outlined in the tomb of the vizier Rekhmire and others.

Joseph's story is also classified, at least in part, as one of rags to riches, the tale of the downtrodden who rises high, even demonstrating, as modern scholarship argues, that in truth the rags-to-riches story is more accurately a riches-to-rags-to-riches narrative. The second set of riches commonly appears at a higher level, not unlike the shift from one stage of life to another in a life-cycle rite of passage.

Finally, Joseph's marriage to Aseneth, daughter of Potiphera, priest of On—that is, Heliopolis (Gen. 41:45)—generated a number of commentaries, probably the most notable of which is the story of "Joseph and Aseneth," dated variously from the first century B.C.E. to the third century C.E. or even later. Aseneth and Joseph had two sons, Menasseh and Ephraim (Gen. 41:50–52), who eventually became two of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. That Joseph married a foreign woman played on the biblical tradition of the "other" or "foreign" wife seen in the story of Ruth and others.

Ultimately Joseph must be seen as bridging the time and space between Canaan and the patriarchs and the exile, for Joseph plays the key role in Israel's survival of the long famine and its location in Egypt,

from which the Exodus, that incident which is so very central to Israelite history, took place. The many untoward events in Joseph's life only served to emphasize that the God of Israel was a god who acted in history on behalf of his people and thus could be counted on to keep the covenant established with Abraham and reaffirmed with Isaac and Jacob. Joseph represents the covenant in action.

Susan Tower Hollis

See also: Isaac; Jacob (Ya'acov).

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JUDEO LANGUAGES

See Languages, Jewish

KABBALAH

Kabbalah (קבלה) is a generic term in Hebrew used to describe different Jewish traditions. Beginning at the end of the twelfth century, this term refers mainly to the articulation of Jewish secret lore by the rabbinical elite. The term "Kabbalah" comes from the Hebrew grammatical root for "to receive" (קבל), which accentuates the belief of kabbalists that their secret lore relies on a chain of transmission of oral traditions first received by Moses from God and consequently transmitted over the years from one sage to another.

Early Stages

As a historical phenomenon, the first appearance of kabbalistic treatises and historical information on kabbalistic figures dates to the late twelfth century and the beginning of the thirteenth century. At this primary stage, one can detect three main kabbalistic and mystical branches that, to the best of historical knowledge to date, were unaware of one another: The first branch is referred to as Hassidut Ashkenaz (German Pietism) and elaborated earlier Jewish mystical traditions from the *Hekhalot* literature and the *Sefer yetzirah* (Book of Creation). Despite contributing to the development of later Kabbalah, this movement did not use the term "Kabbalah" in the sense of a systematic secret lore, nor did it mention the main kabbalistic-theosophic symbol, that is, the sefirotic tree. The second branch includes just one treatise, called the *Sefer ha'bahir* (Book of Brilliance); the *bahir* consists of different layers, and its historical and cultural context is still obscure. Written in midrashic style with ambiguous wording, it is the first text to implicitly refer to the main kabbalistic-theosophic symbols and is pseudepigraphically attributed to the tannaitic sage Rabbi Nehunia ben ha'Kana. Since the thirteenth century, this treatise has been considered a canonical esoteric text. The third branch is the school of Abraham ben David (Rabad), one of the most prominent rabbinic figures in Provence (southern France), and his son Isaac the blind. Only limited textual evidence has survived from this school—mainly a short interpretation of the *Sefer yetzirah* and some quotations that can be found in later kabbalistic treatises.

The Two Main Kabbalistic Trends

Kabbalah was used to describe two different trends in the thirteenth century: the first trend is the theosophical-theurgical kabbalah, which focused on the structure of the sefirotic system while depicting it by mythical and symbolic means. According to this trend, every Jew has the ability to affect the heavenly realms, for better or worse, through his daily ritual praxis and intentions. The second trend is the prophetic Kabbalah, whose main focus is the achievement of mystical experiences by kabbalists through such means as contemplation, vocalization, and interpretations of the combinations of alphabetical letters, holy names, and Bible verses.

The Ten *Sefirot*

The sefirotic system, which stands at the crux of the theurgical-theosophical Kabbalah, is a dynamic structure of the divine realm, which combines Neo-Platonic notions with Jewish mythical and mystical traditions. This structure is usually shaped in the form of a man, a primal man (*adam kadmon*), or a tree. It is basically composed of ten parts that reflect the way in which the infinite God (*Ein sof*) reveals Himself. Each one of the *sefirot* is referred to by various attributes and is sometimes ascribed a gender (male or female). The *sefirot* have different names, but their most common ones are: *keter* (crown); *ḥokhmah* (wisdom); *binah* (understanding); *ḥesed* (love); *gevurah* (strength); *tiferet* (beauty); *netsaḥ* (lasting endurance); *hod* (majesty); *yesod olam* (foundation of the world); and *malkhut* (kingdom). A common structure of the sefirotic system is shown in the diagram on the following page.

Alongside this decadal structure, three main dynamic axes dominate the sefirotic structure: The first outlines the dynamic relationship between the upper part of the sefirotic system (i.e., *arikh anpin: keter, ḥokhmah, binah*) and its lower part (i.e., *zeir anpin:* the lower six *sefirot* not including the lowest one). Graphically speaking, the second axis stretches from right to left and depicts the tension between love (*ḥesed*) and strength (*gevurah*), and it is balanced by the middle *sefirah* (*raḥamim/tiferet*). The third axis describes the relationship between the lower male *sefirah* (*tiferet*) and the lower female *sefirah* (*malkhut*). In the kabbalistic treatises, one finds disagreement as to whether the ten *sefirot* themselves are external to the *Ein sof* God (*kelim*) or emanations and therefore a part of the *Ein sof* (*'atsmut*). From a theosophical perspective, the main role of the kabbalist is to demonstrate how the scripture as well as lower world reflect in their innermost meaning the complicated dynamics within the sefirotic system. Practically speaking, the main role of the kabbalist is to achieve a balance between all the axes of the sefirotic system in order to repair

(Crown)

(Understanding)   KETER   (Wisdom)

BINAH   (Knowledge)   ḤOKHMAH

DAAT

MALKHUT

(Strength)   (Love)

GEVURAH   (Kingdom)   ḤESED

(Beauty)

TIFERET

(Majesty)   (Victory)

HOD   (Foundation)   NETSAḤ

YESOD
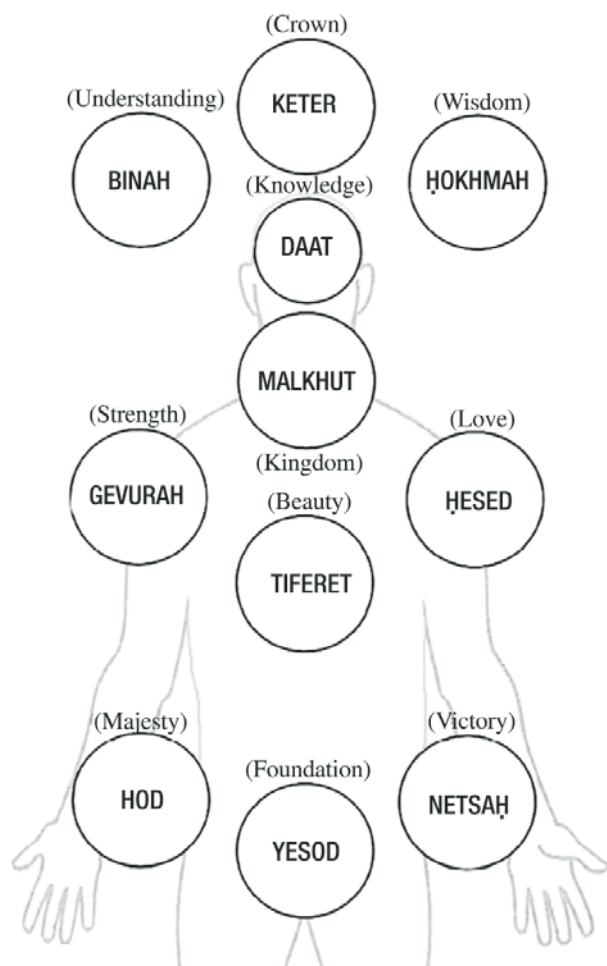
The Sefirotic System

the heavenly realm thereby transmitting divine influence to the world below while expressing a personal longing to achieve a mystical cleaving to God (*devekut*).

The Thirteenth-Century Theurgical-Theosophical Kabbalah

The first didactic discussions on kabbalistic theosophical issues are found in the writings of Rabbi Asher ben David, nephew of Rabbi Isaac the blind and grandson of Rabbi Abraham ben David, who lived at the beginning of the thirteenth century and probably wrote in Provence. At the same time, an important development of the kabbalistic lore occurred in Catalonia (Spain) among some of the disciples of Rabbi Isaac the blind— the kabbalists Rabbi Ezra ben Salomon, Rabbi Azriel, and Rabbi Jacob ben Sheshet of Gerona. The latter produced interpretations of parts of the Bible and rabbinic midrashim, as well as kabbalistic polemic treatises, and were deeply influenced by Neo-Platonic ideas. A differ-

ent branch of the Kabbalah was developed in the same region and at the same time by Nachmanides (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman). Nachmanides wrote down his kabbalistic attitudes in a very esoteric manner in his commentary to the Torah as well as in some other short treatises. He also founded a kabbalistic school whose main characteristics were esotericism, centralism, conservatism, and much caution in the transmission of kabbalistic knowledge. Nachmanides' kabbalistic traditions were later taught and interpreted by his disciple Rabbi Solomon ben Aderet of Barcelona (Rashba) as well as by his commentators such as Shem-Tov ben Abraham ibn Gaon, Joshua ibn Shueib, Rabbi Bahya ben Asher, and Isaac ben Samuel of Acre.

At the same time, that is, the first half of the thirteenth century, in Castile (Spain) Kabbalists developed other attitudes toward Jewish mysticism in a manner that was less centralized. The first of these is found in the later stage of the short mystical writings of the Ḥug ha'Iyyun (Circle of Contemplation). Those writings, which were first written in Provence and then developed in Castile, exhibit an eminent mystical of lights and developed a doctrine that brought together the thirteen measurements of the Godhead and the ten *sefirot*. The second kabbalistic trend that developed at that time in Castile is that of Rabbi Jacob ben Jacob ha'Cohen, which was influenced by the theosophical orientation and adopted hermeneutical tools from the school of German Pietism. Conjointly, theosophical ideas about the evil side of the Godhead were expanded on by a younger sibling of Jacob, Isaac ben Jacob ha'Cohen. Also worthy of mention is their disciple, Rabbi Moses ben Simon of Burgos and his disciple, a prominent leader of the Jews in Castile in the last third of the thirteenth century, as well as Todros ben Joseph ha'Levi Abulafia, who in an eclectic way combined between previous kabbalistic traditions from Gerona and Castile.

During the last third of the thirteenth century and the first quarter of the fourteenth, a new phase in the history of the Kabbalah began in Castile with a few kabbalists who wrote more explicitly on theosophical issues. Those kabbalists belonged to what is referred to as a "secondary rabbinical elite," a term coined by Moshe Idel to indicate that those figures were not among the most prominent halakhic personas. Among them should be mentioned Rabbi Joseph Gekatilla and Rabbi Moses (Moshe) de Leon, Rabbi David ben Yehuda ha'Ḥasid (nephew of Nachmanides), Rabbi Joseph of Hamadan, Rabbi Joseph Angelet, Rabbi Isaac ben Shahula, and Rabbi Joseph ben Shalom Ashkenazi. It is among these kabbalists that segments of the most important medieval kabbalistic treatise, namely, the Book of Zohar (the Book of Splendor), first appeared.

It is an accepted assumption of modern scholarship that the Book of Zohar, as it is known today, is a layered

and heterogeneous work (sometimes referred to as Zoharic literature); however, the majority of its texts were probably composed in the late thirteenth century and the beginning of the fourteenth century, and, in fact, its evolution did not end until its first printing in the mid-sixteenth century. The Zohar has been considered by most of the Kabbalists from the fourteenth century on as the canonical book of the Kabbalah. The book, which was attributed to the second-century sage Rabbi Shimeon bar Yoḥai (Rashbi), was written mainly in a unique Aramaic dialect. It contains an amalgamation of tales and interpretations of biblical verses in midrashic style, mythical depictions of the heavenly realm, and literary descriptions of the mystical experience of its heroes. All these genres elaborate original theosophical, mythical, and mystical issues. At the crux of this book lie literary descriptions of a group of sages, led by Rashbi, which includes rabbinical figures known from the talmudic literature. One of the classical Zoharic genres is the description of these sages' meetings in which kabbalistic and other issues were discussed and elaborated upon.

The first copies of Zoharic texts circulated as small booklets said to have been copied by Rabbi Moses de Leon from an original text that he secretly possessed. However, Isaac of Acre wrote that he heard third-hand that, after Rabbi Moses de Leon's abrupt death, his wife had said of him that he did not merely copy the Zohar but was actually its composer. The reliability of her testimony has been questioned ever since. Beginning in the eighteenth century, following Rabbi Isaac of Acre's testimony about the author of the Zohar, as well as many philological observations, some scholars, as well as a few rabbinical figures, have claimed that the Zohar was indeed written in the late thirteenth century by Rabbi Moses de Leon. Recent scholarly views argue that the Zohar was not written solely by him but by a larger group of kabbalists in Castile.

Thirteenth-Century Prophetic Kabbalah

The tension between the rabbinical elite that supported theosophical Kabbalah (especially in its Nachmanidian form) and the "other" thirteenth-century Jewish Kabbalah—the prophetic one—is illustrated in the historical case of the rejection of Rabbi Abraham Abulafia's kabbalistic attitudes around 1285, by the Rashba, a disciple of Nachmanides and one of the most important halakhic figures of the second half of the thirteenth century. Abraham Abulafia is of essential significance in the development of this trend, which, like the above-mentioned mystical trends, also referred to itself as Kabbalah. Abulafia, who objected to the theosophical sefirotic system, combined an extremely mystical and prophetic tendency with the use of an almost anarchic hermeneutical method

and mystical techniques, including letter combinations and vocalization of holy names. Although Abulafia's attitudes were vehemently rejected by some rabbinical elite and the majority of his writings were not printed until the end of the twentieth century, one can find important evidence showing that he influenced later kabbalists and kabbalistic treatises that are considered theosophical.

The Mid-Fourteenth to the Mid-Sixteenth Centuries

The mid-fourteenth and the mid-sixteenth centuries bookend the two major literary corpora of the Kabbalah, that is Zoharic literature and the kabbalistic literature of Safed. However, between the two, some very important and influential kabbalistic works were written. A few of these were eclectic, such as *Sefer ha'Kanah* and *Sefer ha'Peliah,* which were written in Byzantium in the second half of the fourteenth century and were pseudepigraphically attributed to the tannaitic sage Rabbi Nehunia ben ha'Kana; *Sefer shoshan sodot,* by Rabbi Moses of Kiev; and later on, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the theurgical works of Rabbi Meir ben Gabbai, *Sefer avodat ha'Kodesh* and *Tola'at Ya'akov.* Another important book, of which only a fifth has survived, is *Sefer ha'Meshiv.* This book, which interprets the meanings of the ten *sefirot*, was written shortly before the Spanish expulsion of the Jews in 1492. The book presents original messianic and mystical matters supposed to be achieved by magical means. After the expulsion, a few kabbalists from different backgrounds such as Judah Albutiny, Joseph ben Sayyah, and Eliezer ben Abraham Halevi were active in Jerusalem. It was likely due to hard physical and economical conditions, and to the encounter of different traditions in a small community, that each of them developed in his kabbalistic treatises unique trance techniques or messianic speculations. In the 1990s it was been noted by scholars that some of their notions influenced kabbalistic treatises written soon afterward in Safed.

The Kabbalah in Safed

In the sixteenth century, Safed, a small town in Palestine under the Ottoman Empire, brought together within a short period a group of important rabbinic figures, among them some kabbalists. It was probably this encounter between prominent halakhic figures, highly gifted liturgical poets (*paytanim*), profound kabbalists, writers of kabbalistic-ethical manuals, renewal of many kabbalistic rituals, and a widespread high mystical, mythical and messianic tendency that led to the development of a new phase in the Kabbalah. Although a few of the rabbinic figures in Safed referred to kabbalistic matters in their writings, it was the work and teaching

of two men—Rabbi Moses Kordovero and Isaac Luria Ashkenazi—that led the Jewish mystical world into a new phase. Kordovero was an extremely erudite kabbalist, well acquainted with many kabbalistic treatises, including prophetic ones. Nevertheless, he was, above all, influenced by the Zoharic traditions and the Zoharic tales about Rabbi Shimeon bar Yoḥai and the mystical experiences that he and his fellow sages had. Among his many treatises, the main two are his early kabbalistic book *Pardes rimonim,* a comprehensive account of former kabbalistic traditions and his lengthy commentary on the Zohar and *Sefer Yetzirah,* called *Or Yakar.* A few months before Kordovero's death, a 35-year-old Kabbalist from Egypt arrived in Safed; his name was Rabbi Isaac Luria Ashkenazi (Ha'Ari = Hebrew initials for the Godly Rabbi Isaac). Luria met Kordovero and learned Kabbalah from him for a few months, and in the following two years after Kordovero's death and until Luria's own premature death, he developed his complicated and detailed cosmogonical, mythical, and mystical system. The Lurianic Kabbalah emphasizes and develops mythical notions from earlier kabbalistic traditions, such as the collapse of the first emanated world, the mythical role of the physical shape of primitive man, and the theurgical role of the Jew in repairing the shattered heavenly realm, which was depicted by him through the figures of five personas or faces. Luria wrote very little, and most of the Lurianic treatises were, in fact, written by his disciples—Rabbi Ḥaim ben Joseph Vital, Rabbi Joseph ibn Tabul, and Rabbi Moses Jonah.

Since the late sixteenth century, the Lurianic Kabbalah had been spread and developed in Central and Eastern Europe by Luria's disciples and commentators, such as Rabbi Israel Saruk, Rabbi Menachem Azariah de Fano, and later on by Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz in his popular kabbalistic-ethical anthology *Shney luhot ha'brith* (של"ה). Alongside the kabbalistic development of Lurianic lore, this kabbalistic branch became very popular with the dissemination of kabbalistic prayer books, which included intentions and contemplations according to Lurianic methods as well as *tikunim* (theurgical rituals).

Sabbateanism

In the last third of the seventeenth century, the renowned messianic movement of Shabbatai Zvi and his prophet Nathan of Gaza emerged. As recent studies in the field have demonstrated, this messianic movement was based more on theological criteria of highly speculative Kabbalah and less on political or national aspirations. At the core of the Sabbatean theosophy stands the attempt to reveal the true God, which is to be identified with the sixth *sefirah, tiferet,* instead of the *Ein Sof.* The Sabbatean Kabbalah was first developed by Shabbatai Zvi and Nathan of Gaza, in its second stage by Abraham Miguel Cardoso and Neḥe-

miah Hayyun, and in the next generation by Barukhia (Berechiah) Russo (Osman Baba), one of the founders of the Dönmeh sect in Turkey. In Eastern Europe, it was developed by Ḥaim Maleakh, Judah the Pious, and later on by the famous rabbi from Prague—Jonathan Eibenschütz (Eybeschutz). The final stage of the Sabbatean movement within the Jewish world was led by Jacob Frank in Galicia. Frank seemingly converted to Christianity with a majority of his community in the mid-eighteenth century.

Ḥasidim, Mitnagdim, and Maskilim

Three different trends evolved in Eastern and Central Europe during the second half of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century: the Hasidic movement, the *mitnagdim* (Opponents), and the Haskalah (Enlightenment) movement. The Hasidic movement was established by Rabbi Israel Ba'al Shem Tov, a figure of whose biography very little is known, and was later expanded by his disciples, especially Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch and Rabbi Jacob Joseph of Polonoi. This movement, which is still extremely prevalent in the Jewish world, is based on the popularization of many kabbalistic notions, as well as on the use of magical elements. Hasidic teachers have argued that God's presence prevails everywhere and that in order to achieve a mystical cleaving to God, one is not obliged to use sophisticated or elitist means; rather, this can be achieved through mystical intentions applied in daily matters such as joy, dance, and eating. The rabbi of the Hasidic community (the *tzaddik*) is considered a manifestation of the ninth *sefirah* (*yesod*) and therefore a mediator between the believer and God.

The vehement objection to the Hasidic movement by both the *mitnagdim* and the *maskilim* was more a reaction to the folkloric character of the Hassidut, which led to popularization of kabbalistic notions and to dissemination of magical praxis and less to the kabbalistic traditions themselves. In this respect, it should be mentioned that the *mitnagdim* developed their own kabbalistic doctrine based on highly speculative linguistic and mythical notions. The relation of the Haskalah to Kabbalah is complicated, and although most of the *maskilim* in Eastern and Central Europe rejected kabbalistic traditions, describing them as superstitions and nonsense, there were a few *maskilim,* such as Salomon Maimon, who showed some interest in the kabbalistic notions themselves. Nevertheless the great contribution of the Jewish Enlightenment to the Kabbalah was by scholars from the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* (Jewish Studies) movement. These scholars, although mainly describing the kabbalistic traditions from very judgmental points of view, read the kabbalistic treatises for the first time from a historical-philological perspective. Among the most important scholars who

contributed to the study of Kabbalah in the nineteenth century were the historian Heinrich Graetz, the bibliographer Moritz Steinschneider, the scholar Adolf Jellinek, and later on the folklorist Moses Gaster.

Contemporary Kabbalah

Beginning in the twentieth century, Kabbalah has developed in new directions, especially in Israel and the United States. Schematically speaking, Kabbalah in this period can be divided into three types: first, Orthodox academies (yeshivas), most of them in Jerusalem, in which the students dedicate most of their time to the study of kabbalistic lore, mainly according to the Lurianic attitude, among them, Yeshivat Beit El, Yeshivat Rehovot ha'Nahar, and Yeshivat Nehar Shalom. The second type includes new movements established by disciples of charismatic individuals such as Rabbi Abraham Isaac Hacohen Kook and Rabbi Judah (Yehuda) Ashlag. Rabbi Kook was the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi in British Mandate Palestine, and his kabbalistic ideas are a blend of nationalism, romanticism, mysticism, and some contemporary philosophical notions. More than thirty years after his death in 1967, his disciples and especially his son Zvi-Judah (Yehuda) Kook established a new nationalist form of the Zionist-Orthodox communities in Israel, characterized by highly messianic tendencies and national-political aspirations. Rabbi Judah Ashlag was a very original kabbalist who wrote a long commentary on the Zohar as well as on other kabbalistic treatises in which he combined Lurianic lore and socialist ideas. About thirty years after the death of Ashlag, a disciple of one of his sons, Baruch Ashlag, named Michael Laitman, established a popular kabbalistic movement called Bnei-Baruch, and around the same time Philip Berg, who was for a short period a student of Ashlag's brother-in-law, Judah Brandwein, established the Kabbalah Center. Both movements have an important role in the popularization of kabbalistic notions and their integration into the New Age discourse. The third type includes two Hasidic movements: Lubavitch (Chabad) and Breslav. These movements are largely composed of secular and traditionalist Jews who embraced Orthodox Judaism while adopting Hasidic, kabbalistic, and messianic ideas.

The Kabbalah in Non-Jewish Milieus

The influence of kabbalistic literature on non-Jewish theologians and thinkers probably dates to the Christian theologian Ramon Llull in the thirteenth century. However, only in the midst of the Renaissance, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, when some Christian theologians and intellectuals studied Hebrew and Aramaic, among other Semitic and ancient languages, and saw the main kabbalistic treatises as an ancient Jewish tradition reflecting the single pre-Christian true theology (Prisca Theologia) does one find lengthy treatises and commentaries discussing Christian doctrine based on Jewish kabbalistic literature. This phenomenon is referred to by scholars as Christian Kabbalah. Among those Renaissance theologians, one should mention Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, Johannes Reuchlin, Aegidius of Viterbo, and Guillaume Postel. The non-Jewish interest in Kabbalah was not limited to the period of the Renaissance. The kabbalistic treatises and notions have continued to attract leading scientists and philosophers, such as Gottfried Leibniz, and contemporary Western thinkers, such as Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, Umberto Eco, and Harold Bloom.

Tzahi Weiss

See also: Age and the Aged; Brother-Sister Marriage; Magic; Safed, Legends of; Shimeon Bar Yoḥai.

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KADMAN, GURIT
(1897–1987)

Gurit Kadman was an Israeli folk-dance teacher dedicated to preserving traditional Jewish and other indigenous ethnic dance in Israel. The vitality and popularity of Israel's modern folk-dance movement are due in part to her efforts.

Kadman was born Gertrude Loewenstein in Leipzig, Germany, on March 3, 1897, to an upper-middle-class family that placed little emphasis on Jewish tradition. She joined the German youth movement, the Wandervogel (Wandering Bird), which sought out Germany's cultural roots and folk expression.

In 1919, Loewenstein married Leo Kaufman, a leader of the socialist Zionist youth movement, and a year later they settled in Palestine with their infant son (the first of three children) and were among the founders of the communal settlement Hefziba. After the establishment of the State of Israel, the family changed its name to Kadman and Gertrude changed her name to Gurit.

In 1931, the family moved to Tel Aviv, establishing a permanent home that became a center of cultural and artistic activities. In the 1930s, Kadman taught gymnastics and dance, including international folk dance. She also taught Israeli folk dance at the Teachers Seminary of the kibbutz movement.

In summer 1944, with the collaboration of members of Kibbutz Dalyah, Kadman organized, staged, and produced a pageant based upon the Book of Ruth for the holiday of Shavuot (Festival of Weeks), also called Ḥag Ha'Bikurim (Festival of the First Fruits). The success of the pageant led to the organization of a folk dance festival at the kibbutz. Kadman was convinced that this presented an opportunity for introducing indigenous Israeli dances—an initiative that would reflect the return to the Land of Israel, to agriculture, and to biblical sources. She encouraged choreographers and musicians to create folk dances and works for the holiday pageants and festivals. In the years between the first Dalyah festival (1944) and the second (1947), hundreds of new dances were created. So great was the interest in these new dances that the second festival was held in an enormous natural amphitheater near the kibbutz, confirming Kadman's conviction that the Jews were a "dancing people," from biblical times onward. Her energy and charisma were contagious, and with the organizational support of the members of Kibbutz Dalyah, three more festivals took place in this amphitheater, in 1951; in 1958, as part of Israel's tenth anniversary of independence; and in 1968, the last one held in Dalyah on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of Israel's independence.

In 1945, Kadman founded the dance department of the Histadrut (workers union), which greatly enhanced

Gurit Kadman

the folk dance movement in Israel and abroad. The department established workshops, created leader training programs, and issued dance materials for holidays and special events. During this period she invested time and energy in preserving and fostering the dance traditions and festivities of the diverse ethnic groups in Israel, including Arabs and other minority groups. Especially notable was Kadman's role in directing the folk dance group of the Israeli youth delegation to the First International Democratic Youth Festival, held in Prague in summer 1947. After the festival, the group toured displaced persons (DP) camps in Czechoslovakia, Germany, and Italy, where it performed and taught Israeli dances to the survivors of the Holocaust. In 1947–1948 she toured the United States to spread Israeli folk dances through workshops and seminars in conjunction with the Jewish Educational Committee and other agencies.

The influx of immigrants from around the world after the establishment of the State of Israel raised the danger that Western influence might overwhelm the diversity of dance traditions brought by the immigrants. In collaboration with the ethnomusicologist Ester Gerzon-Kivi, Kadman initiated documentation on film of the different ethnic dance and music traditions while they were still in their authentic form. She also encouraged the establishment

of performing dance groups from many ethnic groups: Yemenites, Kurds, Georgians, Indians, North Africans, Ethiopians, Bukharans, Arabs, Cherkessians, and others. For these achievements, in 1981 she was awarded the Israel Prize, the highest award given by the state. With the award money and additional contributions, she produced the book *Ethnic Dance in Israel* (1982, in Hebrew).

Kadman was active in a number of international organizations of folk music and dance and lectured extensively at conferences, where she presented her documentary films on the ethnic and folk dances of Israel. In later years she toured Africa and Asia. Kadman died in Jerusalem in 1987.

Ayalah Goren-Kadman

See also: Folk Dance, Jewish and Israeli.

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KAME'A

See: Amulets

KARAITES, EASTERN EUROPEAN

The Karaite movement is a Jewish movement that recognizes the canon of the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) as its religious authority. Karaites maintain that all of Moses's commandments were recorded in the written Torah. As a result, Karaite Jews, or Karaites (the adherents of Miqra, the Bible), do not accept the Mishnah, Talmud, or rabbinic decrees as binding and deny all talmudic-rabbinic tradition. Headed by Anan ben David from Baghdad, the movement—which was a mixture of different groups—arose in the mid-eighth century and, by the mid-ninth century, became the most dominant among various Jewish sects. From the late eighth century on, it spread to Iran, North Africa, Spain, the Land of Israel, Byzantium, and other regions. Today, there are

about 25,000 Karaites in Israel, 1,000 in the former Soviet Union, and about 300 in Poland. Most East European Karaites today ignore their links to Judaism and Hebrew and consider Turkic-pagan customs important elements of Karaite culture.

Karaites of the Crimean Peninsula

Mejumas

Karaites migrated to the Crimean Peninsula with the Tatar-Mongol invasion in the mid-thirteenth century. The major centers of the Karaite settlement there were Keffe (Feodosiya), Solkhat, Chufut-Qal'eh, Mangup, and Gözleve (Evpatoria). Most of the oral traditions, legends, anecdotes, proverbs, parables, riddles, and songs prevalent in Crimean Karaite communities were created in the Karaite ethnolect of the Crimean Tatar language, which is in the Turkic group of languages. Crimean Karaites used to write down all these materials in special collections of different texts called *mejuma* (collection). The *mejumas* compiled before the twentieth century (the earliest ones that were preserved in archives are as early as of the nineteenth century) were usually written in the Hebrew alphabet and the later *mejumas* in Cyrillic. *Mejumas* were compiled and preserved by many Karaite families. This kind of literature was typical for other Turkic-speaking groups of the Crimean Peninsula, Rabbanite Jews (Krymchaks) and Crimean Tatars. Both Tatars and Krymchaks had similar collections called *jonka* (collection). Some *mejuma* materials are similar to those that appeared in Tatar *jonkas* and contain topoi typical of Tatar and Ottoman oral and literary traditions. Dozens of *mejumas* (the exact number is unknown) are preserved in manuscripts in various libraries and private collections. Most *mejuma* materials have not been systematically studied, and there are no critical editions. The majority of scholars who dealt with these materials collected them using little philological, anthropological, or historical analysis, although some used them for linguistic research, such as Wilhelm Radloff, who in 1896 published large excerpts from different *mejumas*.

Karaite proverbs and sayings either from the Crimea or from Eastern Europe usually were dedicated to all the areas of everyday life: family relations, good and evil, attitudes toward other peoples and toward themselves. These materials to some extent reflect the Karaite way of life, their mentality and self-perception, and stereotypes regarding other cultural groups. One example is a proverb that reflects the Karaite view on the differences between Karaites and Christians with respect to religion: "The ringing bells call people to church, while
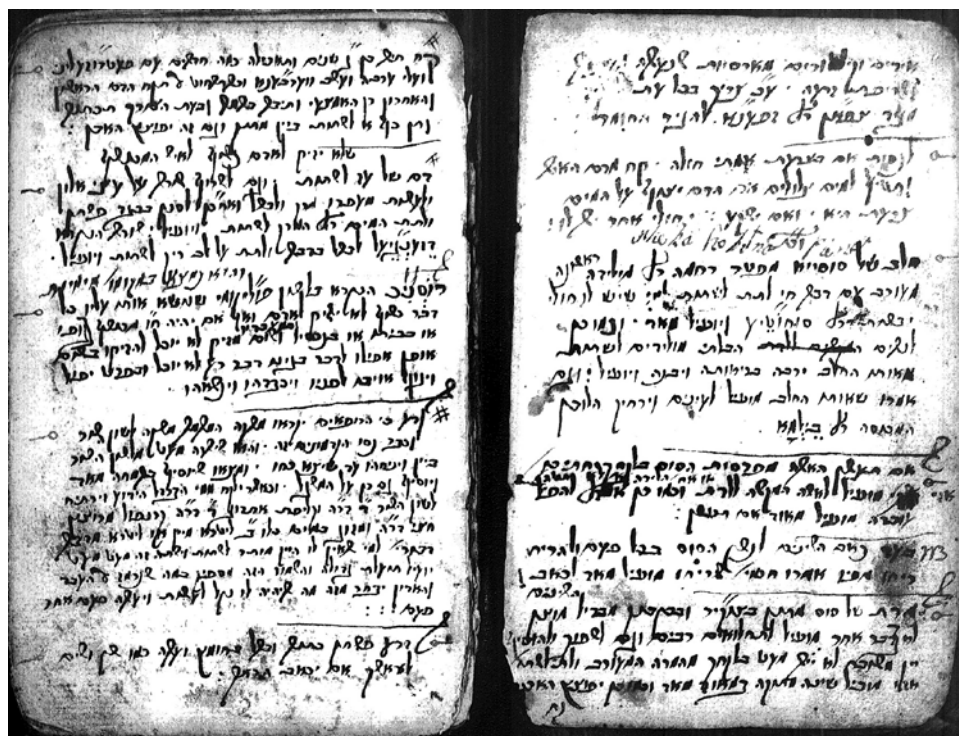
Pages from Karaite manu-
script of Troki, presumably
seventeenth century, dealing
with mascots and remedies.
*(The National Library of Russia,
St. Petersburg)*

community members of the *kenesa* (Karaite synagogue) rush there [without encouragement]." Yet another reflects on different values among Poles, Jews, and Karaites: "Pan [Polish nobleman] has a passion–ducats (gold coins); peasant–lard; Jew–garlic; and Karaite–a prayer book."

Mejumas also contain various poems and songs. Some of them are dedicated to Jewish holidays and their meaning, such as Purim songs, Shabbat hymns, and songs in honor of Jerusalem or in honor of an event, such as a wedding or circumcision. One of the specific genres of Karaite folk songs is *chin* or *mane* (from the Arabic *ma'na*; a ringing sound). These improvised songs were sung by young men under girls' windows. These songs included praise of the beloved's beauty, words of love, and different kinds of jokes and jests. Sometimes *mejumas* also contained historical writings—chronicles of historical events such as wars or community affairs. Such a literary genre existed also in Hebrew. In addition to the depictions of historical events, one can also find the depiction of miracles and biographies of nineteenth-century community leaders. The historical chronicles and the depiction of miracles and biographies were not necessarily an integral part of *mejuma* but were often prevalent in Karaite communities in separate manuscripts.

The biography genre comprises exemplary stories whose intention was to provide a model of ideal behavior for its readers (or listeners). Such is a story about Shemuel ben Abraham Agha, the head of Karaite community of Chufut-Qal'eh, the "court Jew" who was

counselor to the mid-eighteenth-century Crimean khan Qirim-Giray. Shemuel denied the khan's suggestion that he convert to Islam. He justified this refusal by asserting that one who betrays his ancestors' religion would also betray his master. The khan, who fired and humiliated him, thereafter became convinced of his loyalty and honesty, brought him back to the court, and raised him above all his ministers. Another exemplary story (from the eighteenth century) demonstrating the obligation to observe the Torah's commandments and to perform good deeds is about a pious man who saved one soul from Israel (that is, redeemed a captive) when his own life was in danger. This deed enabled him to reverse false charges of being a wicked person and to save his life. These and other similar texts were never published and are preserved only in manuscripts. Most of these stories were spread in Karaite communities as oral tales and were written down only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Karaites of Poland and Lithuania

Due to the absence of documentary evidence, it has not been possible to date the first appearance of Karaites in Lithuania and Poland. In the town of Troki/Trakai (Lithuania) a Karaite settlement existed supposedly from at the end of fourteenth century. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries Troki was a spiritual center for East European Karaites and produced a number of

outstanding scholars. Karaite settlements also existed in Volhynia and Galicia. These communities maintained connections with Karaites in Constantinople/Istanbul and the Crimea. The Lithuanian and Polish Karaites also used a Turkic language but one that was part of the subgroup of Qipchaq languages, which was different from that of Crimean. The Karaites of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, unlike the Crimean Karaites, had no *mejumas,* but similar materials exist in Karaite manuscripts from Troki, Luck, and Halicz written in Karaite-Qipchaq and in Hebrew. Karaite chronicles and all kinds of texts depicting events, miracles, and biographies preserved in these regions are usually written in Hebrew. It is unclear whether such texts were also created in Karaite. The legends and various tales may have been prevalent as oral traditions before they were written texts. Among the records and notes taken down by community members, scholars have located some motifs of Karaite folklore. Unfortunately, unlike in the Crimea, few such materials survived in manuscripts.

One such folklore motif appears in a story about Nathan ben Zerah, the son of the confidant of the duke of Lithuania, Vitold/Wytautas (1392–1430). The duke sent father and son to the Crimea to deliver gifts to the Crimean khan. They were attacked by a band of robbers, but Nathan defeated them, their chieftain presented him with his ring, and Nathan, too, became a court Jew. This story, which appears in different versions, is full of anachronistic historical details and sprang up much later then Vitold's time (an early version appeared in the seventeenth century). Karaites of Lithuania had other traditions that connected community events to the times of Vitold. The main oral historical tradition claimed that the Karaites were settled in Lithuania as well as Poland by Vitold, who brought them there from the Crimea. This tradition, which has no documentary proof and was published only in the nineteenth century, might reflect an event that took place in Vitold's time—the settling of the Volga Tatars in Lithuania.

One of the largest collections of Karaite legends and tales was collected and published in 1921 by the Jewish scholar Reuven Fahn. His book *Me'aggadot ha'Karaim* (Selected Karaite Legends) contains legends from different Karaite communities, including in Poland (Galicia). One of these legends, "Benei segullah" (Treasured Men), reflects another East European Karaite anachronistic tradition regarding the beginning of Karaite settlement in Galicia. According to this legend, they settled in Halicz in the thirteenth century as a result of the treaty between the Tatar khan Batu and Daniel, the prince of Galicia.

Other Karaite legends and fairy tales were collected in Troki in the twentieth century by the Karaite scholars Abraham Szyszman, Szymon Firkowicz, and Ananiasz Zajączkowski, who interviewed the eldest community members. This interesting collection, containing original Karaite folklore (which can be traced to the sixteenth century and later), was never published. (All the legends and fairy tales collected by Fahn and by the Karaite collectors of folklore were subjected to some degree of literary redaction, adaptation, and sometimes translation to another language, as a result of which these texts may be far from their original oral or written versions.)

Magical Practices

Another aspect of Karaite folk culture involves various sorts of magical practices and omens. Contrary to the widespread view among scholars that Karaites, unlike rabbinical Jews, completely rejected such practices, one can conclude on the basis of the large number of manuscripts dealing with them that it was a widespread phenomenon. Most manuscripts dealing with these practices are written in Hebrew, sometimes by well-known scholars, which indicates that educated Karaite elites did not fight against these practices but kept them and used them in their everyday lives. Only a few texts of this kind have been published. One of them, from Troki and written in Karaite, was published by Zajączkowski (1929), who adduced a list of omens, based on the shivering of different parts of the body, according to which one could predict future events. For example: "If the upper lip [shivers], a person will receive a verdict of not guilty in the court"; "If the middle of the foot [shivers], a person will be captured [and will become a slave]." Part of this material, as well as most Karaite proverbs and sayings, was written in Karaite, but it contained a considerable number of Hebrew words and roots with Turkic affixes. This is an example of everyday Karaite beliefs, which were widespread also among Crimean Karaites and other ethnic groups. A common phenomenon in Karaite communities (as well as in Rabbanite ones) was the usage of amulets, incantations, different techniques of soothsaying, various practices for changing fate, interpretation of dreams, and so on. These practices are depicted in many Karaite manuscripts from Eastern Europe and the Crimea.

One tendency among modern Karaite scholars and publicists who deny the Jewish origins of Karaism is an attempt to present the laws of Karaite Halakhah, which in general are close to the Rabbanite ones, apart from their Jewish context, and some specific attributes of Karaite folklore and ethnography that were allegedly borrowed from Turkic pagan tribes.

Some Karaite customs, beliefs, and folklife practices are described in Karaite literature (including periodicals) from the second half of the nineteenth century onward. However, this rich material was never systematically studied. These materials as well as *mejumas* merit comprehensive research that includes comparison between

Hebrew, Tatar, and Polish texts (written by Karaites, Rabbanites, Tatars, and Poles) with respect to their structure, plot, purpose, and the influence of surrounding cultures.

Golda Akhiezer

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KETUBBAH

A *ketubbah* (pl. *ketubbot*) is a Jewish marriage contract. The talmudic rabbis' main purpose in instituting this document was to protect the status and property of the wife in case of divorce, which the husband can initiate at will, or upon the husband's death. Accordingly, the document lists his financial and other obligations toward her in consequence of their marriage. The document is traditionally written in Aramaic, the common Jewish language in Eretz Israel and Babylonia during the talmudic era.

The *ketubbah* is not mentioned in the Bible, though marriage contracts were common in the ancient Near East. The first written reference to a deed associated with a Jewish marriage ceremony is the apocryphal book of Tobit (7:14), written in about the third or fourth century B.C.E. The earliest extant examples date to the fifth century B.C.E. and were found among the Aramaic papyri belonging to the Jewish military colony that resided on the Egyptian island of Elephantine. It was in the talmudic period, however, that the *ketubbah* proper developed. Different traditions as to its formulation and contents developed in Eretz Israel and Babylonia. Basic Babylonian-type formularies of the text appear in the period of the Geonim (sing., Gaon; heads of the yeshivas, or rabbinical schools), for example, in the works of Rabbi Sa'adiah Gaon (882–942) and Rabbi Hai Gaon (938–1038). In Eretz Israel, however, the text was not standardized—as revealed by the *ketubbah* fragments found in the Cairo Geniza. This tradition came to an end with the havoc created by the Crusades in Eretz Israel—but some traces of it can be found in the *ketubbot* of some communities (chiefly among the Romaniote Jews of Greece, where the document lists the wife's obligations, in Hebrew).

The basic formula of the Babylonian-type *ketubbah* was accepted in the Middle Ages by most Jewish communities, including the Sephardim and Ashkenazim, and is in use today with some modifications. In the Ashkenazi world, the entire text was standardized early on, and even the amount of the dowry does not differ from one *ketubbah* to another. Among the Sephardim and Jews residing in Muslim lands, there are significant variations in the basic Babylonian formula and the document continued to be a "live" contract at the wedding. The wording of each *ketubbah* was based on negotiations as to exact amounts, and many include lengthy and specific stipulations, which never appear in Ashkenazi *ketubbot.*

Surviving *ketubbot* from the Middle Ages onward are generally written on one side of parchment (chiefly among the Jews in Western Europe) and paper (usually in Eastern Europe and Islamic lands). The festive occasion of the marriage and the custom of reading aloud the *ketubbah* during the ceremony helped establish the tradition among Sephardic and Italian Jews, and Jews of Islamic lands of decorating the borders of the *ketubbah* with illustrations and verses. The text and illustrations of the *ketubbot* made in these communities therefore contain a wealth of information for the folklorist. The clauses with the dowry lists, which were commonly written in Jewish dialects among the Jews residing in Muslim countries and the Sephardim in the Ottoman Empire, contain lengthy lists of clothing items, pieces of jewelry, bed linen, textiles, and other objects. Often, each item is separately listed with its actual value in local coinage. The names of the persons mentioned in these contracts (brides, grooms, their fathers, the witnesses, etc.) provide information about local customs concerning Hebrew and non-Hebrew names, common last names (and sometimes their meaning), and patterns of connections between families in a particular community. Moreover, in Morocco, for example, the forefathers of both the bride and groom are listed for several (sometimes, ten or more) generations back—to prove their "Sephardic ancestry." The selection of decorative verses around the text reveal popular wedding songs, unknown from any other source. The special conditions (*tenaim*), written in some Sephardic and Italian *ketubbot* in a separate column on the left side of the main text (or under it), contain many details on the daily life in the community where the contract was produced.

The earliest surviving examples of decorated *ketubbot* come from Egypt and Eretz Israel from the tenth to the twelfth century. They are decorated with simple floral and

geometric designs and some architectural elements. They also feature designs composed of tiny Hebrew letters—a style known as micrography. Although the custom of commissioning an illustrated *ketubbah* was not adopted by the Ashkenazi communities, representations of a bridal pair in typical medieval German-Jewish costume can be found on a *ketubbah* from Krems (Austria), 1391–92. In medieval Spain the custom was apparently much more popular, but very few simply illustrated examples have been discovered to date.

After their expulsion from Spain in 1492 and forced conversion in Portugal in 1497, the Sephardim disseminated illustrated *ketubbot* in the countries in which they settled. The most important center was Italy, where the illustrated *ketubbah* reached its highest artistic expression in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Affluent Italian Jewish families vied with one another over whose *ketubbah* was more elaborate, and in several cases the authorities of the communities limited the amount one could spend on this object. Italian *ketubbot* were generally written on large pieces of parchment, the upper or lower borders of which were at times decoratively cut. The text was often set within an architectural framework, resembling Baroque structures. The painted portal symbolized the "building of a house in Israel," the "gateway to the righteous" and as a symbolic passageway to sacred life (*kiddushin* [Heb., marriage, lit. "sanctification"]). Embedded in the portal were colorful scenes, including biblical episodes whose heroes bear the same names as the bridal couple, allegorical representations, the signs of the zodiac and the twelve tribes of Israel, the city of Jerusalem, implements of the Temple (objects such as the seven-branched menorah, Table of Showbread, golden altar, the laver, and so on), and a wealth of floral, geometric, and micrographic motifs. Unofficial coats of arms of the wedded families were frequently incorporated into the page as well. Distinctive styles, motifs, and decorative schemes developed in the various centers of Italian Jewry, especially Venice, Mantua, Ferrara, Florence, Livorno, Ancona, and Rome.

Outside Italy, the main centers of European *ketubbah* decoration were in the major Sephardic communities in the Netherlands (Amsterdam and Rotterdam), Austria (Vienna), Germany (Hamburg), Romania (Bucharest), and Gibraltar. Important centers were established throughout the Ottoman Empire, chiefly Istanbul, Izmir, Salonika, and Rhodes. The Sephardic and Romaniote communities of Greece (especially of Corfu and Yanina) also followed the custom. In these regions and towns local styles prevailed over the imported Sephardic visual traditions. Thus, the Sephardim in the Netherlands and the communities under their influence (including eighteenth-century New York) preferred to use delicate black-and-white copper engravings, with figurative allegories and local tulips, while in the Ottoman Empire,

the page was crowded with large floral designs in bright colors.

The Sephardic Jews of Morocco (known as *megorashim* [exiled]) preserved the style and elements of medieval Spain until the modern era. The conditions in their *ketubbot*—for example, the bridegroom takes it upon himself not to divorce his wife against her will and only with her full consent—show the superiority of Sephardic women over "local" Jewish women and include their supplication to God to redeem those exiled from Castile. Attractive folk *ketubbot* were also produced by the Atlas Mountains Jews in Morocco, as well as in Tunisia and Algeria. Elsewhere in the Islamic world, the illustrated *ketubbot* were popular in countries such as Iran, Afghanistan, Bukhara (Uzbekistan), Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and Eretz Israel. Under the influence of Islam in these countries, depictions of the human form were avoided and rich colorful abstract and floral motifs reflect the joy of the wedding. In Iran, as in Italy, local decorative schemes developed in some towns—especially Isfahan, Teheran, Yezd, and Hamadan. The Jews of Meshed, who were forcibly converted in 1839, thereafter prepared two marriage contracts: one in Persian and Arabic for the official wedding, and the other, the standard *ketubbah* in Aramaic, which they used secretly for the Jewish wedding ceremony, attended only by a few close relatives, away from public eye.

Also noteworthy are the highly ornamental *ketubbot* of India, which sometimes depicted local wild animals, and of Georgia, which showed Iranian influence. Folk art designs also crowd Kurdish *ketubbot* (from Iraq, Iran, and Turkey) and those from Yemen (though most Yemenite *ketubbot* are unadorned). The Karaite and Samaritan *ketubbot* are richly decorated with chiefly floral designs. Symbols of the Temple (e.g., cypress trees standing for "the cedars of Lebanon") appear mainly in the Sephardic *ketubbot* of the Old Yishuv in Jerusalem.

In the modern era, some changes were introduced in the text. Reform Judaism in the United States—which advocates that Judaism and its traditions be modernized and made compatible with full participation in the surrounding culture—called the *ketubbah* "an unnecessary, useless formality" and replaced it with a brief "Certificate of Marriage," in which all the halakhic (legal) references have been omitted and the text is entirely in English. Conservative Judaism, by contrast—which, while accepting modern culture and secular scholarship about Judaism's sacred texts, encourages the conservation of Jewish traditions—in 1953 introduced an amendment according to which the couple agrees to abide by the rulings of the Beit Din of the Rabbinical Assembly and the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (the "Lieberman Clause"). Egalitarian contracts became common in the United States in the 1970s, including phrases such as "We see loving relationships around us

and we will learn from them . . . we plan to share joy and drudgery, to be responsible to and for each other . . . to be one and yet remain individuals." In Israel, the kibbutz movement—with its close-knit, communitarian, and egalitarian ethos—offered the most innovative "secular" alternatives to the traditional *ketubbah,* emphasizing, inter alia, the Zionist ideals of life on a kibbutz and the State of Israel.

With growing interest in new *ketubbot* came a revival of the art of the *ketubbah.* Beginning in the late 1960s in the United States, folk artists began to design *ketubbot* as wedding gifts for their friends. Within a few years the personalized illustrated *ketubbah* became a widespread phenomenon among young American Jewish couples. Unlike in the past, many of the artists are women, and the customers are mainly of Ashkenazi origin. In Israel, however, the predominant Ashkenazi-European culture encouraged immigrants from Islamic lands to give up their traditions regarding writing and decorating *ketubbot.* (The official Israeli rabbinate early on adopted a standard formula, and printed forms in this style were given to any couple registered to get married, so the older traditions were quickly abandoned.) The standard printed formularies issued by the Israeli rabbinate include familiar symbols, such as symbols of the twelve tribes and the Western Wall, while those issued by the army rabbinate feature insignia of the various armed forces.

During the 1980s some Israeli couples, chiefly under American influence, started to commission decorated *ketubbot.* The artists are mostly immigrants from the West, but some of Islamic origin have joined this revival. At the same time, a growing market has been created for those interested in illustrated *ketubbot* who cannot afford costly personal contracts. More and more Judaica and giftshops sell ready-made, colorful printed pages or lithographs, whether reproductions of old specimens or new ones, provided with blank lines or blank space for personalization.

Shalom Sabar

See also: Marriage; Papercut; Sabar, Shalom.

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KIBBUTZ, FOLKLORE OF

A kibbutz (pl., kibbutzim) is a rural cooperative community of 100 to 1,000 members who share a wide social ideology oriented by its participants' involvement in, and devotion to, national and collective goals. Until the late twentieth century, the most significant marks of kibbutz life as it developed in Israel were total equality, communal life, and the absence of any monetary reward for any kind of contribution. Since the first kibbutz was established in 1910, the kibbutz has pioneered and promoted a secular Zionism, that is, a national movement for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland. As of 2010, there were 267 kibbutzim, most of them secular; 16 kibbutzim are religious. Three of the secular kibbutzim are located in cities such as Jerusalem, Sderot, and Beit Shemesh. What follows applies, in general, to the majority of secular kibbutzim.

Since the 1980s, the kibbutz movement has experienced an economic and ideological crisis, which has undermined its foundations. This crisis is the result of the kibbutz's declining status in Israeli society, along with the fall in government support since the 1977 elections, which brought right-wing parties to power. These events were accompanied by internal organizational and economic changes in the kibbutzim, due to generational evolution.

Identity and Folklore in Kibbutz Culture

Kibbutz tradition is based on a special combination of selectively adopted elements of traditional Judaism, interpreted according to secular ideology and integrated into modern concepts of a rural, agricultural-industrial, and highly educated society. From the early years of the kibbutz movement until the 1980s, all cultural or folklore-related activities were spontaneous and voluntary; therefore, there was no tradition per se, and each kibbutz worked separately in an uninstitutionalized manner. In time and after the original kibbutz members began to have children, they developed a desire for a Jewish cultural identity, which led to the creation of a "new tradition" in the 1920s and 1930s.

This new tradition was created in a process of "trial and error," whereby an individual or group of culture activists would establish a specific ceremony to commemorate a feast or celebration. If the ceremony was well accepted by the members of the specific kibbutz, it would gradually become a local tradition. Other kibbutzim might hear of this local custom and adopt it as well. This spontaneous process became more organized when, during the 1960s, the kibbutz movement opened a central culture committee and much effort was invested in spreading these traditions among all the kibbutzim.

The first holidays to be celebrated were those with an obvious historical or agricultural context. New festivals also were added, for example, "the celebration of sheep shearing" in late spring or "the celebration of water" on the eighth day of Sukkot, and later a special year of cultural and folkloric activities, or "the Kibbutz Birthday." Local artists were encouraged to contribute their talents to these festivals, by decorating stages and gathering spaces, composing music, or writing literary texts—many of which became part of Israeli folklore. These cultural and folkloric events were performed before broader audiences, beyond those with a direct connection to the kibbutz (at its peak no more than 6.3 percent).

Celebrations

Most kibbutz cultural activities, feasts, and festivals are celebrated on Friday night. The ritual of *"Kabbalat Shabbat"*—welcoming the Sabbath—includes readings of mostly secular texts and singing new and traditional Sabbath songs. This precedes the communal Friday night dinner, in the decorated dining hall, around tables covered with white tablecloths and flowers and attended by people dressed in their best clothing. Although this collective ceremony gradually faded, the ritual nature of Friday-night dinners remains. After dinner, the whole community gathers for the main party, the *messibah*.

This is a highly ritual event, consisting of artistic performances on a central stage, in which most of the kibbutz population takes part. Sometimes refreshments are served. After the performances, those in attendance engage in singing or folk dancing.

Kibbutz celebrations are characterized by Zionist, agricultural, or universal values such as liberty, activism, and courage, rather than Jewish religious values. Thus Passover (Pesaḥ) became the feast of spring and national liberation and is the most significant holiday in the kibbutz calendar. Shavuot (Festival of Weeks) became the celebration of the harvest, instead of the giving of the sacred law (the Torah). This feast is celebrated out in the fields. In this ritual, a symbolic commutation of the previous year's tithes is paid to the Jewish National Fund, instead of to the temple, as in ancient times. The celebration of Sukkot replaced the end of the yearly cycle of the reading of the Torah, with its ancient agricultural commemoration of harvesting fruit and celebration of the agricultural season.

Zionism emphasized the traditionally less important Jewish holidays, such as Ḥanukkah, the Tu Be'Shvat, and Lag Ba'Omer, as vessels for new ideas because of their relative flexibility in accommodating new meanings, such as agricultural or humanistic values to replace traditional religious faith and values. But before those new meanings and feasts were canonized, they lost their attraction in favor of the old traditions. This could be explained by the decline of the secular socialist ideology along with the decline of the status of the kibbutz in Israeli society, in addition to the revival of the traditional old Jewish values, after the 1977 elections, when for the first time since 1948, the right wing's parties came to power.

Since the 1990s, much effort has been made in secular circles to strengthen the modern-traditional values of the earlier decades, not only in the kibbutzim but throughout Israeli society. At the center of these efforts are past and present kibbutz members.

National Holidays

The kibbutzim place a high priority on celebrating national holidays (Independence Day and War Memorial days), although each kibbutz creates its own tradition.

The most revered of Jewish holidays—Rosh Ha'Shana (the Jewish New Year) and Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement)—raised a serious problem for the secular kibbutz from its beginnings until the 1970s, primarily because they could not be adapted without compromising their religious significance. Yom Kippur was mainly ignored but regained its importance as a ritual of commemoration, tragically relevant after the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Instead commemorating the miraculous victory of the Maccabees over the Greeks, as in the religious interpretation, the Zionist Ḥanukkah

לשנה טובה

שתולה באדמת המכורה

New Year greeting card with a pioneer tiller, 1940. *(Shalom Sabar Collection, Jerusalem)*

is a festival celebrating national heroism, activism, and liberty—all symbolized by the candlelights associated with the holiday.

Life-Cycle Events

Kibbutzim celebrate passages between life stages with special rituals, some traditional and some new. Each is marked by some kind of party.

Birth: In the early days of the kibbutz, the birth of a child was communally celebrated to reflect its significance as a promise of continuity and hope in the future. Over time, such celebrations became private and more personal, as separate dwellings for children were phased out.

Brith-milah (male circumcision): The religious ceremony, performed by a *mohel* (professional circumciser), takes place in the home of the baby's family. There is no secular version of this ceremony. In most kibbutzim it is a family celebration on the eighth day but nothing grander.

Bar/bat mitzvah: Until the 1980s a big celebration was usually held at the end of the sixth grade (age twelve to thirteen) for the entire class, ignoring the Jewish tradition of a bar mitzvah. Later, although the traditional ritual influenced its form, the celebration remained firmly secular, eschewing the synagogue's rituals and ceremonies. Such parties are held by the bar mitzvah celebrants, who demonstrate their cultural and social talents. Other rituals and ceremonies are defined by each kibbutz's local traditions.

Other individual traditions mark high school graduation, joining the army (age seventeen to eighteen); being accepted into kibbutz membership; that is, becoming a full-fledged adult member of the kibbutz; or reaching the age of fifty, sixty, and all the following decades, up to 120. The local paper features announcements of significant personal events, which in the past would have been sufficient reason for a big party.

Wedding: Celebration of a marriage offers an example of significant change over time in kibbutz ideology and observance. In the past, couples considered the marriage ceremony a mere formality. But later weddings became occasions for big celebrations, requiring enormous preparation. On many kibbutzim, wedding ceremonies retained secular Jewish symbols: a local and secular *ketubbah* (marriage contract) was compiled and written, and the officiant was the local administrator instead of a

rabbi. Nowadays, weddings on a kibbutz are just like a Jewish wedding anywhere in the world.

Funerals and mourning rituals: When a kibbutz member dies, an announcement is affixed to the communal billboard and printed in the newspapers, detailing the relevant information. A time period is specified for mourning, during which no cultural or joyous activities are allowed on the kibbutz. In the past it was for seven days, following the convention of the religious practice of shiva, a seven-day mourning period. As the kibbutz members aged and the population grew, this period was reduced to three days or less. The observance of the mourning period is now a private matter (in the past it was a community event, both in length and in type of observance; now both are private decisions).

The deceased is usually laid in a plain wooden coffin, covered with black cloth, unlike the Jewish religious ceremony, where the body is wrapped in shrouds, followed by burial in the holy soil with no demarcation. The funeral procession departs from a central location inside the kibbutz and proceeds to the local cemetery, where a secular ritual is performed. Eulogies are given at the grave site according to the deceased's stated wishes before passing away or following his or her family's wishes.

In many kibbutzim, mourners then recite a secular or traditional Kaddish (mourning prayer) or poetry. Thereafter the coffin is covered with earth, branches of green trees and fresh flowers are laid, and attendees offer condolences to the grieving family. Since the 1990s kibbutzim have opened their cemeteries as a place of secular burial on a commercial basis for nonmembers, some of them non-Jewish, who by the traditional Jewish law are buried in special sections, separated from Jews, as done in regular Jewish cemeteries, according to the Halakhah (Jewish law).

Commemoration: In many kibbutzim, a special place is set up for the purpose of commemoration of the departed. It could be a room in the library or elsewhere in the center of the kibbutz or it could be a larger commemoration complex, depending on the particular kibbutz. A Book of the Dead (*Sefer ha'Niftarm*), or personal materials, booklets or books to commemorate individuals, are displayed there. Every kibbutz has its own commemoration tradition. Since the 2000s more and more kibbutzim have used electronic media for this purpose; today using the Internet is very common.

Rumors and Gossip

The kibbutz is a closed community, lacking any formal means of discipline such as police or jail. The members are very concerned about their public image and are careful not to damage it by behaving irresponsibly. Rumors and gossip are employed as spontaneous mea-

sures to alert individuals that they are not behaving according to the accepted collective laws and regulations. Although the stories that spread in the kibbutz are considered accurate, their lifespan is short and they do not become part of the local intergenerational dialogue. Nonetheless, they perform a necessary function as an enforcement tool of social norms.

Legends and Folk Stories

Most of the booklets and books containing local stories were published as Jubilee books, (special books celebrating the age of the kibbutz since its establishment) from the mid-1970s onward. The stories deal mainly with local history and everyday life. Difficulties, achievements, early history, and the process of the community formatting into its present stage are the main subjects. Usually they are humorous and entertaining in nature. Their structure is simple, consisting of one or more episodes, usually with one main character, and they take place in the past and are told from the present storyteller's point of view. These stories deliver messages of knowledge from one generation to the next, strengthening the emotional ties between individuals and their community. Being personal, humorous, and amusing, they allow criticism in a way that does not risk breaching the social consensus. Many stories are told orally, as memoirs or local history. At first, they mythologize historical events, but later they demythologize it, reflecting the generational changes in kibbutz ideology. Stories and histories that were told during the pioneer era to glorify the kibbutz are retold by the next generation in a critical way or at least less admiringly. As myths are challenged, they become part of kibbutz history and are often recounted with a smile.

In one kibbutz Jubilee book the foreword reads: "All stories are written from the depth of a loving heart and a laughing eye. . . . And if you feel a twinge of love toward this house while reading these stories. . . . And if you take this piece of history in your hand now and again to glimpse and remember, smile and cherish—then this book had done its job" (Kfar Aza Jubilee book 1997).

Roni Nehab-Kochavi

See also: Folk Narratives in Israel.

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KIDDUSHIN

See: Marriage

KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT, BARBARA

A scholar of folklore, performance studies, and Jewish studies, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has made major contributions to Jewish folkloristics by both proposing important new approaches to the study of established subjects in the field—such as folk songs, ritual objects, and foodways—and expanding the scope of media in which Jewish folkloristics might engage, including tourist productions, museum displays, and the use of new media.

The daughter of Jewish immigrants from Poland, Kirshenblatt-Gimblett was born in Toronto and began her undergraduate studies at the University of Toronto, eventually completing her B.A. and M.A. in English Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. Her Ph.D. dissertation in Folklore (Indiana University, 1972) on storytelling among Yiddish-speaking immigrants in Toronto demonstrates the importance of analyzing the tale as a performance, its significance informed by the context of its telling and by the teller's skills and repertoire. She also argues, here and elsewhere, for the value of studying immigrant folkways as a distinct culture in its own right, defined by immigrants' negotiations between their former and present homes. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett revisits these issues in later work, culminating in *They Called Me Mayer July* (2007), written with her father, Mayer. This book draws on decades of interviews and conversations to offer a rich collaborative portrait in words and images of Mayer's life as a boy in the Polish town of Opatów (Yidd., Apt) in the interwar years.

Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has explored the intellectual history of Jewish folkloristics and ethnography in several essays, including studies of Max Weinreich's social science scholarship at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in interwar Vilna and her introduction to the 1995 reissue of Mark Zborowski and Elizabeth Herzog's *Life Is with People* (1952), a landmark work of "anthropology at a distance" on Jewish life in pre-Holocaust Eastern Europe. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett's studies of Jewish performance extend to folk singing and klezmer music (Jewish instrumental music), Hasidic Purim plays, and tourist practices in Israel. Her work on Jewish visual and material culture includes studies of Jewish photography in Poland before World War II, Jewish cookbooks and textiles, and displays of Judaica at world's fairs. As part of her ongoing interest in museums, she has curated several exhibitions and has led the core exhibition development team of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, which opens in Warsaw in 2013.

In addition to teaching at the University of Texas and the University of Pennsylvania, since 1981 Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has been a professor of performance studies at New York University, where she is also affiliated with the Department of Hebrew and Judaic Studies. She has played a leading role in the field of folkloristics as president of the American Folklore Society (1988–1992) and as a member of the Advisory Council of the Smithsonian Institution's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, among many other organizations. Beyond her work on Jewish topics, she has published and lectured extensively on performance studies; on "heritage" as a mode of cultural production in tourism, festivals, museums, and other practices; and on foodways, contemporary art, digital media, and the aesthetics of daily life.

Jeffrey Shandler

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KISSELGOF, ZALMAN

See: Russia, Jews of

KURDISTAN, JEWS OF

The territory of Kurdistan is divided among three countries—Turkey, Iraq, and Iran—and some Kurds also live in republics of the former Soviet Union that border on these three countries as well as in Syria. It is generally accepted that, before they emigrated to Israel in 1950–1951, most Kurdish Jews lived in 146 communities in Iraq, 19 communities in Iran, and 11 in Turkey, while a few lived in areas on the periphery of the region of Kurdish concentration. There are no reliable figures on the number of Kurdish Jews today, but at the time of the mass emigration to Israel, they numbered between 20,000 and 30,000.

Oral traditions among Kurdish Jews claim that they are descended from the Twelve Tribes of Israel. The earliest documentation on the existence of a Jewish population in Kurdistan is in the accounts and memoirs of the twelfth-century travelers Benjamin of Tudela and Pethahiah of Ratisbon. In 1170, Benjamin of Tudela recorded the existence there of more than 100 Jewish communities; he reported that Amadiya alone boasted a population of about 25,000 Jews. Furthermore, there were Kurdish villages, such as Sandor, whose entire population was Jewish. Messianic leaders emerged from Amadiya in the twelfth century: The first among them was Menaḥem ben Solomon Ibn Dugi, and the second was David Alroy. Documents and manuscripts written by rabbis who served in the communities in the sixteenth century provide details about life conditions, including spiritual life. In addition, contemporary poets and *paytanim* (authors of liturgical poetry) composed about 200 religious and secular works in Hebrew and Aramaic. Among these were Rabbi Samuel, son of Rabbi

Nathanael Barzani, a head of a yeshiva in Mosul; his daughter Asenath, who was herself the head of a yeshiva in that city; and Phineḥas Hariri and his son Ḥayyim.

Relations between the Jews and the Muslim Kurds varied by the place and the period. According to scholars who conducted field surveys and interviewed Kurdish Jews who immigrated to Israel, relations were generally good. This was because the Kurdish Jews did not question the superior status of the Muslim Kurds, and during periods in which the Jews were persecuted, they survived by subordinating themselves to the tribal chieftains, who placed them under their protection.

The occupations and crafts of the Jews of Kurdistan, most of whom lived very frugally, were those characteristic of an agricultural society and of rural villagers. These included agriculture, the raising of livestock, spinning thread, weaving, sewing, and dyeing cloth. In villages along the riverbank, such as Zakho, many Jews were raftsmen who would float trees and merchandise aboard rafts to the cities downstream. As the villagers emigrated to more urban settings, the number of craftsmen among them increased: They now comprised shoemakers, tailors, carpenters, goldsmiths and silversmiths, and merchants and peddlers. The latter were also intermediaries between villagers and urban residents.

Kurdish Jewish households were organized along patriarchal lines. At times, about thirty family members would live under one roof, and the household would be run as one unit, the chores carried out under the supervision of the oldest woman, with all other women in the house subservient to her.

Kurdistan had a few synagogues—some of them very old—around which communal life revolved. The religious and social customs of the Kurdish Jews have preserved some traditions and customs dating from the period of the Talmud and the Geonim, but they also absorbed practices and folklore from their Christian Nestorian and Muslim Kurdish neighbors. The Jewish highland villagers and townsmen spoke a language that preserved Aramaic, together with words from Persian, Turkish, Kurdish, and Hebrew, a vernacular that they called "the language of the Targum." The Iraqi Arabs called it "the language of the mountain people (*jabali*)"; scholars today refer to it as "neo-Aramaic." Aramaic was also spoken in Persian and Turkish Kurdistan. The Nestorians also spoke this language, but their Jewish neighbors generally used a different dialect, depending on where they lived.

Although the Jews of Kurdistan were particular about observing religious practices and strictly fulfilled the positive commandments, their knowledge of the Torah and the number of those erudite in the law both declined. In all matters of religious law and practice, they turned to the rabbis in Baghdad. The boys generally attended a *cheder* (religious school), where they

received a rudimentary education in reading the Torah and the prayers. During the twentieth century, schools under the Alliance Israélite Universelle, a Paris-based international Jewish organization founded in 1860 to safeguard the human rights of Jews around the world, were established at Seneh, Kermanshah, Mosul, Khanaqin, and Karkuk.

Folk Art and Handicrafts

In addition to the economic and political vicissitudes of Kurdistan, the difficult geographic and climatic conditions had a negative effect on the development of folk arts among Jews and non-Jews alike. Practical considerations took precedence over artistic ones, as they preferred to produce objects needed for daily life: household furnishings, bed linen, soap, candles, and so forth. Nevertheless, popular art found an outlet in handicrafts such as weaving, embroidery, the art of the goldsmith and the silversmith, and illumination of ancient Jewish manuscripts. Such folk art entailed the employment of traditional rudiments, symmetry, and aesthetic elements meant to please the eye, in addition to the practical aspect of the objects created. The Kurdish Jews who immigrated to Israel in the mid-twentieth century ceased to practice these handicrafts.

Weaving

Weaving is one of the major handicrafts practiced by Kurdish Jews, especially those of Iraqi Kurdistan, and one in which they excelled. The Jews of Kurdistan adopted traditional customs pertaining to the manner of dress and the clothing of the population among whom they lived. Unlike Jews in other parts of the Islamic world, Kurdish Jews had no restrictions placed upon them. Thus, their clothing was generally more splendid and adorned than that of the local population because they were relatively better off economically than their neighbors. Both women and men engaged in weaving, but they used different types of looms, employed different techniques and weaving traditions, and had different objectives.

The Jewish male weavers produced fabric out of goat's hair and sheep's wool, from which clothing was sewn, and silk fabric produced from silkworm cocoons for women's dresses and children's clothing. Jewish carpet weavers excelled in weaving fine woolen hangings, used for many purposes, such as blankets, decorative covers for mattresses, and women's shawls. Both Muslims and Jews often used the hangings to prepare objects for religious use: prayer mats for the Muslims, while the Jews used them to decorate their sukkah (temporary booths, made of boards, sheets, and in north Kurdistan, even of mud, and topped with branches, which Jews use during the festival of Sukkot), to create a *parokhet* (a curtain covering the Ark of the Covenant in the synagogue), and so on. Women reserved weaving for their spare time, since household chores accounted for most of their day. They mostly wove various types of carpets, though they also plaited belts with tassels out of cotton or wool as well as various household objects and items of clothing.

Embroidery

Embroidery was solely the province of women, especially those in the villages, and the proportion of Jewish women among them was high. However, only a few earned a living by this profession, generally women whose husbands engaged in weaving, and thus the wife's handicraft supplemented the income earned by her husband. Embroidered patterns on the festive holiday clothing of men, young women, and children were most commonly found in Iraqi Kurdistan; they emphasized the festive character of the clothing. An analysis of Kurdish Jewish embroidery reveals the traditions in embroidery techniques, the employment of colors, and the choice of patterns and their location. Study of such embroidered clothing shows that the women used symmetrical patterns and were meticulous in their handiwork. Yet within the confines of traditional embroidery, there was room for personal expression, and residents of different areas could be identified by their clothes and the ornamentation with which they were adorned.

Gold and Silver Artifacts and Jewelry

Jewelry, one of the few luxury items in Kurdistan, was widespread among all classes of society. There was a high proportion of Jews among the artisans in gold and silver, and in certain locations only Jews engaged in this craft. The material used was high-quality gold and silver of various levels of quality. The use of precious stones was not frequent, but sometimes they were embedded in a piece of jewelry or hung from it. The jewels were intended for women, who would wear them from an early age. In addition to adorning their wearer, the jewels were also believed to have magical properties: They were intended to protect the women from all evil and to ensure their economic future. The variety of jewels one possessed, the materials out of which they were created, and their design were influenced by the individual woman's economic status, whether she lived in a village or a town, and even her religious affiliation. Jewelry produced by Jews bore traditional elements such as the Star of David and tablets with the Ten Commandments. In addition to jewelry, the Jewish craftsmen in gold and silver produced metal amulets, pointers for the reading of the Torah, silver plaques and sheaths for the

Torah scrolls, and *rimmonim* (filials) that decorated these scrolls. Such ritual objects were generally produced by craftsmen in Mosul and Baghdad.

Amulets

Amulets were in wide use among Jews and non-Jews alike because of the widespread belief in their magical ability to cure ailments and safeguard a person from evil as well as because of the difficult living conditions in Kurdistan and the scarcity of means to deal with them. These motifs are also characteristic of the use of amulets in other Jewish communities in Muslim countries and among the Ashkenazi Jews of Europe. Jewish craftsmen in Kurdistan also produced amulets for their non-Jewish neighbors, bearing inscriptions in the Kurdish language, but non-Jewish Kurds sometimes wore Jewish ones. The purpose of most of the amulets was to protect women and children, though a minority of them were intended for men and a few were meant to protect the house and those who dwelled within its walls. The two major types were amulets with inscriptions or ornamentation and those without inscriptions. Those of the first type were created from various materials: parchment, paper, metal, or fabric. The *ḥakhom* (lit., wise man), who served as teacher, *ḥazan* (cantor), *mohel* (to perform circumcisions), and ritual slaughterer, would write words or phrases from holy scripture on the amulets made of parchment and paper; he would also inscribe such words on metal amulets, mostly made of gold, silver, or brass, and would write passages for the women who embroidered amulets made from fabric. Noninscribed amulets were made of natural objects such as uniquely shaped or colored stones, animal bones, wolves' teeth, shells, chickpeas, or ears of grain. Other amulets took the form of blue clay beads, gold and silver coins, copper platelets, and small bells. Some of the amulets were incorporated into the woven and embroidered artifacts, in splendid hangings, tablecloths for the Sabbath, and clothing.

Illuminated Manuscripts

Illuminated (illustrated) manuscripts of traditional Jewish texts were the objects that enabled Kurdish Jews to engage in artistic painting. Since there were no printing presses in Kurdistan, *ḥakhamim* and their disciples would copy, illustrate, and ornament manuscripts. Among the illuminated manuscripts are prayer books with commentaries, sheets to decorate houses and synagogues, and *ketubbot* (marriage contracts). Religious texts comprising the Pentateuch and the Scroll of Esther, which were to be used for reading aloud in public, were not illuminated, in accordance with Jewish law.

Books, sheets, and *ketubbot* were precious to the Kurdish Jews; they therefore felt a need to ornament them. Paper was the most widespread material for manuscripts, with parchment being rarer and therefore less in use. The illuminations used to ornament them did not go beyond traditional motifs, generally including fauna, flora, or inanimate objects but never human beings. The patterns were consistent and limited and were also used in other objects, such as embroidered tablecloths, religious objects, and amulets.

Folk Stories

Two types of orally transmitted folk stories were common among the Jews of Kurdistan: those that originated in Kurdish folklore and original Jewish folk stories.

Tales that were part of Kurdish folklore were an important source of amusement, a means by which the family could spend time together during the long winter evenings in the presence of an experienced storyteller. The Jews excelled at preserving Kurdish folktales, and the storytellers among them were renowned among both Jews and Kurds throughout the country. The tales were generally adventure stories or acts of bravery performed by legendary Kurdish heroes. There were also love stories, tales that had a moral, and others that were humorous and amusing, in addition to epic poems and lengthy dirges. The Jewish storytellers would recite them in Kurmanji, Arabic, or neo-Aramaic, depending on the audience.

Jewish folktales were also widespread and were culled from early and later compilations of tales such as *Oseh Pele*. Each story had a Jewish moral based in part on the Midrash and the Aggadah, and in part on local additions or adaptations. The Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa comprises 1,006 folktales of Kurdish Jews in Hebrew recorded since 1955 and accounted for about 4 percent of the folktales at the IFA in 2009. Of these, 722 (about 72 percent) are by Jews from Iraqi Kurdistan, 241 (about 24 percent) from Iranian Kurdistan, and 43 (about 4.3 percent) from Turkish Kurdistan.

Most of the Kurdish-Jewish stories in the IFA are folktales. They are not related to any specific time or place and are full of imaginary and supernatural elements, such as stories that bear the title "The Magic Flute of Ashemedai [Prince of Demons]" or "The Wondrous Herbs of Healing." Some of the stories focus on Jewish cultural heritage, such as "The Sword of Deliverance" or "Thanks to a Single Mitzvah [good deed]," while others are about biblical heroes. Many of the stories reflect the innermost desires of the storytellers and their audience. A lot of these aspirations related to the ups and downs of the Jews' fate, to issues relating to proper recompense (matters of reward and punishment) as well as to relations between Jews and their neighbors. Only a minority of the stories collected at the IFA are in the form of a historical or geographical legend whose major hero is a local Jewish sage or some

A group of Kurdish Jews praying. *(Courtesy of Haya Gavish)*

other character, great in spirit or in might, with whom the local community was acquainted. Sometimes the story focuses on a local sacred site (a synagogue or a cemetery) even if a domestic hero does not figure in it. There are also sacred legends whose hero is a prophet (such as Naḥum ha'Elkoshi or the biblical Jonah) to whose graves Kurdish Jews would travel on pilgrimage.

The IFA collection also includes a group of stories that are personal memoirs; some of them are told in the first person and include supernatural elements, while others are unusually realistic. They focus on actual twentieth-century historical events and people. Examples of such subject material are: rescue from a pogrom as a result of the 1941 rebellion of Rashid Ali in Iraq; stories describing immigration to Eretz Israel; contact with emissaries of the Zionist underground in Iraq; the reaction of Kurdish Muslims to the emigration to Israel of their Jewish neighbors in the 1950s; the transfer of Torah scrolls to Israel, and memoirs of "Prisoners of Zion," Jews who were imprisoned because of their Zionist activities.

In all the genres are stories that relate to relations between Jews and the local populace. Most of these indicate that the lives of Kurdistan's Jews were intertwined with those of their neighbors and that on the whole these were not relations of hostile confrontation but, on the contrary, were marked by a common popular culture. Many of the stories mention the names of non-Jewish heroes; others refer to animals that play a central role in the oral tradition of the non-Jewish Kurdish population. Some of the stories concern humorous characters or offer a series of anecdotes about the image of the fool-sage.

Aphorisms

Aphorisms and sayings were widespread among the Jews of Kurdistan and were part of their oral literary heritage. Scholars in Israel and elsewhere have recorded and published aphorisms in neo-Aramaic. They cover a wide range of topics that relate to cultural values and lifestyles

in Kurdistan. such as family relations, ethnic references to non-Jews or to Jews from other cities in Iraq, cuisine, the home and the community, dreams, good and bad luck, ambitions, authority, greed, boasting, sagacity and foolishness, honor and shame, and wealth and poverty.

This genre has undergone a great transformation in Israel. Aphorisms that referred to aspects of life in Kurdistan have been forgotten, while those that dealt with universal themes, such as marriage, children, labor, or wealth, have been preserved, particularly among the elderly. These are members of the last generation that still speak neo-Aramaic, for their children converse in Hebrew. When there are parallel aphorisms in Hebrew, they are preferred to the neo-Aramaic versions.

Musical Traditions and Folk Songs

The Jews of Kurdistan had a very rich and fruitful religious and secular musical tradition. This was orally transmitted folk music that preserved patterns of an ancient musical style. As in other ancient civilizations in which music has remained an oral folk tradition, the human voice is still the main component in the formation of melodic style, which is closely bound up with specific articulation and intonation. It was influenced by the multinational and multilingual character of Kurdistan and preserved Iraqi, Turkish, and Syrian musical dialects that were common in the region.

Scholars often divide the musical genres according to the languages spoken in Iraqi Kurdistan, resulting in the following: (1) Hebrew, for religious songs sung in the synagogue or the home; (2) neo-Aramaic, for the religious and paraliturgical music for the study, vernacularization, and paraphrasing of the sacred text; (3) Kurmanjit, for songs that reflected original Kurdish folkways; and (4) Arabic, for songs of entertainment and amusement at feasts and banquets, particularly in the cities.

Most of these *piyyutim* (liturgical poems) were written down by scholars in Israel. Their contents can be classified in a few subdivisions: (1) *pizmonim,* songs for festive occasions, which, though connected to festivals or ceremonies, were first and foremost intended simply to give pleasure to the listeners; (2) *azharot,* a genre that included Jewish religious practices in short rhymed form sung in Hebrew or neo-Aramaic during the Jewish festivals or on special days with religious significance, with the objective of providing a popular, easy, and amusing way of teaching religious law; (3) *kinnot* (lamentations) for Tisha Be'Av (the Ninth of Av, the anniversary of the destruction of the First and Second Temples), sung in Hebrew and neo-Aramaic, whose content aroused national-religious sentiments; and (4) *tafsirim,* popular, rhymed versions of biblical episodes or of midrashic legends, for which it was customary to sing in neo-Aramaic.

The secular musical tradition of the Jews of Kurdistan was absorbed orally from Kurdish folklore. The Jews adopted ballads, tales of heroism, and folk dance melodies, which they integrated into their own musical traditions in Kurmanjit. In many instances, the Jewish vocalists were considered the true representatives of this musical tradition. Another genre of secular folk songs were songs of labor, in the field or the home. The majority of these are in Kurmanjit, and a few are sung in neo-Aramaic. Secular vocal music also includes fairly short songs, such as those sung by the mother or the caretaker to children while bathing them, feeding them, or putting them to sleep (lullabies), and songs that are an extension of a cursory blessing, a curse, or a saying that was particularly common among the women. These were sung either in Kurmanjit or in neo-Aramaic.

Kurdish Folk Dances

Kurdistan's Jews loved to dance and often engaged in this pastime. They danced at life-cycle events, such as circumcisions and weddings, and on religious festivals and other days with religious significance. Dancing was also connected to secular events, such as a house warming or completion of seasonal agricultural labors. The Jewish and non-Jewish versions of these dances and the songs that accompanied them are almost identical.

Kurdish folk dancing is group dancing, with no limit to the number of participants. Most are line or circle dances. At outdoor festivities (especially the Sehrane), hundreds might take part in each dance, even a hundred persons in one circle. Men and women of all ages often danced together, though in Kurdistan it was also customary for each sex to do so separately. In line ("open circle") dances, the leader is an outstanding dancer who sometimes waves a kerchief or brandishes a dagger in his free hand. In some cases, individuals dance opposite the line or within the circle of dancers.

Despite variations in dance styles of the various regions of Kurdistan, two basic ones are common to all. The first is a slow step with emphasized heavy pounding of the ground, as if symbolically expressing the fact that some of the Jews, at least, work the land; the other consists of quick, springy, light movements, an expression of the *joie de vivre* that is characteristic of the Kurds. All dances include the basic position: legs slightly spread, knees moderately bent, a straight back, various fashions of holding the hands of other dancers, and energetic hand waving.

Kurdish dancing is based on a single step that is repeated over and over again and can go on for up to twenty minutes. There is no break between the dances.

The instruments upon which the musical accompaniment was played were generally the *zirne,* a wind instrument that sounds like a mountain oboe, and the *dola,* a huge drum on which one beat with two sticks—a thick one and a thin one. At times the dancers would

accompany themselves, singing in Kurmanjit. In Israel, Kurdish dance has remained true to its original style and has been able to ward off external influences, such as those of Israeli folk dancing, but some of the dances that were customary in Kurdistan have been omitted from the repertoire and are no longer performed in Israel. Since the 1970s, several troupes that perform Kurdish dances have developed in Israel, in which members of the second, and even third, generations of Kurdish Jews in Israel take part.

Haya Gavish

See also: Circumcision; Languages, Jewish.

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L

LADINO

See: Languages, Jewish

LAG BA'OMER

Lag Ba'Omer, a minor festival in the Jewish tradition, literally means "the thirty-third [day of the counting] of the *omer*." (The numerical value of the Hebrew letters *lamed* and *gimel*, which are contained in the word "Lag Ba'Omer," is 33). Even though the holiday always falls on the eighteenth of Iyar, its date is set by the count that begins on the second day of Passover. To understand the significance of the date of this festival, one must trace the meaning of the counting of the *omer* to the Hebrew Bible.

The Counting of the Omer

In Leviticus, God commanded the Israelites, "When you enter the land that I am giving you and reap its harvest, you shall bring the sheaf [*omer*] of your first harvest to the priest. He shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, that you may find acceptance; the priest shall wave it on the day after the Sabbath" (Lev. 23:10–11). The count lasts for forty-nine days; the fiftieth day is Shavuot, and it, too, is determined by the count. Most of the Hebrew names for Shavuot describe the festival, while the name Lag Ba'Omer refers only to the count itself.

Mourning customs are observed during the forty-nine days of counting the *omer*: People refrain from cutting their hair, shaving, and getting married. The reason can perhaps be traced to an agricultural society's anxiety that the grain in the fields might not produce a good crop. So the first sheaf of the first grain to ripen, barley, was offered in the Temple, and joyous occasions were avoided. Over the centuries, various other reasons have been added. The most important of these relates to Rabbi Akiva's disciples and the Bar Kochba revolt, the Jewish uprising against Rome during 132–135 C.E. According to the Talmud, "Rabbi Akiva had 12,000 pairs of disciples, from Gabbatha to Antipatris. All of them died in the same period of time because they did not treat each other with respect. . . . It was taught: All of them died between Passover and Pentecost" (*b. Yevamot* 62b). Rabbi Akiva was one of the main supporters of the Bar Kochba revolt, and his disciples were prominent among the rebel soldiers. Consequently, the mourning was associated with the revolt. The fact that the Talmud refrains from stating this explicitly is probably due to the fear that the Romans would accuse the Jews of mourning the death of rebels.

The Suspension of Mourning on Lag Ba'Omer

Mourning customs are not observed throughout the counting of the *omer*. One of the days when they are set aside is Lag Ba'Omer. Historical sources cite various reasons for this: (1) Rabbi Akiva's disciples stopped dying on this day; (2) it marks the start, in 66 C.E., of the Great Revolt, the Jews' uprising against the Roman procurator Gessius Florus, which, according to Josephus, began on the seventeenth of Iyar; (3) it commemorates the initial successes of the Bar Kochba revolt; and (4) when the Kabbalah become prominent, it was associated with the annual memorial for Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai. According to tradition, three events took place on this day: he was ordained as a rabbi, got married, and died. The festival celebrated at his tomb is said to commemorate the fact that on the day he died, he revealed secret lore to his disciples and a fire burned around the house for the entire day.

Customs

The element of rejoicing—the suspension of the mourning customs throughout the counting of the *omer*—is prominent in the traditions of Lag Ba'Omer. Notably, men may shave and have haircuts and weddings are celebrated.

A custom that was widespread in the Diaspora and is still followed today is where teachers take their pupils out into nature, especially forests, where they practice archery. Most historians link this tradition with the Bar Kochba revolt and its heroes, but some view it as an assault on the forces of evil—symbolically shooting Satan in the eye with an arrow.

When the prestige of Kabbalah increased, it became customary to light candles in memory of Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai, traditionally credited with the authorship of the Zohar. Another custom involves making a pilgrimage to his tomb, in Meron near Safed (in the Upper Galilee), to attend the gala memorial ceremonies (*hilula*) in his honor. A major feature of this festival is the lighting of bonfires, into which people throw clothes, jewelry, and coins. Although the rabbis frequently spoke out against this custom, because it violates the precept that one must not destroy property and valuables without good reason, the people continued to practice

Customary Lag Ba'Omer bonfire in Nahlat Itzhak, Tel Aviv. *(Photo by Oren Peles)*

it. Another Lag Ba'Omer custom associated with the *hilula* is *ḥalaaqah,* in which three-year-old boys have their first haircut.

The custom of lighting bonfires on Lag Ba'Omer (not just in Meron) is generally linked to the Bar Kochba revolt. The explanation is that the rebels used bonfires to announce the start of the uprising and their initial victories.

Lag Ba'Omer in Israel

With the onset, in 1882, of Jewish immigration to the Holy Land, the settlers in the new agricultural colonies adopted the custom of lighting bonfires on Lag Ba'Omer. The Zionist movement, the national movement that called for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland and the resumption of Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel, took over the day as a national holiday. Bar Kochba, the leader of the rebellion against the Romans, became a symbol of the Jewish fighter and of the national struggle for independence. The first Jewish self-defense organizations in the country, the Gideonites, Bar Giora, and Ha'shomer, and, later, the Haganah, emphasized Lag Ba'Omer and the lighting of bonfires and excursions into nature. So did athletic clubs such as Maccabi and Ha'poel. Schoolchildren turned the late-night party around the bonfire into a central element of the holiday.

Lag Ba'Omer has been the holiday of youth movements since 1916. There are torchlight processions and torch races as well as various athletic competitions, including archery. The bow and arrow was adopted as the symbol of the Gadna, the paramilitary youth group.

The Palmach was founded on Lag Ba'Omer in 1941, and the ordinance establishing the Israel Defense Forces was issued on this day in 1948.

Since the mid-twentieth century, the celebration at the tomb of Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai has become a major folk festival. Hundreds of thousands of individuals make the pilgrimage to Meron each year, and some stay there for an entire week.

Nili Aryeh-Sapir

See also: Bar Kochba, Shimeon; Egg; Shimeon Bar Yoḥai.

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LAMECH, LEMECH

See: Cain and Abel

LAMPS AND CANDLES

In the Jewish tradition, many customs, symbols, and motifs are associated with candles. Their roots lie deep throughout the ages and in every diaspora. Candles represent both the material and the spiritual realm. The *ner neshama* (memorial candle, lit., candle for the soul) epitomizes the diverse meanings that Jewish culture has given to this artifact. The candle motif has many facets, denoting the joyous and miraculous in the lives of both individuals and the nation, religious precepts, and memory and identification of and respect for the living and the dead. According to the classic rabbinic texts, candles may serve as a source of light; may be used, without deriving any material benefit from them, to fulfill a religious precept; or may be lit to express respect or joy. All the various customs have developed from these three principles.

Hebrew uses the same word, *ner,* for both oil lamps and their modern replacement, tallow or wax candles. Jewish tradition makes no distinction between the two. When texts from the talmudic era use the word, they are necessarily referring to an oil lamp. In recent centuries, Ashkenazi Jews have preferred candles (but not exclusively), while the Middle Eastern Jewish communities have continued to use oil lamps.

The Sabbath

Although it is not mentioned in the Bible, lighting the Sabbath lamp at the initiation of the weekly day of rest is an ancient Jewish custom. The Mishnah that deals with the subject at length (*m. Shabbat* 2) addresses only the technical details and takes the religious obligation for granted. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus noted that the custom of lighting lamps at the commencement of the Sabbath was an ancient Jewish custom that Greeks and barbarians also adopted.

A non-Jewish source is found in the Fifth Satire of the first-century C.E. Roman poet Persius, which describes the Jews' observance of the Sabbath and refers to its smoking lamps, white jugs of wine, and red dish full of fish.

The medieval Jewish philosopher Maimonides ruled that lighting the Sabbath lamp is a religious obligation incumbent upon every household, rich and poor alike (Mishneh Torah, Laws of the Sabbath 5:1).

For the Jews, the Sabbath is not only a day of rest but also a holy day, on which "you shall kindle no fire throughout your settlements" (Exod. 35:3). Just as one prepares food before the Sabbath, so, too, must one prepare the lamps in advance. The illumination makes the Sabbath pleasant and expresses its festive nature. The Karaites, by contrast, sat in the dark on the Sabbath night because they believed that fire and light are forbidden on the Sabbath, even if prepared in advance. The normative Halakhah insisted that Sabbath lamps be kindled at the start of the Sabbath.

The Jewish concept of *oneg Shabbat* (Sabbath delight) expresses festivity and joy, which require light and therefore cannot take place in the dark. According to the sages, "If you call the Sabbath a 'delight' (Isa. 58:13)—this refers to the lighting of the Sabbath lamp. If you would suggest sitting in the dark, there is no delight in that, for those who descend to Hell are judged in the dark" (Midrash *Tanḥuma*, Noah).

During the course of Jewish history, lighting the lamp on the eve of the Sabbath became a distinguishing symbol of the transition from the profane to the sacred. The sages elevated this precept to a very high level and attached many virtues to it. They decided that if a poor person had to choose between lighting the Sabbath lamp and consecrating the Sabbath over wine ("making *Kiddush*"), the former took precedence, for the sake of domestic harmony.

The ceremony of lighting the lamps at the commencement of the Sabbath imbued every Jewish home with an air of festivity, tranquility, and spirituality. Thus, every genre of Jewish folk literature includes descriptions of this moving ceremony—the motif of the Sabbath lamp is woven deeply into Jewish stories, poetry, and art. Similarly, the blessing "creator of the light of the fire" that is part of the *Havdalah* service at the conclusion of the Sabbath, relates to the change in the status of light and fire—the fact that, until this moment, one was not permitted to light a lamp because of the sanctity of the Sabbath, but now it is permitted.

A burning lamp is a symbol of life: "The lifebreath [or soul] of man is the lamp of the Lord" (Prov. 20:27). The sages, in their discussion of the sanctity of the Sabbath lamps, define the concept and symbol represented by this metaphor and the parallel between the blazing lamp and the human soul: "A lamp is designated lamp, and the soul of man is called a lamp: better it is that the lamp of flesh and blood be extinguished before the lamp of the Holy One, blessed be He" (*b. Shabbat* 30b). According to the sages, the lamp of oil or tallow, the material lamp, should be allowed to go out on the Sabbath rather than the lamp of the Holy One, blessed be He—namely, the human soul. There is a parallel, but also a clear preference for life over matter, a recognition of the sanctity of human life.

The custom of lighting a memorial lamp for a departed soul can be found in the Talmud. "Our rabbis

Sabbath/Festival lamp, by Johann Valentin Schuler (1650–1720). Frankfurt am Main (Germany), 1680–1720. Silver: cast, repoussé, and engraved. Photo by Richard Goodbody, Inc. *(The Jewish Museum, New York/Art Resource, NY)*

taught: When Rabbi [Judah the Pious] was about to depart [from this life] he said, 'I require [the presence] of my sons.' When his sons entered into his presence he instructed them: 'The light shall continue to burn in its usual place'" (*b. Ketubbot* 103a). Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes, known as Rashi, presents another perspective: "'The lamp shall continue to burn in its place': on the table as when he was alive, since even after he passed away he would visit his home every Sabbath eve." Both the talmudic passage and Rashi's explanation have had many implications for Jewish tradition and custom and for beliefs that spread in the various diasporic communities. In lay circles in Eastern Europe and in folklore, many believed that the soul of the departed fluttered around the flame. The first reference to the custom of lighting a memorial candle on the anniversary of a person's death, for the elevation of his or her soul, is found in the Responsa literature. "People are to be meticulous about this." The Chabad-Lubavitcher Ḥasidim have a custom in which the mourner who recites the "Kaddish" (mourner's prayer) lights five lamps in the synagogue on the anniversary of the death (called "*yahrzeit*" [Yidd., yearly] candles), one for each of five Hebrew terms for the soul.

The burning lamp symbolizes the fact that the living remember the dearly departed and that the soul of the deceased is bound up in the individual's memory as well as in the collective memory of the Jewish people.

The metaphor of human life as a candle is manifested in a phenomenon associated with both of them: The lamp burns down toward its inevitable extinction, just as human life is an inevitable progression toward death.

Jews in Morocco have a custom of lighting two lamps on the wedding night, one for the groom and one for the bride. Whichever burns out first is taken to be an indication of which spouse will die first. This belief can be traced back to the Talmud (*Horayot* 12a; *Keritot* 5b).

Yom Kippur Candles

The custom in parts of Lithuania and Belorussia was to illuminate the synagogue with giant candles for Shabbat Shuva (the Sabbath between Rosh Ha'Shana and Yom Kippur); these were referred to as *shuva licht.* When the season approached, a woman would go from house to house to inform all the women in the town that it was time to make the *shuva licht: hak'n vaks* (chop wax) and *lig'n a kneytl* (insert a wick). As they added threads to the wicks, the women would recite the names of departed relatives and of martyrs who had disappeared in the woods and fields, whose date of death was unknown and whose grave was unmarked.

The globs of tallow and wax that dripped from the Yom Kippur candles were used to make *shammash* (servitor) candles for the *ḥanukkiyah* (Ḥanukkah lamp) and the candle used in the search for leaven on the night before the beginning of Passover.

In Germany, it was customary for all worshipers to light a candle when they arrived in the synagogue for Yom Kippur. This custom was already widespread in the Middle Ages.

In Libya, people brought candles to the synagogue on the eve of Yom Kippur—as many as there were men in the household, including those who had passed away. They made no distinction between the living and the dead, since the candle symbolized both.

In Lithuania, Jews lit memorial candles for the departed in the synagogue and "life candles" at home for the living (Mendele Moykher Seforim describes this custom). These were always made of wax because in Hebrew the word for "wax" is an anagram of the word for "cry," alluding to our wish that God hear our cries.

In Dagestan, everyone brought a candle to the synagogue because the Yom Kippur light symbolized atonement and the word "*nefesh*" (Heb., soul) is an acronym for n*er* fe*tilah* sh*emen*—lamp, wick, oil.

According to a popular tradition, having a person's candle go out in the synagogue was an evil omen. The *Shulḥan arukh* (The Set Table) mentions this, ruling that

such a person should relight the candle at the conclusion of the sacred day and allow it to burn down to the end. He should also pledge that henceforth for the rest of his life neither he nor anyone else will ever extinguish his candle at the conclusion of Yom Kippur. Here the motif is repeated: The burning lamp is a metaphor for human life.

The greatest rabbinic authorities had a profound understanding of human psychology. When human weakness and the rational came into conflict, they preferred a compromise, as we find in the Mishnah *Berurah:* "Because people are anxious if someone's candle has gone out (although I do not believe there is any reason for concern, since candles may be extinguished by the wind or the heat)—nevertheless, because people are anxious, they should hand their candle to the sexton and forget about it, and leave any unburned stumps in the synagogue." In this way, people sever their contact with their candles and cannot pretend to have a prediction of their destiny, if their candle went out.

Righteous men have the power to counteract the evil portent of a candle that goes out prematurely. Many folktales take up this motif.

Ḥanukkah

Ḥanukkah, an eight-day festival starting on the Twenty-fifth of Kislev, commemorates the Maccabees' (Hasmoneans') victory over the Greeks in Eretz Israel in 164 B.C.E. Lighting the *ḥanukkiyah* (Ḥanukkah menorah) is the main religious precept associated with the holiday.

The precept is first mentioned in the Talmud: "Our rabbis taught: The precept of Ḥanukkah [demands] one light for a man and his household; the zealous [kindle] a light for each member [of the household]; and the extremely zealous Beth Shammai maintain: On the first day eight lights are lit and thereafter they are gradually reduced; but Beth Hillel say: On the first day one is lit and thereafter they are progressively increased" (*b. Shabbat* 21b).

It is recounted that, when the Maccabees entered the temple, they discovered that the Greeks had defiled all the consecrated oil except for one small flask, which normally would suffice to keep the candelabrum lit for only a single day. Through a miracle, however, the oil lasted for eight days. This is why the commemorative festival was established for future generations. In the Aggadah and later in folk tradition, commemoration of the miracle of the flask of oil became the central motif of Ḥanukkah.

Candles and Mourning

A person in mourning does not light lamps or candles, except, as noted, to elevate the soul of the departed.

On the evening of the Ninth of Av, the national day of mourning in commemoration of the destruction of the first Temple and Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E., too, people refrain from lighting lamps, as the verse hints: "He has made me dwell in darkness" (Lam. 3:6). One lights only a single lamp, placed on the floor or some other low surface, providing just enough light for reading the scroll of Lamentations and reciting the *kinnot* (liturgical dirges). This custom can be traced to the Midrash.

A lamp burning on the floor symbolizes loss and destruction. Jews in Eastern Europe came to associate it with the candle that burned at the head of a corpse laid out on the floor of the house before the *ḥevra kadisha* (burial society) took it to the cemetery. Hence people avoided placing a burning candle on the floor.

The custom of setting lighted candles by a corpse is based on the verse "for the commandment is a lamp, and the Torah is a light" (Prov. 6:23). This is understood as alluding to the religious precepts and good deeds that a person performed while alive and the Torah that he learned, which will accompany him to his permanent rest and guard him from all harm ("When you walk it will lead you" [ibid., 6:22]).

Yitshak Ganuz

See also: Death; Ḥanukkah; Shabbat; Yom Kippur.

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LANGUAGES, JEWISH

In every country in which Jews lived for a number of generations, they developed, as part of their folk culture, a language or a dialect of their own (ethnolects). The language was in most cases the one Jews used among themselves, customarily serving as a "mother tongue," sometimes being the only language women spoke—while men also learned Hebrew (which was restricted mainly to religious spheres, as well as to poetry and literature) and the tongues of the gentile surroundings (for mundane purposes and for negotiations with non-Jews). Typically, with regard to grammar and syntax, the Jewish languages or dialects did not differ much from the local languages in the countries in which they lived, yet

some consisted of a highly variant grammar. As for vo-cabulary, some differed by only a few embedded Hebrew words, especially in the religious and cultural domains for which no terminology existed in the language of the gentile environment, while others comprised a signifi-cant Hebrew (as well as Aramaic) element. These Jewish languages were used both orally and in writing, often using the Hebrew alphabet, including the block letters used in Hebrew today and Rashi script.

After the Jewish community of a language area had developed its language, it tended to retain it even after it left that area and settled in other countries, speaking other languages. Thus Yiddish developed in Eastern Europe after Ashkenazi Jews from German lands settled there, and Ladino (Judeo-Spanish) developed in the lands of the Ottoman Empire and North Africa after Sephardic Jews moved there from Spain. In the new environment, the Jewish language brought from the old country tended to acquire a certain respected or even hallowed status among the Jewish people (yet never approaching the sanctity of Hebrew), while the language of the non-Jews was considered a foreign, inferior tongue. Jewish languages served as the preferred medium for both original writ-ing (excluding belles lettres, during the Middle Ages) and translations. Sacred and liturgical texts such as the Bible, the *siddur* (prayer book), and the Passover Hag-gadah were translated from Hebrew and Aramaic into Jewish languages, verbatim; non-Jewish works were often translated incorporating Jewish imagery, so as to suit Jewish readership.

The colloquial languages spoken by the Jews were sufficiently different from the vernacular of the non-Jews to make it impossible or at least difficult for the latter to understand it. Thus it enabled Jews to speak freely of their foreign surroundings, to joke and to express their Jewish identity. In some of the places where Jews were a vulnerable minority, they even developed secret lan-guages to avoid being understood and better conceal their speech. Such languages include Lashon (Heb., language), developed by the Jews in North Africa in Arabic-language territories; and Luterā'i, or Lo tora'i ("not Torah-like")—a mixture mostly of Hebrew lexical items and Persian words, used by Jews in Iran.

The process of developing and retaining specifically Jewish languages ceased with the spread of the Jewish Enlightenment, which, starting toward the end of the eighteenth century, brought about a linguistic as well as a cultural assimilation of the Jews to the non-Jewish en-vironment, of which they became an integral part. Other reasons for the diminution of Jewish languages were per-secution, genocide in the Holocaust, and official pressures to speak other languages (such as Russian in the Soviet Union). In the twenty-first century, Jewish languages are accorded a lower status among the young genera-tion, which is integrated into the surrounding cultures

(such as in the United States and Israel). Some Jewish languages face extinction, and not enough information can be gathered by scholars on all of them (such as the Slavic-based Knaanic and La'az of northern France and northern Italy), although the languages are thoroughly researched, and information is highly accessible (e.g., the Jewish Language Research Web site). The Jewish languages are a source of folklore, as folk literature—such as stories, legends, proverbs, and riddles—is produced in all of them; and folklore is embodied, composed in, and revealed and transmitted by them (as by any spoken languages).

Brief characterizations of the twelve oldest and most widely spoken Jewish languages follow, in alphabetical order. This list of languages is not comprehensive.

Aramaic and Neo-Aramaic

Although Hebrew was the national language of Israel and attained the position of the sacred tongue of the Jews, Aramaic had special significance throughout Jew-ish history. It is the longest-attested member of the northwest Semitic subfamily of languages (to which Hebrew, Phoenician, Ugaritic, Moabite, Ammonite, and Edomite also belong) and, according to the Bible, was the ancestral tongue of Hebrew patriarchal family, spoken by Abraham, Jacob (Deut. 26:5) and probably all his sons (as the mothers were born in Aram). Chil-dren were brought up in the Canaanitish language that developed into Hebrew (cf. Isa. 19:18) only after marry-ing local women in the Land of Canaan. However, Ara-maic survived next to Hebrew at least in court circles, until the end of the Hebrew monarchy (Isa. 36:11; 2 Kgs. 18:26). That some layers of the common people also spoke Aramaic is shown by the fact that on the Nile island of Elephantine the language of the Jewish com-munity established there in the fifth century B.C.E. was still Aramaic.

After the return from the Babylonian exile in 538 B.C.E., the language of the Judean population became Aramaic. Several texts contained in the biblical canon and originating from that period are in Aramaic (Dan. 2:4–7:28; Ezra 4:8–68, 7:1–26). By the time of Jesus, Aramaic was the colloquial language spoken by the Jews of Palestine and thus by Jesus himself. Two centuries later, Aramaic replaced Hebrew as the language of the scholars. Thus, while the language of the Mishnah (ca. 200 C.E.) is still Hebrew, that of the Talmud (ca. 400–500 C.E.) is largely Aramaic. This was also the period in which rabbis and scholars felt the need to make the text of the Holy Scripture accessible to the people, which brought about the production of several Aramaic translations of the Bible.

During the Middle Ages, even though the collo-quial language of a majority of the Jewish communities

became Arabic, widespread study of the Talmud kept a knowledge of Aramaic alive among the people, and the scholars, both in Palestine and in Babylonia, wrote in Aramaic until the end of the Geonic period (eleventh century). With the rise of Jewish mysticism, kabbalistic authors preferred to write in Aramaic rather than in Hebrew, and this preference endowed Aramaic with an aura of sacredness (cf. the Zohar), that continued to be attributed to it by the masters of the Kabbalah in sixteenth-century Safed.

The only Jewish community in which Aramaic survived as a colloquial language until modern times was that of the Kurdish Jews, among whom it developed into three dialects of neo-Aramaic: those of northwest Iraq, Persian Azerbaijan, and Persian Kurdistan. The exact connection between these dialects and the old Aramaic of the Babylonian Jews is not known. In 1948, when the State of Israel was established, the total number of Aramaic-speaking Jews was estimated at 20,000, most of whom subsequently immigrated to the new state. There their language became commonly called "Kurdith," even though this term actually refers to the language of Muslim Kurds, which is an Iranian (non-Semitic) tongue. Other names for the colloquial of the Kurdish Jews are "Language of the Jews," Targum, and Jabali (Mountain Tongue). The Persian-Azeri-Jewish neo-Aramaic is also called Lishán Didán (Our Language), Lishanán, and Lishanid Nash Didán (The Language of Ourselves). At the beginning of the twenty-first century fewer than 5,000 people were known to speak Lishán Didán, although attempts are being made to preserve the language from extinction by means of writing original songs, creating special events in Aramaic and activating a Web site.

Neo-Aramaic among the Kurdish Jews was confined to speech and was used for writing only in a few limited areas: They produced some *tafsirs* (commentaries) of the *haftarot*, *piyyutim* (liturgical poems), and some midrashic works. In addition, they produced long and elaborate neo-Aramaic epic poems on biblical themes that had remained in an oral form until collected and published by Rivlin.

Judeo-Arabic

Judeo-Arabic is the name given to a family of languages whose individual members differ from one another to the same extent that the Arabic colloquial languages of the Muslim population in various Arab countries differ from one another. Thus Iraqi Judeo-Arabic, Moroccan Judeo-Arabic, and Yemenite Judeo-Arabic are distinct languages.

Jews lived on the Arabian Peninsula before the rise of Islam (seventh century) and spoke Arabic, into which they inserted some Hebrew and Aramaic words, especially of Jewish religious-cultural concepts (some of which entered Arabic and are included in the Qur'an). Pre-Islamic Judeo-Arabic produced writing that was based on phonetic sounds and employed the Hebrew script—thus preceding the standardization of the orthography used in Classical Arabic. When, because of the phenomenal spread of Islam in Southwest Asia, North Africa, and Spain, Arabic became the language of these areas, the Jews who lived there adopted it as their colloquial language, developed their own Judeo-Arabic dialects, and soon began to use it as their literary medium. From the eighth century on, they produced a flow of important works in all the fields cultivated by the Muslim Arabs, including astrology, astronomy, medicine, philology, philosophy, and a great variety of specifically Jewish theological and religious works. In only two fields of literature did the Jews of Arab countries prefer to write in Hebrew rather than in Judeo-Arabic: in legal compilations (Codes) and in poetry. This literary flowering continued until the fourteenth century, when the general decline of Arab cultural life brought about the practical cessation of Judeo-Arabic literary activity as well. Thereafter, only works of little value, mostly liturgical or exegetic in nature, or translations of Hebrew pietistic works, continued to be produced, until the very end of the existence of Jewish communities in the Arab lands in the mid-twentieth century. Throughout, the ability to read Hebrew, required for religious life, was largely confined to men, while a reading knowledge of Arabic was rare even among them.

However, just as among the Muslim Arabs Arabic had become the language of a vital oral folk culture, among the Jews in Arab lands the local Judeo-Arabic dialects became the medium of a rich oral literature. Some of the Judeo-Arabic folktales and folk poetry was written down (mostly remaining in manuscript) and thus survived from about the seventeenth century, but extensive collection and publication of Judeo-Arabic folk literature started only in the second half of the twentieth century. This work resulted in representative collections of Iraqi, North African, and Yemenite folktales, folk poetry, and proverbs.

One notable development among speakers of Judeo-Arabic was poetry in which verses in Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic (sometimes also in Aramaic and Arabic) were used in combination in the same poem, or stanza, or even in the same line. This type of poetry, known as "macaronic" in medieval Muslim Spain and "*matruz*" (embroidered) in North African Jewish folk literature, testifies to a familiarity with the languages included, at least among certain sectors of Jewish society. Gradually, new languages were combined into these poems, such as the vernacular languages, in medieval Muslim Spain and French—from the late nineteenth century—in North Africa. At times the new languages even replaced Hebrew (to create poems in French and Arabic). In these poems, traditional themes of faith, exile, and redemption were replaced by romantic and even erotic themes.

Judeo-French

Judeo-French is Medieval (Old) French as spoken and written by French and Rhenish Jews. It differs from the other "Judeo" languages in that there were no dialectal differences between it and the Old French spoken by the non-Jews of the region, with whom the Jews were in close contact. Thus the Jews of Normandy spoke the Norman dialect, those of Troyes that of the Champagne, those of Dijon, Burgundian. The same language was used for all purposes, at home, in the marketplace, and at the synagogue, occasionally even in prayers. The influence of Old French was so strong among them that it colored their pronunciation of Hebrew. Also, in contrast to other Jewish languages, very few Hebrew words were incorporated into it.

The only barrier the Old French–speaking Jews did not cross was the Latin script. Perhaps because the Latin alphabet was too strongly identified with the Church, they did not use it but wrote the phonological characteristics of the Old French language using the Tiberias punctuation system (still customary) and Hebrew characters, as did the Jews in their Jewish languages in other countries. Most significant of the literary remains of Judeo-French, or, rather, Old French, are the biblical glossaries, which began to be written in the twelfth century. They contain tens of thousands of Old French words, and together, with the complete biblical dictionaries, they testify to the continuing practice of teaching the Bible in French. In the same period the method was adopted of explaining in French (written in Hebrew characters) Hebrew and Aramaic words appearing in the Bible and the Talmud and their commentaries, in halakhic treatises, in Responsa, prayer books, works of law and custom, and even in financial records and the margins of manuscripts.

By far the most important author in this respect is Solomon ben Isaac, known as Rashi (1040–1105), the great sage of Troyes. Rashi's commentaries on the Bible and the Talmud constitute a veritable treasury of Old French words (which he called La'az), many of which do not appear in any other contemporary writing and which thus constitute an invaluable source of information on the French language of his period.

French Jews also produced liturgical poems in Old French, written in accordance with French literary norms. Of these only a few have survived, but their quality suggests a wide use of this medium in religious services and ceremonies.

Judeo-Greek

The Greek language was known to the Jews of Palestine and Egypt from the second century B.C.E. on, and some of them wrote their works in it (e.g., Philo of Alexandria, Josephus Flavius, first century C.E.). A translation of the Bible into Greek (Septuagint) was undertaken by Jewish scholars soon after its translation into Aramaic. When the Jewish Diaspora spread to Greek-speaking countries, the Jews who settled there adopted Greek as their colloquial language, but it was not until the Middle Ages that documented evidence appears of the existence of a special Judeo-Greek dialect, which contains an element of Hebrew and Aramaic and which is written in Hebrew letters.

The earliest Judeo-Greek glosses are contained in the *Arukh* (ca. 1100), the talmudic dictionary of Rabbi Nathan ben Yeḥiel. Other early Judeo-Greek documents are a fragment of the Book of Ecclesiastes in Greek and a translation of the Book of Jonah, as well as other fragmentary pieces of religious literature dating from the eleventh to the thirteenth century. From the sixteenth century dates the Greek translation of the Constantinople Polyglot Pentateuch, intended for the use of Greek-speaking Jews of the Balkans.

In modern times Judeo-Greek continued to be spoken in several Greek cities (Arta, Chalcis, Corfu, Ioannina, Larissa, Prevesa, Trikkala, Volos, and Zante). In the synagogues of Corfu, hymns in Judeo-Greek were sung during religious services, and under the Nazi occupation of Greece, some Jews communicated with one another in Judeo-Greek as a protective measure. Beginning in the mid-twentieth century, Judeo-Greek hymns and poems began to be collected and published (e.g., *Yanniotika evraika traghoudhia,* compiled by Joseph Matsas). However, the folk literature and folk poetry of the Judeo-Greek–speaking Jews has remained one of the most neglected areas in Jewish folklore study. By now the opportunity to record what had been transmitted orally has been largely lost because so many speakers of this language perished in the Holocaust.

Judeo-Iranian Dialects

In addition to speaking Judeo-Persian (see below), Jews living in areas in which the Muslim population speaks various Iranian dialects speak their own dialects related to those of the non-Jews. Thus the Jews of Hamadan, Isfahan, Kashan, Kerman, and Shiraz use their own Iranian dialects, with the addition of a very small Hebrew and Aramaic component, reserved mainly for religious terms. The dialects consist of different vocabulary and accent, and although in some cities (e.g., Yazd, Rasht, and Teheran) multiple Jewish dialects coexist that are mutually unintelligible. The Judeo-Iranian dialects preserved Old Iranian dialects that had evolved over time, so they are used to conduct research on Iranian languages. Nowadays, almost all Iranian-Jewish dialects face extinction because of massive emigration from Iran. The younger generation refuse to speak or learn the language, and even those who still speak their original

dialect changed it by adding words from the new languages of the countries to which they immigrated.

In Bukhara (currently in Uzbekistan, whose Jewish population predated and survived its membership in the Soviet Union), where the Muslim majority speaks a Persian dialect known as Tajik, the Jews had their own Judeo-Tajik and wrote in it manuscripts with careful vocalization to indicate the Tajik (as against Persian) pronunciation of the words. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Bukharan Jews produced poets and translators writing in the Judeo-Tajik language. Although this cultural flowering was confined to a few individuals by the end of the eighteenth century, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Bukharan Jews were the ones among all the ethnic groups who most identified with Jewish culture. In the first four decades of the twentieth century, books in Judeo-Tajik were published both in Bukhara and by newcomers to Israel, among them about 170 religious books, as well as works by Persian poets and Hebrew authors.

Judeo-Italian

This dialect was variously called Giudeo-romanesco (Judeo-Roman), Italkian, Latino, or Voldare. Accompanying the medieval emergence of Italian dialects in various parts of the Italian Peninsula were the Judeo-Italian colloquial languages, beginning in the tenth century in Italy and the sixteenth century in the Jewish community of Corfu. Judeo-Italian was a literary *koiné,* artificially formed by the Jews of south-central Italy to be employed as a common literary vehicle and for translation and teaching. Although its literary usage declined by the end of the sixteenth century, Judeo-Italian survived, to some extent, in the local dialects spoken in the Jewish ghettos.

The first texts known to us in Judeo-Italian are the glosses explaining obscure philosophical lemmata, written by Shabbethai Donnolo in the tenth century in his *Sefer ḥakhmoni,* a commentary on the *Sefer yetzirah* (Book of Creation). The first talmudic dictionary, the *Arukh,* of Rabbi Nathan ben Yeḥiel of Rome (ca. 1100) includes about 600 Judeo-Italian words, attesting to its wide usage at the time. By the thirteenth century Italian Jews wrote religious works in Judeo-Italian, including a Lamentation for Tisha Be'Av (Ninth of Av), which evinces influences of contemporary Italian religious poetry, and a Judeo-Italian version of the Song of Songs. During the fourteenth through sixteenth centuries, a number of translations were performed from Hebrew to Judeo-Italian, including the entire Bible, the prayer book, the Passover Haggadah, works of liturgy, grammar, philosophy (including Maimonides's *Guide for the Perplexed*), and medicine. Much of this was for the use of children and women, who, while familiar with the Hebrew alphabet, did not know Hebrew

or Judeo-Arabic, in which the works were originally written. Italian Jews also authored several Judeo-Italian glossaries for the study of the Bible and other works written in Hebrew or Judeo-Arabic. Most of the Judeo-Italian works were written using the Hebrew alphabet, with only a few using the roman alphabet. It should be noted that the Hebrew letters were also used for transcriptions of works written in Italian (not Judeo-Italian), such as the *Divine Comedy,* transliterated by Judah Romano at the beginning of fourteenth century.

In the course of the nineteenth century, Judeo-Italian disappeared from most parts of Italy as a spoken language. It retained its currency only among the Jewish working classes of Rome and remained known in certain Jewish scholarly circles, as shown by the frequent use of Italian *la'azim* (explanations in a foreign tongue) appearing in a mid-nineteenth-century Hebrew manuscript on alchemy from the island of Jerba off the Tunisian coast.

Ladino

Also referred to as Judezmo, Romance, Spanyolit, Espanyol, Zargon, and other terms, Ladino is the language of the Sephardic Jews, who after their expulsion from Spain in 1492 settled in Western Europe, North Africa, and the Ottoman Empire. Its significance in the lives of Sephardic Jews corresponds in many respects to that of Yiddish for Ashkenazi Jews. Ladino is the richest and most widespread of a group of Judeo-Romance languages, other members of which include Judeo-Catalan, Judeo-French, Judeo-Portuguese, and Judeo-Provençal. Its relationship to Spanish is generally like that of these other Jewish languages to Catalan, French, Portuguese, and Provençal, respectively. A common characteristic of all of them, as well as of other Jewish languages, is the presence of a rich Hebrew vocabulary comprising mainly words related to those areas of Jewish religion and culture that do not have their equivalent in the culture, and hence in the language, of the host peoples.

After the Christian conquest of Spain over the Muslims, Spanish became the colloquial language of the non-Jewish as well as the Jewish population of the country, and the Jews developed their own dialects of the language. However, it was only after they settled in the early 1500s in the new countries, where they retained the language they had brought along from Spain, that their colloquial language became significantly different from the Spanish of Spain. This was due primarily to two factors: In Spain Spanish continued to develop from its medieval (pre-1492) form into modern Spanish, while the Ladino of the Jews outside Spain preserved the medieval Spanish of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; and Ladino came to incorporate more and more non-Spanish words,

derived mainly from Hebrew, Arabic, Turkish, Greek, French, and, to a lesser extent, Portuguese and Italian. This enrichment of the language by elements absorbed from the actual environment has continued to the present in Israel, where the Ladino of the Sephardim shows some Yiddish influences. Apart from the vocabulary, the syntax (word order and sentence structure) of Ladino has also been affected by foreign influences.

Like other Jewish languages, Ladino was written in the Hebrew alphabet, usually in the Rashi script, which was rarely vocalized. However, the Hebrew square lettering was also employed. Beginning in the early twentieth century the roman alphabet also began to be used, especially in newspapers.

Because of the influence of the languages spoken by the non-Jewish population in each country inhabited by Sephardic Jews, differences developed between the "Western Ladino" of Greece and the Balkan lands and the "Eastern Ladino" of Constantinople (Istanbul), the west coast of Turkey, and the Isle of Rhodes. The Ladino spoken by Sephardim in London, Amsterdam, and Italy remained the closest to Castilian Spanish. In those areas Ladino-speaking Jews virtually disappeared with massive emigration from North Africa and the Balkans to Israel. In Israel, too, the approximately 200,000 Ladino speakers, who in the 1950s and 1960s constituted the largest Sephardic community (most of them in Jaffa, Jerusalem, Lydda, Ramleh, Safed, and Tiberias), gradually died off in the 1970s, and their children and grandchildren no longer speak the language.

Ladino literature, found beginning in the thirteenth century, is very rich, comprising Bible translations, glossaries, biblical interpretations, books of ethics, prayer books, and manuals for religious ritual. This literature continued to be produced by Sephardic Jews until the nineteenth century. A smaller number of works of poetry was also written on religious-historical subjects. An example of this kind of literature is the *Coplas de Yocef Ha'tzaddik,* written in 1732 by Abraham de Toledo, whose 400 quatrains were sung to a special melody on the festival of Purim. Most important in Ladino literature is the *romancero* (romances), much of it going back to Spain and transmitted orally for several centuries, with melodies of their own (see: Folk Music). Serious attempts have been made to collect and publish these romances, either their lyrics alone or with their musical notations, only since the mid-twentieth century. No systematic recording and publication has as yet been undertaken of Ladino folktales and proverbs, which comprises material of many hundreds of pages.

Ladino newspapers began to be published in the nineteenth century, followed by translations (or, rather, adaptations) from the French, Hebrew, or Yiddish originals. Original works were produced in Ladino, including a *Historia Judia Universal* (in thirteen volumes), novels,

biographies of Jewish philanthropists, and works on Zionism. By the end of the twentieth century, Ladino appeared doomed to disappear. Recently, however, interest in the language has revived: It is studied at universities and research centers as well as in private courses around the world, various institutions research Ladino as a part of the Sephardic heritage, textbooks have been published, and scientific conferences as well as cultural events are held in Ladino.

Judeo-Persian

A dialect of Persian, Judeo-Persian is one of the important languages in which Jews produced a rich literature. The earliest documents attesting to the use of Judeo-Persian date from the eighth century and consist of inscriptions and fragments of writing in Hebrew script. From these and later documents it appears that Judeo-Persian was never one single Jewish language but had different forms in various parts of the Persian-speaking language area, each with its own linguistic peculiarities.

From the thirteenth century on, a considerable number of Jewish scholars, translators, and poets produced many literary works in Judeo-Persian, all written in Hebrew letters and comprising translations of the Bible and related lexicographic treatises, original Judeo-Persian poetry, and transliteration of classical Persian poetry using the Hebrew alphabet.

Of these three areas, the most important was that of original Judeo-Persian poetry. In this field, two names stand out: Mawlana Shahin of Shiraz (fourteenth century), whose greatest work is the *Sefer sharh Shahin al ha'Torah* (The Book of Shahin's Commentary on the Torah), which is a poetic paraphrase and reinterpretation of the Pentateuch; and Emrani, the sixteenth-century poet, whose works include poetic paraphrases of books of the Bible and parts of the Mishnah.

In the seventeenth century, two historical writers, Babai ibn Lutf (alternatively, ben Lutf) and Babai ibn Farhad (alternatively, ben Farhad), composed chronicles of the persecutions and forced conversions of Iranian Jews. Judeo-Persian literary activity continued well into the eighteenth century, during which time the Bukharan Jews, not subjected to the persecutions visited upon their brethren in Safavid Persia, produced historical-poetical works in their own Judeo-Tajik dialect. The last protagonist of the old school of Judeo-Tajik writers was Simon Ḥakham, who moved in 1890 to Jerusalem and there produced his five-volume Judeo-Tajik translation of the Pentateuch (1901–1902) and other important works. By the early twentieth century, Jewish immigrants from Persia and Bukhara made Jerusalem into a veritable center of Judeo-Persian and Judeo-Tajik literary productivity, with an output that included not only Bible commen-

taries, prayer books, rabbinical writings, the Mishnah and the Zohar, medieval Jewish poetry and philosophy, midrashim, historical writings, and all types of liturgical poetry but also translations of non-Jewish literature, such as *The Arabian Nights* and Shakespeare's plays. An important role within this literary flourishing was played by the rabbis of the Jadid al-Islam community, who had moved from Meshhed to Jerusalem.

As the above brief survey shows, the works produced by Persian and Bukharan Jews in Judeo-Persian and Judeo-Tajik, respectively, fall into the category of literature and poetry, and not folklore. Yet scholars must not overlook the linguistic basis: the prevalence among the Persian and Bukharan Jews of their respective colloquial languages, in which they also produced a rich folk literature, comprising folktales, folk songs, riddles, proverbs, and the like, of which only a fraction has been recorded and thus saved from oblivion.

Judeo-Provençal

Also called Judéo-Comtadin, Hébraïco-Comtadin, Shuadit, and Chouadit, Judeo-Provençal is one of the Judeo-Romance languages (see: Ladino), comprising various dialects and spoken among the Jews of Provence in the Middle Ages and through the eighteenth century. Although Jews are known to have lived in Provence (in southern France) from the sixth century on, the earliest surviving texts in Judeo-Provençal, the glosses found in various religious treatises, date from the twelfth century. From the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries date fragments of a Judeo-Provençal translation of the Book of Esther and a prayer book in that language, prepared for the use by women who could read the Hebrew alphabet but did not understand Hebrew. This prayer book consists of a unique blessing: "Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the Universe, who made me a woman."

The dialect spoken by the Jews of the Comtat-Venaissin (in the department of Vaucluse in southern France) was a language that comprised Provençal, Hebrew, and French elements. It was commonly called "Chuadit" (Shuadit), a term believed by scholars to be derived from *Y'hudit* (Jewish), in accordance with the Judeo-Provençal pronunciation of the Hebrew *yod* as *ch* (sh), that is, the Hebrew *yahid* = Judeo-Provençal *chaid.* It was also called *ebraico vulgari* or *jargon de l'escolo.* A variant of this language was a Provençal dialect, likewise written in Hebrew letters, in which Hebrew-Provençal songs were composed from the late seventeenth century on, with verses in Hebrew and Provençal alternating. Such alternation of verses in Hebrew and in the local dialect is known from the *matruz* poetry of Judeo-Arabic. These songs, known as *"obros,"* were intended for Purim, the night before a circumcision, and other special occasions.

Judeo-Tat

Judeo-Tat is a Persian dialect that is spoken by the Mountain Jews of the eastern Caucasus, including those of the towns of Derbent (Dagestan) and Makhachkala, the villages of the Caucasian foothills of southern Dagestan, and the Kuba district north of Azerbaijan. As is the case with the other Jewish languages, written Judeo-Tat used the Hebrew alphabet in newspapers and the language taught in their schools until the Russian Revolution of 1917. In 1929, as a secularization measure, the use of the roman alphabet was imposed upon them, and ten years later they were ordered to replace that as well with the Cyrillic alphabet.

Judeo-Tat is one of the nine officially recognized languages of Dagestan. In the 1959 Soviet census about 30,000 Jews declared Judeo-Tat their mother tongue. Not much is known of the origin and history of the language, except that it is influenced by northwest Iranian dialects and Turkish and forms a dialectal unity with the languages spoken by the Muslim neighbors of the Jews and the small Christian sector.

Judeo-Tatar

Also called Judeo-Crimean Tatar and Krymchak, Tatar belongs to the Altaic family of languages, a Turkic dialect spoken by Tatars in the Crimean Peninsula. The Judeo-Tatar language was spoken by both the Rabbinate Jews (the Krymchaks) and the Karaites communities of the Crimean Peninsula and was written in Hebrew letters. There are Bible translations into that language, of which manuscript copies are preserved in the St. Petersburg Library and elsewhere. A complete Bible in Judeo-Tatar translation was published in 1841–1842 (ed. Mordecai Tirishkan, 4 vols.). The fact that the Bible was printed in a Judeo-Tatar translation served as a statement that the Karaites had their own Bible and shared little with other Jews. Judeo-Tatar is one of the least-investigated Jewish languages. As of the twenty-first century it is nearly extinct, with only few individual speakers left.

Yiddish

Yiddish (meaning "Jewish"; also called Judeo-German, Judisch-Deutsch, Taytsh, Jargon, Mameloshn, or "mother tongue") is the language used by the majority of Ashkenazi Jews, especially in Eastern Europe until the mid-twentieth century. It was estimated that on the eve of World War II, of the total global Jewish population of about 16 million, 11 million spoke Yiddish.

The basis of Yiddish is medieval German, which constitutes the bulk of its lexical stock. To it was added,

as in other Jewish languages, a rich Hebrew (and, to a small extent, Aramaic) vocabulary, related mostly to the Jewish religious and traditional aspects of life. In addition, the languages into whose territories the Yiddish-speaking Jews moved, especially the Slavic languages of Eastern Europe, influenced the vocabulary of Yiddish as well as its patterns of word formation. As in the case of the other Jewish languages, Yiddish used the Hebrew alphabet, with certain modifications required to indicate the phonemes specific to the language.

The initial development of Yiddish probably took place between the late eleventh and mid-thirteenth century, when Jews from France and Italy first moved eastward into German-speaking areas and adopted the local colloquial languages. After 1250, when the Jews moved from the German lands to Slavic-speaking Eastern Europe, they did not give up their German-based colloquial tongue but, instead, incorporated Slavic elements into it, developing what became the common language of all East European Jewry. (A new hypothesis regarding the formation of Yiddish claims that it resulted from an opposite, westward migration, of Jews from Slavic-speaking countries to Germany.) This Old Yiddish replaced the Slavic-based Jewish language, "Knaanic," spoken in the communities that existed in Eastern Europe before the arrival of the Yiddish-speaking Jews from the west. As a result of this process, within the next two centuries the entire East European Jewish population became a Yiddish-speaking community. Yet different dialects formed in different places. The main division is between Western Yiddish, which was spoken until the end of the nineteenth century in Germany, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and Hungary; and Eastern Yiddish, which has a major Slavic influence and still exists today. Even Eastern Yiddish had dialects, roughly divided according to geographic area into Northeastern (also called Lithuanian), Mideastern (Polish), and Southeastern (Ukrainian). Although Yiddish has no official dialect, a literary dialect of Standard Yiddish (*yidishe klal-shprakh*) developed. This dialect is based on the pronunciation of Northeastern Yiddish with Southern Yiddish grammar, and it is used for literary and academic writing.

Regarding literature, one type of the earliest literary remains (from the fifteenth century) is in the form of *piyyutim* (liturgical poems), specifically composed in Yiddish for recital on the Sabbath and festivals and at the Passover Seder, weddings, and circumcisions. Yiddish poems were often written to German folk melodies, which were popular among the Jews as well, and they testify to the presence of a creative folk poetry among the Yiddish-speaking Jews of the period. Another type of folk literature that appears early in this period is that of fables. A free translation of fables from Hebrew into Yiddish is found in a Cambridge manuscript (dating from 1382); before the end of the sixteenth century a Yiddish

translation of the Hebrew *Mishle shu'alim* (Fox Fables) was printed in Freiburg and the *Kuhbukh* (Cow Book), the first Yiddish collection of fables, in Verona.

The period from 1500 to 1700 is considered that of Middle Yiddish, when there was little contact between East European Jewry and the Jews of German lands. Consequently, the linguistic distance grew between the German language of the German lands that continued to develop and the German element of Yiddish that remained unchanged (duplicating the process between the Spanish of Spain and the Spanish contained in the Ladino of the Sephardim in the countries to which they moved after the Spanish expulsion). From these two centuries, a large volume of Yiddish narrative and expository prose has survived, as well as letters, verses, and other types of writings, which attest to a rich burgeoning of Yiddish folk literature.

Among the literary works produced in this period are Bible translations and interpretations, legends, midrashim, dictionaries, rhymed epics based on biblical stories, and homiletic prose works (of which the most popular was the *Tzenerene* by Rabbi Ya'akov ben Yitzhak Ashkenazi of Janow, from which many generations of Jewish women learned about biblical events and figures). In addition the biblical drama flourished in Yiddish, as did the oral Purimshpil (Purim play), performed on that festival, the Jewish holiday with the greatest popular appeal. As early as in 1544 the first prayer book in Yiddish translation was printed, and subsequently many more were in use, facilitating the understanding of the prayers, which Jewish religious tradition required to be recited in the original Hebrew (or Aramaic) only. The earliest printed *t'khines* (Hebrew *t'ḥinot*) prayers of individual and private supplication, recited mostly by women and containing the outpourings of popular religious sentiment date from the sixteenth century.

The folklife of the Yiddish-speaking Jews was greatly influenced by books of customs (*minhag*) and of ethical conduct (*musar*), which often recorded and codified the existing popular rules of conduct. The first Yiddish books containing collections of tales and pious stories were printed in Venice in the mid-sixteenth century. The first comprehensive Yiddish book of customs was printed in 1590 in Mantua. The *Ma'aseh Book* or *Mayse Bukh* (Story Book), printed first in Basel in 1602, is a collection of 257 stories based on a variety of sources, most of them talmudic and midrashic. This book, and the several others that followed, show the influence of the novella and the folktale current in contemporary non-Jewish literature.

A different type of popular literature was that of long narrative poems in Yiddish, called *lider* (songs), which resembled the German popular *Historische Lieder* of similar content. These writings tell about current historical events, often the suffering caused the Jews by anti-Semitic attacks, such as the Fettmilch riots

(1612–1616) in Frankfurt am Main. In the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries a large number of such *lider* were written; no fewer than forty of them have survived. During the same period historical writings in prose also were popular, mostly translated from Hebrew into Yiddish.

Among Yiddish-speaking Jews who continued to live in German lands after the mass migration to Eastern Europe, many German fantastic adventure tales, folk songs, and other genres of popular folk literature, including the popular German *Volksbucher* (Folk books)*,* were transcribed into Hebrew letters and presented to Jewish readers (including amendments so as to suit the Jewish reader, such as excising all references to Christian religious life).

It is interesting to compare the fate of Yiddish in Italy with that of Yiddish in Eastern Europe. In Italy, the Ashkenazi Jewish immigrants who settled in the northern part of the country retained their Yiddish for only about a century. During that century they produced an impressive number of Yiddish works, but at the beginning of the seventeenth century Yiddish began a decline, and the Ashkenazi Jews in the country adopted Italian as their colloquial language as well as their literary medium, as the Italian Jews had done already earlier. In Eastern Europe, however, the Slavic cultural environments in which the Jews lived (Czech-, Polish-, Russian-, and Ukrainian-language areas) were unattractive to the Jews, so they never felt motivated to give up their Yiddish and adopt in its stead one of those languages. Thus until the time of the Holocaust, the colloquial language of the great majority of East European Jews remained Yiddish.

The literary activity of Yiddish-speaking East European Jews at the time of the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment) and thereafter is a part of the history of Jewish literature and no longer belongs in a discussion of Yiddish as the language of the East European Jewish *amkha* (people)*.* It should be noted, however, that until its decline beginning in the nineteenth century, Yiddish was the chief medium of Jewish literary expression in every genre, and the language in which many of the most important Jewish writings were produced.

Today Yiddish is the colloquial language of only a few communities of Orthodox and Hasidic Jews, and scholars estimate that fewer than 2 million individuals speak it. Yet in the late twentieth century interest in the language began to revive. It is researched and studied at universities and in Jewish organizations, and cultural events are held in Yiddish, such as the Yiddish theater.

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See also: Folk Music and Song.

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LANGUAGES, STRUGGLE BETWEEN

The "struggle between languages" is the name given to the ideological controversy over whether Hebrew or Yiddish should be termed the national language of the Jewish people, a debate among scholars and politicians that lasted from the second half of the nineteenth century until the eve of World War II.

The Struggle in the Diaspora

With the rise of the eighteenth-century Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment, the modernizing Jewish movement that emphasized European cultural values) movement in Germany and the emergence of the new Yiddish lit-

erature came the first signs of opposition to Yiddish—the language of the speech and folk culture of East European Jews. The German-Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn wanted to abolish the use of Yiddish, and this mindset passed from Germany to Eastern Europe. The scholar Isaac Ber Levinsohn (Ribal) adopted this view and was the first to set Yiddish in opposition to Hebrew in his programmatic book, *Te'udah be'Yisrael* (1828), claiming that there was no place for an additional language between Hebrew and the language of the country in which the Jews were living. In the 1860s, with the beginning of the Yiddish press, the first signs of "Yiddishism" began to emerge, when Mordechai Joshua Lifschitz, a nineteenth-century Yiddish scholar and lexicographer called Hebrew a "dead language," arguing that Yiddish was a language capable of bringing modernization to the Jewish society. Expressions for and against the two languages constantly recurred in the texts of writers of the Haskalah throughout the second half of the nineteenth century. Those were also the years when the three classicists of new Jewish literature—Mendele Moykher Seforim, Sholem Aleichem, and I.L. Peretz—began writing. Peretz also took part in the linguistic debate and argued in favor of Yiddish.

As a result of the rise of Jewish nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century, the question "Which is the national language of the Jewish people, Hebrew or Yiddish?" became a cardinal question at the center of political ideologies. The argument was greatly sharpened after the first Zionist Congress in Basle, Switzerland; the establishment of the Jewish Labor Bund (the mass organization in tsarist Russia and interwar Poland that sought to transform the lives of the Jewish working poor through socialist organizing and secular Yiddish culture), and the publication of a path-breaking article by Simon Dubnow, which became later the first chapter in his foundational book on Jewish nationalism, *Letters on the Old and the New Judaism*—all of which took place in 1897. While the Zionist movement, which called for the return of the Jewish people to their homeland Eretz Israel, advocated the revival of Hebrew, the original language of the Jewish people used by Jews throughout the world, those who believed in diaspora nationalism adhered to Yiddish. They argued that because Yiddish was the spoken language of the Jewish people in Eastern Europe, it should be used as an organizing element of Jewish identity, and regarded as the national language of the Jewish people. It was to be used for political propaganda among the Jewish masses, to be fostered as high culture, and to be adopted as one of the hallmarks of Jewish autonomy in Eastern Europe. The argument grew even more pronounced in the early twentieth century, when the development of Yiddish language and culture began to play an important role in the party platform of the Bund as well as a part of those new Jewish political parties that clung to diaspora nationalism and aspired to Jewish autonomy

in tsarist Russia. The development of the Yiddish press and modern Yiddish literature both strengthened these political trends and were strengthened by them.

In 1908, Yiddish writers and intellectuals initiated the famous Czernowitz Language Conference, whose purpose was discussing the status as well as the cultural and lingual development of Yiddish. The resolutions of the conference stated that Yiddish was a national language of the Jews.

In 1910, reacting to the Czernowitz conference, the Zionist thinker Ahad Ha'Am (Asher Ginsberg) published his article "*Riv haleshonot*" (The Struggle Between the Languages) in the Hebrew periodical *Ha'Shiloah,* attacking the conference's decision and claiming that the status of Yiddish was inferior to that of Hebrew. Although this view had been discussed among scholars before, it aroused much debate and numerous reactions.

The Struggle in Eretz Israel

In Eretz Israel, the feud between the languages flared up shortly before the Czernowitz conference and was marked by the establishment of the Socialist-Zionist labor party, Poalei Zion, in 1906 and the publication of its Yiddish periodical, *Der Onfang* (The Beginning), in 1907. The struggle was a fierce one. Some of its better-known manifestations were when, in Jaffa in July 1914, young students prevented the visiting Yiddishist Dr. Chaim Zhitlowsky from delivering a speech in Yiddish; the obstacles in finding jobs that non-Hebrew speakers had to overcome beginning in 1918 and throughout the 1920s; the struggle against the establishment of a chair in Yiddish at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1927; and other activities initiated by small militant groups.

In the interwar years, Yiddish developed and flourished in Eastern Europe and centers of Yiddish literature and scholarship emerged in Poland, in particular. And although Yiddish as a spoken language started to decline in the United States and in Eastern Europe, Yiddish literature still remained the main Jewish literature. The struggle between Yiddish and Hebrew during these years became a permanent component in debates of the Zionist and, especially, Socialist Zionist parties in the Diaspora.

The sharp decline of Yiddish in the United States with the end of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe, on the one hand, and the end of the East European Jewish community in the wake of the Holocaust, on the other hand, ostensibly put an end to the struggle between the languages. A slight echo of the struggle was heard for a short period after the founding of the State of Israel and during the 1950s, with the arrival of Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe, mainly from Poland. But Yiddish and its defenders were already too dispersed and defeated to carry on this struggle.

Rachel Rojanski

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LEAH

According to Jewish tradition, Leah and Rachel are considered the founding mothers of the Jewish people, from whom the House of Israel was built. It is also a tradition to bless brides in the name of the two sisters at their weddings.

The biblical character Leah, the elder daughter of Laban, is described as follows (Gen. 29:15): Jacob loved her younger sister Rachel, who was "beautiful and lovely," and agreed to Laban's demand that he toil for seven years to win her. Laban deceives Jacob and on their wedding night instead brings him Leah. Jacob is forced to toil for another seven years before Laban gives Rachel to him as his bride. Together with Rachel, Leah was esteemed as one of the mothers of the nation who "built up the house of Israel" (Ruth 4:11).

Leah bears Jacob four children: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah. She later purchases the right to sleep with Jacob again by giving Rachel mandrakes, which her son Reuben finds in a field, and gives birth to two more sons, Issachar and Zebulun, and one daughter, Dinah. The mandrake, *mandragola officinalis,* is a plant whose shape resembles a human body. It is considered in folklore to have medical healing powers.

The Midrash (*Bava Batra* 123:1) relates that Jacob gave secret signs to Rachel, so that he would be able to identify her in the darkness (in the East it was the custom for the couple to spend their wedding night in the dark). Not wanting to shame her sister Leah, Rachel disclosed these signs to her, and so Jacob did not realize who she was until the morning light.

These secret signs, wrote the sixteenth-century commentator Avraham Azulai, are actually a ceremonial rite observed by the bride and groom on the wedding night. The bride is supposed to hold the big toe of the groom's right foot, the thumb on his right hand, and his right ear lobe. In so doing, she stimulates his desire to fulfill the commandment to be fruitful and multiply and casts off the three spirits that dwell in these parts of the body and quell a man's desire.

Some sources interpret Leah's name as "wild flower," referring to the Canaanite moon goddess.

According to tradition, the order in which her sons were born determined the hierarchy in the alliance of the Leah-Rachel tribes. But Jacob's preference for the children of his beloved Rachel, as opposed to those of the despised Leah, contradicts the law of the Torah (Deut. 21:15–17). Together with her sister, Leah stood by Jacob in his quarrel with Laban and joined him in his flight from her father (Gen. 31:1–18).

According to the Midrash, Leah was as beautiful as Rachel. Her only defect was that her eyes were weak from the many tears she shed because she thought she would be given in marriage to Esau (Tanḥuma Buber, Gen. 152). Leah is also said to have been "unloved" (29, 30–31) and she had to fight for Jacob's affection.

The concept of Leah as the hated wife appears in the Midrash, which presents the heroine as a devoted, loving woman. The Zohar (1:123) relates that "through all of her days, Leah stood at the crossroads and wept for Jacob when she heard he was a righteous man. Rachel never set forth on her own, and so Leah won burial with Jacob, and Rachel's burial was at the crossroads." Leah also responds to Jacob's accusation that he tricked her. She replies that Jacob acted the same way in his childhood, when he responded in Esau's name when his father called him; this incident from Jacob's own past causes him to loathe her, Leah claims (*m. Ber. Rab*. 70; *Agadat Ber.* 49).

The midrashic literature is inconsistent in its attitude toward Leah. Alongside descriptions of her love for Jacob and of her humility, she is described as having been unjust: "had she been just, she would not have lied to her sister" (*m. Ber. Rab.* 1:92). Her wild behavior is also described in this source, and she is depicted as being "decorated as a prostitute" (ibid., 80:1).

Leah's kindness toward her sister is also described in Jewish folklore: When Leah and Rachel were pregnant, both of them prayed to God and asked Him to give them a son. However, when Leah saw Rachel's suffering, she prayed for her and asked God to give this son to Rachel. Leah gave birth to Dinah (Israel Folktale Archives, no. 9581–India).

Aliza Shenhar

See also: Jacob (Ya'acov); Rachel.

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LEGEND

The legend is a prominent genre in folk literature in general and in Jewish folk literature in particular. Its narratives evoke associations with historical personages, geographic locations, and events. As distinct from the fairy tale, the legend corresponds to the real world of the narrator and his audience and is therefore accepted by members of the audience as a story that they can believe in. There are several subtypes of legend. Most Jewish legends are sacred legends. The sacred legend deals with central problems of individual and society. Man faces the sacred power (God or his emissaries), and this power solves problems in such a way as to maintain the stability of the sacred social order. The legend, which occurs in a numinous-miraculous mode, is rooted in the religious faith of the narrating society and reflects its moral-religious values. One kind of sacred legend is the legend about miracle-worker rabbis, known in international terminology as the saint's legend or in Jewish terminology as a *shevaḥ*. The unique nature of this legend is that it turns its hero into an object of admiration, identification, and imitation, thereby reinforcing the conventions of holiness and fitting behavior in society. The holy figure serves as a means of religious identification.

Legend in Ancient Jewish Literature

An exceptional feature of Jewish folk literature is that part of the corpus has been preserved in writing since the biblical era. Legends can be found in all the ancient Jewish writings: the Bible, Apocrypha, rabbinic literature, and medieval texts. The Bible encompasses more than a thousand years of cultural creation. The most prominent genre in the Bible is the myth (creation stories), but many different kinds of legends—foundation legends, naming legends, legends of the patriarchs in Genesis and of kings and prophets, such as the Elijah and Elisha cycles, in the Book of Kings—exist within its pages. There are legendary elements in the Book of Jonah and the Book of Job.

Many legends come down to us in the Apocrypha and Pseudoepigrapha, books that were not admitted to the canon of the Hebrew Bible and cover approximately 500 years of Jewish history. Most of this fragmentary material has reached modern audiences second- and third-hand.

Many of these books profess to be by or about characters and events known from the Bible. Among them are legends that expand on biblical accounts and praise-tale cycles. Some of the legends, however, do not have biblical antecedents, although they later became patterns of Jewish folk legends. These include legends of Jewish life in the Diaspora, which tell of the deliverance of a Jewish community. There are also two legends whose heroines became the archetypes for women in times of persecution: the legend of the mother and her seven sons, recounted in two versions in the books of Maccabees (2 Macc. 7, 4 Macc. 8–15), who became in later Jewish legends a model for a mother who is ready to die a martyr's death together with her sons; and Judith, who became the model for women's bravery in times of persecution.

In rabbinic literature, the legend has a central place in the corpus of texts redacted in the first centuries of the Common Era, which contain traditions that had been transmitted orally and in writing by groups of scholar and sages. Some of the legends told by the sages are expanded biblical legends. Others are biographical legends about biblical figures, about some of the sages themselves, and about other historical personages canonized by the people.

A number of compositions from the Middle Ages contain legends reworked by authors of that period. The earliest of these works is *Midrash Asseret ha'Dibberot* (Midrash of the Ten Commandments), which dates from the eight or ninth century. One important anthology that includes legends is the ninth-century *Alphabet of Ben Sira.* Other important works that include legends are the *Ḥibbur yafe me'hayeshua* by Rabbi Nissim ben Jacob of Kairouan (eleventh century); *Sefer ha'Ma'asim* (France, twelfth century); and *Sefer ḥasidim* (Book of the Pious), composed by Rabbi Judah the Pious in Germany in the thirteenth century.

Among the works that include expansions of biblical legends are the Midrash *Ve'yosha,* the *Chronicles of Moses,* the *Story of Abraham* and *Sefer ha'yashar* (Book of the Just), written in the late Middle Ages.

The historical legend is an important medieval genre. Prominent in this category is the *Book of Josippon,* written in southern Italy in the tenth century. It is based on the historical works of Josephus Flavius but adds material taken from the talmudic sages. Another historical composition is the *Scroll of Aḥima'atz,* a family chronicle written by Aḥima'atz ben Paltiel in southern Italy in the eleventh century. *The Book of Memoirs,* produced in Germany in the early fourteenth century, is a Jewish folk history ranging from the Creation until the End of Days. *Shalshelet ha'Kabbalah* (The Chain of Tradition), by Gedaliah ben Joseph ibn Yahya (Italy, sixteenth century), makes extensive use of hagiographic legends in its presentation of the annals of Torah scholars from the earliest times to the author's own day.

Legends in the Modern Era

Jewish legends in the modern era can be found in anthologies published since the seventeenth century: the *Ma'aseh Book* or *Mayse Bukh* (Story Book), a Yiddish collection of 257 tales compiled by Jacob ben Abraham and printed in Basel at the start of the seventeenth century; a collection of historical legends translated by Eliezer Leibermann and transcribed by his father, published in Amsterdam in 1696; and the Judeo-Spanish *Me'am lo'ez* by Ya'acov Culi (1689–1732).

Saints legends were central to Hasidism from its early days in the eighteenth century. This is the praise legend, or *shevaḥ*—the hagiographic legends that the Hasidim told about their rebbes. The best-known collection of these is *Shivḥei ha'Besht* (Ben-Amos and Mintz 1970). The most prominent anthology of Sephardic Jews that includes many legends is *Oseh Peleh,* by Joseph Shabbetai Farhi, first published in Livorno in 1864.

The collection of folk narratives for documentation and scholarship arose at the beginning of Jewish folklore studies in the nineteenth century. In 1897 Max (Meir) Grünwald founded the Gesellschaft für jüdische Volkskunde and edited the *Mitteilungen für jüdische Volkskunde*, between 1898 and 1922. Between 1912 and 1914 the first ethnographic expedition headed by S. An-Ski collected many legends in Jewish shtetls. A group of folklorists led by Noyekh Prilutski (Noah Prylucki) was active in Warsaw. The institution that collected folklore material most intensively was the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research, founded in 1925 in Vilna, Poland (now Vilnius, Lithuania), as a historical and cultural center. In 1955 in Haifa, Dov Noy founded the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA), which currently holds approximately 23,000 folk narratives, of which 21,000 are Jewish tales. In all these collections the legend is the most common genre; some 40 percent of the tales held by the IFA are legends.

The topics covered in the legends are diverse: relations between Jews and gentiles; deliverance from blood libels; martyrdom; Jewish settlement in various countries and the founding of major Jewish communities there; holy men, ghosts, and demons; ethical principles such as charity; ritual precepts between human beings and God; social precepts governing relations among human beings; and festivals and life-cycle ceremonies, including circumcision, bar mitzvah, marriage, and burial. One interesting phenomenon in the Jewish legends is the change of the genre that takes place when the international *märchen* (fairy tales) become legends in Jewish folklore.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: An-Ski, S.; Folk Narratives in the Bible; Grünwald, Max; Israel Folktale Archives; Poland, Jews of.

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LEHMAN, SHMUEL

See: Poland, Jews of

LÉVY, ISAAC JACK (1928–)

Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Spanish Languages and Literatures Isaac Jack Lévy (University of South Carolina) was born on the Isle of Rhodes, Italy (now Greece). In 1939, following the Italian government Order of Expulsion for Jews, Lévy, his family, and many members of the Rhodesli Jewish community immigrated to the international city of Tangiers, Morocco. At the height of the Second World War in 1944, fifteen-year-old Lévy sailed with his mother and grandmother through a neutral sea-lane for America to enter through the Port of New Orleans. Lévy attended Brooklyn College (1947–1949), served with the U.S. Army Signal Corps in Germany and the United States (1948–1952), completed his BA at Emory University (1957), his MA at University of Iowa (1959), and his PhD at the University of Michigan (1966). From 1963 to 1993, Lévy was a member of the Department of Foreign Languages at the University of South Carolina.

The publication of his master's thesis and doctoral dissertation—respectively, "Sephardic Ballads and Songs in the United States" and "Prolegomena to the Study of the Refranero Sefardí"—marked the beginning of his dedication to collecting and publishing the folklore and folkways of his people, the Sephardim of the historic Ottoman Empire. In *Sephardic Scholarship: A Personal Journey*, Lévy writes about the twining together of his identify as a Sephardi and of his scholarly work. His field research has taken him to Sephardic communities in the United States (Atlanta, Los Angeles, New York, Seattle), Europe (Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands, the former Yugoslavia, Greece, Turkey, Rhodes), and the Middle East (Israel). Lévy's focus has been multifaceted: he has continued his work in proverbs and ballads; he has researched folktales, collected folk songs, gathered first-person narratives, and folk beliefs.

He has written on jokes in "Sephardic Humor: One Has to Laugh to Live," and on folk poetry in "The Yearning for the Promised Land in Sephardic Literature and Folklore." His most recent publication weaves together multiple genres in a collection and analysis of the mother-in-law in Judeo-Spanish folklore, "A Mother-in-Law Not Even of Clay Is Good: *Sfuegra ni de barro es Buena*." Lévy is currently writing *The Sephardic Art of the Holocaust*, a volume complementing his *And the World Stood Silent: The Sephardic Poetry of the Holocaust*. Lévy has transliterated from Rashi script—Judeo-Spanish written in Hebrew script—to Judeo-Spanish the popular novel, *Istoria enteresante de la Ermoza Rahel (An Interesting Story of the Beautiful Rachel)*. In an affectionate tribute to his isle of birth, Lévy wrote *Jewish Rhodes: A Lost Culture*. As part of the commemoration of the four-hundredth anniversary of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal, Lévy co-edited with Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt a special issue of the *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Review* titled *Sephardic Folklore: Exile and Homecoming.*

Committed to the study of his native language, Lévy advocates for accessible orthography and for the designation of the language as Judeo-Spanish, rather than as Ladino, which is used for religious texts. In "The Challenges of Working with Judeo-Espanyol," Lévy writes about the difficulties of transliterating from Rashi to Judeo-Spanish, of recording precisely the spoken word of informants who have differing pronunciation depending on where they learned to speak Judeo-Spanish, and of determining a common style of orthography. Active in organizational work, Lévy was the founder of American Society of Sephardic Studies (1967), of the Sephardic Section of the Modern Language Association (1967), and of the *Hispanic Studies Series* at University of South Carolina Publications (1974).

Among the foundations that have supported Lévy's research are the following: the Maurice Amado Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Program for Cultural Cooperation Between Spain's Ministry of Culture and United States' Universities, and the Lucius N. Littauer Foundation. He has received many awards, among these the Order of Don Quixote (1968), the National Award from the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (1970), and the Elli Kongas-Maranda Book Prize of the American Folklore Society for *Ritual Medical Lore of Sephardic Women: Sweetening the Spirits and Healing the Sick.*

Rosemary Lévy Zumwalt

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LEW, HENRYK

See: Poland, Jews of

LEWINSKI, YOM-TOV (1899–1973)

Folklorist Yom-Tov Lewinksi's diverse and widely read studies on folklore subjects delved deeply into the yearly cycle, the life cycle, folk literature, and folk medicine.

Lewinski was born in 1899 in Zambrów in the Łomża district of Poland. He received a traditional Jewish education at a *cheder* (traditional Jewish elementary school for young boys) and yeshiva. He moved to Warsaw and was accepted at the Poznański Teachers Seminary. At that time, he became active in theTse'irei Zion (Young Zionist) movement and wrote articles in the Hebrew and Yiddish press. Lewinski served as an officer in the Polish army, and after his discharge took advanced teachers' courses in Vilna and worked as a teacher. In 1923–1924 he studied in the Humanities Department of the Polish University in Vilna but was expelled on suspicion of communist activity in his work with Tse'irei Zion. In 1924–1925 he studied at the Royal College of Liège, Belgium, where he received his Ph.D. in the history and literature of the East.

Lewinski began his literary work with the journal *He'ḥalutz* in Warsaw. He published academic and literary articles in the Yiddish newspaper *Vilner tog.* In 1925–1926 together with Y.Y. Glass he edited *Moznayim*, a journal on literature and science in Western Europe. In 1929–1930 he served as editor of the weekly *Die yiddishe zeitung,* and in 1930–1931 he was the editor-in-chief of the daily *Der belgisher tag* and the weekly *Der vegveyzer.*

Lewinski emigrated to Palestine in 1935 and engaged in the teaching and research of Jewish folklore. He saw folk creation as an inseparable part of the historical and cultural heritage of the Jewish people. Clearly evident in his work from this period is his sense of immediate proximity to the East European shtetl, together with knowledge of other languages and cultures, which gave him a wide basis for comparison and research.

In 1942, with a group of friends, Lewinski founded Yeda Am, the Folklore Society in Israel and, beginning in 1948, edited its journal *Yeda Am.* He was prominent in the activities of the society and guided many of its endeavors. He lectured at teachers' colleges, spoke on radio, and lectured at study days for lay students of Jewish folklore. With friends he arranged for the collection of folklore material at retirement homes and in various settlements. He designed and distributed questionnaires on marriage customs throughout the Diaspora, on holiday traditions, and on other subjects. He attended international folklore conferences and, with the famous literary scholar and folklorist Dov Shtok, was the editor of *Reshumot* (New Series).

In the spirit of the massive works of collection of Haim Nachman Bialik and Yehoshua Chone Ravnitzky, and Alter Druyanov, and the enterprises of Saul M. Ginsburg (Ginzburg) and Pesaḥ S. Marek and S. An-Ski, Lewinski devoted himself for many years to the publication of the eight-volume *Book of Festivals,* which included many of his articles, some of them anonymously (1950–1956). He edited volumes 3–8, in which he aimed to help preserve the details of Jewish culture. *The Book of Festivals* laid the historical background with attention to continuity and change in the cultural norms of past generations. The volumes were widely distributed because of the sense of cultural continuity reflected in them, among other reasons.

Lewinski also edited the *Encyclopaedia of Folklore and Tradition in Judaism* (vols. 1–2, 1970), which expounds terms and concepts in Jewish sources and customs. The work also contains comparative descriptions of customs in various Jewish communities.

Lewinski was a teacher and educator, and his pedagogical proclivity led him to publish textbooks for teachers and kindergarten teachers, as well as a children's book, *These Are the Festivals of Israel* (1971), for which he won Ramat Gan's An-Ski Prize for Folklore.

Many of Lewinski's works were not completed at the time of his death, in Ramat Gan, Israel, in 1973, and much material remains collected and classified in his estate.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Reshumot; Yeda Am.

Yom-Tov Lewinski. From the "Sefer Zambrov/Zembrove" Yizkor Book. *(Courtesy of the United Zembrover Society)*

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LILIENTHAL, REGINA (1877–1924)

Through her research and published works, the twentieth-century ethnographer Regina Lilienthal depicted the cultural traditions of Polish Jews, with an emphasis on Jewish narratives, customs, and beliefs.

She was born in Zawichost, Poland, on June 14, 1877, to a merchant family named Eichmans. She attended a grammar school for girls in nearby Sandomierz. In 1895 she moved to Warsaw, where she taught at secondary schools, while writing articles about the social problems of the Jewish community in Poland. Lilienthal attended lectures given by the well-known sociologist and historian Ludwik Krzywicki, under whose influence she became interested in Jewish folklore.

In her early writings, Lilienthal presented mostly unelaborated materials of her field research, translated into Polish. These texts appeared in the Polish ethnographical periodicals *Wisła* and *Lud,* or in the *Izraelita* daily. Later on, she started to publish monographic studies based on extensive comparative material; they are now chiefly valued for field research material pertaining to Polish Jews in the early twentieth century.

Lilienthal's writings are strongly marked by the historically oriented approach. She based her research on the rich comparative materials drawn from both world cultures and Hebrew sources. Lilienthal attached special importance to the Talmud and midrashim, which, prior to learning Hebrew, she mostly used in their Russian- or German-language translation.

Her most important works are *The Jewish Child* (1927); and *Jewish Holidays in the Past and Present* (1909, 1912, 1918), a monographic study planned for five volumes, of which only three were published, covering Passover, Shavuot, Sukkot, Rosh Ha'Shana, Ḥanukkah, and Purim. She did not finish her research on the Sabbath and some minor holidays and feasts. Other works of hers include *The Worship of Heavenly Bodies Among the Jews* (1921) and the posthumously published *The Wor-*

Regina Lilienthal, Krakow, early twentieth century. *(Ethno-graphical Museum, Krakow)*

ship of *Water Among the Hebrews and Its Survival Among Contemporary Jews* (1926).

Lilienthal's scattered essays on Jewish folklore and her articles on social matters were published in the Jewish and Polish periodicals *Głos Żydowski, Juedische Philologie, Niwa Polska, Nowa Gazeta, Nowe Tory, Ogniwo,* and *Przeglád Tygodniowy.* Lilienthal died on December 4, 1924.

Olga Goldberg-Mulkiewicz

See also: Poland, Jews of.

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LILITH

Lilith, a female demon, is one of the dominant figures in Jewish demonology. She is characterized as a voluptuous woman or an incubus who tempts men and attacks them in their sleep, when they are most vulnerable. She is also identified as Adam's first, rebellious wife. Ancient texts and Jewish folklore hold her responsible for the death of newborns and of women in labor.

Lilith in the Bible

Lilith's name is mentioned once in the Bible (Isa. 34:14) as part of the list of the various animals, and birds, that will dwell in the fallen ruins of Edom (Idumea). Opinions differ over the meaning and the nature of Lilith in this list. The name might refer to the bird "Night jar" or "Goat sucker" (Driver 1959), the demon of wind and tempest (Wohlstein 1963), or the spirit of ruins (Kaufman 1976). The Septuagint (Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible done between 300 and 200 B.C.E.) translated the term "Lilith" into Greek as *onocentaurus*, a demonic creature that is part-donkey (*onos*) and part centaur.

Lilith in the Talmud

In the Talmud, Lilith is mentioned briefly in different contexts. She is the mother of the demon Hormin (*b. Sanhedrin* 39a) or Hormiz (*b. Bava Batra* 73b). She gives her name to a remedy: "the arrow of Lilith" (*b. Gittin* 69b). She has long hair (*b. Eruvin* 100b). She is winged (*b. Niddah* 24b) and attacks the lonely sleeper (*b. Shabbat* 151b). These characteristics may have been influenced by Babylonian demonology (Scholem 1974), for Lilith shares traits with two different demons: the "Ardat Lili," a lustful female demon that attacks single men, and the "Labratu," a female demon with wild hair that kills children and sucks their blood. This last trait resembles the "Lamia" in Greek mythology, a monstrous mother who devours her own children and hides in despair in remote and wild dwellings, also described as a blood-sucking vampire that attacks children.

The Magical Bowls

These traits are similar to ones found on magical bowls that were discovered in the city of Nippur, Iraq (in 1948–1967). They date approximately from the sixth to seventh century C.E. and were apparently used in homes, as traps for evil beings. The center of each bowl is inscribed with a conjuration against demons. The names Lilith and Lilin are mentioned as creatures that attack men and women in their sleep (Montgomery, bowls nos. 1 and 6). Lilith is depicted as a long-haired naked female (Montgomery, bowls nos. 8 and 17). One of the conjurations describes her as devouring, strangling, and drinking the blood of boys (Montgomery, bowl no. 18).

Lilith in the Midrash and During the Middle Ages

Lilith's character is further developed in the Midrash. She is Adam's sexual companion while he is separated from Eve, due to her mourning over her murdered son, Abel. Demons are conceived from his relations with Lilith (*m. Avkir*). Lilith attacks her own children (*Tanḥuma* Num 128; *Numeris Rabba* 16:15). She is also identified with the queen of Sheba. According to Gershom Scholem, this notion is based on the Targum (the Aramaic translation of the Bible) to Job 1:15, where the queen of Sheba is described as a jinn, half-human and half-demon (Scholem 1965). The midrashic text that had the greatest impact on perceptions of Lilith's character was *Alpha Beta de'Ben Sira* (The Alphabet of Ben Sira), which dates from approximately the tenth century (Yassif 1977) and provides extensive details about Lilith.

This story is mentioned in relation to a common ancient amulet (Scholem 1974), whose purpose is to protect infants from Lilith. In this tale Lilith is depicted as Adam's first wife, created with him from soil. Lilith, the egalitarian spouse, seeks not to be subordinate in the act of sexual intercourse. Adam is reluctant to agree to her demand. So after pronouncing the Sacred Name (that is, the name of God), she flies away, escaping to the sea. Three angels are sent to return her to her husband. Lilith refuses, explaining that the purpose of her creation is to harm infants: baby boys during the first eight days after their birth, until they are circumcised, and baby girls during the first twelve days of their life.

In one version of the text, Lilith argues further and exhibits thorough halakhic knowledge. Her refusal is based on biblical jurisdiction (Deut. 24:4): "Her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife; after that she is defiled." Lilith adds that she has already fornicated with a demon. As a result of her recalcitrance, Lilith is punished by God. She accepts her punishment, in return for her freedom, and agrees that 100 of her children will die every day. But her anger and jealousy toward mankind are monstrous. She seeks revenge by attacking infants. Lilith consents to refrain from her attacks in cases where she sees an amulet bearing the names of these three angels: Senoy, Sansenoy, and Semangelof.

Lilith's liberated spirit as depicted in this story has been viewed positively and has inspired some feminists (there is even a feminist journal titled *Lilith*). According to folklorist Haya Bar Itzhak, however, taken as a myth this narrative aims to sanctify the social order of patriarchal Jewish society. It does so in a sophisticated manner and rules out any possible challenge to that order. The first woman's equal status in creation bodes disaster because it leads her to demand equal status. When this is denied, she rebels against man. Her rebellion leads her to betray man and couple with a demon. But this is not the end of the chain that leads from equality and satisfaction of erotic needs to rebellion and betrayal. The culmination is when she is made into the archetypal anti-mother. As Bar Itzhak puts it, the erotic woman who demands equal-

Amulet, Persian. This amulet was meant to protect mother and child during childbirth. The name of god, Shaddai, Almighty, with a crown is encircled by an invocation against Lilith. Israel Museum. *(Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY)*

ity and independence harms Adam's children as well as her own. Lilith becomes a perpetual threat to children and mothers. The patriarchal myth distinguishes among the main traits of womanhood and calls on woman to choose the only form of fulfillment possible in the culture in which she lived. A woman must repress all her other desires if she wishes to be fulfilled as a mother, the sole status that can bring her honor and respect in patriarchal society (Bar Itzhak 2012).

Lilith in the Kabbalah

Further developments in Lilith's characteristics occurred in the Spanish Kabbalah. In the thirteenth-century kabbalist text "The Treatise on the Left Emanation," by Rabbi Isaac Hacohen, Lilith is described as the queen of the divine emanation's evil side, the Sitra Aḥra. She is divided into two beings, the young Lilith, spouse of Asmodeus, the king of demons, and the elder Lilith, spouse of Samael, the head of Satans.

Later in the Zohar, her negative aspect is emphasized even further. She is described as a tempting female covered with makeup and splendorous jewels who copulates with sinners. Afterward, she turns into a frightening and repellent demonic creature who murders the sinners (Zohar 1:148a–b). This concept was later carried into the Lurianic Kabbalah and Hasidic tales.

The Protection Against Lilith

Lilith's main characteristic, which prevails in Jewish folklore to this day, is that she endangers newborns and their mothers. In order to protect them from her lethal grasp, various customs were adopted throughout Jewish communities. Among them is a constant watch over women in childbirth and over infant boys until their circumcision. Medieval sources mentioned the Wachnacht, the night preceding circumcision, as especially critical and a time that required intensive prayer and study of the Holy Scriptures (Trachtenberg 1977, 42–43, 170–172); another medieval custom was to trace a protective circle around the mother's bed (Trachtenberg 1977, 169).

Numerous amulets to protect people from Lilith exist throughout the Diaspora. Some of them replicate Ben Sira's amulet design, including the angels' names and figures, or parts of the story itself. Such an amulet

can be found in a medieval Jewish magic text: *Sefer Raziel Ha'malakh* (Book of the Angel Raziel) (p. 50b). The amulets include the expression: "Adam ḥava ḥutz Lilith" (Adam and Eve barring Lilith) (Shachar 1981, 20, amulets nos. 1, 3, and 4). Others recall the story of her encounter with Elijah, in which, under his threat, she revealed her various names (Nahmias 1996, 72, 84–85). Some are based on the design of an enclosed form (a circle or the Star of David) to mark an area outside her influence (see *Sefer Raziel Ha'malakh* 50b). Other amulets are made of metal (Shachar 1981, 276, 285, 288, amulets nos. 885, 916, and 933). Some of them are in the shape of weapons (Muller-Lancet 1983, 97, amulets nos. 157–158).

Other means of protection include hanging Holy Scriptures over the bed of the newborn. Salt or knives are also placed under a baby's mattress. Red thread is tied on the baby's wrist (Nahmias 1996, 116).

Lilith has been the subject of much research. Gershom Scholem offered a thorough historic and philological survey of her development throughout Jewish texts. He pointed out the origins and non-Jewish parallels (Scholem 1974). Raphael Patai (1990) devoted an entire chapter of his *The Hebrew Goddess* to Lilith, in which he examined the different Jewish sources where Lilith is mentioned and discussed her significance in Jewish folklore, in particular, the opposition between her identity and that of the divine feminine element, the *shekhinah*.

Lilith has also inspired psychological studies. The ambiguity of Eve and Lilith in Freudian and Jungian perspectives has been investigated in various Jewish texts related to Lilith (Abarbanell 1994). These texts and their concepts have been the object of Jungian study (Black Koltuv 1986).

Idit Pintel-Ginsberg

See also: Adam; Amulets; Demon; Magic.

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LITHUANIA, JEWS OF

See: Poland, Jews of; Russia, Jews of

LOT

See: Abraham

LOT'S WIFE

See: Abraham

LULLABIES

Lullabies (also called cradlesongs), which circulate widely within Jewish ethnic groups and play a family and social role, are a universal genre primarily sung by mothers to help their children fall asleep; they are transmitted from one generation to the next. The folk lullaby, which flourishes within the family circle, strongly influences the literary genre of written lullabies. The latter are an imitation or reworking of the folk lullaby and, in the absence of a melody, generally lack a real-life application.

Literary studies frequently distinguish two types of lullabies: the folk song, which is transmitted orally, and

the art song, which is written down. But this distinction is artificial. Many anonymous lullabies that circulate orally and in multiple versions excel in their use of figurative language and images whose symbolic subtext would be at home in any work of high literature. However, there are many lullabies sung to texts by well-known poets, frequently because of the melody that has been attached to them. Yet these may also circulate in modified texts and sometimes to different melodies. When they are "folklorized," they may be truncated (by the elimination of stanzas), lengthened (by the addition of lines and stanzas), or altered in various other ways—through modifications in the text or the order of the verses or recasting as parody.

Lullabies in the Human Life Cycle

Lullabies, sung when babies are being put to bed, make it easier for children to fall asleep and give the caretaker a break from her chores. Many lullabies explicitly mention the rocking or hanging cradle, as part of the realia of the house (in the nursery or children's bedroom). In the wake of technological advances in this domain, however, many languages have given the genre a new name—such as "slumber song" in English, *Schlaf Lied* in German, or *shluf lid* in Yiddish— replacing the traditional lullaby, *berceuse, viglid,* or *Wiegenlied*. The genre is functional: The rhythm and melody are generally appropriate for putting a child to sleep—rocking the cradle, treading on the rice while the infant lies on a mat on the ground, walking with the baby held in a baby carrier slung from the mother's shoulders, and so on.

All that is needed to put a child to sleep is a melody in a certain rhythm. Some sounds, by their monotonous repetition or by the relationship among them, exert a hypnotic effect on listeners, making them drowsy before they eventually drop off to sleep. Here the role of the singing voice is essential. The melody and sounds are perfectly suited to achieving the goal; as far as the soporific purpose of the song is concerned, the actual words neither add nor detract.

In fact, the lullabies from many cultures all over the world, both ancient and modern, are composed of both a functional melody and a text whose content means absolutely nothing to the infant or young child who is the main "consumer" or "target" of the song. The words reflect the feelings of the caretaker who sings them— her cultural heritage and background, her situation as a woman and a mother, and her hopes and expectations for the future. Hence the lullabies sung in the Jewish cultural space (which includes Europe, North Africa, and Southwest Asia), usually by a woman—the mother

or her various surrogates (grandmother, older sister, some other female relative)—are unmistakably women's songs. Some of the universal hallmarks of the lullaby are directly associated with the mother-woman's emotions.

One prominent motif is that of the "absent father." The father—the woman's husband—is not present where his baby is sleeping. This motif expresses, in various forms and ways, the protest—social, feminine, sexual—directed (sometimes only subconsciously) against the husband, who is not currently with the woman and the fruit of their love. The infant is turned into a concrete and painful memento of a love that is no longer.

This protest may be bitter in the extreme. Some Jewish lullabies even describe the rabbi or husband's torments in hell, in the World to Come. But the protest may be softened by the statement that the absent father will soon return or a suggestion that his absence has justifiable and even heroic causes: He is away working; he is in prison; he has been exiled; he is doing guard duty. In one way or another, he is acting on behalf of his infant, his family, his people, and his society. The woman's longing for his return and reunification of the family is accompanied by hopes of compensation for the suffering caused by his absence.

Lullabies preserve the structural triangle typical of folk songs in general. Sometimes the father is replaced by an angel, a young goat (or other animal), or even God. The paternal surrogate is described as standing next to the cradle and watching over the infant in place of the father, even if the text does not make this exchange explicit.

But substitutions of this sort are scant compensation. They cannot neutralize the woman's protest or blunt the pain, humiliation, and sense of discrimination caused by the unjust division of labor between the sexes and the unequal division of responsibility for children between father and mother. The woman, the fruit of whose love is there in front of her eyes but not of her partner's, bears a load of overwhelming bitterness.

Ethnolinguistic factors account for most of the differences in songs from one culture to another. The absent father may be away pasturing the flocks, not necessarily because the lullaby was created in a sheep-herding society but because in English and German, as well as in other languages, *sleep/Schlaf* rhymes with *sheep/Schaf*.

In Hebrew lullabies, the kid is the preferred animal substitute for the child because of the association of *gedi* (kid) with *gad* (luck). Sometimes a motif is determined by the circumstances of time and place. The father who has been exiled to Siberia or who has emigrated to America (leaving his family behind) represents the historical situation of the early twentieth century, while the uncircum-

cised infant Abrasha in a Soviet-Jewish lullaby reflects the situation in the Soviet Union.

Dov Noy and Aliza Shenhar

See also: Adam; Amulets; Demon; Magic.

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LUZ

See: Angel of Death

MA'ASEH BOOK (MAYSE BUKH)

The *Ma'aseh Book,* or *Mayse Bukh* (Story Book), a compilation of stories in Old Yiddish, is one of the most important literary phenomena of Jewish fiction in Ashkenaz from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century. The book, in its multiple editions, contains the entire range of characters, metaphors, and major tales based on the talmudic and midrashic legends; the narrative collections translated from the East and disseminated in Central Europe; and the medieval exempla and hagiography.

The *Mayse Bukh* was printed in Basle (present-day Basel), Switzerland, in 1602. Consisting of 257 stories, it is the largest anthology ever published in Old Yiddish. It was published by Jacob ben Abraham of Mezhirech, a bookseller who also printed books written in Hebrew and Yiddish in Basle between 1599 and 1603. Although the sources of this comprehensive narrative collection are varied and numerous, three major literary corpora stand out: (1) stories culled from ancient sources, particularly from the Talmud and the Midrash, with which the copyists were familiar, especially through Jacob ben Ḥaviv's "Ein Ya'akov" as indicated in the titles of some of the stories; (2) hagiographic tales about Rabbi Samuel the Pious and his son, Rabbi Judah the Pious, which were composed by the medieval pietists of Ashkenaz, as well as stories related to the history of Ashkenazi Jews and exemplary characters—such as the stories about Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes (known as Rashi), Rabbi Simeon the Great (well known as Rabbi Shimeon Ben Yitzhak of Mainz, 950–1020), Rabbi Meir ben Rabby Yitzhak Shatz, Rabbi Yeḥiel of Paris, Rabbi Amnon of Mainz, and Rabbi Amram of Cologne.

These stories are saturated with mystical and magic motifs that match the Jewish culture of the German pietists in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Some of these stories found their way into the *Mayse Bukh* through postmedieval sources, such as *Shalshelet ha'Kabbalah,* by Gedaliah ibn Yahya (printed in Venice in 1587). This corpus is grounded in medieval European fiction, an aspect discussed at length by the Yiddish scholars Max Erik and Yisrael Zinberg, though modern scholarship attributes this phenomenon to the indirect influence of Hebrew sources; (3) stories of the Middle Ages and later sources that were composed or copied close to the

printing of the book and were taken from various collections, such as *Ḥibbur ha'Ma'asiyyot* and *Midrash Aseret ha'Dibberot* (printed in Constantinople in 1519) and *Midrashim u'Ma'asiyyot she'ba'Talmud* (printed in Venice in 1544), or the first Hebrew rendition of *Ḥibbur Yafeh meha'Yeshu'ah* by Rabbi Nissim ben Jacob of Kairouan (printed in Ferrara in 1557), which was originally written in Judeo-Arabic in the eleventh century. This corpus also contains stories that scholars believe were taken from *Sefer ḥasidim* (Book of the Pious), whose first printed editions date somewhat earlier than the *Mayse Bukh* (Bologna, 1538, and Cracow, 1581) and *Kaftor Va'Feraḥ* (Basel, 1581) by Ya'akov ben Rabbi Yitzhak Luzzato.

The narrative collections in ancient Yiddish originate in manuscripts such as MS London, the British Library, Add. 18695 (Mestre, Italy, 1504), written by Menaḥem Oldendorf; MS Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Héb. 589 (Northern Italy, 1579), written by Anshel Levi; MS Munich No. 100, copied by Isaac Reutlingen and containing twenty-two stories; and especially MS Munich Cod. Hebr. 495, with 117 stories (Northern Italy, late sixteenth century) and MS Jerusalem, National Library Heb. 8° 5245 (Innsbruck 1596), which was written by Samuel ben Zelikman Bak and contains 109 stories.

The development of these narrative collections of stories into the first collection in print (Basle, 1602) was studied starting early in the twentieth century by the scholars of Yiddish literature and its folklore: Max Erik and Jacob I. Maitlis, Chone Shmeruk, and, finally and most importantly, Sara Zfatman, who mapped this development beginning with the manuscripts and up to the late editions of the book. Also, Erika Timm offered the first seminal description of the Innsbruck's manuscript within the context of both the genre of the *mayse* in Ashkenazi culture and the Latin and Italian tradition of the exemplum and the novella, with a full correspondence with the *mayses* kept in this manuscript and those included in the Basel printed edition.

There are early and late printed editions of the *Mayse Bukh,* both in the original language and in translation. The first edition, printed in Basle (1602), was followed by others: Prague (1665); Wilhelmsdorf (1674); Frankfurt on the Oder (1677–1700); Amsterdam (1701); Frankfurt (1703); Frankfurt on the Oder (1709); Dyhernfurth (1709); Berlin (1709); Amsterdam (1723); Hamburg (1727); Rödelheim (1753); and Nuremberg (1763).

A digest of the stories, published in two volumes, was produced by Moses Gaster in his *Ma'aseh Book* (Philadelphia, 1923). A digest in Germany of the *Mayse Bukh* tales was produced by Bertha Pappenheim in her *Allerlei Geschichten Maasse-Buch* (Frankfurt, 1929), the title of which is borrowed from the Amsterdam edition (1723).

The various editions of the *Mayse Bukh* differ in their range of stories. The changes resulting from incorporating new stories and excluding others were mapped

in detailed charts by Sara Zfatman, Yoav Elstein, and Ariela Krasny.

The *Mayse Bukh* left its imprint on the development of the Jewish story first in Yiddish, in the literature preceding and following World War I, and in modern Hebrew literature, where it exerted a strong influence on writers such as S.Y. Agnon.

Avidov Lipsker

See also: Anthologies.

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"MA'ASEH YERUSHALMI," THE STORY OF THE JERUSALEMITE

"The Story of the Jerusalemite" is a medieval story (according to the versions of the story known to modern scholars) that brings together the folk motif of the marriage of a man to a female demon with the exemplary element of the punishment of those who break an oath. The relationship between these two elements varies among the many versions of the story, and so, too, does its genre characterization, which on occasion tends to be classified as a legend and, at other times, a folktale.

The basic plot concerns the tribulations of the son of a wealthy merchant who breaks his oath to his dying father that he would not travel on a boat, the hardships that lead him to his marriage to a demoness, and finally his death at her hands. The dramatic turns in the plot are indicated by the repeated violations of the hero's obligations, the high point being the violation of his oath to the king of the demons, who had granted him his patronage, and then to his daughter, whom the king had given to him in marriage. Each of these instances drives the protagonist further and deeper into the world of the demons. At the end of the story, the hero, who wishes to free himself from the demonic reality, obtains permission from his demon wife to visit his human wife and son, whom he had left in the human realm upon sailing. When he refuses to abide by his promise to return, she goes to his town in order to compel him to do so. At this point, the versions of the story diverge. In some, the hero generally succeeds in releasing himself from the demoness and permanently returning to human reality (sometimes at the cost of the death of his human wife at the hands of the demon one); in others, the demoness is compelled to accept a bill of divorce from him but then she kills him with a farewell kiss. Many versions of the story conclude with a motif in which the demon leaves their child, the fruit of coupling between humans and demons, in the father's community, with the demand that he be brought up in it and even that he rule over it.

In some versions, the motif of the violation of the oath is left aside and the son of the merchant is portrayed as an unfortunate victim of a chain of events, on account of which he is trapped in the world of demons and in the marriage with the daughter of their king. His attempt, as the hero of a magical folktale, to slyly escape from the demonic grasp and return to his natural world appears morally appropriate. In one variation, he even gains his freedom through recitation of the Shema. However, in most versions, the exemplary element is crucial and the motif of breaking the oath is prominent. In this case there is no salvation for the protagonist, and his death, from a kiss of death by the demoness who claims him, is perceived as justified.

Although the story was among the most popular medieval Jewish stories (and it also has a distant Christian medieval parallel), its history and origin remain uncertain. Scholars disagree as to its date (between the tenth and thirteenth centuries), provenance (whether in the Middle Eastern communities or from the circle of Ashkenazi Ḥasidim), and whether it is basically a literary work or a folk composition. It is now known in many versions, some in manuscript form and others in printed editions (beginning with the Constantinople edition of 1516), and still others are oral versions. Widespread mainly in Hebrew, the story was also translated into other Jewish languages, and such translations are still known to exist.

The different versions vary in the degree to which they portray the demonic reality and the life of the chief protagonist. The more detailed versions paint a world of Jewish demons, studying the Torah and observing the divine commandments, with wives, rabbis, houses of study, and synagogues, and whose king (Ashmedai)

heads a large army. Their complex relationship with the man finds expression in their primal aspiration and their power to kill him, on the one hand, and in the high estimation with which their sages and king hold the value of his study of the Torah, the climax of which is the demon king's hope to have his daughter marry him, on the other. The expansion of cosmology in Jewish culture to the extent of including demons attains, therefore, a radical formulation in this story, which basically consists of correlated and symmetrical social, religious, and ethical systems in both the demonic and human worlds. The pinnacle is reached with the unification of the worlds through the creation of a family and the marital relations between the representatives of the two realms and with the birth of a demonic-human descendent. (Marital relations between humans and demons, along with humans' giving birth to demons, was a popular motif in medieval Jewish folklore; for its occurrences in international folklore cf. AT 424; Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature,* F302, T111.) Despite the substantial distance between these two realms, their unity and continuity as well as the protagonist's moves between them, underline the ease with which one can precariously slip from the human to the demonic. It is here that the exemplary power of "The Story of the Jerusalemite" is located.

Yuval Harari

See also: Asmodeus; Demon.

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MAGIC

Magic has deep roots in Jewish cosmology, which reserves a place of honor for supernatural forces, especially those associated with language, the Torah, the names of God, and His agents. In folklore studies, the term "magic" is identified with the inexplicable and the supernatural. It involves concrete attempts to employ rituals and spells in order to modify reality as well as elements of wonder in fantastic tales. Following a chronological progression, this survey draws on a broad spectrum of sources to move between these two spheres: texts and objects produced within Jewish magical culture and narrative, historical, and halakhic traditions.

Any study of Jewish magical culture, in both its imaginary and tangible aspects, comprises two groups of sources: "insider" ones, which are part of the culture of practical magic, and "outsider" ones, which are not magical per se but refer to magic. Both types are important for illuminating the role of magic in Jewish culture. The "insider" sources, which are largely performative in nature, attest to the existence and reveal the nature of a long-standing and unbroken Jewish magical culture from the First Temple period until the present and illuminate its contours. They can be divided into three categories: (1) Magical objects: These are amulets, incantation bowls, adjuration skulls, magical gems and pendants, and various objects and artifacts that became charms by virtue of a spell or blessing. What is important about these objects, of which thousands are known, is that they are evidence of concrete magical practices. They also teach us about spells (and through them about the essentials of magical cosmology), the goals of the practices, and something about their material aspects. (2) Magical recipes: Thousands of prescriptions survive for magical rites, recorded from antiquity to the present. The professional literature of magic, in which they were written, copied, revised, and repeatedly updated, is a broad and well-documented genre. The importance of these prescriptions is evident in the extremely broad spectrum of objectives to which they are applied and in the linguistic, material, and ritual means that the magical literature offers professional as well as occasional users. (3) Magical treatises: The relatively few works of this sort are, at base, collections of recipes. Their particular importance for the contemporary scholar lies in the theoretical framework that informs the recipes and reflects a comprehensive worldview in which magic is a rational practice and by no means absurd.

The "outsider" sources, which were not produced as part of Jewish magical activity, provide two types of in-

formation. On the one hand, they greatly expand scholars' knowledge of Jews' fantasies about magic and increase their understanding of where magic fits into the Jewish cosmology. On the other hand, these sources locate magic, especially the denunciation of magic, within the broad web of power struggles waged by various elites (priests, talmudic sages, rabbis, secular rationalists) against alternative agents of power. In these struggles, labels that establish a binary distinction, between the permitted and the forbidden, between religion and magic, between miracles and witchcraft, between saint and sorcerer, between truth and worthless fiction, were often employed to draw a sharp line between "us" and "them." The campaign against magic and its agents was presented as essentially a matter of ideology and, consequently, as the war of the rabbis or the rationalists, defending the true foundations of Judaism, against the ignorance and deviance of backward classes (which the research literature generally identifies with "the people"). This campaign, however, was not immune to political considerations.

During the biblical period, ritual power was practiced by the prophets as well as by foreign practitioners ("magicians"). In later periods, it was employed by the members of the rabbinic elite itself as well as by educated professionals who were proficient in broad sectors of ritual, halakhic, and esoteric Jewish knowledge.

The Biblical Period

The only magical objects that have survived from the biblical period are two amulets, which date from the late seventh or early sixth century B.C.E. (that is, the First Temple period). They were unearthed in a burial hoard found on the slope of the Hinnom Valley in Jerusalem. The two amulets are made of thin strips of silver leaf, which were rolled up after an incantation was engraved on them. In both cases, the incantation includes the Priestly Benediction (Num. 6:24–26), which served as an apotropaic text in biblical ritual as well. The biblical and priestly use of this text did not necessarily predate its magical use. Scholars have proposed the contrary sequence, namely, that the Bible borrowed the formula from its popular apotropaic use and converted it into a canonical blessing.

Everything else historians know about magic in the biblical age comes from the Bible itself. The Bible consistently and vigorously rejects magic and its agents (Deut. 18: 9–11) and pronounces a severe sanction against them: "You shall not let a sorceress live" (Exod. 22:17 [RSV v. 18]). It presents magic as a paradigmatic sin, which it sometimes associates with fornication and adultery (e.g., 2 Kgs. 9:22; Isa. 47:9, 12; Nah. 3:4; Mal. 3:5) and ascribes it to the "other" priests, Egyptians (Exod. 7:11ff.), or Persians (Dan. 2:2). In any case, their power, like that of Balaam, who was hired by the Moabite Balak, the son of

Zippor, to curse the Israelites (Num. 22–24), is always inferior to that of God and His earthly representatives. However, at the same time, the Bible itself prescribes an unmistakable magical ritual: the ordeal of the woman suspected of adultery, carried out in the tabernacle by the priests (Num. 5:11–31). The priest wrote a curse on a scroll, which he then dissolved, along with dirt from the floor of the sanctuary, in holy water contained in an earthen vessel. The woman drank the water; if she was guilty of adultery, she succumbed to its effects immediately. In this case, the clearly magical element of testing the woman by means of a curse introduced into her body is combined with normative ritual elements: the priest, the tabernacle, the altar, a meal offering, holy water, and God, Who is depicted as testing the woman. The Bible apparently alludes to another ordeal conducted by Moses in order to determine who among the people were implicated in the sin of the golden calf (Exod. 32:19–20). This passage, however, lacks details concerning the ritual elements of the trial, and no verbal formula is employed in this case.

Two main elements of the Jewish magical culture are touched on in the Bible: the campaign against evil spirits and the use of the divine name (both were developed extensively in later sources). The Bible has very little to say about demonology. Evil spirits appear infrequently (Judg. 9:23; 1 Sam. 16:14, 23; 1 Kgs. 22:19–22); other demons, such as Reshef, Ketev, and Dever, are mentioned almost in passing (Deut. 32:24; Psalm 91). Satan (the "adversary" or "accuser"), too, plays only a bit part (Zech. 3:1; Job 1–2; 1 Chr. 21:1). In only one instance do we hear of a human attempt to repel these baneful entities—David's playing the lyre to soothe Saul. This is the only place where the Bible mentions an actual practice intended to exorcise an evil spirit (sent by God to torment Saul). Invocation of the divine name is likewise mentioned infrequently. Proclaiming God's name as a means of expressing fealty to Him is frequent, but its use as a blessing (Deut. 21:5; 2 Sam. 6:18; Ps. 129:8), a means of healing (2 Kgs. 5:11), a curse (2 Kgs. 2:24), or an oath (1 Kgs. 22:16) is rare. Taken together, however, these passages indicate that the infrastructure for such uses, which became very common in the later magical literature, already existed in Israel during the biblical age.

Many narrative traditions tell of biblical heroes' recourse to supernatural forces. The most conspicuous of these wonderworkers are Moses and Aaron, Elijah, and Elisha. They are not referred to as magicians, of course, and the marvels they work are represented as miracles rather than as magic. Nevertheless, if one penetrates the veil of the biblical redaction of the stories, one gains a strong sense of the magical traditions that underlie them. Even though the Bible distinguishes between the "spells" performed by the Egyptian sorcerers and "the finger of God" that is active on the side of Moses and Aaron (so

that they are not implicated in magical arts), the story of their duel in Pharaoh's court has clear overtones of a combat among magicians, which some folklorists believe was almost certainly its nature before it was recast as the biblical version. In antiquity Egypt was known as the cradle of magic and its priests were accounted powerful wizards. There is little doubt that the story of Moses's victory in the magicians' "home court" was originally a popular account that highlighted the great power of the national hero who liberated the people from bondage. The biblical versions strongly downplay the element of practical magic in Moses's supernatural deeds. What remains is the wonder itself and the object used to perform it—his rod. Moses uses it to smite Egypt (Exod. 7–11), to extract water from a rock (Num. 20:7–11), to split the sea so that the people of Israel can cross and to make the water come back upon the Egyptians (Exod. 14:15–28), and even to affect the outcome of the battle between the Israelites and Amalekites at Rephidim (Exod. 17:8–13). The motif of the miraculous rod is also found in legends about Aaron. The rod that Aaron casts to the ground in Pharaoh's court turns into a serpent and swallows up the staff-serpents of the Egyptian magicians (Exod. 7:10–12). During the Israelites' wandering in the wilderness, it blossoms miraculously to signal God's choice of Aaron and his sons to serve Him (Num. 17:16–24). A third staff associated with Moses in the Exodus cycle is the one atop which he mounted a brazen serpent; looking at it healed those who had been bitten by a serpent (Num. 21:8–9).

But Moses's powers did not depend on the rod, for he effected miracles even without it: He afflicted the Egyptians with boils by casting soot into the air (Exod. 9:8–10) and sweetened the waters of Mara by casting a tree into them (Exod. 15:23–25). In two cases Moses conveys ritual knowledge that saves the people from mass death. In Egypt he teaches the Israelites to protect themselves against the destroying angel by using a bunch of hyssop to smear blood on the doorposts and lintels of their houses (Exod. 12). In the wilderness he instructs Aaron how to use incense to halt the plague that the Lord sent against the people (Num. 17:9–13). In the last case, the brothers employ the power of ritual to counteract a decree by God himself. In the other cases, they are acting in accordance with a directive by God, Who works the miracle. This strips the ritual element of its performative meaning, leaving only a gesture whose role is to provide a human sign of the divine intervention in the physical world. In this way, the biblical rejection of magic is expressed in the very editing of popular Israelite legends throughout the process of their incorporation into the canon.

This tendency can also be found in the hagiographical legends about Elijah and Elisha. The wonders they perform, which, in the biblical telling, are frequently associated with or highlight a request for divine intervention, are examples of wondrous deeds performed by wandering agents of ritual power. By means of words, ritual gestures, and various items and materials (a robe, salt, flour, a piece of wood), the two—master and student—were capable of instigating and ending a drought, causing water to flow in a dry streambed, turning a small amount of food into an unending feast, covering vast distances in almost no time, crossing a river on dry land, making the water of a spring potable and spoiled food edible, causing iron to float, summoning wild animals to harm others, infecting a person with leprosy, blinding enemies, helping barren women conceive, reviving the dead, and more (1 Kgs. 17 to 2 Kgs. 13). Elisha, who inherited his teacher Elijah's powers and wonder-working mantle, surpassed him in the scale of his miracles and even performed one posthumously (2 Kgs. 13:21). For later generations, Elijah, who ascended to heaven in a whirlwind, borne by a chariot and horses of fire, was a legendary hero, a miracle worker who moves back and forth between the upper and lower worlds, revealing secrets to human beings, rebuking them, and, especially, guarding and protecting the people.

The Second Temple Period

Literature of the Second Temple era (third century B.C.E. to first century C.E.) provides some information about magical beliefs and customs among the Jews of those centuries. Much of it relates to protection against demons and spirits—the demonology of the Second Temple period is much more developed than that of the Bible. The best-known magical artifacts from the period are several fragmentary antidemonic texts from Qumran and the knotted shirt from the Cave of Letters (in the Judean desert). The Qumran fragments indicate an intensive clash with demons, fought by means of spells and adjurations (4Q560, 4Q510–511, 11Q11, 8Q5). The child-size linen shirt, with small tied-up pockets containing minerals and seeds, evidently attests to an apotropaic practice based on these items. These pockets may be the "bindings" or "knots" in which boys may go out into the public domain on the Sabbath, mentioned in the Mishnah (*Shabbat* 6:9) or those mentioned later in the Babylonian Talmud by Abbaye's foster mother as means for protection and cure (*b. Shabbat* 66b).

These "insider" sources are supplemented by several narrative and historical testimonies. Here one must distinguish between traditions of a mythic character and those based on daily life. In the former category, the apocryphal Book of 1 Enoch is of special importance. In it, magic is said to be derived from the lore brought down to earth by angels, which they transmitted to the women with whom they coupled (1 En. 7). The Book of Jubilees, which also tells the myth of the angels, traces the source of demons to spirits that came out of the bodies

of the Nephilim, the offspring of the angels and human women, after they killed one another. Noah was given antidemonic medical treatises of heavenly origin after he entreated God to protect his sons against the demons (Jub. 10:1–14). This is the first known mention of antidemonic magical literature. The earliest discussion of practices of exorcism is found in the Book of Tobit. The angel who accompanies Tobias on his journey to Rages tells him that when he enters the bridal chamber with Sarah, he must burn the heart and liver of the fish that he caught, in order to expel the demon. The trick works, and the demon, who slew Sarah's seven previous grooms before they could consummate the marriage, flees to the remotest corner of Egypt, where an angel chains and imprisons him (Tob. 6–8).

Josephus recounts that he saw a certain Eleazar exorcise an evil spirit in the presence of Vespasian, his sons and generals, and many of his soldiers. This scene, in which Eleazar placed a ring that contained "a root of one of those sorts mentioned by Solomon" under the madman's nostrils and ordered the spirit to overturn a basin of water to prove that it had exited the man's body (*Ant.* 8.45), is almost certainly based on public exorcisms that Josephus had heard about or perhaps had even witnessed. This story is supplemented by the tradition about the miraculous *baaras* root, which Josephus quotes elsewhere (*J.W.* 7.6.3). He reports that this root gives off light and shrinks away from those who try to pull it out of the ground. To touch it means certain death, unless one employs special precautions, but all desire it because of its ability to exorcise demons. It is possible that it was among the roots from which "root amulet" were made (see below). Josephus traced Eleazar's powers to incantations composed by Solomon to alleviate illness and cast out evil spirits. This is early evidence of the tradition that Solomon ruled over the demons. More developed versions of this tradition are found in the Testament of Solomon, a demonological work whose Jewish origins can be seen beneath the Christian redaction in which it survives, in the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Gittin* 68) and in later Jewish, Christian, and Muslim narratives.

The laying on of hands is also mentioned as an effective means of exorcising spirits. The Genesis Apocryphon relates that Abraham employed this method when he was summoned to Pharaoh's court to expel the evil spirit that had struck the king and his household as punishment for his seizure of Sarah (1QapGen 20:16–29. Cf. Gen. 12:10–20).

We hear very little about magic outside the context of demonology. Book 2 of Maccabees alludes to defensive magic—the idol-amulets that the Jewish warriors wore on their bodies when they went into battle (2 Macc. 12:39–42). Josephus mentions offensive magic in his account of the intrigues at Herod's court, where women in general and the ladies of the court in particular were accused of compounding drugs (*pharmaka*) to serve as love potions or poison (e.g., *Ant.* 15.223–231; *J.W.* 1.29.2, 1.30.1). The interweaving by a (male) historian of women, intrigues, and sorcery goes very well with the mythic image, noted above, of women as the transmitters of baneful heavenly magical lore to earth.

The many miracles attributed to Jesus in the Gospels provide additional evidence of how Jewish society of late antiquity conceived of wonders. The traditions about Jesus's expelling evil spirits and healing the sick, feeding the masses with a small amount of food and turning water into wine, stilling a tempest and walking on water, restoring the sight of the blind and resurrecting the dead are used to support Jesus's religious and spiritual message (in its Pauline version), but their foundations lie in a Jewish society that believes in miracles and considers them proof of holiness. The scribes' allegation that Jesus is employing the powers of Be'elzebul (Mark 3:22) points to the political underpinnings of the charge of sorcery—labeling the miraculous power of the "other" as illegitimate. Recipes in Greek magical papyri of the first half of the first millennium C.E. indicate the place of the miraculous-magical traditions about Jesus in the cross-cultural magical lore of the eastern Mediterranean basin in late antiquity.

The First Millennium C.E.: The Age of the Mishnah, the Talmud, and the Geonim

Diverse magical sources from the first millennium C.E. include a broad range of magical objects, produced for their clients by professional adjuration writers, as well as the texts on which these professionals drew. The rabbinic corpus, too, provides indications of the nature of contemporary Jewish magic, its role in Jewish culture, and the use that the sages made of the theme of magic in the *beit ha'midrash* (House of Study) discourse. Karaite and Rabbanite writings of the ninth and tenth centuries reflect mainly the rejection of magic—rabbinic magic, which the Karaites censured, and popular magic, which the Rabbanites condemned. They also provide supplementary evidence of what Jewish society thought about magic.

The Jews of that era believed in the power of various objects to protect them, cure disease, and improve their success in a number of areas, both for profit and for mischief making. The potency of these objects came from the spell written in them. To benefit from its properties, Jews (like their non-Jewish neighbors) commissioned writers of charms and spells to make amulets, incantation bowls, and other performative artifacts. The inventory of surviving objects, some of them discovered in proper excavations and accurately dated, depends, of

course, on the durability of the material of which they are made. This means that it is limited to objects of metal, ceramics, precious stones, and bone. According to the Tosefta, there were also talismans made of roots (*t. Shabbat* 4:9). It is possible that the small metal cases with attached loops through which a thread could be inserted, found in Israel and Transjordan and containing some unidentified substance, were talismans of this type. In metal amulets, texts were engraved on thin strips of bronze, silver, and gold, which were rolled into a tight cylinder and sometimes placed inside a metal case. Some of them, unearthed in scientific excavations, were found in synagogues, sometimes at the location of the ark. This may reflect the notion of the synagogue as a sacred place and of the ark as the holy of holies, the point of contact between this world and the other, through which both public and private petitions rise to heaven.

The writing of amulets was part of a broader ceremonial process, which is outlined in the professional recipe literature; for example, love amulets were inscribed on soft pottery and thrown into the fire to complete the sympathetic process described in the spell: As the shard burns, so shall the heart of the one charmed by it burn after the one for whom it was made. Instructions for making amulets include detailed rituals of purification and writing to guarantee that they work properly. There were diverse ways to use amulets. The recipes suggest burying them (e.g., in the house or by the side of the road in order to influence someone who lives or passes there or between the roots of a tree to kill pests), casting them into the sea (to calm its waves), throwing them into a river (to increase a fisherman's catch) or a fire (to arouse love), hurling them at enemies (to frighten them away or make oneself invisible to them), or hanging them on the wall of one's shop or home, chair, or bed (for success or protection). But most amulets, especially those intended for healing and protection, were worn on one's person or, in special cases (such as easing childbirth), placed on or under the body.

The sages, too, recognized the power of amulets. Hence they ruled that an amulet that has been proven— meaning one that has healed three times or whose author has done so—may be carried on the Sabbath (*t. Shabbat* 4:9; *b. Shabbat* 61). Their debates on this topic indicate the widespread use of amulets to cure animals, as well as the medicinal use of grasshopper eggs, the teeth of foxes, and nails from a crucifix as a cure (*m. Shabbat* 6:10 and parallels), and of a "preserving stone" to prevent miscarriages (*t. Shabbat* 4:12; *b. Shabbat* 66b).

Magical gemstones were widespread in the Greco-Roman world in the first half of the first millennium; judging by the magical materials available; however, they do not seem to have gained popularity among Jews.

The situation with regard to magic bowls is quite different. This antidemonic practice was common among all groups in Mesopotamia during the fifth to seventh centuries C.E.; Jews were among the most prominent writers and users thereof. The recourse to such bowls was rooted in a cosmology that saw failure, disaster, sickness, and death as the work of demons. Jews in Babylonia went to great lengths to protect themselves against these evil spirits, which acted on their own or were compelled by magical means to wreak harm on people. Although the Babylonian Talmud quotes a number of incantations to be recited against demons in general and against certain demons in particular (*b. Shabbat* 67a), it never mentions magical bowls. More than 1,000 Jewish incantation bowls are extant today. Made of simple and undecorated pottery, they derived their performative power from the text that was written on them in ink, in a spiral moving from the center toward the rim. The circle, which closes and bounds, separates and binds, is seen in the shape of the vessel, in the inscribed text, and in the circles frequently drawn on the bowl's inside and rim, where they often frame images of demons—men and women, birds and monsters, often bound in chains. This is indeed the bowls' purpose, as the spell, too, makes plain: binding, overcoming, and chasing away demons. The adjurations on the bowls reflect a combination of a well-developed demonology with a deep knowledge of Jewish lore: the Bible, the Mishnah, the liturgy, and mystical traditions. The frequent references to Rabbi Hanina ben Dosa and Rabbi Joshua ben Perahiah are evidence that magical traditions about the sages circulated outside the House of Study. The five skulls on which adjurations were written in Aramaic indicate that Jewish charm makers had no qualms about making use of the dead when necessary.

The magical artifacts are evidence of the actual practice by the Jews of both Palestine and Mesopotamia of magical rituals based on adjurations. The two largest books of recipes from the first millennium, *Sefer ha'Razim* (The Book of Mysteries) and *Harba de'Moshe* (The Sword of Moses), greatly expand scholars' knowledge of Jewish magical culture. The former anchors magic in a cosmology known also from the apocryphal literature as well as from the early mystical writings—the *Hekhalot* (palaces) and *Merkavah* (chariot) literature. It enumerates seven heavens, each divided into several levels (except for the seventh, which is the place of God), with camps of angels headed by their own officers. Each camp is appointed over a particular realm—healing, injury, love, success, knowledge, and so on—and can be enlisted to achieve diverse aims within its province by means of the rituals and adjurations presented in the book. *Harba de'Moshe* describes a heavenly hierarchy of thirteen archangels who command the angelic hosts. In accordance with an explicit request by God that they honor the divine name by which they are adjured, human beings can control the angels through the use of the sword of the divine names brought by Moses from Mount Sinai. At the conclusion

of a long and arduous ceremony of purification, prayer, and adjuration, they can employ the names enumerated in this treatise to work the many spells—for health, love, social and economic success, harm to others, protection, and so on—described in detail at its end.

The magical recipes for healing, protection, and warding off demons presented by the talmudic literature fit the evidence of the magical texts. There is no doubt that the sages believed that human beings could compel the universe to act contrary to the laws of nature. As was their wont, however, they meticulously distinguished, classified, and qualified. The official halakhic stance on magic is an absolute prohibition; its practitioners are to be stoned (*m. Sanhedrin* 7:4). Beyond this, however, the sages' discourse about magic is diverse and polyphonic and provides information both about the lineaments of the magical culture and on their own use of magical traditions for didactic as well as political ends. Some of their dicta deny that human beings have the ability to create living creatures (*Avot de'Rabbi Nathan* A12); but other traditions recount that a certain rabbi actually created an anthropoid (golem), and for others a calf was created during their study of secret knowledge (*b. Sanhedrin* 65b). They reject customs such as tying a pendulum to the thigh or a red thread around the finger, throwing a piece of iron into a cemetery, or spilling water in the public domain and pronouncing *ḥd'* or saying *dgn krdn* or *dny dnw;* all of these are categorized as "Ways of the Amorites," that is, heathen worship (*t. Shabbat* 6–7). But they pragmatically accept "whatever is proved to be of cure" (*b. Shabbat* 67a) and Judaize certain practices of sympathetic magic by giving them normative explanations (*b. Ḥullin* 72b–73a).

There is mockery in stories about the magical powers of gentiles, along with accounts of the sages' combat with them and defeat of their charms (*y. Sanhedrin* 7:11). There are many traditions about women who practice magic and narratives of the sages' power to defeat them (e.g., *Mekhilta de'Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai* 22:17; *y. Ḥagigah* 2:2; *y. Sanhedrin* 7:11; *b. Pesaḥim* 110a–111a; *b. Sanhedrin* 67b). There is abundant information about the origin of the demons, the dangers that they pose, the places that they frequent, and rituals to protect oneself against them, as well as stories of the sages' overcoming them (e.g., *m. Avot* 5:6; *Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* 18; *b. Eruvin* 18b; *b. Shabbat* 77a; *b. Pesaḥim* 111b–113a; *b. Ḥullin* 105b; *b. Qiddushin* 29b). There are expressions of a belief in the power of curses (*b. Berakhot* 56a; *b. Bava Qamma* 93a; *b. Mo'ed Qatan* 17) and of the evil eye (*Gen. Rab.* 56:11; *b. Pesaḥim* 26a; *b. Bava Metzi'a* 107b; *y. Sanhedrin* 1:2; *b. Berakhot* 55b). There is also a profound recognition of the power of the Divine Name to act in the world and of the danger latent in its irresponsible use (*Avot de'Rabbi Nathan* A 12; *y. Yoma* 3:8; *Exod. Rab.* 1:29; *Eccl. Rab.* 3:11). In all of these, as well as many other matters, the sages' discussions of magic enrich

our knowledge of Jewish magical culture and of the rabbinical establishment's attitude toward it.

Both types of information can also be extracted from later texts. In the late first millennium, the leaders of the Karaites accused the Rabbanites of employing magic through loathsome sacrificial rites, amulets, and pure and impure names to inspire love and hate, gather demons, heal illness, walk on fire, calm the sea, darken the sun and keep the moon from becoming smaller, shorten journeys, and so on. In their polemics they refer by name to several books of magic, later copies of which turned up in the Cairo Geniza. At the end of the millennium, the rabbis of Kairouan (in present-day Tunisia) asked the halakhic authority Rabbi Hai Gaon for his opinion of similar matters, such as the case of a man who employs certain practices of writing to conceal himself from robbers or beat them away, to calm a storm at sea, or to kill someone. These rabbis also refer to the books of magic that were evidently circulating at the time in the Mediterranean basin. The Gaon's answer was twofold, combining derision and approval: All these things are possible, he wrote, but can be accomplished only by the totally righteous and are no longer feasible in our own generation. Thus magic, which is, of course, not referred to by that name, is not totally barred from the Jewish milieu but is deflected out of the time, the cultural space, or the normative borders of contemporary society.

The situation is totally different in the *Hekhalot* and *Merkavah* literature. Both the learning and the use of adjurations and holy names are essential elements of these writings of early Jewish mysticism. In these texts, visionary aspects are interwoven with magical aspects into an amalgam that can no longer be broken down into its components: seals and holy names serve the mystic in his way up toward the Throne of Glory and his vision of God; at the same time, the visionary experience is woven into these texts in other contexts involving the use of adjurations, chiefly in order to master esoteric lore and study the Torah.

The Middle Ages and Early Modern Era (Eleventh to Seventeenth Centuries)

Magical documents from the Cairo Geniza (storage of writings), dating mainly from the eleventh through the thirteenth century, bear witness to the continuity between the Jews of the Muslim world and the magical ideas and practices of earlier times. The influence of their Arab environment, which provided them with new practical knowledge and theoretical terminology, is evident, however. The Geniza documents include a few thousand fragments relevant to magic, among them many passages from magical treatises and books of reci-

pes and dozens of amulets. Like those of earlier centuries, these amulets were used mainly for healing, protection, love, knowledge, and success; but amulets on parchment, paper, and cloth that were deposited in the Geniza from this period survive. The performative aspect of the amulets remained the same, with adjurations based on holy names, letters, and signs. Addressed to heaven, they aimed to gain control over angels, names, letters, stars, and constellations, and sometimes demons, to enlist them in the service of the person employing the charm and compel them to act on his behalf, effectively and swiftly. Textual parallels among the amulets and recipes from the Geniza make it possible to study the link between theoretical knowledge and its application, conventional formats, and the creative freedom available to the authors of such charms. The great advantage of the Geniza is the extremely broad diversity of the recipes and magical works found there, which allow scholars to trace the continuity and changes in Jewish magical culture over the generations; some of them are copies of earlier texts.

The Geniza provides a broad and sometimes highly systematic literature that makes magical use of both canonical and noncanonical materials. The treatise *Shimmush Tehilim* (Use of Psalms), for example, turns the various chapters of Psalms into charms, with recommendations for their use in diverse rituals to achieve specified purposes (protection, love, harming others, escaping prison, finding a thief, healing animals, sobering up, etc.). Similarly, the treatise *Shimmush 18 berakhot* (Use of the Eighteen Benedictions) turns the blessings of the "Amidah" prayer (in the Eretz Israel rite) into incantations, which it incorporates into charms that are to be recited eighteen times in various rituals, each in pursuit of a goal appropriate to its content. The biblical trial of the woman suspected of adultery (Num. 5:11–31) finds a magical counterpart in a treatise titled *Inyan Sotah* (Case of the Adulteress). Pure and impure names are listed systematically, along with magical practices and illusions according to "four elements." Works referred to only by their titles elsewhere are actually quoted here. Works of astral magic develop the practical aspects of the link between stars and angels, astrology and magic. The hundreds of charms and materials (e.g., minerals, metals, rocks, seeds, leaves, oils, bones, internal organs, meat, animal heads, skin, blood, hair, sweat, sperm) and many rituals that appear in the magic documents from the Geniza create an extensive system of theory and practice, of texts and symbolic gestures whose purpose is to compel the world to act in the service of human beings through sympathetic means (i.e., according to the "laws" of similarity and contagion). As in earlier works, the range of practices offered by this professional literature is much broader than what can be found in amulets. Nevertheless, there is almost no trace of sheer fantasy. In an overwhelming majority of cases,

the magical literature reflects logical and pragmatic thinking and offers metaphysical assistance to help human beings achieve what they might be able to achieve even without magic.

If the Geniza reflects the continuity of ancient Jewish magic in Palestine and adjacent regions (and a local Muslim influence), Ashkenazi practice represents a mixture of Babylonian and Palestinian traditions (along with a local Christian influence). Of particular importance here is the literary evidence of the migration of traditions from the East to the West, such as the work known as the *Alphabet of Ben Sira,* which originated in the Babylonian and Persian cultural sphere and circulated in later recensions in medieval Europe. It notably includes the myth of Lilith, according to which this archdemon took an oath not to cause injury wherever the names of the angels who captured her are mentioned. The narrative, which relates to fragmentary ideas about Lilith in the rabbinic literature, has clear parallels in ancient historiolae (brief stories incorporated into charms) from both Palestine (amulet) and Babylonia (magic bowls). The archaeological and literary findings are thus complementary and produce a comprehensive picture in which demonological beliefs and magical practices illuminate each other. Another important example of the links between East and West is the text known as the *Scroll of Aḥima'atz* (Italy, eleventh century). This family genealogy is full of legends of wonder and magic that recount the subjugation of wild beasts, magical shortcuts, knowledge of the arcane, resurrection of the dead, preventing the decomposition of a corpse, propelling a ship and halting it on the high seas, and more. This is a literary reflection of the milieu in which medieval Jews (and their neighbors) employed charms and holy names, a milieu that is documented in professional writings from the other side of the Mediterranean. But whereas the Geniza documents reflect a rich magical culture that employs diverse rituals, the heroes of the *Scroll of Aḥima'atz* work their wonders almost exclusively through words, by invoking divine names. As might be expected from an "outsider" source, Ahima'az also echoes the fear of the magical powers of the "other"—in this case, the harmful and sometimes predatory witchcraft of women.

Most of these elements of Jewish magical culture, as well as its reflection in nonmagical literature, are found in medieval texts from the Rhineland and northern France. Here, though, the picture is somewhat different. First, there is no physical evidence of practical magical activity, because no amulets or other magical artifacts from this period have survived. Consequently, what scholars know about the magical culture of those centuries is based chiefly on recipes and magical treatises in manuscript, frequently in combination with mystical traditions from the *Hekhalot* and *Merkavah* literature. In these works, the relative poverty of the ritual in which the charm

is embedded (time and place of performance, material elements, ritual gestures), compared with what scholars know from older works, stands out. Performance practices are reduced chiefly to the use of names and incantations. Mystical and magical speculations in Ashkenazi manuscripts, produced by circles that were interested in names and their theoretical and practical significance and that are associated with the arcana of prayer and arcana of benedictions, with success in one's studies and a good memory, are based almost exclusively on the use of names and adjurations. This phenomenon is even more marked in the narrative and magical traditions that are not associated with performance.

Medieval Jewish literature is full of the marvelous and supernatural. It features monsters, demons, corpses, and witches, which are active in a dimension that exists alongside human beings and influences their destiny. Magic is the most important means that human beings can employ to deal with these creatures and avert the threat that they pose. Sometimes, as in demonological tales and exempla about the dead, the element of performative magic is marginal. Sometimes, though, it is the key to the story, as in accounts of battles against "others"—most often, representatives of the hegemonic Christian establishment—and in legends of Jewish saints. This genre flourished in Jewish folklore, with no thought given to the heroes' real-life opinion of magic. Hence Maimonides is one of the outstanding wielders of divine names, for his own sake and on behalf of his people, as are Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes (known as Rashi), Moshe ben Nachman (called Nachmanides), Abraham Ibn Ezra, Judah the Pious and his father Samuel, Menahem Recanati, Isaac (Yitzhak) Luria (known as Ha'Ari), and many others. In the popular mind, all of them spoke, wrote, engraved, carried, or hurled divine names consisting of four, twenty-two, forty-two, or seventy-two letters. These powerful names of God were employed by them to resurrect the dead, animate a golem, make buildings fly through the air, defeat enemies, exorcise ghosts and demons, make ships move with the speed of lightning, travel long distances in no time, render themselves invisible, and so on.

In the Middle Ages, a new esoteric doctrine emerged and took shape in Europe, the Kabbalah. It gradually became entrenched and expanded its influence over Jewish thought and practice. Embedded in the Kabbalah was a mythic demonology in which the Sitra Aḥra (the "other side" of the godhead) and the forces that serve it in the world replace the haphazard appearances of demons and spirits as the source of evil in the world. A broad demonological system, with Samael and Lilith at its head, was deemed to spread through the world, bringing enduring and almost independent evil to it. Correspondingly, the battle against evil took on a messianic aspect as an attempt to bring redemption to the Jewish people by eradicating

cosmic evil (the story of Yosef dela Reina). Alongside theoretical Kabbalah, practical Kabbalah also developed. Practical Kabbalah (as its name suggests) is the system of rituals and "intentions" (*kavanot*) anchored in theosophical Kabbalah, whose crux is exerting a theurgic influence on the godhead in order to repair it, on the one hand, and to draw the emanations and powers down into the world to amend and improve it, on both the national and individual planes, on the other. Although all manifestations of magic and the use of divine names came to be called practical Kabbalah, only a relatively limited branch of Jewish magical practice actually reflects the influence of kabbalistic ideas (such as references to the Sitra Aḥra or the *sefirot*—the ten "aspects" or "powers" of the godhead—as part of the baneful or beneficial cosmic forces). The bulk of the literature of charms and adjurations remains untouched by the new doctrine and continues and develops pre-Kabbalah magic. This literature was collected from diverse sources and copied passage by passage, sometimes word for word and sometimes with revisions, in both Europe and the Muslim world. Some of the manuscripts created in this fashion are merely compendia of magic, which offer a mix of folk remedies, charms, treatises on magic, exorcism, the use of psalms and prayers, and so on. Others were carefully edited to produce systematic lists that could serve as the basis for the books of charms and remedies that were widely composed, copied, printed, and circulated at the beginning of the modern age.

The Modern Era

The use of holy names was a widespread practice at the beginning of the modern era and remains so today. The books of charms and remedies (*segulot u'refu'ot*) composed and at times printed since the seventeenth century are written evidence of a living phenomenon among Jews in both Europe and the Muslim world. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries many *ba'alei shem* (Masters of the [Divine] Name) flourished in Europe (chiefly, Eastern Europe). Some of them were members of the rabbinical elite, rabbis, and heads of yeshivas for whom magical activity was only a sideline. Others were itinerant specialists who made the rounds of the towns and villages to help their residents by means of names and charms. Their practices were based on professional knowledge amassed from various sources, which they sometimes edited into systematic treatises. These volumes provide evidence of the extremely broad range of aspirations and goals entertained by the *ba'alei shem,* which strongly recall what scholars know from much older sources as well: healing, protection against fire, conception and pregnancy, easing childbirth, protecting infants, shortcuts, invisibility, protection against enemies or harming them, recovering stolen objects, freeing prisoners from jail, warding off the effects of sorcery and the evil eye,

exorcising demons and dybbuks (spirits that had taken control of a living person), and so on. Some of these men became the protagonists of legends that recount the marvels worked for them or that they effected for others. The most famous of them was, of course, Israel ben Eliezer, known as the Ba'al Shem Tov (or Besht), the founder of Hasidism. The professional activities of the Ba'al Shem Tov, who was widely known as a miracle worker, incorporated the use of charms, divine names, and adjurations along with standard medical practices, such as cupping and the application of leeches. The legends about him expand his powers beyond mere technical abilities and recount his wondrous capability of far-seeing, predicting the future, discovering the past (metempsychosis), hearing voices, and understanding the speech of birds and animals. He became famous for his victorious duels with demons, dybbuks, and even the angel of death. Special powers were attributed to his prayers. He employed all of these in his magical-miraculous activities, especially in his work as a healer.

Hasidic literature attributed similar marvelous abilities, although not on the scale of the Ba'al Shem Tov, to many of the rebbes who followed him. At the same time, experts in the use of divine names and amulets continued to be active in Europe and even in North America among non-Ḥasidim and among Jews in the Muslim world. There, too, many engaged in healing through words and rituals, frequently in close contact with the Muslim environment with regard to both the sources of their lore and their clientele. Several families, such as the Abuḥatseras, the Pintos, and the Ben Barukh Ha'Cohen family in Morocco, became known for the power of the *baraka* (heavenly grace and blessing) that was passed down among them from father to son and for the professional lore contained in their family manuscripts, which combined to produce extraordinary ritual performative power. Others, according to popular belief, acquired their knowledge and "efficacious hand" from their extreme piety and study of the exoteric and esoteric. In Morocco, Yemen, and Iraq, many of these holy men copied and composed manuscripts of practical Kabbalah, of which dozens survive. Many others (such as Rabbi Ya'akov Vazana) acquired their magical knowledge and powers from their Muslim neighbors and even, it was said, from demons. In North Africa, especially in Morocco, these pious men were known for working miracles even after death. Their tombs became annual pilgrimage sites for groups and individuals in quest of blessings and assistance.

This living magical activity, in both East and West, is documented in narrative traditions as well as in the diverse texts and objects produced by it, which provide evidence of its theoretical and professional underpinnings as well as of its wares, which were employed by the people. The professional aspect is reflected in dozens of manuscripts of charms and remedies composed in Europe, Iraq, Yemen, and North Africa by various *ba'alei shem* for practical use. These texts are in various languages—Hebrew, Aramaic, Yiddish, Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), Judeo-Arabic—depending on the local language of author or copyist. The influence of the Christian or Muslim environment is frequently evident in the terminology and sometimes also in the practices. In general they are arranged in a professional manner, divided into sections by topics and sometimes alphabetically by purpose; some of them even have indexes to make it easier for users to find what they need. Many such manuscripts contain treatises on casting lots—a diagnostic method employing various calculations based on the names of the client and his or her mother and on his or her birthdate. The result of the calculation is used to diagnose the real problem that underlies the patient's overt symptoms of disease or misfortune—sorcery, a demon, or the evil eye—and to treat it specifically. Some of these collections of charms have been printed, a few in multiple editions, and can be found in bookstores today. They have ornate title pages, rabbinical approbations, forewords, and sometimes indexes. In many cases, the authors incorporated narrative passages: memorates, fabulates, legends, and exempla concentrating on holy men and miracles, whose purpose is to corroborate and validate the magical knowledge they contain.

The consumer side of this activity is reflected in thousands of amulets from all over the Jewish Diaspora that are in private hands or public collections. Because of the durability of the material (and collectors' preferences), the vast majority of the amulets surviving from the past three centuries are made of metal. These amulets, especially those fashioned for protection and success, were meant to be worn as pendants; hence many have the form of or are incorporated into jewelry. Because of the amulets' small size, the texts are generally limited to holy names and to combinations of letters taken from biblical verses and standard spells. The amulets are ornamented with typical performative symbols such as the Star of David, a fish, an eye, and the seven-branched menorah; frequently they also incorporate purely decorative elements. Sometimes the piece of jewelry incorporates a container for a slip of parchment or paper, which was rolled up or folded and placed inside. These amulets come in diverse shapes. No single pattern seems to be dominant in Europe. In Muslim countries, by contrast, the outstretched hand pointing downward, the *ḥamsa*, is widespread and serves as a prophylactic device in its own right. The apotropaic use of the *ḥamsa* is common in the Muslim world; its use by Jews is a good example of a magical tradition borrowed from the non-Jewish environment, which is then adapted and Judaized.

The texts for amulets were written on paper or parchment and, as necessary, on other materials as well, such as wood, leather, cloth, bone, and leaves. Many

of these amulet texts survive in handwritten and in an ever-increasing number of printed versions (generic texts written in advance to be given to customers). Some are meant to be folded or rolled up and worn on the body. Others are hung on the walls of homes or businesses, to ensure protection and success. Those in the last category are relatively large and often have a striking design. Sometimes the design is just a matter of aesthetics, but in other cases it has a performative significance. An extremely common pattern in both Middle Eastern and European communities is the prophylactic talisman known as the *Shiviti-menorah.* It features a seven-branched candelabrum in the center, composed of the words of Psalm 67 along with the first half of Psalm 16:8, whose first word is *"shiviti":* "I am ever mindful of the Lord's presence." The wide and public distribution of such plaques in homes and synagogues in the modern era has generated many textual as well as visual variations of the artifact based on its two basic elements. Pictorial and textual elements have been added to the plaques in keeping with local traditions and the artists' fancy. The *Shiviti-menorah* plaque is a good example of the multiple existence of an object in which content, form, beliefs, and ritual are inseparably merged ("conglomerate") and that lies on the fine line between normative religion and folk custom. This is also the location of magical beliefs and customs associated with the intrinsic powers of Torah scrolls and their associated paraphernalia: the case, the finials and crown, the dedication plaques, and the ark curtain. All of these, as well as the cloths tied to the Torah scroll or left briefly in the ark, or water poured into the hollow finials, have been considered charms for wealth, success, and protection, activated by touching them, being in their presence, or simply by donating them to the synagogue.

These object-agents of holiness, with performative powers, were frequently employed in ceremonies to exorcise evil spirits and dybbuks. Belief in the dybbuk, a type of trance possession in which, according to popular belief, the ghost of a dead person that cannot find rest enters and takes over the body of a living person, can be traced back to the sixteenth century. It spread widely in Jewish communities in subsequent centuries. In addition to attempts to negotiate with the dybbuk and persuade it to evacuate its victim voluntarily, exorcising it was based on vigorous and sometimes violent techniques applied against the ghost (in practice, against the possessed individual) and the use of adjurations. The latter were intended to force the ghost to escape the near-presence of holy names by leaving the body. The technique involved introducing the names into the body of the possessed in various ways: through the ears, by reading the adjurations aloud; through the mouth, by dissolving them in water, which the possessed drank; or through the nose, by burning them and having the possessed person breathe in the smoke. The battle that ensued inside the pos-

sessed person's body between the ingested holiness and the indwelling ghost was reinforced by various external agents of holiness: the synagogue, the rabbi-exorcist, and ritual objects such as a shofar, a tallit, candles, a Torah scroll—all of them endowed with performative powers. These, supplemented by blows and other forms of pressure, could ultimately banish the dybbuk and with it the impurity and deviant behavior and remove them out of the community—although they sometimes left the patient dead.

All these customs, beliefs, and ceremonies, so common in Jewish communities in the modern era, were the target of harsh criticism by the *maskilim* (those who took part in the Enlightenment ideology). They wanted to discard "folk" magic, as they called it, and purge it from "authentic" historical Judaism. They portrayed magic as an empty practice foreign to Judaism and the various *ba'alei shem* as ignoramuses at best and charlatans at worst. This attitude was similar to that of earlier elites; this time, however, the process was propelled by secularization (or at least a distillation of Jewish religion into ethical principles and rational thought). The dichotomy of religion and magic, exploited by earlier elites to place themselves and their values at the center and the "other" on the margins, was now joined by science, which frequently rejected both religion and magic. The proponents of the Wissenschaft des Judentums viewed and explicated magical beliefs and practices as the backward and decadent nadir of folk Judaism, an extreme manifestation of the decay of the spiritual and moral messages that are the core and essence of the true Jewish religion.

Of course, this idea, which was shared by the first academic scholars who studied Jewish magic, could not eradicate the magical elements from Judaism, and they still flourish today. Healing and prophylactic powers are associated with objects that were once owned by kabbalists and illustrious rabbis, such as Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (the Lubavitcher rebbe), Rabbi Yitzhak Kadouri, Rabbi Yisrael Abuḥatsera (known as the Baba Sali), and others, or received their blessing. Dozens of famous and lesser-known *ba'alei shem* are active in Israel and the Diaspora even today. The more professional among them rely on traditional modes of diagnosis (various forms of casting lots) and heal chiefly by means of incantations, blessings, and amulets. They attribute their powers to two sources: meritorious family lineage and professional expertise, which they employ on behalf of the Jewish masses, whether religious or not, who knock on their doors. Some of these practical kabbalists go beyond the use of divine names and spend years collecting and reworking the magical literature. In our own generation, too, Jewish magical knowledge, which draws on ancient sources, proliferates and develops.

To date, magical literature, both old and new, is available in bookstores and sold to all comers. Dozens

of titles about practical Kabbalah, charms and remedies, incantations, divination, and magic have been published in Israel since the late twentieth century. The Internet has become a new arena for discourse and commerce of spiritual, ritual, and material aspects of magic. Many Web sites offer objects of practical Kabbalah: amulets, books of charms, precious stones, all sorts of preparations, jewelry with special powers, and paraphernalia such as cups, watches, and keychains that have been empowered in one way or another and are vaunted to possess the capacity to improve human life. Many of the wares hawked in this typical postmodern market amalgamate Jewish and non-Jewish traditions and interweave elements of traditional Jewish magic with others taken from Christianity, Buddhism, and various tribal cultures. In the multicultural spiritual fusion typical of the New Age, healing (individual, social, and global) and empowerment occupy center stage. Magic, with its many traditional and new manifestations, is considered a legitimate form of thought and action, whose attraction and hold keep increasing.

Yuval Harari

See also: Amulets; Charms, Books of; Demonology; Dybbuk; Kabbalah.

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MANGER, ITZIK (1901–1969)

The Yiddish poet and author Itzik Manger published in Europe, Israel, and the United States, and his poetry is celebrated for its rich combination of humor, sadness, and nostalgia. Jewish folklore plays a prominent role in his works, which are frequently based on folk motifs, familiar folk literature plots, and symbols drawn from folk literature. His poetic mission, as he saw it, was to collect and preserve these motifs and symbols in a vanishing lyrical and folklore tradition.

Manger was born in Czernowitz, the capital of Bukovina (present-day Chernivtsi, Ukraine), on May 28, 1901. His father, Hillel, was a tailor, jester, and rhymester; his mother, Ḥava, was gifted with a rare ability to sing folk songs and recount folktales and legends. His childhood was spent in severe poverty. The entire family—parents and three children—lived in a single room and sometimes in a cellar. His first education was at the Czernowitz *cheder*; later he graduated from the German elementary school and attended the German Royal High School there. In his childhood Manger absorbed melodies from the old plays of the Yiddish playwright Abraham Goldfaden, the carefree singing of troupes of the Broder Singers, which he overheard at the tavern in town and the hostel behind it, and gypsy tunes from the wine cellars. Later, when he attended the German high school, he was exposed to the elegant poetry of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Friedrich Schiller, and Heinrich Heine. Because of his proclivity for pranks, which offended the teachers, Manger was expelled before graduation from the school. He studied tailoring with his father and began writing poetry in German. In 1914, with the beginning of World War I, he moved to Iaşi, and in 1918, at the end of the war, he returned to Czernowitz. Then he wrote poetry in Yiddish. His ballad "Portrait of a Girl" was published in the Romanian-Yiddish periodical *Kultur* in 1921. From then on, he published articles and ballads in various Romanian periodicals as well as in magazines published in Warsaw and New York.

In 1928 Manger toured Poland, lecturing on Jewish and European literature and on folklore, especially Jewish humor. He enthralled his large audiences. By the time he returned to Poland in 1929, he had already earned a reputation as one of the leading lights of Yiddish poetry. His poems and ballads circulated among all strata of people. Most of his poems, a play, and some of his best-known prose works were written during his decade in Poland (1928–1938).

When World War II broke out, Manger fled to London, where he came into contact with local poets who appreciated his talents. At the end of the war, he published two volumes of poetry: elegies for the murdered Jews of Europe. In 1948 he returned to Poland as a representative of the International PEN Club. He was traumatized by the experience of a Poland without Jews: "In every other nation, the people go on pilgrimage to the graves of poets; among the Jews, poets visit the graves of the people" (Besser 1998).

In 1951 Manger immigrated to the United States, where he published his collected poems as *Lid un balade* (Poems and Ballads, 1952). Some of the works from this collection were translated to English (Shmeruk, 1984): Nathan and Maryann Ausubel (1957); Sarah Zweig Betsky (1958); Joseph Leftwich (1961); Ruth Whitman (1966); Irving Howe and Eliezer Greenberg (1969). Other
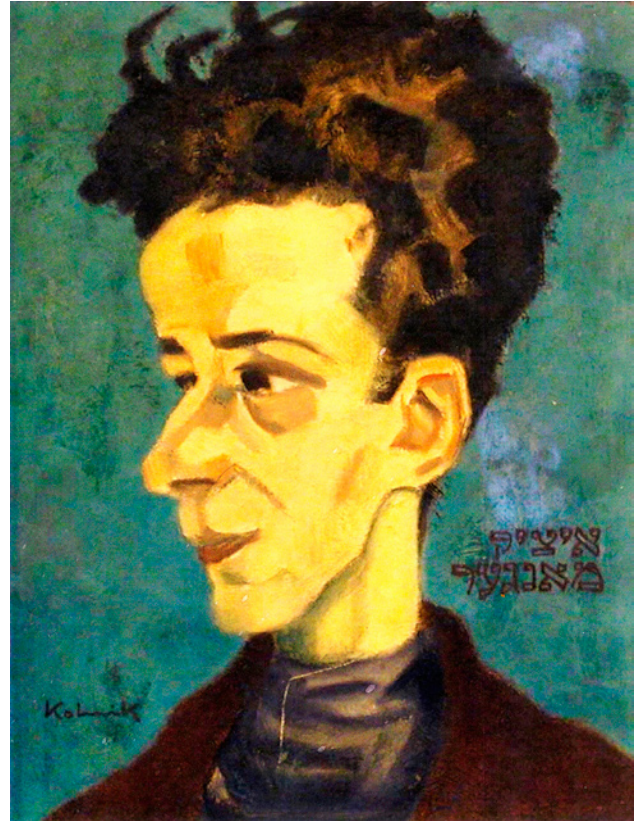
Itzik Manger by Arthur Kolnik (1890–1972).

works were translated by Leonard Wolf (2002). Manger joined the editorial board of the Socialist paper *Der Veker* and wrote for *Di Goldene keyt* and *Vogshol.*

In 1958 Manger first visited Israel, where he was received with open arms by those who appreciated his poetry, as well as by his sister, Sheindel, whom he had not seen for twenty-one years. Several of his works were included in an anthology of world poetry published by UNESCO in Brussels in 1961; they also appeared in various periodicals in English, French, German, Polish, Romanian, Latvian, and Dutch translations. In 1962 he paid another visit to Israel, where he was again received enthusiastically, but illness forced him to return to the United States. He was already seriously ill when he made his fourth trip to Israel, this time to settle permanently, in 1967, and remained bedridden until his death on February 21, 1969.

Manger's works exemplify the charm of the Yiddish language, with its tenderness, humility, fondness, sadness, and humor. In his essay "Folklore and Literature" (Paris, 1939), Manger offered a concise definition of the aesthetic and national function of Jewish folklore and demonstrated how Jewish literature and Jewish folklore had been linked in every age. He asserted that the greatness of Jewish literature derives from its tie to Jewish folklore. The thesis at the core of the essay is that living literature is impossible without a foundation in folklore.

Manger also maintained that the history of culture shows that any attempt to foster a literature that lacks solid roots in folklore is doomed to failure. From this he concluded that the greatness of Yiddish literature lies in its link to Jewish folklore (Bar-Itzhak 2009).

Exploiting a modern historical consciousness, Manger made deliberate anachronism a major element in works such as *Khumesh Lider* (Bible Songs)*, Megile Lider* (Scroll Songs)*, Rus,* and *Dos bukh fon Gan-Eyden* (The Book of Paradise), in which he reset the biblical stories in the Jewish world of Eastern Europe.

Tamar Eyal

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MA'OZ TSUR

See: Ḥanukkah

MĀQĀMA

The *māqāma* (pl., *māqāmat*)—"assembly" in English—is a rhymed prose literary genre, popular in Hebrew literature since the twelfth century. The name "*māqāmat*" derives from the Arabic *māqāma,* meaning "a gathering place" where stories were told. It translates as *maḥberet* in Hebrew (from *ḥever*—a group of people together) and received its fame and was disseminated by oral recitation in such gatherings. From its inception, the Hebrew *māqāmat* took two forms: classical and nonclassical (Andalusian).

The classical *māqāma* emulates the Arabic classical genre, which originated with Badi al-Zaman al-Hamadhānī (Persia, 967–1007), and his follower, al-Ḥarīrī (Iraq, 1054–1122). According to this classical form, the components that determine a *māqāma* are style, characters, and structure. The style involves an eloquent ornamental rhymed prose, interspersed with monorhymed metrical poems. There are two permanent characters: a narrator (*maggid*), who enables readers to see the hero, as their paths intersect, and a hero, portrayed as the antihero—a vagabond rogue and master of disguise who is capable of obtaining whatever he wishes from others, thanks to his wit, shrewdness, folklore, and outstanding rhetorical ability. The classical *māqāma* is structured as a short frame story. It has a standard opening and closing, portraying the characters' meeting and departing, and a variable body, conveying the hero's deeds. Often, the opening describes the hero as a storyteller, and the body itself is the story he recites to his listeners. The body of the *māqāmat* is varied both in content and in rhetorical method. Any topic can be expressed in a *māqāma,* including lowly, even bawdy themes and scenes taken from the everyday life of common folk, as the *māqāma* was intended for a middle-class audience from its origin—unlike the courtly literature that preceded it. The *māqāma* also varies in the literary genres conglomerated in it, consisting of tales, fables, legends, jokes, memoirs, proverbs, and epigrams, as well as riddles, prayers, sermons, debates, and more. Each book of classical *māqāma* is a compilation of fifty independent *māqāmat*, presented in what scholars believe is an arbitrary order. In all these components, Hebrew *māqāma* follow the Arabic model. Yet, while the goal of the Arabic *māqāma* is to entertain, the Hebrew *māqāma* involves didactic, mainly satirical intentions, aiming to teach and to instruct through laughter. This major difference is most likely due to Christian influence, to which Hebrew *māqāma* writers were exposed.

The main and most famous classical *māqāma* writer in Hebrew is Yehudah al-Harīzī (Toledo, 1165–Halab, 1225), who wrote *Maḥberot Iti'el* (Iti'el's *māqāmat*)—a translation-redaction of al-Ḥariri's book of *māqāmat*; and *Sefer Taḥkemoni* (Book of Taḥkemoni), which became the defining model of the classical Hebrew *māqāma.* Other classical *māqāmat* are *Māqāmat Akhituv ben Taḥkemoni* and *Māqāmat il-Tajnis* (*Māqāma* of Homonyms), by Yosef ben Tanchum Hayerushalmi (Cairo, end of thirteenth century), *Sefer ha'Musar* (Book of Ethics); by Zechariah

al-Ḍahiri (Yemen, sixteenth century); and *Sefer ḥizzayon* (Book of Revelation), by Itzḥak Satanov (Berlin, eighteenth century). There was a renaissance of the classical genre in the eighteenth century. Still, few writers wrote in this specialized form.

The nonclassical form of the Hebrew *māqāma* is a narrative containing satirical elements, written in rhymed prose, not always including poetry. The other components of the classical *māqāma* are not compulsory, and the authors chose from them to suit their needs. The sketchiness and generality of this definition is the cause of a polemic between scholars, with some claiming that only a handful of classical *māqāmat* may properly take that name. Notwithstanding, this is the accepted definition. In the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, the nonclassical *māqāma* became the favored genre of Hebrew belles lettres in Spain, France, and Italy, at the expense of poetry. The first *māqāma* written in Hebrew is *Neum Asher ben Yehudah* (Asher ben Yehuda's Oration), by Shlomo ibn Zakbel (first quarter of the twelfth century), a short humorous narrative, embedded in a milieu like that in the *Arabian Nights*. This is one of the rare *māqāmat* written under the Muslim regime. Even so, it has Christian influences and differs in many ways—including a didactic morale—from the classical, Arabic *māqāma*. The second *māqāma* known to scholars, already written under Christian rule, is *Sefer Sha'ashuim* (Book of Delight), by Yoseph Ibn Zabara (Barcelona, twelfth century)—a compilation of animal stories, fables, proverbs, folktales, medical lore (such as rules on how to maintain good health), popular knowledge in other sciences and additional topics, all gathered in a frame story of two characters—the narrator and a devil—going from the narrator's hometown to the devil's home. This is considered the first picaresque novel in Hebrew. *Sefer Sha'ashuim* includes also many misogynistic sayings and tales, a topic that became popular in *māqāma* literature, until a polemic for and against women took place in it, such as in the *māqāmat Minḥat Yehudah Sone ha'Nashim* (The Offering of Yehudah the Women Hater), by Judah [Yehudah] ibn Shabbethai (Toledo, 1208), and in *Ezrat Nashim* (The Aid of Women) and *Ein Mishpat*, by Isaac (Burgos, 1210).

The nonclassical medieval *māqāma* had a didactic purpose and helped spread ideas in Christian Europe, where poetry became subordinated to philosophy and was justified only if it was edifying or moralistic. Thus, in *Sefer Ha'Mevakesh* (Book of the Seeker), by Shem Tov ibn Falaquera (Tudela, thirteenth century), the hero, pursuing the best path in life, questions seventeen experts in different fields (such as a wealthy man, warrior, craftsman, physician, pious man, poet, mathematician, astronomer, logician, and physicist) until he finds the ultimate way—in philosophy. Another didactic, moralistic yet entertaining *māqāma* is *Meshal ha'Qadmoni* (The Fable of the Ancient), by Isaac ibn Sahula (1281).

Ma'ase ha'Rav (Deed of the Master), by Shem Tov ben Isaac Ardutiel (1345), appears to be a humorous debate between a pen and scissors that argue which of them is more suitable for writing, after the writer has used the scissors for cutting letters, thus writing a letter on a cold winter night in which he could not use the pen because the ink had frozen. Yet even this entertaining argument might be allegorical and conceal political satire (Colahan 1979). Even the facetious *Maḥberot Immanuel*, by Immanuel Ha'Romi (end of thirteenth century), contains didactic teachings.

The decision to use the *māqāma* genre for bestowing knowledge upon the readers is a testimony to its popularity. The genre became so popular that it was chosen as the model for translation into Hebrew, including works that were not originally written as *māqāmat,* such as *Mishle Shu'alim* (Fox Fables), Berechiah ha'Nakdan's translation of Marie de France's animal fables (about 1200); and *Kalila Ve'Dimna*, by Ya'akov ben Elazar, and *Ben Ham'elekh ve'ha'nazir* (The King's Son and the Ascetic), by Abraham ibn Hisday—both adaptations of Indian works from their Arabic translation. Thus, the *māqāma* genre became a central means of transferring folk literature from other cultures into Hebrew.

The modern era of the *māqāma* genre begins with Bialik's *Aluf batzlut ve'aluf shum* (1928). Poet Shimshon Meltzer used it as a format for folktales in *Sefer hashirot ve'habaladot* (Book of Poems and Ballads), and Ḥaim Ḥefer wrote satirical *māqāmat* weekly in the daily newspaper *Yediot Aḥronot* from the 1960s until 2001. A significant transformation in contemporary *māqāma* is that it sometimes replaces the satirical element with mere humor. Thus, it is a preferred medium for writing festive greetings (recited at birthdays, weddings, etc.) and children's books.

Ayelet Oettinger

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MAREK, PESAḤ

See: Anthologies; Poland, Jews of; Russia, Jews of

MARRIAGE

Procreation is the first commandment given by God to humankind (Gen. 1:28, 9:1). Jewish law mandates that the sexual relationship between a man and a woman in order to fulfill this commandment is permissible only after a ritual marriage ceremony. Consequently, the wedding ceremony became a central occasion in the Jewish life cycle and is one of the major "rites of passage" in that cycle. The development of the ritual has a complex evolution, spawning a variety of ceremonies strongly influenced by the surrounding cultural milieus. The basic elements of the ritual, its historical development, and its attendant customs have been studied and documented by scholars throughout history.

There is little evidence as to the nature of marriage during the biblical period. The act of marriage, called "taking" (*lekiḥah*) (Deut. 24:1; Exod. 2:1), seems to have included processions for the bride and groom (Ps. 78:63, of Macc. 9:39) and to have been followed by a week of feasting (Gen. 29:22, 27).

In the talmudic period and probably earlier, the marriage cycle comprised two separate events. First was the betrothal, called *kiddushin* or *erusin,* during which the bridegroom presented the bride with a coin (of minimal value, *peruta*) or a ring (as the Romans did), reciting two benedictions, one over wine and the other for the actual act. Second, at some later date, a marriage ceremony, in which the bride was led to the groom's house or, later, to a *ḥuppah* (canopy), symbolizing her new home, and a ceremony (called "*sheva berakhot")* took place in which (six or) seven benedictions were recited. Between the first and the second events, which until the Middle Ages could be separated by a year or even more, the bride and groom could have no sexual relations. Only after the *nisuin* (the

second stage of the marriage process) were they fully married and liable to the responsibilities and privileges accorded them by their new status. In the Middle Ages, these two events were unified, and in order to distinguish them, the *ketubbah* (marriage contract) is read out loud between them.

The actual ceremony is a joyful one and even in early times included dancing before the bride, even by rabbis (*Ket.* 16b–17a), who occasionally danced with the bride perched upon their shoulders (ibid.). At the end of the ceremony, the groom would shatter a glass, either in memory of the destruction of the Temple, or to reduce the unseemly hilarity of the proceedings (*Ber.* 31a), or as a means of protection against evil spirits. In medieval Germany, the glass would be hurled against the *ḥuppah Stein,* a special stone set in the (northern) wall of the synagogue.

The wedding took place before a minimal quorum of ten adult males and in the presence of two competent witnesses, followed by seven days of festivities, during which the seven special marriage benedictions were recited at meals.

Marriages did not take place during the period of the Omer, from after Passover to Lag Ba'Omer (Sephardim) or from the first of Iyar until before Shavuot (Ashkenazim). It was considered preferable to hold the wedding ceremony at the beginning of the month or during the full moon but not during the waning of the moon. The preferred day for a wedding during talmudic times was Wednesday, because the courts sat on Thursday, and this would allow the husband to complain to the court immediately, should he discover that his bride was not a virgin (*Ket.* 1:1). Wednesday was also considered a lucky day. However, later (mainly among Ashkenazim), having the wedding on Friday was more popular because it reduced costs, since the Sabbath meal was the first of the meals of the *sheva berakhot.* In modern times, Sunday is often the most convenient time for weddings.

Many customs are connected with the marriage ceremony. In Ashkenazi communities, on the Sabbath before the wedding (*spinholz*), the groom is called up to recite the blessings over the Torah (*Aufrufren*); among Sephardim he is called up on the Sabbath after the wedding (*Shabbat ḥatan*). It is customary for the bride and groom not to see each other for the week before their wedding, and they usually fast on their wedding day, until the actual ceremony. At the ceremony itself, the bride is dressed in white and her face is covered with a veil. Just before the ceremony, the groom lifts up the veil to see his bride's face (to make sure she is indeed his betrothed) and then lets it down again, in a ceremony called the Veiling of the Bride (*Badeken* or *Bedeckung*). The bride and groom are often brought by the Torah-bearing parents to the *ḥuppah,* and in Ashkenazi communities the bride is led in seven circuits around the groom, symbolically to cre-

ate a protective circle to ward off all malignant forces. The bride then stands to the right of the groom, and the ceremony commences, conducted by an officiating rabbi. Often the seven benedictions are pronounced by family members, close friends, or distinguished guests. Traditionally, the groom hands over a ring (which must belong to him) and places it on the forefinger of her right hand, declaring her by this to be his lawfully wedded wife, according to the law of Moses and Israel. In some modern Conservative, Reform, and Egalitarian communities, there is an exchange of rings between the two parties. A peculiar custom found both in Eastern Europe and in some Middle Eastern communities is for the bride and groom to try to tread on each other's foot under the *ḥuppah*, signifying that the one who succeeded would become dominant in the marriage.

In some Middle Eastern communities, the husband would then take his newly wedded wife directly to the bridal home (suite) and carry her over the threshold, or he would enter her new home, treading over broken pottery and through water from an earthen pitcher poured down by the husband from the roof (Djerba, Libya). Furthermore, in Djerba the bride smeared broken eggs on the doorposts of the house, while in Georgia butter was similarly used, as powerful protective measures. In Afghanistan, a fowl was slaughtered to mark the occasion. Thus, the marriage cycle, on the one hand, was a time of great rejoicing but, on the other hand, it combined this joy with an element of tension and fear of the evil forces that lay in wait of the opportunity to jeopardize the couple's activities or harm them physically. For this reason, a broad variety of protective measures developed in the various communities, usually influenced by local practices, giving rise to a large number of local customs, which included elements of magic, superstition, and folklore.

Daniel Sperber

See also: Demon; Egg; India, Jews of; *Ketubbah*.

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MEIR BA'AL HA'NES, RABBI

Rabbi Meir Ba'al Ha'Nes (Master of the Miracle), also known as Rabbi Meir, was a Jewish sage and *tanna* (teacher of the Mishnah) who lived during the time of the Mishnah, the collection of Jewish oral traditions compiled circa 200 C.E. and included in the Talmud. According to tradition his grave is located in the southern part of the city of Tiberias and is one of the most sacred, famous, and revered shrines among Jews in Israel and the Diaspora.

Unlike most of the sages of the Mishnah and the Talmud, whose lineage is known, neither his father's name nor the birthplace of Rabbi Meir is known. His common name was Rabbi Nehoray (Aram., light), and he is said to have been called Rabbi Meir because he lit up the eyes of the *ḥakhamim* (sages). The present popular view is that the *tanna* Rabbi Meir is the one buried in Tiberias, but the identification is problematic and has been contested by historians up to the present. In the thirteenth century, several pilgrims mentioned that Rabbi Meir Katzin was buried in Tiberias. The burial place has also been associated with Rabbi Meir ben Ya'akov, who came to Eretz Israel with Rabbi Yeḥiel of Paris, as well as with Rabbi Meir ben Yitzhak, the author of the *Akdamot for Shavuot*. The testimonies of other pilgrims refer to the grave of Rabbi Meir in Gush Ḥalav near Safed. With time, the Gush Ḥalav grave disappeared and people connected Rabbi Meir with Tiberias.

The first pilgrims to tour the Holy Land, Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela and Rabbi Petahiah of Regensburg, mention the grave of Rabbi Meir in Khila in Iraq. A folk tradition in northern Morocco mentions that Rabbi Meir Ba'al Ha'Nes is buried in Ksar El-Kebir, by the grave of the local saint Rabbi Yehudah Zabali. Rabbi Moshe Bassola, who visited Eretz Israel in 1522, described a grave of erected stones on a plateau in Tiberias, where people gathered in the evenings and mornings to pray and said that there was buried a certain Rabbi Meir, who had sworn not to sit down and thus had been buried standing up, but who was not Rabbi Meir of the Mishnah. Rabbi Isaac Luria (Ha'Ari), the greatest of the kabbalists, who used to visit Tiberias and the holy graves there, spoke about the grave of the *tanna* Rabbi Meir and that he was buried in a standing position. This determination by the Divine Ari of the place of the tomb of the *tanna* Rabbi Meir was followed and respected by the majority of the sages of his time and thereafter. Extensive folklore support has strengthened this determination and the tomb in Tiberias is recognized today as Rabbi Meir Ba'al Ha'Nes's grave.

Beginning in the thirteenth century the graves of Rabbi Meir Ba'al Ha'Nes in Tiberias and Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai in Meron became the most popular sites among

Jews in Eretz Israel and in the Diaspora. The expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 and the development of Safed as an important kabbalistic center in the sixteenth century greatly contributed to attracting pilgrims to holy places in Eretz Israel. From this time onward, there was a significant increase in the veneration of saints among the Jews in North Africa. The different emissaries from Eretz Israel touring the Jewish communities in the Diaspora contributed to the divulgation of the great importance that Rabbi Meir Ba'al Ha'Nes's blessing holds for protection against all kinds of ailments and dangers. An almsbox in the name of Rabbi Meir could be found in almost every Jewish house, synagogue, and yeshiva and served for supporting the poor and the Jewish scholars in the Holy Land.

Rabbi Meir, a disciple of Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Ishmael, played an important role in spreading the study of the Torah in the generation following the second-century Bar Kochba revolt, a failed Jewish revolt against Roman rule. Rabbi Meir also made a major contribution to the compilation of the Mishnah. According to tradition, every anonymous saying in the Mishnah is attributed to him. Apart from his great understanding of the Halakhah (Jewish religious laws), Rabbi Meir also excelled in the Aggadah. He was an accomplished orator beloved by all social classes. He divided his sermons into three portions: one-third Halakhah, one third Aggadah, and one-third fables. Rabbi Meir was versed in 300 fox fables. The sages said: "After Rabbi Meir passed away, the fable tellers disappeared."

Rabbi Meir's residence was in Tiberias. When the Roman edicts against the sages who ordained their disciples as rabbis became intolerable, Rabbi Meir was forced to flee to Asia Minor, where he joined his teacher, Rabbi Akiva, who also fled there due to the Roman persecutions.

Rabbi Meir was married to Beruriah, the daughter of Rabbi Ḥananiah ben Teradion, one of the ten martyrs. Beruriah is the only female mentioned in the Talmud as a female sage who participated in debates about the Halakhah with the talmudic sages. Her sayings were compared to those of the *tannaim*. Legend has it that for three years she studied 300 Halakhot (laws) a day from 300 great scholars. The Gemara tells about her wisdom with regard to ruffians who lived near Rabbi Meir and upset him frequently. Rabbi Meir wished them a merciful death. Beruriah said to him: "It is written 'Let the sins be consumed out of the earth' (Ps. 104:35), not sinners. Thus you should ask for compassion for them so they will repent." Rabbi Meir did so, and they repented.

The deed that crowned Rabbi Meir as a miracle maker for generations, and earned him the appellation of "Ba'al Ha'Nes" relates to saving Beruriah's sister, who had been taken to Rome and forced into a brothel. Beruriah asked Rabbi Meir to go and redeem her sister. He went there

and said: "If no misdeed was done to her, a miracle will happen to her." He addressed the guard and asked him to free her. The guard said: "I am afraid that the authorities will kill me." Rabbi Meir said: "Take this money, give half of it as a bribe and keep the other half for yourself." The guard said: "When there is no more money, what shall I do?" He told the guard: "say: 'God of Meir, answer me,' and you will be saved." And the guard asked: "Who will guarantee that it will happen this way?" Rabbi Meir answered: "Now, you will see. Look, there are man-eating dogs over there. I will go there." Rabbi Meir took a branch and threw it at them. The dogs came running, ready to devour him. He said: "God of Meir, answer me," and they left him in peace. The guard believed Rabbi Meir and handed the woman over to him. When it became known, the authorities came to take the guard. He said: "God of Meir, answer me." They asked: "What is that?" He told them the story. They let him go, and he was saved.

Rabbi Meir died in Asia Minor. As mentioned in the Talmud, Rabbi Meir asked the local people to inform the people of Eretz Israel that a *tanna* had died there and that they should bring his body to the Holy Land. Rabbi Meir also requested that his coffin be placed by the seashore so that the waves could carry the coffin to Eretz Israel.

For generations, the rabbis advised the Jews that in times of trouble they should make a vow to Rabbi Meir Ba'al Ha'Nes in these words: "God of Meir, answer me." In 1695 Rabbi Eliyahu Hacohen from Izmir wrote: "If someone loses an object and then vows to provide oil for lighting lamps in honor of Rabbi Meir, he will immediately find the lost object." Rabbi Ḥaim Abulafia, who renewed the Jewish community in Tiberias in 1742, decreed that "he who makes a vow in the name of Rabbi Meir will find it is not fulfilled if it is paid in his own city, but only if the charity is donated solely to the holy city of Tiberias, so that Torah students in Tiberias are provided for." All Sephardic Jews in the Diaspora followed his decree.

In the book *Keter Shem Tov* it is said that in the name of the Ba'al Shem Tov (the founder of Hasidism) "if a person is in danger and in need of a miracle, he should give eighteen coins for candles for the synagogue and say wholeheartedly: 'I vow eighteen coins for candles for the soul of Rabbi Meir Ba'al Ha'Nes; God of Meir, answer me! God of Meir, answer me! God of Meir, answer me! May it be your will our God and God of our fathers, in the same way you heard the prayer of your slave Meir and performed miracles for him, please do the same for me and all your people Israel, who are in need of visible and hidden miracles. Amen, may it be your will." The Ḥasidim believed that a person tempted by bad thoughts could be relieved by placing a coin in an almsbox for Eretz Israel or for Rabbi Meir Ba'al Ha'Nes.

In 1866, at the site of Rabbi Meir's grave, the sages of Tiberias erected a shrine with two white domes overlooking the Sea of Galilee, a yeshiva, a synagogue, and rooms

for pilgrims. For generations, the sages of Tiberias honored the tradition of visiting the grave on predetermined dates in order to pray and ask for mercy for all Jews. They published and distributed prayers and liturgies said at the grave of Rabbi Meir. When the shrine was completed in 1867, a *hillulah* (ritual celebration) in honor of Rabbi Meir was held on the fourteenth of Iyar, called a "second Passover." An impressive procession with Torah scrolls departed from the old synagogue Etz Ḥaim in the Old City, led by the rabbis of Tiberias, its sages, and representatives of the Ottoman authorities. Large amounts of money were collected in an auction of different mitzvot. The determination of the date of *hillulah* was strongly contested by the Ashkenazi community. Despite heavy protests, the *hillulah* continued to develop and to attract more and more pilgrims over the years. Large donations collected at the end of the twentieth century changed the nature of the site. The grave has been completely rebuilt, the yeshiva has been enlarged, and the shrine is bustling with pilgrims throughout the year.

The vast usage in folk art of the dome of Rabbi Meir's shrine, scenic pictures of Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee in *tashmishei kedushah* (Jewish ceremonial objects), *ketubbot*, pamphlets praising the *tanna*, tablecloths, mural paintings, and *parokhot* (curtains over the Ark) in synagogues, calendars, book covers, sukkah decorations, and others, along with the spreading in Eretz Isreal and in the Diaspora of stories and legends telling the miracles of Rabbi Meir, have undoubtedly contributed to his glorification. His presence in the daily life of Jews of different communities and their frequent appeals to him have established and strengthened the popularity of Rabbi Meir Ba'al Ha'Nes as one of the greatest saints of the people of Israel.

Issachar Ben-Ami

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MEMORIAL DAY

Observed on the fourth of Iyar, Yom Ha'zikaron (Memorial Day) commemorates those who died in the 1948 War of Independence and other wars in Israel.

The need for an official day to honor those who have fallen in Israel's wars was apparent soon after the War of Independence and became more acute with the subsequent wars and their victims; however, setting an appropriate date for this holiday was not without controversy. On the one hand, holding the holiday close to Independence Day on the fifth of Iyar would emphasize the contribution of the fallen to the establishment of the State of Israel. On the other hand, combining the two was potentially problematic, and bereaved parents stated that they preferred to keep them separate. In 1951, state officials decided that Memorial Day would be observed the day before Independence Day. This highlights the two holidays' intrinsic connection—the soldiers who gave their lives were responsible for the existence of Israel as an independent state—but keeps Independence Day from being a solemn occasion.

All over Israel, a siren blares in the evening to mark the start of the observance. Unlike Independence Day, which begins with an official state ceremony on Mount Herzl, Memorial Day did not originally start with an official ceremony in a specific place. Although there was an attempt to hold an opening ceremony on Mount Zion, the first official national observance at the start of Memorial Day was not introduced until after the Six-Day War of 1967, when the Western Wall plaza was designated for the ceremony.

In the evening, worshipers light memorial candles in the synagogue; candles are also lit in cemeteries and in private homes. In public places, the flag is lowered to half-mast. All places of entertainment are closed, by law, for twenty-four hours, starting in the evening. Radio and television broadcast programs featuring elegiac songs, classical music, stories of heroism, and personal accounts by soldiers, along with letters and excerpts from their writings.

The main events on Memorial Day are state ceremonies in military cemeteries, with the participation of government representatives. Various local communities hold their own commemorative observances, each in tune with its ideals and values. These events, too, are usually held by the graves of the fallen, adjacent to monuments to the dead, or in a room dedicated to their memory. In secular kibbutzim, it was long the custom to avoid religious texts, which were replaced by secular passages, including a *yizkor* (memorial prayer) written by Berl Katznelson, one of the leaders of the prestate labor movement, that make no reference to God. Over the years, the opposition to religious texts has diminished, and today they are generally part of local ceremonies.

Memorial Day concludes with a special recitation of the *yizkor* at Mount Herzl, immediately preceding the festivities for Independence Day. After the prayer, the national flag is raised to the top of the staff, as a sign for the start of the Independence Day celebrations.

Nili Aryeh-Sapir

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Menorah

The menorah (Heb., lamp or candelabrum) is the golden seven-branched Temple candelabrum, one of the Tabernacle (or "tent of meeting," the movable sanctuary built in the desert) implements, and an important cultic vessel in the First and Second Temples. The shape of the seven-branched menorah is the central symbol of Judaism and a recurring symbol-motif in Jewish culture and art since the Temple period.

In the first Solomonic Temple, there were ten lamps (1 Kgs. 7:49; 2 Chr. 4:7). Some scholars claim that there was one cultic lamp, as in the Tabernacle, and ten additional lamps to light the space. In the Second Temple, there was one lamp, as in the Tabernacle. This lamp was removed in 169 B.C.E. by Antiochus Epiphanes IV. Judah Maccabee cleansed the Temple after the desecration and built a new lamp, which remained there in Herod's Temple until its destruction in 70 C.E. (1 Macc. 4:44; 2 Macc. 10) by Titus, who conquered Jerusalem (*J.W.* 5:216–217; 7:148–149). The raiding of the menorah and its transportation to Rome, along with the other Temple implements, on the shoulders of Roman soldiers is depicted on the triumphal arch built in Rome on the via Sacra some twelve years later in Titus's honor.

A detailed description of the menorah, including its material shape and construction, is given in the instructions transmitted to Moses on Mount Sinai to build the Tabernacle in the desert (Exod. 25:31–40) and in the description of Bezalel actually constructing the menorah according to the divine directions (Exod. 37:17–24).

The instructions specify the material, weight, and form of the menorah, but do not give measurements, as are given to other furnishings. According to the instructions, the menorah should be cast or carved of pure solid gold and its weight a talent. It should have six branches—three on each side—and a central shaft, but it is not specified whether it should have a stand. The branches are decorated with cups, knobs, and flowers: three "almondlike

cups" shaped as almond blossoms, with each divided into a knob, and a flower on each side of every branch.

Though detailed, the description of the menorah is somewhat complicated and enigmatic. For instance, it is not clear what the "almondlike cups" or the knobs are. Furthermore, because the menorah of the Tabernacle or the First Temple has not survived, it is very difficult to know its exact shape in detail. Its form is studied today from early visual depictions, some in archaeological finds, none earlier than the First Temple period, in conjunction with the textual descriptions; some details, such as the form of its base, are hotly debated by scholars.

Other points of discussion are the veracity of these depictions and whether they correspond to the Tabernacle menorah, whose descriptions in Exodus are claimed by scholars to be later texts, or to the Second Temple menorah.

The difficulty encountered in understanding the structuring details of the menorah are reflected in the midrashim to the following verse:

> And this is the work of the candlestick was of beaten gold: unto the shaft thereof, unto the flowers thereof, was beaten work: according unto the pattern which the Lord had showed Moses, so he made the candlestick. . . . Now this was how the lampstand was made, out of hammered work of gold. From its base to its flowers, it was hammered work; according to the pattern that the Lord had shown Moses, so he made the lampstand (Num. 8:4).

The word מקשה is interpreted in its two senses, one as one piece of gold, and the second referring to קשה (difficult), describing the difficulties Moses had in implementing the instructions to build the lamp. It is related in the Midrash that God helped Moses by showing him a visual model (and other aids), but in the end he did not overcome this difficulty and passed on the task to Bezalel, who actually built it without seeing the model. (Bezalel is considered the exemplary artist and patron of artists) (*Bam. Rab.* 15:4; *Tanḥuma* Beha'alotkha 11; *Yalqut Shimoni* Beha'alotkha 8).

Early depictions of the menorah date back only to the first century B.C.E. (incised menorah on a plaster fragment; a coin of Antigonus, the last Hasmonean king [40–37 B.C.E.]; and others). They vary in form and detail, though they display some identical features, such as the six curved branches.

As different opinions prevail as to the date of the texts, especially those describing the Tabernacle lamp, it is uncertain to which candelabrum the depictions refer.

The best-known depiction of the menorah is the Titus Arch relief, which was discussed by many scholars (Narkiss, Sperber). This is probably the only one made as a realistic historic image of the actual Temple lamp

transported to Rome. But it has a heavy octagonal stand that does not correspond to any of the descriptions; therefore it is conjectured that its original stand was broken and that this is an additional base.

In the Tabernacle the menorah stood in front of the curtain *parokhet*, which separated the Holy of Holies, containing the Ark, from the Holy (Exod. 26:35). Its lamps (*nerot*) using pure olive oil were lit by the high priest every evening (Exod. 27:20; 30:7–8; Lev. 24:2). This light is called the perpetual light (*ner ha'tamid*). Hence it became the prototype for the *ner ha'tamid* lit later in synagogues in front of the Ark in remembrance of the Temple. If it was extinguished, it was considered a bad omen for the future, just as it was for the lamp from which the *ner ha'tamid* was lit every day *(ner ma'aravi).*

The Menorah as Symbol

Apart from being an actual cultic vessel in the Temples, the seven-branched gold menorah functions as a constant symbol in Jewish culture from biblical times to the present, including its role as the symbol of the State of Israel (modeled after the Titus Arch menorah).

Even by the time of the Temple, the menorah alone or together with other cult objects was considered a metonym for the Temple, for Jerusalem, and for the Land of Israel. From the various depictions dating from the time of the Temple, it is evident that the menorah was much more important for its symbolic significance than for its precise depiction.

It should be noted that reproduction of the menorah imitating that of the Temple was prohibited (*b. Rosh Hashanah* 24a; *Menahot* 28b; *Avodah Zarah* 43a), but apparently this did not apply to depictions of the menorah.

Both collectively and individually, the menorah served as an identifying symbol of Judaism. It is found in synagogues, on tombs, and on objects belonging to Jews, such as clay oil lamps and jewelry. The menorah acquired multiple meanings, some of them in the mystical and magic traditions; it served as a symbol of God and His light, of the light of the Torah, of the sun and the planets, of the tree of life, and, in particular, of redemption and salvation, both national and personal.

The menorah as a symbol of redemption and messianic hope features in the vision of the prophet Zachariah, who lived in the time of the rebuilding of the Second Temple (520 B.C.E.) (Zach. 4:2–12). In his vision, he saw a gold menorah with a bowl above it (Gullah) feeding it with olive oil, flanked by two olive trees. The vision is explained as a good omen, promising the help of God in rebuilding the Temple. In later texts—rabbinic exegesis to Zachariah's prophesy, by Rashi (Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes), Abraham Ibn Ezra and others—this vision is understood in a far wider context as a symbol for God's promise for redemption in messianic times and is considered an eschatological symbol.

In the third-century Syrian synagogue of Dura Europos, the menorah features along with the shofar (ram's horn trumpet) and *lulav* (palm branch) on the central panel along with the sacrifice of Isaac (on Mount Moriah, identified with the Temple mount) and the depiction of the Temple where it symbolizes the past Temple, the covenant between God and Abraham, and the hope for a future rebuilding of the Temple. A similar meaning is conveyed in the mosaic floors of synagogues in the land of Israel dating from the fourth to sixth centuries C.E. (Hammat Tiberias Beit Alpha and others). There the menorah is represented along with a depiction of a Temple façade and with other implements as a reminder of the Temple and of hopes of the future rebuilding of the Temple.

As in synagogue decoration, the menorah expresses collective redemption; its appearance on funerary art on gravestones, sarcophagi, and catacombs (in Israel's Beit She'arim, in the Diaspora Catacombs in Rome) expresses the hope for individual redemption: resurrection of the dead expected to follow the arrival of the messiah.

In a similar way, it features in conjunction with the Tabernacle implements on the first page of hand-written Bible manuscripts from Egypt (tenth century) and from Spain called מקדשיה (thirteenth to fifteenth centuries), symbolizing the connection to the past temples and hope for future rebuilding of the Temple. These Bibles are called מקדשיה and thus are compared to the Temple themselves.

In medieval kabbalistic literature, the menorah was interpreted as a mystical and magical symbol. The mystical interpretation went in two main directions. The first views the menorah as representing the celestial bodies, following Josephus Flavius (*Ant.*, 111144–146). The second, more widespread, sees the menorah as representing God in its structural composition. The first kabbalist known to have given this interpretation is Rabbi Asher Ben David of Provence in the first half of the thirteenth century and later spread by others. According to this view, the menorah represents at the same time the absolute unity of God as it was made of one piece of solid gold, מקשה אחת, and the multiplicity of the divine aspects of the divine entity, the *sefirot* as represented by the branches of the menorah. The seven *sefirot* in the menorah are *tiferet* (beauty) in the middle, *hod* (majesty), *ḥesed* (love), *malkhut* (kingdom), *yesod* (foundation), *netsaḥ* (victory), *gevurah* (strength), three on each side.

In practical Kabbalah magical properties were attributed to the menorah, such as those ascribed to the menorah in Psalm 67. Around the fifteenth century, an interesting exchange of symbols occurred. The menorah, considered a magical symbol and believed both to have been engraved on the shield of King David and to have helped him to win

his wars, is exchanged gradually for the six-pointed star, considered a magical protective symbol and called the Shield of David. Later in the nineteenth century, the star took the place of the menorah as a Jewish identity symbol.

Esther Juhasz

See also: Jerusalem and the Temple; Shiviti-Menorah; Symbols.

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Methuselah

See: Age and the Aged; Noah

Messiah and Redeemer

In folk tradition the messiah is the savior born of the seed of David who will appear on earth one day, bringing the longed-for redemption. The term *"messiah"* (Heb., *mashiah*) stems from the Hebrew root משח—anointed with oil—meaning the man chosen by God to be king (e.g., 1 Sam. 9–10). The yearning for the revelation of a supreme power, bringing security, might, abundance, and peace, intensified in times of political stress, enslavement, exile, and suffering, giving rise to tales about a supernatural figure that would redeem the people of Israel and revive its glory: the messiah.

In the course of centuries, yearning for a messiah was expressed in various writings, exposing tensions between diverse perceptions concerning the nature of the days of the messiah, the characteristics of the messiah, the messiah's role in the process of redemption, and the time of redemption. These tensions are also embedded in the folktales and reflect the cultural contexts in which they were created.

There is a specific typology of the way redemption and redeemers appear in descriptions, tales, and visions throughout Jewish history. The prototype of the descriptions and tales of redemption is the first story of redemption, that is, the Exodus, and the model for the redeemer is the figure of Moses. The figures of redeemers and their struggles are depicted in the various writings by analogy with the Exodus in the Bible and the Aggadah (in the Talmud). The utopian images of the world to come stem from portrayals of the glorious past of the people of Israel in the days of the kingdom of David and Solomon, who attained exceptional idealization.

The Development of the Messianic Tale

Although rabbinic messianic sayings frequently mention premessianic tribulations—his wars, his origin, names, and the nature of the Days of Redemption—there is no complete narrative or portrayal of the messiah from his birth to the successful completion of his endeavor. It was only in the Middle Ages that the story of the messiah appeared as a complete and coherent narrative in the apocalyptic *Book of Zerubavel,* apparently written in the first half of the seventh century in the Land of Israel. This work describes, in great detail the coming of the messiah at the appointed time, referring to his deeds, wars, enemies, and helpers, until his success in establishing a perfect reality, a world based on new principles, and his bringing Celestial Jerusalem down from heaven.

The *Book of Zerubavel* presents the tradition of the messianic precursor, the messiah son of Joseph, from the tribe of Ephraim, who will die in the battlefield shortly before the appearance of the messiah son of David. The messiah son of Joseph is a mortal warrior, fighting against the forces of evil, and he even succeeds in preserving the independence of the kingdom of Judea for a certain period of time but dies in the decisive battle against evil. It is only after his death that the messiah son of David appears in the Arbel Valley by the Sea of Galilee, reveals himself to the elders of the people of Israel, and proves that he is the messiah. Then he brings the dead to life and heads their army in the last battle. The messiah son of David does not stain his hands with blood; he annihilates evil by spiritual means only.

This narrative model continues to feed folk imagination, but other narrative patterns have developed alongside it, stemming from new beliefs and schools. With the spread of the ideas of Rabbi Isaac Luria in the sixteenth century and the proliferation of stories praising him, a form of messianic tale developed, featuring a hero who is not the mythical messiah set to appear at the end of days but a saintly human being, mediating between heaven and earth, who might hasten the coming of the messiah and of redemption. In these tales the holy man tests the faith of his disciples. They fail the tests, and their failure postpones the coming of redemption. An outstanding example of this type of narrative is the story about Rabbi Isaac Luria, who invited his disciples to go up to Jerusalem on Sabbath Eve (*Shivḥei Ha'Ari*). This type of plot reappears also in the stories about the mystical rabbi Israel ben Eliezer (called the Ba'al Shem Tov), the prominent kabbalist Rabbi Ḥaim ben Atar, and other holy men.

Alongside the story of the mythical messiah and the tales about holy men, an additional type of narra-

Detail from "Meeting the Messiah" (Łódź, 1935), from the Szyk Haggadah. *(The Robbins Family Collection. Reproduced with the cooperation of The Arthur Szyk Society, Burlingame, California, www.szyk.org)*

tive developed, about a wise man who tries to destroy evil by practicing Kabbalah mysticism and thus hasten the coming of the messiah and with him national and cosmic redemption. However, the human limitations of the wise man cause him to fail badly, and even empower evil. This type of narrative developed around the figure of the kabbalist Rabbi Yosef dela Reina.

Three basic folk narrative patterns developed over time, each telling about the redeemer and his struggle against evil, and each representing a different perception of redemption and of the messianic endeavor: the pattern portraying the mythical messiah, fighting mythical evil until redemption; the pattern portraying the holy person with supernatural knowledge, who tests his disciples' faith, their failure, and eventual delaying of redemption; and the pattern portraying a wise man, well-versed in the practical aspect of the Kabbalah, who tries to subdue mythical evil by means of oaths but fails because of his human limitations and as a result sins and causes others to do so. These three patterns are models, leading to the development of other messianic tales that continue to appear at times of increasing messianic expectations, such as the mythical tales about Shabtai Zvi and Nathan of Gaza, the stories about David Alroy and Shlomo Molkho, as well as stories praising the *tzaddikim* (Hasidic rabbis), who tried to reform the world and hasten redemption.

One might perceive these patterns as a theme composed of three elements of plot: the redeemer's decision to bring about redemption, the struggle against evil, and success or failure. These elements take various forms in the different patterns. The decision to bring about

redemption appears in three different versions: (a) the mythical one, in which the time of the supernatural redeemer's arrival is determined by a supreme power; (b) the version in which the redeemer, a holy man, decides to make use of an opportune time revealed to him by supernatural knowledge; and (c) the version in which a human redeemer, wise and knowledgeable about the secrets of practical Kabbalah, decides to compel the supreme powers to do his bidding.

The struggle against evil appears in two main versions: (a) the mythical one, displaying a physical struggle occurring in many stages, with the assistance of various helpers and holy objects; and (b) tales about holy men, in which the struggle is mainly spiritual and rarely described.

Success or failure is portrayed in three ways: (a) as mythical, in which the messiah succeeds in bringing about redemption; (b) in tales about holy men, who fail as the result of their disciples' improper conduct and the insufficient faith of their generation; and (c) in the version in which the wise man fails due to his own weaknesses when adjuring and subduing the supreme powers, and through his failure sins and causes others to sin, delaying redemption.

Hebrew literature since the beginning of the twentieth century continued to weave the tale of the messiah and of redemption into its works, attempting to link modern events to Jewish history and tradition. Most literary attempts to confront historical events of utmost importance to the Jewish people incorporate the theme of redemption and the figure of the messiah as a recur-

ring essential element in Jewish thought and as an all-powerful motive for the endeavors of the Jew in modern times. But what used to be permeated with innocent faith, which confirmed and empowered social and religious institutions as well as life patterns, has been replaced by doubt and frustration in modern Hebrew literature, as it is unwilling to adopt the previously prevalent religious, harmonic perception. The Jewish revolutionary, whether Zionist or socialist, is deeply influenced by his affinity with the figures of redeemers in folk literature, but this affinity is always dialectical and displays doubt and disillusionment alongside hope and prospects for the future (e.g., *Stories of the Revolution,* by H. Hazaz; *Days and Nights,* by N. Bistricki). The narrative pattern of the redeemer, which reflects the presence of God and the messiah in Israeli tradition, changes its features in the modern era and becomes, in most works, the symbol of the futile search for divine transcendental presence (e.g., the heroes of Ya'akov Shabtai and some of the heroes of *The Last Jew,* by Yoram Kaniuk).

Yael Poyas

See also: Elijah the Prophet.

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MEZUZAH

The *mezuzah* is the parchment scroll inscribed with particular Hebrew verses from the Torah affixed to the doorpost of the entrance to Jewish homes and rooms within it. In the Bible, *mezuzah* simply means "doorpost" (Exod. 12:7), but later it acquired the meaning of the actual object placed on the doorpost. The biblical commandment to "write *them* upon the *mezuzot* [doorposts] of your house and upon the gates" is given twice (Deut. 6:9 and 11:20) but does not specify which exact words of God are meant by "them." Rabbinical tradition employs words in Deuteronomy 6:4–9 and 11:13–21; the Samaritans (see: Samaritans) who carve their *mezuzot* on large stones, use different texts—in particular, the Ten Commandments.

Other laws concerning the preparation of the *mezuzah* were set by the rabbis in the talmudic period and later elaborated in such works as the Jewish philosopher and Torah scholar Maimonides's *Mishneh Torah.* According to these rules, the *mezuzah* is prepared from the skin of a kosher animal (size not indicated) and inscribed by a *sofer* (a Jewish scribe who transcribes prescribed texts) upon one side, with the above passages, in square letters, commonly occupying twenty-two lines. It should be affixed to the doorpost of every residential room; rooms such as bathrooms or storage rooms are excluded. Ashkenazi Jews affixed it also to their synagogues' entrances, while the Sephardim did not. Today it is common to affix it as well in other public buildings. Commonly, the *mezuzah* is affixed in the upper third of the right side of the doorpost and should slant inward—actually representing a compromise between the vertical (Rashi [Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes]) and horizontal (Rabenu Tam [Ya'akov ben Meir, 1100–1171]) positions common in the Middle Ages. Halakhah further specifies that a blessing should be recited when the *mezuzah* is attached to the doorpost and that it must be inspected twice within seven years.

The practice of protecting the house against evil spirits with written formulas or other magic objects is known from the folklore of many people in antiquity as well as the modern era. Early Jewish sources and modern scholars thus disputed whether the *mezuzah* is a protective amulet. While the Talmud occasionally refers to the protective powers of the *mezuzah* (see *y. Pe'ah* 1:1), Maimonides claimed that those "foolish hearts" who believe so "turn a commandment" whose purpose is to emphasize the love of God "into an amulet" (*m. Sefer Ahavah, Tefillin* 5:4). Believing in the potency of the *mezuzah* as a protection against evil spirits (*shedim*), Jews in the Middle Ages used to inscribe on the parchment kabbalistic formulas and names of protective angels, and draw magical designs. But Maimonides's decision finally became the norm, and no such formulas were added on the face of the *mezuzah.* However, to this day the back of the parchment is inscribed with two powerful names of God, familiar also from standard Hebrew amulets. Most common is the name Shaddai (Almighty), which is inscribed so that it is visible when the parchment is rolled up. The name Shaddai is considered especially powerful in protective formulas, but in the context of the *mezuzah* it is traditionally interpreted as standing for שומר דלתות ישראל ("Guardian of the doors of Israel" [i.e., Jewish homes]). The second name is the so-called fourteen-letter name כוזו במוכסז כוזו, usually written on the back of the parchment. This name is derived by one of the forms of the system called *temurah* (substitution), according to which every letter represents the one preceding it in the Hebrew alphabet (thus, the hidden name is יהוה אלוהינו יהוה).

The belief in the power of the *mezuzah* led some authorities to strongly recommend appropriate codes of behavior toward the *mezuzah.* The most prevalent custom is to kiss the *mezuzah,* or touch it with bare fingers and

Assorted *mezuzah* cases.
(Jewish School/The Bridgeman Art Library/Getty Images)

kiss them, every time one enters or leaves the room or apartment. This custom is mentioned in *Minhagei Maharil*, the book of customs of the German rabbi Jacob ben Moshe Moelin Halevi (called the Maharil; 1360?–1427). Another German authority, Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg (called the Maharam; ca. 1215–1293), urged his fellow Jews to place in their homes many *mezuzot*, as "no demon can have power over a house upon which the *mezuzah* is properly affixed" (*Responsa Maharam,* Cremona, 1557, no. 108). To this day there are rabbis who claim that car accidents or other misfortunes can be prevented if the *mezuzot* are properly written and periodically inspected.

It became customary in the talmudic period to encase the rolled parchment in a receptacle, which the Talmud called a שפופרת (tube). As Rabbi Judah (third century C.E.) objected to this practice, one may assume it was a new custom at the time (*Mezuzah* 2:10). But despite the objection, the custom was apparently widely accepted early on and later adopted by many Jewish communities, East and West. It is assumed that the talmudic tube was plain and no decorations adorned its face—whether made of wood, metal, or, more likely, simple reed. The tradition of using reeds was still prevalent in the Italian communities of the Renaissance and Baroque period, as is testified by Rabbi Judah Leon de Modena (1571–1648), who in his work *Historia de riti hebraici* (Venice, 1638, II,2) calls it *canna* (reed).

European *mezuzah* cases were made of a variety of materials reflecting the status of their owners and their artistic tastes. In both the Sephardic and Ashkenazi worlds, plain *mezuzah* cases were most common; however, the highly ornamental *mezuzah* case was much more at home among the Ashkenazim, especially high-ranking members of the community and large synagogues, in Central and Eastern Europe. Extant examples are exquisitely carved of wood in a style and technique familiar from other objects (e.g., Torah pointers), and there are some decorative silver cases, executed by skilled silversmiths, who at times even embedded them with semiprecious stones. As a rule, Ashkenazi (and other) cases have a small opening to show the word "Shaddai," inscribed on the rolled parchment. On some East European cases the aperture has tiny doors, at times inscribed with another "name" of God associated with Shaddai, that is, קרע שטן (lit., "rend Satan"). Other decorative symbols include designs familiar from local Jewish ceremonial objects, such as the Torah crown, the Ten Commandments, the four "holy animals" (lion, tiger, deer, and eagle—the latter commonly shown as double-headed), twisted pillars (generally standing for Jachin and Boaz, the two pillars that stood at the entrance vestibule of Solomon's Temple [I Kgs 7:21; II Chr 3:17]), and floral designs. In some cases German examples featured human figures as well (e.g., praying Jews).

Italian *mezuzah* cases were at times made in the shape of rectangular thin brass boxes, with a circular aperture covered with glass through which the word "Shaddai" is visible. In Eretz Israel of the Old Yishuv, olive wood cases gained widespread popularity and were decorated with holy sites, most often the Western Wall and Rachel's Tomb, the visual hallmarks of the Holy Land.

Most attractive and unusual are the *mezuzah* covers of Moroccan Jews. The custom in Morocco had been to

hang over the *mezuzah* at the entrance of the house an embroidered cover in the form of a shield, reminiscent of the Moroccan tefillin (phylacteries) case. The cover is made of velvet and embroidered in gold or silver threads with typical designs: flowers, *ḥamsa* (see: Symbols) elements, protective pairs of birds, and so on. Most remarkably is the name of the mistress of the house, which is centrally embroidered in the upper part of the cover, just beneath the word "Shaddai" at the top center.

In modern times, the *mezuzah* covers feature old designs and familiar motifs, but many new materials and modern decorative features have been adopted. Side by side with traditional materials, *mezuzah* cases today are made of Jerusalem stone, glass, fiberglass, plexiglass, ceramic, plastic, molded rubber, mold-made paper (handmade paper actually produced on a cylinder machine or a cylindrical mold), anodized titanium, ceramic alpaca, and combinations of various materials. A common feature of the modern *mezuzot,* especially in Israel, is the replacement of the word "Shaddai" with the enlarged letter *shin* (though sometimes both are used). Craftsmen in the United States and Israel create *mezuzah* covers often aimed at particular sectors of the Jewish population, clearly reflected in the combination of materials and designs. In addition to covers made for the various Jewish denominations, some are made for special groups, such as those for children's rooms, which are designed in the shape of a car, Noah's Ark, or other toylike motifs. Though halakhically unnecessary, another recent phenomenon is the car *mezuzah.* In Israel some institutions and sectors, such as the army or police, produce their own *mezuzah* cases, embedded with their familiar logos or emblems.

Shalom Sabar

See also: Amulets; Samaritans; Symbols.

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Midrash

Midrash (Heb., מדרש) is a particular genre of rabbinic literature comprising four major forms: (1) biblical exegesis; (2) halakhic discussion; (3) aggadic narrative; and (4) public sermon. Midrashic literature is also the main source for Jewish folk literature from antiquity and late antiquity.

The noun "midrash"—from the root *drsh* (דרש)—appears only twice in the Bible (2 Chr. 13:22 and 24:27), both times meaning "book" or "writing." This narrow meaning evolved in Second Temple writings and later in rabbinic literature to primarily mean "to search," "to seek," "to examine," and "to investigate."

The *darshan,* the individual who interprets the biblical verse, might decide not to uncover the original context or meaning of the biblical verse. While aware of these, he can choose to invent new readings that validate his own needs or the needs of his generation. The verse's polysemy—and its potentially different or contradictory meanings—enable the *darshan* to use or manipulate the verse in order to support his own religious, theological, ideological, or halakhic ideas.

Midrash is divided into two major subgenres: Midrash Halakhah and Midrash Aggadah. In Midrash Halakhah, the sages usually interpret biblical verses to support their innovative halakhic positions, while in Midrash Aggadah they offer literary interpretations, having no direct halakhic implications, upon the verses. Scholarship traditionally dates Midrash Halakhah to the Tannaitic period (first two centuries C.E.) and Midrash Aggadah to the Amoraic period (approximately the third to sixth centuries C.E.); however, as many scholars have shown, this historical division is not absolute, as much aggadic material appears in the tannaitic corpus.

During the Tannaitic period, two main textual corpuses make use of midrashic material: the Mishnah and the Tosefta, and the *Midreshei ha'Tannaim.* The pre-eminent third-century halakhic work known as the Mishnah is traditionally attributed to Rabbi Yehuda ha'Nasi's redaction. The Tosefta, a large collection of segments that were left out of the Mishnah and collected over the following two centuries, is structurally similar to the Mishnah. The category of *Midreshei ha'Tannaim* is a scholarly designation used to describe a series of tannaitic compositions interpreting both the halakhic and literary sections of the Torah. The compositions follow the order of the Torah, skipping over Genesis and beginning with Exodus: *Mekhilta de'Rabbi Yishmael* and *Mekhilta de'Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai* are dedicated to Exodus; the *Sifra,* also known as *Torat Kohanim,* is dedicated to Leviticus; *Sifrei Bamidbar* and *Sifrei Zuta* are dedicated to Numbers; and *Sifrei Devarim* is dedicated to Deuteronomy.

Significantly, midrashic material can also be found in several other sources: Second Temple literature, the writings of Jewish Hellenist authors such as Josephus Flavius and Philo of Alexandria, and early Christian writings, particularly the New Testament.

During the Amoraic period, the sages reached a peak of creativity, composing hundreds of brief literary texts. These texts can be divided into two major groups: exegetical narrative expansions of the biblical story, in which the sages rewrite the original text in light of their own theological, philosophical, and cultural understandings, and biographical narratives of the sages (Heb., *Ma'ashe ḥakhamim*), in which the sages recount variegated tales about their colleagues and daily life in Palestinian and Babylonian Jewish communities of late antiquity. These stories not only describe the house of study (Heb., *beit ha-midrash*) and the sages who studied in it but also grant a hearing to the diverse spectrum of voices usually unheard during antiquity and late antiquity, including those of women, children, and slaves.

The midrashic material from the Amoraic period is collected in two large corpuses: the Talmuds and the aggadic Midrash compilations. There are two Talmuds: the Talmud Yerushalmi (the Palestinian Talmud), created primarily in the Galilee at the beginning of the fifth century C.E., and the Talmud Bavli (the Babylonian Talmud), known also as the "Talmud" or Gemara, created in Babylonia and edited around the seventh century C.E. The aggadic Midrash compilations include the "Classical Midrash," mainly collected and edited in Palestine during the Amoraic period, and the "Postclassical Midrash," collected in many different locales, including Babylonia, the Balkans, and southern Europe, from the end of the Amoraic period until the end of the first millennium. Chief among midrashic compilations are *Midrash Rabba* and *Pesiqta de'Rav Kahana. Midrash Rabba* gathers ten distinct compilations, which were collected at different times in different places, under one name; five contain aggadic homilies on the five books of the Torah, and five contain aggadic homilies on the five scrolls (Song of Songs, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Esther, and Lamentations). *Pesiqta de'Rav Kahana* is unique in that it is structured upon the annual cycle of sections from the Torah that the prophets publicly read on festivals and specially designated Sabbaths. The largest homiletical compilations from the postclassical period are the *Tanḥuma,* a midrash on the five books of the Torah; *Avot de'Rabbi Nathan,* which follows tractate *Avot* of the Mishnah; and *Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer,* the latest compilation, written after the rise of Islam and containing a rewrite of the book of Genesis and of the first part of Exodus.

Ever since the Middle Ages, the midrashic traditions have been retold again and again, and they are found in all the important story anthologies such as *Midrash Aseret ha'Dibberot, Alphabet of Ben Sira,* and *Ḥibbur Yafe min ha'Yeshua.*

Haim Weiss

See also: Rabbinic Literature.

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MIMUNA FESTIVAL

The Moroccan-Jewish Mimuna festival is a metamorphosis of one of the oldest festivals in human history, dedicated to celebrating the renewal of nature in the spring and its regeneration after the winter hibernation. This festival, held in communities throughout Israel and Morocco, has become a significant new festival for North African immigrants and others in Israel and shows how ethnic behavior succeeds in perpetuating itself in a new cultural environment. As a festival with deep roots in the Jewish tradition, it contributes to preserving some features of Jewish cultural identity and original communal values.

Roots in an Agrarian Society

In the biblical tradition, Passover was normally designated for this celebration, but the constraints that were thereafter imposed on Passover ceremonies and food consumption—especially on ordinary bread and other foods, in the rabbinical tradition—changed the substance of this ancient and central Hebrew festival. It morphed from a celebration of the cycle of life to a national and a religious festival. In numerous Mediterranean Jewish communities, and especially among North African Jews, the night and day following the end of the Passover festival were used for the reappropriation of some ancient spring traditions and the return to ordinary food and bread consumption after the Passover interruption. However, nowhere other than Morocco did this new celebration acquire such an institutionalized and enlarged set of ceremonies and behaviors, for historical and sociocultural reasons. In Moroccan-Jewish communities, the Mimuna took on numerous new cultural meanings—from economic, livelihood, and daily life meanings to friendship between Jews and Muslims and messianic aspirations.

Mimuna, or *Maymuna* (the feminine form of *Maymun*), is an Arabic word that means "lucky," "fortunate," "blessed," and the traditional blessing said at the festival is: "May you earn and be fortunate." The blessing is derived from the traditional agricultural calendar: The Mimuna takes place at the beginning of the crucial harvest season, on which the livelihood of both individuals
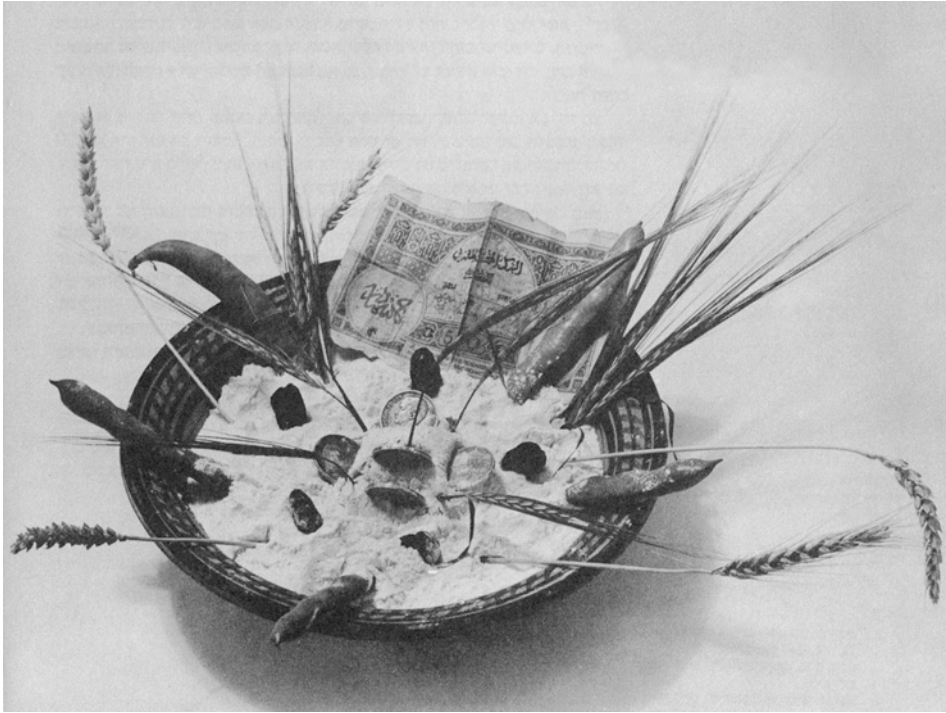
A Mimuna plate, Morocco. The items in the plate are symbols of fertility and wealth. *(Courtesy of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Photo by Reuben Milon)*

and the community depends. A Moroccan-Jewish proverb hints at the importance of the agricultural calendar: "Who didn't make good benefits between Passover and Pentecost would find where to die," that is, he is very unlucky; this emphasizes the link between spring agriculture and economic success. The food and drinks served during the night ceremonies of Mimuna, including fresh beans, ears of barley or wheat, branches of blooming fruit trees such as fig or pomegranate, milk and butter, drinks and liquors, and plates of fine flour and sweets, homemade cookies, and marmalade, also have symbolic and agricultural implications. These ceremonies include the rendition of some biblical verses from the Book of Proverbs and paragraphs from the mishnaic Chapters of the Fathers, and the tasting of the goodies by large groups of family members, friends, and neighbors, who visit numerous houses on this night. In some families, they also prepare a kind of unsalted and unleavened fried bread, called *mofleta,* which is served with butter and honey to relatives and guests and is often accompanied by glasses of green tea.

The night ceremonies end with the preparation of dough for the new bread to be baked and consumed on the following day. On this occasion, the mistress of the house kneads the dough and performs blessings for the young girls and boys of the family and friends, wishing them good luck in marriage and placing some coins and light jewels on the surface of the dough. Thus, this ceremony is also a good occasion for bringing together boys and girls from large families and of acquaintances and giving them an opportunity to meet each other in the

hope of possible marital arrangements. On this festival, betrothals also were celebrated.

Multidimensional Aspects

Apart from these communal family, friendship, and hospitality aspects, the Mimuna festival encourages and exemplifies good relations between Jews and Muslims. According to some scholars, beginning at the end of the seventeenth century, after a period of violent conflict between Muslims and Jews, numerous Moroccan Jews, especially in rural communities, would visit the home of their Muslim acquaintances before the night ceremonies. During these visits, Jews offered their Muslim neighbors typical Jewish delicacies, including Passover *matzah* (unleavened bread), cookies, and cooked food. The Muslims looked forward to and welcomed these traditional visits, offering tea and other beverages in return and providing their guests with milk, butter, honey, eggs, fresh beans, and ears of wheat, and sometimes also fine flour and yeast for the new dough to be put on the Mimuna table.

On the following day, families would go, separately or in small groups, to parks, forests, or gardens with picnic baskets to enjoy nature. Later, the mistress would return to her house to bake another batch of bread, whose dough had risen overnight and during the day.

An additional meaning of the Mimuna festival is evident in a mixed Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic song performed at the evening ceremonies. It speaks longingly of the hope of every Jew to be in the Holy Land the following year and to enjoy all its promised abundance, symbolized by the

Mimuna table and its abundance. Moreover, the common Hebrew blessing "Next year in Jerusalem" was repeated so often on this occasion that communities of southwestern Morocco called the evening of Mimuna by a mixed Judeo-Arabic and Hebrew name, "Lilt Shanah Habba," that is, the night of the blessing "in next year." In rabbinical circles, the name "Mimuna" even has a messianic meaning: The word is said to be a deformation of the Hebrew word *emunah* (faith). From this point of view, Mimuna ceremonies refer to the messianic hope of redemption during the month of Nissan, according to the midrashic saying "In Nissan they were liberated {from Egypt} and in Nissan they will be liberated {by the messiah from exile}."

In Israel, rabbis attributed another meaning to the Mimuna. They established a link between the festival name and Rabbi Maimon, the father of the celebrated Jewish philosopher Maimonides (Rabbi Moses ben Maimon), who found refuge with his family and his notorious son for five years in Fez, Morocco, after fleeing the persecutions of Almohad fundamentalists in Cordoba in 1160. However, there is no trace of this rabbinical meaning in the festival ceremonies or in the texts performed at them.

After the mass immigration of many Moroccan Jews to Israel, their cultural habits and behaviors were disrupted. This was due to the dispersal of their natural communities and their scattering around the country, as well as to the new cultural ideology of "the melting pot" adopted by the leadership of the new Jewish state in order to shape a common Israeli identity and culture. This disruption also affected the Mimuna ceremonies, and only a few families continued to celebrate them in the 1950s and the early 1960s. In 1964, a Moroccan-Jewish political leader initiated a public gathering of immigrants from North Africa, especially Morocco, in a Jerusalem park on Mimuna day, for a great picnic, accompanied by Moroccan-Jewish music and food, and invited social and political leaders to welcome the guests. Thereafter, a new tradition of Mimuna was born in Israel, with great public and sociopolitical significance and ceremony.

Mimuna Today

Since the 1980s, Mimuna has become a new official festival in Israel, about which local and national newspapers and the electronic media report and deliberate and even special radio and TV programs are produced. The evening ceremonies open with a festive event that occurs at a public and cultural space in Jerusalem or in the home of a political figure from the Moroccan-Jewish community and to which numerous political, diplomatic and religious figures, including the prime minister and the chief rabbis, are invited for official greetings and tasting the sweet *mofleta,* which has become the new symbol of the Mimuna in Israel. Elsewhere in the country, local ceremonies are also organized in public spaces or in the homes of Moroccan Jews, gathering local leaders and guests from among their neighbors and Ashkenazi acquaintances. The slogan transmitted by the national organizers of the ceremonies to Moroccan-Jewish families is "Open House," requesting that these families open their houses to guests from other Israeli communities in order to make the Mimuna festival one of friendship and brotherhood for all Israeli society.

Not all Moroccan Jews celebrate the family ceremonies of the Mimuna. This is true not only for young generations born in Israel but for the older generation as well. The festival has become a special event organized by a few families in every Israeli settlement and includes plenty of cookies, beverages, and a great amount of *mofleta.*

The following day, the ceremonies take place all over Israel; picnics are held in parks, with grill pans and various foods. In some places, principally those with a great number of Moroccan Jews, municipal authorities organize entertainment, including official greetings and the performance of Moroccan-Jewish music. Until the beginning of the 2000s, a great gathering was organized, at the national level, at a large park in Jerusalem, where thousands were invited to picnic and participate in the traditional ceremony of greetings, addressed by the president of the state, the prime minister, and important ministers. A musical program was also offered with the performance of famous Middle Eastern and other singers and groups.

Hence, the Mimuna festival slowly became an important sociopolitical arena in Israel, at which political leaders meet and greet future voters. With the communal and cultural aspects of the festival, the event has evolved from a pure folk festival to an official national celebration.

Joseph Chetrit

See also: North Africa, Jews of.

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MINHAG (CUSTOM)

The word "*minhag*" (custom) has two different meanings in Jewish tradition and folklore: (1) a postbiblical religious custom; and (2) a version of a liturgical rite.

A Postbiblical Religious Custom

In talmudic times the structure of the Halakhah (Jewish law) had a fairly clear hierarchy. The laws that had biblical authority (*mi'de'oraita*) were the most stringent. Transgressions of them carried the heaviest penalties, and they could hardly ever be changed or modified. The laws based on rabbinic authority (*mi'derabbanan*) were more lenient, bore lighter sanctions, and were more open to being modified or overturned. (They are usually called either "*gezerot*" or "*takkanot*" [negative or positive enactments].) The class of practices with the least authority in the hierarchic structure was the *minhag*.

One does not say a prayer on carrying out a *minhag,* because it has not been "commanded": The benediction usually begins with: "Blessed art Thou . . . who has *commanded* us to . . ." Likewise, transgression of a *minhag* exacts no serious sanction. *Minhag* is more amenable to change and cancellation. In many cases, customs are of a local nature, limited to a country, a town, or even a single family, as opposed to the other categories of Halakhah, which for the most part devolve upon the whole community. However, with the passage of time, and as a result of threats from different groups (Karaites, Reform Judaism, etc.), which attacked and rejected certain customs as baseless, the *minhag* was given greater authority and status. Thus the Tosafot (*Menahot* 20b) state that "custom is Torah" and on occasion had precedence over law (based on *y. Yevamot* 12.1, *y. Bava Metzi'a* 7.1, *Soferim* 14:18), while the revered Torah scholar Maimonides classified *minhagot* (pl.) with *gezerot* and *takkanot,* thus suggesting the three had equal status. The early-nineteenth-century rabbi Moses Sofer ruled that any attempt to innovate, that is, to change or annul customs, was forbidden by Torah law (*ḥadash assur min ha'Torah*), thus limiting rabbinic flexibility in dealing with archaic and obsolete practices.

Over the generations, there has been a blurring of the distinction between different classes of customs, such as those that a community adopted probably following the personal practice of a renowned sage or, on the other hand, a non-Jewish practice that somehow penetrated from the surrounding cultural milieu. The former usually fell into two categories: (1) a stringent practice "to distance oneself from transgressions," such as making the Sabbath begin early, adding to the days a woman must abstain from relations with her husband after her menstrual period ended, or extending the period between the eating of meat and milk products, and (2) "making mitzvot more endearing" (*ḥibbuvei mitzvah*), such as kissing a *mezuzah,* a Torah scroll, or elaborate decoration of ritual objects (*hiddur mitzvah*). The latter class often reflects local folk beliefs and was not infrequently called into question by rabbis as falling into the category of *ḥukkat hagoyim* (idolatrous practice). For example, early medieval *mezuzot*—even one written by Rabbi Judah the Pious—in addition to having the canonic biblical texts, had in their margins divine names, angels' names, characters, magical symbols, and verses from the Psalms. With regard to such *mezuzot,* Maimonides wrote that he who has them would have no part in the world to come. In a similar vein, Rabbi Tam of the twelfth century pointed out that if one reverses the Hebrew letters in *minhag* (מנהג; custom), one arrives at *Gehinnom* (גהנם; hell), indicating that sages should not uphold foolish customs.

These additions to the "classic" *mezuzah* were intended to increase its power to protect the house against malignant forces. Indeed, the biblical name of God, Shaddai, inscribed on the parchment was understood to be an acronym for *shomer daltot (or dirot) Israel* (guardian of the door, or houses, of Israel). Many such folk customs arose out of the belief that one required protection against evil spirits. Thus, in North African Jewish communities the use of the Islamic *ḥamsa* (hand of Fatimah) was widespread, a Torah scroll was placed in the room of a woman in childbirth to protect her, and a knife was placed under her pillow for the same purpose. Salt and iron were used as protective devices, and amulets, such as the famous one preventing the female demon Lilith from killing newborn babies, found in the early *Sefer Raziel ha'Malakh*, were hung on walls, above beds, or around the neck. These practices, which entered the halakhic literature (including the authoritative *Tzara'at* [will] of Rabbi Judah the Pious), have their roots in the folk superstitions of the surrounding culture. Rabbinic literature is copiously interspersed with such customs, which belong to the realm of folk religion.

At the other extreme, some customs took on the status of real law. Thus, although originally the second day of the foot-festivals (*yom tov sheni shel galuyyot*) was imitated in the Diaspora because of doubt as to where the new month begins, and emissaries sent out by the Sanhedrin could not reach distant communities to inform them in time, when the calendar became fixed by astronomical calculations, this consideration no longer applied and the practice of keeping the Second Day should have become obsolete. The Talmud (*b. Betzah* 4b) asks: "Now that we are acquainted with the calendar, why do we observe two days?" And the answer given is: "Because they sent a directive from Jerusalem stating: Adhere to the *minhag* of your ancestors that was transmitted to you." In this way, many customs assumed a status of sacredness by virtue of long usage

and were treated with greater reverence than those from Halakhah, such as eating apples and honey on Rosh Ha'Shana and Kapparot on the eve of Yom Kippur.

Historically there has been a remarkable diversity of customs in Jewish practice and there was a clear tendency by rabbis to attempt to amalgamate various customs into a harmonic whole, so as to "cover all the options" (*latzet yedei kol hadeot*). Likewise the rabbis went out of their way to justify even the strangest practices (*lemashkunei nafshei lehatzdik haminhagim*). Hence numerous obsolete customs have been contracted into a composite unit.

Liturgical Rite

The basic foundations of the liturgy are found in the Talmud (tractate *Berakhot*). However, over the generations numerous conditions and modifications were made in different communities, so significant variations developed between the rites of various countries and communities. Most notably, the Ashkenazi ritual evolved from Palestinian practice, whereas the Sephardic one was based on Babylonian usage. Within these broad distinctions are a multitude of local variant *minhagim*: Byzantine, Italian, Polish, German, Yemenite, and North African, to mention but a few. The Palestinian ritual was largely forgotten during the period of the Crusaders (eleventh and twelfth centuries), when few Jews arrived to live in Palestine. Thus, the Palestinian triennial Torah-reading cycle fell into abeyance and the Babylonian annual cycle took over; the twenty-four fasting days listed in Palestinian Byzantine *Megillat Ta'anit Zuta* (or *Batra*), though cited in the legal codices, are no longer kept. Current liturgy is based primarily on the Babylonian *siddur Rav Amram Gaon,* and only remnants of the Palestinian rite survive, mostly in the Ashkenazi rite.

With the advent of printing, the versions became more standardized and consolidated and three major rituals emerged: *Nusaḥ Ashkenaz* (the European version), *Nusaḥ edot ha'Mizraḥ* (the version employed in North African communities), and *Nusaḥ Sepharad.* The latter is an amalgam of the Spanish (Sephardi) rite initiated by the school of the Ari, Rabbi Isaac Luria, in late-sixteenth-century Safed, and the Ashkenazi–Polish rite, a combination adopted by the Ḥasidim in the late eighteenth century. Considerable modification of the traditional liturgy has been introduced under Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist influence. In the State of Israel, especially in the Israeli army, an attempt has been made to consolidate unified prayers–rites, acceptable to all communities (*Nusaḥ Aḥid*), based primarily on the *Nusaḥ Sepharad.*

Daniel Sperber

See also: Folk Belief; Folk Medicine.

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MINHAG BOOKS (BOOKS OF CUSTOM)

Minhag books, devoted to the collection of Jewish customs (*minhagim*), fall into three major categories: (1) those that address customs of individual communities or of notable authorities; (2) those that celebrate customs relating to specific events, such as weddings,

funerals, circumcision, and festivals; and (3) studies of customs to reveal their background and origins and (among the kabbalists) their innermost meanings. Since customs represent life patterns of societies and individuals, which are not normally recorded, the need for such books arose as a result of contacts between communities that had varying customs, usually to demonstrate the legitimacy for each community to follow its own tradition and that each set of customs was binding upon its own locale.

In the Tannaitic period (first–second centuries C.E.) there existed such a list of the differences in marriage customs between Judea and the Galilee (*t. Ketubbot* 1:4). However, the earliest significant compilation of this nature is *Sefer ha'Ḥillukim* which lists the differences between Palestinian and Babylonian liturgical usage, compiled during the Geonic period (seventh–eighth centuries C.E.?, critically edited by M. Margaliot, Jerusalem 1938). Provence, in southern France, was an area in which the Franco-German and Spanish customs frequently clashed with one another, and several collections of customs were composed there, such as *Sefer ha'Manhig,* by Abraham ben Nathan (ed. Y. Raphael, Jerusalem, 1978), and *Sefer ha'Minhagot,* by Asher ben Saul Lunel, both from the early thirteenth century, listing customs of Lunel, Narbonne, Catalonia, and other areas, and their sources. In the late thirteenth century Menaḥem Meiri produced the work *Magen Avot*, defending Provençal customs against the attacks of Spanish authorities, primarily the disciples of Ramban, who tried to force the Spanish rite upon them. Germany had many small scattered communities, each of which developed its own customs.

From the early fourteenth century onward, there exists an entire genre of *minhag* literature, beginning with the followers of Rabbi Meir of Rothenberg (called the Maharam). The most important of these works are the *Tashbetz* of Rabbi Samson ben Zadok and the *minhag* books of Rabbi Avraham Klausner, Rabbi Jacob ben Moshe Moelin Halevi (called the Maharil), and Rabbi Isaac Tyrnau (of Hungary). In the sixteenth century a new form of *minhag* book emerged, for popular use, designed primarily for women and children, in Yiddish and with simple woodcut illustrations. The earliest was printed in Venice in 1593, based on Shimon Ashkenazi's publication in 1590. In modern times *minhag* literature has been enriched by studies that sought to give reasons for each Central Term. Among the most popular works are *Ta'amei ha'Minhagim,* by A.I. Sperling (1896), and *Otzar kol minhagei Yeshurun,* by A.E. Hirshkovitz (1917). The fullest digest published to date is *Otzar Ta'amei ha'Minhagim,* by S.P. Gelbart (1995). In many of these works the reasons given for inclusion are imaginative and far-fetched, and the late twentieth century saw a number of critical analyses published on the historical developments of customs.

Daniel Sperber

See also: *Minhag* (Custom).

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MINYAN

In Jewish law, the minimum requirement of individuals for a variety of liturgical purposes is a minyan (מנין), a quorum of ten males age thirteen or older. Certain sections of communal prayer, such as *Barekhu* (meaning, "bless," the opening word of the call to worship)*, Birkat Cohanim* (the priestly benediction), and the reader's repetition of the Amidah (Standing Prayer), can be recited only in the presence of a minyan. So, too, the reading of the Torah and of the *haftarah,* and the recitation of *sheva berakhot* (the seven benedictions) of a wedding ceremony and marriage feast require such a minyan.

This notion, that ten adult males constitute a community (*edah)* and are therefore required for community ritual activities, was variously derived by the sages ("This evil community," Num. 14:27), referring to the ten spies who brought back to Joshua a negative report from Jericho (*b. Ber* 216, *b. Megillah* 23b), or from Genesis 18:32, where it is related that ten righteous men could have saved the evil city of Sodom (*b. Ber.* 6a). The Talmud (*b. Ber.* 6b) cites the third-century Palestinian sage Rabbi Yoḥanan as stating, "When God comes to a synagogue and does not find a minyan there, He is angry, as it is said, 'wherefore, when I came, was there no man? When I called, was there none to answer?'" (Isa. 50:2).

Some communities that find it difficult to raise a quorum for prayer employ paid "minyan men" regularly to attend services. In modern-day egalitarian congregations, usually of the Conservative or Reform denominations, women worshipers may be counted as part, or all, of the quorum. In emergency situations, one may also form a minyan consisting of nine adult males and one boy holding a Bible (*Shulḥan Arukh Ḥayyim* 55:4).

Daniel Sperber

See also: Hebron.

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MITTEILUNGEN DER GESELLSCHAFT FÜR JÜDISCHE VOLKSKUNDE

See: Germany, Jews of; Grünwald, Max

MIZRAH

Mizraḥ (Heb., east) might refer to the eastern wall of the synagogue, which faces toward Jerusalem, where the holy ark is situated. This wall is also called *kotel ha'mizraḥ* (lit., "eastern wall"), and the seats against it are considered the most honorable seats in the synagogue.

In Jewish folklore, *mizraḥ* is the name of a plaque that includes this word as a central feature; it is hung in synagogues and Jewish homes, in Eastern and Central Europe, in Germany and Alsace, to indicate the direction of Jerusalem and, hence, the direction for prayer. (The direction of Jerusalem from Eastern and Central Europe is more to the south, but it has become the custom to refer to the direction of Jerusalem as east in this context.) Rabbinical texts state that one should direct one's heart in the direction of Jerusalem, the direction of the Temple, in the time of prayer (*m. Berakhot* 4; 4–5, *b. Berakhot*). Thus, the *mizraḥ* was more prevalent in homes, where it served as an indicator of the direction for prayer, though it also featured in synagogues, where it was mainly combined with the *shiviti* plaque, which is placed in front of the reader's desk.

The word "*mizraḥ*" is also interpreted as an acronym for the phrase "from this side the spirit of life." Psalm 113:3, referring to the direction of the Temple and the divine presence. A phrase commonly inscribed on *mizraḥ* plaques, "From the rising of the sun to its setting, the name of the Lord is to be praised," refers to the glorification of God from the east. Other verses and benedictions and devotional or moral texts are often added. A very common combination is that between the word "*mizraḥ*" with the verse "I have set the Lord always in front of me" (Ps. 16:8).

*Mizraḥ*s were made sometimes by scribes or by yeshiva students as a pastime. They were painted or printed on parchment or paper or embroidered on textile, and many were made as papercuts. They are colorful and decorative, bearing symbolic images such as the rising sun, rampant lions flanking a crown, the four animals from the saying

in *Pirqe Avot* (The Ethics of the Fathers; 5:20) "Be bold as the leopard and light as the vulture/eagle, swift as the gazelle, and powerful as the lion to do the will of your father in heaven" and many others.

Mizraḥ plaques became signs of Jewish homes, were associated with the creation of a new home, and were given as wedding presents.

Esther Juhasz

See also: Jerusalem and the Temple; Papercut; Shiviti-Menorah.

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MLOTEK, CHANA

See: Anthologies

MONSTERS AND OTHER MYTHOLOGICAL CREATURES

In Jewish folklore, monsters and other mythological creatures have played a role ever since biblical times. The origin of many of these creatures is vague, and scholars assume that many of them are of non-Jewish origin.

In the Bible a few mythological creatures, such as Leviathan (meaning "snake") (Isa. 27:1) and Behemoth (Job 40:15–24) (maybe meaning "hippopotamus"), are mentioned. The prophet Ezekiel saw a creature combining human and nonhuman segments (Ezek. 10). Giants are known from the Bible as well (Gen. 6:4; Deut. 3:11), and modern scholars argue that the role of such creatures was greater in antiquity, when God was believed to have subdued Rahav, the Canaanite sea monster (Ps. 89:11; Ps. 26:12).

In pseudepigrapha literature one reads about the phoenix (3 Bar. 6:1–13), two types of gigantic birds combined of several beasts' segments. Dragons appear as well (Add. to Dan.; Add. to Esth.).

In talmudic literature there are all sorts of monsters, some already known from earlier sources, such as a giant man (*b. Nid.* 24b), a gigantic bird (*Gen. Rab.* 19:4; *b. Bek.* 57b), the phoenix, a gigantic fish, the unicorn, and a Capricorn. The siren is mentioned in connection to halakhic (legal) matters (one is not allowed to eat a siren, because it is human, but its corpse is pure because it is a fish). Centaurs are mentioned in rabbinic text (*Bereshit*

Rab. 23:6) and also appear on synagogue ornaments. The *tannaim* (teachers of the Mishnah) believed (as did Aristotle) that there is a mouse made half of flesh and blood and half of soil (*m. Ḥul.* 9:6). The rabbis were aware of the reality of all sorts of human deformations and believed that a woman could give birth to a demon, a beast, or a snake (*m. Nid.* 3:1).

In *Hekhalot* literature—that is, Jewish mystical literature from the fourth through the seventh century— (Seder Rabba deBereshit 32 = Schäfer, Synopse # 452), there is a description of six heavenly beings that resemble a kind of Egyptian or Babylonian pantheon. In the Middle Ages Jews became aware of the legends concerning Alexander and were exposed to dwarfs and *acephalos* (headless) persons. Jews believed that a holy person could create a humanlike creature, known as the golem, a homunculus or anthropoid, which has become the most prominent Jewish monster in Jewish folklore.

In his commentary to Gen. 49:27, Rabbi Ephraim of Regensburg (twelfth century) took the legend about a werewolf as a Jewish tradition and wrote a charm about how to be saved from it.

Meir Bar-Ilan

See also: Jerusalem and the Temple.

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Month

The Jewish calendar is lunar, so the length of a month is based on the moon's circumnavigation of the earth. The month starts with the first appearance of the crescent, while the moon is positioned between the sun and the earth. This moment is called "*molad*" (Heb., birth), or "new moon." The moon takes approximately 29-1/2 days (precisely 29 days, 6 hours, 44 minutes, and 3-1/3 seconds) to travel around the earth. To prevent a new month from starting in the middle of the day, the half day is either omitted or added to the next month. Therefore, in the Jewish calendar a month may be either 29 or 30 days.

The names of the months in use today originated in Babylonian sources and are mentioned in the Talmud (*y. Rosh Ha'shanah* 1:2). Other names (1 Kgs. 6,1; 6, 38; 8,

The custom of Kiddush Levanah (the sanctification of the new moon). Woodcut from *Sefer Minhagim*, Amsterdam, 1727.

2) and a numerical system (Exod. 12:2; Num. 29:16) are found in the Bible, but were not retained.

The Jewish calendar year comprises twelve lunar months. The length of the first seven alternates: The first month, Nissan, always has 30 days; Iyar always has 29 days; Sivan, 30; Tammuz, 29; Av, 30; Elul, 29; and Tishrei, 30 days. The next two months, Heshvan, and Kislev, vary in length. Some years they are full (30 days) or abbreviated (29 days), and some years they alternate: Heshvan 29 days; and Kislev, 30 days. This flexibility is imposed to ensure that certain holidays will occur on fixed days. The following months, Tevet and Shevat, always have 29 and 30 days, respectively. In a regular year, Adar has 29 days, but in leap years (which are always the 3d, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th year in a 19-year cycle), an entire additional month is added. Adar I has 29 days, and Adar II has 30 days.

Ceremonies and celebrations observed every month mostly refer to the first day, Rosh Ḥodesh (lit., head of the month), when the crescent of the new moon appears. Some of the festivals related to nature (Sukkot, Passover, Tu Be'Av) occur on the full moon, in the middle of the month. In the Bible, trumpets were sounded to announce the first day of the month (Num. 10:10), when gatherings and banquets were set (1 Sam. 20:5), and when offerings and sacrifices were made (Num. 28:11–15).

In the Mishnah, the proclaiming of the new month is described in detail (*m. Rosh Ha'shanah* Ch. 2). The oldest method was used by a rabbinic court, which questioned at least two witnesses who claimed to have seen the crescent. A meal was offered to those who came to tes-

tify. After the testimony was accepted and agreed upon, the new month was announced throughout the country and the Diaspora by way of bonfires on hilltops. Due to controversies among sects, such as the Kutim (*m. Rosh Ha'shanah* 2:2) regarding the calendar, several cases of false testimonies and deceptive fires occurred, as a result of which this custom was altered. The court was charged with announcing the beginning of the month, and messengers were sent to the Diaspora. As these journeys were dangerous and at time failed, this method was abandoned as well. The calendar was finally fixed around 360 C.E. by Hillel the Second.

Since the sixteenth century, a custom developed of fasting on Rosh Ḥodesh eve and reciting Seliḥot (Supplication prayers usually recited daily during the month of Elul, before Rosh Ha'Shana). This fast is called Minor Yom Kippur.

Several customs related to the first day of the month existed among the different Jewish communities, such as paying a respectful visit to the rabbi, offering money to the *melamed* (traditional teacher), and abstaining from shaving. Tunisian women would whitewash graves. But many of these customs did not prevail or spread among all the Jewish people.

Although the calendar is fixed, the month's length is announced in the synagogue. On the first day of the month, prayers and blessings are recited. The traditional blessing dedicated to the new moon, "Birkat ha'Levana," is read by moonlight.

An ambivalent relationship exists between women and the first day of the month. In a positive context, women celebrate the day by abstaining from working. This custom has its source in the Midrash, in which it is told that women do not work on this particular day as a reward for not participating in the sin of the golden calf from the time of Moses (*Pirkei de'Rabbi Eliezer* 41). In a negative context, women are not allowed to participate in the blessing of the moon. This custom is based on an ancient Apocryptic tradition in which the moon assisted Eve by giving her light to commit the sin of eating the forbidden fruit.

Idit Pintel-Ginsberg

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MOSES

Moses—whom the Bible attests brought the Jewish people out of Egypt, led them through the desert, brought the tablets down to them from heaven, gave them the Torah, and died before himself entering the Promised Land—is the hero of innumerable legends in the apocryphal literature, the Midrash, and the literature of the Middle Ages and the modern era. These narratives fill the gaps in the scriptural account and go on to recount not only Moses's birth and life's work as leader of the people in Egypt as told in the Book of Exodus but also those years between these two periods of his life, about which the Bible offers scant information. The Hellenistic literature presents Moses as an ideal figure—a leader, military man, and architect of the culture. The rabbinic literature, by contrast, offers a more complex figure, one in keeping with the biblical portrayal: The sages viewed Moses as a human being with limitations and weaknesses yet also as the greatest of the prophets and one who possessed superhuman traits. The collections of expanded biblical stories of the Middle Ages, such as *The Chronicles of Moses* and the sixteenth-century *Sefer ha'yashar* (The Book of the Just), weave Moses's life story into an all-embracing epic, adapting the Hellenistic sources and the apocrypha disallowed in the rabbinic literature, the Midrash, and narrative material of their time. As it usually does in fashioning the characters of culture heroes, legend details several stages in the life of Moses. Scholars distinguish between legends before his birth, legends about his life, and legends set after death. Legend makes no mention of Moses's descendants; it was Joshua, his disciple, who took his place as spiritual leader of the Jewish people.

Legends Preceding and the Story of Moses's Birth

Noble parentage, an elderly mother, advance knowledge possessed by either the enemy or the family, the appearance of light, a painless delivery, unnatural growth, and various miracles in connection with the baby are all characteristic motifs of the typical birth model of cultural heroes. Legend adds many details to the biblical description of the birth of Moses as outlined in Exodus 2:1–2. According to Josephus, the pharaoh knew in advance, courtesy of his astrologers, of the birth of the Israelites' redeemer, who would one day defeat him. According to medieval sources, such as *The Chronicle of Moses* and *Sefer ha'yashar*, the pharaoh dreamed of a scale with a little lamb on one side and the elders and ministers of Egypt on the other; the lamb outweighed the rest. When he learned that the dream attributed the future destruction of Egypt to an Israelite soon to be

born, the pharaoh took Balaam's advice and commanded that every male child born to the Israelites be thrown into the Nile.

Consequently, according to the rabbinic sources, Amram divorced his wife, Jocheved, so as not to have to send more sons to their death. It was his daughter, Miriam, who persuaded him to remarry and continue to have children lest the males of the nation die out. In full view of the entire people, Amram, head of the Sanhedrin, remarried Jocheved as she sat on a bridal litter beneath a wedding canopy. Jocheved became young again, conceived a child, and gave birth to Moses in the sixth month of her pregnancy without labor pains. She and Amram both knew the nature of the fetus she bore: In a dream, the Almighty revealed himself to Amram and told him. At the time of Moses's birth, the house was filled with a light like that of the sun and the moon. Other miraculous signs of the birth are: Moses was born already circumcised and he was given the power of speech and the ability to walk at birth.

Legends About Moses's Life

Accounts of the scene in which the pharaoh's daughter—Thermuthis, according to the Greek sources, and Bitya, according to the rabbinic sources (Exod. 2:3–10)—pulled Moses out of the Nile report that there was such blistering heat that day that the princess went to the river with her handmaidens to cool off. Other explanations detailed in the Hellenistic and rabbinic sources for the princess's descent to the Nile are: her sadness at being barren, her desire to purify herself from her father's idols, or her wish to find a cure for leprosy. The Bible's ambiguous use of the word *"amatah"* ("her forearm" or "her maidservant") is resolved in the post-biblical literature and art in two ways: One explanation is that the princess's forearm lengthened so that she could reach the basket. The paintings of Dura Europas, from the third century, bear out this interpretation and express the positive view of the rabbinic sources toward Bitya. The translations into Greek and Latin (the Septuagint and the Vulgate), by contrast, opted for the second possibility. It was Bitya who named Moses after pulling him out of the water. Philo and Josephus offer a detailed Egyptian etymology for the name. The angel Gabriel also had a hand in rescuing Moses from the Nile: He struck Moses to make him cry and to arouse the princess's compassion. He also killed all her handmaidens save one because they advised her against violating her father's decree. After Moses was drawn out of the water, his sister, Miriam, appeared. She had been waiting nearby and suggested to the princess that the baby be brought to a Hebrew nursemaid. Consequently, he was brought to Jocheved's house.

Moses. From *Maḥzor Rödelheim* by Wolf Heidenheim (ca. 1800).

Moses in Childhood

Moses stayed in his mother's house for two years, at which time he was weaned and brought to Bitya, in the pharaoh's palace. A critical event in Moses's childhood occurred, according to Josephus in his *Chronicle of Moses,* when he reached for the royal crown, grasped it, and stepped on it or, alternatively, placed it on his own head. This act was perceived as a bad omen, and Moses was put through a test to prove his innocence: Hot coals and an onyx stone were placed in front of the child; when Moses reached for the onyx, Gabriel deflected his hand toward the burning coals, and everyone deemed the taking of the crown merely a child's act. Ailianos cites a Greek variant to this story.

Moses as a Youth

The Bible (Exod. 1:11–12) recounts Moses's involvement in the fate of his brethren. Upon witnessing an Egyptian

beat an Israelite to death, he killed the Egyptian and buried him in the sand. The postbiblical traditions related to this act in one of three ways, all intended to prevent the creation of a precedent allowing a Jew to kill a gentile oppressor: Josephus ignores it in deference to a target audience that dictated an apologetic orientation; the rabbinic sources presented it as a one-time event emerging from unique circumstances: the killing of the Egyptian was the calculated implementation of Heaven's sentence against the Egyptian oppressor, who had committed adultery with the wife of an Israelite overseer. Moses killed him with assistance from above and not with a conventional weapon. The late source *Petirat Moshe rabbeinu* (The Death of Moses) from the eleventh century in Byzantium is the only one to criticize Moses. It presents this act as the reason that Moses is sentenced to die and forbidden to enter the Land of Israel.

After killing the Egyptian, Moses had to flee Egypt. Two Israelites who were fighting each other (Exod. 2:13), identified in the rabbinic sources as Dotan and Aviram, informed on him to the pharaoh. Moses was in fact saved from death when the pharaoh's messengers tried to behead him: His neck became as hard as marble, and thus he was impervious to harm but still had to leave Egypt.

Hellenistic as well as medieval sources recount the legend of Moses in Ethiopia. This is an example of how legendary traditions passed from the apocryphal and Hellenistic literature to the medieval literature of expanded biblical tales, skipping over the talmudic and midrashic sources. (One rabbinic reference to the legend, in an Aramaic translation of the Bible attributed to the second-century sage Jonathan ben Uzziel, bears mention.) While the sages identify the "Ethiopian woman" about whom Miriam told Aaron (Num. 12:1) as Zipporah, these traditions identify Moses's wife as the queen of Ethiopia, whom he wed after a brilliant victory on the battlefield. In the passage from the Hellenistic period to the Middle Ages, Egyptian mythological elements were repressed in a process of adaptation (Shinan 1977; Yassif 1994, 106–107).

After leaving Ethiopia, Moses arrived in Midian, where Jethro, his future father-in-law, lived. *Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* and several works from the Middle Ages cover this chapter of Moses's life. They describe the chain of events that led to the marriage of Moses and Zipporah, and Moses's period of training in Midian as the future redeemer of Israel. According to the topos found also in Arthurian legends, Moses succeeded in uprooting God's staff, which had been stuck in Jethro's garden, a feat unmatched by any of the local heroes. Consequently, he was rewarded with the hand of Zipporah (Aarne-Thompson folktale classification system, Thompson H310). The fashioning of Jethro's character in these sources is particularly interesting: Sometimes he is neutral; at other times, negative.

The turning point in Moses's life was the revelation of the Almighty in the burning bush, a thornbush on fire that was not consumed by the flames. There Moses is commanded to return to Egypt, stand before the pharaoh, and demand that he let the Israelites depart (Exod. 3:1–22). But, according to the eleventh-century work *Gedulat Moshe* (The Greatness of Moses), before he returned to Egypt, Moses ascended to Heaven, his physical form becoming a flaming torch—like an angel, he reached the seventh heaven and toured paradise and hell. This is one of three ascents Moses makes to Heaven: at the start of his career, before receiving the Torah, and before his death.

One difficult event at this stage of Moses's life took place along the journey, with Zipporah and his children, to Egypt (Exod. 4:18–26). The angel of God nearly killed him, and would have, had not Zipporah hurriedly taken a sharp stone and circumcised their son. She is the heroine of the story, like Jocheved, Miriam, and Bitya, the other prominent women in the first two chapters of Exodus.

The continuation of the story of Exodus describes the completion of the mission imposed on Moses against his will: Moses meets with the pharaoh, who stubbornly refuses to let the children of Israel leave Egypt, even after the ten plagues have rained down on them (Exod. 11:10). Three events constitute the climax of Moses's life as leader of the nation: the exodus from Egypt, receiving the Torah, and building of the Tabernacle *(mishkan)*, the portable dwelling place for the divine presence during the period of the wanderings of the Israelites in the expanse of the wilderness (Exod. 25:1–20).

The motif of a halo, expressed in the description of Moses's radiant face *(qaran or panav)* upon descending from the mountain with the tablets of the Ten Commandments in hand (Exod. 34:29–35), is embodied in midrashic accounts that clarify the origin of Moses's radiant face. A mistranslation, however, by Jerome, refers to an actual horn. This mistranslation was Michelangelo's source of inspiration for his sculpture of Moses.

The most tragic event in Moses's life was undeniably the verdict that he had to die before the children of Israel entered the Promised Land, because of his transgression at the water of *Meriva* (Num. 19:7–14). His pleas to be permitted to enter the Land of Israel as a bird on the wing over the Jordan or as a fish beating its fins in the water were in vain, for the ruling had been decreed and the time had come for Joshua to lead the nation. Midrashic accounts from the eleventh century on elaborate extensively on Moses's final moments: his argument with the Almighty in an effort to reverse the decree; the exchange of roles with Joshua in his suddenly becoming the latter's apprentice and acolyte; his clash with the angel of death, who chased after him with a staff engraved with the name of God; his conversation with his soul, which refused to leave his pure body; and,

ultimately, how God concealed and preserved Moses with a kiss. The Bible itself offers an ambiguous account of Moses's death, stating that the place of his burial is unknown and, at the same time, specifying its location precisely: in the valley in the land of Moav, opposite Beit Pe'or. This ambivalence remains unresolved in the dozens of versions that flesh out the biblical story, expressing an oxymoronic conception of the death of Moses as one who both died and was simultaneously secreted away by God.

"Moses by the Well" is a late theodicean story, type AT 759 (Aarne-Thompson folktale classification system). Moses witnessed an act of vengeance against one who seemed to him to be clearly innocent of wrongdoing, while the true villain was saved from all harm. Upon wondering at the ways of the Lord, he is exposed to facts of which he was previously ignorant, which brings him to acknowledge God's justice in His rulings.

One unusual tale about Moses, apparently of non-Jewish provenance, is "The Picture." A portrait of Moses, painted for an Arab king, revealed extremely negative character traits. This was incompatible with the familiar image of Moses. To the king's astonishment, Moses explained that the artist had rendered an accurate portrait—that he, Moses, had been born with those vices but through personal diligence had succeeded in overcoming his nature and raising himself to a higher level.

Another story about Moses, also of non-Jewish origin (apparently of Arab provenance), type B121, touches on the period of his sojourn in the house of Jethro, as a shepherd. It concerns an angel in the form of a wolf who sought to test the measure of Moses's dedication to his flock.

Arab legend is also the source for "The Man of the Tenth Generation," type 785 (see *Mimekor Yisrael*, Ben Amos ed., #12). A wicked and dishonest man accompanied Moses to Mount Horeb, stole cake from his provisions, and then denied it. Moses, with the power of the divine staff in hand, forced him to admit what he had done. Ultimately, he received his due punishment: Along the journey, Moses performed various miracles with his staff, even reviving the dead; the scoundrel tried to reproduce the miracles but naturally failed, and this led to his capture.

Legends Set After Moses's Death

One episode in the Talmud regarding the disappearance of Moses's burial place describes a delegation of Romans who set out to find it. Once in the vicinity, they found that regardless of where they stood, the grave appeared to be elsewhere; the phenomenon recurred even when they split up (*Sotah* 13b).

The numerous legends about Moses at various stages of his life, gathered from biblical and mostly postbiblical sources to refill narrative gaps, establish his figure as a collective cultural hero. In sum, Moses is portrayed as both a distanced, unattained persona and a human figure with whom one can identify.

Rella Kushelevsky

See also: Aaron; Magic; Zipporah.

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MOTHER (ḤANNAH, MIRIAM) AND HER SEVEN SONS

The legend of the mother and her seven sons is probably one of the most popular and widely disseminated legends among Jews in varied cultural contexts. In addition to Hebrew and Aramaic, it has been narrated both orally and in writing in Yiddish and in a number of local variants of Judeo-Arabic, Judeo-Spanish (Ladino), and Judeo-Persian, and it is still recounted today. In ancient and medieval times it was associated with the memorial day of the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, Tisha Be'Av (the Ninth of Av), a connection retained in most early modern and modern occurrences among Jews of the Middle East and North Africa. Later traditions, especially among the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe, associate it with Ḥanukkah. It gained much importance and wide distribution in medieval Europe, particularly in the wake of various pogroms and atrocities against Jews, such as those related to the Crusades. It is still very popular in educational contexts and may have been the script of the first Hebrew school theater performance in Jerusalem at the end of the nineteenth century.

The Plot

In the legend, seven brothers sacrifice themselves by refusing to comply with a decree that orders the transgression of some of the most central Jewish laws, for example, eating a forbidden food or worshiping an imperial statue. The plot usually highlights the sacrifice of the youngest son as well as the encouragement of the mother. In some versions the mother follows her sons to death by committing suicide. The legend, from its earliest formulations, may be considered the prototype of Jewish martyrological legends that exemplify women's role in martyrology in general.

The name Ḥannah is a rather late but dominant addition to the tradition of the legend of the mother and her seven sons, explicitly mentioned in the circa tenth-century south European *Yosippon*, but, as suggested by the editor of the text, David Flusser, possibly rooted in the grouping of the tale of the mother of seven with a number of barren women who were blessed with sons, among them the biblical Ḥannah, mother of Samuel (1 Sam.), in an earlier text: the *Pesiqta Rabbati.* In many earlier sources she is anonymous, referred to simply as "the woman" or is called Miriam, Tanḥum's daughter (in some late printed variants, also Nahtom's [baker's] daughter). The sons are anonymous as well, except for some early modern and modern Judeo-Arabic variants in which the youngest son bears the name Ezra or Azar.

The Sources

The earliest written document including the legend of the mother of the seven sons is 2 Maccabees, apocryphal in Jewish tradition, included in the Septuagint (LXX) translation of the Hebrew Bible that was extant among the Jews of Hellenistic Egypt and possibly also in contemporary Palestine. This was the dominant ancient version of the tale that fed into later traditions, both Jewish and Christian. The events are historically contextualized by being set during the period of religious oppression by the Seleucid ruler Antiochus Epiphanes, and this particular story is the one preceding, and perhaps also motivating, the outbreak of the Hasmonean rebellion leading to another—short—period of Jewish independence including the reinstitution of the Temple of Jerusalem.

The tale of the woman and her sons follows the account of the martyrdom of the priest Eleazar, whose name is possibly reflected later in the above-mentioned name of the younger son. In this version the woman and all her sons are anonymous and the transgression that they resist is being "compelled by the king, under torture with whips and cords, to partake of unlawful swine's flesh" (RSV 7:1), which may be understood as part of a sacrificial ceremony. The seven sons all behave with utter stoicism and nobility while subjected to detailed acts of torture, the seventh and presumedly youngest son is highlighted, and the mother joins her sons in death. Although the text is Greek, the story explicitly stresses the linguistic as well as the religious particularity of the Jewish martyrs. The story, however,

The Courage of a Mother. Illustration by Gustave Doré, from Doré's English Bible (1866).

has also been paradigmatic for the Christian martyrological tradition.

The much longer, less narrative and more philosophical version of 4 Maccabees was not taken up in later tradition. Talmudic-midrashic sources crystallize into two main versions, one in the Palestinian aggadic Midrash compilation of Lamentations Rabbah (*Eikha Rabba*), the other in the Babylonian Talmud tractate *Gittin*. In both cases the legend is embedded in a longer chain of narratives all pertaining to the period of religious oppression stretching from the destruction of Jerusalem and the Second Temple by the Roman emperors Vespasian and Titus to the "decrees of Hadrian" specifically prohibiting Jewish religious practices such as circumcision and intellectual practices such as learning their own traditions. The transgression resisted is the imperial worship of the emperor's icon, and, according to the poetics of the corpus, the sons all quote biblical passages to justify their act. Torture is less emphasized than in the Hellenistic versions, although it does appear in yet another midrashic rendering of the tale in the *Pesiqta Rabbati,* which in other details resembles both main traditions.

The two main versions differ in some significant details: In the Lamentations Rabbah version, the woman is named Miriam (in most manuscript traditions,

"Tanḥum's daughter"), in an associative linking with a number of adjacent martyrological tales of women bearing the same first name, with a possible inter-religious narrative dialogue with Christianity in mind (Miriam = Martha = Mary), whereas in the Talmud she remains anonymous. Lamentations Rabbah seems the dominant version in later tradition, contrary to the usual dominance of the Babylonian Talmud traditions, especially in its stronger emphasis on the mother's role—including also a scene of breast feeding the youngest son—characteristic of many of the medieval European versions. Christian parallels abound, such as the famous narratives of saints Perpetua and Felicitas.

The Cultural Context

The conjunction of the name Ḥannah as well as the origin in the Book of Maccabees may explain the consistent association between the legend of the mother of seven sons and the celebration of Ḥanukkah, which, for instance, can account for the fact that the tale provided the theme for one of the first known Hebrew theater performances in modern times, in a Jewish school in Ottoman Jerusalem. The topic itself explains the solitary reading as well as performance of prose and poetry versions in various Jewish languages on Tisha Be'Av, commemorating the destruction of both temples of Jerusalem.

Galit Hasan-Rokem

See also: Av, Ninth of (Tisha Be'Av); Ḥanukkah.

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MOTHER, JEWISH

See: United States, Jews of

MOUNTAIN JEWS

See: Russia, Jews of

MOURNING

See: Death; *Qinah* (Lament); Women in Rabbinic Literature

MOYKHER SFORIM, MENDELE (1835–1917)

Mendele Moykher Sforim (also Moicher; Sfarim) was the pseudonym of the writer, critic, and essayist Sholem Yankev (Jacob) Abramovitsh (Abramovich), a major figure in both Yiddish and Hebrew literature. In the field of modern Hebrew literature, Abramovitsh's formidable presence and influence are noticeable both in the period of the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment) and in the subsequent period of Jewish national renaissance. While Abramovitsh assumed the literary figure of "Mendele the Book Peddler" as his pen-name for his literary works since the appearance in Yiddish of *Dos Kleyne Mentshele* (The Little Fellow, 1864), his given name, Sholem Jacob, was used in the essays he published before and after his literary persona became popular.

Abramovitsh was born in the small town of Kapulye (Kopyl) (Belarus; exact date not available), and at the age of thirteen traveled extensively in the Pale of Settlement, where Jews were permitted to live in the Russian Empire. He spent the first decade of his literary career in Berdichev, moving in 1869 to Zhitomir in order to enroll in the Haskalah-oriented, government-sponsored rabbinical seminary, and then spending most of his later years (1881–1917) in Odessa. In Berdichev, Abramovitsh published *Mishpat shalom* (Judgment of Peace, 1860) and *Ein mishpat* (Fountain of Judgment, 1867), two volumes that assembled his early essays in literary social and educational criticism.

In addition, Abramovitsh published an important polemical letter ("Lehashiv et Mordechai" [Repudiating Mordechai], *Ha'Melitz* 38–39 [1861]), which called on Haskalah literature to reorient itself toward social and political issues, as well as works of popular science (*Toledot ha'teva* [History of Nature], 1862–1873). Most crucially, however, in Berdichev, Abramovitsh made his debut as a writer of both Hebrew fiction (*Limmedu heitev* [Learn to Do Good], 1862, later published as *Ha'avot ve'habanim* [Fathers and Sons], 1868) and Yiddish fiction (*Dos Kleyne Mentshele* and *Dos Vintshfingeril* [The Magic Ring], 1865). The Yiddish stories combine a depiction of the grim realities of Jewish daily life with a critique of the passive and false hope for supernatural redemption. *Dos Vintshfingeril,* for example, severely criticizes the popular passion for a miraculous "magic ring" and recommends, instead, that modern Jews pursue active, scientific knowledge of nature. Taking the new path of criticism and enlightenment should push the Jewish people from mysticism to an active exploitation of nature, he argued. His Hebrew publications of the period are also indicative of his affinity with the Haskalah movement. In them, he champions contemporary *maskilic* (enlightened) ideas in the realm of social and educational reform and calls for an incisive critique of religion, tradition, and metaphysics.

Abramovitsh's early essays are an important milestone in the history of Hebrew literary criticism and theory. In the realm of criticism, they call for a stringent and impersonal standard of literary taste. In the realm of literary theory and aesthetics, those texts prescribe a realist and socially committed reference (*hityahassut*) to the actual reality of the Jews in the Russian Empire. Philosophically, the publications in Hebrew of the Berdichev period raise a clear voice in favor of retaining the basic tenets of Jewish religious belief while harmonizing them with the new, European culture of Enlightenment.

Abramovitsh's poignant articulation of this familiar *maskilic* idea was directed against the moderate Lithuanian *maskil* Eliezer Zvi Zweifel (1815–1888). Abramovitsh claimed that Zweifel's version of Haskalah was a lukewarm and opportunistic blend of religious faith and secular Enlightenment. Zweifel ignored the Jewish Enlightenment's crucial call for a critical reassessment of religious belief. For Abramovitsh, true Haskalah must dare to submit all "accepted traditions" (excluding the "words of God" or the written and oral Jewish law [Torah]) to a strict epistemological reevaluation. The final outcome of Haskalah criticism should be a stable and reliable amalgam of traditional faith and rational knowledge. Zweifel's entire *maskilic* endeavor epitomized for Abramovitsh an indecisive limping between two opposing opinions, that is, between modern rationality and traditional faith. Abramovitsh's espousal of moderate and reflective *maskilic* ideology is also apparent in the novel *Ha'avot ve'habanim,* a love story, which presents the younger generation's infatuation with the Haskalah as a central aspect of its spiritual and political maturity.

Abramovitsh's attempts to revitalize the thought and practice of the Jewish Enlightenment took a markedly social turn in the late 1860s. He wrote *Di Takse* (The Tax, 1869), a socially minded play that criticizes the power structures that held sway in the large Jewish town of Berdichev. In addition, Abramovitsh published the first version of *Fishke der Krumer* (Fishke the Lame, 1869), which became—after many revisions, in both Yiddish and Hebrew—the mainstay of Abramovitsh's bilingual oeuvre. Together with the aforementioned *Dos Vintshfingeril, Fishke der Krumer* appeared in an enlarged Yiddish version in 1888; both were translated into Hebrew, respectively, as *Be'emek ha'bakha* (In the Valley of Tears, 1904) and *Sefer ha'Kabbtsanim* (Book of Beggars, 1909). They incorporate the most representative and memorable aspects of Abramovitsh fiction: a curious mixture of scathing social criticism of the shtetl (village) with a sentimental empathy for its inhabitants.

During the 1870s, in the town of Zhitomer, Abramovitsh published a short social allegory under the title *Di Klyatshe* (The Nag, 1873) and an allegory of Jewish history,
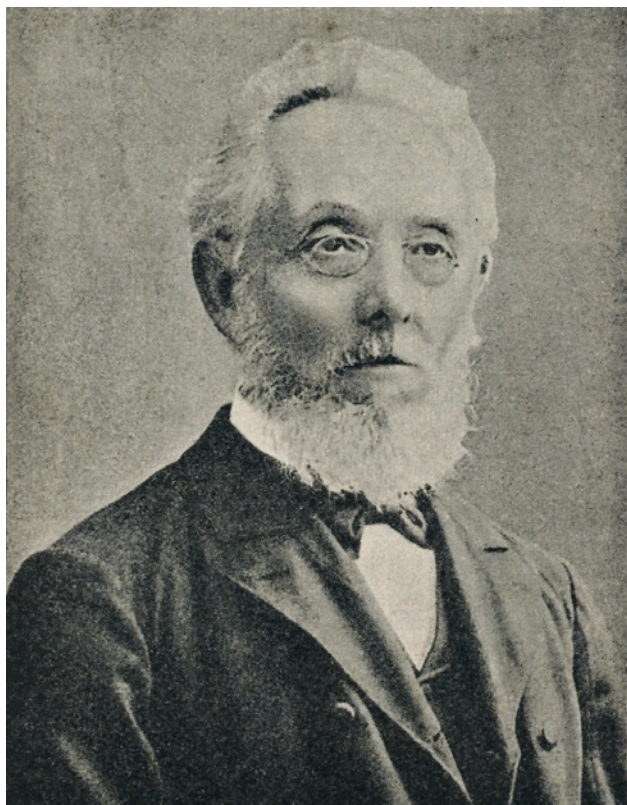
Mendele Moykher Sforim. *(Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary)*

titled *Dos Yidl* (The Little Jew, 1875). In 1878 he published the picaresque novel *Kitser masoes Binyomin ha'shlishi* (Travels of Benjamin the Third), which he translated into Hebrew in 1896. Those texts study the situation of the Russian Jews within the tumultuous international power structure of Europe. The stress Abramovitsh placed on the historical and political position of the Jews in Europe separates his 1870s works from his earlier, *maskilic* attention to their spiritual and educational situation.

Abramovitsh's deep commitment to the wide popular reach of Haskalah ideology was the motivation behind the publication of a Yiddish translation—complete with popular scientific commentary—of two traditional Jewish religious texts, *Zemirot Yisrael* and *Perek shirah* (1875). The latter is a long, laudatory ode that describes the natural world as a harmonious, teleological system. In his commentary, Abramovitsh employed passages from his own *Toldot ha'teva* for establishing a wholesome picture of the natural world, where scientific knowledge of nature operates in tandem with the traditional praise for the Creator's unfailing wisdom.

The so-called Zhitomer years (1869–1881) were crucial for Abramovitsh's development as a Hebrew publicist and essayist. His essays of that period are ambitious, in both scale and thematic reach. Setting aside the polemics

with various rival *maskilim*, the new essays of the Zhitomer period evoke more radical questions about the material and metaphysical measures that should be undertaken in order to change the historical and social situation of the Jews in Europe. The essays treat various issues, such as the attitude toward women in Jewish education, the metaphysics and politics of Jewish sovereignty in Europe, and the advantages and limitations of nationalism (e.g., "Ma annu?" [What Are We?], *Ha'shaḥar* 6, 1875; "Hagoy lo nichsaf" [Nation Not Desired], *Ha'maggid* 19–23, 1875; and "Ahava le'umit ve'toldotea" [History of Patriotism], *Ha'melitz* 6–7, 10–12, 15, 1878). The critique of Haskalah in *Di Klyatshe,* taken together with the materialist and utilitarian worldview advocated in the Hebrew essays, account for Abramovitsh's deep acceptance of the materialist and positivist trends that flourished in Russian philosophy and literature at that time.

The last period in Abramovitsh's long writing career (Odessa, 1881–1917) is dominated by his decision to join forces with the growing body of Hebrew literature, written under the aegis of Jewish national renaissance. Abramovitsh forcefully and famously returned to the sphere of Hebrew literature with the story "Beseter ra'am" (The Secret Place of Thunder, 1886), a daring attempt to come to terms with both the anti-Semitic pogroms of the early 1880s and the cultural and political upheavals that came in their aftermath within the Jewish world. "Be'seter ra'am" was the first of a few short Hebrew stories that together consolidated his canonic stature as the genius-creator of the post-*maskilic* Hebrew-literary idiom. This *nusaḥ* (style) has since been celebrated by many critics (e.g., Alter 1988, Bialik 1954) as better suited to realistic literature, mainly due to its flexible syntax and multilayered vocabulary. Politically, however, Abramovitsh was highly skeptical of the newly emerging public infatuation with the pre-Zionist Hibbat-Zion movement, which called for a celebration of Jewish life in the Land of Israel. His stories refuse to adopt a strictly progressive view of history (i.e., the inevitable move from Haskalah to nationalism), preferring, instead, to evoke deep suspicion vis-à-vis the consequence, dangers, and seductions of the rise of modern nationalism. Abramovitsh died in Odessa on December 8, 1917.

The most important aspect of Abramovitsh's participation in the production of Jewish folklore lies in the nature of his literary persona, Mendele the Book Peddler, and in his specifically "Mendelean" representation of the shtetl. Over the course of the twentieth century, various scholars analyzed and theorized both aspects of Abramovitsh's literary career. The consequence of this extensive scholarly endeavor can be described as consisting of three major, consecutive phases: (1) the prestructuralist phase (the "aesthetics of ugliness"); (2) the structuralist phase (from the 1960s onward); and (3) the current and emerging poststructuralist reading of

Abramovitsh, which has resulted in numerous volumes of literary criticism.

Dan Miron's classical study of the Mendele's persona (1996, first published in 1973) is instrumental in defining the aesthetic ideology of the first phase, as well as its radical critique and ultimate displacement in the second phase. Together with other scholars, most notably Gershon Shaked (1965) and Menahem Perry (1968), Miron sets out to defend Abramovitsh's literary artifice from what he defined as "the fallacy of "folk archetype." Critics who took the folk-archetypal path interpreted Abramovitsh's Mendele as a common man, a "positive plebian," "one of the common people," or a person through which "the soul of the people speaks." As such, Mendele became an epitome of "the aesthetics of ugliness," an aesthetic attitude that defined the merits of Yiddish literature solely in terms of its ability to represent the abnormality, absurdity, and self-destructive particularity of the Jewish people in Eastern Europe. As an aesthetic depiction of Jewish abnormality, Yiddish literature in general—and Abramovitsh's work in particular—did nothing more than replicate the deformed particularities of Jewish life. Within this framework, some critics argued that Abramovitsh's work is a radical attack on the very existence of the Jewish shtetl (Brenner 1967; Kariv 1950), while others believed that his work is a "pleasing idiosyncrasy," as Miron put it, or a nostalgic preservation of the shtetl (Frishman 1914).

In both cases, however, the literary imitation of the folklore element is reduced to a "comic mimesis," that is, an imitation that flouts—critically or nostalgically—the incorrigible ugliness or abnormality of the social world it represents. According to this aesthetic ideology (its main speaker was, according to Miron, Sholem Aleichem), Yiddish literature is capable only of "externalistic, mimetic, comic perception of reality" (Miron 1996, 72). The reason for this limitation lies in the nature—or rather, the stereotype—of the Yiddish language. Due to its verbal gesticulations and elasticity, the Yiddish literary artifact tends to impersonate and *become* the folkloric subject matter it imitates. The oral, communal, and particularistic characteristics of Yiddish literature turn it, for better or worse, into an embodiment, an authentic replication of "the Jew" in Eastern Europe. However, in the process of impersonating the archetypal Jew, Yiddish literature loses it *literary* value as a universal medium of criticism and transcendence. In the "aesthetics of ugliness" the imitator is said to be incapable of guarding against losing his or her own autonomy vis-à-vis the contagious and seductive powers that dwell in the social reality he or she set out to imitate.

The folk-archetypal reading of Abramovitsh typically stresses, first, the oral-conversational character of its language; second, its reach toward the communal (rather than individual or psychological) aspects of Jewish life; and, third, its deviation from any universal norm of truth, common sense, or beauty. This led critics of the first phase to believe that Abramovitsh's literature is inherently circumscribed by the "chains of ordinary life" (*avotot ha'havay;* Tzemach 1968) and that, consequently, it lacks "expressive" literary value.

This view has been challenged from a structuralist viewpoint, which stresses the authority of the literary text vis-à-vis the social world. Critics like Miron, Perry, and Shaked raised forceful objections against the first phase of Abramovitsh's reception. Rather than a simple mimetic replication of Jewish communal and linguistic practices, the new reading of Abramovitsh stresses Mendele's dual *re*presentational competence, that is, his ability to give voice to the old shtetl and, at same time, his ability to judge and criticize that form of life from a modern, secular, and Europeanized point of view. Readers in the second phase believe that Mendele knows very well how to inspire the typical Jewish merchant or trafficker (such as Alter) to talk. However, these critics also point out that Mendele is very quick and adroit in expressing the critical view of "common sense" (Shaked) or in voicing the verdict of the "universality of common humanity" (Miron) as he encounters and represents the Jewish form of life. If the prestructuralist phase of Abramovitsh's reception was monolithic in its stress on Mendele's gesticulating mimicry of the communal-folkloric elements, the structuralist reading of him turns our attention to Mendele's ability to be in two places at one time. Mendele is a go-between, a "ventriloquist" who is able to assume the voice of the common Jews (in fact, to be the common Jew) while commenting and passing scathing judgments vis-à-vis that very social and cultural existence. Whereas the first phase of Abramovitsh criticism presented the folkloric elements as if they existed "outside" the literary work, the structuralist phase stresses Mendele's double act of representation and criticism. Mendele ventures into the old world in order to transform and "modernize" it, by means of his emphatic representation and criticism. For critics of the second phase, Mendele's literary genius is marked by his daring ability to delve into the depths of Jewish exilic experience, in order to emerge back with it as a symbol of modernized Jewish identity.

The nascent poststructuralist phase challenges the notions of transcendence, normalization, and secularization, which informs and motivates the structuralist reading of Abramovitsh. The third phase returns to the old mimetic model but denies its Platonic negative assessment as a mere replication of the social world. The poststructuralist readers of Abramovitsh believe that Mendele indeed loses himself in the act of impersonating the shtetl, but they argue that there is nothing wrong with that. The gesticulatory mimesis of the shtetl is stripped of its "debased" character as an abnormality and becomes active and independent force of critique: This time, however, it serves as a critique of

modernity, European universality, and secularism (Banbaji 2009; Schwartz 1991). Politically, then, the poststructuralist readers of Abramovitsh deny the secularist or transcendent character of Abramovitsh's representation of the shtetl. In other words, while structuralist critics maintained that the folkloric, Jewish subject matter is a figure that the Abramovitsh's work is capable of framing and criticizing, the poststructuralist critics believe that his work—specifically Mendele's character—is a tableau that accommodates an undecided strife between two allegorical figures or, indeed, between "two Mendeles," the first being a typical Jew and the second a universal, Europeanized symbol of a modern Jewish identity. The latter Mendele, which was held as a figure of normalcy and universal judgment, is dethroned in the poststructuralist reading of Abramovitsh, but not for the sake of a nostalgic return to the old "aesthetics of ugliness." Reintroducing the old archetypal Jew as an equal participant in the literary imagination of the shtetl, the poststructuralist critics turn the readers' attention to Mendele's irredeemably fractured consciousness of Jewish modernity.

Amir Banbaji

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MUSEUMS (VERNACULAR) IN ISRAEL

The publication of *Museums of Israel* (Rosovsky and Ungerleider-Mayerson, 1989), an English-language guidebook to Israeli museums, marked the public recognition given to vernacular museums in Israel, that is, local heritage museums established through largely nonprofessional, grassroots efforts. These museums reflect Israelis' passion for preserving and interpreting the past. Since the late twentieth century, this widely recognized popular interest in local heritage has given rise to the establishment of more than a hundred local museums across the country, about one-third of them in kibbutzim (collective settlements) and others in moshavim (noncollective settlements), small towns, and urban centers.

Taken together, the local heritage museums that dot the country inscribe various strands of the metanarrative of the Zionist enterprise of place-making and nation-building. They provide object-rich arenas in which stories are told and retold of ancient national roots that can be gleaned through archaeological finds; attachment to place that is expressed through the collection of local flora and fauna; or territorial claims that are reflected in the commemoration of foundational acts of settlement. Many of these vernacular museums were first informally established by a charismatic enthusiast (referred to locally as *meshuga ladavar),* often aided by a small group of followers. Once established, they became locally institutionalized through the vote of the kibbutz general assembly, or the decision of some other governing body, and only later received the recognition (and, at times, financial support) of national authorities, such as the Ministries of Culture, Education, Tourism, or Defense (the Museum Act legally regulating the museum field was passed in 1983).

The development of the Israeli local museum scene before the 1970s was gradual and involved mainly the establishment of museums centered on regional archaeological collections and nature-related environmental displays. In addition, a few local museums were devoted to Israeli art (e.g., Ein Harod, in the Jezreel Valley near Mount Gilboa in northern Israel), and some were devoted to the memory of the Holocaust (e.g., Ghetto Fighters' House Museum in western Galilee). The development of the museum scene that took place in Israel during the last quarter of the twentieth century involved the establishment of dozens of museums concerned with the history of pre-Independence Zionist settlement, the history of building Israel's military force, and the his-

tory of the relationship between Israel and the Jewish Diasporas, usually framed in terms of the project of the Ingathering-of-the-Exiles, that is, the national effort to bring Jews from all over the world to the Land of Israel. These various thematic agendas ground the establishment of immigration, settlement, and military museums. They reflect the core Zionist metanarrative, whose tripartite concerns are Jewish immigration (aliyah, ideologically perceived as "ascendance"), settlement of the land, and self-defense through military means. Their proliferation in the later part of the twentieth century marks a change in the Israeli idiom of cultural legitimization. Notably while archaeological museums celebrate the Jews' ancient link to the land of Israel, settlement and military museums commemorate the foundational acts of place-making and self-defense. The nostalgic celebration of the nation-building era in the dozens of vernacular museums established around the country in the 1970s and 1980s is an intriguing cultural phenomenon, as it began just when the West Bank settlement movement turned acts of settlement into a highly contested political issue. It can be seen as a grassroots movement of cultural self-interrogation as well as reaffirmation that grew at a time when the troubled present was felt to cast a doubtful shadow on what mainstream Israelis believed to be a cherished past.

While the nation-building narrative presented by the majority of local museums tends to focus on the Land of Israel as the telos of a secular Israeli civil religion, the several ethnographic museums established during the same period are devoted mainly to the display of the cultural heritage of Jewish ethnic groups, such as Iraqi, Yemenite, Italian, German, or Hungarian Jews. The objects displayed in these museums are not the traces of a local, mostly agricultural past but the shreds of a partly lost cultural heritage authenticated through its links to a once-thriving diasporic center. They feature traditional Jewish ritual objects that are almost totally absent from settlement museums but are found in Judaica collections in Jewish museums worldwide. They tell a story of Jewish continuity in the Diaspora and through immigration to Israel, rather than narrating the implications of the Zionist revolution for the lives of pioneering communities and individuals.

The twenty-first century has seen the further institutionalization and professionalization that have taken place in Israeli vernacular museums, which have become thriving centers of educational activities for both children and adults. Some new museums have been established, for example, the Centers for the Heritage of the Jews of Libya and Turkey in the towns of Or Yehyda and Yahud, respectively, which display and narrate additional pieces of the Jewish-Israeli past. Some older museums, such as the first settlement museum in Israel located in Kibbutz Yifat in the Jezreel Valley, have renewed their exhibitions in line with new pedagogical approaches. Nonetheless, the oral guided tour in and through which past events and actions are continuously reassessed by live narrators in the light of the present remains the main source of a dynamic cultural dialogue in Israeli heritage museums.

Tamar Katriel

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MUSEUMS, JEWISH

Since their earliest incarnations at the end of the nineteenth century, Jewish museums have celebrated the folklore of the Jewish people. Starting in the mid-twentieth century they transitioned from being vehicles for the display of collections of ritual or folk objects to being much more varied in their approach and to having a particular story to tell. Many of the stories focus on local history and on Jews' social and cultural adaptations to the local environment, while still emphasizing some of the common aspects of Jewish life throughout the ages and in different lands.

Early History

The first Jewish exhibitions and museums, which were opened toward the end of the nineteenth century, focused on the display of Jewish ritual objects. This trend was set by the spectacular display of the Isaac Strauss collection at the Paris World's Fair in 1878. The objects from the collection were selected for their outstanding aesthetic merit, but they displayed according to the kind of ceremonial function for which they were originally designed. Thus, all Ḥanukkah lamps were displayed together, all Torah crowns together, and so forth. As scholars such as J.D. Feldman have expressed, this helped to recontextualize such objects in terms of ritual function and Jewish observance while still retaining the narrative of artistic achievement.

This method of display was evident in the earliest Jewish museums, in Vienna in 1895, Prague in 1906, and Frankfurt in 1922, and remained canonical for most subsequent displays of Jewish collections until the 1970s. The influence of such an approach can still be observed today in more recent museums, whether they

be in Venice, Amsterdam, or Israel, as seen in the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

In these museums, the dominant mode of display focused on the manner in which the Jewish communal leadership and leading families were able to integrate and make an important contribution to the welfare of the country in which they found themselves. The tone for such an approach was set by the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition in London in 1887. The exhibition stressed the positive contribution made by British Jews and included letters, mementos, and portraits of distinguished persons. By stressing the way that Jews were similar to members of the wider society, the exhibition was staking a claim for Jews to be rightfully recognized as loyal British subjects.

Other exhibitions, however, sought to emphasize cultural distinctiveness and focused much more on folk art and folk costumes. One such exhibition, held in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1913, portrayed Jews as coming to the United States from many different lands. The exhibition featured Jews who came from twenty-seven countries, each in their own booths, with men and women dressed in picturesque costumes. This exhibition was specifically designed to promote the idea of cultural pluralism as a positive feature of American society, at a time when there was mounting pressure to restrict immigration to the United States from Europe. Another example in this vein, but in a different political context, is represented by the An-Ski exhibition held in 1914, in St. Petersburg. This exhibition was based on materials gathered in the course of folklorist S. An-Ski's 1912 expedition in Ukraine and neighboring countries for the purpose of recovering items of Ashkenazi material culture. The exhibition displayed mainly objects obtained from peasant and rural households so as to place Jewish art within the same context as other so-called folk traditions within the Russian Empire, emphasizing the contributions made by ordinary people as opposed to those of the elite.

A few collections, such as the one in Danzig (present-day Gdánsk, Poland), combined both ritual objects and items of folk art, and in 1939, the Jewish community of Danzig sent its collection of Jewish folk art to the Jewish Museum in New York for temporary safekeeping, where it has remained. Most collections at the time, however, focused on Jewish ritual objects.

It is also in the 1930s that a new facet of Jewish art began to be displayed in Jewish museums: artwork by contemporary Jewish artists within the framework of a Jewish museum. The Jewish Museum in Berlin took the lead, when, under the directorship of Karl Schwartz, it opened in January 1933, with works by artists such as Max Liebermann and Jacob Steinhardt. But the experiment was short lived, and the museum was forced to close after the Nazi-initiated pogroms known as Kristallnacht in November 1938 vandalized or destroyed many Jewish cultural centers.

Nevertheless, the seed had been sown, and after World War II, when European Jews sought to rebuild from the ashes of the Holocaust, the Museum of Jewish Art was established in Paris in 1948. It was set up with the specific mission of collecting and displaying Jewish works of art, both religious and secular. The permanent exhibition included religious artifacts, reproductions of Jewish tombstones from Prague, and reproductions of synagogue mosaics. It also included a large collection of contemporary art, including works by Marc Chagall, Emmanuel Mane-Katz, Ben Benn, and Jacques Lipschitz. In 1988, the museum's collection was transferred to newer and grander premises at the Museum of Jewish Art and History in Paris.

Emphasis on Storytelling

By the 1960s, a tradition of exhibiting Jewish artifacts in European and American cities had already become well established and was becoming increasingly diversified, starting with a display of Jewish ritual objects and increasingly also taking note of folk art and of contemporary Jewish artists. However, the greatest change in the manner in which Jewish culture was displayed came in the 1970s and 1980s, with a new emphasis on history and storytelling.

Indeed, many Jewish museums began to change their displays and narratives in order to accommodate a more general trend emphasizing communal histories by focusing on the lives of ordinary people. The U.S. civil rights and women's movements led to a reassessment of the rights of indigenous and minority groups, as well as of the manner in which history was taught and retold. Exhibitions and displays began to celebrate cultural difference as something to be admired in its own right. Thus, the Jewish Museum in New York arranged exhibitions on the history of Jews on the Lower East Side of Manhattan, from the 1870s onward, as well as on the Yiddish theater.

Moreover, nation-states are increasingly promoting themselves as pluralistic and multicultural, which in turn is transforming modes of display. In the 2000s, Jewish folk and ritual objects are displayed in order to tell a story that illustrates a Jewish way of life, often focusing on Jewish festivals and the Jewish life cycle. Hence there is an increasing use of thematic displays in Jewish museums, with items laid out in such a way as to re-create a scene, for example, a table set out for a Friday evening meal or a Seder, as in the Jewish Museum in London, or a *ḥuppah* (wedding canopy) and a wedding scene or items associated with the burial society, as in the Jewish Museum in Prague.

The Jewish Museum in Berlin, which opened in September 2001, combines Jewish social history and way of life in an overarching story of the Jews. The permanent exhibition explores the interaction of Jews and gentiles in Germany over the past 2,000 years. The story includes courtly Jews and more humble rural dwellers, urban socialites and street hawkers, entertainers, scientists, artists, and businessmen. There are also portraits of Jews by Jewish artists and the display of books and articles written by Jews about their views on religion, society, child rearing, and other topics.

The exhibition focuses on the theme of tradition and change and, among other things, explores the transformations in the role of Jewish women in the process of social change. The exhibition tells the story of women such as the seventeenth-century businesswoman Glückel of Hameln, who kept a diary concerning her daily life; Henriette Herz, who initiated a literary salon in the early nineteenth century; Bertha Pappenheim, who led the Jewish women's movement in the early twentieth century; and Regina Jonas, the first woman ordained as a rabbi.

Over the past few decades, there has been an increasing emphasis on storytelling and narrative. Yet the most exciting developments still lie ahead. Many leading Jewish museums, whether in Jerusalem, London, or Warsaw, are boldly facing the challenge of going beyond narrative and are seeking to engage their audiences in encounters and discussions.

David Clark

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N

Name, Naming

See: Circumcision; Folk Belief

Narkiss, Mordechai

See: Folk Art

New Year Cards

Every year hundreds of thousands of Jewish New Year cards are mailed throughout the world. Contrary to a widely held opinion, the origin of this custom predates by centuries the sending of Christian New Year cards, which have been popular in Europe and the United States since the nineteenth century.

The custom is first mentioned in the *Book of Customs* of Rabbi Jacob Moelin Halevi (called the Maharil; ca. 1360–1427), the spiritual leader of German Jews in the fourteenth century (*Minhagei Maharil* [Sabionetta, 1556]). Based on the familiar talmudic dictum in the tractate *Rosh Ha'shanah* 16b concerning the "setting down" of one's fate in one of the three Heavenly books that are opened on the Jewish New Year, the Maharil and other German rabbis recommended that letters sent during the month of Elul should open with the blessing "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year." Other than in Germany and Austria, not many in the Ashkenazi world followed this custom before the modern era. In fact, other than the Sephardim and Jews in Islamic lands, Jews did not undertake the practice of sending New Year cards until relatively recently.

The German-Jewish custom reached widespread popularity, however, only with the invention—in Vienna, in 1869—of the postcard. This invention won immediate success, and within a few years the plain cards were enriched with illustrations, which attracted the public to buy more and more cards, festooned with beloved and familiar themes. The high period of the illustrated postcard, called in the literature "The Postal Card Craze" (1898–1918), marks also the flourishing of the Jewish New Year card in Europe and the United States. During these years, cards were printed in three major centers: Germany, Poland, and the United States (chiefly New York). The German cards are frequently illustrated with biblical themes, such as the Giving of the Law or the Binding of Isaac, which were popular also among the general public. The urban makers of the Jewish cards (mostly in Warsaw), however, preferred nostalgic depictions of the religious life of Eastern European Jews, often using photography. Though the photographs on their cards were often theatrically staged in a studio with amateur actors, they preserve the visual reality—how things looked at the time the postcards were produced—and customs lost in the Holocaust. Moreover, some of the cards depict customs (such as "Krishme bei den Kimpterin" [The Reading of the Shema Prayer for a Woman in Childbirth]) that provide the folklorist with the only visual testimony of the said practice. The mass immigration of Jews from Eastern Europe to the United States in the first decades of the twentieth century gave a new boost to the production of the cards. Colorful and elaborate cards frequently depicted America as the new homeland, widely opening its arms for the new immigrants. At the same time, other American cards emphasized the Zionist ideology and depicted contemporary views of Eretz Israel.

Even before the invention of the postcard, tablets of varying sizes bearing wishes and images for the new year were in wide use by the Jews of nineteenth-century Eretz Israel ("The Old Yishuv"). These tablets depicted the holy sites of the "four holy cities" in the Holy Land, in particular, those in and around Jerusalem. A popular biblical motif was the *Akedah,* the Binding of Isaac, often "taking place" against the background of the Temple Mount and accompanied by the prayer for Rosh Ha'Shana, which mentions the *Akedah.* Also common were interior and exterior views of yeshivas or buildings of the various organizations that produced these tablets. The tablets were commonly sent abroad for fund-raising purposes.

With successive waves of new immigrations (*aliyot*), the images on the cards changed dramatically, almost without a transitional stage. Instead of the religious sentiments of the Diaspora communities and the Old Yishuv, in the 1920s and 1930s the cards highlighted the land that was purchased and settled by Jews—that is, the new settlements, such as farm lands, villages, and towns, including Tel Aviv and Petaḥ Tikvah; the tilling of the land; and "secular" views of the proud new pioneers. At the same time, the very growth in the consumption and production of these cards attests that the traditional and basically religious custom continued and even became increasingly popular. Moreover, the new cards demonstrate a burst of creativity and originality not only in the new subject matter but also in their innovative graphic designs and the texts accompanying them. Thus, the wishes on the cards call for "A year of conquering our land," "A year of construction and immigration," "A year of flourishing of our homeland," "A year of the revival of

our people," "A year of the triumph of light over darkness," and so forth.

In the years preceding the establishment of the State of Israel, the cards called for the development of the country, the expansion of its borders, and the ingathering of the exiles from all corners of the world. One card bears the wish "A new generation will come to the Land [of Israel] that will never know the yoke of Diaspora." The hardship of life in the transition camps and the strains of shortages during the 1950s are reflected in many cards from these years, depicting images of fruits and other foods and accompanied by the wish for "a year of abundance and plenty." This period also witnessed the beloved images of proud soldiers bravely guarding their young homeland. This tendency increased after the Six-Day War. The heroes of the war, political leaders, and soldiers depicted against the background of the liberated holy sites, filled the stalls selling New Year cards in Israeli streets. These images were replaced in the 1970s by views of the "ideal Israeli family," shown fashionably dressed in its well-appointed apartment.

Most recently, the custom of mailing New Year cards has declined in Israel. Instead, many now prefer to call or send e-mail messages. In other countries, especially the United States, cards with traditional symbols, which are sent by postal mail, are still common. The new cards, however, are much more elaborate and use a variety of techniques, including pop-ups and papercuts. Thus, the simple and naive New Year cards, which are commonly discarded after the holiday, vividly reflect the dramatic changes in the life of the Jewish people through the generations.

Shalom Sabar

See also: Rosh Ha'Shana.

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NIGER, SHMUEL

See: Poland, Jews of

NITL NAKHT

See: Ḥanukkah

NOAH

The story of Noah and the Flood, recounted in Genesis 6–9, is a tale of cosmic destruction and re-creation after the first attempt at creation failed. The similarity between the biblical narrative and Mesopotamian myths, especially the Epic of Gilgamesh, is striking, although Mesopotamian-polytheistic motifs are transformed so as to serve the monotheistic worldview of the Bible. The biblical account of both the cataclysmic event and its human protagonist, Noah, is rather terse and at times opaque, leaving much to the imagination of later interpreters. Alternatively, the biblical narrative itself can be viewed as concealing circulating traditions of ancient time that resurfaced in later, Second Temple and post-biblical, writings. Two aspects implicit in the biblical account of the flood appear explicitly in extracanonical traditions: the analogy between the flood as re-creation and the first creation of humankind as portrayed in Genesis 1–2, and the breaching of sexual categories within which the biblical account of the flood is framed.

Noah's Moral Stature

The biblical Noah is cast in ambivalent terms. On the one hand, he is the person chosen by the Almighty to be the sole survivor of humanity. Scripture explicitly states that "Noah found favor with the Lord" and that "Noah was a righteous man; he was blameless in his age; Noah walked with God" (Gen. 6:8–9). On the other hand, Noah's shameful behavior in which he is exposed naked to his son Ḥam in a state of drunkenness (Gen. 9:18–26) presents him as a flawed model. In fact, when Scripture describes him as "blameless in his age," it might be

qualifying his piety by contextualizing it in a comparative (to his age) manner. Second Temple texts, as well as rabbinic writings, oscillate between these two views of his character. The Babylonian Talmud articulates this dual image vividly (108a): "Noah was a righteous man; he was blameless in his age. Rabbi Yoḥanan said: In his age, but not in other ages. And Resh Lakish, said: In his age, how much more so in other generations. Rabbi Ḥanina said: To what may Rabbi Yoḥanan's view be likened? To a barrel of wine that is laid in a cellar of vinegar. In its place [compared to the vinegar], its odor is fragrant; not in its place, its odor will not be fragrant. Rabbi Oshaya said: To what may Resh Lakish's view be likened? To a dish of perfume that is laid in a place of filth. In its place, its fragrance spreads and how much more so in a place of perfume."

Noah's Birth

Accompanying the view of Noah as a cultural hero (and possibly addressing textual hints in Gen. 5:29), some traditions provide details on his birth, imbuing it with the necessary miraculous elements. According to 1 Enoch 106:2–16, when Noah appeared, "His body was like snow and red like the flower of the rose, and the hair of his head [was] white like wool . . . and his father, Lemech, was afraid of him and fled and went to his father, Methuselaḥ. And he said to him: 'I have begotten a strange son; he is not like a man, but is like the children of the angels of heaven . . . and I am afraid lest something extraordinary should be done on the earth in his days.'" Methuselaḥ then turns to the heavenly figure of his father, Enoch, who reassures him that the child and his sons will be saved from destruction. In the Genesis Apocryphon (column 5, 12–13), Lemech describes the newborn Noah, saying that "his eyes shone like the sun . . . this youth is on fire." In *Midrash Ha'gadol* (Gen. 5:29), Noah's miraculous birth is signaled by the fact that he was born already circumcised, thus associating him with other outstanding individuals such as Moses and David, who are said to have been born circumcised. The Genesis Apocryphon and 1 Enoch also refer to Lemech's anxieties regarding his paternity, situating Noah in surprising proximity to other cultural heroes such as Jesus, Samson and even Isaac.

Noah, Animals, and Sexual Transgressions

Assuming that humankind was indeed deserving of annihilation, how could the animals be accused of mortal sin? According to some traditions, the animals were guilty of sexual sins similar to those practiced by humanity. They, too, were copulating with members of other species (*Tanḥuma Buber,* Noah 11), analogous to the marriage of the sons of God and the daughters of men (Gen. 6:1–4, preceding the verse that recounts God's realization of the wickedness on earth). Sexual motifs appear in the biblical story—in the paragraph preceding the decree of the flood and in the postflood scene in which Noah's nakedness is exposed. Extracanonical traditions further develop the theme of sexual transgression, expanding it to the realm of the animals, for example, animals that violated the rule of sexual abstinence in the ark were punished. Such was the fate of the dog that was punished by remaining attached to its partner, the raven who was condemned to spitting, and Ḥam (hereby associated with the animal realm) who was inflicted with a dark complexion (*b. Sanhedrin* 108b).

Immoral conduct and divine retribution thus form the crux of this etiological tradition. The raven's licentious character is explicitly linked to his untrustworthy behavior as Noah's first messenger (Gen. 8:6). According to the Talmud, when Noah sends the raven away, the latter protests that not only is it rendered an unclean animal, hence there are only two of his kind in the ark, but now Noah chooses it for a dangerous mission. By so doing, claims the raven (rightfully), Noah is endangering the future of the species. However, the raven goes on to accuse Noah of coveting its (the raven's) "wife." Noah's furious answer alludes to the fact that he has remained abstinent throughout the period.

The Arc and the Garden of Eden

That Noah's interaction with the raven becomes so intimate should not be surprising, for Noah had spent almost an entire year on board in close quarters with representatives of the animal kingdom. We are told of the sleepless nights and hard toil that were entailed in taking care of the varied needs and routines of the different animals (e.g. *Tanḥuma Buber,* Noah 2). A few specific incidents are reported: The lion, for instance, attacked Noah as a result of which he began to limp (*Tanḥuma,* printed edition, Noah 9). The lion's ungrateful behavior stands in contrast to that of the *urshana* (a dove or pigeon), which displayed gracious conduct for which he was blessed with the phoenix motif of eternity (*b. Sanhedrin* 108b). Here, it is worth noting that another rabbinic version of the phoenix myth appears in relation to the Garden of Eden, where the bird declines the forbidden fruit of the tree of knowledge, which Eve offers to Adam as well as the animals. His refusal, in turn, saves him from the overarching principle of existence, namely, mortality (*Gen. Rab.* 19:5). That these two rabbinic versions appear in connection with the paradisic phase of the first creation and in the context of the womblike ark emphasizes the conception of the flood as a modified reenactment of the first, failed, effort at creation.

The threads leading from the Garden of Eden to the ark are made visible by the tradition that explains Noah's vine as having originated there (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* 23). The miraculous vine bore fruit on the very same day it was planted, but turned out to cause great damage. Not only did drunkenness trigger Noah's immodest conduct, but, having awakened from his stupor, he realizes Ham's indiscretion and curses the latter's son, Canaan (Gen. 9:20–27). Noah, as the archetypal drunk, plays the lead role in the following didactic tale: "When Noah came to plant a vineyard, Satan came and stood before him . . . what did Satan do? He brought a sheep and killed it beneath the vine . . . a lion and killed it . . . a pig and killed it . . . a monkey and killed it beneath the vineyard and sprinkled their blood . . . and they irrigated it with their blood. God indicated [by these] that before a man drinks wine behold he is as innocent as that sheep . . . when he has drunk aplenty, behold, he is as bold as the lion . . . when he has drunk too much, he becomes like a pig . . . when he has gotten drunk, he becomes like a monkey: standing, and dancing and uttering obscenities before all and unaware of what he is doing" (*Tanḥuma,* printed edition, Noah 13). This tale is also one of the early versions of the tale type "The Devil in the Ark" (AT 825).

Modern Traditions

Modern oral narratives, as recorded in the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa, attest to the ongoing appeal of Noah's story. While some narratives rely on earlier, written sources, others offer expansions, introducing into the biblical framework novel motifs and generic structuring. Satan's role in planting the vine is, according to one tale (IFA 13715), the endpoint of a longer scheme. According to this tale, Satan tricked his way into the ark and put his hand on the grapeseeds that he found there. Noah, who had his own plans for planting a vineyard, agreed to a pact with Satan and entered into partnership with him. Another tale (IFA 11435) builds on the above-cited tradition of the lion's attacking Noah, but adds that the lion felt deep remorse and earned Noah's forgiveness. The repenting lion is thus rewarded by being placed on King Solomon's chair. A seemingly popular tale (IFA 660, 15081, 5024) deals with Noah's shortage of daughters (in the biblical narrative we hear of none; here he has one) in light of three prospective grooms, either his own sons or strangers. The solution is found in the transformation of a dog and a donkey into the two missing brides. The tale suggests that most wives are beastly, in one way or another. A few tales are etiological in their treatment of relationships between animals, providing a drama that has its roots in the ark (IFA 2371, 7422). In other tales the emphasis is on Noah as a model of redemption in which he is present-

ed as motivated by selfish concerns and is measured vis-à-vis other models, associated with figures such as Abraham and Moses (IFA 15986, 7864).

Dina Stein

See also: Animals; Ararat.

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NORTH AFRICA, JEWS OF

According to archaeological sites, Jewish communities settled in North Africa beginning in at least the third century B.C.E. The most ancient of these sites are in Libya and the most recent ones (third century C.E.) in Morocco, which seems to support scholars' hypothesis that Jews came to North Africa from ancient Israel after a stay in Egypt and scattered progressively from East to West, from the Middle East to the Atlantic in the Hellenic-Roman Empire. Another thesis, which was influential in the twentieth century, argues that North African Jewry descends essentially from Zenata Berbers, who were converted by Jewish missionaries before the Arab conquest and organized resistance in the Algerian Aures Mountains to Arab troops, headed by the so-called Judeo-Berber queen, the Kahina. But serious sustained and detailed epigraphic and historical research showed the weakness of this thesis, which was presented in the fourteenth century by the Arab philosopher Ibn Khaldun, who referred to Arab traditions originating in the eleventh century. It is also probable that some Eastern Jewish groups came to North Africa accompanying Arab troops and after the Arab conquest was completed. All these Jewish groups created a rich and diverse folk-

lore, at times influenced by the broader North African culture, and have sustained elements of that folklore to this.

Islamic Rule in the Middle Ages

Beginning in the eighth century, North African Jews developed their own culture and forged their history under the patronage and control of Islamic civilization, which imposed on them the humiliating regime of the *dhimma* (protection). Under this status, their existence in Dar al-Islam (House of Islam) was tolerated and their life and properties secure in exchange for their recognition of Muslim state superiority; payment of a communal tax, the *jizya;* and acceptance of other constraints and daily humiliations. Under these sociopolitical conditions, North African Jews developed urban centers of great reknown, such as Gabes, Kairouan, and Mahdia (in present-day Tunisia); Tahert and Qal'at Hammad (in present-day Algeria); and Walili, Fez, and Sijilmasa (in present-day Morocco), where they engaged in economic activities as merchants, goldsmiths, and craftsmen and studied and created halakhic (legal) and linguistic treatises in Hebrew as well in Judeo-Arabic. They were in close contact with the Middle Eastern Jewish communities of Iraq, Egypt, and the Holy Land and had regular exchanges with the Jewish communities of medieval Spain, which were ruled at that time by the same North African Berber tribes. With these communities, they developed the rich written Judeo-Arabic culture, in the fields of philosophy and medicine as well as of biblical and talmudic exegesis.

This intense Jewish creativity reached its climax in the eleventh century in Kairouan and Fez. In Kairouan, figures such as Rabbi Ḥanan'el ben Ḥushi'el and Rabbi Nissim ben Jacob ibn Shahin were heads of yeshivas in the first half of the eleventh century and wrote talmudic treatises. Rabbi Nissim also gathered the first anthology of old and new Jewish talmudic and folktales, in Middle Classic Judeo-Arabic, which thereafter was widespread in the Jewish world. In Fez, Hebrew grammarians and poets—as well as great talmudic scholars such as Rabbi Isaac ben Jacob Alfasi Hacohen (called the Rif), whose supplements to talmudic jurisdiction (the *Tosafot*) influenced the development of halakhic law and the blossoming of the Jewish cultural center of Spain—were among the heads of the Spanish Golden Age. Nonetheless Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (Maimonides; 1135–1204) left Granada to go to Fez with his family in 1160 and stayed there for five years in a famous yeshiva. This intense Jewish existence was abolished by the destruction of Kairouan in 1056 with the invasion of North Africa by Egyptian Bedouin tribes. In the second half of the twelfth century, the persecutions imposed by the fundamentalist Almohad dynasty, which left southern Morocco and conquered all of North Africa and Islamic Spain, forced Jewish communities to convert to Islam or die, and thus destroyed all the Jewish communities there. Until the rise of the Merinid dynasty at the beginning of the fourteenth century, many Jewish families lived as Muslims in the open but honored their Jewish traditions and lifestyle secretly, allowing for the restoration of a Jewish communal life thereafter.

Jews in the Early Modern Era

At the end of the fourteenth century and in the fifteenth century, Jews who were refugees from Spain and Portugal settled in North African urban communities and contributed to the broader culture. They were able to maintain their Jewish identity and economic life thanks to their culture developed over some six centuries. In 1392, because of the Christian persecutions of Jews in northern Spain, great rabbinical Spanish figures settled in Algeria and founded important Jewish centers of Halakhah, Hebrew poetry, and exegesis. Thus numerous rabbinical figures settled in Algiers and Tlemcen, with hundreds of refugees, and led the recovering Jewish communities of North Africa. In Tlemcen, Rabbi Ephraim Ankawa (1359–1442) was considered a holy man and his tomb became a place of pilgrimage. In Algiers, Rabbi Shimon ben Semah Duran (1361–1444) and Rabbi Yitzhak bar Sheshet Perfet (called the Rivash; 1326–1407) were respected rabbinical scholars, renowned *dayyanim* (judges), and great Hebrew poets as well. Their descendants led the community of Algiers for centuries.

Those expelled from Spain in 1492 (and from Portugal in 1496) (*megorashim*) found a precarious refuge in northern Moroccan and Algerian ports before they scattered in local or inland Jewish communities, such as Oran, Honein, and Tlemcen in western Algeria; Larache, Sale, Tetuan, Tangier, Fez, Meknes, Sefru, and even Marrakesh, in Morocco; or before their emigration to other places in Europe (primarily Italy) or in the Ottoman Empire, especially the Holy Land. Some of them suffered casualties from local potentates upon their arrival, but thereafter they gained the protection of central powers, such as the kings of the Moroccan Saadian dynasty, who saw them as a new, valuable social group, capable of contributing to the economy of their country or their region. In some communities, such as Fez and Marrakesh, tensions developed between the *megorashim* and the indigenous Jewish communities, due to their different Jewish habits and traditions and to their Spanish or Andalusian culture. They even constituted separate communities, with rabbinical leaders and synagogues of their own for a period. Yet these Castilian rabbis and merchants soon became the leaders of their merged communities, and their descendants led them until their dispersion in the second half of the twentieth century.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, descendants of *megorashim* who settled first in Italy, especially in Livorno, continued to emigrate to North African communities, and principally to Tripoli and Tunis, where they occupied important positions in the fields of international trade and internal commerce, and were called Grana (newcomers from Livorno). In Tunis, their large number and close links with Italian interests brought the Grana to separate themselves progressively from the autochthonous community (the Twansa) and to maintain their own Jewish religious and social institutions. This situation created great tensions between the two communities, which disappeared only after the dispersal of the whole community.

In spite of these tensions, the settlement of thousands of *megorashim* in Jewish urban centers largely contributed to the regeneration of North African Jews after the severe persecutions of the Middle Ages and permitted them to develop their Jewish identity in close relation to the Sephardic heritage until the dispersion of the communities in the second half of the twentieth century. However, in some halakhic domains, such as the inheritance rights of the widow as laid down in the *ketubbah* (marriage contract), there developed two traditions in some communities, one pertaining to the indigenous communities and the other to the Castilian tradition. This Sephardic culture prevailed especially in yeshiva learning (talmudic study), which was based essentially on family recruitment, and in halakhic jurisprudence based on communal *Taqqanot* (ordinances) and *She'elot u'teshuvot* (Shu"t), or halakhic questions addressed to the great rabbinical figures of the time, whose answers were regarded as legitimate decisions and binding rules. In fact, all the written North African Jewish intellectual contributions in Hebrew, Judeo-Arabic, and Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) were influenced by Sephardic sources and canons—kabbalistic and mystical creation or exegetic and homiletic literature as well as Hebrew poetry. Moreover, a majority of the writers who distinguished themselves during the previous five centuries in various fields of Jewish learning and creativity were descendants of refugees from Spain. Some families, such as Serfati or Monsonego in Fez and Berdugo or Toledano in Meknes, held the communal *ḥazaqa* (monopolistic right) in certain communal affairs, such as the *sheḥita* (the ritualistic and halakhic slaughter) or the *dayanut* (the status of rabbinical judges).

With the settlement and integration of those who had been expelled, there developed several kinds of Jewish communities in North Africa, with implications for the local Jewish identity and communal life based on the Jewish language and culture that prevailed there, with binding relations to the non-Jewish culture of their Muslim environment, from the Arabized or the Berber stock. The first—and the most important—kind includes autochthonous urban and rural communities that always spoke Judeo-Arabic. The second includes urban mixed communities, in which those expelled from Spain initially formed separate communities that spoke Judeo-Spanish but finally merged with the Judeo-Arabophone group and thereafter took leadership of the communities, as happened in Tripoli, Tunis, Algiers, Oran, Fez, Meknes, and Sale. The third type of community is composed of new communities that developed in northern Morocco, such as Tetuan, Tangier, Larache, and Alqsar-Kebir, and spoke Judeo-Spanish until the twentieth century, with a rich oral culture in a dialectal variety locally named *haketia.* A fourth category included isolated rural and small communities scattered in the High Atlas and Anti-Atlas Mountains of Morocco among Berber tribes, which spoke only Judeo-Berber or Berber, or Judeo-Arabic and Berber, and followed Berber oral culture in their social life. It is this great diversity of intermingling between the ancient Jewish tradition and the neighboring Islamic cultures, based on Arabic or Berber practices, that forged the various modes of life and identities of the North African Jews.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, these varied traditional facets of Jewish life and Jewish identity experienced modernization and change due to pressure from the European colonial powers on the North African countries and to the educational networks instituted by Jewish European benevolent and educational organizations, such as the Alliance Israélite Universelle of Paris and the Anglo-Jewish Association of London in the second half of the nineteenth century. In Algeria, the French military and political occupation that began in 1830 and lasted until 1962 ended the Ottoman domination of the country. For Jewish communities, early French schools and the abolition of Jewish judicial autonomy led to a regime that culminated in the 1870 Crémieux Decree, which gave French citizenship to Algerian Jews (but not to Algerian Muslims). As a result, Hebrew and Judeo-Arabic writing decreased in Algeria in all traditional Jewish fields. In Tunisia, the French Protectorate of 1881 and the Alliance's scholar network initiated in Tunis in 1879 as well as the introduction of Hebrew printing gave birth to a worthy and original internal Jewish modernization movement. Judeo-Arabic and Hebrew writings and journals blossomed between 1875 and 1914 but were thereafter challenged by French writing. In Libya, imperialistic ambitions led Italy to occupy the country militarily in 1911, ending its long subordination to the Ottoman Empire, and accorded some civil rights to Jewish communities. In Morocco, the large network of schools inaugurated by the Alliance in Tetuan in 1862 and the French Protectorate of 1912 contributed to training a valuable French-speaking elite in the great urban centers, who played an important administrative and economic role during the French colonization of the country. Yet the rabbinical position of power did not

Postcard of École de l'Alliance Israélite, Tetuan, Morocco. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

suffer from this change. On the contrary, the reforms introduced by the French Protectorate creating communal committees and official rabbinical courts with a High Rabbinical Court at Rabat contributed to improving the jurisprudential tradition of the great communities and led to valuable rabbinical efforts to adapt the world of Halakhah to modern changes. In line with these processes of modernization, there also developed in the urban communities a new appraisal of the neighboring Arabic culture by the traditional Jewish elites, which led them to strengthen their performance and practice of medieval Andalusian music, adapted to the society's new cultural needs.

As for Jewish culture in North Africa, apart from its Jewish religious assets, oral and written, which had developed and changed after the Arab invasion, it was essentially a syncretic culture, integrating cultural elements from the neighboring Berber and Arab Muslims as well as from Spanish, Italian, and French colonial culture. In all aspects of everyday material culture, the influence of the rural or urban environment on Jewish life was obvious, from the houses typical of Andalusian and Berber architecture to public hygiene and men's and women's clothing (with some distinctive aspects), to Mediterranean dietary rules and foodways except for the strict religious rules of *kashruth* that still governed Jewish life. In the various verbal arts, Jewish borrowings from Arabic traditions (and Berber traditions in Moroccan rural communities) were extensive, including hundreds of folktales and folk songs and thousands of proverbs and sayings, as well as routines of daily interaction, based on the practice of Jewish languages and dialects, which were similar to those of their neighboring environment. Even the intense veneration of saints, with hundreds of rabbinical and miraculous figures, and

of holy places such as the ancient synagogue known as El Ghriba, on the Tunisian island of Jerba, continued after the mass departure from North Africa, reinforced by similar Berber traditions.

These cultural and behavioral borrowings were reinterpreted and given new meaning and status through their integration into Jewish life, such that they appeared to the Jewish communities as their own. The modernization processes introduced North African communities to new technologies, rational knowledge, individualistic trends, and European languages. The educated Jewish elites largely adopted these new values, but, with the exception of some small elitist groups in Algeria, who shifted completely to French in the twentieth century, these communities continued to merge their new values with their traditional life in a hybrid and syncretic manner.

Jewish Life Today

During the second half of the twentieth century, this intense and rich Jewish life abruptly ceased, almost entirely. The independence of the four North African countries—Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria—and their political involvement in the Arab-Israeli conflict against Israel led the Jewish masses to emigrate, to the new Jewish state, France, Canada, and other countries in Europe and South America, leaving behind thirteen centuries of life under Islamic rule. Today, approximately 3,000 Jews live in Morocco, mostly in Casablanca, compared with more than 250,000 in 1950. In Tunisia, there are some 1,500 Jews today, approximately 800 of them in Jerba, compared with more than 105,000 before the great emigration. In Algeria, there are fewer than 100 elderly Jews, the last rem-

Talit holder, Algeria, 1936. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

nants of some 165,000 who lived in the country in the 1950s, and in Libya there is not one Jew today, compared with the 35,000 who lived there in 1950. Due to this massive emigration, the original North African communities dismantled, and their scattered members were forced to create new communal structures and construct new Jewish identities for the survival of their communal traditions, adapted to their new Jewish life in Israel, Europe, and America. Today, like millions of other displaced Jews, more than 1.5 million Jews originating in North Africa are seeking new forms of cultural integration that will allow them to preserve their cultural memory and identity.

Joseph Chetrit

See also: Circumcision; Folk Songs and Poetry, North African; Illuminated Manuscripts; Languages, Jewish; Mimuna Festival; Pinto, Rabbi Ḥaim, and the Pinto Family; Spain, Jews of.

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NOY, DOV (1920–)

Dov Noy was the first person to establish folklore as an academic discipline in Israel, initially, in 1955, at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and subsequently at Haifa University. From 1956 to 1982, Noy established and then directed the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA), within the framework of the Haifa Ethnological Museum and Folklore Archives. The IFA, a comprehensive repository of more than 23,000 folktales from more than 70 ethnic groups, was transferred to the University of Haifa in 1983 and was renamed in Noy's honor in 2002.

Noy was born on October 20, 1920, in Kolomyja, Poland. In 1938 he immigrated to Palestine to study at the Hebrew University (HU) of Jerusalem. In 1941–1945 he served in the British Army (Royal Engineers). In 1946 he received his M.A. (Bible, Talmud, and Jewish history) and enrolled as a Ph.D. student at the HU.

In 1947–1948 Noy headed the cultural and educational activities in the Cyprus Refugee Camps, where so-called illegal Jewish immigrants to Palestine were detained by the British. Through his encounter with Holocaust survivors in Cyprus, Noy listened to many narratives referring to the Holocaust and to the destruction of Jewish culture in Europe, including its folkloric infrastructure. In 1949–1952, along with Shimshon Meltzer, the widely read Hebrew poet, who had been his teacher of Hebrew in Kolomyja, Noy coedited the children's weekly magazine *Davar le'yeladim.*

After completing his studies at Indiana University (folklore, comparative literature, and anthropology) and his 1954 Ph.D. dissertation under Professor Stith Thompson, Noy taught at Indiana University in 1954 in the Departments of Folklore and of Slavic Studies.

Noy began to teach Aggadah (post-biblical oral tradition) at the HU in 1955, and the folkloristic methodology he acquired there provided him with fresh insight into the study of Aggadah literature, especially the talmudic-midrashic narratives, which he believes belong more to the realm of folklore than to that of written literature. Thus the genres of Jewish folk narratives should be defined and described according to the accepted universal ethnopoetic classification, established by A. Aarne and S. Thompson (Type- and Motif-indexes).

Noy believed that in the absence of reliable material, he could not face the challenge that modern folklore imposes on scholars, who demand a clear and unequivocal formulation of the questions concerning the continuity of oral tradition; the existence of specific national, ethnic and local traits; and the problems of intercultural contacts and acculturation. As a result, he established the IFA to aid scholars in accessing the folklore and cultures of Jews who immigrated to Israel from various countries. The IFA continues to collect folktales extant in Israelis' oral tradition.

Noy saw the collecting of folktales as the first stage in organizing the archives. His 1967 paper "Collecting Folktales in Israel" was followed by the annual *A Tale for Each Month* (TEM) reports. The second stage involved the annotated (documentation of the "chain of tradition" and comparative notes) publication of as many narrative texts as possible. Noy started to publish authentic texts, mainly in the IFA Publication Series (IFAPS), which consisted of story collections, in which the folktales were accompanied by comparative notes, data on the collectors and narrators, English summaries, indexes, and so on. The series (1962–1978) included forty-two booklets (among them fifteen TEM booklets)—twenty of which were edited by Noy.

During the early years of the IFA, Noy saw the IFAPS—as well as the "From the Folk-Mouth" section, which he established in 1954 in the Hebrew daily *Omer* intended for newcomers to Israel, and his series in the Israel Broadcasting Service—as tools to encourage collectors, some of whom were editors of their collections.

With the establishment of a wide collectors' network, during the mid-1960s Noy founded another series of collections whose purpose was to reflect and promote the study of Jewish ethnic communities and their contribution to the ethnopoetic heritage. Each collection consisted of seventy-one folktales extant in a particular ethnic community that faithfully reflected its ethnic "ego" and its rich narrative tradition.

The third stage involved synthesizing research and scholarly conclusions. Noy created a new methodological path in the study of folk literature. The major trends in his academic work, which combines written and oral literary sources, touch on almost all periods and aspects of Jewish culture.
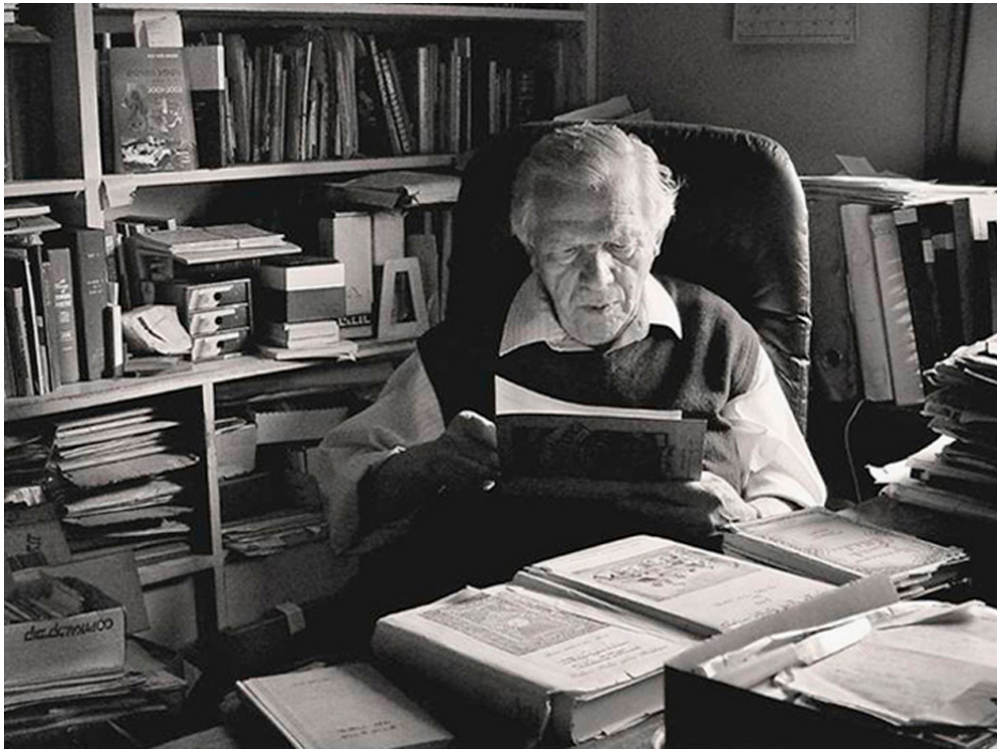
Dov Noy at work in his office.

Noy's folklore views were affected having grown up in a multicultural and multilingual home and were strengthened by his experiences in World War II and the Holocaust, in which he lost his family. For him, the folklore of East European Jews became memory rather than living reality, a task of reconstruction rather than of documentation. In some of his studies, he acted as an "agent," trying to associate the former generation of European Jewish folklorists and the young generation of Israeli folklorists, most of whom are his disciples. This is evident in *Yiddish Folksongs from Galicia* (1971). In his 1982 paper on S. An-ski, "The Place of S. An-sky in Jewish Folkloristics," Noy combines the history and the classification of Ashkenazi folklore and ethnography, of which S. An-ski can be considered the "founder." Noy's 1969 comparative-structural study of Yiddish folk balladry is probably also influenced by the same view, as is "The Model of the Yiddish Lullaby" (1986).

In a variety of studies, Noy demonstrated that the national cultural heritages of the non-Jewish neighbors among whom the Jews lived and created throughout their wanderings have been assimilated into Jewish folklore. While mutual intercultural contacts are evident in many realms, Jewish folklore has certain specific traits common to Jews of the East and the West (Ashkenazi, Sephardic, Middle Eastern), which are characteristic of the creative "ego" of the Jewish people in general. According to Noy's analysis, the Judaization and adaptation of universal traditions (the oicotypification in narratives) bear witness to the qualities, trends, and hopes of the Jewish

"tradents," who transmitted the tales while adapting and Judaizing them, and by the Jewish "audiences" that listened to them.

Noy formulated four rules of Jewish oicotypification: (1) changes at the beginning and at the end of the tale; (2) use of biblical verses and allusions; (3) Hebrew wordplay, allusions, and analogies; and (4) Jewish folkways in Jewish space and Jewish time.

In his discussions of the issues of Jewish hagiography, Noy used authentic Yemenite materials, which have been transmitted orally from generation to generation. In his papers on the Yemenite-Jewish poet and folk hero Rabbi (Mori) Shalem Shabazi, he created a model for the analysis of a Jewish hero's folk biography as extant in Jewish folk narratives.

Noy emphasized that Jewish folklore is not transmitted through a single medium, but combines the following three categories, one of which usually dominated: (1) oral: folk literature and folk music; (2) visual: arts and crafts, costumes, ornaments, and material culture; and (3) cogitative, including popular beliefs, which bring about customs and rites. Each category is exemplified by a single bibliographical entry.

While working to establish the IFA, in 1968 Noy founded and directed the HU Folklore Research Center and was the editor of its *Studies* (8 volumes). In 1974 he held the newly founded M. Grünwald Chair of Folklore at the HU.

The University of Haifa granted Noy an honorary Ph.D. in 1999. In 2002, he was granted the prestigious

Bialik Prize for Life Achievement, of which he regards his contribution to the study of Aggadah and folklore as the most important component. In 2004 he was awarded the most prestigious prize in Israel, the Israel Prize for literary research.

Noy succeeded in inspiring public and community institutions to deal intensively with the study of folklore of all sectors of the population, especially (in the 1950s and 1960s) of the Middle Eastern and Sephardic ethnic groups, which, compared with the Ashkenazi groups, were until then neglected with regard to their cultural heritage. His institutional leadership and his pluralistic approach contributed to his stature as the single most influential folklorist in Israel and in universal Jewish folklore throughout the world.

Edna Hechal and Aliza Shenhar

See also: Israel Folktale Archives.

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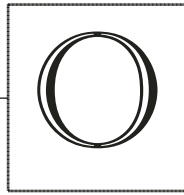
OLSWANGER, IMMANUEL (1888–1961)

Immanuel Olswanger was a folklorist, Yiddishist, linguist, Zionist activist, poet, and translator (into Hebrew) of world-famous folklore works.

Born in Grajewo, Poland, in 1888, Olswanger attended school in nearby Suwałki and later studied at the Universities of Königsberg (in Eastern Prussia) and Bern, Switzerland, where he studied languages and literature. In Switzerland, he began to develop an interest in Jewish folklore and acted as the secretary of the Jewish Section of the Swiss Folklore Association. In Switzerland he met Ludwig Lazarus Zamenhoff, the creator of the international auxiliary language of Esperanto, and became an avid user and distributor of Esperanto. Olswanger's two main areas of interest, languages and folklore, later became the basis of his folklore and translation projects.

In the early 1930s, Olswanger was active in the Zionist movement and was founder of the student Zionist organization He'ḥaver, as well as acted as emissary of Keren Ha'yesod, the United Jewish Appeal, the financial arm of the World Zionist Organization. He emigrated to Eretz Israel in 1933 and settled in Jerusalem, where he worked as writer, editor, and translator at Tarshish Press in Jerusalem. He published a book of verse titled *Bein Adam le'kono* (Between Man and God) in 1943 as well as a book of poetry in Esperanto, *Eternal Yearnings,* and children's literature. He was among the first to translate into Hebrew Asian literary texts and collections written in languages such as Sanskrit (*Bhagavad Gita* [Song of God], a part of the *Mahabharata,* attributed to Lord Krishna) and Japanese (the ancient story collection *Mukashi banashi*).

The uniqueness of this work lies, among other things, in the Latin transcription Olswanger used, which made his work accessible to a wide audience. He translated from European languages, including German, Italian, and Spanish, as well. He translated poems by Goethe, Boccaccio's *Decameron,* and Dante's "Divine Comedy," to which he added notes and wrote an introduction. In addition, he edited collections of Yiddish folklore, mainly proverbs, jokes, and anecdotes: *Röyte pomerantsen* (Red Oranges; 1947, republished and subtitled *Or How to Laugh in English,* with an introduction by Harry Goldin, 1965), and *Lechayim* (To Life; 1949). These works describe in a humorous way the lives and worlds of ordinary East

European Jewish characters, such as peddlers, wagon drivers, and beggars. Olswanger's Yiddish collections augment the work of renowned earlier Yiddish writers such as Mendele Moykher Seforim (Shalom Ya'akov Abramovich, 1836–1917), Sholem Aleichem (Solomon Rabinovitch, 1859–1916), and Olswanger's contemporaneous Alter Druyanow (1870–1938), especially with regard to Druyanow's voluminous *Book of Jokes and Witticisms.*

Olswanger died in Jerusalem on February 7, 1961.

Ilana Rosen

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ORING, ELLIOTT (1945–)

Elliott Oring is a prominent American folklorist distinguished by his contributions to the analysis and interpretation of Jewish humor. He regards humor as an expressive genre that is basic to the formation and reflection of Jewish identity.

Born in New York City on April 20, 1945, Oring earned his Ph.D. in folklore at Indiana University in 1974. His career as an educator (1971–2004) was spent in the Department of Anthropology at California State University, Los Angeles. He also served as visiting professor at the University of Texas, Indiana University, and the University of California campuses in Los Angeles and Berkeley, and as Fulbright scholar at the University of Iceland.

Oring's field-based dissertation, revised into the book *Israeli Humor* (1981), explores the content and structure of the *chizbat* (Arab., "lies") of the Palmach. *Chizbat* were humorous narratives about characters and situations in the Palmach commando units that operated underground during the British Mandate in Palestine. Oring saw the narratives as crucial to the construction of a nascent Israeli identity in which traits of the cocky, secular, Levantine *sabra* (native-born Jews of Palestine) were contrasted with those of immigrant European Jews.

Oring has frequently dealt with jokes by and about Jews as signs of identity. The most sweeping study of this phenomenon is *Jokes and Their Relations* (1992), in which he analyzes the idea of "Jewish humor." Pointing out that the conceptualization of Jewish humor was a modern invention, he proposed several hypotheses to explain how this notion came into being. In the nineteenth century, humor had come to be viewed as a sign of a civilized humanity, and Jews felt it necessary to demonstrate that they had participated in this humanity since their emergence as a people. But because the humor of the Jews

was borne of a history of suffering, rejection, and despair, this history could be reconciled with humorous expression in only a limited number of ways. Consequently, in both scholarly and popular sources, Jewish humor was regarded as transcendent, defensive, or pathological. Other chapters in the volume address the hypothesis of self-hating humor, Jewish-American song parodies, and the Jewish jokes of Sigmund Freud (which is the subject of an entire volume [1984]).

Oring has been critical of psychodynamic interpretations of humor as aggression and favors a consideration of the social, individual, and historical conditions under which jokes are created and told. He has developed a concept of humor as "appropriate incongruity": the perception of an appropriate interrelationship of elements from domains that are generally regarded as incongruous. In his interpretations of humor, he has analyzed the categories that are brought into incongruous opposition and the means by which they are made appropriate.

Simon J. Bronner

See also: Humor; Joke.

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OSEH PELE

Oseh pele is a collection of ninety-four tales compiled by Joseph Shabbetai Farhi, who was born in Jerusalem in 1802. In 1843 Farhi moved to Livorno, Italy, and lived there as a writer and religious leader until his death in 1882.

Oseh pele was published in three different volumes in 1845 and in 1869; in 1870 it was published in one volume and then was republished many times in this form. This book has influenced generations of storytellers, in particular, and Jewish folk literature, in general. The main reasons are its content, sources, genre, and style. The book comprises stories from Hebrew sources of different times, including canonic sources (midrashic and talmudic legends, collections of folk stories from the Middle Ages and modern times). It offers central social and national themes for Jewish culture, including conflicts between Jews and non-Jews; social class differentiation (poor and rich); family relationships (fathers and sons); the cycle of life (birth, marriage, and death); and the Jewish year cycle (Sabbath and holidays). It also represents different literary genres such as myths, fairy tales, novellas, legends, anecdotes, and parables. All the stories are written in biblical style (some of them rhyme) and end with a clear moral statement explaining the meaning and the function of the story according to the author.

The tales included in the book are from three different sources: (1) famous Jewish folktales elaborated from written sources such as the Book of Judith, in which Judith decapitated the enemy and saved the Jews (apocryphal literature); the story of Teraḥ and Abraham, who smashed the idols (Midrash); and the "Story of the Jerusalemite," who broke his oath to his father and found himself married to a she-demon (Middle Ages); also from the same sources are stories about famous sages, saints, and rabbis such as Rabbi Akiva, Rabbi Meir, Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa, Rabbi Isaac Luria Ashkenazi (called Ha'Ari; founder of the Lurianic Kabbalah), or the Sephardic rabbi Abraham Galante; (2) oral sources—that is, stories that the author heard, as he writes, "from wise people more precious than pearls"; and (3) original stories by the author that are sometimes based on non-Jewish sources, including "The Beloved Friend and a Half," about a true friend who hides a friend who, he thinks, is a murderer, and "The Woman Whose Upper Half Looked Like a Beast," though she was very wise. At the end with the help of her son, she turns beautiful and regains her husband, who had run away from her when he saw her face right after the wedding.

The author's aim of the book was to draw young Jews back to traditional Jewish literature in the context of the Jewish cultural crisis of the nineteenth century: the tendency toward secularization and the Haskalah (Enlightenment) movement in European Jewish communities.

This book illustrates traditional rabbinic Jewish norms and values. It became popular especially in the Sephardic and Middle Eastern Jewish communities (in which the book was translated into Judeo-Spanish and Judeo-Arabic). It serves as a source of oral stories told to this day.

Tamar Alexander

See also: Anthologies.

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PAPERCUT

The art of papercut, or cutting designs in paper or in parchment, is a traditional Jewish creative art form. The earliest record of papercuts dates back to a humorous text from 1345: "Milḥemet ha'et ve'ha'misparaim" (The Battle of the Pen and the Scissors) written by Rabbi Shem-Tov ben Yitzhak ben Ardutiel of Spain. Then it is mentioned in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries regarding the development of papercut in Central Europe. *Ketubbot* and the Book of Esther embellished with papercuts, common among Italian Jews, came from that period. This art form reached its peak in the nineteenth century due to the widespread use of paper at every social stratum. Papercuts from that period come mostly from Ashkenazi Jews living in Central and Eastern Europe and from Sephardic Jews living in the Ottoman Empire, especially in Turkey. This art was known to the Jewish population living in North Africa as well as to Jews from Iraq and Syria; alas, only a few items from that population survive. At the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the art of papercut was introduced to the United States by immigrants from Eastern Europe, where the art form began to disappear by the mid-twentieth century. The tradition was revived in the 1960s in Israel and in the United States and, later, in Poland and continues to develop.

The basic function of a papercut in traditional Jewish society was *hiddur mitzvah* (enhancing the Commandments through aesthetics), and to that end, both the motifs and the embedded texts were always subordinate to the Commandments. Far less common were papercuts used as amulets or as decoration.

Among the most renowned traditional papercuts were those produced by Eastern European Jews. Its makers were individuals with a profound knowledge of Judaism, which enabled them to enhance the artistry of papercuts by imbuing them with meaningful content, widely used abbreviations, in pattern layout, or in ornaments. Both the layout and the most commonly used motifs came from traditional art, often a synagogue decoration. Among recurring motifs are menorahs, crowns symbolizing the Torah crown, Decalogue (Ten Commandments) tablets, and the Tree of Life. The most common and most monumental are *mizraḥ* papercuts, hung on the eastern wall of the house, that is, pointing toward Jerusalem—a sacrum that one would pray to— and *shiviti* papercuts, often encountered in synagogues. In addition, papercuts would often announce special events, namely, holidays like Purim or Shavuot, or decorate the walls of a sukkah (booth) during the festival of Sukkot or the calendar used for counting the Omer. The papercuts were made of white paper, often a rectangular page taken out of a school notebook. The artist would then fold the page in half along its vertical axis, draw a pattern with a pencil, affix it to a wooden board, and cut the pattern with a sharp knife. After unfolding it, he would color the papercut with various water-based paints and then put it on a paper, often with a contrasting color, to create a background.

Another group of papercuts in that region were *Roizeleh,* most often round and cut from colorful shiny paper; they would be used to decorate building and synagogue windows during the holiday of Shavuot. Both the pattern and the paper from which it was made as well as the cutting technique indicate that it drew on local non-Jewish art.

The second most renowned and numerous group of papercuts were those created by Sephardic Jews living in the Ottoman Empire, especially in Turkey. They were created in conditions that were diametrically opposed to those in Eastern Europe. Their development reached a peak, according to known sources, earlier than in Eastern Europe. Scholars are aware of papercuts made by Turkish Jews as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century. After continuous development throughout the nineteenth century, papercut was on the wane in the first half of the twentieth century. In order to properly evaluate that art, it is significant to mention that the art of papercut was widely developed in Turkey, a non-Jewish society. There, shops sold papercuts, and their creators were organized in craft guilds.

The art of papercut was also taught in school in the 1920s. Historians have no information whether there were Jewish papercut artists for whom this activity was their profession and their sole source of income. Among these papercuts, we encounter a diversity of materials. Paper was widely used, as was cardboard and sometimes even plywood. The paper was often colored, dyed at printing houses, and the colors used were intense: red, dark blue, sometimes a gold. In addition, colored pencils were used. The use of water-based paint was rare. The cutting technique was also different; both scissors and knives were used. In addition, the technique most commonly used was cutting a single element of a pattern and then attaching it to the background or to an existing composition. The technique would create multilayer papercuts, often creating a sort of three-dimensional effect. An artist would use pattern elements cut from various printed texts. The papercut artists were men familiar with Judaism, as indicated by their use of commonly used texts. The basic function a papercut played was consistent with *hiddur mitzvah.* The most common were *shiviti* papercuts, papercuts

functioning as amulets, papercuts that would decorate a sukkah during Sukkot holidays, wedding blessings, and *ketubbot.* The strong influence of local non-Jewish art can be seen in the decorative elements in Jewish papercuts in the Ottoman Empire, such as the use of a rich plant ornamentation, especially flowers, architectural elements, and illustrations of holy places that pilgrims would visit in the Holy Land. Affinity to Jewish art can be seen in widely used texts and abbreviations, and in single-pattern elements. The most common are the Torah crown, the Decalogue tablets, menorah, and the Star of David. It is worth noting that in a pattern layout, the center of the ground is emphasized, and there is the completion of the wholeness. The papercuts do not usually display symmetry in their design elements.

Papercuts now produced in Israel do not involve their traditional function but, instead, are often created for tourists as souvenirs. Thus their objective is to satisfy the buyer's sense of aesthetics and desire for an art object with Jewish affiliation. They are intended as decorations for a residence or for a festivity. This tendency is becoming more common as seen in the number of types of papercuts: less use of traditional texts and more use of secular texts. The papercut motifs are still traditional, although new ones are being introduced from nature and Israel's contemporary symbolism. In contemporary Israel, as in the Diaspora, the artists creating papercuts are both men and women gifted in the fine arts and employing this art form to depict Jewish culture and key events in their history.

Olga Goldberg-Mulkiewicz

See also: Frenkel, Gizela; Goldberg-Mulkiewicz, Olga; Mizraḥ; Shiviti-Menorah; Symbols.

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PARABLE

The Biblical Parable

"Parable" is the standard translation of the Septuagint for the Hebrew word *mashal*. In the Bible *mashal* designates an array of genres—parables, fables, riddles, proverbs—all of which require decoding of their figurative language or symbolic representation, as shown by two famous examples.

The first is Nathan's rebuke to King David, in which he presents him with the following parable:

> There were two men in the same city, one rich and one poor. The rich man had very large flocks and herds, but the poor man had only one little ewe lamb that he had bought. He tended it and it grew up together with him and his children: it used to share his morsel of bread, drink from his cup, and nestle in his bosom; it was like a daughter to him. One day, a traveler came to the rich man, but he was loath to take anything from his own flocks or herds to prepare a meal for the guest who had come to him; so he took the poor man's lamb and prepared it for the man who had come to him. (2 Sam. 12:2–4)

The second is Jotham's parable, in which he turns to the people of Shechem, who have just appointed his murderous brother as king. In this parable, it is the lowliest and most damaging thornbush that accepts the offer made by the trees of the forest to rule over them, after the worthy trees had all turned it down (Jud. 8–15). In both instances the parable is used as a rhetorical device by a speaker, who acts in a sensitive, even perilous, power structure in which indirect, coded speech is required.

The Rabbinic Parable

Compared with its biblical predecessor, the rabbinic *mashal* is more restricted in its meaning and relates mainly to parables and fables, although it is difficult to identify these latter terms with the culturally specific term *"mashal."* Rabbinic parables may be traced to the same environment that produced the synoptic parables, thus rendering them an important tool for reconstructing the dialogue and polemic between the two emerging religions, Judaism and Christianity. There are few examples of Aesopian or Aesopian-like fables in rabbinic literature: the fox who enters a vineyard through a hole in the fence and, having stuffed himself for three days, cannot exit (*Ecclesiastes Rab.* 5:14) or the bird that removes a bone from the throat of a lion only to learn that not having been swallowed by the beast is in itself the biggest reward it could have hoped for (*Gen. Rab*. 64:10).

Indeed, rabbinic literature lists the study or knowledge of parables, including fox parables, as a separate discipline alongside legal and ethical (aggadic) studies (*b.Sukkah* 28a; *BavaBatra* 134a; *Sanhedrin* 28b). It also alludes to different social contexts in which parables were delivered, such as wedding celebrations (*Leviticus Rab.* 28:2). However, it is the exegetical context that forms the main, almost exclusive, framework for the hundreds of parables in rabbinic texts. That the rabbis saw the parable as a key hermeneutical tool is attested not only

by their prominence throughout the rabbinic corpus but also in explicit statements (or rather in metaparables) that compare the parable to handles that allow the basket of fruit (the Torah) to be carried or to a thread that provides a way out of the (interpretational) maze (Song of Song Rabbah 1:1). Parables are usually introduced by the formula *"mashal le'mah ha'davar domeh"* (*mashal* to what it is like), or in abbreviated forms. Rabbinic parables went through a process of standardization in which earlier parables employ a wider stock of characters (a man, a field owner, a proprietor) that in the classical rabbinic period (in amoraic compilations) are often subsumed in the single persona of a king. The figure of the king is modeled after the courtly setting of the Roman emperor.

The other component that becomes a regular feature of parables in later midrashim is the inclusion of the *nimshal*—an explication and the corresponding biblical citations. The King parables entertain basic plot-character structures anchored in familial and stately relationships: a king who leaves his wife (or his consort: a matron, a woman of high statue); a king who despairs of his sons' upbringing; a king who prepares a banquet for his citizens; a king who marries off his daughter. While the king always symbolizes God, the identity of the other characters may vary. Thus, the daughter may stand for the Torah (and her implied groom, for the Israelites). The rabbinic parable functions hermeneutically through its dual nature: It is both a fictional story and exegesis.

The following example illustrates the rabbinic parable's complex rhetorical power:

> Abba bar Kahana said: It is like a king who married a woman and wrote her a large dowry (*ketubbah*). He wrote to her: So many chambers I make for you, so much jewelry I make for you; so much gold and silver I give you. Then He left her for many years and journeyed to the provinces. Her neighbors used to taunt her and say: Hasn't your husband abandoned you? Go, marry another man. She would weep and sigh, and afterward, she would enter her bridal chamber and read her marriage settlement and console herself. Many days later the king returned. He said to her: I am amazed that you have waited for me all these years! She replied: My master, O king! If not for the large dowry you wrote to me, my neighbors would have led me astray long ago. Likewise: The nations of the world taunt Israel and say to them: Your God does not want you. He has left you. He has removed His presence from you. We will appoint you to be generals, governors and officers. And the people of Israel enter their synagogues and houses of study, and there they read in the Torah, "I will look with favor upon you, and make you fertile. . . . I will establish My abode in your midst, and I will not spurn you" (Lev. 26:9, 11), and they console themselves. In the future when the redemption comes, the Holy One, blessed be He, says to

Israel: My children! I am amazed at how you have waited for Me all these years. And they say to Him: Master of the universe! Were it not for the Torah you gave us, in which we read when we entered our synagogues and house of study, "I will look with favor upon you . . . and I will not spurn you," the nations of the world would have led us astray long ago. That is what is written, "Were not your teaching my delight, I would have perished in my affliction (Ps. 119:92). Therefore it says, "This I call to mind; therefore I have hope" (Lam. 3:21).

This elaborate parable functions on several levels: It serves as an intertextual binder of remote biblical verses by providing them with a "plot-structure," through which the addressees—the people of Israel—are praised for their loyalty in desolate times, a loyalty that is guaranteed by the dowry (Torah). At the same time, the fictional narrative and its relation to the *nimshal* suggest inexplicable gaps that carry deep theological anxiety and queries: Why did the king (God) desert his wife (Israel), and how does one reconcile the difference in tenses between the parable—in which the "happy ending" is included—and its explanation, which refers to an imagined future? It is the multifaceted nature of the *mashal,* its ability to provide both a clear message (e.g., praise and comfort) and reflect on the limits of its exegetical enterprise, that endows it with such hermeneutical power.

Post-Rabbinic Parables

Whereas in the rabbinic period the parable was the most prominent explicitly fictional genre, the post-rabbinic periods gave rise to other fictional narratives, such as the exemplum. Post-rabbinic parables, while often employing traditional imagery of the rabbinic parable, now function in novel ways: They serve as an illustrative rhetorical device for conveying complex ideas (e.g., in *Seder Eliyahu,* ninth to tenth century), thus assuming a clear didactic role; alternatively, they convey and conceal esoteric concepts (e.g., Gnostic notions in *Sefer ha'bahir,* twelfth century). Later medieval Jewish philosophers, as well as mystics, continue to use human characters in their parables, at times in the mode established by earlier post-rabbinic literature, transforming the parable into an allegorical, illustrative tool. Indeed, in the poetic lexicon of the later Middle Ages the word *"mashal"* becomes a technical term for allegory. Parables appear in ethical and homiletic literature (Bahya ibn Paquda, *Duties of the Hearts,* twelfth century); in medieval rhymed prose of different character (Joseph ibn Zabara, *Sefer Sha'shuim,* end of twelfth to beginning of thirteen century; Isaac ben Solomon ibn Sahula's *Mashal ha'qadmoni,* thirteenth century). Parables also figure in Hasidic writings and preaching. Early Hasidic writings often refer to tales of the Ba'al Shem Tov (the eighteenth-century

founder of Hasidism) as *meshalim,* although poetically they bear stronger affinities to the exemplum. The tales of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav (late eighteenth to early nineteenth century) not only make use of traditional parables and fables but also invite allegorical interpretations that in turn render their overall fictional character a "parable" of sorts. Modern folk-narratives, documented in the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa, include several parables, some of which rely on earlier written sources (midrashic works as well as later folk-narrative books such as the *Oseh Pele*).

A structuralist-functionalist approach to the "parable" (cf. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 1975) identifies the parabolic aspects of a given narrative as contingent on the context in which it is performed. Thus, multiple discourses could be characterized as "parables" provided that they bear implied structural analogies to a tension-ridden social situation in which they are applied and on which they comment. As the contexts change, so does the meaning of the parable. This performance-oriented definition of the "parable" allows the inclusion, in addition to traditional "parables" and "fables," of other fictional narratives. It also provides a theoretical model for reconsidering traditional Jewish "parables" and "fables," beginning with their first appearance in the Bible.

Dina Stein

See also: Fable.

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PARADISE (*GAN EDEN*)

See: Afterlife

PASCHELES, WOLF

See: Anthologies

PASSOVER

Passover (Heb., Pesaḥ) is the first of the three pilgrimage festivals on the ancient calendar. It starts on the eve of the fifteenth of Nisan and lasts seven days, from the fifteenth to the twenty-first of Nisan. The seven-day festival was commanded by God in order to commemorate the events described in Exodus 12:1–42.

The Story of the Exodus

According to the biblical story, God instructed the Israelites to slaughter a lamb on the twilight of the fourteenth of Nisan and apply its blood to the lintel and side posts of their doors, using hyssop leaves, in order to indicate that their households should be "passed over," hence the name given to the festival (Exod. 12:27). This so-called paschal lamb was to be roasted later that night and eaten together with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. That night God killed all the Egyptians' firstborn children (the tenth plague) but bypassed the houses marked with paschal blood. Led by Moses and Aaron, the Israelites left Egypt in haste and thus had to form their bread from dough before it was leavened. The unleavened cakes they made are called "*matzot*" (sing., *matzah*). Thus in the Bible the festival is also called *Ḥag Hamatzot* (Feast of the Unleavened Bread). During the seven days of the festival, only unleavened bread is permitted.

Because the story of Passover took place in the springtime, the third name given to this festival is the *Ḥag Ha'Aviv* (Feast of Spring). It was the Bible that related the historical events to the spring. The newly settled Israelite society in Canaan (roughly corresponding to present-day Syria, Lebanon, part of Jordan, Palestine, and Israel) was agricultural, and Nisan, the first month of the Hebrew year that fell during the spring, symbolized the renewal of nature as well as the renewal of the Hebrew nation. In Leviticus (23:10–11) the Israelites are instructed to bring a sheaf (*omer*) of the first fruit of their harvest to the priest, who will wave it on the sixteenth of Nisan. While laying the foundations for the new nation, the Bible binds together its history—the end of slavery and the Exodus promised to Abraham, the first patriarch (Gen.

Seder plate. Spain, fifteenth century. Gift of Jakob Michael, New York, in memory of his wife, Erna Sondheimer Michael. 134/57; 483–12–65. *(© The Israel Museum, by Nahum Slapak)*

15:13–14)—and its new reality in Canaan. In the Book of Exodus, the slaughtering and eating of the Passover lamb are part of a family feast to which a needy neighbor was to be invited (12:3–4); it is not a sacrifice to God.

The Feast of Passover in the Bible

The Bible does not mention observance of Passover with respect to the Israelites' years of wandering in the desert after they left Egypt. Only after crossing the Jordan River and arriving at Gilgal did the Israelites celebrate their first Passover in Canaan, eating *matzot* and roasted corn (Josh. 5:10–11). 2 Chronicles 30 relates to the feast of Passover at the time of King Hezekiah, who restored the Temple worship after it was desecrated by King Ahaz, his father. The king sent posts throughout Judea and Israel to summon the people to the Temple. Priests performed the slaughtering of the Passover offering on the fourteenth of Nisan. The feast of the *matzot* was celebrated, as ordered by God, seven days (30:21). 2 Chronicles 35:1–18 describes Passover during the reign of Josiah: The king distributed to the people 30,000 lambs and kids for the Passover offering. Priests and the Levites performed the slaughter, and, after the burnt offerings, intended to God, were removed, the meat was given to the people to be roasted and eaten. After the exile to Babylonia, and the destruction of the Temple and of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings, 25:1–17),

the prohibition against building the Temple outside Jerusalem (Ezek. 20:40) put an end to the sacrifices. The celebration of Passover is mentioned again at the time of Ezra, when, after Cyrus's decree, the Israelites returned from the Babylonian exile and rebuilt the Temple in Jerusalem (Ez. 6:16–22). On the fourteenth of Nisan the priests slaughtered the Passover offerings for the people returning from exile.

Passover During the Time of the Second Temple

The Mishnah (*Pesaḥim* 9:5) called the paschal lamb the Egyptian Passover (*Pesaḥ mitzrayim*). The lamb was also called "Passover throughout the ages" (*pesaḥ dorot*).

At the time of the Second Temple, although the paschal lamb was slaughtered in the Temple, it was not performed by priests, as was the case earlier, but by the people themselves, while the Levites were reading the *Hallel* (Psalms 113–118; *t. Pesaḥim* 3:11). According to the Tosefta (*Pesaḥim* 4:14), each person arrived at the Temple with his lamb and his knife. After the slaughtering, the meat was distributed to the pilgrims, who roasted it throughout the city and ate it in groups (*m. Zevaḥim*, 5:8). During this period, thousands of pilgrims from Israel and the Diaspora went to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. The Passover offering was eaten together with *matzah*, bitter herbs, and *ḥaroset.* The benediction over the wine and grace after the meal were accompanied by the drinking of wine, but the Talmud and other sources make no mention of the drinking of four cups of wine, as was later to become standard at a Seder (see below). One reads the *Hallel* and nothing points to the telling of the story of the Exodus. Even though thousands of Jews still made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem, most Jews celebrated the eve of Passover, like every other feast—a meal, a benediction over wine, and grace after the meal—at home.

Passover After the Destruction of the Second Temple

In the generations after the destruction of the Temple, the Passover observance took another form. The Seder, celebrated on the eve of the fifteenth of Nisan, became the main feature of the feast. The foundations of the Seder as we know it today were laid in the Mishnah (*Pesaḥim* 10). Unlike most of the tractate *Pesaḥim,* which refers to the celebration at the time of the Temple, chapter 10 mentions the sages of Yavneh. Because Yavneh became the spiritual center after the destruction of the Temple, Shmuel Safrai and Ze'ev Safrai, in *Haggadah of the Sages: The Passover Haggadah* (1998), infer that this chapter was incorporated into the Mishnah after the destruction of the Second Temple by the

Romans in 70 C.E. The word "Seder" (lit., "order") does not derive from the Mishnah, but was coined by Rashi (Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes) (*Sefer ha'orah* 53) in the eleventh century.

The prohibition against eating leavened bread or other foods considered forbidden for Passover (*ḥametz*) during the seven days of the festival gave rise to a tradition, observed to this day, that begins long before the Seder itself and consists of a thorough cleaning of the house to remove any leaven and preparation of the *matzot.* According to the symbolic ceremony, on the eve of the fourteenth of Nisan one hides crumbs of leavened bread in one's home, then searches for them by candlelight. The crumbs found are burned early on the morning of Passover eve, along with the rest of the leavened bread in the house. In Israel all the *ḥametz* is symbolically sold to a non-Jew for the seven days of the festival.

The Seder

The Seder, like the biblical event, takes place on the eve of the fifteenth of Nisan. Its essence is the reading of the Haggadah—a book consisting of the story of Exodus and of halakhic and midrashic texts, psalms, liturgical hymns, benedictions, and prayers—and the performance of symbolic rituals related to the story of the Exodus, which are followed by a festive meal. According to the custom already established in the Mishnah (*Pesaḥim* 10), the participants in the Seder are to recline, as was the habit among the Greeks and the Romans.

The Seder intends to commemorate and partially re-enact the biblical events. It takes place around the table on which lies the Seder plate, containing a roasted bone commemorating the paschal lamb and Passover sacrifice, called *"zroa,"* and an egg recalling the special sacrifice (*korban ḥagigah*) offered by the pilgrims in the Temple in Jerusalem. The Italian Haggadah attaches to the roasted bone and the egg an eschatological meaning while stating that the roasted bone is a reminder of the leviathan and the egg refers to a legendary bird called *"ziz."* Both animals will be eaten in the righteous meal in paradise, with the arrival of the messiah. The *maror* (bitter herbs) symbolize the bitter slavery in Egypt and recall the bitter herbs that the Israelites ate with the lamb on the eve of the Exodus. The *ḥaroset* (a mixture of chopped fruits, wine, and spices) resembles the clay with which the Israelites worked in Egypt. *Karpas* (various green leaves, according to the custom) is dipped in salt water or in vinegar. This custom originates in the Greek and Roman practice of starting a meal with hors d'œuvres, unlike the Jews who would start it with bread. The Italian Haggadah adds to the plate roasted grains, nuts, sweets, and fruit, meant to keep the children awake and to persuade them to ask the Four Questions in the Haggadah (chiefly, "What makes this night different from all other nights?"). In addition,

the Seder plate features three *matzot,* of which two fulfill the requirement for *leḥem mishneh* (the double portion of bread also served on the Sabbath) and the third, placed in the middle, is called *"afikoman"* (the name derives from the Greek *epikomen,* or "entertainments after the meal"). Half of the *afikoman* is hidden at the beginning of the Seder and is eaten at the end. An Ashkenazi custom, which became a common practice, is for the children in attendance to search for the hidden portion and "redeem" it at the end of the Seder in exchange for a present. The Seder cannot be terminated until after the *afikoman* is eaten, after which nothing further is eaten. In addition, the Seder includes the drinking of four cups of wine at specified points in the ceremony. In some communities, it is customary to fill a cup for the prophet Elijah and open the door to await his arrival.

Passover in Art

The importance of the festival together with the *mitzvah* of embellishing ritual objects gave rise to a tradition of decorating objects related to the Seder. Some of these objects are used on other occasions, and it is the decoration that identifies their particular function. Wine cups and goblets, for example, are inscribed with the word "Pesaḥ," sometimes with quotations from the Haggadah, and are often decorated with motifs related to the festival. It is customary to decorate Elijah's Cup.

An object made especially for the Seder is the Seder plate. This tradition was most elaborated in the Jewish communities of Europe, but plates were also made in Iran, Syria, and Israel. The earliest Seder plate known today is a faience plate from the fifteenth century. The plates, also made of silver, pewter, brass, and olivewood, were decorated with text taken from the Haggadah and scenes related to the story of the Exodus and Passover customs.

In addition to the special plate, the Seder ceremony has produced silver vessels for the *ḥaroset,* embroidered cases for the *matzot,* and special covers for the cushion on which reclines the person who conducts the Seder. The creation of decorated ritual objects continues.

The most richly decorated object is the Haggadah. The earliest decorated *Haggadot* date to the thirteenth century. Many decorated *Haggadot* have been printed since the invention of movable type. The special iconography of the Haggadah includes text, rituals, and biblical illustrations. The printed *Haggadot* of the twentieth century often include illustrations that refer to events of the time of their creation.

Yael Zirlin

See also: Egg; Food and Foodways; Haggadah of Passover; Seder Plate.

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PATAI, RAPHAEL (1910–1996)

Raphael Patai's scholarly works represent a synthesis of anthropological-folkloristic theories and methods with the historical study of Jewish and Arab cultures and of the Jewish communities that experienced the world of Islam. In numerous books and essays spanning more than sixty years, Patai drew upon major folkloristic and anthropological approaches of the twentieth century, such as cross-cultural comparative methods, myth and ritual theory, and theories of cultural contact and acculturation to analyze the ancient Israelite religion, post-biblical and medieval Jewish literature, and the cultures and traditions of Jewish ethnic groups from predominantly Muslim lands. Within Jewish folklore, his studies examine biblical beliefs in the context of the ancient Middle East, highlight the mythic dimensions of the Aggadah, and broaden scholars' initial concern with east European communities to include Jewish ethnic communities from Arab lands.

Early Life and Education

Patai was born in Budapest, Hungary, on November 22, 1910. Following the spirit of Hungarian nationalism, his father, Jozef (1882–1953), had changed his last name from Klein to Patai, alluding to his childhood village Pata. His father and his mother, Edith Patai (née Ehrenfeld) (1886–1976), belonged to Hungarian Jewish-Zionist intellectual circles. Both were scions to long lines of rabbinical families and became poets and writers in Hebrew and Hungarian. Raphael Patai began his education in a modern school and continued in the newly established high school of the Israelite Congregation of Pest. After graduation in 1928, he briefly

studied mechanical engineering at Budapest's Technical University but, because of its blatant anti-Semitism and his own interest in other areas, transferred to the yeshiva in Montreux, Switzerland, which combined an east European Jewish curriculum with a Western setting. Having attended the yeshiva for only a few months, he enrolled at the Rabbinical Seminary of Budapest in September 1929, after explaining to his father that he was nonetheless not intending to pursue a rabbinical career. He was, at the same time, enrolled at the University of Budapest (now called Eötvös Loránd University). At the seminary, he came under the influence of Bernard Heller (1871–1943), a prominent scholar of Jewish and Arabic folklore. During the academic year 1930–1931, he attended the Jüdisch-Theologisches Seminar in Breslau and the University of Breslau, and then returned to Budapest to complete his studies.

After graduation from the University of Budapest in 1933, Patai moved to Palestine and enrolled as a "research student" at the Hebrew University. Even as a young student, he demonstrated his dedication to folklore by publishing the essay "Ha'folklor ma hu?" (What Is Folklore?) in the Jerusalem daily *Do'ar ha'Yom* on March 15, 1935.

In 1936, after completing his dissertation, "Ha'Mayim: Mehqar leyediat ha'aretz ulefolklor eretzi-yisraeli biteqۚufot hamiqra vehamishna" (Water: A Study in Palestinology and Palestinian Folklore in the Biblical and Mishnaic Periods), Patai became the first student to receive a Ph.D. at the Hebrew University. After it was published, his dissertation was awarded the prestigious Bialik Prize for 1936. He followed this study by exploring the theme of "man and land," prominent in the discourse of the Yishuv (settlement) period, in his book *Adam ve'Adamah* (Man and Land).

As an extension of his doctoral research, Patai published *Ha'sappanut ha'ivrit: meḥkar betoldot hatarbut ha'eretz yisraelit beyemei kedem* (Jewish Seafaring: A Study in Ancient Jewish Culture) (1938), to which he returned at various points later in his life. It was one of the last subjects on which he worked at the end of his life, and the revised text was published posthumously as *The Children of Noah: Jewish Seafaring in Ancient Times* (1998).

Research and Life Work

Very early in his career Raphael Patai recognized the significance of systematic research in folklore and anthropology among the diverse Jewish ethnic groups that were gathering in Palestine and began recording information about the culture and history of several ethnic groups. An exemplary ethnographic-historical and folkloric research project employing this method was his study of the Crypto Jews of Meshhed, begun in Jerusalem in 1946 and completed sixty years later

Raphael Patai, ca. 1993. *(Courtesy of Daphne Patai)*

and published posthumously as *Jadīd al-Islām: The Jewish "New Muslims" of Meshhed* (1997). In Jerusalem, Patai was the major moving force in the formation of the Palestine Institute of Folklore and Ethnography (1944) and the founding editor of its journal, *Edot: A Quarterly for Folklore and Ethnology* (1945–1948), and its monograph series "Studies in Folklore and Ethnology," which comprised five volumes between 1946 and 1948.

In 1947 Patai received a research fellowship in the United States from the Viking Fund (later the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research) and left for a year, but unable to obtain an academic appointment in Israel, his departure lasted a lifetime. Supported by the Wenner-Gren Foundation, he conducted field research among the Jewish community (which had intermarried with the local indigenous Indian tribe) in the village of Venta Prieta, Mexico, in summer 1948 and revisited the village in 1964. With his report on this field research, Patai entered an arena in which the level of controversy was unexpectedly high. These papers were republished in Patai's volume *On Jewish Folklore* (1983) and again,

with additional essays on the subject, in volume 18 of the *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Review* (1996).

In the United States Patai taught anthropology at Dropsie College (1948–1957) and Fairleigh Dickinson University (1966–1975) and was a visiting professor at Columbia University, New York University, Ohio State University, the University of Pennsylvania, and Princeton University. In 1956 he became the director of research at the Herzl Institute, New York, and a year later he became also the editor of the Herzl Press. In 1988 he founded and edited, at Wayne State University Press, the monograph Series in Jewish Folklore and Anthropology, which after his death was renamed the Raphael Patai Series in Jewish Folklore and Anthropology."

A prolific scholar in Hungarian, Hebrew, and, above all, English, who wrote about a broad range of subjects, Patai introduced into Jewish studies anthropological and folkloric theories of the twentieth century. He selected some of his key articles for republication in his volume *On Jewish Folklore* (1983). During the first phase of his research, he drew upon the comparative, evolutionary, and cultural anthropology of James Frazer, and later he shifted to the Cambridge school of "myth and ritual," and its applications to the Mediterranean societies in the ancient Middle East and Greece. His book exploring this approach, *Man and Temple in Ancient Jewish Myth and Ritual* (1947), led years later to a collaboration with Robert Graves. Their joint book, *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis* (1964), recast Genesis and midrashic narratives about biblical figures and events as Hebrew myths, long before other scholars applied the concept of myth to Jewish traditions and Jewish mysticism. The influence of this collaboration is also apparent in such works as Patai's *The Hebrew Goddess* (1967, 1978, 1990, 2011). Among his best-known works are *The Arab Mind* (1973, 1983, 2003, 2007, 2010) and *The Jewish Mind* (1977, 2007). He provided the first detailed exploration of the role of Jews in alchemy in his book *The Jewish Alchemists: A History and Source Book* (1994).

At the end of his life, Patai turned his attention to the country of his birth and published *The Jews of Hungary: History, Culture, Psychology,* which appeared in 1996, a few months before his death. He also wrote several autobiographical volumes. His last published book was *Arab Folktales from Palestine and Israel,* which appeared posthumously in 1998.

Patai's final project consisted of planning, outlining, and initiating the writing of the *Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore and Traditions* (2013).

Dan Ben-Amos

See also: Alchemy; *Edot: A Quarterly for Folklore and Ethnology*; Hungary, Jews of; Sea.

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PERETZ, ISAAC LEIB (1851–1915)

Isaac Leib Peretz was an author, poet, playwright, critic, and translator and an advocate of the collection, study, and use of folklore in literary works. A central figure in the public and cultural life of Jewish Warsaw, he wrote in both Hebrew and Yiddish and is considered the father of modern Yiddish literature, as well as a major influence on its authors.

Born on April 18, 1851, in Zamość to Yehuda and Rivka Peretz, he received a religious education but was also exposed to *maskilic* circles when he was in his teens. At eighteen he was married to Sara Lichtenfeld, the daughter of the *maskilic* author and mathematician Gabriel Judah Lichtenfeld. The couple had two sons, Jacob, who died young, and Eliezer (Lucjan). After the marriage ended in divorce, Peretz married Helena (Nechama) Ringelheim in 1878. After spending two years in Warsaw (1876–1877) he returned to Zamość, where he studied law. He supported himself as an attorney until 1887, when his license was revoked after he was accused of promoting Polish nationalism and socialism. He moved to Warsaw with his wife and son. In 1890, at the recommendation of Naḥum Sokolov, Peretz joined the statistical expedition financed by the philanthropist Jan Bloch, which investigated the economic plight of the Jews in Poland; this took him to the towns and villages of the Tomaszów district. In 1891 he became a member of the Warsaw community council. Peretz continued in this capacity, dividing his time between this job and his writing and cultural activity, until his death in 1915.

The Works

At the start of his literary career, in the 1870s, Peretz wrote in Yiddish—satirical poems on local Zamość affairs, some of them set to popular melodies. But, like the poems he wrote in Polish during the same years, they were never published. In the late 1870s and throughout the 1880s he wrote chiefly in Hebrew, with his work appearing in the periodicals *Ha'Shahar, Ha'Boker,* and *Ha'Zefirah. Sippurim Be'Shir ve'shirim shonim* (Stories in Verse and Selected Poems), his first published collection (1877), was a co-production with his father-in-law, Gabriel Judah Lichtenfeld. It was not until 1888 that his first important work in Yiddish, the poem "Monish," saw the light of day, in *Di yidishe folksbibliotek,* a periodical edited by Sholem Aleichem. From then on, Peretz published in both Hebrew and Yiddish, gradually switching to the latter. Many of the stories of these years were realistic, with a positive angle on the social aspects of Jewish life. Peretz also became the editor and publisher of four journals: *Di yidishe bibliotek,* with a *maskilic* orientation, in which he published, among other pieces, his impressions of his travels in the Tomaszów district; *Literatur un lebn; Ha'Hetz*; and *Yontev bletlekh.* The last of these, which followed a radical socialist line, evaded the censor by pretending to focus on the Jewish holidays. Peretz also attended conferences of Jewish workers and published stories and essays with socialist sympathies in Eastern Europe, London, and New York. In 1899 he was jailed for three months for socialist ac-

tivity. After his release, a four-volume collection of his work in Hebrew was published by Tushiya.

Collection of Jewish Folklore

In the 1890s Peretz began collecting folk songs, tales, and sayings. Although he prepared forty-two folksongs for publication in *Yontev bletlekh* in 1896, it was only in 1898 that his first work on the subject appeared, in the German-language *Am Urquell.* His interest in Jewish folklore became more intense around the turn of the century. In 1900–1902 Peretz published many of the stories later collected in *Khasidish* (In the Hasidic Manner). Beginning in 1904 he wrote a series of treatments of folktales, which appeared initially in the journal *Der fraynd* and later in the first edition of his *Folkstimlikhe geshikhtn* (Folktales) in 1909. Additional stories in the series were written between 1912 and 1914.

At the same time, starting in 1903, Peretz turned to writing for the stage. His most famous works in this genre are *Di goldene keyt* (The Golden Chain, 1909) and *Baynakht oyfn altn mark* (At Night in the Old Market, 1907). In 1904 Peretz resumed publication of *Di yidishe bibliotek* as a monthly and became the unofficial spokesman of the Yiddishists. A ten-volume collection (the last in 1913) of his writings was published by the Warsaw publishing house Progress.

Literature and Folklore in the Service of Ideology

The aesthetic ideals of the Haskalah (Enlightenment) are evident in Peretz's works of the 1870s, 1880s, and first half of the 1890s. Although they drew on Jewish folklore, their perspective was critical and motivated by an interest in ethnography, as in the *Bilder fun a provints-rayze* (Pictures from a Provincial Journey), based on his experiences in the Tomaszów district, published in *Di yidishe bibliotek* in 1891. In these sketches Peretz described the folklore of the shtetl (village) and its inhabitants, but added trenchant social and cultural criticism, informed by an anticlerical socialism, of the people and their customs. He presented himself as a modern Polish Jew, urban and secular, remote from the people and their folkways, and a sharp contrast to the conservative and disintegrating shtetl. Nevertheless, by this time Peretz was feeling a certain attraction to folklore and compassion for the shtetl Jews. His attitude toward Yiddish, too, the language in which the *Bilder* were written, began to change.

In 1888, when he published the poem "Monish," Peretz told Sholem Aleichem that he wrote in Yiddish for his own pleasure and not to educate the people. This was a bold attitude toward that language: not a despicable jar-
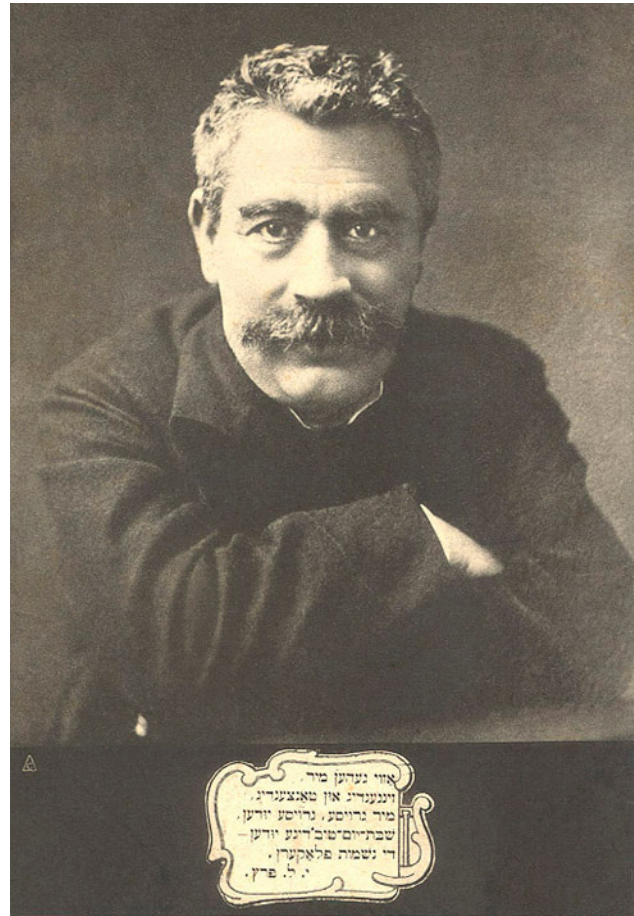
Isaac Leib Peretz, postcard.

gon, dismissed by the *maskilim* as a linguistic and cultural excrescence whose sole merit was as a tool to educate the common folk, but a vehicle that could convey aesthetic values, a language of belles-lettres in which the common folk, too, could have an experience, in his words, "of beauty, of the spirit hovering above the poem." This view of Yiddish went together with a rejection of the pragmatic character of Haskalah literature, a farewell to its social themes, and the turn to an expressive literature that deals with the inner world of individuals and the community. Whereas the Haskalah authors who wrote in Yiddish in the nineteenth century had no use for the older Yiddish literature (the *teḥinot* [supplications], the ethical treatises [*musar*], and the *bobbe meises* [romances; lit., grandma stories]) and ignored the existence of contemporary Yiddish writing (such as collections of legends) and Yiddish folk literature, Peretz was the first important writer who attempted to connect to the storytelling tradition of the revival of the old Yiddish language and turned toward the Jews' recent Yiddish-speaking past: the folksongs, the Hasidic legends, and the *teḥinot* for women.

In Peretz's oeuvre, the use of Yiddish and reliance on folklore developed in parallel. Peretz changed his mind about the national and aesthetic status of Yiddish and also about the national and aesthetic status of folklore. The national awakening all over Europe, including Poland; the Jewish national revival (the First Zionist Congress met in 1897); and the emergence of ethnography and folklore studies led Peretz to recognize the national significance and aesthetic value of folklore. He went on to exert great influence on his contemporaries and inspired them to accept folklore as a national treasure. Peretz presented their folklore as evidence that the Jews were a nation with their own culture, language, and history. He saw folklore as a means of preserving the culture of the past and shaping a modern secular Jewish identity for the future and as a symbol of the national spirit. In his evocations of folk beliefs and folk customs he highlighted the supernatural and mystical elements. He depicted the people's moral and spiritual elevation and their inherent love of beauty and poetry. Jewish folksongs, he held, demonstrated the Jews' sensitivity to nature, to music, to beauty, to dance, and to love. Although folkloric elements can be found throughout his oeuvre, most of the stories written in a folk or Hasidic vein are in the two collections *Khasidish* and *Folkstimlikhe geshikhtn.* Because of Peretz's strong attraction to folklore, his editors could not always decide how to categorize various works; hence the stories included in the successive editions of *Folkstimlikhe geshikhtn* changed over the years. In a 1915 letter to Jacob Dinezon, for example, H.N. Bialik wondered whether "we should perhaps add some of Peretz's Hasidic stories in Hebrew—which also have a folk origin—to *Folkstimlikhe geshikhten,* in order to pad the size of the volume."

Both Yiddish and folklore served Peretz as a tool for consolidating modern Jewish nationalism. During the last decade of his life, Peretz was at the forefront of the campaign, which reached its high-water mark at the Czernowitz Conference of 1908, to make Yiddish a national language of the Jews. He advocated cultural autonomy for the Jews of the Diaspora and wanted to crystallize a Jewish national culture for the Jews living in the Diaspora that would be secular, humanist, and ethical. Peretz did not see the Land of Israel and the Zionist idea as a feasible solution for the entire Jewish people; he believed that it was impossible to create "a spiritual center far from the center of the people's life," as Ahad Ha'am (pseudonym of Asher Ginsberg, 1856–1927) proposed. Consequently he favored implanting a strong secular national culture in the Diaspora, to replace the tradition of the religious past and prevent the assimilation catalyzed by loss of faith. One way to achieve this, Peretz maintained, was by forging a national literature based on all facets of the Jewish tradition, both written and oral. In the essay "What Does Literature Lack?" (1910) he phrased it in the clearest possible terms: "We must get out of the ghetto and see the world, but with the eyes of a Jew. . . . I am speaking to those who are fighting for our right to have our own culture, for the right to create Jewish cultural values. Here again it is not enough to speak Yiddish—you have to say something, too. . . . But someone who has neither past nor future wanders through the world like a foundling, with no father or mother, with no tradition, and with no obligations to what is still to come, to the future and eternity." Peretz died on April 3, 1915.

Limor Weissman Ravid

See also: Poland, Jews of.

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PINTO, RABBI ḤAIM (1748–1845)

Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto the Great was the first in a family dynasty to achieve recognition throughout Morocco and abroad. Due to his renowned erudition, the numerous miracles he performed and recounted all over the country, and his humbleness and great worry to the well-being of his people, his sons and their descendants have acquired the status of sainthood. He was the first of the Moroccan *tzaddikim* whose miracles and deeds were described in a book titled *Shevaḥ Ḥaim.*

The Pinto family is one of three large families (the two others are Abuḥatsera and Ben Barukh Ha'Cohen) to produce several saints and illustrious rabbis. To this day, the families are considered holy, and their descendants share this distinguished reputation. The migration

of these families to Israel and a dramatic change in the general framework of saint veneration among Moroccan Jews in Israel have altered the relative influence of these families.

The Pinto family originated in a small town of the same name in the area of Madrid, Spain. After the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal in 1496–1497, several Pinto families migrated to Morocco as well as other countries. According to a Pinto family tradition, Rabbi Yosef Pinto immigrated to Damascus, Syria. One of his descendants, Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto (1565–1648), became famous as a rabbi. Rabbi Yoshiyahu's daughter married the son of Rabbi Ḥaim ben Joseph Vital, a prominent disciple of Rabbi Issac Luria Ashkenazi (Ha'Ari). Members of the Pinto family stress this link to Rabbi Luria and view Rabbi Yoshiyahu as the head of the family dynasty.

The Pinto families that moved to Morocco settled in Tangier, Agadir, and Marrakech, where they had an important role in leading the local community and the rabbinate. Rabbi Ya'akov Pinto, a disciple of Rabbi Abraham Azulay, became a famous kabbalist and published a commentary to the Zohar. His son, Rabbi Abraham Pinto, was a *dayan* (religious judge) in Marrakech. The last Pinto to live in Tangier was Rabbi Shlomo Pinto, who dedicated his life to the study of the Torah, with the support of his first wife's brother, a wealthy merchant named Rabbi Khalifa Malka. After his first wife's death, Rabbi Shlomo traveled to Marrakech and married a woman from the Benbeniste family. The couple returned to Agadir, where their son, Ḥaim, later known as Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto the Great, was born in 1748. Rabbi Shlomo died in 1761, when Ḥaim was only 12 years old.

That same year, there was an earthquake in Agadir, and many of its inhabitants moved to Mogador. The young Ḥaim arrived in Mogador and stayed with Rabbi Ya'akov Gedalia, one of the city's richest residents. When he learned that one of his relatives, Rabbi Meir Pinto, lived in the city and worked at the French embassy, Ḥaim contacted him. Rabbi Meir registered Ḥaim in the yeshiva headed by Rabbi Ya'akov Bibas. Ḥaim excelled in his studies, and, after Rabbi Ya'akov Bibas died in 1769, Ḥaim, now a rabbi himself, was appointed head of the yeshiva and a *dayan,* together with his friend Rabbi David Ben Ḥazan. Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto served as the chief rabbi of Mogador until his death in 1845.

Among the legends about Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto is that he studied with the prophet Elijah. Every night, Rabbi Ḥaim would wake up to study and his disciple and servitor, Rabbi Aharon Ben-Ḥaim, would serve him a cup of coffee. One night, Rabbi Aharon heard two voices and brought in two cups of coffee. When Rabbi Ḥaim inquired, the servitor answered that he had brought two cups of coffee because he had heard two voices and

thought that there was a guest present. Rabbi Ḥaim said to him: "Happy are you that you have seen the prophet Elijah, but now you must swear that you will reveal this secret only after my death." And so it was that Rabbi Aharon revealed the secret after Rabbi Ḥaim's death.

Another legend recounts that when he was young, Rabbi Ḥaim would pray in the synagogue of a rich man. Every Saturday afternoon, before the Minḥa prayer service, he would give a lesson until the rich man would ask him to stop. On one occasion, Rabbi Ḥaim gave a sermon that excited those in attendance. Rabbi Ḥaim continued his sermon and ignored the rich man's orders, agreeing to stop only after his third request. In the Minḥa prayer, Rabbi Ḥaim implored God to help him find financial support for building his own synagogue. The next day a man about to travel abroad asked Rabbi Ḥaim to hold on to a large sum of money for him until his return. Rabbi Ḥaim asked the man for permission to use the money until his return, and the man agreed. Rabbi Ḥaim then called skilled workmen and built a magnificent synagogue. The man never returned to claim the money, and Rabbi Ḥaim understood that God had sent the prophet Elijah to help him.

Another story tells that while Rabbi Ḥaim was in the middle of teaching a lesson at the yeshiva, he suddenly went and stood at the entrance to the building. His disciple and servitor followed him. A rich man, known to be a miser, passed by, and Rabbi Ḥaim asked him to give alms for the poor. The rich man refused. Then Rabbi Ḥaim asked his servitor to follow the man to his house and recite the Shema. When the rich man reached his door, he suddenly dropped dead as the servitor finished reading the prayer. Upon his return, the servitor told the rabbi what had happened. The rabbi then disclosed that he had seen the Angel of Death dancing in the town around the rich man. Since he had found out what was going to happen, the rabbi tried to save him from death by performing an act of charity. Because he was unable to persuade the rich man to perform an act of charity, he ensured that he had a proper death as a Jew by reciting the Shema.

Rabbi Ḥaim had four children: Rabbi Yehuda (also known as Rabbi Hedann), Rabbi Yosef, Rabbi Yoshiyahu, and Rabbi Ya'akov. Rabbi Hedann became particularly famous as a saint and a performer of miracles. It is told that when he walked through a market, both Jews and Muslims would kiss his hand and ask for a blessing, which they accompanied with a donation. He supported his family from these donations and also gave money to the poor.

It is said that when Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto the Great died, his sons mourned him for seven days. During the day, the four brothers would take light naps. During one of these naps, Rabbi Hedann closed his eyes but remained awake. When he opened his eyes, he saw his father of

Cover page of the book *Shevaḥ Ḥaim* by Makhluf Mazal Tarim. (Casablanca, no date)

blessed memory about to enter the house. Rabbi Hedann shouted loudly, waking up his brothers, and told them that he saw their father entering the house. At night, his father came to him in a dream and said that he had intended to come to him while he was awake, but now that he had revealed the secret, he would be able to come to him only in his dreams.

A legend tells that at the time of Rabbi Hedann, a Jewish merchant named Messann Bohbot decided to travel to Amzat village in the region of Taroudant, where he used to buy citrons that he would later sell in Mogador. After purchasing the merchandise, he was on his way to his hometown when he encountered bandits on the road. He had 500 douro in his wallet. He knew that the bandits would most likely murder him and take his money, so he vowed to donate all his money to Rabbi Hedann if he were saved. Miraculously, he was saved but regretted making the vow and considered giving Rabbi Hedann only 100 douro. That night, Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto the Great appeared to his son in a dream and told him

what happened to Messann and instructed him not to accept less than 500 douro. In the morning, Messann went to the house of Rabbi Hedann and gave him 100 douro and five citrons. Rabbi Hedann said, "I will not accept less than 500 douro, because that was your vow," and told Messann about Rabbi Pinto the Great's appearance in his dream. Messann was shocked to hear that Rabbi Hedann knew everything and immediately handed him all the money.

Another story describes how one year there was a drought and people from the community came to Rabbi Hedann, asking him to pray for rain. Surrounded by the crowd, he went and stood by his father's house. He did not even have time to complete the prayer for rain when the rain started and all the people returned home wet.

A prominent son of Rabbi Hedann, Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto, was born in Mogador in 1865 and died on the fifteenth of Ḥeshvan (October 20) 1937 in Casablanca. He is buried in the old Jewish cemetery of Casablanca, where he was a very popular saint. He is sometimes called Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto Ha'Katan (the Younger), to distinguish him from his illustrious grandfather, Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto the Great.

It is said that around 1924, Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto the Younger was saying the "Birkat ha'Levanah" (the blessing of the new moon). When he finished the blessing, he told the people who were with him: "What did we say in the blessing? *Ke'shem she'anaḥnu meraqqedin* . . . [as we dance toward thee, but cannot touch thee]. I promise you that some of you will live to see the day when man will go up to the moon and dance there." The people who were with him asked: "How can such thing come about?" He told them: "It will happen."

Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto the Younger had four children: Rabbi Moshe-Aharon, Rabbi Ḥaim-Shimon, Rabbi Raphael, and Rabbi Meir. The last two were brutally murdered by Muslims in 1980 in Casablanca. The most eminent of the four brothers was undoubtedly Rabbi Moshe-Aharon Pinto. He was considered a *tzaddik*. He secluded himself for many years in the family house in Mogador and was there when his father died. Moshe-Aharon and others in Mogador did not immediately receive the message about their father's impending death. Several followers of the Pinto saints left for Casablanca, knowing that they would not arrive there in time. They invited Rabbi Moshe to join them, but he declined. Upon their arrival, they were astonished to see Rabbi Moshe already observing the shiva mourning rituals with his brothers and were even more amazed to learn that he had attended the funeral. When Rabbi Moshe was asked about it by his son Rabbi Ḥaim, he answered that some things are best left unsaid.

Rabbi Moshe-Aharon immigrated to Israel, became famous in Morocco and in Israel, and was associated with many miracles. He died in Ashdod when he was

seventy-three years old and is buried there. His grave, a domed structure ornamented with colored glass, is a site of pilgrimage for many of the Pinto family followers in Ashdod and elsewhere in Israel. The most distinguished of his sons, Rabbi David, is responsible for leading the rabbinical activities in France, where he teaches and spreads the Torah. He also leads a large group of followers in Los Angeles. His name is also associated with many miracles.

The eldest son of Rabbi Moshe, Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto, is married to the granddaughter of the famous Baba Sali (Rabbi Yisrael Abuḥatsera) of the Abuḥatsera family. He lives in Ashdod and thus is sometimes called Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto of Ashdod. He serves as the chief rabbi of Kiryat Malakhi. He oversees a broad range of activities in Ashdod and Kiryat Malachi and makes frequent visits to followers of the Pinto family's saints around the world. Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto is the present keeper of a holy Torah scroll famous for its miracles. The scroll was written by Rabbi Yoshiyahu following the instructions of Rabbi Ḥaim Vital and was completed by Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto the Great on the day of his death, the 26th of Elul (September 28) 1845. Rabbi Ḥaim of Ashdod frequently travels abroad presenting the holy Torah scroll to different communities. In a ceremony held in Ashdod one year after Rabbi Moshe-Aharon's death, with the participation of a large crowd, *hakafot* were performed with the Torah scroll according to the tradition of the family. On the fourth encircling, dedicated to Rabbi Moshe-Aharon, water started flowing from the grave, a phenomenon considered a miracle and signifying the presence of the saint buried in the grave. People hurried to touch the water. As the fourth encirclement ended, the water stopped coming out of the grave.

Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto of Ashdod has six sons and daughters. The most prominent of his sons are Rabbi Yoshiyahu and Rabbi Shlomo. Their distinction and status enabled them to develop and expand the Pinto family's activities to several continents. In the past decade, there has been a significant increase in the number of followers and in the inherent ability of some of the followers to provide massive support to strengthening and broadening the family's activities.

Saint veneration among Moroccan Jews in Israel has undergone several changes, opening new venues. A change of behavioral patterns and the formation of new models in the relationship between a saint and his followers now characterize this ritual. In Morocco, the saint veneration was limited to the boundaries of the traditional ritual, as opposed, for example, to their Muslim neighbors. In Israel, the command of large communities of saint followers is sometimes translated to a demonstration and accumulation of power and political strength. The 1980s and 1990s were, from this point of view, a turning point. Numerous saint courts were established in various locations. The popularity of saints from Moroccan lineage increased and with it rivalries and tensions, creating a competition among courts, a phenomenon unheard of in Morocco.

The Pinto family has adapted to the new reality and is leading the way to the creation of international courts and to the expansion of the number of its followers. It can do so because of the participation of the family's youngest generation. Helping to achieve this goal is Rabbi Yoshiyahu, a modest and ascetic man with exceptional skills who lives isolated from the material world. Despite his young age, he has proved himself to be well versed on any subject of interest to his followers. He has acquired a large group of followers in New York, including some of the most prominent Jewish businessmen in the city. Manhattan has the first Moroccan court of its kind in the Americas; it serves as a pilgrimage destination. Yoshiyahu and his brother Rabbi Shlomo, a great scholar and a sharp *Talmid ḥakham* (Torah scholar), visit Israel as well as other centers in the Diaspora once a month to teach the Torah and bless the followers. Their father, Rabbi Ḥaim Pinto of Ashdod, directs the international activities of the family and contributes to it significantly. He says that "the family, the entire family, is only an envoy of the community and its only purpose is to assist and to help the believers."

Issachar Ben-Ami

See also: North Africa, Jews of.

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PIPE, SHMUEL ZANVEL

See: Anthologies

PLANTS

Numerous cultures' plants, in general, and trees, in particular, are an inseparable part of their religious

rituals, way of life, and folklore, and Jewish folklore is no exception. Many customs and views about nature are common to the people of the ancient Middle East. The contribution of Jewish folklore with respect to botany finds expression in the use of plants in Jewish ritual and in idioms and parables related to the natural world that remain current in the Hebrew language.

The relationship between the life cycle of plants and that of humans is widely expressed in the Bible. Jeremiah and the Psalms both compare man to a tree: "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose trust the Lord is: For he shall be as a tree planted by the water, and that spreadeth out its roots by the river" (Jer. 17:7–8; Ps. 1:3). When a successful family is described, it is said: "Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine, in the innermost parts of thy house; Thy children like olive plants, round about thy table" (Ps. 128:3). Biblical images based on vegetation are taken from the agricultural environment and the flora of Israel and reflect a close relationship to nature.

The Bible and talmudic literature are not scientific books or chapters of a "Natural History." The usage of the natural world comes from religious, ethical, and historical notions or as literary devices. The deep relation to plants is evident from their use and their descriptions.

Trees and the Ashera Cult

As in other ancient societies, that of the Semitic Middle East developed a veneration for trees, even a cult. According to Frese and Gray: "Trees are a form of nature that represent life and the continuity of spiritual, cosmic and physical worlds. A tree is often used to symbolize a deity or other being or it may stand for what is sacred in general" (1995, 26).

In Canaan, the cult of trees was expressed in the veneration not just of trees but of the deity that represented them. In the Middle East and in the Bible, the cult is characterized by the following themes:

1. Venerated trees are old giant oaks and terebinths (Ezek. 6:13), which are trees located on hilltops (Hos. 4:130; Deut. 12:2).
2. There was a conflict between Jewish monotheism and the Ashera cult (biblical heathen tree worship), which was mentioned by many prophets.
3. Sacred trees were centers of active worship to local deities, especially Astrate-Ashera (1 Kgs. 14:23; 2 Kgs. 16:4).
4. Sacred trees were used as foci for socially important activities such as a place of Judgment (Judg. 4:5) and burial sites of important figures (Gen. 35:8).
5. El was an important deity in pre-Judaic history. Its name remained in Hebrew in the plural form: Elohim. There is a close similarity between the Hebrew word for oak (*alon*) and terebinth (*ela*)

(both are the most prevalent sacred trees in Israel), oath (*alla*) and El, which is no coincidence. Oaks and terebinths were and remain the place for taking oaths and votive offerings and are highly venerated and protected (mostly by the Druze and Arab Muslim but also by Jews).

Medicinal Plants, Perfumes, and Incense

In spite of the rich floral abundance in Israel, many medicinal plants mentioned in the Bible lack a direct connection to any practical use. Jeremiah (8:22, 46:11, 51:8) mentioned balm as a remedy in a symbolic sense; although there is a general agreement that balm is a medicinal plant, its botanical species is not clearly spelled out. Many medicinal plants are mentioned in the Bible (wormwood—*Artemisia* spp.; cumin—*Cuminum cyminum;* Nigella—*Nigella arvensis;* gourd—*Citrullus colocynthis;* hemlock—*Conium maculatum*), and it is logical to assume that due to extensive cultural relations between the various Middle Eastern countries, they would be expected to have similar uses of medicinal plants. According to this view, Judaism did not contribute knowledge of the use of medicinal plants. The use of mandrake (*Mandragora officinarum*) as an aphrodisiac (Gen. 30:14–17) was very common and is still used for this purpose in the Middle East as well as in Egypt. The use of marjoram (*Majorana syriaca*) for purification (Num. 19:18) reflects the common use of a decoction of the plant for disinfecting babies in Arab villages. The plant contains a high concentration of terpenes (thymol and carvacrol), which were experimentally tested as effective bactericides and fungicides. The same idea recurs in Psalms 51:9, in which the cleaning practice was accepted as mental purification of sins.

Most of the difficulties raised in identifying biblical plants are related to plants used for incense, for instance, balm frankincense. The use of incense for purification and in religious ceremonies (storax, ladanum, frankincense, myrrh, galbanum) was common in ancient Middle Eastern cultures, and the Israelites were no exception. The large number of references (Exod. 30:1–8, 34–38; Lev. 16:12; 2 Chr. 26:19; Isa. 1:13; Ezek. 16:19) shows the importance of perfumes, incense, and odiferous resins in daily practice in the holy Temple. Palestine was a central crossroads in the ancient perfume and spice trade routes between Asia and neighboring countries. Spices and medicinal plants such as saffron, cinnamon, spikenard, balm, cassia, and aloe were in use (Songs 4:13–14; Esther 2:12) and no doubt were expensive commodities used by the upper classes.

Plants in Jewish Rituals and Symbolism

The Land of Israel is blessed with seven plant species: "a land of wheat and barley, and vines and fig-trees and pomegranates; a land of olive-trees and dates" (Deut. 8:8). These species are the most important plants in the economy of the inhabitants and represent staple foods (wheat and barley), main fruits (fig and pomegranate), wine (vine), oil (olive) and sweetener (date honey). All these species were the spine of all the agricultural crops in the various areas of the Land of Israel.

In order to perform the ritual of Sukkot, myrtle, dates, willow and etrog are required: "And ye shall take you on the first day the fruit of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook, and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days" (Lev. 23:40). Myrtle and dates have wide folkloric use in the ancient Middle East, while the willow, the etrog, and the specific binding of these four species (*arba'at ha'minim*) seem to be an original Jewish contribution.

Talmudic literature enlarged the commentaries on why these species were chosen along with their symbolism, which is among others:

1. Etrog—the symbol of fertility
2. Lulav—symbolizes rejoice and victory over other nations (it is no coincidence that on the coin Judea capta, the Jewish figure seats under a palm tree)
3. Myrtle—the symbol of success and matrimonial sanctification, and prosperity
4. Willow—symbolizes the dependence on water for agriculture and the salvation from drought.

During sacrifices, bundles of *Majorana syriaca* were used (Num. 19:18), in belief that it prevents blood coagulation. This custom was kept among the Samaritans during Passover, and thanks to it we have a precise identification of the biblical plant, although it has been proved that the various oils included in this plant do not influence coagulation. A common usage of this plant is not known across the ancient and modern Middle East. It is a symbol of modesty (1 Kgs. 5:13). The oak and the cedar are symbols of strength (Amos 2:9; Zech. 11:2).

Plants and Human Life Cycle

Trees live much longer than humans. Job compares the tree life span to the short human life (Job 14:7–10). Among others, he uses the expression (verse 7): "For there is hope of a tree, If it be cut down, that it will sprout again, And that the tender branch thereof will

The four species (*arba'at ha'minim*) used in the ritual of Sukkot, from *Sefer Minghagim*, Venice 1593.

not cease." Isaiah mentioned the eternity of David's dynasty: "And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, and a twig shall grow forth out of his roots" (Isa. 11:1). In both cases, there is an accurate botanical description of scerophyll evergreen trees in Israel, currently the main landscape's components, which like the common oak, renew themselves from a root stock after being cut. The tree is a symbol of longevity: "For as the days of a tree shall be the days of My people" (Isa. 65:22), while the wicked are compared to annual plants, which disappear in the dry season: "When the wicked spring up as the grass" (Ps. 92:8).

Plants, Fables, and Proverbs

The "Plant" parable best known in the Bible is Yotam parable (Judg. 9:8–15). It uses the properties of the olive, fig, vine, bramble, and cedar. Besides the bramble whose identification is not agreed upon (some identify it as *Rhamnus palaestina* or *Lycium europaeum*), the connection to the plants' properties is clear: The olive tree is the source for oil by which "they honor God and man" (Judg. 9:9). The fig's characteristic is its "sweetness" (Judg. 9:11). The grapevine provides "wine which cheereth God and man" (Judg. 9:13). The bramble is a plant of no benefit but can cause disaster (Judg. 9:15). The cedar is the glory of the plants: "He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon" (Ps. 92:13). The moral of this parable is that the most useless and despicable of all is the one ready to rule and destroy the others.

A well-known agriculture parable is the vineyard parable (Isa. 5:1–6), in which the prophet complains that after nurturing the vine plants (the People of Israel), God expected "forth grapes" and instead he got "putrid grapes." The moral is the unfaithfulness of the People of Israel to their God.

Amots Dafni

See also: Charms, Books of; Folk Medicine.

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POLAND, JEWS OF

The earliest history of the Jews in Poland is shrouded in legend. According to legendary chronicles, Jews arrived in Poland as early as the tenth and eleventh centuries, perhaps even the ninth century.

The folk tradition of Polish Jews includes many legends that relate to the first arrival of Jews in Poland and their reception there. The most popular legend is the Polin legend, which expounds the Hebrew name for Poland and translates it as "lodge here." This legend, like many local legends, turns Poland into a Jewish country. Other legends relate to the Jews' initial reception and deal with relations between Jews and Poles (Bar-Itzhak 2001).

One famous legend concerns Abraham Prochownik, the Jew who became a king of Poland and was instrumental in the coronation of Piast Kołodziej (Piast the Wheelwright), who founded Poland's first historical ruling dynasty.

The legends about Esther (or Estherka) and Kazimierz (or Casimir) III, called the Great, who fell in love with her, are used to explain his grant of settlement rights and the expansion of the privileges for the Jews of Poland.

These legends preserve in the collective memory central incidents in the history of Polish Jewry. They give symbolic and metaphoric expression to the problems that preoccupied the Jewish communities of Poland. They teach the various ways in which a society finds creative solutions to its most pressing existential and spiritual problems. For example, in the legends about the arrival of the Jews in Poland, Jews adopted a foreign country as their own and Judaized an alien space by using well-known methods of Jewish classical literature—expounding the signification of names and ancient symbols such as pages of the Talmud.

In this way the geography of the non-Jewish world was Judaized and drafted into the service of Jewish history.

The legends pose the desire for a long-term and tranquil domicile in Poland and creation of substantial Jewish spiritual life there, against the myth of the ultimate redemption, according to which a full spiritual life is possible only in the Land of Israel. The legends find solutions that make it possible to overcome the dilemma by turning the Land of Israel into the eternal sanctified space of the Jews spiritual longings, from which a degree of sanctity emanates to the present domicile. Poland is thus associated with repose and the continuation of the ancient Jewish tradition of learning; but it is also associated with night, darkness, and transience. The legends propose, by way of resolution, that when the messianic redemption comes, this earthly Poland, with its synagogues and houses of study, will be bodily transferred to the Land of Israel. Such solutions to the dilemmas and the dissonance they raise made life in the Polish Diaspora possible, while preserving the ancient Jewish myths.

The question of relations between Jews and Poles arises in many of these legends, and with particular poignancy in the legends of acceptance. In these, told and written down during various periods of Jewish life in Poland, we are able to see the dialogic narration between the folk legends and the changing sociohistorical reality. As a function of the age from which they date, various legends build different models of desired relations between Jews and Poles, ranging from total separation and estrangement to a model of cooperation based on compassion and later on cooperation based on equality, in the spirit of liberalism and the Jewish demands for emancipation. These models express the changing cultural consciousness of Polish Jewry and the various ideological currents that flowed within it.

Medieval Jewish merchants traveled across Eastern Europe, establishing temporary merchant colonies, but the first privilege permitting permanent Jewish settlement was granted by Bołeslaw the Pious of Kalisz in 1264. This privilege was confirmed and expanded by subsequent monarchs, particularly Kazimierz the Great in 1348. Although tradition holds that this was the result of Kazimierz's love for his Jewish mistress, Esterka, in fact Jewish settlement was encouraged as part of a general move to create an urban network in Poland. The scholarly level of medieval Polish Jewry was not high, though some students of Judah the Pious did settle there. Jewish economic activity centered on money lending at all levels, including to the royal court.

Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries

Polish Jewry entered a period of rapid social, economic, and cultural growth in the sixteenth century. As Jewish

"The Kalisz Statutes," an illustrated text, by Arthur Szyk, one of the first privileges Bołeslaw of Kalisz granted the Jews in 1264. *(The Jewish Museum, New York/ Art Resource, NY)*

numbers increased, more communities were founded in different regions, basing their existence on community privileges rather than national grants of rights. The Jewish communities acted as agents of the Polish economic authorities in collecting taxes from the Jews. In the course of the sixteenth century, the communities in different regions banded together to deal with regional tax issues, and in 1580–1581, representatives of the four Polish regions (Great Poland, Little Poland, Red Ruthenia, and Volhynia) banded together to farm the Jewish

poll tax directly from the treasury. On the basis of this role, the Council of the Four Lands was formed, which not only dealt with Jewish tax issues but also issued legislation on matters of importance to Polish Jewry as a whole, including responses to periodic anti-Jewish attacks and blood libels.

As the power of the Polish nobility grew, many Jews decided to move to the private towns, where they could negotiate for themselves a wide range of economic opportunities. After the Union of Lublin was formed in 1569, an even larger number of Jews moved to the huge magnate latifundia in the eastern parts of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Their role as moneylenders was transformed into that of leaseholders (*arendarze*) of estates that they ran on behalf of the absentee owners. Poorer Jews leased parts of estates and even individual taverns from the great Jewish *arendarze*, so the Jews became an integral part of Poland's agricultural economy. Nonetheless they retained their social and cultural distinctiveness, continuing to organize their life in separate communities and to speak Yiddish among themselves.

This was also a period of cultural growth. The Polish yeshivas became the most important in Europe, with the new curriculum of Pilpul extremely popular. The spread of printing led to the acceptance of the *Shulḥan arukh* as the normative codex of Jewish law with the addition of the glosses by Rabbi Moses ben Israel Isserles (called the Rema) of Kraków, which allowed Ashkenazi Jews to follow their own customs rather than those of the Sephardic Joseph ben Ephraim Karo.

A popular legend about a historical figure of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is the legend of Saul Wahl. According to the legend he became king of Poland for a short time (see: Wahl, Saul).

The mid-seventeenth century saw a period of war in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which, though not aimed directly against the Jews, led to widespread attacks on them. In 1648, the Cossack hetman, Bogdan Chmielnicki, led a revolt against the Polish government, which was soon joined by a mass of Ukrainian peasants, motivated by economic and religious hostility against both the Catholic nobility and their local Jewish representatives. Between 30 percent and 50 percent of the Jews in the Ukraine lost their lives.

There are many legends set during the period of the 1648–1649 pogroms. The most famous are about a woman who confronts a gentile (who is always a Jew hater) and has to defend herself against his lust. The seventeenth-century work *Yeven mezulah* (Abyss of Despair), by Nathan Neta Hannover (d. 1683), which commemorates those slaughtered in the pogroms of 1648 and 1649, tells of the two virgins of Nemirov (Niemirów); one of them tricked the Cossacks into shooting her, while the second threw herself into the river during her own bridal procession. These legends became part of Jewish

collective memory through generations (An-Ski 1920), and some were recorded from oral tradition in the 1950s and are stored in the Israel Folktale Archives (Bar-Itzhak 2008, 64–70). Afterward, in the mid-1650s, Poland was invaded first by Sweden and then by Muscovy. Jews suffered much destruction and loss of life from the attacks of the Polish resistance led by Stefan Czarniecki.

Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries

The small group of the wealthiest magnates was the most active in reconstructing the Polish economy in the late seventeenth and the eighteenth century (following the Northern War of 1702–1720), making significant use of the Jewish population in this process. More Jews were invited to settle in the small towns on their estates, until they sometimes made up a majority of the population, giving the towns a Jewish character—they were known in Yiddish as shtetls. As the number of Jews grew (reaching about 1 million by 1800), they began to search for new forms of income: Many moved to the countryside to lease taverns, while in the towns, they became the leading merchants, settling around the market square, and also broke into a wide range of crafts, even forming their own guilds. The support of the nobility was important, as the Jews faced much hostility (including sporadic violence and accusations of ritual murder) from the non-Jewish townspeople and the local clergy.

In the folk tradition of Polish Jews there are various blood libel legends. Thirteen such legends are stored in the Israel Folktale Archives, all of them recorded from Polish Jews in Israel. The Jewish blood libel legend is a reaction to the Christian blood libel legends and the attack on Jews that followed. Most of these legends are sacred legends about a Jewish community that is saved from the accusation of ritual murder thanks to God's intervention. God's help is usually expressed by sending Elijah the prophet, who appears in Jewish legends as a savior in times of persecution, and is also connected to the coming of the messiah. These legends that end with the saving of the individual or the entire Jewish community and punishment of the wicked character are an expression of fear caused by blood libels and the yearning for divine help that will save the Jewish people, especially in the Jewish sacred time of Passover.

Nonetheless, there are also historical legends that end with the death of the Jewish protagonist. The protagonist is usually the leader of the community, a rabbi or a Torah scholar who is accused of ritual murder. He prefers to die in order to save the entire community and dies a martyr death, refusing to convert to Christianity. Among these legends in the folk literature of Polish Jews are the legends about the Raices brothers. There are also

legends about Adil, the daughter of Moses Kikinish of Drohobycz, who chooses to die a horrible death to save the Jewish community.

In cultural terms, the late seventeenth century was a quiet period. Following the Sabbattean heresy, there seems to have been a growth in interest in mysticism, which led to various forms of religious revivalism in the eighteenth century. The most prominent of these was the Hasidic movement, popularly believed to have been founded by Israel Ba'al Shem Tov of Międzybórz (d. 1760) and his pupil, Dov Ber, the Maggid (preacher) of Mezritch (d. 1772). This movement prized spiritual experience over study and taught that religious experience could be achieved not just in prayer but in daily life. A central tenet of Hasidism was the spiritual role of the leader, or *tzaddik*, who acted as a conduit between God and the individual Ḥasid. The *tzaddik* also began to play a social role as the ultimate source of authority in Jewish daily life. By the nineteenth century, the number of *tzaddikim*, each maintaining his own court, had proliferated greatly, emphasizing the movement's essential decentralized structure. The *shevaḥ* (praise) became the most popular folk narrative told by the Hassidim about their Rebbe.

The partitions of Poland (1772, 1793, and 1795) saw the Jews divided among the centralistic and authoritarian regimes of Prussia, Russia, and Austria. Some Jews supported the Poles' military struggle against partition, with Berek Joselewicz even establishing a Jewish legion, though many simply accepted the change of regime. The Jews of the Posen region in the Prussian partition underwent a relatively rapid process of Germanization, with many migrating westward during the nineteenth century. Posen itself became a bastion of Jewish orthodoxy under Rabbi Akiva Eger (1761–1838). The Jews of southern Poland, renamed Galicia, were under Austrian rule. There, too, the authorities were interested in forcing the Jews into acculturation in terms of education, use of language, and economic structure. The enlightened Jews (*maskilim*) supported this policy on the part of the authorities, while the conservative Ḥasidim were highly opposed. This led to a cultural battle between the two groups. The Austrian cultural policy was not backed up by serious social and economic incentives, so most of Galician Jewry remained economically backward, dependent on the largely stagnant agricultural economy. Over the nineteenth century, however, the Jews of Galicia (particularly in the larger towns) did undergo a process of gradual acculturation. Emancipation, granted in 1867, allowed the Jews to begin organizing as a religious and national minority in Galicia, in parallel to the Poles and the Ukrainians. This tended to exacerbate economic, social, and religious tensions in the region.

After passing from Prussian to French rule, central Poland, with its capital in Warsaw, became a semi-independent kingdom under tsarist rule following the Congress of Vienna in 1815. Many Jewish rights of previous decades and centuries were restricted, though Jewish economic activity remained crucial to the economy as a whole. As the industrialization of this region developed, the Jews underwent a process of urbanization, concentrating in urban centers such as Łódz and Warsaw. Though they did not form a classic industrial proletariat, the numbers of Jewish poor grew rapidly; however, a Jewish bourgeoisie also developed, with a small number of Jews beginning to assimilate to Polish culture. Over the nineteenth century, some members of the Jewish plutocracy even converted to Christianity. By mid-century, Hasidism had made significant inroads in this region of Poland, too, providing all levels of Polish-Jewish society, from the poorest to the most wealthy, with a conservative Jewish orientation and an alternative to drawing closer to Polish culture. In later years, with the intensification of Russification, and the migration to Poland of Jews from Lithuania (Litvaks), some Jews in Poland developed a Russian cultural orientation.

In the Polish uprisings of 1830 and 1863, much anti-Jewish sentiment was expressed and many Jews remained indifferent or even hostile to the Polish cause. However, there were also important centers of Jewish support for the Poles' struggle, particularly in Warsaw, where the city's chief rabbi, Dov Ber(ush) Meisels (1798–1870), openly identified with the Polish side in the early 1860s. Previously, the Polish national poet, Adam Mickiewicz, had expressed his feelings of brotherhood with Polish Jewry, calling for their support in the Poles' national cause and supporting their emancipation. With the failure of the 1863 uprising, the structure and functioning of Polish society began to be reconsidered and the Jews' role within it brought into question. While the positivists supported Jewish integration, the growth of nationalist sentiment in the last decades of the century led to increased anti-Jewish hostility, which came to a head in the years before World War I.

Jewish legends about the 1863 uprising were transcribed and published by A. Almi (see below, pg 421). The legends first appeared in the Jewish newspaper in Warsaw, *Moment,* in 1910–1911 and were later republished in volumes in Yiddish (1927) and Polish (1929).

In Jewish folklore we may see diverse manifestations of intercultural communication between Jews and Poles: the use of Slavic words and even the interpretation of parts of non-Jewish songs (An-Ski 1925, 171–194); the use and Judaization of Slavic place names; the use of iconographic symbols like the Polish eagle on books and ritual objects and the influence of local architecture on Jewish synagogue buildings; and the documentation of folk narratives by Poles and the incorporation of non-Jewish historical figures in Jewish folklore. These figures occupy two contrasting niches—avatars of the wicked Haman in Polish Jewry history such as Bogdan Chmielnicki

in legends about the pogroms of 1648–1649 and great benefactors of the Polish Jews, such as King Casimir the Great, King Jan III Sobieski, Count Lubomirski, and Count Potocki, among others.

Twentieth Century

Following the war, Poland was re-established as a nation-state, even though within its final borders about 30 percent of the population were not ethnically Polish. Some 3 million Jews were Polish citizens, making up almost 10 percent of the total population. Though the victorious powers insisted that Poland (and the other new nation-states in east-central Europe) sign a special treaty to secure the rights of national and religious minorities, its terms were largely honored in the breach. There were widespread attacks on Jews in the early years of independent Poland. Jewish cultural, religious, and educational institutions did not enjoy state support and there was much economic and religious discrimination against Polish Jews, openly supported by the Church. This situation grew considerably worse in the 1930s, when Poland's poor economic situation together with government policy brought Jewish poverty to unheard-of levels. A wave of extreme nationalism led to the outbreak of a series of pogroms in central Poland in 1935 and 1936.

Polish Jewish society in the interwar period organized not only to secure its place in independent Poland but to create a range of social and cultural institutions for Jewish society. Zionists formed the leading political party, but the orthodox Agudat Yisrael and the socialist Bund also were popular. Each orientation not only was a political party, with representatives in the Sejm, local councils, and Jewish communities, but also established its own school system, youth groups, newspapers and cultural institutions. As a result, Jewish society became highly politicized. In cultural terms, interwar Polish Jewry has been characterized as a cultural and linguistic polysystem, with creative branches in the Yiddish, Polish, and Hebrew languages. These acted independently but also interacted (often with much tension) to create Polish Jewry's complex cultural milieu. These years saw important achievements for Polish Jews in both high and popular culture, literature and theater (there was also the beginnings of a Jewish film industry in Poland), and academic research and Torah study. Thus, despite the discrimination and harsh conditions, this was a period of great cultural activity for Polish Jews, which was brought to an end by the outbreak of war and the German invasion of 1939.

The Study of Jewish Folklore

Since the nineteenth century, Jewish society in Poland was influenced by the prevailing ideologies in the countries where the Jews lived. Romanticism and resurgent nationalism affected the Jewish intelligentsia, too, and awakened an interest in Jewish folklore. But contemporary ideologies took on a unique guise in Jewish society, a direct consequence of the Jews' social and political situation during this period of change, upheaval, and revolutionary ferment. The efforts of Jewish thinkers and activists focused on achieving emancipation, of the sort the Jews had received in Western Europe, alongside an unremitting struggle against anti-Semitism. The campaign for emancipation was accompanied by constant attempts to prove the Jews' loyalty to and integration with non-Jewish society and to demonstrate patriotic feelings for the country in which they lived. Most of them did not believe, however, that this entailed turning their backs on Judaism and its spiritual treasures. These circles included a handful of pioneering folklorists who published in Polish; notable among them were Benjamin Wolf Segel, Henryk Lew, and Regina Lilienthal.

An interest in traditional Jewish culture first emerged among major Polish writers of the nineteenth century, notably Eliza Orzeszkowa and Bolesław Prus, who wrote on Jewish topics. Polish literary and artistic circles were fascinated by the individuality, complexity, and exoticism they attributed to Jewish culture. Interest in Jewish ethnography emerged before World War I in the circles affiliated with two Polish ethnographic journals, *Wisła* and *Lud.*

As for the works of the pioneering Jewish folklorists who wrote in Polish, special note attaches to the Polish-language weekly *Izraelita,* which represented the Polonizing Jews. Its editor starting in 1897, Naḥum Sokolow, opened its pages to folklore materials. He believed that the Jewish intelligentsia had to renew its acquaintance with the masses and urged abandonment of the *maskilic* strategy of keeping the people at arm's length. Sokolow, not yet a Zionist, wanted to rescue folk traditions; he called for organic change in Jewish life, in a manner that would not infringe the people's sensitivities. Sokolow's approach led to the drafting of a program for Jewish folklore studies, published in *Izraelita* in 1901 by Henryk Lucjan Kohn.

The journalist Henryk Lew was the moving spirit of *Wisła, Lud,* and *Izraelita.* He launched his project to collect folklore materials by publishing a questionnaire, first in *Izraelita* (*Izraelita* 32 [1897], 1) and later in *Wisła.* The questionnaire covered the following areas: beliefs and stories, folksongs and poetry, customs and traditions, folk medicine and superstitions, and folk notions and ideas.

Segel, Lew, and Lilienthal published in all three venues. Segel and Lilienthal also contributed to the publications of the Anthropological Commission of the Academy of Arts in Kraków. In addition to collecting and discussing folklore materials, these three pioneering

folklorists helped spur widespread interest in Jewish ethnography among Jewish and Polish intellectuals.

Several different streams of nationalism spread in Eastern European Jewish society during the course of the nineteenth century. The Zionists advocated the Jews' return to Eretz Israel and the establishment of a national home there. Other movements championed solutions that involved Jewish autonomy in their countries of residence. The ideological preferences of the various movements influenced their attitude toward Jewish ethnography and folklore as well.

For the Zionists, Jewish folklore, which circulated in Yiddish and was an expression of Jewish life in the Diaspora, could not serve the ideological goal of rejecting Diaspora traditions in favor of a revival of the ancient national culture in Eretz Israel. The Jews did not need to prove that they had a national culture, since its greatest treasures had been written down for centuries. Nevertheless, some of the pioneers of Jewish ethnography and folklore in Eastern Europe were fervent Zionists who, no less than their colleagues from other ideologies, felt a great love for Jewish folk culture. But their Zionism affected their work in that it led them to publish folklore materials, both new anthologies of ancient folklore and collections of the folklore of Polish Jews, originally in Yiddish, in Hebrew.

The most important contribution to folklore studies was made by the "national poet," Haim Nachman Bialik (1873–1934). Bialik's link to Jewish folklore was manifested on three levels: (1) his use of Jewish folklore in his poetry and narrative fiction; (2) his program to collect and preserve the outstanding exemplars of Jewish literature (including folklore) over the generations; and (3) his co-editorship of the journal *Reshumot,* an anthology of Jewish memoirs, ethnography, and folklore.

It is important to mention the contribution of Micha Josef Berdyczewski (Bin-Gorion) to the study of Jewish folklore. Bin-Gorion published several anthologies of Jewish folktales in Hebrew that were translated by his wife, Rachel Bin-Gorion Ramberg, to German and published in Germany. Another pioneer of Jewish folklore studies in Eastern Europe and after that in Eretz Israel, a Zionist through and through, was Alter (Asher Abraham Abba) Druyanow (1870–1938).

It should be noted, however, that some Zionist folklorists published their collections in Yiddish. Pinḥas Graubard (1892–1952), one of the Warsaw circle that gathered around Noyekh Prilutski (Noah Prylucki; 1882–1941), published songs of thieves, prisoners, and prostitutes in the most important collection produced by the Warsaw folklorists, *Bay Undz Yidn,* edited by M. Vanvild (pen name of Moses Joseph Dickstein, who also used the pseudonym Leib Kave; 1889–1942). He also edited an anthology of literature and folklore (1914) and,

along with Shmuel Lehman, published Yiddish folksongs in the Frischmann jubilee volume (1914).

We must not omit folklorists who were affiliated with the religious Zionist party Mizraḥi. Rabbi Yehuda Leib Avidah (pen name: Judah Elzet; 1887–1962) was active in Poland in 1910–1920, and after that in Canada and South Africa, and, after 1949, in Israel. He published in Yiddish (on prayers, 1918; on the human body, 1920; proverbs, sayings, and anecdotes, 1918–1920; on trades and tradesmen, 1920; and on food, 1920) as well as in Hebrew (on customs, in the journal *Reshumot,* 1918).

Rabbi Yeshayahu Zlotnick (1892–1943) published a three-volume *Folklore Ḥumash* (1937–38), a lexicon of Jewish wisdom (1930), and festival folklore (1930).

As mentioned, the Zionist vision was not the only expression of the Jewish national awakening in Europe. There were other Jewish national movements, including Folkism, Bundism, and Territorialism, which had in common a fondness for the Yiddish language and a romantic view of it as embodying the ethos of the Jewish people.

Yiddish folklorists believed that its language is the supreme achievement of every nation and that the most important thing a people creates in this language is its folklore, which expresses its pristine spirit. For the Yiddishists, philological and folklore studies were a means to bond with the masses.

Even before World War I, Yiddish folklorists rang up impressive achievements. But their most intensive activity took place between the two world wars. Their crowning achievement was the work of the Ethnographic Committee set up by YIVO (the Jewish Scientific Institute).

The most important activities and publications of Yiddish folklore studies before World War I were:

In 1895, *Der Hoyzfroynd* published the impressive list of 2,000 proverbs collected by Ignatz Bernstein. Ignatz Bernstein published an expanded version of his anthology of Yiddish proverbs in 1908. The introduction, which explains his method of classification, is in a foreign language (German). Bernstein intimates that by collecting the proverbs he viewed himself as helping in the birth of the national consciousness of the Jewish people.

In 1890 Isaac Leib Peretz, renowned as the greatest Yiddish author and a key figure in Jewish Warsaw, anchored folklore firmly at the center of the national movement when he began collecting Yiddish songs in 1890 and urged his friends to do likewise.

In 1901, the historians Saul Ginsburg (Ginzburg) and Pesaḥ Marek published their important anthology, *Evreiskiie narodnye pesny.* This is a scholarly work with the text of the songs in Yiddish transcription, although the annotations are in Russian.

In 1908, at the Czernowitz conference, I.L. Peretz maintained that the Hasidic story marked the beginning of modern literature in Yiddish (see: Peretz I.L.).

In 1912, Yehudah Leib Cahan (1881–1937) published a collection of Yiddish folk songs with their melodies.

In 1913, Shmuel Niger (pseudonym of Shmuel Tsharny; 1883–1955) edited and published *Der Pinkes,* the first collection of scholarly essays and articles devoted to Yiddish philology. Yiddish folklore occupied a prominent place in it, with three essays on the subject. In 1912–1914 the ethnographic expedition headed by S. An-Ski and funded by Baron Günzburg took place. Its members traveled through small towns in the Ukraine and collected a vast quantity of folklore materials.

The activity of Yiddish-oriented folklorists between the two world wars was diverse. Their activity was focused in Warsaw and Vilna (then part of Poland).

The Warsaw group centered around the philologist, attorney, politician, and folklorist Noyekh Prilutski (1882–1941), who published the *zamelbikher* (collections) of folklore material collected by himself and his associates (Prilutski 1912). He also coedited the *Arkhiv* of ethnographic materials with Shmuel Lehman (Prilutski and Lehman 1924–1933) and published folk songs in Yiddish (Prilutski 1911, 1913).

The most productive collector in Prilutski's circle was Shmuel Lehman (1886–1941), whose work was published by Prilutski, Graubard, and Vanvild. In 1921 he published the collection *Arbayt un Frayhat* (Labor and Freedom), edited by M. Vanvild. In 1923 he put out collections of Purimshpils, children's folklore, and thieves songs in the most important collection produced by the Warsaw folklorists, *Bay Undz Yidn,* edited by M. Vanvild. In 1922 he published folklore related to the World War in the Vilna-based *Lebn,* edited by Moshe Shalit. In 1928 he published thieves' songs, with melodies, edited and published by Pinḥas Graubard. In 1926 he published thieves' love songs in *Landoy bukh*. Lehman continued to collect folklore even in the Warsaw ghetto.

Another member of Prilutski's circle, between 1909 and 1912 (when he emigrated to New York) was A. Almi (Elia Chaim Scheps; 1892–1963), who was considered the biographer of the group's activity. His most important contribution consisted of stories about the Polish rebellion of 1863.

Another collector was the "people's poet," Hershl Danilevich (1882–1941), who published soldiers' songs, riddles, and anecdotes in *Bay Undz Yidn* (mentioned above). He also published seven songs of *cheder* boys in *Reshumot* (1930).

The Historical Ethnographic Society was established in Vilna in February 1919 by An-Ski; after his death, on November 8, 1920, the group took his name. This society made a major contribution to the study of Jewish folklore and ethnography in Eastern Europe. The most productive folklore collector was Shloyme Bastomski (1891–1941), who constantly emphasized the link between folklore and education.

The institution that achieved the most impressive results, despite the constraints that accompanied its work, was YIVO. The establishment of YIVO was a natural and inevitable part of the activities in interwar Jewish Poland. That country had become the center of autonomous Jewish culture.

The goal of the YIVO Institute, established in 1925, was to organize learned research into various areas of Jewish culture while providing an appropriate setting for research and publication and setting uniform standards for scholarly work. Folklore received prominent attention at YIVO. In keeping with the Yiddishist ideology that folklore was in the service of the language, the Ethnographic Committee was set up as part of the philological section on October 27, 1925, shortly after YIVO itself was founded. The committee's main goal was to organize the collection of Jewish folklore "wherever the Yiddish language is alive."

The committee decided to set up a network of volunteer collectors *(zamlers)* throughout Poland and, if possible, other countries, affiliated with Yiddish cultural institutions, mainly schools. Announcements about the collectors' network were made in meetings, periodicals, and Institute bulletins.

The committee's work was marked by a personal relationship with the collectors. It maintained a lively correspondence with them, was attentive to their needs, and did everything possible to assist them. This treatment increased their motivation; so did the fact that the collectors' names were published in the YIVO bulletin. The committee organized competitions for the best shipments of folklore materials. Later some of the collections were published by YIVO.

In 1929, the Ethnographic Committee convened a conference of fourteen leading collectors. Responding to an explicit request made at that meeting, it organized a special course for collectors the next year, with Y.L. Cahan of New York as the principal lecturer.

YIVO provided a mantle of scholarly respectability to folklore studies in its series *Filologishe Shriftn,* which included work on folklore starting with its very first volume, a festschrift for Dr. Alfred Landau. The Ethnographic Committee's end product was the anthology *Yidishe Folklor,* published in 1938, and edited by Cahan (who had died the previous year).

The collection of Yiddish folklore is usually noted as the YIVO Ethnographic Committee's most important accomplishment. There is no doubt that it was an impressive achievement realized in a very short period.

World War II—The Holocaust

On September 1, 1939, Germany invaded Poland and on September 17 the Soviet Union attacked from the east. About half of Poland's territories were annexed by

the Soviet Union. The rest of Poland fell under German occupation. Part of the northern and western regions was incorporated directly into Germany. Warsaw, Kraków, Lublin, Kielce, and Radom and most of their provinces were constituted as the Government General administered by German civilian bureaucracy. On June 22, 1941, Germany invaded the Soviet Union and within a month German forces occupied all of the former Polish territories that had been taken in 1939 by the Soviet Union. Beginning in October 1939 increasing numbers of Jews were forced to live in ghettos.

After the German invasion of the former Polish territories occupied by the Soviet Union, the Germans started mass killings as part of the Nazi plan to annihilate all of the European Jewry. More than half the Jews who were killed by the Nazis as part of the Final Solution—the code name for the destruction of European Jewry—were exterminated in death camps. Six death camps ware established on Polish territory. Four of them were extermination camps—Chełmno, Bełżec, Sobibor, and Treblinka. The other two, Auschwitz-Birkenau and Majdanek, were both concentration camps and death camps. The majority of Polish Jews were annihilated in World War II. Although there were still Jews in post-Holocaust Poland, one can no longer speak of Jewish communities.

Folklore's treatment of the Holocaust raises several problems. The general public tends to identify folklore with amusement and aesthetics, and therefore to associate folklore with the Holocaust was problematic, although Jewish folklorists like Shmuel Lehman even collected folklore in the ghettos. Another problem with folkloric treatment of folk narratives set during the Holocaust was the genre classification of folklore studies such as legends with its vernacular connotations that may be understood as casting doubts on the veracity of the survivors' reports. This may be the reason for the preference to study personal narratives of Holocaust survivors rather than stories that can be identified as legends.

Many folk narratives of Polish Jews are still told by Holocaust survivors. The Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa holds some 2,800 tales recorded from Polish Jews in Israel since 1955. Many of these stories underwent transformation and are being recounted through the lens of the Holocaust. Thus, for example, legends about the origins of Jewish synagogues in Poland became legends of destruction and construct the myth of the Jews of Poland, which includes their origins on Polish soil and their catastrophe in the Holocaust.

Haya Bar-Itzhak and Adam Teller

See also: An-Ski, S.; Bar-Itzhak, Haya; Berdyczewski (Bin-Gorion), Micha Josef; Bialik, Haim Nachman; Blood Libel; Cahan, Y.L.; Druyanow, Alter; Estherke; Holocaust Folklore; Languages, Jewish; Lilienthal, Regina; Peretz, Isaac Leib; Prochownik, Abraham; *Reshumot;* Segel, Benjamin Wolf; Wahl, Saul.

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POPE, JEWISH

The story about a pope of Jewish origins came from a narrative cycle that circulated among the medieval Donau and Rhine communities. According to this tradition, Elḥanan, the son of Rabbi Simeon the Great of Mainz, was kidnapped from his father's house by his Christian nurse, was raised by gentiles, and on account of his erudition became a pope, and as such he was widely known for his great wisdom. One day, he wanted to trace back his family roots so as to find out the source of his wisdom. When his entourage told him that he had been stolen from the Jews, he demanded that Rabbi Simeon the Great be brought before him. According to earlier versions, the father recognized his son by certain marks on his body, while according to later versions (from the *Mayse Bukh* [Story Book] onward), the son's identity was revealed to his father in the course of a chess game they played together.

The father persuaded his son to return to the fold and sanctify the name of God. So the son summoned a group of kings, dukes, and cardinals and in their presence, while standing at the top of a high tower, he proclaimed his Jewish faith, denied Christianity, jumped off the tower, and died instantly. When Rabbi Simeon the Great heard that his son had sanctified the name of the Lord, he inserted his name in a *yozer* (hymn) in praise of the Creator, which he composed for the second day of the New Year, by adding the verse "God has shown grace [= El Ḥanan] to his heritage to improve it in sweetness."

The earliest version of this medieval legend is found in the Hebrew-written MS Cambridge, Add. 858, fol. 46–47 (Ashkenaz, fifteenth century). This version was copied several times and went through a number of adaptations until it finally found its way into the *Mayse Bukh* (Basle, 1602), which was written in Old Yiddish. There it appears in the section of medieval narratives as story No. 187, on pages 126–128, and it is this printed version that possibly made the story known. In the versions originating in sixteenth-century manuscripts, beginning with MS Moscow-Günzberg 256, fols. 108a–109a (Italy, the mid-sixteenth century) onward, the story is attributed to the son of Rabbi Solomon (or Shlomo) ben Aderet of Barcelona (Rashba). The story received special attention in modern Jewish literature, in Marcus (or Meyer) Lehmann's German-written novel (Rabbi Elḥanan, *Der Israelit,* 1867–69), Yudel Mark's Yiddish-written novel *Der Yidisher Poips* (New York, 1947), and Isaac Bashevis-Singer's short story "Zeidlus der ershter," published in Yiddish in 1943 and, in English, as "Zeidlus the Pope," in 1964.

According to scholars, this story originates in the character of Pope Anacletus II (who officiated in this capacity between 1130 and 1138), who was a descendant of the Pierleoni family of Roman nobility, whose progenitor was a Jew who converted to Christianity. This conjecture was raised by such scholars as Adolf (Aaron) Jellinek in his *Beit ha'Midrash* (Frankfurt, 1873) and Moritz Güdemann in his *Sefer ha'Torah ve'ha'Ḥayyim* (*Geschichte des Erziehungswesens und der Cultur der abendländischen Juden, während des Mittelalters und der neueren Zeit,* Vienna, 1880–1888).

The Jewish story of a boy who became a pope has parallels in European folklore. This is a folkloric type that is labeled in Aarne-Thompson's Index as "The Three Languages" (AT 671) and also appears in a related type (AT 517). This narrative type recounts the story of a child who mastered the language of animals. His father deems him a fool and orders that he be killed, but the child is saved because of his special knowledge; he arrives in Rome and becomes the pope. Subsequently the son summons his father to Rome for the purpose of absolution and the washing of his feet. This type became known particularly in its later rendition, Version No. 33, as adapted in the brothers Grimm's "Die drei Sprachen."

Avidov Lipsker

See also: *Ma'aseh Book* (*Mayse Bukh*).

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PRAYER

Although the *siddur,* the compilation of Hebrew prayers, is second only to the Bible in terms of its importance in Jewish culture and history, the beginnings of Jewish prayer are one of the highly obscure issues and unsolvable riddles in Jewish cultural history. Actually, the *siddur* is a credible and reliable reflection of Jewish history throughout all generations since the last years of the Second Commonwealth.

Origins of the *Siddur*

Recent studies of the Hebrew prayer and the literary yield of the Dead Sea sect reveal a close relationship between the two. It might be declared quite confidently that Jewish prayer as a regular and fixed text and custom originated with the Dead Sea sect. Of no lesser importance is the fact that the texts included in the prayers of this sect were partly in prose and partly in rhythmic poetry. At the same time, worship of God in the Temple, originally consisting of animal sacrifices, was now accompanied by a text uttered by the high priest. Some of the liturgical texts and customs of the Dead Sea sect were documented in the scrolls discovered in Qumran, while those of the mainstream were documented in the Mishnah. The latter betray greater affinity to the corpus of prayers as established in Yavneh in the first years after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 C.E.

The main figure in the establishment of the fixed text of the prayers was Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Zakkai, who settled in Yavneh with his pupils to build an alternative to Jerusalem as the spiritual center of the Jewish nation. Although rabbinic sources are nearly silent on this issue or offer late etiological explanations about the establishment of the obligatory acts and the texts of the prayer, scholars can deduce from these acts and texts the principles followed by the rabbis: (a) establishing a fixed and simple Hebrew text, yet with much attention to its linguistic and literary correctness, based on the Bible and written in prose, thus eliminating all other texts, in prose as well as in poetry, which were used by different groups or individuals for prayer; and (b) establishing a comprehensive obligatory etiquette for liturgical services. All this was intended to provide a substitute for the worship at the destroyed Temple, the loss of which was strongly felt at that time among Jews in the Land of Israel, and also to create a way to unite Jews and to remove the danger of the disintegration of their national identity.

The new liturgical text was clearly considered a creation of the rabbis, in sharp distinction to the divine Bible. They forbade anyone to write it down, which explains the need to perform the services in public and the very limited number of individuals who could serve as *sheliaḥ tzibbur* (emissary of the congregation). Only a small amount of liturgical texts was documented in the rabbinic literature, from which historians cannot construct any comprehensive depiction of the prayers. This also explains why there were different versions of the same parts in the prayer, thus violating the stability and consistency by which the first rabbis wished to characterize the Jewish liturgy. Moreover, violating other wishes of the first rabbis, popular tendencies caused the insertion of mystical elements, like the *Qedusha,* and poetic texts (*piyyutim*) into the prayers. The *piyyutim* in particular presented problems with respect to Halakhah, as they violated the idea of a fixed text. The rabbis' efforts to suppress them were in vain.

The Written Compilation of Prayers

The first written compilation of the prayers appeared in the mid-ninth century, when Rabbi Natronai Gaon in Iraq was asked by a Spanish-Jewish community to commit them to paper for them. Still, the term "*siddur*" was used to note the compilation of prayers, but the expression "*me'ah berakhot*" (one hundred blessings) was employed after the sages' verdict that each of the Jews has to say 100 benedictions every day. Although the term "*maḥzor*" was already in use, it denoted the collection of *piyyutim* written by one *paytan* for an annual cycle or the like. A later compilation of prayers was the one edited by Rabbi Amram Gaon, also in Iraq.

But the first *siddur*, which was a perfect compilation according to a very strict order and based on clear and solid rules, was that of Rabbi Sa'adiah Gaon (882–942). By and large this *siddur* served as a model for almost all later *siddurim* edited in the next generations. It was accepted in Jewish communities throughout the Muslim world, while in Western Europe (northern France, Germany, and Italy) the *siddur* of Rabbi Amram Gaon was considered a halakhic and liturgical authority.

Until the tenth century two main versions of the prayers were used; both originated in the Land of Israel but they respectively came to known as *nusaḥ bavel* and *nusaḥ Eretz Israel,* indicating the place of their use. The growing prestige of the Babylonian center eventually

Prayer book. Venice, 1772. *(Réunion des Musées Nationaux/ Art Resource, NY)*

caused the disappearance of *minchag Eretz Israel.* Thus, the wording of the permanent prayers (*nusaḥ ha'qeva'*) was consolidated and became common to all Jewish communities, except for some very small variations. But the selection of the *piyyutim* inserted in the permanent prayers showed large differences. These differences are the main factors in the formation of the four major *minhagim* (customs): (a) the Middle Eastern (Yemen and Persia); (b) Sephardic (North Africa and the Balkans; (c) Ashkenazi (North France and Germany); and (d) Italian. The strengthening of the Kabbalah in Jewish life and thought in the pre-exilic prestigious spiritual center in Safed in the sixteenth century greatly affected some of these *minhagim* and produced some hybrid *nusaḥim* based on the old version but including many kabbalistic additions and alternatives: (a) the later *nusaḥ* of the Sephardim; (b) the Ashkenazi *nusaḥ* Sefarad; and (c) the *baladi* in Yemen.

The core of the Hebrew prayer is the Amidah, which is obligatory for each adult Jewish male to recite three times a day: morning (Šaḥrit), afternoon (Minḥa), and evening (Arvit). On Saturdays, on the first day of the month, and during festivals there is an additional Amidah (*musaf*), and on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, another additional Amidah (*ne'ilah*). All these prayers are said in silence (*laḥaš*) while standing and are then repeated by the *sheliaḥ tzibbur,* originally for those who did not know them by heart, when it was forbidden to write down the prayers. In Šaḥrit and Arvit three short passages of the Pentateuch (*Qeri'at Shema*) with two benedictions before them and one (Šaḥrit) or two (Arvit) after them are said before the Amidah. It is strongly recommended that a minyan, that is, a quorum of ten, be present to say both Amidah and *Qeri'at Shema* in the synagogue.

This combination of prayers is common to Jewish communities all over the world, and in this respect any Jew can participate in the prayers of any community. Yet, because of other aspects that are not essential for satisfaction of the religious obligation of prayer—the pronunciation of Hebrew wording, the music, and the like—it is somewhat unusual and sometimes impossible for a person who is an outsider to take part in the joint, public performance of a prayer. However, in modern congregations in the State of Israel, as a result of the great variety in the origins of their members, there is a tendency to be more tolerant of variations in *minhagim* and *nusaḥim.*

Yosef Tobi

See also: Blessing God.

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PROCHOWNIK, ABRAHAM

Abraham Prochownik, a legendary figure, was, according to a Polish-Jewish folk legend, a Jewish king of Poland. He was called "Prochownik" because of his occupation as a merchant in gunpowder *(proch).* The legend, which relates to the accession of the legendary King Piast (ca. 860), the founder of the glorious Piast dynasty that ruled Poland until 1370, has been incorporated into histories of Polish Jewry. In the absence of written

documentation of the beginning of Jewish settlement in Poland, historians picked up and recorded the legend, which they usually gloss over briefly. There are very few folkloristic transcriptions that can be used for documentation and research.

Historians believe that the legend does not predate the thirteenth or fourteenth century, when gunpowder reached Europe. Some believe that it was created only in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, to serve apologetic needs. The legend implies that the Jews are essential to Polish society. Weinryb notes that in 1868, Smołka, a member of the Polish Sejm, used the story to defend the Jews of Galicia and demand equal rights for them (Weinryb 1973, 336; Bar-Itzhak 2001, 91). Although some historians believe that the first Jews reached Poland in the ninth century, most of them agree that the legend cannot be relied on to establish the date of Jewish settlement there.

The most extensive version of the legend, provided by Herman Sternberg in 1860, can be summarized as follows: The death of Popiel left the royal family of Poland without an heir. The nobles, assembled in conclave in Kruszwica, were unable to agree on a candidate. They accepted the proposal by the eldest elector that they crown the first man who entered the city after daybreak the next morning. Guards were posted to intercept him. That first arrival turned out to be Abraham Prochownik, who had come to town to sell gunpowder, and he was duly proclaimed king. However, he refused to accept the crown. Pressed on the matter, he asked to be left alone to think the matter over and pray to his god. He issued strict instructions that no one disturb him. After three days had elapsed and he failed to reappear, Piast declared that the country could not remain without a ruler and burst into his house. Abraham, addressing the assembled Poles, told them that Piast was the best candidate for the throne because he was intelligent and understood that the country could not exist without a ruler, as well as being courageous and unafraid of disobeying the king. So Piast became king of Poland.

This is an etiological legend to bolster the Jews' right of residence in Poland: If Jews were already living and accepted in the country at the very dawn of the Polish state, in its pre-Christian period, their right to live there could not be challenged. The legend legitimizes the Jews' main vocation, commerce, by showing that they had been engaged in it for centuries. Most of all, though, it presents their major contribution to Polish society and to the establishment of the glorious Piast dynasty, whose most esteemed member, Casimir (Kazimierz) the Great, expanded the Jews' rights of settlement in Poland and, so legend had it, was linked to the Jews through his mistress Estherke. The legend also refers to the Jews' crucial role in Polish society: It was a Jew's acumen that brought the Poles to select the person most suited to be their ruler, a man blessed with intelligence and courage, and to the establishment of the celebrated Piast dynasty.

Another important message, intended for both internal and external consumption, is that the Jews of Poland have no interest in exercising power that is not legitimately theirs. This is intended to assuage the fears of the host nation, but it also serves to preserve the myth of Jewish redemption, inasmuch as a Jewish kingdom can exist only in the Land of Israel.

There are several extended versions of this legend. The first transcription from the oral tradition is that by the Polish folklorist Roman Zmorski, who recorded it in Polish from Jewish informants in 1855. Another version of the story was printed in Hebrew in 1861 in *Ha'nesher,* the supplement of the periodical *Ha'mevaser*, and in Yiddish by Wiernik in 1901.

The legend of Abraham Prochownik no longer circulates. Not a single version is found among the 2,800 folktales collected from Polish Jews, starting in 1955, held by the Israel Folklore Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa. Several Prochownik families in Israel report that they know they are descended from a king of Poland but cannot recount the legend itself.

S.Y. Agnon turned the folk legend into a literary legend as "Mi'shomerim laboker" (Watchers for the Morning), included in his collection *Poland: Legendary Tales* (first published in 1925). The legend also makes an appearance in a novel by the Russian-Jewish author Grigory Isaakovich Bogrov (Baharav), *Evreiskii manuskript* (A Hebrew Manuscript), published in 1878 and translated into Hebrew in 1900.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Estherke; Wahl, Saul.

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PROVERB

The proverb is a verbal genre known in almost every tradition in the world. It usually constitutes one sentence—less often a string of sentences—that conveys a message formulated as a collectively experienced wisdom. The proverb is often marked as separate from the verbal sequence in which it appears either by an introductory formula ("The proverb says," "My mother used to say," etc.) or by its characteristically poetic language, or both. Proverbs are effective tools for expressing group identity because of their great mobility from one context to another and because they can relatively easily be transposed from one linguistic environment to another. The Jewish tradition of proverbs has a long and complex multilingual history, including usage of proverbs in Hebrew, Aramaic, or Jewish languages such as Yiddish, Judeo-Arabic, or Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) interlacing the speech in other languages spoken in non-Jewish environments.

The Hebrew Bible contains two books devoted to the genre: Proverbs (*mishle,* pl. of *mashal,* which in biblical Hebrew means "proverb"), which excels in practical and socially applicable wisdom, rhetorically often formulated as the words of an older person, such as a father, to a younger person of high birth, possibly a future ruler; and Ecclesiastes, whose proverbs express a more philosophical, meditative, and skeptical mode of thought. Perhaps surprisingly, it is the latter whose verses are more likely to remain extant as spoken and written proverbs in contemporary Hebrew, possibly due to the wider knowledge of Ecclesiastes, which is read in the synagogues on the Sabbath that occurs during Sukkot and to the language of the book that resembles modern Hebrew more than the language of Proverbs. In addition, several proverbs in the Bible are inserted in the language of the narrators, the prophets and the poets, as well as in the mouths of biblical personae. Some quotations from the Hebrew Bible may not initially have been proverbs but have been adopted as proverbs in later speech and writing. Today one might encounter the use of biblical verses as proverbs in spoken Hebrew without the user's necessarily knowing the source. The apocryphal book of Ben Sira also belongs to the so-called wisdom literature, in which proverbs abound.

In rabbinic texts of late antiquity, the talmudic-midrashic literature, Hebrew and even more often Aramaic proverbs are a major rhetorical, didactic, and philosophical medium. A text from the earliest stratum of the corpus, tannaitic literature, known as the Wisdom of the Fathers, *Pirqe Avot,* or simply the *Mishnah Avot,* is a compilation of proverbs and proverbial sayings about the learning and teaching practices of the sages themselves, demonstrating the adequacy of the genre in the service of didactic and philosophical teaching, such as "The wise person learns from everyone" (IV, 1 in Hebrew) or "Speak little; do much" (I, 15, in Hebrew). The texts of *Pirqe Avot* are often applied as proverbs in contemporary Hebrew speech. Proverbs abound in other works of the period as well and proliferate even more in the later rabbinic period, in amoraic literature, and in the Palestinian Talmud (Yerushalmi) as well as the Babylonian Talmud (Bavli). The scholarly usage of proverbs in the internal discourse of the sages is sometimes interlaced with more popularly conceived proverbs, often but not always introduced with the formula "This is what people say" (*haynu de-amrei inashe*) (e.g., *b. Bava Qamma* 92a–93a): "This is what people say: 'Don't throw a stone in the well from which you drank water'" (92b, in Aramaic). The Hebrew and Aramaic proverbs are often paralleled by proverbs in other languages of the area and the period, mainly Greek but also Latin and Persian. Since the medieval period, Jews have lived in linguistically divergent environments and their use of Hebrew and Aramaic proverbs frequently incorporated proverbs from the languages of their new environments, especially in the developing Jewish languages characteristic of each region, such as the Yiddish of Central and East European Jews, Judeo-Arabic of the Middle Eastern Jews, Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) of the Jews of the Ottoman Empire, and Judeo-Persian of Iran and its environs.

New proverbs emerge in contemporary Hebrew, especially in the context of mass media; the subculture of the Israeli army ("Hard is only in bread," Israeli Proverb Index, Folklore Research Center, Hebrew University of Jerusalem); and various modes of advertisement. Jewish proverbs continue to constitute markers of group identity in varying language environments, easily communicable, and replete with meanings and associations due to their textual and contextual histories.

Galit Hasan-Rokem

See also: Dundes, Alan; Hasan-Rokem, Galit.

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PRYLUCKI NOAH (NOYEKH PRILUTSKI)

See: Poland, Jews of

PSALMS

The first and most prominent book in the third division of the Bible (the Hagiographa), the Book of Psalms is a collection of 150 chapters, each a separate poem of praise. The word "psalm" derives from the Greek word "*psallo*," meaning "to play a stringed instrument," and ultimately "to sing to the accompaniment of a harp," and is akin to the Hebrew *mizmor,* which is also used as an appellation for the individual poems. The Hebrew name used from rabbinic times to the present to denote the book is *Sefer tehillim* (Book of Praises, often abbreviated to *tillim*), connected to the Hebrew root *hll* (praise), which is conspicuous in the oft-repeated cry found in many psalms, "hallelujah" (praise God).

These names indicate the original nature of the poems as hymns of praise to God, undoubtedly sung in unison or in antiphony to the accompaniment of stringed instruments, although the praise may be in the context of laments over personal or national misfortune or connected with didactic teachings. While not directly connected in form or content to the Temple cult, there is no doubt that already in the time of the first Temple the use of songs set to music formed an integral part of the worship service, providing an outlet for personal and group creativity as well as for religious sentiment. Indeed, many of the superscriptions of the individual psalms refer to musical instruments or to what must have been guilds of professional singers and musicians connected to the Temple service.

The content of the psalms is relatively devoid of specific historical details, except for occasional references to major events in ancient Israelite history, such as the promise to Abraham of land and progeny, the exodus from Egypt, and the splitting of the Red Sea and the wandering in the desert; other historical references include the Davidic monarchy, the centrality of Jerusalem and the Temple, and the exile. Even in those psalms for which a superscription provides a particular historical event as the reason for its composition (see below), the content of the psalm may not be directly related to the stated event. The most prominent type of psalm celebrates the majesty, goodness, and providence of God, evidenced through natural, personal, and historical events. Others contain laments of either personal or national misfortune; these are often accompanied by an expression of confidence that God will hear the psalmist's petition and respond. In the event that the psalmist believes that God has responded favorably in a time of his misfortune, the psalm may be a song of thanksgiving for deliverance. In all these, the psalmist makes frequent use of the first person and addresses God directly in prayer. Many psalms contain didactic teachings especially in relation to righteous living and to the proper education in God's teaching and His Torah.

The poetic language of the Psalms, which makes use of the common biblical literary forms of parallelism and repetition, is rich in metaphor, with abundant reference to nature and its wonders, the beasts of the fields, appeals to agricultural life (both horticultural and pastoral), and description of kings and their glory and of varied occupations of man and woman such as the warrior, the builder, and the nursing mother. Mount Zion, the abode of the earthly Temple in Jerusalem, is the subject of several psalms; a specific collection (Psalm 121, "Shir hama'alot," chapters 120 through 134) may be associated with pilgrimages to the Temple. Some mythological motifs common to other ancient Near Eastern cultures are also found in the psalms, such as the conquest of the primeval waters and the heavenly court. A number of psalms are arranged in an alphabetic acrostic according to the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, which may have been used as an aid to memory.

The composition of the Book of Psalms has traditionally been ascribed to King David, known to be a musician (1 Sam. 18:10) trained especially on the harp (1 Sam. 16:16–23), a singer (2 Sam. 23:1), and a composer (2 Sam. 23:1). Individual psalms are also ascribed by the rabbis to earlier authors, among them Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Asaph, and the sons of Koraḥ. Some of these figures, primary among them David, are represented as the authors of individual psalms already in some of the superscriptions (le'David, Le'Moshe, le'Asaph, li'Shelomo). Some of these titles point to an early attempt to relate the general hymns and laments to specific historical events especially in the life of David, an attempt that continued in rabbinic times. The five-part division of the Book of Psalms (already evident in the canonical arrangement) is related to the five-part division of the Torah: "Moses gave the five books of the Torah to Israel, and correspondingly David gave the five books of the Psalms to Israel" (Midrash to Psalms 1:2). The divine inspiration came to David through music: "A harp was suspended above the bed of David. At midnight the north wind blew on it and it produced its own music. Immediately David arose and occupied himself with Torah. . . . Until midnight he occupied himself with Torah; from midnight on with songs and praises" (b. Berakhot 3b).

The centrality of the Book of Psalms in Jewish family and societal life was already evident during the Second Temple period, as is attested by descriptions of the singing of psalms in the home (4 Macc. 18:15), by the large number of fragments of psalms (including a number of noncanonical psalms) found among the Dead Sea Scrolls (more than that of any other biblical book), as well as by the overwhelming use of verses from psalms in rabbinic literature, especially in homiletic contexts. The liturgical use of psalms was prescribed for Temple worship, in which a specific chapter was sung by the Levites on each day of the week during the daily sacrifice. In addition, psalms 113 through 118, known collectively as the *Hallel* (the Praise *par excellence,* also known as the Egyptian *Hallel*), were sung at the Temple by the Levites during the paschal sacrifice (and, according to one opinion, were recited by the Israelites at the Red Sea), and the Songs of Ascent (psalms 120 through 134) were sung during the water libation ceremony in the festival of Tabernacles. No doubt the cultic use influenced later synagogue liturgy. Thus the *Hallel* psalms were prescribed for recitation in the synagogue on the three Pilgrim festivals and during Ḥanukkah; later custom ordained the recital of a particular psalm for each day of the week, as was done in the Temple (*Masekhet Soferim* 18:1), the inclusion of six daily psalms (145 through 150, known as the *Pesukei de'zimra,* the verses of song) in the morning service, and numerous other psalms and verses of psalms during other parts of the liturgy. The *Hallel* psalms were recited at other times as well, notably during the recital of the Haggadah on

Passover eve, both in the synagogue and during the Seder service at home. Many of these were sung antiphonally, with a leader singing each verse and the listeners responding by repeating the verse or by reciting a standard refrain. Throughout the development of liturgical prayer, individual psalms continued to be assigned to synagogue use; special mention should be made of psalms 95 through 99 and psalm 29, which were instituted by the sixteenth-century Kabbalists of Safed as an introductory service on the eve of the Sabbath (*Kabbalat Shabbat*). In the custom of Yemenite Jews, groups of psalms are sung artistically in predawn Sabbath prayer meetings (*ashmorot*), and verses from psalms are used as introductory material to the similar *bakashot* hymns of the Syrian Jews.

The particularly religious and didactic nature of the Psalms invited the widespread use of the recital of psalms for almost any occasion when prayer was called for, especially life-threatening experiences such as going on a journey, prayers for the dangerously ill, during the night vigil preceding circumcision, at a burial service, and in a house of mourning. In addition, it became customary to recite large portions of the Book of Psalms, or even the entire book, on specific occasions such as on the eve of the Day of Atonement. For these purposes "societies of psalm-sayers" (*ḥevrat tehillim*) were instituted for the regular recital of psalms, especially in Eastern Europe. These societies (celebrated by the Yiddish writer Sholem Asch in *Der tillim yid* [*Salvation*] [Warsaw, 1934]) included men and women of different backgrounds and classes, although they were generally shunned by the more learned classes of Jews. Hasidic masters especially encouraged the regular recital of psalms, and certain individuals were known to be experts in the knowledge of the recital of psalms.

The recital of a particular psalm at times of distress was at first naturally connected to the content of the psalm, and certain psalms, especially those including phrases of comfort in the face of adversity or calamity, by talmudic times were already considered particularly efficacious. As Jewish society, during talmudic times and throughout the medieval period, shared the common fear of demons (*maziqim*) and other malevolent forces, psalms were recited as protection against them. Thus psalm 3, and psalm 91 (known as *shir shel pega'im* [songs (against) demons]) are indicated in the Talmud as useful to ward off an attack by demons and are included in liturgical practices during subsequent ages, especially useful during those times when the demons might be particularly active, such as during illness, at funerals, or before going to bed. However, there is also evidence from the early Byzantine period of the recitation of particular psalms, or verses of psalms, as part of a magic praxis in a wide variety of everyday situations without regard to the specific content of the psalm. These magical uses—sometimes entailing the incantation of a psalm a number of times at propitious

moments or the writing of specific verses for use as an amulet—are listed, along with appropriate instructions, in a book entitled *Shimush tehillim* (The Magical Praxis of Psalms). The book first appears in Palestinian Aramaic texts of the Byzantine period but became widespread in Jewish and Christian circles during the medieval period, in both the East and the West. In this work, psalms are prescribed for remedying such situations as bodily ills, miscarriage, a crying baby, a troubling spouse, demons, storms at sea, wild animals, judicial favor, success in business, and the discovery of the identity of a thief. The work was later expanded to include mention of mystical divine names embedded in the text and prayers including these names. These lists circulated widely, and to this day many editions of Psalms are printed that include introductory comments stating the efficacious use of each psalm. Verses of psalms, as incantations or as prayers, are also found regularly, along with other biblical verses, as part of inscriptions on amulets.

Paul Mandel

See also: Amulets; Magic; Prayer.

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PURIM

The holiday of Purim is based on the account in the Book of Esther about the attempt by Haman, the counselor to King Ahasuerus, to annihilate the Jews in the Persian Empire and how they were saved by the intervention of Mordechai and his niece Esther, who was married to the king. To commemorate the event and the defeat of the wicked Haman, the fourteenth day of the Hebrew month of Adar, the day when the Jews rested after their victory, was enshrined as the feast of Purim; the next day was called Shushan Purim, because the fighting continued in the capital of Susa for another day. (To commemorate the fast and prayer by Esther, her handmaids, and all the Jews in Shushan before the queen went to

the king to beg for his mercy, the thirteenth of Adar is observed as the Fast of Esther.) According to the Book of Esther, the name Purim is derived from the Hebrew word "*pur*" (lot, as in a lottery), because Haman cast lots to select the most propitious day for his murderous onslaught against the Jews.

The Book of Esther recounts that Mordechai and Esther sent letters to all the Jewish communities in the Persian Empire, calling for them to observe these days as a festival. Purim is unique in that it was created in the Diaspora (the Persian Empire) and reflects the lives of Diaspora Jews who must rely on the mercies of a non-Jewish ruler to escape a bitter fate. His clemency is won by the efforts of learned Jewish intercessors, who know how to persuade the monarch to show favor to the Jews. This seems to be why the holiday was accepted in all Jewish communities, even though at first it does not seem to have been approved by the leaders in Eretz Israel (see *b. Megillah* 7a).

Ancient Sources

Purim is the Jewish version of carnival. Many scholars have pointed out that there are carnivalesque elements in the original biblical account, which stands out from other scriptural narratives for its epic scope and includes elements of feasting, drinking, merrymaking, and sex. Some trace the story to an ancient myth about the wars of the gods of Babylonia (Mardukh, Ishtar) against the deities of Elam (Homan).

Religious and Social Elements

The main religious precept associated with the holiday is the public reading of the Scroll of Esther (the Megillah) in the synagogue, in the evening and again the following morning. This precept is incumbent on all, including women and children. In cities that were walled in the days of Joshua, the Megillah is read on the fifteenth of Adar. The reading in the synagogue takes on a carnival air as children, and sometimes adults, attend in costume, often as characters related to the Purim story. In addition, whenever readers come to Haman's name in the text, they make a racket with noisemakers of various kinds.

The social element is manifested in mutual gifts of food (called "*mishloaḥ manot*") and charity to the poor. Both are mentioned in the Book of Esther. According to the Talmud (*b. Megillah* 7a), each person must send gifts to at least two people. The custom is to send various kinds of foods—the more the better. Charity to the poor also includes money and clothing. In mishnaic times, there was a "Purim Collection" (*b. Bava Metzia* 78b) to provide the poor with what they needed to celebrate the holiday.

Purim celebration in Tel Aviv, 1928, by S.I. Schweig. *(Courtesy of the photo archive of the Jewish National Fund, Jerusalem)*

Carnival Elements in Purim Customs

Ever since the beginning of observance of the festival, many Purim customs have carnival elements intended to engage participants in play and to release tension. Often they represent a breach of prohibitions that are stringently enforced the rest of the year.

Drinking wine: In the words of the Talmud, on Purim a person should drink "until he cannot distinguish between 'curse Haman' and 'bless Mordechai' " (*b. Megillah* 7b)—that is, until he has lost the capacity for moral judgment, an excess that is otherwise utterly forbidden. This precept has given rise to parodic songs in praise of wine.

Purim games: Among the games played on Purim is one that dates back to the time of the Amoraim (third to fifth centuries) and called *mashvarta De'Purya* (*b. Sanhedrin* 64b). The Geonim (eighth to tenth centuries) explain this as burning Haman in effigy. The medieval scholar Rashi (Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes) associates it with boys jumping over bonfires. The custom is associated with other forms of symbolic attacks on the wicked

Haman, including writing his name on a stone and then obliterating it by banging one stone on another or making noise to drown out his name during the reading of the Megillah, as a way of hurting him or chasing him away. Another jest involves the selection of a special Purim rabbi or king. This was common in the yeshivas of Eastern Europe. The student chosen for the role would expound the law in a flippant and parodic fashion.

Disguises: Costumes and disguises became a central custom of the holiday and have become especially beloved by children. In Eastern Europe, yeshiva students (who were all male) would dress up as women (such cross-dressing is strictly forbidden the rest of the year). There is no end to the variety of costumes, which are no longer associated only with characters from the Megillah or Jewish history.

The Purimshpil (Purim play): Another expression of the lightheartedness of the holiday was the staging of plays, especially by yeshiva students in Central and Eastern Europe, but elsewhere, too. The first Purimshpil known to scholars, titled *Esther,* is based on the account in the Book of Esther and was composed by Solomon Osko and Eliezer Graziano in Ladino in 1567. The earliest ex-

tant Yiddish Purimshpil, the Akhashveyresh-shpil, was written in 1708 and printed in Frankfurt. In addition to stories based on the Book of Esther, there are also Purim plays that enact other biblical stories, such as the sale of Joseph, David and Goliath, and the binding of Isaac.

Purim in Israel

The residents of Tel Aviv were in the forefront of the celebrations of Purim by rebuilding the Jewish community in Eretz Israel. In 1912, Avraham Aldema, a teacher at the Herzliyya Gymnasium (high school), organized a Purim parade through the streets of Tel Aviv. The costumes expressed the holiday tradition, the biblical era, and current events. With the encouragement of the then-mayor, Meir Dizengoff, Aldema continued to organize similar events on Purim. In 1914 Tel Aviv held a so-called Hebrew carnival, a colorful procession through the streets of the town. This tradition expanded in subsequent years.

In 1932, taking up a suggestion by the author Y.D. Berkovitch, the organizers decided to rename the parade the Adloyada (lit., "until he can no longer distinguish"). The grand marshal and organizer of the proceedings was Moshe Halevy, the founder of the Ohel Theater. Four of the early parades had themes: "Immigration to the Land of Israel" (1932), "Songs in Israel" (1933), "The Tribes of Israel, in Ancient Times and Today" (1934), and "From Slavery to Freedom" (1935). Other street festivals took place as well: an Esther's Palace, erected in downtown Tel Aviv every year, hosted plays, dance performances, and vocal concerts. During the 1920s and 1930s, these performances attracted many visitors from elsewhere in the country and even from abroad.

There was also a public ball. The most famous of these were organized by the dancer and painter Baruch Agadati between 1920 and 1933. In 1926, a Queen Esther was chosen at the ball. Over the years, several theatrical troupes, including the Trask Club, the Ohel Theater, and the satiric Matate Theater, organized their own Purim balls in Tel Aviv.

In 1936, the Adloyada was canceled because of unrest in the country. The custom was revived in Tel Aviv in the 1950s and subsequently spread to other towns. The most important event, a student Purim parade known as the Archiparchitura, was held in Haifa for many years, at the initiative of students of architecture at the Technion.

Nili Aryeh-Sapir

See also: Esther; Esther Scroll; Papercut; Purimshpil.

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PURIMSHPIL

The Purimshpil, the Jewish folk theater enacted in Yiddish during the holiday of Purim, developed in early modern Europe into an ongoing folk tradition among the Jewish communities. The players, themes, motifs, and style are all in accordance with the definition of a folk genre: a traditional show based upon a well-known myth, put on at holiday time by small communities whose members were also the performers. Like similar phenomena in pre-industrial societies, the Jewish festive folk theater was characterized by rituals involving dance, feasting, masquerades, mock weddings, mock fights, impersonation, masks, and men wearing women's clothing. The popular customs manifested in the folk play include reference to the spirit of an upside-down world, anarchy, and rebellion. In the mode of the farce and the parody, the players evoke a world of chaos and the breaking of taboos.

The earliest known mention of the term "Purimshpil" is found in a "Poem on the Book of Esther" (dated 1555), composed by Gumprecht von Szczebrzeszyn, a Polish Jew working as a *melamed* (teacher of young children) in Venice. The term does not necessarily indicate a dramatic play and has been used to describe different types of performances and merriment, monologues, and parodies that were performed at the festive table.

Students from a Tarbut Hebrew-language school perform a Purimshpil. Podbrodzie, Poland (now Pabradė, Lith.), 1939. *(YIVO Institute, New York)*

The first complete extant dramatic text is dated to the seventeenth century. However, iconographic testimony suggests a tradition of such Jewish clownish merriment back to the fifteenth century.

The Purimshpil, as a liminoid manifestation—to use anthropologist Victor Turner's term for creative, reflective leisure activity—has preserved as conspicuously as any other folk drama the dynamic liminal symbols of the ritual.

The Play

The anonymous writers and performers—actors for the occasion—the craftsmen, *badchanim* (jesters), *klezmorim* (musicians), yeshiva *bokhers* (students) who produced the shows would parade through the streets in the play's costumes and masks, stopping at the wealthier Jewish households to demand food and money, for their own needs or for charity, in exchange for entertainment. The family with their invited guests around the festive table did not leave much room for a big-cast spectacle. The players had to wait outside, at the door, first for permission to enter, and then often for their turn to enter and play their parts. The invading players turned the provisional space of the private homes into an intimate theatrical space by incorporating the existing state of an ongoing Purim feast. Household objects were used on occasion, as characteristic of folk play transformation of any accessory on hand, to serve as iconic and symbolic stage signs: benches, chairs, and coat hangers, rustled up in the room where the show was to take place, transported the audience to the throne room, the royal banquet, or the gallows.

The plays, like other genres of Jewish folk culture, derive to a large extent from the existing "higher culture," perhaps more so than any other folk tradition. The elements of these folk plays betray their closeness to a literary origin and are manifested in a rather unusual relationship between high culture and folk culture. Even the least pretentious versions of the Purimshpil clearly reveal this reliance on elements from the learned Jewish sources: the scriptures, midrashim, *Targum sheni*, Aggadah, liturgy, and other "high" genres, including misogynist poetry. However, the Purimshpil reveals signs of oral transmission, too. Throughout the generations, the plays were transmitted either in writing or more often by word of mouth, together with their special melodies and traditional costumes. In many places, a Purimshpil remained in the domain of one family, which produced it by concessional right.

Themes

Biblical themes are central, the most common offering being the Akhashveyresh-shpil, an enactment of the Book of Esther, since the book tells of the origin of the Purim feast itself. Other popular themes such as the sale of Joseph (*Mekhires Yosef*), David and Goliath the Philistine (*Dovid un Goliyes haplishti*), the sacrifice of Isaac (*Akeydes Yitskhok*), and the Book of Daniel, where the weak overcome the mighty, are reflected in the social import or message. As happens frequently in folk plays that appropriate elements wherever they can find them, outright anachronisms appear. Random elements from beyond the world of the biblical myth were used to expand the tale. With the narrative continuity supplied by the myth, the play could distance itself from the original narrative and elaborate on the core story through use of extras, comic fragments, contemporary and comic characters and local allusions, jokes, liturgical parody, songs, and a medley of gibberish, as well as sketches on locally known rabbis, doctors, and cantors. The plays seem to be unstructured: Many of the monologues do not belong to the main plot, the entrances are not motivated, the mythical characters have been made into fools, and there are the abrupt changes in atmosphere, from laughter to tears and from pathos to low farce.

Purimshpil and the Rabbinical Establishment

Absorbed into popular humor, the language became totally unrestricted, containing obscenities, insults, curses, and blasphemies. The authorities were subverted and ridiculed by the players, who descended in numerous instances into scatological humor, from comic gesticulations and sexual allusions to blunt talk of sex and genitalia. These drew the wrath of the community elders. The strong objections that the rabbinical establishment had always felt vis-à-vis the very institution of the theater was now vindicated by this challenge to Jewish asceticism. And after the improvised text of the play was documented in writing, and thus subject to more sober scrutiny, it was doomed. Johann Jacob Schudt, who published the 1708 edition of Akhashveyresh-shpil in 1714, records that the Jews themselves were ashamed of what they had written, and, indeed, the elders of Frankfurt burned the entire edition at the stake. Nevertheless, the well-rooted tradition of the Purimshpil in Eastern Europe did not cease. There are hardly any memoires or stories from the shtetls (small towns) in East Europe that do not contain a Purimshpil experience. However, after the genre had crystallized into the definitive pattern of a play, its development stopped and it began to rely on tradition. This tradition of the Purimshpil lasted

as long as it continued to reflect a life that had remained unchanged for hundreds of years. It constituted not only a means of provision and charity but also a vehicle for social comment and protest, expressing resistance by the weak against the strong on two levels: by asserting the identity of an oppressed Jewish minority culture within a dominant gentile culture and by registering the perspectives of the poorest and least-powerful members of the Jewish community within that community itself.

The Purimshpil, the only authentic Jewish folk theater, which had existed from early modern Europe for hundreds of years, began to decay in the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century with the waves of immigration to the big cities and out of Europe; and it came almost to its end with the extinction of European Jewry in the Holocaust. The Purimshpil still survives, however, in a few yeshivas in the United States and Israel.

Ahuva Belkin

See also: Purim.

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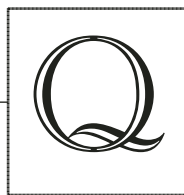
QINAH (LAMENT)

The Hebrew word "*qinah*" designates a lament. In Jewish folklore, the word has two distinct meanings: (1) a lament for the dead, on a private level; and (2) a lament for the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem in the first century C.E., as recited on the legendary day of the event, Ninth of Av (Heb. Tisha Be'Av), on a collective level. Whereas the private laments for the dead are almost always, since antiquity and in various groups and regions, performed by women, the collective laments for the destruction of the Temple are often performed by men.

Laments for the dead are recognized as a literary genre in the Hebrew Bible, for example, David's poetically elaborate lament for Saul and Jonathan (2 Sam 1:17–27). The Hebrew Bible also mentions the social institution of lamenters, according to the grammatical form identified as lamenting women: "call for the lamenting women" (Jer. 9:16). Private lamenting with a strong national tone occurs in the case of the matriarch "Rachel weeping for her children" (Jer. 31:14).

The Talmud also retains at least one lament assigned to women—in this case the women of Shkanziv, a distant city in northern Babylonia—opening with the words: "Woe for his leaving, woe for our grieving" (*b. Mo'ed Qatan* 28b).

In various Jewish traditions more or less institutionalized forms of lamenting occur often with strong connections to local non-Jewish lamenting traditions. Although lamenting exists in different cultures (Karelia, Greek islands), in Israel lamenting traditions have persisted in many communities that emigrated from Muslim and Near Eastern countries as well as from Africa (Ethiopia). Kurdish Jewish women's lamenting in neo-Aramaic was a living tradition until about the 1970s, and some Yemeni Jewish women in Israel still perform laments in Judeo-Arabic, for dead relatives and deceased community members.

The performance of laments involves knowledge of the verbal repertoire of the genre, including a high level of individual variation and improvisation, similar to what is known of lamenting traditions from the Mediterranean region as well as around the world. Likewise the vocabulary and poetics of Jewish laments resemble those of other traditions: questioning the harshness of fate, wailing over the young age of the deceased, and describing the wonderful qualities of the lamented dead. The stylized use of body gestures also is part of the genre.

The other major designation of the term relates to the national and religious laments addressing the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. The Hebrew Bible's book of Lamentations (Eikha) not only anthologizes a five-chapter selection of such poems from antiquity but also to this day constitutes the main repertoire read in the synagogue on the day commemorating the lamented events. In some Judeo-Arabic dialects the day itself is called "Eikha." The title of the book is actually the first Hebrew word of the text, also in accordance with the poetics of laments a question: "How [does the city sit solitary]?" The book is however also called "the scroll of laments," in Hebrew, *Megillat Qinnot,* and the recitation of the text is accordingly called the reading of *Qinnot.* Hebrew poets from late antiquity onward have added to the repertoire of readings on Tisha Be'Av. A prose work midrash, the Lamentations Rabbah, was originally composed in the late fifth century in Palestine in Hebrew and Aramaic, and it has become an additional text for mainly individual reading on Tisha Be'Av, which also is a day of fasting.

Some historical events, such as the mass murder of Jews in the Rhine valley in the eleventh century, accompanying the Crusades, and the Holocaust of the mid-twentieth century, have given rise to new poems of lamentation.

Galit Hasan-Rokem

See also: Death.

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R

Rabbah bar bar Ḥannah

Rabbah bar bar Ḥannah (RBBH) was a third-century rabbi of Palestinian origin to whom a variety of legal and aggadic sayings are attributed in the rabbinic corpus. The sources (mainly *b. Berakhot* 53b, *Ḥullin* 55b, *Yebamot* 120a) suggest that his literary character was that of a traveler especially acquainted with the desert landscape and its inhabitants.

Specifically, RBBH recounted tall tales and mini-travelogues, genres with which his character has been identified in later generations. In his stories (*b. Bava Batra* 73b–74a) RBBH tells of fantastic phenomena that he had witnessed; for example, a gigantic frog was swallowed by a snake that was in turn swallowed by a bird or a huge bird whose head reached the sky. A few of his tall tales—all of which take place in the desert—address pivotal cultural symbols. In one, he is led by an Arab to the looming gigantic figures of the generation of Israelites condemned to die in the desert. There he witnesses their periodic awakening from a coma. In another, he is led to Mount Sinai, where he hears a heavenly voice asking to be freed. Both stories end with RBBH reporting his experience at the *beit ha'midrash* (house of study), only to be rebuked by the sages for what they perceive as his inappropriate response. According to them, he should have counted the threads on the tzitzit (fringes) of the dead of the desert and he should have released the heavenly voice, which he had failed to recognize as the *shekhina* lamenting her exile. In another tale, RBBH is led to the simmering crack through which he hears the Koraḥ family—doomed to eternal interrogation—admit their guilt. He also witnesses waddling geese that owe their obesity to the prolongation of the redemptive era in which they will serve as food for the righteous.

Entertaining and humorous as these stories may be, they also carry deep cultural meaning. Leading their traveler—and his audience—to transgress familiar geographic boundaries, the stories introduce him to temporal dimensions other than the present, namely, the primordial and the eschatological. It is in the framework of the premonotheistic primordial elements of chaos and the anxiety over the eschatological future that RBBH's encounter with figures such as the generation of the desert and the Koraḥ family

presents a subversive narrative; RBBH's tall tales point at the inadequacy of the formal institutional discourse, confined by accepted geographic and temporal boundaries.

Dina Stein

See also: Agnon, S.Y.

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Rabbinic Literature

The term "rabbinic literature," also known as the "literature of the sages (of blessed memory)" (*sifrut ḥazal*), designates a corpus of texts, or rather, corpora of texts, redacted in the first centuries of the common era, containing records of traditions transmitted both orally and in written form by a diverse group of learned men. These sages (rabbis; lit., "masters") are generally considered the successors to the Pharisees of the Second Temple period, and flourished from the end of that period (commonly designated by the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E.) until approximately the fifth century C.E., in the Jewish centers of Palestine and Babylonia. They were at the same time students of tradition and teachers of the people, whose self-proclaimed task was to preserve and interpret the traditions of law and lore of earlier generations and to direct the people in the proper conduct of their lives according to the precepts and teachings of those traditions.

The sages were not a homogeneous group; among them were political and religious leaders, judges and teachers, although the majority earned their livelihood from other activities as artisans, landowners, farmers, merchants, and day laborers. They came from diverse backgrounds, both rich and poor, and while there was often conflict between sages and even, at times, personal animosity, the attitude of those "sitting in the house of study" was in general one of mutual respect, with special honor shown teachers by their pupils. Yet there are indications of an aristocracy of the learned among the sages, with evidence of hereditary privileges accorded at times to the sons of scholars; there are also expressions of impatience and distrust among the sages toward those in the general population who were either unlearned or disdainful of observance of the commandments.

The Literary Production of the Sages: Halakhah and Haggadah

The literary production of this scholarly class of leaders and teachers, while not a direct expression of folk literature, incorporates elements characteristic of such literature. It originated in circumstances of oral transmission and often preserves the rhetoric and style typical of folktales and sayings. The result of collective traditions, it includes many parallel versions of the same story or parabolic saying. Dealing as it does with everyday life and with the need for instruction of the people at large, it reflects and refracts popular beliefs, customs, and means of expression. Thus, alongside intricate legal discussions concerning the many obligations incumbent upon a Jew as embodied in the concept of mitzvot (commandments), one also finds in this literature parables, folk medicine, astrological considerations, fantastic tales, hagiographies, legends, dream interpretations, descriptions of folk beliefs and practices, and humorous anecdotes. These elements are not found in separate works, but are integrated into the web of textual commentary and exposition characteristic of the literature.

A salient feature of the works comprising rabbinic literature is the anonymity of their final editors. Although some books are attributed to a particular sage (*Mekhilta de'Rabbi Ishmael, Avot de'Rabbi Nathan, Midrash de'Rabbi Tanḥuma, Pesiqta de'Rabbi Kahana, Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer*), these attributions are, on the whole, of later origin. However, the named attributions of the individual traditions within each work are generally considered authentic, although the actual verbal formulation of the traditions may be due to later transmitters. Each individual unit of tradition is usually brief, from a few words to a few lines, thus facilitating the memorization of the unit. Because of the compilatory nature of the works, many units are found repeated, either identically or with variation, in several works. The individual work of the rabbinic corpus, then, may be seen as an ordered collection of earlier transmitted traditions edited by an anonymous editor or group of editors, for the purpose of transmitting these traditions to future generations for further study and reference. Although the editor/redactor may be responsible for the order of materials and even their specific formulation, it may be assumed that the individual units in any one work reflect comments from different periods and circumstances.

The content of rabbinic literature may conveniently be divided into two major areas: Halakhah (law) and Haggadah (lore). Halakhah (from the root *h-l-kh,* "to go, to walk") governs the obligations of Jewish life in every sphere, both public and private, and is rooted in the idea of the divine commandments as embedded in the Torah held to have been revealed by God to Moses at Mount Sinai. This Torah (lit., "instruction") is thought of as encompassing both the written word of God, as set forth in the five books of Moses, and the oral Torah ("Torah she'be'alpeh"), which comprises the orally transmitted laws and explanations that accompanied the written Torah and were revealed alongside it at Mount Sinai and further elaborated upon and augmented by interpretations and additional enactments of subsequent generations. Haggadah (from the root *h-g-d,* "to relate"), more commonly called "Aggadah," is more difficult to delineate and is often defined negatively as everything that is not Halakhah. Indeed, while Halakhah is limited to specific forms, Haggadah encompasses a rich assortment of literary genres, including exegesis, parable, metaphor, aphorism, folktale, historical legend, and hagiography.

The Works of Rabbinic Literature

Halakhah and Haggadah are convenient ways of classifying the contents of rabbinic literature, but these terms do not adequately define the nature of the individual works. A more accurate description divides the works by their method of exposition and arrangement, whether topically or as a sort of commentary or gloss to the biblical text.

The first method is embodied in the Mishnah (from the root *sh-n-h,* "to repeat," indicating the oral nature of its transmission), which is a vast ordered compilation, mostly of laws, arranged in tractates—separate compilations of the laws, divided into chapters—and individual *mishnayot,* each tractate dedicated to a particular area of law or subject. A supplemental work, the Tosefta (lit., "supplement"), ordered like the Mishnah, contains additional material, some of which predates the editing of the Mishnah. The second method of arrangement of the traditional material is exemplified by the midrashim (from *d-r-sh,* "to search," "to expound"; specifically, to search out meanings in a biblical text), which are a collection of expositions on biblical verses, usually arranged in the order of the verses of a biblical book. The earliest midrashim are the so-called halakhic midrashim, which relate laws to biblical verses; there exist whole or fragmentary midrashim to the five official books of the Pentateuch, from Exodus to Deuteronomy.

While Halakhah predominates in both Mishnah and halakhic Midrash, there is a considerable amount of unofficial material included in works of both genres. Several tractates of the Mishnah deal with descriptions of activity by the people in the Temple during festival occasions, or include unofficial, didactic lessons; there is, as well, an entire tractate (*Avot*) consisting of aphorisms of individual sages. The halakhic midrashim, too, contain much material related to unofficial as well as official sec-

tions of the biblical books, including legend, exegesis, and homily.

All the materials included in the above-mentioned works are in Hebrew and are culled from the first period of rabbinic literature, that of the so-called *tannaim,* from the end of the Second Temple period until around 220 C.E., the approximate year of the death of Rabbi Judah the Patriarch, who was responsible for the final redaction of the Mishnah. This event marks a watershed in the activity of the sages, for from this time on the Mishnah becomes a central, canonical work, laying the foundation for future exegetical and compilatory activity. In the next period, that of the Amoraim (third to fifth centuries C.E.), study in the academies focused on exposition of the Mishnah. The discussions of the sages and their decisions were mostly in Aramaic, the spoken language at the time; these became organized as commentary and elaboration of the Mishnah and were finally edited as the work known as the Talmud (lit., "study," "teaching"). Because there were major centers of activity in Palestine and in Babylonia, there arose two edited collections, the "Jerusalem" or Palestinian Talmud (actually produced in the Galilee) and the Babylonian Talmud. The Babylonian Talmud, whose final redaction at the end of the fifth century C.E. postdates the redaction of the Palestinian Talmud by more than a century, is by far the longer of the two and achieved a greater level of literary refinement.

Here, too, the redaction of materials was done anonymously. The "commentary" of the Talmud on the Mishnah is vast and varied, not limited to the issue at hand. It includes not only a dialectic discussion of the laws of the Mishnah and the juristic principles underlying the laws, but also a collection of case decisions, legends, hagiographies, biblical exegeses, homilies, and aphorisms, often arranged in an associative manner. As in the earlier works, both Halakhah and Haggadah feature prominently in the Talmuds and are interwoven. The Babylonian Talmud in particular contains vast amounts of Haggadah*;* there is hardly a tractate without significant amounts of haggadic discourse. Both Talmuds, but especially the Babylonian Talmud, which attained hegemony over the Palestinian Talmud during the last centuries of the first millennium (the Geonic period), became the centerpiece and basis for all subsequent Jewish law and practice, as well as the main object of advanced study.

Shortly after the redaction of the Palestinian Talmud near the end of the fourth century C.E., a series of midrashic works were redacted, almost all in Palestine, from the transmitted haggadic material of the Amoraic period. These are generally called haggadic midrashim, to distinguish them from the earlier halakhic midrashim. The earliest redacted work, and one of the most important, is the Midrash to Genesis, called Genesis Rabbah; shortly thereafter appeared midrashim to Leviticus (Leviticus Rabbah), and to those books of the Hagiographa that were used liturgically in synagogue service at specific times during the year, known collectively as the Five Scrolls (Song of Songs, Ruth, Esther, Lamentations, and Ecclesiastes). In time these were copied and printed together, along with other midrashim, in one collection that came to be called Midrash Rabbah (to the five books of Moses and the five scrolls). Another significant series of midrashim, of somewhat later date, were again compiled to the five books of the Torah, called Midrash Tanḥuma; other midrashim include collections ordered according to other books of the Bible (Samuel, Psalms, Proverbs), in addition to collections unconnected to a biblical book (e.g., Tanna devei Eliyahu, *Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer*), as well as numerous smaller works that include the word "midrash" in their title, many of them compiled only in the medieval period, and thus not considered part of the corpus of rabbinic literature.

It is common in scholarly circles to classify the haggadic midrashim as either "exegetical" or "homiletical" midrash, according to the method of exposition of the verses of the biblical book upon which the midrashic work is based: The exegetical midrashim (such as Genesis Rabbah and Lamentations Rabbah) attach midrashim to almost every verse of the book, appearing as a sort of running commentary, while the homiletical midrashim (Leviticus Rabbah, Midrash Tanḥuma) choose specific verses of the book (in order), around which are woven compilations of midrashic traditions loosely comparable to a homily, with the constituent elements organized around a common theme and with introductory passages, and often a concluding passage of a messianic or consolatory nature. However, these terms are somewhat misleading, since there is neither true exegesis nor homily in either type of midrash.

Origins and Folk Content

The origin of much of the material embedded in the rabbinic corpus, whether of the halakhic or haggadic form, derives from discourses and study sessions that were given regularly during the Tannaitic and Amoraic periods, especially on the Sabbath and holidays, in the synagogues (where the Torah and Prophets were publicly recited, translated, and commented upon) and in study circles (later, houses of study [*batei midrash*]), which provided the mainstay of communal activity. An additional source of material included life-cycle events (births, deaths, weddings) and public events (public fasts, funerals of leaders), during which homiletic expositions were commonly delivered. It should not be assumed, however, that the written traditions accurately reflect these discourses; they are, rather, carefully reformulated encapsulations of the oral presentations of sayings, stories, parables, and exegeses by scholars and others. Their main characteristic is an extreme brevity

and condensation of expression and a precision and sophistication of language and form. Arising as they do from an intimate connection with the people at large, they contain a wealth of folkloristic material, including common beliefs about nature, flora and fauna, astronomy and astrology, demons, the efficacy of magic and magical practices, folk medicine, customs and practices relating to the life cycle (in particular, birth, marriage, divorce, and death), dreams, and the human body. Some of these practices are mentioned by the sages only to be criticized or condemned; others are naturally part of the beliefs and customs of the sages.

One of the most ubiquitous forms in rabbinic literature, especially in the Haggadah, is that of the brief narrative tale. The tale is employed in the retelling and expansion of biblical narratives and events, in biographical legend, whether of biblical characters or of contemporary sages and holy men, in historical legend, in exemplum, in parable and fable, in magic tales and comic tales. These tales, while exhibiting sophisticated narrative techniques, also utilize many forms of folk literature, embedding parables, folk legends, proverbs, and fables in new literary forms. The appearance of parallel versions of these tales in separate rabbinic works (and, indeed, at times in several places within one work) provides a fascinating opportunity to observe the ways in which the tales were retold in different circumstances and periods. At times it is possible to discern in these narratives and their parallel versions rhetorical devices, transformations of themes and motifs, and other aspects common to the transmission of folk literature, as well as influences from the folk literature of other peoples with whom the Jews had contact, especially folktales and motifs of Babylonian, Persian, and Hellenistic origins.

Later Influence of Rabbinic Literature

Rabbinic literature in all its forms became the source of study and inspiration to Jews in subsequent generations. It is impossible to overestimate the influence that the corpora of this literature in all its forms exerted on the philosophy, mores, customs, exegesis, and literature of Jewish societies in all parts of the world ever since the rabbinic period. The laws and customs presented in this literature served as the basis of Jewish private and communal life and were codified, epitomized, and commented on in the voluminous halakhic literature based mostly on exposition of the Babylonian Talmud (and, to a lesser extent, the Palestinian talmudic and midrashic literature). The synagogue liturgy was founded on the directives contained therein and incorporated numerous prayers found in these corpora; the comments on biblical passages and personages provided the founda-

tion for Jewish biblical exegetical and homiletic activity throughout the medieval period (exemplified in the grand oeuvre of the medieval biblical commentator *par excellence,* Rashi), as well as a wellspring of sources for the Byzantine and medieval *payytan* (liturgical poet); the numerous tales and biblical comments were retold, compiled, and recombined in anthologies, compendia, and literary works (some of which came to be considered part and parcel of the rabbinic corpus despite their derivative status). During the Middle Ages, rabbinic tales, biblical retellings, and aphoristic comments were woven into homilies and assembled into compilations of didactic tales, while undergoing transformations through repeated alterations and by the incorporation of foreign elements from the ambient cultures in which the Jews found themselves. To a lesser extent, the rabbinic sources had an effect on medieval philosophy and mystical movements and texts, and the language and idioms of the Talmud and midrashim became incorporated in the popular and scholarly idiom, as well as in the local dialects, of Jews in all lands of the Diaspora. The rabbinic lore was translated and incorporated into popular works written in the vernacular for the unlearned, such as the sixteenth-century Yiddish work *Tzenah u'renah,* and the eighteenth-century Ladino compilation *Me'am lo'ez.* In the modern period, as Jews of many lands became increasingly divorced from the study of the rabbinic sources, many elements of rabbinic lore continued to be transmitted through popular discourses as well as through new literary avenues, such as the tales written by Yiddish writers from the period of the Enlightenment (Haskalah).

Scholarship

Modern scholarly research into the folklore of the rabbinic corpus has focused on two main areas: the compilation and comparative analysis of the wealth of biblical midrashic comment and aggadic supplement (as in Louis Ginzberg's monumental oeuvre, *Legends of the Jews* [1909–1938]; and, with a view to the later development of rabbinic legend, the work of Micha Josef Berdyczewski [called Bin-Gorion], *Mimekor Yisrael: Classical Jewish Folktales* [1939–1945; which originally appeared in German as *Der Born Judas,* 1916–1923]; compare also Haim Nachman Bialik and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky's *Sefer ha'aggadah* [1908–1911]), and the modern analyses of the folkloristic elements in the rabbinic narrative (Eli Yassif, *The Hebrew Folktale: History, Genre, Meaning* [1999]; Galit Hasan-Rokem, *Web of Life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature* [2000]). Individual studies have also explored the origins and development of laws and customs found in the rabbinic corpus, often with a comparison to contemporary non-Jewish custom. Recent studies have treated the rabbinic material along

with the later manifestations of the rabbinic tale in a more general analysis of the development of the themes within Jewish culture ("thematology," developed by Yoav Elstein and Avidov Lipsker ([1995]).

While scholars at the beginning of the twentieth century tended to see the rabbinic corpus, specifically the Haggadah, as a refraction and refinement of a more basic folk element current among the people in rabbinic times (Ginzberg, Bialik), more recent scholarship has viewed the rabbinic corpus as part of general Jewish cultural development, incorporating both folkloric and learned-elitist elements. However, a more critical position has also been posited, in which the rabbinic corpus is seen purely as a literary (although oral) phenomenon of the learned elite, even if it makes use of folkloric elements (Fraenkel 2001).

Paul Mandel

See also: Folk Narratives in Rabbinic Literature; Midrash.

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RACHEL

Rachel (from the Hebrew Rahel, meaning "ewe-lamb") is the daughter of Laban, the younger sister of Leah, Jacob's wife, and the mother of Joseph and Benjamin. Rachel is a symbol of tragic sacrifice in Jewish tradition. Due to her father's cunning, she is forced to wait many years before she can become Jacob's wife. Jacob is forced by Laban to work for seven years before he can marry Leah, Rachel's older sister, and then Jacob must work for another seven years in order to become engaged to Rachel. Rachel watches as her sister and Jacob have several sons; her prayers for a child of her own are answered, and Rachel gives birth to Joseph, and then to Benjamin, but she dies while giving birth. After her tragic death, Rachel's fortitude and faithfulness are honored.

Rachel holds a vital place in Jewish history and folklore. Her importance in Jewish tradition derives from her status as the mother of sons who were models for the tribes of Israel, as reflected in the language of the prayer: "May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel" (Ruth 4:11). Popular Jewish belief that Rachel continues to care for her sons, and even laments and weeps for them at times of ruin (Jer. 31:15), stems from this view of her as a mother of sons.

In the Midrash Aicha Rabbah (opening section), Rachel acknowledges her bitter fate. She laments the years she spent waiting for Jacob and the sacrifices she made to preserve Leah's dignity, and asks for God's mercy; she is answered: "For Rachel I restore Israel to its place."

Scholars argue that stories in Genesis about the birth of Jacob's sons crystallized among tribes that traced their lines of descent to Rachel. This hypothesis can be strengthened in light of the fact that Rachel's character

is emphasized and preferred to Leah's, both in explicit and cryptic references to her.

Rachel and Jacob meet for the first time near a well (Gen. 29:2–13). Before she reaches the well, she is called by name by shepherds and identified as Laban's daughter. In an emotional passage, Jacob kisses Rachel and weeps aloud while he reveals their family connections. Rachel wants to tell her father about Jacob's arrival. Rachel's beauty is described as a causal factor in the special, emotional attraction felt by Jacob; this attraction becomes entangled in relations between the sisters and the competition between them for Jacob. The difference in the daughters' appearances is implied in the negotiations between Laban and Jacob over the terms of work: "I will serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel," says Jacob (Gen. 29:18).

After the act of trickery (conferral of Leah in Rachel's stead), Jacob does not hesitate to work another seven years to win Rachel, who is to receive, after marriage, as her sister does, a maidservant.

Rachel's infertility is another obstacle in Jacob's path and explains why Rachel gave him her maidservant, Bilhah. There are hints of her infertility, such as the fact that she resorts to eating mandrakes in order to become pregnant. The mandrake image also foreshadows Joseph's heroic status in the biblical narrative, since mandrakes frequently figure in ancient folktales about the birth of cultural heroes.

In postbiblical literature, there is a debate as to whether Rachel ate the *madragora afficianrum* or its crushed root. Shevet Yissachar tends to believe the first possibility. Rachel's heart-wrenching request that she be given the roots, and her comment that she will never be blessed with children, recalls a Teutonic ritual in which the roots were used to fashion small statues of fortune tellers, which were called golden statuettes or gallows statuettes.

During the argument between Laban and Jacob, Rachel and Leah support their husband, not their father. They even complain about their father: "Are we not regarded by him as foreigners? For he has sold us, and he has been using up the money given for us" (Gen. 31:15). Out of a sense of having been discriminated against, and a determination to protect the sons' inheritance, Rachel steals her father's household gods (Gen. 31:19). The household gods were considered the most precious asset owned by the family.

In the Midrash, Rachel is said to have stolen the household gods not only as a way to cover Jacob's escape but also to purge her father's home of idols. Yet the curse that Jacob imposed on the head of the anonymous thief caused (according to the Midrash) Rachel's death a short time later, when she gave birth to Benjamin. And Rachel lied to her father when she said that she was unable to act because she was menstruating (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* 39,

Tanḥuma v'yetze 40, *Sefer ha'yashar* 103). But the Bible contains no denunciation of Rachel regarding her claim to the household gods. In the Zohar, Rachel is shown to have caused sorrow to her father by the theft of the gods, despite her good intentions; and so she is punished by not surviving to raise Benjamin.

Two traditions relate to Rachel's burial place. One version holds that she is buried north of Bethlehem, in Judea; the other places her in the land of Benjamin (Binyamin). Genesis (35:16–19) says: "And when they were still some distance from Ephrath . . . Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)."

But the tradition arose in the time of Saul that Rachel was buried in the territory of Benjamin: "When you depart from me today you will meet two men by Rachel's Tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah" (1 Sam. 10:2). The tradition placing Rachel's tomb near Bethlehem is accepted by Christianity and has taken precedence over the one involving Benjamin's tribes.

Jewish collective memory reserves a special place for Rachel, due to two prominent topics in the Book of Genesis: Jacob's deep love for her, as a result of which he was willing to toil seven years, and then another seven years, for Laban; and her desperate yearning for, and love for, her children.

The biblical story accentuates both these aspects, the feminine and the maternal sides, of Rachel's character. Both are engraved in the collective memory, after having been relayed from generation to generation from the Bible's pronounced patriarchal standpoint. Jacob's love for Rachel is described; her love and expectations are neglected. In addition, the story of her infertility and overcoming it (the birth of Joseph and, later, Benjamin) is depicted along patriarchal lines. Rachel is described as being impatient and as lacking faith. She knows that her status depends entirely upon her fertility ("She said to Jacob: 'Give me children, or I shall die!'" [Gen. 30:1]). At the same time, the male viewpoint, which is based on solid faith, is stressed ("Am I in the place of God?" [Gen. 30:2]). Moreover, the biblical narrator hints at an ironic side of Rachel's situation: While she says she will die if she does not have children, her unwillingness to be satisfied with one attests to greed. This greed is viewed, elliptically, as the cause of her premature death.

In Jewish Folklore

In Jewish folktales, which continue to be relayed orally, Rachel's status is complex and sometimes fluctuates: She is sometimes seen as the defender of the Jewish people in times of distress. For example, in one tale, when the Temple is destroyed, the people cry to Elijah the Prophet, calling on him to pray for it. Elijah turns to the patriarchs, who refer the prophet to Rachel.

Rachel asks God to hear her plea, since she was not jealous of her sister, whereas he envies his people and has thus burned the temple. God gives Rachel a sign that the people will return to their land. Since then the people call on Rachel for help (Israel Folktale Archives, IFA 9960–Israel, Sefardi).

Rachel provides care to orphans (IFA 5377–Israel, Ashkenazi) and creates miracles; when Arabs attacked a guard (from the Burla family) at Rachel's Tomb, he hid in the tomb for three days. Every day, he found a jug of milk, which he drank; eventually he heard a voice telling him to return home. Since then, Arabs have not attacked the site, and barren women have gone there to pray (IFA 9940–Israel, Sefardi).

In addition to being sought by childless women (IFA 15.766 Israel–Ashkenazi), Rachel is connected in Jewish folklore to humorous anecdotes (IFA 18.299–Yemen, 16.068–Poland, 18.121–ibid.). Rachel's import in the collective memory inspired a number of modern poets to evoke her image in their works.

Aliza Shenhar

See also: Jacob (Ya'acov); Leah.

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RAMBAM (MAIMONIDES) (1138–1204)

Moses ben Maimon (known to English-speaking audiences as Maimonides and Hebrew-speaking audiences as Rambam) has held a key place in the history of Jewish thought, culture, and folklore. He was a rationalist, a man of Halakhah, a philosopher and leader, a chief authority on religious matters, an active participant in Jewish community institutions, and royal physician.

The *Mishneh Torah,* his fourteen-volume compendium of Jewish law, established him as the leading rabbinical authority of his time and quite possibly of all time. His philosophical masterpiece, the *Guide for the Perplexed,* is a sustained treatment of Jewish thought and practice that seeks to resolve the conflict between religious knowledge and secular. He also wrote medical treatises on a number of diseases and their cures.

The figure of Maimonides and his pivotal place in the history of the Jewish people are what invited so many stories about his ability and greatness. These stories demonstrate no uniformity of time source or compiler, are scattered in written sources, and continue to be recounted even now. The Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa contains 145 stories about Maimonides.

These stories have little to do with the content of his ideological and philosophical teaching. At best, the tales touch on the writing of his books by coloring the act with a mystical hue. For example, according to the stories, Maimonides wrote his *Guide for the Perplexed* after being kissed by the angel Gabriel and the *Mishneh Torah* while in seclusion in the cave of Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai, where he hid from medical colleagues who were jealous of his success. From time to time, Moses visited to check on his progress and assist him (IFA 198, 754).

However, for the most part the stories have no connection to reality or to the character of the historical figure of Maimonides. Interreligious conflict is pivotal to the stories about him, manifested in the professional confrontation in which Maimonides represents a figure of authority who wields practical power and can stand up to kings and enemies. Maimonides acted in the stories and in the reality of the Diaspora, in the framework of a persecuted minority's struggle with foreign rule.

Maimonides is indeed a legendary hero, but one who is specifically Jewish. As such, he deals not with wars or marriage to a princess; rather, he shields his community from the authorities and, owing to his status, has the king's ear.

Through the folktale, the image of Maimonides underwent an unexpected process of sanctification. Many stories glorify his image as a maker of miracles and a magician who possesses a marvelous knowledge. He saves himself from his pursuers and brings salvation to individuals and to the community, accomplishes a miraculous shortening of a journey by uttering the Tetragrammaton (four Hebrew letters for God), sketches a ship on the wall of his prison and disappears into it, burns enemies chasing him at the gates of Fez, turns himself into a lion and tears his foes apart, turns a cow into a slaughtered woman borne on the back of a butcher who had done the Jews harm, and revives a murdered boy and saves the Jewish community from a blood libel (IFA 991, 5663, 6128, 13453, 13951, 13953).

The peak of this process of sanctification is reached in the tale that brings together Rabbi Isaac Luria (Ha'Ari), founder of the Lurianic Kabbalah, and Maimonides and attributes to the latter kabbalistic and mystical wisdom. Although the dominant theme of the stories about him is his mystical wisdom, he also used rationality to solve problems.

But on the whole, in the shaping of the folktale the legend is stronger than the biographical facts. The model of the life of the hero that lies in the cultural consciousness imposes itself on such figures and transfers dominant traditional motifs from one cultural hero to another.

As far as historians know, there were no stories about Maimonides during his lifetime or shortly thereafter. The tales are mostly of later provenance, and any connection between them and his biography is exceedingly tenuous. The multiplicity of tales praising Maimonides attests to their centrality in the spiritual-cultural consciousness of Jewish society through the ages. From the stories developed folk beliefs and customs that continue to function.

Maimonides's grave in Tiberias served as a pilgrimage site. Worshippers went there to pray and make requests in the belief that the holiness of the man passes to his grave. Nonetheless, it bears note that today there is no massive pilgrimage to Maimonides's grave, nor is there a commemoration to mark the anniversary of his death, as is the case at the graves of other saints. Nor are there many stories of healing and miracles taking place at his grave. Today, at least in Israel, the image of Maimonides as scholar, rather than saint, is dominant.

In Cairo, however, faith in the restorative powers of the Rambam Synagogue has not waned. Until the 1950s, the synagogue had special rooms where childless couples could spend a night in the hope of gaining Maimonides's blessing. Some stories that are still told describe how people were cured at the well of Cairo's Rambam Synagogue (IFA 4104). Thus, Maimonides continues his work of healing even after death.

Maimonides's books (mainly his medical treatises) are considered sacred to this day, and folk belief maintains that they have the power to heal their owners and make them financially successful (IFA 9103).

Tamar Alexander

See also: Magic.

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RAPPOPORT, ANGELO SALOMON (1871–1950)

Angelo Salomon Rappoport was a prolific scholar of European history, religion, and philosophy, who culminated his career with the publication of *Folklore of the Jews* (1937). Nine years earlier he produced the three-volume *Myth and Legend of Ancient Israel,* which gained new life in 1966, when eminent folklorist Raphael Patai annotated and introduced a new edition. Relating to his Jewish heritage, Rappoport also produced *Psalms in Life, Legend, and Literature* (1935) and translated many Yiddish, German, French, and Russian texts into English. Rappoport tied his study of Jewish folklore to his interest in Christian legends and theology and showed the interrelations of these traditions in books such as *Mediaeval Legends of Christ* (1934). Rappoport also believed that an appreciation of the richness of Jewish folklore by non-Jews will help combat anti-Semitism. In his folklore studies, Rappoport used ideas from the British "survival" school of cultural evolutionary theory as well as diffusionist thinking relating to the influence of Jewish migration on many cultures to answer questions regarding the origin and spread of Jewish folklore. Following the method of comparing international versions of folklore, he argued against an innate "psychic unity of civilization" by making a case for the distinctiveness of the folklore of the Jews among other cultures, while showing that this lore informed the heritage of many nations.

Early Life and Scholarship

Rappoport was born in Baturin, Ukraine, in 1871. He studied in Russia, Paris, and Berlin, receiving his Ph.D. He settled in England, where he became a naturalized British subject in 1898. He was commissioned by the Alliance Israélite Universelle to study the group following Jewish traditions called the Falashas in what was then Egypt and Abyssinia. Beginning in 1901, he held an academic post in modern languages and literatures at Birkbeck College in London before undertaking the co-editing of the twenty-five-volume *Historians' History of the World.* Although ranging widely in world history, his areas of specialty were modern Russia and France as well as ancient Israel and Egypt. He had other major editorial posts, including work on the *New Gresham Encyclopaedia,*

British Encyclopaedia, Twentieth-Century Russia, and *Illustrated Palestine.* He was active in the Zionist movement and was a delegate to several Zionist congresses.

Contributions to Folklore Studies

Following cultural evolutionary theory, Rappoport held that folklore expresses the "psychology of early man," which persists in contemporary civilization "by force of habit and tradition" and typically loses its original meaning in modern use (1937, 2). He applied this idea in his study of the superstitions of sailors (1928) in which he claimed that modern sailors have retained beliefs dating to pagan antiquity and Christian medievalism but are not aware of their origins. He hypothesized that the beliefs remained to warn sailors of danger or augur success. Rappoport included Jewish legends in this work regarding sea voyages and origin narratives on the sea. The evolutionary idea also appears in *Myth and Legend of Ancient Israel,* in which he claimed that "myths, legends and hero-tales, folktales or *Märchen*" are stories told for amusement or instruction in modern life, whereas they held ritual purposes in ancient times. It is a view that Patai hotly disputed in his introduction to an edition published in 1966. Folklore does not, in Patai's view, degenerate over time, and in the modern world it retains significant social and psychological functions.

In looking for a source of folklore among the Jews, Rappoport traced the development of Jewish folklore to ancient Israel at the time of the end of Jewish national life. This assertion is also disputed by Patai, who took Rappoport to task for excluding biblical sources and not fully appreciating the epochs of oral circulation of lore before it appears in written sources in the fourth century B.C.E. After Rappoport established the golden era of Jewish folklore, he posited its diffusion as Jews moved out of ancient Israel and influenced the lore and literature of other countries where they settled. He took special pains to show the Jewish influence upon Christian legends and the influence of rabbinic myths and legends on Muslim literature. As a result of this thesis that Jews contributed their lore to host countries as they moved, he had to deal with the evolutionary implication that they therefore would lose their distinctiveness in the process. Rappoport went against the cultural evolutionary claims of Victorian anthropologists such as John Sterling Kingsley that Jews represented a "backward race" because of their lack of development by pointing out modern ethical values developed by Jews. The most important one, Rappoport claimed, is their belief in one God. In an apparent answer to critics and anti-Semites who decried the superstitious character of Jews, Rappoport blamed "foreign influence

since the Middle Ages . . . which in spite of ghetto walls penetrated into the Jewish communities" (1937, 4).

Rappoport extolled the pure strains of Jewish folklore in ancient Israel and their influence on great literature as well as on the lore of modern civilization while bemoaning the anti-modernism that could be discerned from the increasing "store of popular beliefs which that conservative race had been dragging along on its shoulders for centuries." He angrily bemoaned instances when "Slavonic and Teutonic pagan superstitions" force their way into "the Folklore of the Jews and are now being styled Jewish survivals of primitive Judaism" (1937, 4). Thus Rappoport's Zionist sentiment may be apparent before the establishment of the modern State of Israel when he stated in the introduction to *Folklore of the Jews,* "The Jews have been a wandering race and—alas—are still condemned to wander from clime to clime and from country to country, in spite of the trumpet-call of a return to their own which has resounded in recent times."

In his works, Rappoport resisted the evolutionary temptation to view New Testament Christianity as a replacement for the older Judaism. He used a relativistic argument to show their differences rather than view them in a single developmental line. Indeed, he pointed out the pagan sources of Christian belief, which distinguish Judaism from Christianity. Later scholars such as Patai were skeptical of this generalization. Their criticisms represent late twentieth-century folkloric concerns for ascertaining the function and performance of folklore in social and historical context rather than assuming that ancient uses of lore dictated later meanings.

Other contrasts can be made between Rappoport's survivalist approach to a common folklore of the Jews and the nationalistic belief in a Jewish cultural unity espoused by Nathan Ausubel or the functionalism of Jewish folklore in Judaism presented by Joshua Trachtenberg in *Jewish Magic and Superstition* (1939) around the same time that *Folklore of the Jews* appeared. The irony of Rappoport's work is that while applying evolutionary theory to Jewish folklore, he helped undermine its basic doctrines and opened inquiry into the structure, function, and performance of heavy influence of the folklore of the Jews on modern civilization.

Final Years

The outbreak of World War II disrupted Rappoport's prolific writings on history and culture. Working in France as the Nazis occupied the country in 1940, he joined the French resistance movement to produce anti-Nazi literature, but the Gestapo arrested him in December 1940. Weakened from prolonged imprisonment, Rappoport did not resume his scholarship after liberation. He spent the last years of his life in Paris before dying on June 2, 1950.

Simon J. Bronner

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REBEKAH

Rebekah (Heb. Rivka; the root meaning "cart" or "soft and pliant") is the daughter of Bethuel (Gen. 24:15), the sister of Laban (Gen. 24:29), the wife of Isaac (Gen. 24:67), and Abraham's niece (Gen. 24:15). She is described in the Bible as an ideal woman. "The maiden was very fair to look upon," Genesis states (Gen. 24:16) and alludes to her kind-heartedness and hospitable bearing (Gen. 24:18–19, 25). Scholars have noted that the story that relates how she became Isaac's wife (Gen. 24) underscores the vital importance of marriage within the family unit.

Folklore traditions before the Bible feature courting-engagement motifs near wells. In them, the future groom (or his representative) travels to a foreign land, which is apparently a metaphor symbolizing the emotional journey he will make in relations with his future bride. The man meets a woman or women around the well, which is a feminine symbol of fertility. Drawing water from the well symbolizes male-female relations, as well as host-guest contact. After the newcomer's arrival is known, he is invited to the woman's house until terms of the betrothal are arranged.

The most elaborate presentation of this motif arises in the meeting between Rebekah and Abraham's servant (Gen. 24:10–61), yet the well theme can also be found in a scene between Jacob and Rachel (Gen. 29: 1–20) and Moses and Zipporah (Exod. 2:15–21).

The archetypal well scene between Rebekah and Abraham's servant features many of the key components of the oral story-telling tradition. First there is a trio—three men, two of them elderly and one young man—who understand that a mate must be found for the young man (Isaac) before his mother, Sarah, passes away. Also, the repetition of various water-drinking and washing rituals in this passage is consistent with oral story traditions. However, the scene is atypical in that it is Rebekah, and not the newcomer male, who draws water from the well; and she does so not for her intended fiancé but, rather, for his delegate. The groom, who is absent during the scene, is indeed the most passive of the patriarchs. In contrast, Rebekah, the designated fiancée, is distinctive for her intense, vigorous, and purposeful character. In four short passages (Gen. 24:16, 18–20) she is credited with eleven actions (she fills the jar, lets down the jar, gives a drink, draws water for camels, and so on). She effectively dominates the scene of her engagement.

The scene describing Rebekah's conferral to Isaac as a wife in the presence of Abraham's emissary makes prominent mention of her brother Laban and her mother. Missing, however, is her father Bethuel. Traditional commentators speculated that in local custom, the father ended his daughter's virginity before her betrothal. On this theory, after giving his consent to Rebekah's engagement to Isaac, Bethuel would have created a scandal, had he not died suddenly. Some wrote that Bethuel, as king of Haran, would have insisted on his right "to the first night" with every bride. When Rebekah reached the age of marriage, all rulers of the land gathered together and decided that if Bethuel did not act toward his daughter as the rulers behaved toward their own daughters, they planned to slay both father and daughter (*Masechet Sofrim* 21, 9; *Masekhet Nida* 5:4, *Yalqut Bereshit* 109).

The Midrash relates that Isaac was on his way home from heaven when a convoy arrived from Hebron. Rebekah saw him walking alongside it and was stunned; she fell off a camel and onto a fallen tree. Abraham counseled Isaac to verify whether she was a virgin, after having made such a long journey with his servant Eliezer. Isaac discovered that she was not a virgin, but Rebekah insisted that her state resulted from her fall upon the tree. She even showed Isaac the blood of her deflowering upon the tree, which had been watched by birds (*Yalqut Bereshit* 109, *Midr. Hagadol Bereshit* 366, 369–379; *Midr. Aggadah Bereshit* 59–60; *Hadar Zkenim* 9–11).

Genesis 26 describes Isaac's relations with Abimelech, king of the Philistines, and the danger posed to Rebekah before she disguises herself as her husband's brother. This story resembles that of Sarah and the Egyptian pharaoh, and Sarah and Abimelech. Isaac relates to Rebekah as though she were his "sister," as happened in the case of Abraham and Sarah in the presence of the same king, Abimelech, in the same location. The reason: Isaac worries that people in the area will take note of Rebekah's beauty. Abimelech looks out a window and sees "Isaac caressing his wife Rebekah" (Gen. 26:8). The king realizes he has been fooled and complains to Isaac: "What is this you have done to us? One of the men might well have slept with your wife, and you would have brought guilt upon us" (Gen. 26:10).

As in the experiences of Sarah and Rachel, Rebekah is described as infertile for a prolonged period. After twenty years of marriage she is blessed by God (Gen. 25:21) and gives birth to twins (Gen. 25:26). Like the other two women, she gives birth only to sons.

Legends hold that during her pregnancy, while Rebekah was passing by a Canaanite religious site, Esau tried to leave her womb. When she passed by a place of worship of true believers of God, Jacob tried to leave the womb. During birth, Esau ripped her womb, and so Rebekah was no longer able to have children (*Ber. Rab.* 110; *Seder Eliyahu Zuta* 26–27; *Tanḥuma ki tetze* 4). These tales continue to be told orally by Jews (see, e.g., Israel Folktale Archives [IFA 18.976 Poland]).

The image of conflict in the womb between sons also reoccurs. In this connection, there is the question of why in the Torah it is written: "The children struggled together within her" (Gen. 25:22). It has been said that Jacob studied all of the Torah while still in his mother's womb. But if he was so virtuous, why did he "struggle"? One answer is that the Torah is indeed good for Jacob, but so long as Esau is by his side it has no beneficial effect (IFA 20.054 Israel, Ashkenazi).

Rebekah sides with her preferred son, Jacob, during his struggle with his twin brother after they reach maturity. She takes the initiative, urges Jacob to cunningly seize the father's blessing from Esau; thus, the mother plays an active part in deceiving the blind father, Jacob (Gen. 27:8–17). She also slyly helps Jacob flee to Haran, to escape Esau's wrath.

The Bible says nothing of Rebekah's death. In contrast, the death of Deborah, Rebekah's nurse, who arrived with her from Haran, is described (Gen. 35:8). According to Genesis 49:31, Rebekah is buried in the Cave of the Patriarchs (Machpelah).

Commentators lavishly praise Rebekah, particularly her righteousness. One source refers to her wondrous effects on a spring and on the women who visited it (*Ber. Rab.* 60:6). Isaac also acknowledges her righteousness: "All the days when Sarah was alive, a cloud graced her tent, and its doors were open to prosperity. . . . When she died, that ended; but when Rebekah arrived, everything returned (*Ber. Rab.* 60:16).

Aliza Shenhar

See also: Isaac.

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RESHUMOT

The periodical *Reshumot* (Chronicles) was established to collect and study Jewish folklore and folklife. The periodical experienced two life cycles. It was founded in 1918 in Odessa by Alter Druyanow, who was joined by Haim Nachman Bialik and Yeshoshua Ḥone Ravnitzky. The title pages of volumes 1–4 stated that the periodical was edited by Druyanow with the participation of Ravnitzky and Bialik. Only the first volume was published in Odessa, by the publisher Moriah; it was reprinted in Tel Aviv by Dvir. Five more volumes were published between 1918 and 1930 by Dvir. In the first life cycle, six volumes of *Reshumot* appeared. Druyanow retired from the journal's editorial board after the publication of volume 4. Volumes 5 and 6 were edited by Bialik and Ravnitzky.

The goal of *Reshumot* was clearly stated in the editors' preface to volume 1: It was to be an organ for research and study of the life of the Jewish people and its folklore and for the collection and assembly of such materials. The editors thereby hoped to involve the general public, from whom was required "not excessive expertise and no particular literary talent, but a measure of understanding of the subject, some warmth towards it, and a little good-will."

The editors appealed to anyone who held the people and its culture close to their hearts to send materials to *Reshumot.* The sentences opening volume 1 describe the trials and tribulations of publication and express the editors' commitment to carry on. The appeal to readers is emotional, ending with the declaration: "We must make haste to deliver from the teeth of annihilation everything that can be saved." The periodical was planned to contain six sections: Ways of Life, Faith and Religion, Language and Literature, Art and Poetry, Historic Documents, and Miscellaneous. Each section had its own subdivisions. For example, Ways of Life included accounts of remote communities, famous people, livelihood and crafts of Jews, special foods, and dress. The details of the sections and the areas of interest were printed at the beginning of every volume of *Reshumot.*

The structure of the volumes of this first series was consistent, including features on the Diaspora, memoirs, customs, texts, and letters. The slight differences arose from the nature of the subject-matter that was collected and assembled. Volume 3 is exceptional: It is devoted

to the decimation of the Jews of Russia, principally Ukraine. Druyanow dedicated this volume to Bialik on his fiftieth birthday.

The second cycle of *Reshumot* (*Reshumot–New Series*) appeared from 1945 to 1953. The editors were Yom-Tov Lewinsky and Dov Shtok (Sadan), except for the sixth and final volume, which was edited by Lewinsky and Yoḥanan Tversky. The new series too was published by Dvir.

Influenced by their predecessors, the editors of the new series continued the work of collection, fully aware of the central place of folklore and ethnography in Jewish culture. In his Preface to volume 1 of the new series, "On the Renewal of *Reshumot*," Shtok praises the three editors of the first series. Out of commitment to the founding trio and in recognition of the magnitude of the enterprise, he expresses his sense of "veneration of grandeur" in light of the new beginning of publication of the journal.

Shtok resolved that the new series, unlike the first one, would center on only three areas—memoirs, ethnography, and folklore—and would not continue to include subjects unrelated to these three domains, which by then had found their own forum.

The sections covered in the new series were: "chronicles of the remnant of Jewish communities at the time of the destruction of the European Exile; monographs of personalities and types in the life of various communities and groups; ethnography, customs and communities, folk proverbs and sayings of different tribes, in the various Jewish languages and in different dialects, folk poems and melodies, collections of tales that may shed light on the nooks and crannies of the life of the people or of persons that were an expression of the life and spirit of the people; collection of ethnographies and folklore scattered in books and published collections, bibliography of what has been published in the field of this forum, chronicles," as stated in the opening sentence of the first issue in the new series.

The practical structure of the volumes consisted of generally permanent sections, according to the plan devised by Shtok. Among others, the section headings were: "From the Turmoil" (accounts of the destruction of communities), "Characters and Recollections," "Passages on Way of Life," "Documents and Notebooks," "Folk Proverbs," and "Folksongs."

Although Dov Shtok resolved that the focal point of the periodical was to be the Diaspora, "the continued extension of the threads of folklore" through "the existence and the life of the Settlement" in the Land of Israel would also be reflected in the new series. *Reshumot* can be seen to a large extent as the realization of Bialik's project for cultural revival in Eretz Israel, a compilation program (*Tokhnit Ha'Kinus*) to collect and preserve the cultural production of past generations in Hebrew translation. The compilation project was also to include folklore. *Reshumot,* as a periodical dedicated to folklore and published in Hebrew, was the expression of Zionist folklorists to collect and publish folklore materials in Hebrew for the future generations.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Bialik, Haim Nachman; Druyanow, Alter; Lewinski, Yom-Tov; Sadan, Dov.

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RESURRECTION

See: Afterlife; Angel of Death

RIDDLES

Riddles are one of the oldest genres in Jewish folklore, beginning with the Bible. The riddle is a gnomic, playful genre, consisting of a witty question (e.g., in the form of an image) and a suitable solution. In a true riddle, the clues for the solution are contained within the question itself, whereas the solution in "neck riddles" relies on extratextual information, to which the solver has no initial access. Riddling games involve two parties—one that poses the question, and the other that solves it.

Riddles in the Bible

Wisdom literature in the Bible (Psalms, Proverbs) may contain remnants of riddles (*ḥidot*), and riddles are also mentioned in relation to parables (Habakkuk 2:6) and divine revelation (Num. 12:8). However, the riddle as an explicit genre appears only twice in the biblical texts.

Samson, at the wedding banquet, presents the guests with a neck riddle (i.e., a riddle to which only the person posing the riddle knows the answer since it is based on his/her private experience; such riddles are typical of stories in which solving a riddle is a matter of life and death). "Out of the eater came something to eat, out of the strong came something sweet" (Judg. 14:14). And it is to his persistent wife that Samson finally divulges the answer "What is sweeter than honey, and what is stronger than a lion?" (ibid., 18). Here, the riddle plays a key role in the unfolding of the plot, as do the riddles that are mentioned as the core of the meeting between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (1 Kgs. 10:1–13).

In both instances, the riddle figures in an encounter in which cultural and sexual boundaries are at stake:

In the Samson tale, it is clearly a matrimonial setting whereas the erotic character of the meeting between Solomon and the foreign queen who comes to "test him with riddles" is only alluded to.

Riddles in Midrash

In the case of the riddles of the queen of Sheba, Scripture does not mention the content of the riddles themselves. The Midrash takes it upon itself to fill in the scriptural gaps by specifying the riddles and by intensifying the erotic aspect of the encounter. The second Aramaic translation to the Book of Esther (ch. 3) lists three of the riddles, and the Midrash on Proverbs (1:1) contains an elaborate riddling tale consisting of four consecutive riddles. In the first riddle, the queen asks: "Seven exit and nine enter, two pour and one drinks," to which the king replies: "Surely, seven days of menstruation exit and nine months of pregnancy enter, two breasts pour and the baby drinks." The riddling tale then progresses from issues pertaining to the identity of the fetus/baby to sexual and gendered identities culminating in the national identity when Solomon distinguishes between Israelites and gentiles.

Eleven riddles appear in an earlier midrashic work (*Lam. Rab.* 1) prompted by the first verse in Lamentations, "How does the city sit solitary, that was full of people (*rabbati am*). . . . She that was great among the nations (*rabbati bagoyim*)." The repetition of the word *rabbati* is understood by the rabbis to refer to the wisdom of the Jerusalemites vis-à-vis the Athenians. This wisdom is in turn expressed in the series of riddles, or riddle-related anecdotes, in which the superiority of the now desolate people is played out.

In the first riddling tale, a Jerusalemite arrives in Athens in order to claim an inheritance that his father had entrusted to a local man. After pulling off some tricks, the son succeeds in locating that person and after dishing out the five young birds that were served for dinner in an enigmatic manner—which he explains—he is allowed to return home with his father's belongings. The second tale tells of four men of Jerusalem who went to Athens and stayed with a certain man who, having heard of the great wisdom of the Jerusalemites, decides to eavesdrop while the men are in their room. The first man is not deceived and recognizes that the bed that he was given is damaged; the second notes that the meat they had eaten tasted like dog meat; the third that the wine they had drunk had the taste of a grave. The fourth man exclaims: "Is it any wonder? The man himself, the proprietor, is not the son of his father." Upon hearing this, the host investigates their assertions, only to learn that they were indeed right on all counts. Thus this story establishes the superiority of the Jerusalemites while casting doubt on the very premise of the Athenian's identity.

Humor, playfulness, and wit—coupled with morbid themes—characterize the string of eleven tales, rendering them an especially powerful cultural tool in the face of the puzzling theological and political crisis following the destruction of the Second Temple. It is in the riddle that calls for a (temporary) mixing of categories, for a chaotic disruption of a structured universe, with its appeasing and fleeting solution, that the sense of loss can both be expressed and as if overcome. And it is by telling these riddles that the fantasized world where the historically vanquished Jews overshadow their Hellenistic oppressors comes into being.

Riddles in Later Periods

An entirely different cultural and intellectual milieu gave rise to emblem riddles (named after the enigmatic picture to which they refer), a subgenre of the literary riddle that enjoyed great popularity in Italy and the Netherlands of the seventeenth century. Serving at different festivities, this literary genre—albeit distinct from "folk" riddles—bears similarities to the latter, namely in its social function in riddling contests at weddings.

Modern Hebrew folktales contain numerous riddling-tales with varying degrees of culturally specific markers. One such tale is of Moroccan origin, about the medieval Torah commentator Abraham ibn Ezra, who, disguised as a bishop, provides the king with satisfactory answers to the questions he poses. To the king's second question "How much am I worth?" he answers "ten pounds," explaining that it is more than he had paid for a crucifix. After disclosing his true identity—as an answer to the third question—Abraham ibn Ezra not only earns a handsome reward but also the king's esteem for the greater Jewish community (an oicotype of AT 922 *The Shepherd Substituting for the Priest Answers the King's Questions*).

Dina Stein

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ROMANIA, JEWS OF

The Jewish population in Romania according to the 1930 census was 759,000. In 1940, Romania was forced to yield northern Transylvania, where 150,000 Jews lived, to Hungary. As of 2010, there were between 7,000 and 8,000 Jews living in Romania; the majority of Jews of Romanian descent (approximately 400,000) live in Israel. Thus, the Jewish folk traditions of Romania are preserved mostly among the elderly immigrants to Israel, where those traditions underwent changes in their new context.

Origin of the Romanian Jews

The majority of the Romanian Jews were part of the community of East European Ashkenazim. But unlike the rest of Eastern Europe, Romania was under Ottoman rule until the 1870s. In addition, the southern Romanian province of Muntenia was home not only to Ashkenazi Jews but to a small community of Sephardim (descendants of Jews expelled earlier from Spain and Portugal).

Romanian Jews, as a distinct community, emerged relatively recently, in line with the history of Romania as a political entity. Muntenia (or Walachia, a denomination sometimes applied to both Romanian duchies) and Moldavia, which had been separate countries, were united as one state in 1859. After World War I, other regions—Transylvania, Bukovina, and Bessarabia, which had a population that was mainly Romanian—joined them to become part of what historians call "Greater Romania." Of these, Moldavia was the great reservoir of Romanian-Jewish folk traditions.

Jews began to settle in the Romanian duchies in the sixteenth century, most of them coming from Poland and Russia; Muntenia became home to Sephardic Jews migrating from the Ottoman Empire and Ashkenazi Jews from the outskirts of Hungary as well as from Poland and Russia via the neighboring countries, especially the then-independent Moldavia. Successive waves of religiously observant settlers from Poland and Russia, who had come at the request of Moldavian landowners and princes who wanted to increase the number of taxpayers and thereby improve the economic fortunes of the area, led to a strengthening in religious faith among Moldavian Jews during the eighteenth century and the first decades of the nineteenth century. Each

group of these immigrants, called "Hrisoveliţi" Jews, settled on the basis of a contract called a *hrisov*, which stipulated the right of the newcomers to build a house of prayer, a ritual bath (*mikveh*), and a cemetery for the community.

Not only did the newcomers initiate and develop commercial activity in certain towns, but they helped spur urbanization. They opened markets on the land they rented from boyars (upper nobility), and those markets soon attracted people from surrounding areas, turning villages into small towns. For more than a century, such towns, the local version of the East European shtetl, developed a dense Jewish population, becoming a stronghold of *Yiddishkeit*. The Jewish population of Moldavia increased suddenly during the first half of the nineteenth century, mainly due to those fleeing Russia not only to escape forced conscription into the tsarist army but also to improve their economic circumstances. Among the materials held by the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA 8915) is a tale of the humble odyssey of a five-year-old boy during the reign of Nicholas I, when even small Jewish children were taken by force into the army, in order to estrange them from their people and creed. Most of these immigrants were poor, and many arrived in Moldavia crossing the border illegally.

By contrast, such small towns with a dense Jewish population did not exist in Muntenia. Jews there were integrated into the surrounding non-Jewish population. In large towns, they lived near the synagogues, but amid the secular mentality of the city.

The Influence of Hasidism

The Hasidic movement began in Eastern Europe as a Jewish sect focused around Israel ben Eliezer, called the Ba'al Shem Tov (1700–1760). Romanian Jews and non-Jews alike believe that he lived in northern Romania, in Maramureş, though there are some who believe it was Podolia. The present oral tradition of Romanian Jews retains few legends traceable to the first stage of Hasidism. One of these legends points to the period of seclusion of the founder of Hasidism in the Carpathian mountains. A peasant who had followed the Ba'al Shem Tov approaches him and says:

> "I know you are a man sent by God. I pray you, bless me."
> "What blessing do you want me to bestow on you?"
> "I would like to have children." . . .
> "I'll grant your request."

In another legend, relevant for what may be called the ideology of early Hasidism, the Ba'al Shem Tov displays the faculty of floating on water. This miraculous faculty is bestowed by God not only on the Ba'al Shem Tov but

Talmud Torah school in Siget-Maramureş, Romania, ca. 1930. *(YIVO Institute, New York)*

also on an ignorant Jew (who cannot even pronounce correctly the creed of Judaism, the "Shema") as a reward for his unadulterated faith. Both of them, the Ba'al Shem Tov and the ignoramus, comfortably seated on pieces of cloth, slide on the surface of a river, as if they were being carried in boats. This legend is part of a series of legends expressing the hostility of the poor and half-literate Jews toward the oligarchy of the rich and the rabbis.

In its first stage, the movement opposed rabbinic authority in many ways; singing and dancing, disapproved by rabbis, were encouraged by early Hasidism and were regarded as a means of worshipping God. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the legends about the Ba'al Shem Tov were gradually replaced by narratives corresponding to a radical shift in Hasidism. From a persecuted sect, Hasidism had turned into a widespread current, shaping the pattern of community life and the style of leadership in large segments of East European Jewry. The movement branched into local centers, each center having its own leader, the *tzaddik*, who in time founded a dynasty, maintained a large household (a so-called court), and exerted his influence over a geographic area. The fact that, in the first half of the nineteenth century, part of the Moldavian-Jewish community came under the sway of Rabbi Yisruel fun Rizhyn (Russia) is substantiated by testimony included in the diary of two missionaries.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the descendants of Rabbi Yisruel, known by the family name Friedman, founded Hasidic courts in Moldavia. Among these courts, those of Stefăneşti and Buhuşi attracted not only crowds of Moldavian Jews but also less observant Ashkenazi Jews from Muntenia. Even a significant number of non-Jewish Romanians were among the visitors to the Stefăneşti and Buhuşi courts. The legends about the

Stefăneşti and Buhuşi courts relate to what was called Hasidic hagiography, produced during the dynastic stage of the movement. Some Moldavian-Jewish legends acquired local color by referring to historic events and their echoes among the surrounding Jewish and non-Jewish population, for example, the 1877 War of Independence against the Turks or the two world wars. The dignified and lenient approach of the Friedmans to their visitors explains in part why in Romania Hasidism remained influential beyond 1870, the year Simon Dubnow considers the beginning of the decline of tzaddikism.

The Emergence of Romanian Jewry

In the first half of the nineteenth century, while in Muntenia the acculturation of the Jews was well advanced, in Moldavia only the Jews who had immigrated long since and those who had settled on the basis of a contract blended into the local population. By contrast, those who had come more recently from Russia knew little Romanian and remained more culturally distinct. The first mark of acculturation was that the Yiddish spoken in both Romanian duchies replaces certain words of German or Slavic origin with Romanian words. After the two Romanian duchies joined in 1859, especially toward the end of the century, Jews in Moldavia increasingly migrated to Muntenia and melted into the Ashkenazi Jewish community there, adopted its ways of thinking, became fluent in Romanian, and became acculturated, because of contact with their co-religionists and the surrounding non-Jewish townspeople. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the variegated

Jewish community of both duchies began to merge into a relatively distinct Romanian Jewish community.

Soon this incipient community produced a distinguished elite. Some of these intellectuals devoted their energies to the study of the history and traditions of Romanian Jews and to the fight for their emancipation, while scholars like Moses Gaster and L. Şăineanu, during their stay in Romania, contributed to Jewish studies but mainly to Romanian philology and folklore. Polish and Lithuanian Jews looked on Romanian Jews as a peripheral community, with no pedigree and no long-standing centers of Jewish studies. With certain exceptions, until the final decades of the nineteenth century, Romanian Jews could not claim a noticeable contribution to scholarly Judaism. Their praiseworthy qualities lay elsewhere.

Romanian Jews had a taste for music and art that became well developed. Through their professions (innkeepers, grain and wine merchants, etc.), Moldavian Jews became well acquainted with the music of the peasantry. Romanian folk music inspired the type of Yiddish song called *"vulehel"* and left an imprint on the Hasidic repertoire that incorporated motifs of the Romanian *doina*. Romanian Jews also contributed to the development of Yiddish folk genres and Yiddish literature, frowned on as secular and impious by religious circles in many East European Jewish communities (e.g., Benjamin Wolf Ehrenkrantz's parodies of rabbis). Playwright Abraham Goldfaden (1840–1908) was received with enthusiasm by Romanian Jews, prompting him to expand his theatrical sketches into full-length comedies and in 1876 to found, in Iaşi (Jassy), the first Yiddish theater. Although Romanian Jews increasingly expressed themselves in Romanian, they continued to use Yiddish. A revival of Yiddish literature took place in Iaşi, on the eve of World War I and especially between the two world wars (when Bessarabia and Bukovina were reintegrated into Greater Romania).

Romanian Jews During World War II

Embittered by their forced retreat from Bessarabia and Bukovina (annexed by the Soviet Union in the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact) and instigated by rumors that the Jews were working hand in glove with the Soviet invasion force, Romanians took their revenge on their Jews and allied with the Nazis. The few Jews serving in the Romanian army were shot in the summer of 1940 at Dorohoi in Moldavia. These killings were the prelude to two cruel barbaric crimes against the Jews. At Iaşi, on June 29, 1941, a pogrom was perpetrated in the court (yard) of the police by Romanians and Germans, in which some 8,000 were killed initially; on July 2, 1941 in Iaşi, thousands of Jews were locked by the Ro-

manians in the death trains, in which most of them died of thirst, starvation, and suffocation. The total number of victims in Iaşi has been variously estimated by the Romanian government and the Jewish community, the latter of which believes the toll was some 15,000. The few survivors were saved by a courageous Romanian woman, Viorica Agarici, chair of the local Red Cross, who became a legendary character for Moldavian Jews. At Bucharest on January 21–23, 1941, a densely populated Jewish district was plundered and devastated. The synagogue was set on fire, and 120 Jews were tortured and killed by the Iron Guard, a fascist terrorist organization. In 1941 began the deportation of categories of Jews from different towns and certain regions to Transnistria. It is difficult to estimate exactly how many Romanian Jews were killed at Transnistria.

In Transnistria proper, the deaths of Jews were mainly caused by typhus, cold, and hunger. Despite the miserable conditions of life imposed upon them, more than anything the Romanian Jews from Transnistria feared being sent to the area on the other side of the Bug river, which was under Nazi administration, where deportees were immediately killed. At least some of the Romanian deportees survived and returned to Romania. In Romania, more than half the Jews survived World War II.

Monica Bratulescu

See also: Languages, Jewish.

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ROSH ḤODESH

See: Month

ROSH HA'SHANA

Rosh Ha'Shana (ראש השנה, New Year) is the name of the festival that celebrates the Jewish New Year and a tractate in the Mishnah dealing with this festival. In biblical times, Rosh Ha'Shana was observed for only one day, but in modern times it is observed for two days, both in the Diaspora and in the Land of Israel. However, in some Reform congregations only one day is observed.

It is a day of prayer, supplication, and atonement, and together with Yom Kippur is celebrated by the vast majority of Jews. Even secular Jews are encouraged to participate in some kind of ritual service.

According to the Midrash Rosh Ha'Shana 1:1, four days of the year are regarded as New Year's days for different purposes. The first of the month of Nisan marks the New Year's days for dating the reigns of Jewish kings and the order of the months for religious purposes. In the time of the Temple, the first of Elul was the New Year for cattle tithes, for cattle born in the preceding year. The first of Tishrei is the New Year for the civil calendar, and for the sabbatical and jubilee years. The fifteenth of Shevat (or, according to the Beit Shammai school of thought, the first of Shevat) is the New Year for trees (the holiday is called Tu Be'Shevat, Tu being Hebrew for "fifteen"). However of these four dates, only the first of Tishrei is mentioned in the Bible as a festival: "A Sabbath, a memorial of the sounding of the shofar" (Lev. 23:23–24) and "A day of sounding the shofar" (Num. 29:1–6), although no mention is made of its being a New Year's day. It is also the only one celebrated as a religious festival, since rabbinical tradition has it that on that day "All who have entered into the world pass before Him [in judgment] like a flock of sheep (or a troop of soldiers sneak *numeron*)."

The most distinctive feature of the festival is the sounding of the shofar (ram's horn) during the *musaf* service. Symbolically, it serves to awaken the slumbering to ameliorate their ways (Maimonides, Teshuvah 3.4). The form of the ram's horn is bent to indicate to humans that they should bend their will to that of God (*b. Rosh Ha'Shana* 16a). It is held in the right hand and blown out of the right side of the mouth, as Gideon's rams' horns were held by his soldiers in their right hand in their battle against the Midianites (Judg. 7:20). Hence, the shofar also symbolizes a weapon used to combat the forces of evil. And, indeed, many strategies were utilized to neutralize Satan, who always wishes to sabotage the blowing of the shofar. It is for this reason that the shofar is blown in two sets of soundings, one when the congregation may be seated (*Tekiyot de'meyushav*) before *musaf*, which serve only to confuse Satan (*Levalbel et hasatan*) because they are not the real sounding, followed later by those during the *musaf* service, when the congregation stands (*Tekiyot de'me'umad*).

During this service three groups of prayers are included, each consisting of ten scriptural verses selected from the three sections of the Bible, each introduced with a passage compiled by Rav in the early third century C.E. The first, Malchuyot, describes the sovereignty of God. The second, Zichronot, speaks of God's remembering all His creatures and their deeds, good or otherwise, and the third, Shofarot, relates to the sounding of the shofar. After each section the shofar is sounded according to a fixed pattern (varying slightly according to the different rites). In all, 100 "soundings" (*kolot*) occur throughout the service.

In medieval times, the person who blew the shofar (*ba'al tekiyah*), according to Ashkenazi illuminated manuscripts, would place one foot upon a small footstall as he did so. This has been interpreted by scholars variously as a means of protecting him from the machination of Satan or as a way to cause the sounds to ascend the throne of glory more quickly.

In the Ashkenazi rite, worshippers wear white during the service as a symbol of the purity that they wish to attain. Additional customs are connected with this festival, such as eating apples dipped in honey on the first night, while a prayer is recited for a good and sweet year. In addition, the head of a sheep was placed on the table to be eaten, so that "we be as a head and not a tail" (*Shulḥan arukh*, *Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 583:2). Of special note is a custom that takes place in the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Ha'Shana (or, on the second, if the first falls on a Sabbath). In this custom, called Tashlikh, people go down to a river, seashore, or well, and while reciting a series of biblical verses, including Micah 7:19, "He will again have compassion upon us; He will subdue our iniquities; and you will cast all their sins in the depth of the sea," empty out their pockets, casting crumbs—

symbolizing sins—into the water. The custom in its present form first appears in the late Middle Ages in Germany, but has its origin in the Geonic period, and most likely has pagan antecedents. But mainly these were days of self-examination in preparation for the divine judgment of all mankind, for this day marks the beginning of the ten days of repentance culminating in Yom Kippur.

Daniel Sperber

See also: Food and Foodways; New Year Cards; Shofar.

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RUSSIA, JEWS OF

The earliest Jewish settlements in Russia were in the region of the Caucasus Mountains and date as far back as 721 B.C.E. During the first half of the eighth century, the powerful Khazar kingdom adopted Judaism as its state religion. Jews have lived in Kiev and other areas of contemporary Ukraine since the ninth century. When the Lithuanians gained control over western areas of Russia in the fourteenth century, Jews were given economic privileges. Documentary evidence of the presence of Jews in Muscovite Russia is first found in the chronicles of 1471. During the 1470s, a religious sect known as "Judaizers" gained popularity among peasants in the Novgorod region. Some scholars suggest that the sect was called "Judaizers" in order to scare off potential members. Others suppose that the Jews had an influence on the sect doctrine. Repressions and restrictions against Jews followed. For example, Tsar Ivan IV ("the Terrible") ordered the drowning of all Jews who did not convert to Christianity in the sixteenth century. In 1648, anti-Jewish riots led by Bogdan Chmielnicki had a devastating effect on the Ukrainian-Jewish community. The memory of the Chmielnicki massacre remained an important part of Yiddish folk songs, legends, and stories.

The largest Jewish population came to live under the rule of the Russian Empire in the late eighteenth century, when partitions of Poland in 1772, 1793, and 1795 left areas of dense Jewish population under Russian jurisdiction. It is estimated that by the end of the eighteenth century, the Russian-Jewish population totaled around 1 million. In order to contain and manage the Jewish population, Tsarina Catherine II introduced the "Pale of Settlement," where the Jews were allowed to live in 1791. The borders of the Pale expanded in 1795 with the last partition of Poland and then were revised slightly several times in the nineteenth century. The majority of Russian Jews lived in the Pale at the outset of World War I, when it was abolished de facto, and then in 1917 it was abolished de jure by the provisional government.

During the nineteenth century, the Jewish population experienced unprecedented growth. In 1850, the Jews numbered over 2,350,000 and reached 5 million at the close of the nineteenth century. The economic position of Jews in the Pale was complicated. Jews were involved in industry, alcohol sales, and money-lending. In the 1860s, Jews were active in the emerging financial industry of the Russian Empire. Educational quotas enabled members of the Jewish bourgeoisie to enter Russian institutions of higher education and to gradually obtain permits to settle outside the Pale of Settlement. It is estimated that by the end of the nineteenth century, approximately 100,000 Jews lived in St. Petersburg and Moscow, Russia's largest cities.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, Russia annexed parts of contemporary Azerbaijan, Dagestan, and Chechnya, which were home to Mountain Jews, a non-Ashkenazi Jewish group. Their vernacular was Judeo-Tat, but they also had some knowledge of Hebrew, used in reading holy texts and religious services. By the mid-twentieth century, they numbered around 70,000. Gradually, Russian replaced Judeo-Tat in daily use. The most important literary heritage of the Mountain Jews is the national epic in Judeo-Tat, the *Shiraha* (the name probably is derived from the Hebrew *shirah* [poem]), which abounds in biblical associations and figures. No systematic work on collecting folklore among Mountain Jews was done until the late twentieth century.

Tsars of the nineteenth century had an ambivalent attitude toward the Jews. Nicholas I introduced the draft of Jews into the Russian army. While contemporary historians speak of the ambivalence of this legislation, pointing out that through service in the army, many Jews received opportunities to settle outside the Pale, to become better integrated into Russian politics and culture, and even to help other Jews in the Pale, yet Yiddish popular culture and memory display extremely negative attitudes toward the draft: The majority of the Yiddish folk materials, such as songs, short stories, and legends, portray despair, disappointment, and fear associated with conscription.

Culture

Jewish culture in the Pale was influenced largely by religious movements, such as Hasidism (especially popular in Ukraine) and mitnagdism (in Byelorussia and Lithuania). In the mid-nineteenth century, the forces of Jewish enlightenment (Haskalah) reached Russian Jews as well. As a result, a vibrant Yiddish, Hebrew, and Russian Jewish literary culture began to appear in the Russian Empire, written by the most important Jewish writers.

In 1881, after the assassination of Alexander II, government policies toward Jews became more restrictive. Quotas at institutions of higher education were reduced; laws that restricted Jewish economic activities, known as May Laws (1882), were introduced by his successor, Alexander III. Anti-Jewish riots (pogroms) that swept the country at the end of the nineteenth century, combined with the difficult economic position of the Jewry in the Pale, catalyzed the emigration of Jews from Russia to North America and other destinations as well as increased Jewish involvement in socialist, Zionist, and other political movements. During the reign of the last tsar, Nicholas II (1894–1917), the process of radicalization of the Jewish population in the Pale intensified, Jewish emigration increased, and the number of Jews living outside the Pale reached its highest level, reaching 300,000 by the eve of World War II.

The Study of Jewish Folklore

The economic, social, and even religious divisions between the Jews who remained in the Pale and those who lived in large urban centers became the most important factor in how the studies of Jewish folklore developed in the Russian Empire. All scientific endeavors of collecting and preserving Jewish folklore were sponsored solely by Russian-Jewish businessmen and philanthropists who lived outside the Pale, and all the work on collecting the folklore was conducted inside the Pale.

In the late nineteenth century, Russian-Jewish intellectuals became increasingly interested in studying Jewish folk culture. Influenced by German romantic scholarship, West European Jewish intellectuals, such as Moritz Steinschneider (1816–1907) and Moritz Godeman (1835–1918), encouraged studying Jewish folklore in Yiddish, Ladino, and Judeo-Arabic, because legends, family genealogies, and memorial books could become a valuable historical source. These German-Jewish scholars advocated a "literary" approach to folklore. In addition, Jewish ethnographic museums began to appear in Western Europe at the end of the nineteenth century. Rabbi Dr. Max (Meir) Grünwald (1871–1953) was the first to study the folklore of East European Jews. In fact, he is credited with founding the discipline of Jewish folkloristics—the study of Jewish folklore. He compiled a six-part questionnaire, including "Jewish Names," "People's Poetry," "Superstitions," "Rituals," "Folk Medicine," and "Household and Dress Code."

Enlighteners (*maskilim*) had an ambivalent attitude toward folklore. Some believed that these folk beliefs and rituals stood in the way of modernization of the Jewish community and its emancipation into the Russian society. Others, like Alexander Cederbaum (1816–1893), adopted the German-Jewish attitude toward folklore as a literary source and published some Jewish folktales in *Kol Mevaser,* the first Russian-Jewish journal.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Julius Engel (1867–1927), Shlomo Zanvil Rappoport (S. An-Ski) (1863–1920), Saul Ginsburg (Ginzburg), and Pesah̞ Marek began to systematically collect Jewish folktales and music. In 1901, the first collection of Yiddish folk songs was published in St. Petersburg, edited by Marek and Ginsburg.

In 1892, the Society for the Spread of Enlightenment among the Jews of Russia was established in St. Petersburg. In 1908, it was reorganized into the Jewish Historic-Ethnographic Society. In 1912–1914, the society funded a series of ethnographic expeditions to sixty-six regions of the Pale by S. An-Ski, J. Engel, and Zalman Kisselgof (1876–1939). During the expeditions, Jewish folk legends, fairy tales, songs, customs, rituals, and beliefs were recorded, and handmade artifacts and synagogues were photographed. Many of the synagogues were later destroyed during World War I and World War II. For this expedition, ethnologist Lev Shternberg (1861–1927) designed the questionnaire, which consisted of over 2,000 questions, and it remains a standard in Jewish ethnography.

In 1916, a Jewish historic-ethnographic museum was created in St. Petersburg. It functioned until 1930 (with a break between 1917 and 1920). Expeditions also collected a tremendous amount of Hasidic and *misnagdic* folklore. In the aftermath of the destruction of European Jewry during the two world wars, these collections contained the only records of these cultural products.

Important works in Jewish folklore studies were conducted by I. Tavayev, the author of *Otzar ha'meshalim ve'hapitgamim* (Treasure of Jewish Proverbs and Tales), published in 1919. In 1911–1917, Noyekh Prilutski (Noah Prylucki), an important philologer, published collections of Yiddish folklore in Warsaw. He and his colleagues believed that the existence of a rich folklore in Yiddish signifies the existence of the true Jewish culture and to some extent justifies Jewish national movements.

Jewish Life Under Soviet Rule

In 1917, the February Revolution abolished the monarchy and invested the provisional government with political power. One of its first official decrees officially abol-

ished the Pale of Settlement and granted equal rights to Jews, which began a new chapter in Russian-Jewish history. In October 1917, the provisional government was overthrown by the Bolshevik Revolution. Vladimir Lenin became the head of the state, now renamed a Soviet republic.

Scholars characterized Jewish life under Soviet rule as essentially ambivalent. On the one hand, many Jews suffered from Soviet economic policies, which engaged in nationalization of businesses and collectivization of agriculture; thus small businesses lost their property to larger urban industries, while small farmers lost their land to large collective farms. The state sought to reduce all variety of religious observance, both Christian and Jewish. Important rabbinical dynasties felt compelled to leave the country. Many religious and political Jewish activists were arrested in the 1920s and even more were arrested and killed in the 1930s in purges.

At the same time, compared to the situation under the tsars, Jews had greater educational and professional opportunity. This attracted younger Jews in Ukraine and Byelorussia to migrate to larger cities in Russia, especially Moscow and Leningrad (formerly St. Petersburg). For the predominantly Yiddish-speaking Jews who stayed in the former Pale of Settlement, the government designed programs of *korenizatsiia* (nativization), which were designed to transmit knowledge about the new Soviet system in Yiddish. Thus Yiddish-language party cells, trade unions, schools, theaters, and other political and cultural institutions were created. Jewish sections of the Communist Party were established in 1918 and functioned until 1930. While the major role of most of these institutions was for the government to spread propaganda among Jews, some Yiddish activists and scholars took advantage of government policies to conduct serious academic research in all aspects of Jewish culture, especially folklore.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Kiev became the center of Jewish folklore studies in the Soviet Union. Folklorist Moshe Beregovski (1892–1961) established a phono-archive of Jewish music in Kiev. Beregovski and his colleagues collected Yiddish folklore in large centers of Jewish culture (Kiev, Odessa); in small cities and boroughs in Volhynia and Podolia; in Galicia; and in ancient Jewish agricultural settlements in southern Ukraine (Dnepropetrovsk, Kherson, Zaporozhye, the Nikolaev region, Crimea).

In 1922–1929, Zalman Kisselgof conducted a Yiddish folklore collecting expedition in Byelorussia, the results of which were stored in part at the Leningrad Jewish Ethnographic Museum. Kisselgof managed to record a few Purimshpils (Purim folk performances). This work was later continued by Beregovski, who collected thousands of Purim plays in the 1930s.

In 1936, Beregovski expanded the areas where folklore was collected. Now researchers went to places where the Soviet government supported Jewish agricultural colonies in the Nikolaev region, such as Kalinindorf, Sterndorf, Lvovo, Bobrovyy Kut, Sholom Aleichem, and Freilebn. This was the first and the last Soviet expedition to record the Yiddish folk songs and stories. Some of this work was published as late as 1938, long after all other Yiddish cultural institutions had been ended in the Soviet Union. An important collection of Soviet-Yiddish folklore was published in 1938, *Yiddish Folk Songs of the Soviet Union*, edited by Beregovski and Itsik Fefer, the Soviet-Yiddish poet. Another collection, edited by Y. Dobrushin and A. Yuditski, came out in 1940 in Moscow.

Like their prerevolutionary colleagues, Soviet scholars had an agenda (which was partially suggested to them by state ideology). Scholars believed that one could find the roots of socialism in prerevolutionary Jewish folk culture and therefore prove that the Jewish people fully supported the revolution. In addition, folklorists had the task of reinterpreting the folk heritage in order to minimize the influence of religion on folk songs, stories, and riddles. Therefore, Soviet folklorists paid special attention to the creations that ridiculed tsarist governments, rabbis, and Hasidic leaders, as well as middle- and upper-class members of Jewish society. Consequently, serious attention was paid to collecting Yiddish folklore during the 1920s and 1930s. Kiev collections, recorded in 1929, contain love songs and family lyrics in Yiddish, as well as music of artisans, revolutionary workers' songs, and songs of the "underworld," including beggars and thieves. Some Hasidic music was recorded as well and published as instrumental pieces.

Soviet Jewish folklorists were equipped with institutional financial support and professional equipment to conduct their work. Most of them were professionally trained specialists. Yet ideological constraints inevitably affected the quality and the content of their work. First, all the songs and stories that they were able to record were extremely supportive of the Soviet regime and its policies toward Jews. All Yiddish songs encouraged Soviet policies such as the military draft, work in collective farms, and even resettlement to Birobidzhan. No critical materials were recorded, partly because the informants were afraid to volunteer such materials and partly because the researchers were not willing to give incriminating pieces. As a result, we can rely only on personal family and oral histories to recover such critical materials. Second, not all efforts of Jewish folklore collectors were directed at Yiddish culture. During the Soviet period, Yiddish was only one of the languages spoken by Soviet Jews. Russian was becoming an increasingly popular vernacular. However, according to government ideology, Jews were defined as a people based only on their language, so by acquiring

Russian, Jews lost their status as a separate "nation." Therefore, Russian-Jewish folklore was not recorded. Neither was folklore in Hebrew, as it was assumed that the Hebrew language was the language of religion and the bourgeoisie.

During World War II, the Kiev Institute and its workers were evacuated to Ufa. After their return in 1944, they resumed their work and collected unique post-Holocaust testimonies, especially from survivors in Transnistria. In 1945, Beregovski launched a new project, which aimed to record Yiddish folklore from the war years. The following year, in Chernivtsi (Ukraine), folklore was not recorded in the Zhitomir region. In 1948, the institute was closed, and that marked the end of professional studies of Yiddish folklore during the Soviet period.

Nonetheless, Jewish folklore continued to thrive, though predominantly expressed in Russian. The main genre became the joke (*anekdot*), in which Soviet institutions, bureaucracy, and anti-Semitism were ridiculed, particularly the ability to identify and discriminate against Jews as their ethnicity was recorded in their internal passports. Because Soviet cultural policies toward Jews aimed to eliminate the meaningful connections between Jewish ethnic identity and Judaism, jokes expressed anxieties associated with being Jewish. For example:

> A Jew fills an [application] form: Were you a member of other political parties? No. Were you in the occupied territories [during World War II]? No. Were you ever convicted of a crime? No. Your nationality? Yes.

During the late 1960s and early 1970s, when the Soviet government allowed limited emigration of Jews from the Soviet Union, the jokes began to reflect how having Jewish status suddenly became advantageous. In the late 1990s, the joke "a Jewish wife is not a luxury, but a mean of transportation" (a word play on a Soviet slogan about cars) became one of the most popular Soviet jokes of the late Soviet era.

The studies of Russian-Jewish folklore were rudimentary during the Soviet era, yet developed very quickly in the 1990s. Jewish studies in academic institutions in St. Petersburg, Dnepropetrovsk, and Moscow included courses on Jewish life. Centers of Jewish education in St. Petersburg and Kiev launched projects to collect the remains of Yiddish and Russian-Jewish oral histories in the former Pale of Settlement. Similar studies are being conducted by researchers from England, the United States, Israel, and Canada, who record the folklore in the former Soviet Union and in the destinations of Jews who fled the Soviet Union upon its collapse in 1991. It is estimated that about 1.8 million Jews left the Soviet Union and post-Soviet states to settle in Israel, the United States, Germany, Australia, and Canada. About 500,000 remained in the former Soviet Union. Their culture and their folklore are being transformed in the new environment, yet often retain remnants of the unique Soviet-Jewish culture and identity. Oral folklore is one of the few areas of daily culture where this identity survives. Pioneering works by Fialkova and Yelenevskaya are devoted to the study of folklore of Russian immigrants in Israel.

Anna Shternshis

See also: An-Ski, S.; Grünwald, Max; Languages, Jewish; Poland, Jews of.

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RUTH

Ruth, heroine of the Book of Ruth, one of the five scrolls, is a Moabite woman who married one of the sons of Elimelech and Naomi, who left Moab due to famine toward the end of the era of the Judges.

Ruth's importance and virtues have been assessed in various ways. Many traditional Jewish interpreters identified her identification with the Jewish people as the key element in her dramatic story (*m. Ruth Rab.* 2, 22; *Yevamot* 47b). Other commentators praise Ruth's modesty and righteousness (*Yevamot* 63a). Probably the most extensive commentary deals with the meeting between Ruth and Boaz at the threshing floor (see, e.g., *Ruth Rab.* 5–7); Ruth's behavior in this encounter is seen as a tribute to feminine wile and persistence and as a parable about overcoming various obstacles.

The Book of Ruth is relatively short, with a simple summary of its main plot lines: After Elimelech dies, Naomi returns with her daughter-in-law, Ruth, to her homeland, the land of Judah. Her second daughter-in-law, Orpah, remains in her homeland. Ruth goes to glean in the fields of Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest and encounters Boaz, a relative of Elimelech. Taking advice from her mother-in-law, Ruth goes to the threshing floor, where Boaz sleeps at night, and asks him to marry her. Ruth and Boaz have a son, Obed, who himself becomes the father of Jesse (father of King David).

In this plot sequence, Ruth plays a role reinforced in familiar folk narratives devoted to the birth of a hero. Her interaction with Naomi features contrasts and qualities that are commonly associated with women. The two women share a destiny and their well-being depends upon cooperation. Their social status differs: Naomi hails from an established family and is the older, superior figure. Ruth is of lower status in terms of her foreign, Moabite origins and her status as the young daughter-in-law. After the departure from Moab, both lack children, need to find a source of income, and yearn for a son (Ruth desires a biological son; Naomi seeks a legal, male heir).

Ruth is presented as an enticing woman who uses unacceptable sexual attractions to attain her legitimate goal of perpetuating her line. She loyally fulfills her social obligation of heeding Naomi's demands; she follows Naomi, finds income for her, agrees to her request to tempt Boaz, uses feminine wiles to get him to marry her, and conceives a son whose birth brings the trials and tribulations she shares with her mother-in-law to an end. The happy resolution of the story comes when both women obtain what they lack: income and an heir.

In personal and collective senses, this satisfactory ending reinforces the existing desired social hierarchy that is based on patriarchy and family norms. The moral, which appears repeatedly in narratives about women in a variety of cultural contexts, is clear: a woman who clings to a positive social goal (marriage, the birth of an heir to preserve the memory of a family and retain a claim to an estate) and who operates on the basis of feminine wiles and wisdom to reach this goal will succeed in the end, no matter how daunting the challenges she faces appear to be at the start of her journey.

Ruth attains her goal partly because she symbolizes unconditional love and boundless fidelity. Sages interpreted her name as *reut* (love and friendship). But her name can also be interpreted in terms of the Hebrew root ר ו ה connoting a source of water.

If the symbol of water is joined to the barley harvest, then it seems that Ruth embodies from the start of the story hopes of a bountiful future that are destined to be redeemed.

Naomi and Ruth can be viewed as two sides of one female experience: a symbol of young, hopeful womanhood joined to an emblem of aging womanhood. On a mythological-psychological level, which arguably serves

Detail from "Naomi and Her Two Daughters-in-Law" (Łódź, 1935), from the Szyk Haggadah. *(The Robbins Family Collection. Reproduced with the cooperation of The Arthur Szyk Society, Burlingame, CA.* www.szyk.org*)*

as the deep structure for the story of Ruth and Naomi, the two faces of female personality cannot be separated.

The same is true of the Greek legend of Demeter and Persephone—a tale that, in some ways, parallels that of Ruth and Naomi. Demeter and her daughter, Persephone, are goddesses connected to harvest seasons; in a harvest season, they are associated with passages that move from death (winter) to life (growth and the reaping of the harvest), and these themes are found in the Book of Ruth.

Some suggest that the source of the Book of Ruth is oral tradition narrative formulated as poetry. The Book as it is written indeed contains verses that substantiate this thesis about poetic origins: "Entreat me not to leave you or to return from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16).

In the Aggaddah, Ruth was a daughter of the king of Moab, who was the grandson of Balak (*Ruth Rab.* 2:9). When the events of the book transpired, she was forty years old (*Ruth Rab.* 4:4), and Boaz's wife is said to have passed away on the day she arrived in Eretz Israel (*b. Bava Batra* 91a). Ruth is also said to have seen the grandchildren of her grandchild and to have lived until the days of King Solomon (*Bava Batra,* 91b).

Aliza Shenhar

See also: David, King.

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Ashrei, the first word in Psalms 1:1, Italy, fifteenth century. (*© The Israel Museum, Jerusalem by Ardon Bar-Hama*)

Painted papercut, by Moshe ben Aharon. Poland, ca. 1875. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

Embroidered Sabbath tablecloth showing the Western Wall. Jerusalem, 1928. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

New Year card with a Taslich scene. Likely Polish, 1910s. *(Shalom Sabar Collection, Jerusalem)*

Farewells of Abou Zayd and Al Harith before the return to Mecca. Illustration by Al-Wasiti, from al-Hariri's *Māqāmat* (Assemblies or Entertaining Dialogues), Baghdad, ca. 1240. Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, France. *(Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY)*

"Moses Receives the Torah from Sinai." Illustration to the first chapter of "Avot," Italy. *(Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary)*

Ornamental plate showing Samson tearing down the pillars of the Temple. Ceramics painted with gold rim, Hebrew inscription, from Bohemia. Judaica Collection. Max Berger, Vienna, Austria. *(Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY)*

זה שלמה המלך העושה משפט משתי נשים"

King Solomon judges two harlots who claim the same child. From The North French Hebrew Miscellany (folio 518a), written and illustrated in northern France, ca. 1278. The British Library (Ms. 11639). *(HIP/Art Resource, NY)*

S

SABAR, SHALOM (B. 1951)

Shalom Sabar is a professor of Jewish art and folklore at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He joins together the disciplines of art history and folklore, highlighting issues such as the folk nature of Jewish art and Jewish material culture; visual materials and objects associated with life-cycle and annual rituals; and the evidence that these materials provide about Jewish daily life and the relationships between the Jewish minorities and the societies that hosted them in Christian Europe and the Muslim Middle East.

Shalom Sabar was born March 3, 1951. He was the last Jewish child born in the age-old neo-Aramaic-speaking Kurdish-Jewish community of Zakho, Iraq, before its emigration to Israel.

Sabar studied art history and related fields at the Hebrew University (1974–1976) and the University of California at Los Angeles (1977–1987), where he earned his Ph.D., with his dissertation on the illustrated *ketubbah* (marriage contract) used by Italian Jews during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

His books include *Ketubbah: Jewish Marriage Contracts of the Hebrew Union College Skirball Museum and Klau Library* (1990); *Mazal Tov: Illuminated Jewish Marriage Contracts from the Israel Museum Collection, Jerusalem* (1994); *Jerusalem—Stone and Spirit: 3000 Years of History and Art* (with Dan Bahat; 1997); *The Life Cycle of the Jews in Islamic Lands* (2006).

In addition, he has published numerous essays on various topics pertaining to Jewish folklore, including Hebrew amulets and magic, the *ḥamsa*, New Year cards and postcards, illustrated Passover *Haggadot*, the Bible and Midrash in folk art, traditional images of Jerusalem and the Temple, and folk art and artists of the Old Yishuv.

He has contributed to folklore research as editor of *Rimonim* (a Hebrew periodical on Jewish art), coeditor of *Jerusalem Studies in Jewish Folklore,* and as a member of the editorial board of the periodical *Pe'amim* and a twenty-volume series, both dedicated to the Jewish communities in the lands of Islam (both published by Ben-Zvi Institute).

Sabar has been a visiting professor and has lectured widely at numerous universities and public institutions in Israel and abroad and leads tours to Jewish sites in selected countries in Europe and North Africa.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Folk Art; Jerusalem and the Temple; *Ketubbah*; New Year Cards.

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SADAN, DOV (1902–1989)

Dov Sadan (Shtok) was born on February 21, 1902, in Brody, Eastern Galicia. During World War I his family moved to Lvov (Lviv today), where he was active in the Zionist He'Halutz movement and became one of its leading spokesmen.

In 1925, Sadan immigrated to Israel. He joined the editorial board of the *Davar* newspaper and served as editor of its literary supplement. Sadan was an active member on many boards of cultural institutions. He co-edited the folklore journal *Reshumot—New Series* from 1945 to 1953. In 1950, he joined the faculty of the Hebrew University and two years later became chair of Yiddish Studies. In 1962, he became a member of the Israeli National Academy of Sciences, and in 1968 he won the prestigious Israel Prize. He was elected to the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) in 1965 as a member of Mapai Party, but resigned before the end of his term.

Sadan was first and foremost a scholar of Jewish literature and folklore. He believed that modern Jewish literature was a reaction to the crisis in traditional Jewish culture in the eighteenth century and that it developed in three directions: the new Rabbinic movement, the mystic-Hasidic trend, and the Haskalah (Enlightment) trend. Sadan viewed this complex as one Jewish literature, a literature written by Jews for Jewish readership.

In Jewish folklore, his accomplishments were outstanding. He studied various genres of folklore, including folk narratives, folk songs, proverbs, beliefs, and customs, as well as life and the year cycle. He was most fascinated by the neglected aspects of Jewish folklore, and he worked in areas considered by many scholars in Jewish studies to be unimportant. His findings and scholarship gave legitimacy to these subjects and conferred academic legitimacy to Jewish folklore studies.

Sadan adopted a pluralistic, multilayered approach to folklore studies while maintaining a geographic-historical focus. In his studies he identified the period, background dissemination, and function of each folklore item under study. He saw Jewish folkloric creation as organic in that it is an integral part of a culture and must be studied in

its cultural and social context. But he also viewed folk-lore genres and items as transorganic in that after their creation the original context is no longer needed for the continued existence of the phenomenon. Folklore items are mobile, transcending linguistic borders and migrating from one culture to another, where they are re-told and take new forms.

Sadan's trend toward incorporating past and current realities while deploying a historical-functional approach is exemplified in his article "The Blasphemer from Hamlin," in which he presents an array of approaches and interpretations before drawing the conclusion that a mouse-trapper is actually a prototypical Jew, one who is foreign in Central Europe and saves himself from various dangers, even though he becomes a victimized citizen. The article was written in 1940, on the eve of the Holocaust.

Sadan concentrated on the compilation of folklore materials. He set new standards in the deployment of his dynamic approach and became a pioneering figure in folklore research. He believed that the modern "secular" Jewish culture that broke away from traditional Judaism is only an episodic stage in the history of Jewish culture.

Sadan died October 14, 1989. Following his death, Dov Noy edited a volume of Sadan's articles titled *Dov Sadan: Twelve Studies in Folklore* (1990).

Aliza Shenhar

See also: *Reshumot.*

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SAFED, LEGENDS OF

The proliferation of legends about the town of Safed in the Upper Galilee region coincided with its economic, social, and spiritual flowering in the second half of the sixteenth century. In the relatively short span of slightly more than fifty years, this previously unknown place, with almost no ancient historical significance, experienced an economic boom, social diversity and wealth, and vigorous intellectual activity relating to Halakhah, Kabbalah, moral philosophy, exegesis, and homiletics that made it, for a brief while, the spiritual capital of the Jewish people.

During the town's heyday, from the 1530s until approximately 1600, the Jewish community of Safed knew both relative security, thanks to the consolidation of the new Ottoman regime in the country, and economic prosperity, based on the local textiles industry. Safed attracted exiles from Spain and many merchants and intellectuals from all over the Diaspora, who noted that the town had an appropriate Jewish spirit and economic basis.

One key aspect of this cultural development includes the legends that developed and spread in and around Safed during this period, which have rarely been studied. This is somewhat surprising, given that so much of what we know about life in Safed, especially its image in the Jewish consciousness over the generations, derives from these legends. When they have attracted attention, it has been chiefly from the historical and philological perspectives. Some scholars assumed that the legends were reliable historical testimony and made use of them; others have dismissed them as worthless fictions and ignored them. The important philological work done on these legends, Meir Benayahu's 1967 edition of *Toledot Ha'Ari* (Praise of the Ari)*,* focuses on the manuscripts and textual variants in pursuit of the authentic version and tries to use

Jewish men pray and lay their hands on the grave of Rabbi Isaac Luria, a sixteenth-century Jewish mystic and Kabbalah scholar. *(David Silverman/Getty Images)*

them to identify particulars of the lives of the circle that gathered around the Rabbi Isaac Luria (Ha'Ari). Scholars of Hebrew literature and Jewish folklore, notably Joseph Dan and Tamar Alexander, have discerned the importance of the legends about Luria and assigned them to the genre of the *shevaḥ* (saints' legend)—the earliest Jewish examples thereof—like the hagiographies of medieval Christianity.

Documentation of the Safed legends begins slightly later, in 1602 or 1607. In 1602 (thirty years after Luria died in a cholera epidemic that swept the town), a Moravian Jew by the name of Solomon (Shlumel) Dresnitz liquidated his property, divorced his wife, and moved to Safed, the focus of his dreams, in order to study the Lurianic Kabbalah in its place of origin. The four letters that he wrote to his teachers and relatives back in Moravia, starting in 1607, include many details about economic and intellectual life in Safed. He writes of his great desire to meet Luria's disciples, the members of the intimate circle that had gathered around the sage, in order to learn the Lurianic Kabbalah from them, as well as of his equal avidity to hear the stories of the wonders

Luria performed. With this in mind, according to his own testimony, Shlumel Dresnitz accosted men and women in the study halls and synagogues, in the marketplace and the street, who knew of Luria's deeds at first hand or by report.

All the narratives that Shlumel included in his letters are legends in the classical sense of the term. They are anchored in the real world of Safed, were recounted by informants who fully believed them to be true, and were accepted as such by their faithful transcriber as well as by subsequent generations. From this perspective one must see him as the first Jewish ethnographer and folklorist whose name and biography are known today. It is true, however, that documenting folklore was not his goal. Rather, as he writes to his correspondents, his intention was to spread knowledge of Rabbi Luria's wondrous deeds and sanctity to Jewish communities that were unaware of them and thereby use these legends to establish the sacred nature of the Lurianic Kabbalah.

The scholarly literature has tended to view the Safed legends, especially those about Luria, as the work of a small group of his disciples and followers during his

life and in the first years after his death. If these legends were indeed produced in this circle, they would be sectarian rather than folk legends. Consequently, one must emphasize that folk literature is not "folk" by virtue of those who create the myth, legend, or tale but because of its acceptance by society. The person who uncovered and documented the Safed legends in their earliest versions was Shlumel Dresnitz, who arrived in Safed more than thirty years after Luria's death. By his own account he collected the legends from those of Luria's disciples who were still living in Safed, but also and principally from men and women in the marketplace, the streets, the synagogue, and the house of study (*beit ha'midrash*). Scholars have demonstrated, too, that there were almost no legends circulating about Luria right after his death and that those that did exist were known only within the immediate circle of his disciples. Taken together, these two items mean that the bulk of the legends developed and circulated outside that circle during the three decades between his death and Shlumel Dresnitz's arrival in Safed. During those years, even those legends that did originate among his closest disciples metamorphosed from sectarian legends into folk legends. Others, evidently the vast majority, were created during this period or shortly after.

The biographical facts about Luria, abstracted from the dozens of legends included in Shlumel's letters, arranged in chronological order and published as *Shivḥei Ha'Ari*, date to the first edition of Dresnitz's letters, published in 1629 as part of *Ta'alumot Ḥokhmah* (Mysteries of Wisdom) by Joseph Solomon Delmedigo (Yashar mi-Qandia). *Shivḥei Ha'Ari* is in fact the earliest work of Jewish folklore and anthology of stories about a venerated figure that can be assigned to the genre of the saints' legend. It was the forerunner of dozens of later compositions that imitated it in various ways.

Although the Safed legends are usually and rightly classed as saints' legends, given their focus on Luria, two other aspects must be emphasized. First, many focus not on Luria but on other prominent sages with whom he came into contact, including Shlomo Alkabetz, Moses ben Jacob Cordovero, Joseph ben Ephraim Karo, Moses Alsheikh, Abraham ben Eliezar Halevi Berukhim, Eleazar Azikri, Joseph Ashkenazi, and, of course, Luria's closest disciple, Ḥaim ben Joseph Vital. While each of these personages is the subject of only a few legends, rather than a full corpus of tales such as that surrounding Luria, it is plausible that many oral traditions about them were never documented. The second point is that the essence of the Safed legends is not their hagiographic character but their local color. Even a quick glance at these tales, in the various formats in which they have been preserved, reveals the centrality of the spatial element: hills and orchards, caves, springs, tombs, roads, and fields, and especially the streets and houses of the town of Safed. Therefore, fundamentally the Safed legends are both hagiographic saints' legends and local legends.

The Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) in Haifa contains more than a hundred texts about Safed. Some of them celebrate Safed's zenith in the sixteenth century and feature heroes such as Luria, Joseph Karo, and Eleazar Azikri. Others exemplify narrative traditions relating to later periods, through the very recent past—Israel's War of Independence (1948) and later events, for example. Of special interest are those narratives of sixteenth-century Safed that are not incorporated into *Shivḥei Ha'Ari* or other documents of that age. It is possible that at least some of them are contemporary traditions that were not transcribed by Shlumel Dresnitz but were passed down orally by the Safed community until modern times.

Eli Yassif

See also: Yassif, Eli.

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SAMAEL

Samael is one of the major characters in Jewish demonology, even though he is not mentioned in the Bible and no major text summarizes his characteristics and roles. The etymology of the name has two versions: the Blind Angel (Suma-El), and the Poisoning Angel (Angel of Death; Sama-El). These two interpretations reverberate in the Jewish tradition.

Samael's character appears sporadically, in a discontinuous manner in the textual tradition that is thousands of years old, dispersed in dozens of texts from various periods and different regions.

In the Apocrypha and Pseudoepigraphy, Samael is mentioned in three different texts, each of which emphasizes a different trait of his character. In the text "The Ethiopian Enoch" (second to first century B.C.E.) he is described as one of the rebel angels, though not their leader, who descended to Earth to fornicate with human daughters.

In the text "Slavic Baruch's Vision" (first century C.E.), Samael the angel is described as having been present in Paradise at the time of the original sin. He was the one who planted the tree of knowledge, according to this source. That was the reason for God's wrath. Since then, Samael envied Adam and wanted to corrupt him. Samael is also mentioned as having disguised himself as the snake that tempted Eve.

In the text "The Ascension of Isaiah" (first to second century C.E.) Samael is the embodiment of evil, overpowering man and acting through him. Alternatively named Samael, Belial, and Satan, he is the leader of evil forces. Samael gains control over King Menashe and, through him, takes revenge on the prophet Isaiah and kills him.

These three elements in Samael's character—its heavenly source, his involvement in the original sin, and his evil nature—persisted in later Jewish traditions.

In the Midrash, Samael's traits are various and diverse. The Midrash *Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* (Eretz Israel, seventh to eighth century B.C.E.) retains ancient traditions about Samael. These were preserved in later sources:

- He is the high angel, leader of the rebellious group of angels. He opposed the creation of Adam, envied him, and therefore descended from Heaven to tempt him. In Paradise, he tempted Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, while riding on the snake (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer*, ch. 13).
- He impregnated Eve, and he is the father of Cain (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer*, ch. 21).
- He is the opponent of the Archangel Michael (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer*, ch. 27; Shmot Raba 18:5; *Yalqut Shimoni* Gen. Leh Leha 68).
- He serves as the People of Israel's prosecutor (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer*, ch. 21).
- On Yom Kippur, the Scapegoat is offered to him (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer*, ch. 46).
- He is often identified with Satan (Pintel 1981, pp. 76–77).
- He is the guardian of Esau, Edom, and Rome (*Tanḥuma Vayishlah* 8; *Bereshit Rabati*).
- He is the Angel of Death (*Devarim Raba* 11).
- In some of the midrashic sources, Samael is part of elaborated stories, involving major biblical figures.

One of these stories involves the confrontation between him and Abraham, on the way to Isaac's sacrifice. In this Midrash (*Bereshit Raba* 56) Samael has no demonic characteristics. His function is to raise doubts about Abraham's faith. Samael approaches Abraham with a sequence of painful questions about the validity of God's promises and about humanity's ability to withstand divine, demanding trials. Abraham overcomes all these doubts, and the immensity of his faith is proved once more. Samael approaches Isaac as well, but is able to reveal the breaches of his faith.

The other elaborated story in the Midrash concerns Moses's death (*Avot de'Rabbi Nathan*; *Devarim Rabbah* 11:10; *Yalqut Shimoni*, *Vayelekh* 940). Samael in this context takes the role of the Angel of Death. His duty is to take the souls of all living creatures. His traits here are the traditional ones associated with death: He wears a sword, and he is cruel and full of wrath.

The focus in the Midrash is on Moses's difficulty in accepting his own death. This problem is represented in other forms as well, such as in a verbal and physical struggle with the Angel of Death.

Samael is pictured as wicked and is called Head of all Satans. He is described as waiting impatiently to take Moses's soul. During the physical struggle between the two, Moses attacks Samael with his staff, on which the holy name of God is engraved. Samael flees while Moses chases him and blinds him with the beam of glory he has between his eyes.

In early Kabbalah, in the "Treatise on the left emanation" (thirteenth century C.E.) Samael is mentioned as the great prince and great king of all the demons, and as Lilith's spouse. In the Zohar, he is described as the leader of the "Sitra Aḥra," the evil side of the divine forces of destruction.

He appears also in the Lurianic Kabbalah story of Rabbi Yosef dela Reina, who seeks in vain to bring final redemption by chaining Samael and Lilith. Their appearance in this story is as two large black dogs.

The custom, derived from the sixteenth-century Isaac Luria's practice, is to abstain from using in any way the full name of Satan. The abbreviation "Sameh Mem" and hints of Samael's name are used instead.

Idit Pintel-Ginsberg

See also: Demon; Lilith.

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SAMARITANS

The Samaritans, an ethnoreligious group that follows Samaritanism, an Abrahamic religion similar to Judaism, trace their origins to the biblical northern tribes of Israel. They do not conceive of themselves as Jews but, rather, as an independent and more true form of the Israelite religion. In fact, Samaritans interpret their name not as a locative that refers to Samaria but as "those who keep the Torah," the *Shamerim.* Today Samaritans often refer to themselves as Samaritan Israelites.

Samaritan religious principles may be summarized as:

1. There is one God, YHWH (referred to as *Shema,* "the Name").
2. The Torah in the Samaritan version was given by God to Moses and is the only divinely sanctioned biblical book.
3. Moses was God's only prophet.
4. Mount Gerizim, near Nablus, is the *axis mundi,* chosen by God as his dwelling place from time immemorial (as expressed in the Samaritan version of the Ten Commandments).
5. The Aaronite priests, primarily the oldest Levite, who serves as the high priest, are the legitimate interpreters of the law and the keepers of tradition (since the demise of the Aaronite priesthood in 1624).
6. Reward and punishment await after death.
7. Moses will return as the *Taheb,* who will end the period of divine "disfavor" initiated with the hiding of the Tabernacle at the time that the Judeans sinned and split with the Gerizim temple.

In terms of ritual, public Sabbath rites take place within synagogues, where Torah scrolls are housed within shrines (the Holy Ark) that are covered with decorated veils (*parokhet*), and the podium upon which the shrine stands is named after the sacrificial altar of the Tabernacle, the *mizbe'aḥ.* Public prayer consists of florilegia of Torah verses and liturgical poetry in Aramaic and Hebrew. Torah scrolls are not read from but venerated and displayed iconically. Scriptural performance and study is carried out from codices, and it is expected that boys and girls memorize the entire Torah. Samaritans celebrate seven holy-day periods, which include ritual processions to the top of Mount Gerizim. These periods are divided into festivals (*moadim*): Passover, the Festival of the Seventh Month, the Day of Atonement, and Shemini Atzeret (the day following the week of Sukkot [Tabernacles]), and pilgrimage holidays (*ḥagim*): the Festival of Unleavened Bread (*matzot*), which follows Passover, Shavuot (Pentecost), and Sukkot. On Passover, Samaritans perform the paschal sacrifice, a high point of their liturgical year that has long fascinated Westerners. On Sukkot, they build tabernacles within their homes, rather than outdoors, a practice that they attribute to persecution. The ceilings of Samaritan tabernacles are decorated with an array of fruit arranged in geometric patterns. All members of the community, including pregnant women, children, and the sick, fast on the Day of Atonement. Like Karaites, and unlike the less literally minded Rabbinites, Samaritans do not eat heated food on the Sabbath. Similarly, they do not make use of air conditioners on the Sabbath and festivals. The Samaritans maintain a solar/lunar calendar, which, because of differing systems of intercalation, does not necessarily coincide with that of the Jews.

Enactment of biblical purity laws is particularly significant within this community. Samaritans are punctilious in their response to seminal and menstrual emissions, with husbands and wives avoiding all physical contact, including sharing living space, food, and household items, for the week that the wife is in menses. Although ritual baths (*mikveh*; pl. *mikvaot*) have been discovered in late antiquity Samaritan contexts (including a synagogue), today ritual immersion is performed in bathtubs. Circumcision is practiced strictly and, in keeping with the Samaritan version of the Pentateuch, must be carried out on the eighth day after birth with no exceptions. The high priest is the ultimate legal decision maker in all areas of ritual law. Deeply conservative at its core, Samaritan law and custom are dynamic and develop in response to internal as well as external stimuli.

The liminal boundary separating and connecting Jews and Samaritans, which can be seen as early as biblical literature and traced archaeologically from the Persian period onward, reflects a unique element in both Jewish and Samaritan thought. Samaritans were numerous during the early centuries of the Common Era, and archaeological

Samaritans sit under a sukkah made of fruits inside their house during the holiday of Sukkot on Mount Gerizim near the northern West Bank city of Nablus. *(Menahem Kahana/AFP/Getty Images)*

evidence for Samaritan settlements in Samaria and adjacent areas as well as in cities of the eastern Mediterranean has been discovered. Samaritan communities are known to have existed in medieval Egypt, Syria, and a number of locations within and outside of Palestine. Only a small remnant survived Christian and Muslim persecutions and proselytism into the twentieth century. In 1901 the community comprised 152 individuals, all of whom resided in Nablus.

During the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, American Protestants and then early Zionists provided considerable aid to the Samaritans and nurtured the community. Most significantly, Zionist scholar Yitzhak (Isaac) Ben-Zvi, later president of Israel, convinced some single Samaritan men in Jaffa to marry Jewish women, a practice that was previously forbidden. A small colony settled in Tel Aviv during the 1930s. Today, the community numbers approximately 740, 350 in Nablus/Mount Gerizim and 390 in the Samaritan neighborhood of Neve Marqeh, in the Tel Aviv suburb of Holon. Israeli Samaritans are regarded by the State of Israel as Jews, and their priests are compensated by the state as clergy. They serve in the Israel Defense Forces and speak Hebrew at home, while their brethren in Nablus primarily speak Arabic and attend Palestinian schools.

Scholarship

Western interest in the Samaritans has its origins in European biblical scholarship of the early modern period. Although European scholars showed considerable interest in Samaritan customs, their most sustained concern was the Samaritan Pentateuch and its significance for the history of the text of the Hebrew Bible. Correspondence between Samaritan leaders and mainly Western scholars—often on the false pretense of representing European Samaritans—began in the sixteenth century and continued on less-colonial terms into the twentieth century; in its later phase, it focused on Samaritan customs and concentrated on ethnography. These documents are particularly significant in assessing diachronic changes in ritual or interpretation in recent centuries. Only in the early twentieth century did scholarship that might be considered folklore studies develop, first in Europe and in British Mandate Palestine. The work of the London-based Moses Gaster is particularly significant

for folklore studies, as it focused on custom and magic, as well as comparison of homiletical texts with Second Temple and rabbinic biblical interpretation. Ben-Zvi carried out significant local fieldwork and surveyed archaeological discoveries. Samaritan oral traditions were collected by Dov Noy during the 1950s, and forty-seven stories are held by the Israel Folklore Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa. Beginning in the late 1930s, historical linguist Ze'ev Ben-Hayyim and his students set about publishing critical editions of the most important Samaritan writings and their oral traditions of recitation, together with Hebrew translations.

After 1970 a broad flowering of Samaritan studies of all periods took place, carried out by an international group of scholars organized as the Société d'Etudes Samaritaines (Society for the Study of the Samaritans) in 1985. The broad range of Samaritan studies was united under the rubric of the society and its quadrennial congresses and their proceedings. This diverse community was brought together by Alan D. Crown of the University of Sydney in a series of compilations, most prominently a handbook called *The Samaritans* (1989). This volume was followed in 2002 with a parallel Hebrew publication edited by Ephraim Stern and Hanan Eshel, which updates Crown's handbook and integrates recent archaeological discoveries. Reinhard Pummer of the University of Ottawa has been the most prolific modern scholar focusing on folklore-related issues, ranging from his corpora of texts relating to Samaritans in Josephus and the Church fathers to the publication of Samaritan marriage contracts (with Abraham Tal), folk art, and fieldwork relating to Samaritan rituals and customs. Among the Samaritans themselves, a member of the Holon community, Benyamim Tsedaka, the son of Noy's original informant, Ratson Tsedaka, has published a series of academic and semiacademic articles and collections in English and modern Hebrew relating to Samaritan history, customs, biblical interpretation, foodways, and contemporary life. As the centerpiece of his project, Tsedaka has published a biweekly newspaper that reports on academic and community developments and has become an important source for the study of contemporary Samaritanism.

Literary and Oral Traditions

Samaritan literature is rich in literary sources that are of significance to folklorists. The most important Samaritan collection is *Tibat Marqe* (lit., the "[Book] Chest of Marqe"), an anthology of midrashic interpretations centered on the Five Books of Moses. Composed in a late antiquity Aramaic that is akin to Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, the earliest sections of *Tibat Marqe* (books 1 and 2) date to the fourth to fifth century, while the later sections, dating to the eleventh to twelfth century, are composed in medieval Samaritan literary Aramaic

with numerous Arabic influences and biblicizing forms (which Ben-Hayyim calls "Samaritan"). As a diachronic anthology of biblical reflections (midrash), *Tibat Marqe* parallels the great early modern rabbinic anthology known as *Midrash Rabba,* which similarly preserves biblical interpretation compiled over a thousand-year period. *Piyyutim* (liturgical poetry), which date from late antiquity and continue to be produced for wedding feasts and other significant occasions to this day, are a major branch of Samaritan literature. The most significant late antiquity poets were Amram Dare, Marqa, and Ninna (son of Marqa), whose works were edited by Ze'ev Ben-Hayyim. These poems are replete with biblical interpretation.

Finally, a broad literature of Chronicles in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Arabic was produced by the Samaritans into modern times. The earliest of these is the *Tulidah,* which in its oldest part dates to the twelfth century; the monumental Arabic chronicle attributed to Abu'l Fath dates from the fourteenth century. The chronological structure of the Chronicles provided frameworks for the preservation of folk memory relating to the heroes of previous generations, particularly the priestly genealogy, and shows numerous points of contact with Jewish, Arabic, and general folklore literature and motifs. Noy was well aware of the importance of Samaritan literary tradition in the formation of the oral traditions that he collected from Tsedaka. This intermingling of literary and oral elements is evident throughout the Chronicles literature and is not only a modern phenomenon. Samaritan musical tradition is essentially liturgical, and early recordings of Torah readings are preserved in a number of libraries (including the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York). In recent years Benyamim Tsedaka has organized a choral group, not all of whose members are Samaritan.

Visual Culture

Evidence of Samaritan visual culture has survived from the Persian and Greco-Roman periods and from the early modern and modern periods. Fragments of Samaritan manuscripts were discovered in the Cairo Geniza, and a number of medieval codices are extant. All codices on parchment predate the fifteenth century, as scrolls were written on the hides of sacrificial animals, which required a state of purity that was unavailable when Samaritans lost access to the ashes of the red heifer, apparently in the seventeenth century. Late twentieth-century excavation on Mount Gerizim, carried out under the direction of the archaeologist Yitzhak Magen, has uncovered extensive remains of the Samaritan temple precinct, dating as early as the sixth century B.C.E., which was destroyed by the Hasmonean John Hyrcanos II in ca. 110 B.C.E. Significantly, the existence of this temple is not recalled in Samaritan tradition, though Josephus

and rabbinic sources mark its destruction. Extensive remains of Aramaic dedicatory inscriptions have been uncovered, written both in the Samaritan script and what later came to be called Jewish square script. Synagogue remains from late antiquity have been uncovered across Samaria and in adjacent regions, as well as on the island of Delos in Greece.

In the Palestinian examples, images of Torah shrines and menorahs appear in mosaics and bas-relief. Even at this early date, Samaritan strictness in regard to forbidden imagery, based in the second commandment of the Ten Commandments, is a hallmark of late antiquity Samaritan visual culture. Although no medieval ritual objects or architecture are extant, bronze containers for Torah scrolls similar in design to Jewish Torah cases created in the Middle East (*tiqim*) and ultimately derived from Qur'an cases are extant from as early as the sixteenth century, as is an embroidered Torah ark curtain dated 1509/1510. These are decorated with Torah verses, and one case is decorated with schematic drawings of the tabernacle.

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, polychrome tabernacle drawings based upon the Torah curtain image—together with a large quantity of handwritten books—were prepared and sold to visiting collectors. Samaritans interpret Deuteronomy 6:9—"and you shall write them upon the doorpost of your house and upon your gates"—literally, inscribing biblical verses in Samaritan script on or near the doorpost of their homes. This practice is known from late antiquity and continues to the present. *Mezuzot,* as they are called, are sometimes used to decorate the interiors of Samaritan homes. A wide variety of biblical verses has been used, both in the past and present. Some contemporary *mezuzot* have verses formed into a variety of shapes, including doves, flames, and the menorah. Samaritan homes in Holon as well as official documents such as calendars are sometimes decorated with *mezuzot* in the form of the seal of the State of Israel, with the word "Israel" written beneath the menorah. This image in particular reflects the depths of Samaritan participation in modern Israeli life. The most significant Samaritan religious icon is the Samaritan script itself, a writing system that dates to biblical times and is distinct from the script used for Jewish Hebrew and Aramaic. Both in Neve Marqeh and on Mount Gerizim the ubiquitous use of Samaritan script defines Samaritan public and private space.

Samaritan amulets in bronze that are extant from late antiquity have been discovered in both Palestine and Corinth in Greece. Modern amulets are known to have been written on wood, paper, and leather. The texts consist of biblical verses written in Samaritan script. Today, Samaritan amulets are sold to Jews, Christians, and Muslims, and Samaritan amulet writers are regarded by their clients as magical experts.

Steven Fine

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SAMBATION

Sambation (Sabbation, Sanbation, Sabatino, Sambatya, Sabbath River) is a legendary river beyond which the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel were exiled in 721 B.C.E. by Shalmaneser V, king of Assyria. Legends describe it as a roaring torrent (often not of water but of stones), the turbulence of which ceases only on the Sabbath, when Jews are not allowed to travel.

Sambation is mentioned for the first time in the Yerushalmi Talmud: "Rabbi Brachia and Rabbi Chalbo say in the name of Rabbi Shmuel bar Nachman: (the tribes of) Israel exiled to three exiles, one behind the river Sanbation and one to Daphneh of Antiochia and one that the cloud descended on them and covered them" (*y. Sanhedrin,* 10).

Sambation is also mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud in a legend about Rabbi Akiva: "Rabbi Akiva was questioned by Turnusrupus, the wicked: Why is this day (of Sabbath) distinguished from all other days? To which Akiva answered: Why is this man (Turnusrupus) distinguished from all other men? And he answered: Because it is the will of my master (the king). Rejoined Rabbi Akiva: Sabbath is also distinguished because it is the will of the Lord of the Universe. Said Turnusrupus: You misunderstand me. My question is: Whence do you know that this day is Sabbath? And he answered: From the river of Sabbation (which rests on this day)" (*b. Sanhedrin* 65b).

Rabbi Akiva does not explain how the river distinguishes the Sabbath from all other days of the week, but Rashi (Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes, 1040–1105 C.E.) says in his interpretation of this text: "A river of stones, and all days of the week it goes and flaws, and in the day of Sabbath it keeps still and rests." Rashi relies on other midrashim that enlarge the story. For example, in Midrash Bereshit Rabba, it was said: "River Sambation will prove—that it drags stones all the days of the week and on Shabbath it rests" (*Bereshit Rab.* 11:5).

Both legends, the legend about Rabbi Akiva and Turnusrupus and the legend about the river Sambation as the place of exile for the ten tribes of Israel, are mentioned many times in the Midrash (*Bereshit Rab.* 73:5; *Bam. Rab.* 16:5; *Eicha Rab.* 2:5; Midrash *Zuta Shir Ha'Shirim* 1, 5 (16); *Psiqta Rabbati*, 23:5, 31:5; Midrash *Tanḥuma*, Mikets, 17).

The name Sambation is mentioned in the Targum of pseudo-Jonathan to Exodus: "I will remove them from there and place them beyond the River Sambation" (Exod. 34:10).

Nachmanides (Moshe ben Nachman, 1194–c. 1270), in his comment to Deuteronomy (32:26), explains that the name Sambation derived from the root S.B.T., which means "cease working" and the suffix -*yon* is the Arabic form of the adjective, like ezov–ezovion. Nachmanides identifies the river Sambation as the river Gozan, to which the tribes of Israel were exiled: "And the king of Assyria carried Israel away unto Assyria, and put them in Halah, and in Habor, on the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes" (2 Kgs. 18:11).

Josephus Flavius, in his book, *The Wars of the Jews,* describes a river that runs every seventh day and rests on six:

> Now Titus Caesar tarried some time at Berytus, as we told you before. He thence removed, and exhibited magnificent shows in all those cities of Syria through which he went, and made use of the captive Jews as public instances of the destruction of that nation. He then saw a river as he went along, of such a nature as deserves to be recorded in history; it runs in the middle between Arcea, belonging to Agrippa's kingdom, and Raphanea. It hath somewhat very peculiar in it; for when it runs, its current is strong, and has plenty of water; after which its springs fail for six days together, and leave its channel dry, as any one may see; after which days it runs on the seventh day as it did before, and as though it had undergone no change at all; it hath also been observed to keep this order perpetually and exactly; whence it is that they call it the Sabbatic River that name being taken from the sacred seventh day among the Jews. (*J.W.* Book 7, 5:1)

Pliny the Elder (Gaius or Caius Plinius Secundus, 23–79 C.E.), in his book *Naturalis Historia* (Natural History), tells about a river that runs on six days and rests every seventh, though it in no way appears by his account that the seventh day of this river was the Jewish Sabbath (*Nat. Hist.* 31).

The first to disseminate the legends was Eldad Ha'dani. According to his narrative, the Sambation surrounds the land not of the ten tribes, but of the children of Moses, who have there a powerful kingdom in Africa. Eldad represents the Sambation as consisting entirely of sand and stones (Julius [Judah David] Eisenstein, *Otzar Midrashim*, 1915; Eldad Ha'dani, 19:5).

As a result of Eldad Ha'dani's stories, the legends about the ten lost tribes of Israel who live beyond the Sambation River spread among Jewish communities all over the world. The Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa holds many stories about the lost tribes of Israel, and some among them mention the Sambation. Many of these stories are confrontation stories, in which a Jewish community is in danger and receives help from a Jewish hero who comes from beyond the Sambation River.

A Yemenite-Jewish story that is found in three different versions at the IFA (IFA 943, 4311, and 11289) describes the rescue of a Jewish community by a Jewish maiden from beyond the Sambation, who is brought by a messenger of the community.

A confrontation story of Polish-Jewish origin that is found in two versions (IFA 206 and 2208) tells about confrontation between a Christian minister and Rabbi Meir ben Isaac Nahorai, cantor of the Vermaiza and Magentsa communities. The minister asks the cantor to demonstrate a miracle; and Rabbi Meir enters the raging Sambation and immediately the river calms down. According to the legend, after this miracle, Rabbi Meir writes a *piyyut* of "Akdamot" to the day of Pentecost.

A confrontation story from Morocco that is found in the IFA in two versions (IFA 11248 and IFA 13947) makes the connection between the Jewish hero who comes from beyond the Sambation and the building of a mosque by the name "Mulay ha'Shabbat" (the Master of Sabbath).

Yoel Perez

See also: Tribes, Ten Lost.

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SAMSON AND DELILAH

Samson is the last of the judges in the Book of Judges. In the Jewish folkloric tradition, the story of Samson, like the story of Hercules and other ancient heroes, such as Perseus, Cadmus, and Bellerophon, expresses the folk wish for a strong hero who can bring salvation to his people. His lover, Delilah, the only woman in the tales of Samson whose name is cited, betrays him and brings about his downfall. According to some scholarly interpretations, her name stems from a Hebrew acronym that refers to the loom of the web in Judges 16:13–14.

The history of Samson's life in the Bible is divided into three parts:

1. The dedication of Samson to God before his birth. The story is connected to the motif found around the world of a baby born by supernatural powers to a barren woman. An angel of God appears before the woman alone (Judg. 13:3) and informs her of the expected birth of a Nazarite, who will save Israel from the Philistines. The angel also mentions the law relating to the rules of the boy: A razor shall not touch his head. Later the angel appears before the woman and her husband (13:11).

The story of the birth of Samson has gone through a process of demythologization. Unlike the stories of coupling between gods or angels of God and human women, which were known in different versions throughout many cultures, in the story of Samson, the angel of God is only the messenger. Some scholars maintain it is likely that the biblical storyteller wanted to avoid the mythical tradition of sexual coupling between Samson's mother and a heavenly creature, as a result of which a giant was born.

2. The first actions of Samson (14–15)—a series of outstanding deeds. On his way to his Philistine fiancée he kills a lion (14–16); on the way to the second visit, he removes honey from a beehive in the carcass of the lion (14:8–9). These events enable him to ask several riddles at his wedding banquet (14:12–14). His Philistine friends force his wife to tell them the answer to the riddle. Samson gives them thirty changes of garments as he had promised, but in order to do this, he kills thirty men in Ashkelon (14:19). The marriage to a Philistine woman is not viewed favorably by Samson's parents and brings about a violent disagreement. After his wife's father gives her to his friend, Samson catches 300 foxes, attaches torches to their tails, and sets fire to the fields of the Philistines.

Scholars have found a similar connection to dispatching of the foxes in the story of Obidius in the Roman ritual of the holiday in honor of the goddess of grain: At the circus in Rome, they raced foxes with burning torches attached to their tails. Perhaps in this tale of Samson there is a provocation to Dagon, the Philistine god of grain. In Aesop's fables, there is also a similarity: A man hated a fox who caused him damages. He soaked linen in oil, tied it to the fox's tail, and lit it, but the fox arrived during the harvesting of the man's fields and burned them.

Inspired by the spirit of God, Samson killed 1,000 men with a donkey's jawbone (15:15–16). At the same time, he became thirsty, a miracle occurred, and a well was created (14:15–19). These two stories offer an etiological explanation of names of places: Ramat Lehi (cheek's heights) and Ein-Hakoreh (the caller's spring).

3. The last deeds of Samson and his death. The reason for Samson's failure is connected to his love of women. He is nearly captured in Gaza when he visits a prostitute. He escapes at night after tearing off the doors of the gates of Gaza (16:1–3). After that he falls in love with Delilah, who manages to extract from him the secret of his strength (16:17). She shaves his head (16:19), and, after he loses his strength, she delivers him into the hands of the Philistines (16:18–20). The Philistines gouge out his eyes and tie him up. In the meantime, his hair begins to grow. The Philistines gather in the temple of their god Dagon in order to mock his downfall. Samson prays to God and requests vengeance. After that, he destroys the temple and dies in the destruction. More people are killed at this event than Samson has killed in his lifetime (16:29–30). His death represents his special character, and at this event it transpires that his exceptional strength came to him directly from God.

Three stories are interwoven in this part:

1. the removal of the gates of Gaza (16:1–3)
2. Delilah (16:4–20)
3. the death of Samson (16:30).

The motif of Samson's hair is similar to that in the story of Nisus, king of Megara. At first, the story of Samson was told independently and was passed down orally from generation to generation.

Only later was it adapted to a successive poem like the story of Gilgamesh, who excelled in physical strength, and Gretir, the hero from Iceland.

In contrast to other judges, Samson fought the Philistines alone, and his battles were due to his personal conflicts. His assistance to his people is through weakening his enemies, but his activities are not of political importance.

The Book of Judges relates the tale of Samson's love for Delilah, a woman from the Valley of Sorek (Judg. 16:4). Five Philistine leaders each offer her eleven hundred pieces of silver, should she agree to turn Samson over to them, so that he could be bound and tortured. Delilah assents to their bribes—not for ideological reasons but, rather, out of greed. She unsuccessfully tries three times to tempt Samson into revealing the source of his strength to her.

The First Attempt to Entice Samson (Judges 16:6–9)

The manipulative Delilah asks Samson to prove his love for her. The biblical account (Judg. 16:6–9) describes the first attempt to entice Samson: Delilah said to Samson, "Tell me, please, wherein lies the secret of your great strength, and how you can be bound to render you helpless." Samson replied, "If they bind me with seven fresh, wood fiber cords not yet dried, then I shall become weak and be like any other man." The princes then brought her seven fiber cords that had not dried, and she bound him with them. Having men hidden in her room, she said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" But he snapped the cords as a strand of rope snaps when it is exposed to fire. So they did not discover the secret of his strength.

The Second Attempt to Entice Samson (Judges 16:10–12)

Delilah said to Samson, "You have deceived me: you have lied to me: but tell me now, please, with what you can be bound." He said to her, "If they bind me tightly with new ropes that have never been used, then I shall become weak and be as any other man." So Delilah took new ropes, bound him with them, and said, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson!" Men were waiting in an inside room. But he snapped the ropes from his arms like a thread.

The Third Attempt to Entice Samson (Judges 16:13–14)

Then Delilah said to Samson, "Until now you have fooled me and told me lies: Do tell me wherewith you can be bound." He said to her, "If you weave the seven locks of my head with the web." So she fastened it with a pin and said to him, "The Philistines are upon you, Samson." He awakened from his sleep and tore away the pin of the loom with the web.

Delilah finally succeeds in her fourth attempt to entice Samson: "And so, when she had nagged him with her words day after day and pressured him, he was exasperated to the point of death" (16:16). At last, Samson reveals his secret to her. Delilah has Samson fall asleep with his head on her lap, asks a Philistine for a razor, and then snips off the braids of Samson's head. The erotic overtones of this specific passage are self-evident.

In the original oral tradition, the tale of Samson and Delilah is an erotic story in which the woman overpowers the man in the act of intercourse; this fact is blurred in subsequent renderings. One reads that "She [Delilah] made him sleep upon her knees" (19) and about Yael and Sisera "He was fast asleep" (Judg. 4:21). The author's idea was to protect the image of the biblical heroes. "At her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down; at her feet he bowed, he fell" (Judg. 5:27).

The motif of the invincible male hero who is tempted by his beloved to reveal the secret of his strength to her is well known in folktales. The treacherous woman delivers her lover to the enemies in the ancient Gilgamesh tales, which refer to a hero who loses his supernatural strength due to the betrayal of a prostitute.

The story of Samson and Delilah is unlike biblical tales, such as those of Yael and Sisera and Esther and Haman, in which the reader is meant to revere the heroine, who saves her people from a hostile enemy. In the biblical account of Delilah, readers identify with the male hero, whereas Delilah is represented as a negative character. Samson is a towering figure capable of all acts of heroism; but he is unable to withstand the seductive powers of Delilah, a foreign woman, and finally reveals his great secret to her.

The biblical text reports that Samson loved Delilah (16:4), but not that she loved him—a hint, perhaps, that she does not love him and will have no qualms about betraying him.

Folklore scholars hypothesize that the tale originally was told by the Philistines, who admired Delilah's actions and rejoiced at Samson's demise. When the story was transposed in the Hebrew narrative, Delilah's character changed: In the biblical version, she carries out her act not for patriotic motives but, rather, out of greed. There is some similarity between the tale of Samson and the life of Hercules. As with Samson, Hercules' death is caused by a woman he loves.

In Hebrew, the name Samson (Shimshon) conspicuously includes the root for "sun" (*shemesh*), whereas the name Delilah includes the letters for "night." Folklore scholars have thus interpreted the tale of Samson and Delilah as an example of the eternal mythological struggle between the day (sun) and night. The name Delilah is connected by the rabbis with *delal* (to enfeeble), because she "enfeebled Samson's strength, she enfeebled his actions, and she enfeebled his determination" (*Midr. Num. Rab.* 9:24).

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SARAH

Sarah (Sarai), Abraham's wife (Gen. 11:29) and Isaac's mother (Gen. 17:19), is the first of the four Jewish matriarchs. According to Abraham (Gen. 20:12), Sarah was also his half-sister, the daughter of his father but not of his mother.

The usual interpretation of the name Sarah is "princess" or "chieftain[ness]," though it may also be connected with the Akkadian S'arrat, one of the designations of the mother-goddess Ishtar.

Sarah was infertile, and in biblical times infertility was considered a disgrace and a curse for a woman. The folkloric motif about the infertility of a beautiful, beloved wife characterizes biblical myths of the mothers Rebekah and Rachel as well as the theme of deliverance from infertility with God's help.

The use of the infertility motif serves as a bridge connecting the recognition that birth expresses God's will and his power to control fertility and the need to cast light upon his intervention in special circumstances. Hence the infant (Isaac), whose birth is announced by three angels, is perceived as the product of the connection between God and a mortal woman. In a demythologizing process, the biblical story emphasizes the results of this connection not in terms of mythic concepts of children of the gods but, rather, as regular mortals.

The announcement of Isaac's birth is connected to a passage that relates to Abimelech, king of Gerar (Gen. 1–18), which makes clear that Sarah returned to her days of youthful beauty before the birth. In Egypt Abraham tells the pharaoh that his wife is his sister to save him from being killed out of jealousy (Gen. 12:11–14). The pharaoh takes the beautiful Sarah from him; after God afflicts the pharaoh with the ten plagues, the Egyptian ruler returns Sarah with gifts ("all that he had" [Gen. 12:20]). In the Midrash, Sarah prayed to God to deliver her from the pharoah, and an angel was sent to whip the king at her command (*Bereshit Rab.* 45:1).

It can be hypothesized that this folkloric motif derives from the Egyptian legend of two brothers. The Midrash relates that Sarah was concealed in a box so that she could be smuggled from Canaan across the border into Egypt—the account resembles the first story in the tales of the Arabian nights.

The fact that the story is repeated three times in the Book of Genesis (Sarah and the pharaoh, Sarah and Abimelech of Gerar, and Rebekah and Abimelech) might reflect various folk traditions passed among the people orally and incorporated into the biblical text. The repetition is characteristic of narrative traditions. In addition to the repetition, processes by which the story is told in gradual stages and intensifies from version to version are evident.

After the birth of Ishmael, Sarah struggles with Hagar, her Egyptian maid whom she offered to her husband so that she could give birth to a child. She changes her name from Sarai to Sarah only after Isaac's birth; similarly, Abram becomes Abraham after the birth (Gen. 17:5), in accordance with the popular belief that a change in a person's name changes his or her fortune.

The promise of offspring was repeated when the angels visited the tent of Abraham and Sarah. Sarah laughed when she heard the news, thus providing the basis for the name of the son, Isaac: The Hebrew for Isaac, Yitzhak, is based on the Hebrew root for "laughter" (*tazhak*).

The midrashic literature provides effusive descriptions of Sarah's beauty; for example, during the ninety years in which Sarah did not give birth, she had the appearance of a "bride at the wedding canopy" (*Midr. Bereshit Rab.* 45:4). This motif is familiar in story-telling that emphasizes that a hero's qualities are unaffected by time. There are also legends that stress her righteousness and the miracles that occurred to her. In one legend, villagers gossip about the old man and old woman who are said to have brought a street urchin from the market (the boy is said to be their son). A miracle occurs, and her breasts open as two fountains, and she nurses all infants of women who were there (*Midr. Bamidbar Rab.*). In addition, during her lifetime, the doors of her house were always hospitably open; her dough miraculously increased in volume; a light burned from Friday evening to Friday evening, and a pillar of the divine cloud rested above her tent (*Midr. Bereshit Rab.* 60:16).

According to the Midrash, after Abraham offered Isaac in sacrifice, Satan related to Sarah that Abraham had slaughtered their son. She fainted, lost her mind, and died of grief (*Targum* Jonathan, Gen. 22:20; *Sefer ha'yashar,* based on ancient sources). Beauty was extinguished when she died, and everything was thrown into confusion (*Midr. Ha'gadol Bereshit*).

Sarah passed away at the age of 127, in Kiryat Arba. Abraham purchased the Cave of the Patriarchs (Machpelah) to bury her.

Sarah should have reached Abraham's lifespan of 175, but forty-eight years were taken away because of her readiness to argue with Abraham over Hagar's misdeeds (*Bereshit Rab.,* 45:5). Sarah's behavior toward Ishmael, whom she drove away from Abraham's tent, is justified

on the grounds that she saw him commit idolatry, rape, and murder (Tosfata Sota 6, 6; *Bereshit Rab.* 53:11).

Sarah appears in fifteen stories registered in the Israel Folklore Archives (IFA), only a few of which are continuations of midrashic tales, including Sarah's response after she heard of Isaac's sacrifice (Morocco, IFA 10.022).

In folktales that are still transmitted orally, Sarah figures as a righteous woman who lived a long life with Abraham because she seldom spoke. This point is made by a sage in Jerusalem who wants women to keep quiet in their portion of the synagogue (Sephardi, Eretz Israel, IFA 622). She can play a starring role in legends—an elderly woman who brings cures for a mortally ill child is said to be Sarah (Ashkenazi, Eretz Israel, IFA 5194).

Humorous formulas based on word play in Yiddish and Hebrew were common to Jews in Eastern Europe. For example, Sarah, the daughter of a rabbi from Kraków, asked for a bone (Yidd., *bayin*). During a Sabbath meal, her brother believes that she has acted impolitely and slaps her. After she starts to cry, he justifies his action by saying that he had to recite the passage that begins "and Sarah's son (*ben*)" (Poland, IFA 14463).

The Arab-Israeli conflict also finds expression in these tales. In one tale from Tunisia, a Jewish boy who is struck by an Arab boy claims that he appealed to Sarah, who complained that she allowed Abraham to wed Hagar, thereby giving rise to a loathed nation. The qadi (Muslim religious judge) revokes the rite of striking Jews due to this boy's deed (IFA 9670).

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See also: Abraham.

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SATAN

In the Bible, the early etymology of the name Satan means "opponent" or "enemy" and is used in the context of human relations (e.g., Num. 22:22, 32; 1 Sam. 29:4; 2 Sam. 19:23; 1 Kgs. 5:18; Ps. 109:6). But in the books of Zechariah and Job, the name refers to a separate entity, who lacks any detailed physical aspect. He is a heavenly being and serves as the celestial prosecutor (Zech. 3:1–2), challenging Job's faith and moral integrity (Job 1:6–12; 2:1–7).

This trait of the heavenly prosecutor was adopted and further developed in rabbinical sources and midrashic literature. Satan became the dreadful denunciator of any private or collective wrongdoing by a person or by Israel (*Avot de'Rabbi Nathan,* [addition 2 to version 1], ch. 9; *Gen. Rab.* 57:4; *Exod. Rab.* 31:2; *Lamentations Rabba* Buber 2). This characteristic of Satan has predominated in Jewish culture as well as in folktales (e.g., IFA 2015; IFA 3162; IFA 15277; IFA 6791).

Various customs are explained as being designed to prevent Satan from denouncing individuals or Israel as a whole, such as the fast on the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) (*Psiqta Rabbati* 45:185b) or a blessing immediately following ritual hand washing (*netilat yadaim*) (*Deut. Rab.* 2:10; *Makhzor Vitri* 17).

His name is often replaced by other terms, such as Samael (*Exod. Rab.* 18:5; *Lev. Rab.* 21:4), the Angel of Death, or the evil inclination (*b. Bava Batra* 16a).

One of Satan's major cultural functions is to act as an arbiter of moral issues. He is described as rejoicing and dancing while a person sins (*Num. Rab.* 20:11) and is eager to punish evildoers. Assisting Noah in the planting of the vine, he caused the appalling aspects of drunkenness (*Tanḥuma Noah* 13:13). He controls the four matters viewed as provoking sins: wealth, women, evil inclination, and feuds (*Kallah Rabbati* 6:1). In this context, he is represented as connected to women: the creation of Eve generated his existence (*Gen. Rab.* 17:6; *Yalqut Shimoni* Gen. 23). Some actions involving women are regarded as bringing him into one's home, such as a father envying a beautiful woman (Num. 218:18) or marrying two women (*Tanaim* Deut. 21:22). According to medieval Judah the Pious, he provokes men into adultery (e.g., *Sefer ḥasidim* Wistinetzki 361). He causes quarrels among couples (IFA 4016). The custom that at the conclusion of funerals women should leave the cemetery first is explained by the belief that Satan and the Angel of Death are dancing before them (*Yalqut Shimoni* Zech. 570:3; *Tashbetz Qatan* 447). A humorous element in folktales is his request from God to experience marriage with a human wife. After his request is granted, Satan unhappily married, flees to avoid his wicked wife (e.g., IFA 14104; IFA 14894; IFA 14969).

Satan is a vehicle through which critical doubts about divine justice can be approached. For example, Isaac's sacrifice is explained as being initiated by Satan (*b. Sanhedrin* 89b). He is described as obstructing the journey of Abraham and Isaac to the site of the sacrifice, while questioning the strength of human faith and the justification of divine commands (*Gen. Rab.* 56:22; *Tanḥuma Vayar* Buber 261:114; *Yalqut Shimoni* Vayar 22:98; IFA 10022).

National disasters and suffering are explained as a result of his insistence that harsh sentences be imposed for collective sins, such as the making of the Golden Calf (*Exod. Rab.* 43:1; *Tanḥuma Ki Tisa* 19) or the decadent behavior of Persian Jewry (*Esth. Rab.* 7:13).

He is also described as disrupting righteous activities and behaviors (*mitzvot*) such as Moses's reception of the tables of law (*Exod. Rab.* 41:7; *Maḥzor Vitri* 508), blowing the horn on Rosh Ha'Shana (IFA 1609; IFA 1645), and carrying out the ritual of the Sabbath ending (IFA 2007); he is said to be annoyed by Torah study sessions (*Gen. Rab.* 38:7; 84:3). These events end with the righteous overcoming Satan, and as a result the sacred and normative ethos is strengthened.

Some of the views concerning him seem to reflect human fears of dangerous situations: He is active during periods dangerous to people (such as giving birth or engaging in battle) (*y. Shabbat* 1:1, 2:6; *Gen. Rab.* 91:9). Some people are subjected to his threats: the lonely traveler, the person who sleeps alone in a dark house, and the one who sails upon the open sea (*y. Shabbat* 2:6; *Eccl. Rab.* 3:2).

Paradoxically, some beliefs about Satan also reflect human apprehension about happy events: He is believed to be present wherever there is calm, food, and drinks (*Gen. Rab.* 38:7, 84:3). The ancient proverb "Man should never open his mouth to Satan" (*b. Ber.* 19a, 60a), is an excellent example of this tendency.

Various customs were viewed as reducing Satan's malefic actions, and these change according to time and space. For example, in tannaitic sources a person intending to travel was advised to refrain from leaving on the same day as the wicked, because he would be accompanied by Satanic angels (*t. Avoda Zarah,* Liberman 17:3). The scapegoat on Yom Kippur was considered a bribe to him to deflect his denunciations (*Sifrei* Shemini 1:3). Yet Satan is powerless while peace dwells among the people of Israel, even if they worship idolatry (Num. 42; *Num. Rab.* 11:7). In the Midrash, observing a righteous way of life according to the Torah and giving charity prevent his actions and prosecution (*Deut. Rab.* 2:10). The different ways of blowing the shofar are supposed to confuse him (*b. Rosh Hashanah* 16b; *Sekhel Tov* Buber Gen. 22). On the Day of Atonement, he does not prosecute (*Lev. Rab.* 21:4).

In the Middle Ages, reading the Torah continuously (*Maḥzor Vitri* 426) and putting salt on a table before the meal starts were supposed to prevent Satan from acting (*Hagahot Ashrey* on Berakhot ch. 6, 22:1; Trachtenberg 1977, 155, 160). The use of amulets carrying the expression "Krah Satan" (lit., "rend Satan") is supposed to cure a person who has been attacked by an evil spirit (Trachtenberg 1977, 95).

Idit Pintel-Ginsberg

See also: Demon.

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SCHWARZBAUM, HAIM (1911–1983)

Haim Schwarzbaum's mastery of ancient and modern languages, as well as his unlimited interest in world cultures, positioned him as one of the last great comparative folklorists of the twentieth century. Schwarzbaum brought to folklore studies his background in European, ethnographic-Orientalist learning and the school of Jewish studies at the Hebrew University in the first half of the twentieth century. The combination of the two formed the basis of his folkloristic achievements, which included a lifetime of scholarship and the authorship of five books.

Schwarzbaum was born on September 24, 1911, in Warsaw, Poland. He began his academic studies in his hometown, where he remained until his immigration to Palestine in 1937. He continued his studies in Arabic and Muslim culture at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Haim Schwarzbaum. *(Courtesy of Moshe Schwarzbaum)*

Schwarzbaum's folklore publications began in 1938 with short articles in daily newspapers in Hebrew and English, then developed into articles in professional Israeli and international journals in the 1960s and 1970s, and culminated in his great research books. Schwarzbaum's scholarly achievements can be categorized in three large-scale fields.

First, the postbiblical traditions in Judaism and Islam. His first scholarly article, "The Denier and the Loaves of Bread" (*Edot* 1946), clearly belongs in this category. Here Schwarzbaum revealed his preference for the comparative discipline, his immense mastery of sources in a great number of languages, and his keen attention to the cultural diversity of tales. Schwarzbaum continued his extensive publication in international folklore journals as *Fabula,* but his main achievement in this category was the last book published in his lifetime, *Biblical and Extra-Biblical Legends in Islamic Folk Literature* (1982). Here he explored the traces of biblical traditions in the main literary genres of Arab folk literature. His findings about the cultural interchange between Jewish and Muslim cultures in the domain of oral, folkloric traditions are of first-rate importance for understanding both cultures.

Second, Jewish folk narratives of the Middle Ages. Schwarzbaum was one of the first scholars in Jewish studies to understand the importance of the narrative traditions of the Middle Ages to the study of European folklore. He studied the sources and analogues of major folklore works such as Joseph ben Meir ibn Zabara's *Book of Delight,* Moses Gaster's edition of *Sefer ha'Ma'asiyot* (The Exempla of the Rabbis), Rabbi Nissim ben Jacob ibn Shāhīn's *An Elegant Composition Concerning Relief After Adversity* and the *Chronicles of Yerahmeel.* However, his most important publication in this area, which also brought him international recognition, was his book-length study of Petrus Alfonsi's *Disciplina Clericalis,* published in *Se-farad* (1961–1963). In it, Schwarzbaum studied one of the most influential exempla books of medieval Europe, revealing the Arab and Jewish sources of the stories as well as their influence on European folklore. The most comprehensive of Schwarzbaum's publications is *The Mishle Shu'alim* (Fox Fables) *of Rabbi Berechiah ha'Nakdan: A Study in Comparative Folklore and Fable Lore* (1979). The study is dedicated to the thirteenth-century Hebrew collection of fables by the French Rabbi Berechiah ben Natronai ha'Nakdan—one of the most important medieval books of fables. This is a comprehensive study of fable theory in general and of each of the fables included in the Berechiah collection.

Third, the study of Jewish folk literature. Throughout Schwarzbaum's scholarly publications, he expressed important observations and findings on the history and development of Jewish folkloristics. In 1961, in one of his early articles, he presented an authoritative examination of recent studies in the field. So did his "The Contribution of the Jewish Scholars in England to Jewish and General Folklore"—a fundamental and comprehensive survey of the works of two of the most influential British folklorists: Joseph Jacobs and Moses Gaster. However, his main achievement in this field is *Studies in Jewish and World Folklore* (1968), in which he devoted special attention to the study of Jewish folk narrative, folk song, dance, proverbs, folk beliefs, and customs and material culture. This book is still considered one of the basic tools for understanding the history and methods of Jewish folkloristics.

A selection of the most notable of Schwarzbaum's articles was published after his death by the archive of Jewish and Muslim Folklore bearing his name at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev in Israel. His articles in English were published as *Jewish Folklore Between East and West: Collected Papers,* edited and introduced by Eli Yassif (1989), and articles in Hebrew in *Roots and Landscapes: Collected Studies in Folklore,* edited by Eli Yassif (1993).

From 1939 to 1948 Schwarzbaum served as librarian and archivist of British Mandate Palestine, and from 1948, when the State of Israel was founded, to 1977, he worked as archivist of the Israel Defense Forces. He died on November 11, 1983.

Eli Yassif

See also: Yassif, Eli.

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Sea

The admiration aroused by mankind's first encounter with the sea gave birth to many myths, including the biblical myth of creation. Comparing this myth to myths from the ancient Middle East reveals that the act of creation had always involved the surrender of the sea as a threat over civilization and its submission to the will of God. The divine act of separation of the upper waters from the lower ones (Gen. 1:6–7), as well as the struggle between God and the whale, the Great Dragon or *Rahab* in biblical sources (Isa. 27:1; Ps. 74:13–14, 89:11) developed into a moral conflict in latter rabbinic literature, reflecting the evil nature of the sea and its destructive force restrained only by the unlimited powers of God (*b. Bava Batra* 74b). The rebellious nature of water reflected in the story of the flood (Gen. 7) and the crossing of the Red Sea (Exod. 14) also demonstrate the possibility of using the great powers of the sea in order to regain God's sovereignty or prove his supremacy. Later sources show as well how the sea punished Rabban Gamliel for confiscating Rabbi Eliezer (*b. Bava Metzi'a* 59b) and how it carried Rabbi Akiva and Rabbi Meir safely upon its waves to the shore (*b. Yebamot* 121a).

The great distance from home as part of the seamen's lives evoked its own apprehensions. As representatives of the social order, the sages warned the seamen that the sea is one of the three places where Satan takes up his prosecution and might harm them (*Yalqut Shimoni* Gen. 31) and that "money that came from overseas countries . . . never contains a sign of blessing" (*b. Pesaḥim* 50b). Such sayings were meant to protect travelers not only from the risks involved in sailing but also from the risks of crossing cultural borders and being exposed to foreign values.

The fear of the sea, its dangers and uncontrollable conduct, was also reflected through the description of the extreme dimensions and imaginative characteristics attributed to it. The depth of the sea, for example, was so great that Adrianus, having spent three and a half years dropping ropes to the bottom of the sea, stopped only when a divine voice intervened (*Shoḥer Tob* 93). Ancient maps often reflected the common conception according to which the sea surrounded the entire world, and sailings were likely to involve extreme weather or an unpleasant encounter with mythological monsters, such as the animals Rabbah bar bar Ḥannah saw while traveling with seamen (*b. Bava Batra* 73b). Animals and sometimes even human characters that dwelt underwater maintained social order, such as the reign of the whale in the story "The Heart of the Fox" (*Alphabet of Ben Sira,* question 21). The creatures living underwater in this story enjoy eternal life, but when they try to convince the fox to join them, he realizes he will not be able to come

back. In this way, the sea becomes a symbol of both life and death, fertility and barrenness, the predictable and the unknown.

According to folk traditions, overseas one could find imaginary places such as Paradise or the country of demons, which the hero of "The Story of the Jerusalemite" visited. These places were described not in accordance with actual maritime experience but often as a projection of people's fears and desires. That is why such places were characterized in familiar terms relating to reward and punishment. The Jerusalemite arrived in the country of demons by flying on a miraculous owl and could not leave without the help of a crippled demon and an oath that he would return. Thus, even when the sea is described as a dangerous place, its random actions could be explained by means of a familiar cultural rationale and thus could be controlled.

"Miracles on the Sea," as Isaac Leib Peretz shows in his literary tale, might turn the wild environment of the sea into a religious site, but this will occur mostly for the righteous and on Jewish religious festivals or other holy occasions. The sea turned into a space of distinct boundaries upon which God's spirit dwelt also in S.Y. Agnon's book *In the Heart of the Seas* (1956)*,* based on Jewish traditions. Ḥanania, the hero, crossed the sea and reached the land of Israel traveling on top of a handkerchief. Folk stories dealing with the swift crossing of the sea on horseback, by means of an eagle, giant hand, handkerchief, or mat, are held in the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa as well (5507, 3615, and others), reflecting the attempt to control the incomprehensible dimensions of the sea.

Through the mediation of prayers and vows, such as reading *Shirat hayam* (Song of the Sea) in times of danger at sea (IFA 4094, and in Agnon's aforementioned story [pp. 60–61]), dealing with the sea inspired Jewish cultural patronage. In light of this patronage, even the image of seamen was associated with a positive description of people of the wider world, and despite their reservation about seafaring, *Ḥazal* (sages) consulted seamen more than once concerning general knowledge on materials with which they were not familiar (*b. Shabbat* 90a).

The attitude toward the sea often found in Jewish folk tradition therefore remains dualistic. It has been considered frightening, on the one hand, while challenging, on the other hand, and endangering as well as enlightening and broadening the mind, as is said: "There are two who draw in abundance and give forth in abundance: And these are they: the sea and the government" (*Sifre* to Deut. 354).

Alongside Jewish sea traditions, universal traditions were also common among Jews. One example of this was the custom of throwing a person or an object into the sea in order to pacify it or to make the wind blow. This custom, popular among other peoples in ancient times,

has its sources in the animistic perception that the sea has a will of its own and can be appeased when offered a sacrifice. Evidence of this can be found as early as in the story of Jonah (Jonah 1:12–15) or in the talmudic story of Nikanor, who called upon seamen to throw him into the water together with the temple door in order to appease the sea (*b. Yoma* 38a). Traditions and customs of this kind exist to this day as a means of mediation between the unpredictable sea and the human consciousness wishing to control it. Such is the story of the *Dakar,* the submarine that submerged and disappeared underwater on its very first journey at 1968 because it lacked its Indian totem, considered by folk belief to be its protector.

The return to Israel with the rise of Zionism and the naval reality along its seashores raised new cultural opportunities. These were expressed through personal sea stories reconstructing the immigration to Israel as an experience of revelation and refoundation of Zionist values and symbols. Through this cultural filter, life at sea has become a national and social challenge more than a physical one, aiming to grasp the frequently changing substance of the sea and thereby to turn exile into a home.

Tsafi Sebba-Elran

See also: Patai, Raphael; Seamen Tales and Traditions.

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SEAMEN TALES AND TRADITIONS

Water motions and wave voices occupied the human imagination and invoked an animistic perception of the sea. Stories about mythological sea animals of monstrous dimensions, such as the great whales, appeared as part of the Jewish myth of creation (Gen. 1:21). Only the divine powers of God could master the outburst of the sea as demonstrated by the story of the flood (Gen. 7) or that of Jonah. The prophet who ran away from God into the sea had to be thrown from the ship to the water at the time of a storm in order to appease the sea and thereby to control God's anger (Jonah 1).

Later encounters with the sea, as seen through Rabbah bar bar Ḥannah's corpus of sea tales in the Talmud, also involve gigantic waves surging up to the stars or a monstrous fish that took the ship three days and three nights to surround (*Bava Batra* 73a). Here as well as in other traditional contexts, the mighty forces of nature surrender to God, using a biblical verse or other magic means such as Rabbah bar bar Ḥannah's club with the biblical verse engraved on it. Prayers, vows, and other traditional practices assigned to control the sea were often connected to Passover, when, according to Jewish beliefs, the miracle of crossing the Red Sea took place. Throwing the unleavened bread (*matzah shmura*), the *afikoman,* or the Omer salt into the sea, for example, could calm the water and appease a storm (Israel Folk Archives [IFA] 6628; Sholem Aleichem's "Home for Passover").

Among sea stories reflecting the unique difficulties and challenges of Jewish travelers, there are stories about the Sabbath at sea. As sailing at sea made it necessary to violate the Sabbath rest, many rabbis made use of supernatural forces to delay the ship from sailing on the Sabbath, as did Rabbi Ya'akov Abuḥatsera (IFA 12339) and Rabbi Shmuel (IFA 13809). Through the mediation of God or his messenger, the threatening boundless sea turned not only into a familiar place but into a religious experience of miracles. According to this view, the sea became a place of refuge. Jewish heroes such as Maimonides (known as the Rambam) escaped foreign leaders into the sea and crossed it swiftly through the use of the divine name, put on a piece of paper and cast into the sea. The miraculous experience is also expressed through the Jewish tale type "cast thy bread upon waters" (AT 670*b), according to which a son casting bread into the sea to obey his father gained the ability to comprehend the language of animals and found a treasure.

As a mediator between the familiar social order and the unknown borders of the sea, the fish has become a Jewish symbol of good luck. In addition to being able to fulfill wishes (AT 555), it has also the power to enrich the poor and to compensate the righteous. Thus, for instance, a fish that the fisherman's son put back into the water helped

him and enriched him in exchange, at AT 506 tale type. According to the Jewish tale type A*980, either the Rambam or a different hero in the story miraculously found the king's ring inside a fish and thus restored his status as leader of the Jewish community. Likewise, a flock of fish built a "bridge" so that the hero could reach his kidnapped wife (IFA 14389), as in another story, in which crossing the Red Sea took place on back of a giant fish (IFA 4954).

The sea was also considered a dubious and dangerous environment because it was out of reach for the Jewish congregation. Those Jews who did sail were mostly a minority, being exposed to foreign values without the protection and the supervision of the community. Jewish travel diaries dating from the Middle Ages and later reflect this social and cultural seclusion, as one can read in Judah Halevi's poem "At Sea, 16," in Rabbi Moshe Bassola's Diary, or in the travel story of Rabbi Nachman of Bratslav, all based on Jewish folk traditions as well as on personal testimonies.

Social life on board a ship has always been an issue to be dealt with for the seamen. The intercultural meeting point between strangers on a ship aroused the fear of mutiny or scheming, as recounted in the Midrash of the man who drilled a hole in the ship and threatened to drown all its passengers (*Yalqut Shimoni* Jer. 324). These fears stemmed from the negative image attributed to seamen in most texts. Although seamen enjoyed a certain religious halo, being so close to wild nature and depending on the grace of God (*b. Nida* 14a), they were presented as greedy womanizers, especially in modern folktales. The tale type AT 938, which describes a washerwoman snatched by a captain on shore, has a multitude of parallel versions in the IFA and perpetuates the image of the seaman as a rootless person exploiting each port to have a good time with women of all kinds. Hence, going to sea has often been associated with disobeying social conventions, the results of which would be devastating. One example of this is the medieval story "The Story of the Jerusalemite," in which the son breaks an oath he gave to his father by going to sea. Overseas he marries Ashmedai's daughter who kills him for not being loyal to her.

After the development of oceanography, technology, and shipping, perception of the sea was less affected by religious traditions. Stories related to the revival of Israel, such as immigration under British Mandate Palestine and the establishment of the Israeli navy and the fishing industry, evoked mainly social and ideological issues, such as the implications of life away from home, the social equality at sea under the influence of kibbutz values, and the formation of an Israeli identity in the cosmopolitan context of the sea. All can be seen in personal sea stories from the late twentieth century.

Tsafi Sebba-Elran

See also: Sea.

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SEDER PLATE

The central object on the table in many Jewish homes on the first and second nights of Passover is a large plate, the Seder plate, known in Hebrew as *ke'arat le'il haseder.* The plate and the different articles placed or, rather, displayed on it serve to recount the story of Passover in a symbolic way. Thus each of the foods on the plate is understood and interpreted in the context of the slavery in Egypt, the Exodus and freedom, and the celebration of Passover in the era of the Temple.

The selected foods and their traditional symbols are as follows: Three *matzot*—the unleavened bread or *matzah* generally symbolizes the haste in which the Jews left Egypt—however, the three *matzot* gained additional meaning, especially in the Lurianic Kabbalah (see below); *zroa,* grilled shank bone of a lamb—symbol of the ancient ceremonial meal of the roasted paschal sacrifice (*korban Pesaḥ); beitzah,* hardboiled egg—symbol of the festival offering (*korban beitzah*); *maror,* bitter herbs—symbol of the embittered lives and difficult labor of the Israelites under the yoke of their Egyptian taskmasters; *haroset,* a mixture of minced apples, nuts, and wine—symbol of the mortar and bricks used by the Israelite slaves during their bondage in Egypt; *karpas,* any green leafy vegetable eaten during the meal (lettuce, celery, parsley, etc.)—originally it stood for the hors d'oeuvres eaten in the meals of the upper class in antiquity and thus served as a symbol of freedom and nobility at the Seder. The custom of dipping the *karpas* in saltwater, however, has been interpreted by some scholars as a reminder of the tears the Israelites shed in Egypt, among other explanations.

The manner in which the different foods are arranged on the plate differs from one community to another. Ef-

forts to standardize the order have been offered by the followers of Rabbi Isaac Luria (Ha'Ari) and Rabbi Elijah, the Gaon of Vilna. In the Lurianic Kabbalah, Passover foods acquired additional meaning connected to the ideas of the school. Thus the plate and its foods have been associated with the ten *sefirot,* or divine emanations, in Lurianic Kabbalah, and the three *matzot*—representing the three "classes" of Jews: Cohen, Levi, and Israel—parallel the upper *sefirot: Keter, Ḥokhmah,* and *Binah.* According to this tradition, *maror,* the bitter herb, is placed in the center of the round plate, while the shank bone (right) and egg (left) are above, and the *ḥaroset* (right) and the *karpas* (left) below. In the tradition of the Vilna Gaon only two *matzot* are placed at the center of the plate—representing the two loaves of bread (*leḥem mishneh*) used on the Sabbath or holiday. Above the *matzot* are the *maror* (right) and *ḥaroset* (left), and below are the bone (right) and egg (left). It should be noted that the Lurianic custom is much more widespread and most extant plates from the past follow this practice.

While the symbolic foods are mentioned in the early sources, a Seder plate is not described in the talmudic or geonic literature. Medieval authorities, such as the twelfth-century Rabbi Abraham ben Nathan ha-Yarhi (i.e., of Lunel, Provence; ca. 1155–1215), mention "a basket in the center of the Passover table" (in his book of customs *Sefer hamanhig,* Istanbul, 1519). Wicker baskets to hold the three *matzot* were also used by the Jews of medieval Spain, as seen in the illuminations of some Sephardic *Haggadot* (e.g., the Barcelona Haggadah, London, British Lib. Ms. Add. 14761, fol. 28v). The miniature shows the young son carrying the covered basket on his head—re-enacting the Exodus from Egypt. This custom was preserved after the expulsion from Spain and is known to this day among descendants of the Sephardim from Morocco and Tunisia. From Spain also comes the earliest extant Seder plate, which is preserved at the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Judging from its style, decoration, and similarity to Spanish lusterware, this attractive glazed ceramic plate (d. 57 cm), characteristic of Hispano Moresque pottery, is apparently from Manisas in Spain (late fifteenth century). However, the poorly written Hebrew on the plate and uncertainty of its use have led some scholars to doubt its Jewish origin.

By the time the *Shulḥan arukh* was composed, the Seder plate is mentioned in several rabbinic sources, and Rabbi Joseph ben Ephraim Karo himself refers in his code to "a vessel or dish brought to the Seder table" and recommends that the table be "set with beautiful vessels . . . in the manner of freedom" (*Oraḥ ḥayyim* 472:2). Other authorities expanded this idea and emphasized the importance of elaborate ware on the Seder table: "Although during the rest of the year it is best not to display too many beautiful dishes, so that we may keep in mind the destruction of the Temple, yet on the night of Passover,

it is good to display as many fine dishes as possible" (Ganzfried, *Kitzur Shulḥan Arukh* 118:7).

During the Renaissance, Italian ceramic masters developed and perfected the production of colorfully painted pottery in a technique known as majolica. Some twenty-eight Italian majolica Seder plates, tentatively dated to the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, have survived. On the rims of these plates appear in bright colors biblical and ceremonial scenes and figures related to the Passover story. However, as the images on these plates are clearly inspired by printed *Haggadot*, one of which was printed only in the nineteenth century (Trieste, 1864), it is now assumed that these are not genuine Renaissance plates but were made in Italy in the late nineteenth century.

The eighteenth century, in which Jewish communities in Europe grew and prospered, witnessed creativity and growth as well in the production of ceremonial art. Many of the extant Seder plates in museums and private collections were made in this period, emanating from Germany, Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, and the Netherlands. Common were shallow plates made of pewter and engraved with Jewish symbols, scenes related to Passover, and Hebrew inscriptions taken from the Haggadah. The pictorial motifs were often inspired by popular illustrated printed *Haggadot*, such as the Venice Haggadah of 1609 or the Amsterdam Haggadah of 1695 and 1712. Similar scenes also appear on ceramic plates of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which were produced in countries such as England, France, and Hungary. At times the Passover episodes are phototransferred—mechanically copied and printed from the *Haggadot* in black and white, while some colorful porcelain plates, chiefly from Herend, Hungary, employed images based on contemporary popular paintings such as those by Moritz Daniel Oppenheim.

A new type of Seder plate, fitted for both the three *matzot* and the symbolic foods, came into use among wealthy Jewish families in Germany, Austria, and Poland toward the end of the eighteenth century and was still popular in the 1930s. This is a large three-tiered cylindrical plate, made mostly of silver or brass, and at times also of wood. The bottom three levels of the plate, often surrounded by a metal grill and silk curtains, are used for separating the three *matzot* (replacing the cloth pockets customarily used for this purpose), while the symbolic foods are placed on top. The makers of these plates developed toylike silver vessels for the ceremonial foods, at times held by complete (that is full, whole, three-dimensional figures) Jewish figurines. Thus, for example, an elderly Jew holds the *ḥaroset* container in the shape of a wheelbarrow—reminiscent of the hard labor in brick and mortar. At the center of some of these plates is a holder for the Elijah's Cup.

In Muslim lands, no such intricate Seder plates were created. Some communities, where Jewish artisans excelled in the craft of brass, large brass plates were used as

Seder plates. Such plates, engraved with lengthy Hebrew inscriptions, the names of the foods, and ornamental and symbolic designs, such as a wine bottle and cups, emanate in particular from Morocco. Simpler plates, made also of wood, are known from Eretz Israel under the Ottoman Empire. In other communities, for example, Kurdistan, simple but large plates are used, and the foods on them are more abundant, including as many *matzot* as needed for all the participants. Among Yemeni Jews, the entire round Seder table, filled with plenty of green vegetables, actually turns into a "Seder plate."

In the twentieth century the art of the Seder plate was revived by Judaica artists, particularly of German origin. The aforementioned three-tiered plate was designed in a modern style by artists such as Friedrich Adler and Ludwig Wolpert, whose work is influenced by design concepts of the noted Bauhaus school. The Zionist movement and the establishment of Israel influenced the commercial or souvenir brass plates produced in large quantities, mainly in the 1950 and 1960s, when the symbols of the freedom festival found new outlets. In the final decades of the twentieth century, many new innovative plates were created by young artists, and international competitions for designing Seder plates were held in the United States and Israel.

Shalom Sabar

See also: Haggadah of Passover; Passover.

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SEGEL, BENJAMIN WOLF (1866–1931)

Benjamin Wolf Segel contributed to the study of Jewish folklore as collector of East European Jewish folklore in general and Galician-Jewish folklore in particular. He also made a meaningful contribution to the analysis of various genres.

Segel was born in Rohatyn in 1866 and grew up in Lwów in Western Galicia (now Ukraine); not much is known of his childhood. In his publicistic writings he fought strenuously on two fronts: defending his community, the Jews of Poland and Galicia, against anti-Semitism, while battling supporters of Jewish nationalist ideologies within that community, whether Zionist or Yiddishist. Emancipation was his heart's desire; he fervently believed that a Jew could be at home in Poland and its culture. For Segel, emancipation did not mean assimilation. Eliminating the barriers between Poles and Jews did not have to lead the latter to surrender their identity as Jews.

Segel's worldview shaped his work in Jewish folklore. He was a fervent admirer of Jewish folk culture and an energetic collector: His writings reflect the broad interests of someone who deals with many folklore genres, including folktales, folk songs, proverbs, belief and customs, and folk medicine. As someone who believed in emancipation he published in Polish and German. Because much of his work appeared under pseudonyms, including Bar-Ami (son of my people), B. Safra, Dr. Zeev, and B. Rohatyn, his vast contribution to the study of Jewish folklore has not yet been recognized. Few know that Segel collected and interpreted parts of the famous anthology of proverbs published by Ignatz Bernstein. On several occasions, he served as guest editor and wrote a large part of the content of the monthly *Ost und West,* edited by Leo Wintz.

Segel's work appeared in a number of periodicals—*Urquell, Ost und West, Globus, Mitteilungen zur Jüdischen Volkskunde, Wisła, Lud,* and *Izraelita*—as well as in the publications of the Anthropological Commission of the Academy of Arts in Kraków. In this last publication, he published a fascinating anthology of Galician Jewish folktales and folk songs, all of them in Polish translation except one tale, which was printed in Yiddish transcribed in the Latin alphabet.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Poland, Jews of.

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SEHRANE

Sehrane is a traditional festival celebrated by the Jews of Kurdistan on the ninth day of the spring, immediately after the end of Passover. Sehrane (alternately, Serane) is derived from the Arabic *sayaran* (to walk, to stroll) and from the Kurdish *sayaran* (I look, I see). The central Sehrane celebrations mark the changing seasons and people's rejoicing at the end of winter and the transition to spring, when members of the Kurdish community could put behind them the limitations imposed by winter and go outside to spend some time in nature. Additional, secondary ceremonies were celebrated out in the fields to mark specific occasions, such as pupils going out for a picnic to mark the completion of reading the Pentateuch or an outing by pupils and youngsters on Shabbat Nahamu (the Sabbath immediately after the Ninth of Av [Tisha Be'Av]), on which the weekly Portion of the Law "Comfort ye, comfort ye, My people" is read).

History of the Festival

The Sehrane festival has no religious or historical significance of its own. For centuries before arriving in Israel, some communities in Kurdistan celebrated the Sehrane in the fall, during the intermediate days of the holiday of Sukkot (that is, not the first two or last two), but most of them did so after Passover, a holiday with historical significance, being the festival of national liberation. The Sehrane celebrations also reflect geographic conditions in Kurdistan, the character and values of its population, and the customs and relations between Kurdistani Jews and their non-Jewish neighbors.

Kurdistan is a mountainous region whose harsh and snowy winters present an obstacle to travel. The populace used to store food for the winter months, during which they would hardly leave their homes. With the coming of spring, as the snow melted and everything began to bloom again, the people would return to work their fields, and these celebrations expressed the joy of rejuvenation. One can identify in the Sehrane the archaic and universal element of springtime rejuvenation and resurrection that was expressed, in one way or another, by both pagan and Christian societies.

One aspect of the celebrations was a heightened sense of social cohesion and equality. Sometime before the holiday, the communal leaders would assemble to discuss the rituals and would then set tasks for each household to fulfill, according to its capabilities, such as provision of foodstuffs, costumes, and hospitality tents; help for the underprivileged; and assuring the presence of singers and musicians, including some who would play the *dola*—a large wooden cylinder-shaped drum on which one beat with a thick wooden stick on its front and a thin one on its back surface—and musicians to play the *zirne,* a wooden reed flute or mountain oboe. On the day after the end of Passover, members of the community would go out into the countryside to a pleasant site that was far from their permanent place of residence and blessed with flowing water, abundant vegetation, and fresh air. There they would pitch their tents and spend five to seven days.

The Sehrane also played a role in interreligious relations. Muslims were involved in the preparations for the festival and its implementation, as a sign of goodwill and cooperation. The area in which the celebrations were held was generally put at the Jews' disposal by the local tribal leader, who also saw to the security of the celebrants, guarded their vacant homes, and even provided foodstuffs whenever this was necessary. The Jews would repay his kindness by naming the Sehrane after him. Muslim Kurds would bring their Jewish neighbors bread and milk products.

The women would cook over open fires, preparing and serving characteristic dishes such as flat bread, pastry stuffed with meat, stuffed grape leaves, and alcoholic beverages. The well-to-do hosted the poorer members of the community. The men would congregate at a special meetingplace where they recounted folktales, legends, and fables that had been transmitted from generation to generation within the community. During the holiday

A Jewish Kurdish dance with traditional costumes. *(Courtesy of Haya Gavish)*

celebrations, public prayers were conducted three times a day.

Members of the community donned their finest traditional costumes; the women wore their jewelry and lent some to those who had none. They engaged in folk dancing and sang songs of love and of yearning for Zion and Jerusalem, in addition to traditional Kurdish songs in the Kurmanji dialect. Many engagement ceremonies were held during the Sehrane, more liberal behavior among individuals was condoned, and social customs relating to social standing, age, and sex were not rigidly observed. This happy frame of mind continued among the community members long after the festivities and instilled a hope for a better future.

Modern-Day Celebrations

In 1971, the Association of Kurdistani Jews in Israel decided to revive the traditional Sehrane festivities with the objective of preserving the Kurdish community's unique culture, of enhancing pride in their cultural heritage, and of expressing their successful integration into Israeli society. The first celebrations, held in 1975 in the cooperative agricultural settlements of Beit Yosef and Yardena, both in the Jordan Valley, were attended by 20,000 members of the Kurdish community in Israel. So as not to compete with the Moroccan-Jewish festival of the Mimuna, which that community celebrated on the day after the conclusion of Passover, the date of the Sehrane was moved to the day after the end of Sukkot.

There are some striking differences between the festivities in Kurdistan and the manner in which the Sehrane is celebrated in Israel. In Kurdistan each com-

munity organized its own celebrations. But in Israel the event is centrally organized and held at one site in the country, after the end of Sukkot. Jews who hail from Persian Kurdistan, however, decided not to deviate from their traditional custom and, since 1987, have held their own, separate celebration—which they call Sayaran—on the day after the end of Passover.

Despite these changes, Kurdish Jews in Israel have successfully maintained the spirit of popular, joyful spontaneity that characterized the Sehrane in Kurdistan over the years.

Haya Gavish

See also: Kurdistan, Jews of.

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SERPENT

See: Animals; Birth; Cain and Abel; Eve

SEVEN BENEDICTIONS (*SHEVA BERAKHOT*)

See: Marriage

SEVEN SPECIES (*SHIV'AT HA'MINIM*)

See: Plants

SHABAZI, SHALOM (1619–CA. 1680)

Shalom Shabazi was a poet and Torah scholar who contributed to the consolidation and finalization of Yemeni-Jewish poetry. He was the most significant Jewish poet in Yemen and can be viewed not only as the greatest poet of Yemenite Jewry but of Jewish and Hebrew literature through generations.

Yemeni-Jewish poetry can be traced back at least to the mid-twelfth century. At that time it was already influenced by the Hebrew poetry of Spain, but retained some of its affinity for the ancient Eastern paytanic school (a school of liturgical religious poetry) of the Land of Israel. During the following generations it was gradually shaped, almost completely, in accordance with the qualities of the Hebrew poetry of Spain. A crucial change took place in the sixteenth century, when the influence of the new pre-exilic school of Safed, mainly embodied in the poetry of Israel Najjārah, was brought to Yemen by one of its distinguished creators, the poet and the *māqāmist* (an Arabic and Hebrew literary genre of rhymed prose), Zekharyah al-Dāhiri, who visited Safed, where he met prominent Jewish scholars. This influence, in terms of form and contents, became a basic element of Yemeni-Jewish poetry, as is shown in al-Dāhiri's work as well as in that of his younger contemporary, Yosef ben Israel. Another significant feature of Yemeni-Jewish poetry, already known from the works of Zekharyah Ha-Rofe and Sa'adyah ben David in the fifteenth century, is that it was written not only in Hebrew but in Judeo-Arabic as well. The second half of the sixteenth century, then, is when Yemeni-Jewish poetry began to develop as a singular poetic school, although it did not abandon its strong affinity for Spanish-Hebrew poetry.

Living in the seventeenth century, Shabazi witnessed the tragic events from which Yemenite Jews suffered. He was one of the social and spiritual leaders of his community and adhered to the messianic movement centered on Shabbatai Zvi, the Jewish false messiah from the 1660s.

As the most admired historical figure among Yemeni Jews, Shabazi is the most popular protagonist of Yemeni-Jewish folktales. Many of those folktales present him as the national Jewish hero who fought to abolish the evil anti-Jewish deeds of the mythical Muslim wizard Ibn 'Alwān, although the latter lived some hundreds of years before him (d. 1267). No wonder, then, that his tomb was the destination of thousands of pilgrims, Jews as well as Muslims, men and women, who came seeking remedies for their ills—sickness, sterility, poverty, and the like.

Shabazi's prominence as a poet is due to various aspects of his poetry: (a) its sheer quantity; (b) the variety of poetical genres in which he wrote, covering all Jewish life within the yearly circle and the life circle; (c) his mastery of the three languages used in Yemeni-Jewish poetry: Hebrew, Arabic, and Aramaic; (d) his linguistic originality and ability to invent new words; (e) his erudition in terms of Jewish and Arab sources, including Arab poetry; (f) his development of the *muwašša* (a special kind of Arabic and Hebrew poem known by that name but also called a "girdle poem") construction to an unprecedented extent; (h) his treatment of the sufferings of Jews under Muslim rule during his lifetime, such that his poems constitute substantive documentation of the contemporary history of the Yemeni Jews. But beyond all that, his contemporaries as well as his successors considered his poetry the best expression of their hard life, while advancing the messianic aspirations that would be redeemed in the Land of Israel. No wonder, then, that his poems were recited by Yemeni Jews when they returned to their ancestors' homeland. Shabazi, whose poetry overshadowed not only that of all his Yemenite or Spanish antecedants but that of those who succeeded him, was the only Yemeni-Jewish historical figure about whom a huge amount of folktales developed. This is also why almost every Yemenite *dīwān* (a book of poems), in manuscript or in print, is attributed to Shabazi, while all other poets represented in it are completely ignored.

According to popular tradition, Shabazi wrote fifteen hundred poems. But leaving that tradition aside, more than 750 poems of his are listed by scholars of Yemeni-Jewish poetry. Few, if any, other figures in the long history of Jewish literature can boast of such a literary yield. Furthermore, many of his poems are very long, frequently more than 150 lines.

In spite of his popularity, the number of his poems printed in traditional *dīwāns* or in other kinds of liturgical anthologies of poetry is relatively limited, as the repertoire used by the community was very selective and assigned for special occasions. The majority of his poetic writings remained in manuscripts. Through the efforts of modern Israeli scholars, many of Shabazi's poems were published for the first time. Unfortunately, however, no comprehensive scholarly edition of Shabazi's poetry has appeared.

The date of his death is unknown, but scholars have evidence that he was still alive in 1680.

Yosef Tobi

See also: Yemen, Jews of.

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SHABBAT

In Jewish tradition, the Sabbath (Heb., Shabbat) is the seventh day of the week. It is a day of rest, on which labor is forbidden, after the six workdays. According to various biblical passages, the primary meaning of the word *shabbat* is "stop," "suspend," or "refrain from acting," and not just "rest." The talmudic sages accordingly applied the term "sabbath" to all the holidays mentioned in the Torah, even those that do not fall on the seventh day of the week.

Biblical Roots of the Sabbath

The Sabbath, as distinguished from and different from the other days, is an original Jewish concept. Its observance proclaims that the Sabbath was created along with the universe and is an essential part of its structure, just like the moon and the stars, the sun and the heavens, the sea and the dry land. The Sabbath is the only holiday established during the seven days of creation and the only one mentioned in the Ten Commandments (Exod. 20:8–11; Deut. 5:12–15). This repeated reference attests to the great importance attached to the Sabbath in biblical thought and in Judaism. The Sabbath is one of the topics addressed most frequently in the Hebrew Bible, especially in the Torah. The Sabbath is not a human product but a divine creation, sanctified by God's actions, which appointed it as a day of rest for the entire universe. It exemplifies the principle of social justice in that all human beings are equal—"so that your male and female slave may rest as you do" (Deut. 5:14) and that all creatures, even animals, have a right to rest: "you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your ox or your ass, or any of your cattle, or the stranger in your settlements" (ibid.; cf. Exod. 20:10).

The Sabbath was given to the people of Israel as a sign of the Lord's covenant with them and as a remembrance of the creation (Exod. 31:16–17), but also as a remembrance of the exodus from Egypt and the Lord's deliverance of the Israelites (Deut. 5:15). Consequently their observance of the Sabbath is proof that Israel is the favored nation of the Creator, that He sanctifies them and that they are faithful to the covenant with Him. The prophets linked the destinies of the people, of Jerusalem, and of the Davidic monarchy, as well as the people's visions, aspirations, desires, and dreams, with their observance of the Sabbath (Isa. 56:2–6, 58:13–14; Jer. 17:21–27; Ezek. 20:12–24; Neh. 9:14). In the well-known formulation of the Jewish thinker and essayist Ahad Ha'am (pseudonym of Asher Ginsberg, 1856–1927), "more than the Jews have kept the Sabbath, the Sabbath has kept the Jews." That is, their meticulous observance of the Sabbath as described in the Bible was crucial to the national survival of the Jewish people over the generations, in all their diasporas, despite the unremitting pressure of assimilation, massacres, pogroms, blood libels, persecution, and even genocide of the first half of the twentieth century.

The Sabbath is a holy day. The Torah prescribes severe penalties for its desecration: "Anyone who profanes it shall be put to death: whoever does work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people" (Exod. 31:14). To remove any doubt, the Torah reports the stoning of a man who was found gathering wood on the Sabbath (Num. 15:32–36).

The customs and ordinances of the Sabbath, including permitted and forbidden labors, are not enumerated in the Torah or counted individually among the positive and negative precepts. It was the sages of the Mishnah, especially its redactor, Rabbi Yehuda ha'Nasi, who first introduced order and logic to the Sabbath regulations. Drawing on a tradition that traced back to the days at Mount Sinai, the sages defined thirty-nine categories of labor that are prohibited on the Sabbath—those that were required for construction of the sanctuary in the wilderness.

From these thirty-nine primary categories (Heb., *avot melakhah*) of prohibited labors, many secondary categories (Heb., *toladot*) are derived. The observance of the Sabbath, with meticulous attention to its special character, has a strong mark on Jewish life. Despite the immense difficulties, the Jewish people held observance of the Sabbath to be equal in weight to all the other precepts in the Torah. Jewish life in the Land of Israel or the Diaspora has always been conducted from Sabbath to Sabbath—emotionally,

A cup and a plate for *Kiddush* and *Havdalah* at beginning and conclusion of Shabbat. Silver. Inscription: Glass of Elijah. 20th century, Morocco. *(© The Israel Museum, Jerusalem)*

spiritually, and physically. In the Bible and Talmud, *shabbat,* as its focal point and terminus, sometimes has the sense of "week."

The mishnaic sages stipulated that one must give the Sabbath feasts a special and festive air, to further distinguish them from weekday meals. Accordingly, starting in the middle of the week Jews would set aside the finest foods and delicacies they found in the market, so that they could experience the "delight of the Sabbath" and the "honor of the Sabbath," making their Sabbath repasts the best of the entire week.

The Jewish concept of the Sabbath has influenced the entire world. One reflection of this is that the weekly day of rest is referred to as "Sabbath" by many peoples in many languages. According to Josephus Flavius, the first-century Jewish historian, "there is not any city of the Grecians, nor any of the barbarians, nor any nation whatsoever, whither our custom of resting on the seventh day hath not come" (*Against Apion* 2.40, trans. Whiston). The Roman philosopher Seneca censured Romans who observed the Sabbath, carping that "the vanquished [the Jews] have given laws to their victors [the Romans]" (*De superstitione,* quoted by Augustine, *City of God* VI 11). Evidence of the infiltration of Jewish customs into Roman life is also provided by the poet Persius (*Satires* 5:179–1984), who mocks Romans who mark Friday night by lighting candles, drinking wine, and eating fish and derides his fellow citizens who go to the synagogue to hear the sermon.

The two younger monotheistic religions accepted the principle of the Sabbath but modified its date, with the Christians moving it to Sunday and the Muslims to Friday.

The Start of the Sabbath

The Sabbath arrives in a gradual process lasting for several hours, which includes emotional, spiritual, and logistical preparations. Because an excessively rapid transition from the profane to the sacred would detract from the special atmosphere of the Sabbath, one stops work early on Fridays in order to have sufficient time to complete these preparations. (In modern Israel Friday is a day off, in addition to the Sabbath [Saturday], but Sunday is a regular workday, unlike in Europe, North America, and elsewhere.) The Talmud reports a tradition of blowing the shofar on Friday afternoons to alert the people to the approach of the Sabbath: "Six blasts were blown on the eve of the Sabbath" (*b. Shabbat* 35a). This tradition is still followed in some orthodox Jewish communities in the Diaspora and Israel (Jerusalem, Bene Berak, Betar Illit, and elsewhere). Another custom is to bathe before the start of the Sabbath; the especially pious immerse themselves in a *mikveh* (ritual bath). This is the first step in readying the soul for the Sabbath.

Jewish traditions emphasize the special garments reserved for the Sabbath. "If you honor it [the Sabbath]

and go not your ways" (Isa. 58:13) is expounded by the Talmud to mean that "your Sabbath garments should not be like your weekday garments" (*b. Shabbat* 113a). The sages took this seriously and prescribed that every person own two suits of clothing, one for weekdays and the other for the Sabbath.

On Friday afternoon, the table is set for the Sabbath meal. In this task the mistress of the house is joined by other members of the family; traditionally each of them has a fixed assignment. The Sabbath eve meal is the most important family gathering of the week as well as an occasion for hosting guests. The table is set with a white tablecloth, two or more candlesticks with lit candles, a wine goblet for the *Kiddush* (blessing over wine), two *challot,* and, of course, the dishes and utensils for all the diners. A perusal of Jewish literature over the generations reveals that the Sabbath table, which creates a feeling of the special and different nature of the day, is one of the strongest memories of home that Jews carry with them.

The actual onset of the Sabbath is marked by the lighting of candles. According to tradition, the Sabbath enters with the lighting of candles and wine (the Friday night *Kiddush*) and exits with a candle and wine (the *Havdalah* rite). The laws of candle-lighting are summarized by Maimonides (*Mishneh Torah,* Laws of the Sabbath). Having a Sabbath candle burning in the house is mandatory for both men and women, as part of the special "delight of the Sabbath." A blessing is recited when the candles are lit, while it is still daytime (eighteen minutes before sunset). This precept applies more particularly to women than to men. This priority has been explained in several ways. Some say that women are generally at home during the week and tend to the house; thus the burning candles express the family's gratitude to the mistress of the house. Another reason, proposed by Rashi (Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes) in his commentary, is that "there is no serenity in a house where there is no candle [light], because people are apt to bump into things in the dark."

The Friday afternoon prayer begins with a special service, *Kabbalat Shabbat* (Greeting the Sabbath). To the three prayer services recited every day—the evening service, after sunset at the start of the new day; the morning service; and the afternoon service (from shortly after noon until sunset)—two additional services are added on the Sabbath: *Kabbalat Shabbat,* which precedes the Friday evening service, and the *musaf* (additional) service, in commemoration of the additional sacrifice offered in the Temple, which follows the reading of the Torah on Saturday morning.

According to ancient traditions dating to talmudic times, on Friday afternoon people would go into the fields outside their towns and villages to greet the Sabbath in nature. This is recounted of Rabbi Ḥanina ben Dosa or Rabbi Yannai (*b. Bava Qama* 32b). The sixteenth-century Safed kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria (Ha'Ari) and his disciples used to stroll outside the town to greet the Sabbath with joyful song. According to a legend, one Sabbath eve when they were carried away in their spiritual ecstasy Rabbi Luria turned to his disciples: "Would you like to go to Jerusalem before the Sabbath and spend the Sabbath there?" "First, we have to go tell our wives," some of them replied. Rabbi Luria was shattered by their hesitation. "Alas, we did not have the merit to be redeemed! Had you all said that you wanted to go to Jerusalem, redemption would have come for all Israel." Safed in the sixteenth century is also where kabbalists devised the *Kabbalat Shabbat* service as it is known today, based on six Psalms and the liturgical poem "Lekha Dodi" ("Come, my friend, to greet the Sabbath bride") by Rabbi Solomon ben Moses Alkabetz.

Friday Night

It is customary for a father to bless his children on Friday night, in the synagogue or after returning home—even if they are already parents themselves. The blessing for sons repeats Jacob's blessing of Joseph's sons, "May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh" (Gen. 48:20); for daughters it is "may God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah."

After the children have been blessed, the assembled company sing the hymn "Shalom Aleikhem" (Peace Upon You), which is based on a legend recounted in the Talmud (*b. Shabbat* 119b):

Rabbi Jose Judah said: "Two ministering angels accompany a man home from the synagogue on Sabbath eve, one good and one evil. If he arrives home and finds the lamp burning, the table set, and his couch covered with a spread, the good angel exclaims, 'May it be this way next Sabbath,' and the evil angel responds, unwillingly, 'amen.' But if not, the evil angel exclaims, 'May it be this way next Sabbath,' and the good angel responds, unwillingly, 'amen.'"

Scholars do not know who wrote this hymn or when, only that it was made part of the Sabbath opening ritual by the kabbalists of Safed. The melodies to which it is sung have made it extremely popular and turned it into one of the most prominent manifestations of the Sabbath.

After he has sent his angelic escort on its way, the husband surveys the house, all decked out in honor of the Sabbath, and praises and thanks his wife by reciting Proverbs 31:10–31 ("Who can find a good wife!"), which extols the virtues of the diligent wife and good mother.

The Sabbath eve and Sabbath noon meals both begin with the *Kiddush* (sanctification) over the wine, recited in the place where one eats. Highlighting the sanctity of the day, it is based on the biblical injunction to "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Exod. 20:8).

The members of the household fulfill the obligation of *Kiddush* by hearing it recited, but then each tastes the

consecrated wine. During the *Kiddush* the special Sabbath loaves, or *challot,* are on the table, but covered with a special embroidered cloth. They are covered, we are told, to spare them embarrassment. Usually the blessing over bread marks the start of the meal. On Sabbath eve, however, the bread has to wait until after the *Kiddush.* Solicitous for the bread and its honor, one places it on the table but covers it until its own moment arrives.

The word *challot* derives from the loaf or cake (Heb., *challah*) set aside for the priest from each batch of dough (Num. 15:20). Because the dough for the Sabbath meals and the rest of the week was prepared on Friday, the special Sabbath bread came to be called *challah.* Although the usage originated in the European diaspora, it spread throughout the Jewish world. Some refer to the Sabbath bread as *leḥem mishneh* (double bread), in reference to the biblical account that the Israelites in the wilderness received a double portion of manna on Fridays (Exod. 16:22).

The Sabbath foods of the different Jewish communities are a central part of the "delight of the Sabbath" (*oneg Shabbat*). The sages derived this obligation from Isaiah's plea that the people "call the Sabbath 'delight' [and] the Lord's holy day 'honored'" (Isa. 58:13). This delight was conceived of in several ways: an especially fine main course, a fine wine, physical pleasure, spiritual delight, and so on. Part of the Sabbath delight is the obligation to eat three full meals: one on Friday night and two more during the course of the next day. This custom is learned from Exodus 16:25, which refers to the manna and repeats the word "today" three times: "Moses said, 'Eat it *today,* for *today* is the Sabbath of the Lord; you will not find it outside *today.*'" To emphasize the importance of this precept, the sages said that "even a poor man who is dependent on charity is obligated to eat three Sabbath meals"; and "everyone who observes the precept of three Sabbath meals will be delivered from three evils: the travails of the messiah, the punishment of *Gehinnom*, and the war of Gog and Magog" (*b. Shabbat* 118a).

Because of the obligation to eat well on the Sabbath, special recipes were devised for this day. Some of them are common to all or most Jewish communities throughout the world. Two foods are an integral part of every Sabbath table—fish and a pudding or stew that is kept warm in the oven from Friday afternoon until the Sabbath noonday meal. This could be *cholent* or *kugel* (Eastern Europe), *tabit* (Iraq), *arissa* (Djerba, Tunisia), *mebosa* (Kurdistan), or *skhina* (Morocco).

All communities sing special hymns *(zemirot)* at the Sabbath table, during and after the meal. Their lyrics are based on Sabbath customs, legends, and praise of the Lord. The Talmud explains why they are sung: "When the Temple was standing the altar atoned for human beings; now a person's table atones for him" (*b. Ḥagigah* 27a). The analogy has another aspect: Because the festive meal represents the sacrificial ritual in the Temple, during which the Levites sang Psalms, our own feast should be accompanied by songs and hymns. Some of these *zemirot* are known in all Jewish communities (*Tzur mishelo akhalnu, Yah ribbon, Deror yiqra*), while others are sung by only one or two of them.

Another special Sabbath precept is hospitality. Jewish and Hebrew literature features extensive accounts of Jewish householders' efforts to have guests in their homes on the Sabbath. This custom, too, can be traced to a talmudic dictum: "Hospitality is greater than welcoming the Divine Presence" (*b. Shabbat* 127a). It was the custom to invite travelers from out of town to dine with a prominent householder on the Sabbath. Anyone who had not yet arranged his meals would come to the synagogue, where the heads of the congregation would make sure to find him a place for the Sabbath, a practice that remains to this day.

The Sabbath is held to radiate a light to which the Jew is attracted during the six workdays. When the Sabbath arrives, Jews enter the domain of spirit and soul and endeavor to hold fast to its sanctity, so that it will accompany them throughout life's profane endeavors during the following week. The Sabbath is not just a day of rest for the body; it is, even more so, a day for the "extra soul" that is hidden away during the week.

Joel Rappel

See also: Food and Foodways; Lamps and Candles.

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Shabbat Ḥatan

See: Marriage

SHALIT, MOSHE

See: Poland, Jews of

SHAVUOT
(THE FEAST OF WEEKS)

Shavuot is one of the three festivals, along with Passover and Sukkot, on which the Israelites were commanded to go on a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem. Shavuot differs from the other festivals in one respect. Whereas the Bible specifies the dates of the other festivals according to the Hebrew calendar, it does not give the date for Shavuot. Instead, it is set by counting seven weeks from the day following the first full day of Passover, the day on which the first sheaf of barley (*omer*) was harvested for an offering in the Temple.

> You shall count off seven weeks; begin counting the seven weeks when the sickle is first put to the standing grain. (Deut. 16:9)

Names of the Festival

Shavuot is a one-day festival, but it has many names, reflecting the complex essence of the festival and its multiple aspects, which were emphasized during different periods in history.

The Feast of Weeks: This is the most common and widely used name for the festival. It expresses the way its date is determined: seven weeks, that is, forty-nine days, are counted from the day that the *omer*—the first sheaf of barley—is harvested, on the day after the first day of Passover, and the festival is observed on the fiftieth day.

The Festival of the Harvest, the Festival of the First Fruits: These names express the agricultural nature of the festival—the grain harvest and the offering of the first fruits in Jerusalem:

> Three times a year, all your males shall appear before the Lord God. (Exod. 23:17)

> You shall observe the Feast of Weeks, of the first fruits of the wheat harvest; and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year. (Exod. 34:22)

The Bible links the pilgrimage to Jerusalem with the bringing of the first fruits to the Temple:

> You shall bring the best of the first fruits of your land to the house of the Lord your God. (Exod. 23:19)

A more detailed description of the bringing of the first fruits to the Temple appears in Deuteronomy:

> When you enter the land that the Lord your God is giving for an inheritance, and take possession and settle in it, you shall take some of every first fruit of the soil, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, put it in a basket, and go to the place that the Lord your God chooses to establish His name there. You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time and say to him, "Today, I affirm before the Lord your God that I have entered the land that the Lord swore to our fathers to give us." The priest shall take the basket from your hand and set it down in front of the altar of the Lord your God. (Deut. 26:1–4)

The Mishnah describes the folk festivities associated with the bringing of the first fruits:

> How were the first fruits brought to Jerusalem? All of [the inhabitants of] the smaller towns in the *ma'amad* [groups of laymen who performed certain liturgical functions in regular rotation, one *ma'amad* after another, through the course of the year] gathered in the central town of the *ma'amad* and slept in the city square, but they did not enter the homes. In the morning, the leader called out, "Arise and let us ascend to Zion, to the House of the Lord our God." Those [who lived] close by brought fresh figs and grapes, and those [who lived] far away brought dried figs and raisins.
>
> An ox with gilded horns led the procession, with a wreath of olive leaves on its head. A flute was played before them until they neared Jerusalem. When they neared Jerusalem, they sent messengers ahead and decorated their first fruits. The prefects and the deputies and the Temple treasurers went out to greet them. [The dignity of the welcoming party] was proportional to the dignity of those who were coming. All of the artisans in Jerusalem would stand and greet them: "Our brothers, the inhabitants of such-and-such a place, welcome!" [They proceeded through Jerusalem] while the flute was played until they reached the Temple Mount. When they reached the Temple Mount, even King Agrippas would carry the basket [of first fruits] on his shoulders and enter the Temple Courtyard. When they reached the Temple Courtyard, the Levites opened with the song (Ps. 30:2): "I will exalt You, O Lord, for You have drawn me up and You have not allowed my enemies to rejoice." (*m. Bikkurim* 3:2–5)

The Festival of the Giving of Our Torah: This name derives from the tradition that associates the giving of the Torah with Shavuot.

When the Jews lived in the Land of Israel and were able to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem and bring the first fruits to the Temple, the religious-agricultural aspect of the festival was emphasized. After the Temple was destroyed and the Jews went into exile, it was the

giving of the Torah that was emphasized. Many customs developed around this facet.

Other names for the festival are the Day of Assembly (Yom Ha'Khel) (Deut. 9:10, 10:4, 18:6) and Atzeret (which also means "assembly") in rabbinical literature (e.g., *b. Bava Batra* 147b).

Festival Customs

The various customs of Shavuot are associated with the several elements that give it its names. One of the customs tied to the holiday as the Festival of the Giving of the Torah is known as *Tiqqun Leil Shavuot:* men stay up all Shavuot night and engage in Torah study, reading passages relating to the 613 precepts, taken from the Bible, Mishnah, Talmud, Zohar, and liturgical poetry.

The custom of the Shavuot *ketubbah* (marriage contract) is also related to this. The Shavuot *ketubbah* symbolizes the bond established between the Jewish people and God on the day of the giving of the Torah. There are also special liturgical poems that relate to Shavuot as the Festival of the Giving of the Torah. The most famous, "Aqdamot," was written in the eleventh century by Rabbi Meir ben Isaac Nehorai of Worms. The poem is a ninety-line rhymed acrostic in Aramaic, with every line ending in the letters *taf* and *aleph* (תא), the last and first in the Hebrew alphabet. The poem extols God as creator of the world and the Jews as the chosen people, and describes the days of messiah. In many congregations, the cantor's repetition of the "Musaf Amida" service includes "Azharot," liturgical poems that enumerate the 613 precepts.

Although the importance of the elements related to nature and agriculture diminished after the Jews went into exile, even in the Diaspora they would customarily decorate their homes and synagogues with greenery and flowers for the festival. In Central and Eastern Europe, they would decorate their windows with papercut rosettes (Yidd., *reyzeleh*). The custom of spilling water on the ground on Shavuot, found among North African Jews, is also connected with the natural aspect of the festival and symbolizes fertility.

According to Jewish tradition, King David was born and died on Shavuot. In his memory, it is customary to read the Book of Ruth, which ends with his genealogy, during the festival. In Jerusalem, it is customary to visit his reputed grave on Mt. Zion. Jews of Asian and North African descent bring food there, light 150 candles (one for each chapter in the Book of Psalms), and recite psalms.

Eating dairy foods at the festival meal, such as cheese blintzes in Ashkenazi communities (which also are said to resemble the tablets of the Ten Commandments), is a widespread custom. Various explanations have been offered for this custom. Some link it to nature, as milk symbolizes

fertility. Others relate it to the giving of the Torah, because the Torah is compared to milk and honey.

There is also a custom of eating filled pastries, another symbol of fertility. Tradition explains this custom, too, in various ways. Triangular pastries, for example, were seen as representing the three sections of the Hebrew Bible—the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings. It is customary to bake cakes and cookies whose ingredients include cheese, honey, and raisins and give them to children, so that learning Torah will be sweet for them, just like these sweet foods.

Shavuot in Israel

In the twentieth century, the festival took on a new character in Israel, one that expresses the Zionist ideology and ethos.

The agricultural settlements (kibbutzim and moshavim) developed a secular version of the offering of the first fruits. This began with Ein Ḥarod, Geva, and Kefar Yeḥezkel in the Jezreel Valley in 1924. The ceremony of bringing the first fruits became the core of the Shavuot celebrations in the agricultural settlements. A procession of agricultural machinery, decked out with the recently harvested produce, made its way to a central stage. The procession was accompanied by readings, singing, and dancing by members of the kibbutz or moshav. The first fruits were dedicated to the Jewish National Fund. When kibbutzim started to build factories, industrial goods were also included in the ceremony of the first fruits.

In 1944, at Kibbutz Dalyah, the folk-dance pioneer Gurit Kadman (see: Kadman, Gurit) introduced a special dance based on the Book of Ruth. The Dalyah dance tradition later emerged from this ceremony.

At the end of the 1960s, a trend of returning to Jewish traditional practices began in the kibbutzim. On Shavuot, this was manifested by communal readings of a *Tiqqun Leil Shavuot* adapted to their ethos.

In cities as well, new ceremonies and customs were introduced in the period before 1948. In Tel Aviv, Shavuot became the Festival of Flowers as children bedecked in flowers paraded through the streets of the city. In Haifa, too, there were first-fruit celebrations (1932–1935). Instead of dedicating the first fruits to the Temple as was done in ancient times, the Zionist-Socialist movement dedicated the first fruits to the Jewish National Fund.

Today, Israel has a multicultural society and therefore various expressions of celebration of Shavuot can be found in various communities.

Nili Aryeh-Sapir

See also: Papercut.

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SHENHAR, ALIZA (1943–)

The scholar Aliza Shenhar's contributions to the study of Jewish folklore include an analysis of the relationship between international tale types and Jewish folktales; the relationship between children's literature and folk literature; discussion and analysis of contemporary Israeli folklore, including urban legends and kibbutz folklore; the substructure of folk narrative in the works of Jewish authors; and a feminist reading of tales about biblical heroines.

Born in Tiberias on July 1, 1943, Aliza Shenhar was educated at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where she wrote her dissertation, "Family Confrontation and Conflicts in Jewish Folktales," under the supervision of Dov Noy.

Shenhar published extensively in Hebrew, English, and German. Among her books are *From Folk Literature to Children's Literature* (1982), *The Jewish Folktale* (1982), *Stories of Yore: Children's Folktales* (1986), *Jewish and Israeli Folklore* (1986), *Folkloristic Sub-Structures in Agnon's Stories* (1989), *Jewish Moroccan Folk Narratives from Israel* (with Haya Bar-Itzhak) (1993), and *The Story Teller, the Story and the Audience* (1994).

Her articles deal with topics such as images of the Jewish sage and *tanna*, Rabbi Meir, Yemenite folktales, Libyan-Jewish folktales, Iraqi-Jewish versions of midrashic legends, animal tales, teaching folk literature, folktales about adolescents, Eretz Israel pilgrimage tales, and Jewish and Druze folktales.

Organizationally, she contributed to the study of folklore as head of the Folklore Studies Program at the University of Haifa (1975–1980), as head of the Israel Folktale Archives, and in a number of other senior administrative posts before becoming rector of the University of Haifa (1991–1994).

Shenhar was a visiting professor and research fellow at the University of California at Los Angeles (1979, 1984) and the University of Göttingen (1987). In the 1990s she headed a national commission on Jewish studies in Israeli schools. She also served as Israel's ambassador to Russia (1994–1997). Since 1997 she has been the president of Max Stern Academic College of Emek Yezreel.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Folk Narratives in Israel.

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SHEOL

See: Afterlife

SHEVA BERAKHOT (SEVEN BENEDICTIONS)

See: Marriage

SHIMEON BAR YOḤAI

Shimeon Bar Yoḥai was a *tanna* who lived in the middle of the second century around the years 140–170 C.E. and was active mainly in Upper Galilee. Legends portray him as a fascinating and charismatic figure, holding not only halakhic wisdom but also characteristics of a miracle worker. The writings ascribed to him emphasize the supreme importance of Torah study; some display a lack of tolerance for human weakness. The sources indicate that he studied for thirteen years with Rabbi Akiva, one of the greatest sages of all times, in Bene Berak. Bar Yoḥai was among his greatest disciples, and even continued to study with him after Rabbi Akiva was imprisoned by the Romans. Bar Yoḥai was ordained by Rabbi Akiva, but later he was also ordained by Judah ben Bava. Rabbi Akiva held Shimeon Bar Yoḥai in high esteem (*y. Sanhedrin* 1:3, 19a). His best-known disciples were Eliezer, his son-in-law, Pinhas ben Yair, and Rabbi Yehuda ha'Nasi. Tradition crowns Rabbi Shimeon with a mystical aura, mainly because of his role in the Kabbalah, as represented in the Zohar.

Life Told Through Legend

The main legend, delineating the historical portrayal of his personality and life story, occurs in the Yerushalmi Talmud (*Shevi'it* 89:1), and in the Babylonian Talmud (*Shabbat* 33b, 34a).

The Yerushalmi Talmud reveals that Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai lived in a cave for thirteen years, eating nothing but carobs, until it adversely affected his health. However, the story does not focus on his life in the cave, but on the change he underwent upon leaving it. At the moment of leaving, he saw a hunter trying to catch birds, and he heard a divine voice that determined whether the birds would be caught or would escape the hunter's trap. From this experience, he understood that everything taking place on earth is determined from above. From this point on, his deeds are explained as stemming from the insight gained on leaving the cave. In its version of the story of his life in the cave, the Babylonian Talmud portrays Shimeon Bar Yoḥai as a person who railed against Roman rule after the failure of Bar Kochba's revolt (the Jewish revolt against Rome in 132–135 C.E.). On account of his widely publicized censure, he was condemned to death. He escaped together with his son, and after hiding for a short time in a seminary for religious studies (*beit ha-midrash*), he hid in a cave and stayed there with his son for twelve years, in total isolation. A miracle took place in the cave, providing them with water and carobs.

While in hiding, Shimeon Bar Yoḥai and his son studied the Torah and prayed, experiencing spiritual exultation through Torah study. They continued their study until the prophet Elijah announced to them that the death sentence was no longer in effect. Shimeon Bar Yoḥai and his son then left the cave. As they were on their way, they saw a man plowing and sowing, and they exclaimed: "They forsake eternal life and engage in temporal life!" Whatever they cast their eyes upon was immediately incinerated. As punishment for destroying God's creation, Shimeon Bar Yoḥai and his son were confined to the cave for one more year by a divine voice. On leaving the cave for the second time, his son Eliezer continued to act with fanatic fervor, but Shimeon Bar Yoḥai restored what he had destroyed. The story then describes the way Shimeon Bar Yoḥai's attitude changed, for he had learned his lesson about the danger of extremism and the need to combine and compromise this world with study and devotion to the Torah.

Various researchers have attempted to clarify which parts of the legends about Shimeon Bar Yoḥai were literary fictions, taken from legends transmitted orally or collected from sources unavailable to the contemporary reader, and which could be considered historical details, enabling students to learn about events and figures during that period. The story of Shimeon Bar Yoḥai's purification of Tiberias after he had left the cave has aroused special interest.

Magical Powers, Esoteric Wisdom, and the Power to Redeem

The stories about Shimeon Bar Yoḥai—his fanatic rebellion against Roman rule, his opinions against gentiles, the miracle in the cave, Elijah's coming to tell him that the danger had passed, and the encounter with the divine voice that taught him that all is in God's hands—endowed him with a mystical aura. He was also perceived as a hermit, with unusual powers, a person able to protect and redeem those of his generation. (*Gen. Rab.* 35b; *y. Ber.* 89:2). Hence, later writings were also ascribed to him, containing apocalyptic themes, such as *Nistarot de Rabbi Shimeon bar Yoḥai* and *Tefilat Rabbi Shimeon bar Yoḥai;* some researchers also ascribe *Mekhilta de Rabbi Shimeon bar Yoḥai* to him. Moreover, the kabbalists perceived him as the author of the Zohar, published in the thirteenth century. According to the Zohar, he and the nine sages, his friends, used to meet in various circumstances during their journeys all over the Land of Israel:

in the Tiberias district, in Tzipori, Ushah, Kisarin, and so on. The Zohar considers Tiberias Shimeon Bar Yoḥai's main place of residence. He was the sage at the center of the group and the one who answered all the difficult questions and solved all the problems disturbing them, inspiring them with the divine spirit through his words and deeds. The publication of the Zohar made Shimeon Bar Yoḥai the main mystical figure of the Kabbalah.

An ancient tradition locates the graves of Shimeon Bar Yoḥai and his son on Mount Miron, and since the sixteenth century Lag Ba'Omer (thirty-third day of Counting the Omer) has been determined as the day of his death; masses of people go on a yearly pilgrimage to his grave celebrating and praying (*Hillula of Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai*). Later traditions suggested that the cave where he had been hiding was in Peki' in the northern district of Israel.

The Zionist movement, which aspired to found a Jewish state in the Land of Israel, adopted the figure of Shimeon Bar Yoḥai, perceiving him as a brave man who clung to his teachings and rebelled against the Roman conquerors, even at the risk to his own life. The custom of playing with bows and arrows on Lag Ba'Omer, introduced by Jewish communities in the Diaspora, has been explained as Shimeon Bar Yoḥai's efforts to teach the Torah, which was forbidden by the Roman authorities, under the guise of such games.

The hymn "Bar Yoḥai, nimshaḥta, Ashrekha," composed by the kabbalist Rabbi Simon Lavie and sung at the celebration on Mount Miron, also presents him as a hero who risked his life for the sake of the Torah and also knew how to combine physical stamina and violent struggle with the study and glorification of the Torah. The hymn pays tribute to the wisdom of Shimeon Bar Yoḥai, who, according to the tradition, wrote the Zohar while in the cave.

Yael Poyas

See also: Kabbalah; Lag Ba'Omer.

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SHIVITI-MENORAH

The Hebrew word "*shiviti*" is the first word of Psalm 16, verse 8, "I have set the Lord always before me" (alternately translated as "I am ever mindful of the Lord's presence"). It is also the name of a devotional mnemonic, a mystic, amuletic page or meditative plaque inscribed with two core components: the *shiviti* verse (Ps. 16:8) and the seven-branched temple menorah inscribed with the words of Psalm 67.

In many variations, with additional texts and decorations, it is prevalent in many Jewish communities. It is traditionally called a *shiviti* by Ashkenazi Jews and a menorah by Sephardi (descendants of the Jews expelled from Spain as well as Jews from Arab/Muslim countries or Middle Eastern countries), referring to its two major components.

The *shiviti*-menorah functions as a reminder of the divine presence and as an aid to concentration in prayer. It is believed that the inscribed menorah and the *shiviti* verse are endowed with protective amuletic powers. In addition, it usually contains various other amuletic formulas, especially names of God (one of the recurring names of God is the 42 letters; a name that is believed to derive from acronyms of the prayer "Ana bekhoaḥ" attributed to Rabbi Nehunia ben ha'Kana, known for its magical powers), blessings such as the Priestly Benediction (Num. 6:22–26), combinations and abbreviations of biblical verses, and psalms.

The *shiviti*-menorah is found in synagogues as well as in private homes, in the *siddur* (prayerbook), and as personal amulets. It displays a rich variety of technique, shape, and decoration. It is preferably handwritten on parchment by a scribe (*sofer stam*), but it can also be printed on paper or cut in paper, chiseled in wood or stone, painted on glass, or embroidered on textiles.

In Ashkenazi synagogues, one *shiviti* is placed in front of the reader's desk. It is meant to help the reader set aside or drive away inappropriate thoughts and concentrate on prayer. In Sephardi and Middle Eastern synagogues many *menorot* are hung: flanking the Torah Ark and above it, and on the synagogue walls.

In *siddurim,* especially in those incorporating kabbalistic customs or rituals, the *shiviti*-menorah page is found mainly in two contexts: in the morning prayers close to the Psalms *pesukei de zimra* or in the counting of the Omer prayers; in other cases the *shiviti*-menorah is a separate leaf kept inside the *siddur*.

The *shiviti*-menorah is hung in the home as a protective amulet. In Ashkenazi communities, it is commonly combined with the *mizraḥ* plaque indicating the direction of prayer toward Jerusalem. It exists also as a personal amulet hung as a pendant.
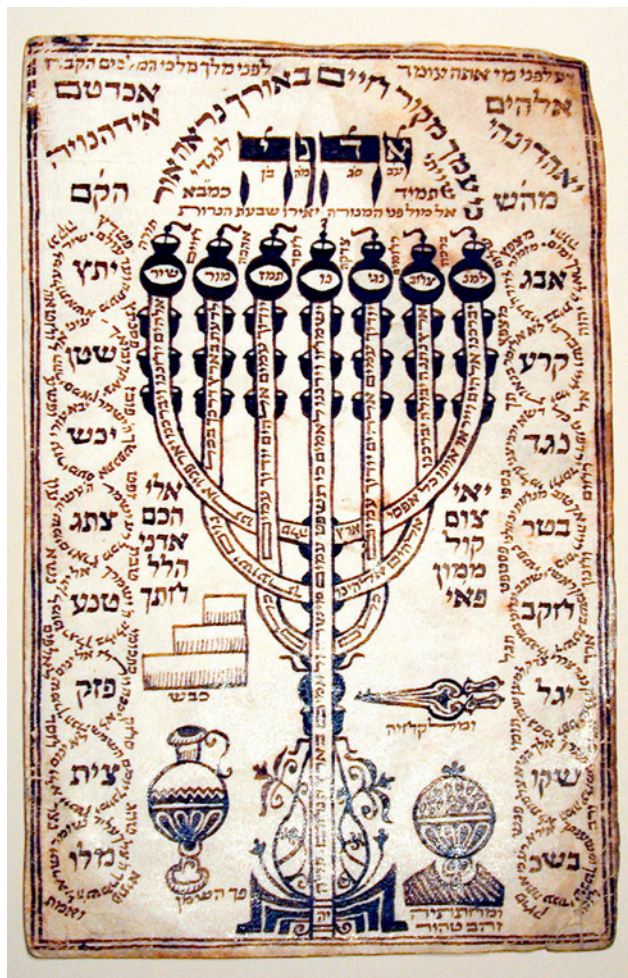
A handwritten parchment *shiviti*, kept between the pages of a prayerbook. Morocco, ca. 1945. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

Historically, the menorah page incorporating Psalm 67 in the shape of the menorah is known from the fourteenth century, and joined with the *shiviti* verse it appears during the eighteenth century or even in the late seventeenth century. Since the nineteenth century, they have been strongly associated with each other, rendering them interchangeable.

The combination of Psalm 67 and the menorah is a visual-textual symbol heavily imbued with mystic magic meanings. The association of Psalm 67 and the menorah is based on the number seven: the psalm has seven verses (not counting the first introductory verse) corresponding to the seven branches of the menorah. The parallel between the structure of the menorah and that of the psalm has been seen as a mystical substructure, on which further cosmic temporal and other connections were based, such as the analogy with the seven planets, the seven days of the week, and the forty-nine days (seven times seven) of the counting of the Omer. The tradition linking the menorah and Psalm 67 and its amuletic protective potential goes back to the fourteenth century where it is mentioned in *Sefer Abudraham* (a compilation of prayers and customs by Rabbi David ben Josef ben David Abudraham dating from Seville in 1340).

The *shiviti* verse expresses a fundamental desire of the devout Jew to feel the encompassing presence of God at all times. The English translation of the verse does not convey the nuance of the verb in Hebrew לשוות. The alternate translation ("I keep The Lord ever in my sight") conveys an additional meaning of the word that involves mental visualization. This understanding of the verse generated a tradition of mystical exegesis involving mystic, magic techniques of visualizing the letters of God's ineffable name as it appears in the verse and, via this contemplation, cleaving to God, as is recommended in the *shiviti* verse.

This visualization is believed to help keep people from doing evil and to lead to righteous behavior and thereby to protect them.

The *shiviti* plaque is not rooted in any halakhic precepts. It is a compilation of religious magical traditions embodied in a devotional object.

Esther Juhasz

See also: Jerusalem and the Temple; Mizraḥ; Papercut.

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SHOFAR

The shofar, created from the horn of a ram or other kosher animal, was used in ancient Israel to announce the new moon as well as to call people together for communal meetings. It was sounded on Rosh Ha'Shana to mark the beginning of the Jewish New Year and to signal a call to repentance. The shofar has played a central role in Jewish practice over the years. In modern times, the shofar continues to be sounded during the month of Iyar, in spiritual preparation for the approaching New Year, and Jews gather to hear it blown during Rosh Ha'Shana and at the end of Yom Kippur. It is considered a commandment (mitzvah) to hear the shofar blown on this High Holy Day.

The shofar is one of the most significant ritual objects in Judaism. Its unique sound was acknowledged throughout Jewish history as it was used to represent and objectify holiness and evoke spiritual elevation. The appearance of the shofar in folklore also recognizes its unique standing both as a musical instrument and ritualistic object or tool.

In the case of the shofar an amazing relation between the instrument's musical characteristics and its spiritual and ritualistic function can be easily drawn:

1. The shofar is a valveless wind instrument with a basic system of sound production and projection. It functions as an extension of the human mouth, empowering or amplifying the act of exhaling. In this way, the shofar sound symbolizes the essentiality and the emotional potential of human respiration.
2. The production of the normative shofar sound creates the musical impression of an unanswered question. The blower can produce an upward melodic gesture but not a downward gesture: There is no way of returning to the exact departing musical point. As a result, the shofar cry remains edgy, plaintive, and "unresolved" in traditional musical terminology. The sound imparts a feeling of instability and the only way to tame its wild effect is by repeating the musical gesture a few times until one gets used to the repeated cry.
3. Another expressive aspect of shofar tone results from the fact that the shofar cry is endless and unpredictable in nature. The musical tone lasts as long as the shofar blower has air and is not divided into traditional subdivisions or musical "beats." In this regard, the tension prior to the moment the tone sounds (the uncertainty as of the very moment of its beginning), the tone's unpredictable length, and the lack of ability to anticipate its length or subdivisions add to its unusual and holy effect.

The shofar's folklore representations are characterized by reflection on the instrument's piercing sound, historical and mythical symbolic connotations (e.g., the association with Isaac's sacrifice or Joshua's Battle of Jericho), and its theological function as a mediator between heaven and earth (as symbolized by the instrument's vessel-like open, ascending physical shape).

The Shofar in the Aggadah

Reviewing the *Aggadot* (legends) regarding the shofar indicates a common reference to this instrument as an object that is both earthly and divine, a ritualistic object used in high holy rites, a constant reminder of the sacrifice of Isaac, and as an instrument that is used for national or festive declarations about the sacrifice of Isaac.

The most significant Aggadah is attributed by Rabbi Yossi ben Zimra to Rabbi Yoḥanan and depicts a harsh dialogue between God and Abraham.

As in good philosophical dialogues, the rhetoric intensifies in dramatic pitch: The angel cries desperately to prevent Abraham from slaughtering his son; Abraham demands to speak to God directly. God asks Abraham to spare the young boy. Abraham insists on remaining committed to his own oath and argues with the Almighty that he (the Lord) has to commit himself to be merciful to the seed of Abraham: "Just as I [Abraham] fought my parental instincts and was ready to honor my oath and sacrifice my son, I insist that you will remember your commitment and testament to me and my seed, and when my children and all their seed will sin against you, You will have mercy on them and imagine that the ashes of my Isaac are present on this altar." God replies: "Your seed will sin and I will judge them unless they ask my forgiveness and I will remember the sacrifice of Isaac and they shall sound the shofar made of the horn of this ram." God directs Abraham's attention to a wild ram whose horns are caught in the brambles: "So will Israel get caught up in troubles among themselves and their enemies, and their salvation will come from the ram's horn."

This legend presents two parallel emotional perspectives: the divine and the human. Abraham is elevated to the role of an almost super-being, able to argue with God, while God gets a human touch, which makes him more emotionally accessible to the reader. At this same symbolic level, the victim of divine pride (the sacrificial innocent ram) is meant to remind God of his own anger (through the sound produced by blowing through the animal's horn) and thus evokes God's mercy. The human cry that morphs into a superhuman statement is manifested and formed in this Aggadah through the symbolism of the shofar.

The Aggadah regarding King David's humbleness makes interesting use of the difference between trumpets and shofars. In this legend, the Israelites blow shofars and trumpets while King David dances in front of the Holy Ark. Trumpets and shofars are earthly musical instruments alongside the ark (a divine, holy instrument), contrasting sacred and profane sounds against a secular background.

It is clear from the way the story is told that the human king wanted to draw God's attention to his act, and as the story unfolds King David provides the following explanation: I am dancing around the ark (and the shofar), so that it will be clear to everyone that Israel's salvation did not come from a human like me but, rather, by the hands of the Almighty, who is the only one that can save his people (*Bamidbar Rabba* 4).

Jewish men blow the shofar during the ritual of the Cohanim at the Western Wall during the celebration of the Jewish festival of Sukkot in Jerusalem, Israel, 2003. *(Marco Di Lauro/Getty Images)*

The shofar is also mentioned as the instrument used in excommunication ceremonies. In this context, the cry of the shofar functioned as a signal for communal gatherings as well as the sound that can shatter walls, binding the community during the excommunication of one of its members.

The shofar call is believed to signal the gathering of the Israelites in exile. The basic assumption that there is an element in the genome of the people of Israel that will allow them to sense this signal, no matter where they are, implies that Abraham's seed are bound together by their ability to notice such a great moment. This sound, which rings throughout the universe, is more important than the *mezuzah*, circumcision, or any other physical sign. The belief that a "right" sound exists, which only the "right" people can understand and decode, is a universal concept that is utilized in a Jewish context due to the holiness of the shofar (*Mekhilta* 24).

The Aggadah discusses the holy status of the ram from whose horn the shofar is made. The various body parts of the ram are believed to have become holy in

several ways; thus, the "breaking" of the whole into its parts can be regarded as an analogy of the nation of Israel, whose people are separated and scattered among nations (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* 31).

The shofar, as an aesthetic object, is well represented in the Aggadah. It has its place on the list of significant Jewish ritual objects, which also includes sukkah, *lulav,* tzitzit, and *sefer Torah*. Here the shofar occupies an intermediary spot between two different groups; one group of concrete objects (sukkah) and symbolic representations of nature (*lulav*) and another group of spiritual, abstract objects (tzitzit) and divine representation (*sefer Torah*), which serves to emphasize the shofar's transitional function between the concrete and spiritual. The modulation or transition from *lulav* to shofar is fascinating as well: Both are natural products (vegetation and a ram's horn), but while the *lulav* functions as an exhibition or representation, the shofar is used to evoke a deep spiritual feeling. On a different level, the transition in this sequence of objects between shofar and tzitzit is notable because the focus shifts from the human mouth to man's clothing (and

hence to the body). This Aggadah also displays theories on the concept of infinity; by reading these *Aggadot*, one can explore an interesting process of iconization. Some important historical events (such as Isaac's sacrifice or the Exodus from Egypt) were commemorated by symbolic objects (such as shofar and *lulav*); at times, the very physical beauty of these objects becomes a desired merit by itself. Remembering and reliving history through objects of beauty is an interesting addition of these *Aggadot* to the shofar legend.

In a similar tale dealing with the duty to respect one's parents, Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai discusses the meaning of the verse כבד את ה מהונך in which a list of good deeds showing respect for the Lord is enumerated. It starts with the command to give away a portion of one's harvest and proceeds with the recommendation to obtain a beautiful sukkah, *lulav*, and shofar. This sequence starts with the idea of giving away (or giving back) to God what he created in acknowledgment of his generosity, and the remainder resembles the previous Aggadah. Yet in this Aggadah there is special meaning ascribed to natural elements. The earth (land) whose fruits we consume allows us also to understand the power of God, who created us; the sukkah's leaves and branches transform into a small temple or shelter, and the ram's horn turns into an element of worship and holiness.

In the writings of the disciples of the Ba'al Shem Tov, the founder of Hasidism, there is a legend the great rabbi used to recite just before the sounding of the shofar during the New Year's evening prayer:

A mighty and wise monarch created an illusion that made his people believe that there were walls and watchtowers (barriers) between themselves and him. He also commanded his people to approach him only through these gates, where some of the state's treasures were supposed to be hidden. Various people were able to make different progress on the path through the gates toward the monarch, each according to his skill, motivation, and determination. One day the monarch's own son had a great desire to see him. As the son started on his way, he suddenly realized that nothing separated him and his father. The moral of this fable is obvious: God's holiness fills the earth and no barriers exist between Him and humankind.

In his book *Das Ritual* (1928), psychoanalyst Theodor Reik explained that the Ba'al Shem Tov would relate this legend at this particular hour to indicate that the shofar's tone does not shake the gates of heaven; rather, the tone is intended to shake man and make him realize the presence of the divine all around him. From a musical viewpoint, one might say that the shofar stirs holy overtones around the people who are willing or motivated or determined to hear them.

Shofar in *Piyyutim* (Religious Chanting)

A *piyyut* (pl. *piyyutim*) is a liturgical poem. The shofar is frequently presented in traditional *piyyutim,* especially those sung on High Holy Days. A closer look at some of the more significant *piyyutim* can indicate the importance of the shofar regarding both its traditional functions and poetic expansions of its representation. After a consideration of the sound of well-known traditional *piyyutim,* it should be noted that none have tried to musically imitate the melodic characteristics of the shofar cry. Furthermore, a large number of the melodies of the shofar *piyyutim* are characterized by descending, melismatic melodic lines. It can be assumed that there is no match for the real effect of the shofar's sound.

In the *piyyut* "Yom Yom Ode" (To Thee I Will Give Daily Thanks), the Iraqi-Jewish melody of the final line of each verse is emphasized by repetition. Each of these lines is repeated twice. An accumulation of these final lines gives us the following combination:

עשרת דברות קדשו השמיענו
בקול שופר חזק מאד יעננו
ושם עין בעין ראתה עיננו
ועינינו יראו וישמח לבבנו

    The ten holy commandments we have heard
    With a very loud shofar cry we will be answered
    And thus we saw things eye to eye
    And with our eyes we saw, and in our hearts rejoiced

The spiritual progression described in this *piyyut* is clear: We take part in a human-divine dialogue consisting of three elements: the ears, eyes, and heart. Even in the section describing what the people of Israel heard, there is a clear differentiation between content (the commandments) and rhetoric (the sound of the shofar); the commandments are unquestionably and a priori holy, while the shofar is strong and powerful. Holiness is eternal and unquestionable, but the sound effect of the shofar is amazing, effective, and earthshaking and yet can be conceived through our human ears. To Western listeners, the sung version of this *piyyut* (especially in the Iraqi-Jewish tradition) with its prolonged instrumental intervals resembles, in some ways, the form of the Christian nativity acts (with a crucial difference resulting from interchanging the birth of Jesus with the revelation of the Jewish God).

In the *piyyut* "The Lord Is Our God," by Moshe ben Natan for the holiday Shavuot, in a version sung by Turkish Jews, the word "shofar" appears not only in its literary and spiritual context but also in its phonetic and alphabetic order. An acrostic including the words שופר

(shofar) and תורה (Torah) is created, leading to the next key word in the following line: the word אל, which starts with the next letter in the alphabetic sequence, א.

<div dir="rtl">
וקול שׁופר השמיענו
ותּורה הנחילנו
ופתח אל באנוכי
</div>

In the *piyyut* "Yona ma Tehegi," by Rabbi Judah Halevi, the relevant verses describe a shofar that is brought to the mouth of a yearning dove (which symbolizes the nation of Israel), in order for it to declare salvation. There is an almost erotic element in the description of the shofar presented to the lips of the loved one (symbolically, the entire scene takes place between God and the nation of Israel), but at the same time there is a very strong sense of empowerment. The actual signal of redemption comes from the mouth of Israel, which has the power to initiate and execute. The erotic, almost sexual, symbolism that enables such a responsibility is envisioned through the metaphorical talent of the poet and at the same time indicates the importance of the shofar in Jewish spirituality. Some of the textual melodies attached require an unusually large vocal range, which hints at the important solo vocal roles in such passages.

In conclusion, one of the most musical *piyyutim*, "Halelu Halelu El" (Glory, Rejoice the Lord), lists a number of musically instrumental ways of glorifying God.

> Glorify him with a shofar blow
> Glorify him with harp and violin
> Glorify him with a drum and with dance
> Glorify him with wind instruments and organ
> Glorify him with (audible) bells
> Glorify him with brass instruments
> Thy soul will glorify the Lord

Granted that the biblical musical instruments in this *piyyut* are different from the equivalent modern instruments, one can recognize here an attempt to reflect on the means of giving praise to the glory of the Lord. The shofar is placed on the top of the list as an obvious "gate opener": "Blow the shofar that both people and heavens will attend to everything that follows." Even more so, the opening statement (the shofar call) includes all the elements in its very sound. After this opening statement, all one needs to do is to elaborate or specify the instruments related to the shofar (the way different kinds of humans are related to the Almighty) and to note that the other instruments are the "seeds" or parts of the holy shofar call.

The shofar is one of the rare ways that an abstract monotheistic religion such as Judaism manifests holiness in a natural object. God, who has no shape and no time, can be manifested through the shofar call. Theodor Reik, a follower of Austrian psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud, dedicated an entire book to the issue of the manifestation of holiness though the shofar. Jewish folklorists have reached similar conclusions.

Oded Zehavi

See also: Rosh Ha'Shana.

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SHOLEM ALEICHEM (1859–1916)

This popular modern author, whose given name is Solomon Rabinovich, has published under many names, corresponding to the multilingual and multicultural environment of his birth, as well as a tradition prevalent among Jewish writers at the end of the nineteenth century of using pseudonyms, often ones that testify to the affinity of the writer with common and unsophisticated parts of the population. In this case, "*Sholem* (variously spelled *Sholom* or *Shalom*) *Aleichem*" is a common greeting in Yiddish, essential to the initiation of almost any pedestrian conversation. The various pronunciations and spellings of Rabinovich's name also testify to the beginning of his writing in Russian, Ukrainian, Hebrew, and Yiddish. It is difficult to overestimate his importance as a writer, journalist, and activist, as Rabinovich greatly influenced twentieth-century Yiddish and Jewish literature. He is popularly considered the third in a trilogy of Yiddish authors who are respectively viewed as the representatives of three generations of Jewish writers, often referred to as the "grandfather," "son," and "grandson" of Yiddish literature: Shalom Jacob Abramovitsh (Abramovich) (better known as Mendele Moykher Sforim; 1835–1917), Isaac Leib Peretz (1852–1915), and Sholem Rabinovich. In addition, Rabinovich is often referred to as a "Jewish Mark Twain," recalling the two writers' common use of pseudonyms, their descriptions of common life, and their association with the inception of a literary tradition of national folklore.

Life Story

The only son of Menachem-Nukhem and Chaye-Esther Rabinovich, Sholem Rabinovich was born on March 2, 1859, in Pereyaslav and grew up in nearby Voronko, in the area of Kiev (capital of present-day Ukraine), then

part of the Russian Empire. Rabinovich attended a non-Jewish school at Pereyaslav and graduated with excellent grades in 1876. After graduation, Rabinovich worked as a Hebrew teacher and married his student, Olga (Golde) Love on May 12, 1883. Olga came from a wealthy family, and Rabinovich's marriage marked a period of affluence in his life. In addition, he and his wife had six children. He lost most of his money in 1890 in the stock market and worked very hard to replenish his income by writing for the press in Russian and Hebrew (in addition to his writing in Yiddish) and going on reading tours. At the same time, his health deteriorated, and he contracted tuberculosis.

After a series of anti-Semitic attacks in Kiev in 1905, Rabinovich's family resettled in Geneva, and he was forced to commute between Geneva, New York, and various reading tours across Eastern Europe. In 1908, during a reading tour in Russia, Rabinovich collapsed and was forced to spend two months recovering at the local hospital of Baranowicze (in present-day Belarus). For some time after this incident, Rabinovich had to curtail his activities, and his family was supported by donations from friends and admirers until he was able to regain his strength.

Rabinovich's family immigrated to the United States in 1914 and settled on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. However, his son Misha, who was ill with tuberculosis, was not allowed to enter the United States. Misha stayed in Switzerland with his sister Emma and died in 1915.

Rabinovich died in New York City in 1916, and his funeral, attended by about 100,000 mourners, was a monumental event in modern Jewish history. Among Rabinovich's children were painter Norman Raeben and Yiddish writer Lyalya Kaufman, whose daughter, Bel Kaufman, wrote the novel *Up the Down Staircase* (1965), which was made into a popular film in 1967.

Rabinovich's Work

Writing in Russian for the Odessa newspaper *Voskhod* and in Hebrew for the Odessa newspaper *Hamelitz,* as well as for Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky's Hebrew anthology, was only a part of Rabinovich's journalistic work and of his work in Hebrew and in Russian. But the main crux of his work, for which he is best known, was written in Yiddish. Rabinovich was an extremely proficient writer; before 1890 he had already produced more than forty volumes of fiction. A contemporary search will yield hundreds of titles—well over a thousand titles if translations of his work and collections of his short stories in various languages are included. Widely read and popular during his lifetime, Rabinovich's work encompasses many aspects of Jewish life during his time, including life in small towns, as in his work (not to be confused with Shalom Jacob Abramovich's) *The Little People* (Ber-

lin: Menorah, 1948); city life and commerce, as in *The Adventures of Menachem-Mendl* (1969) (and *The Further Adventures of Menachem-Mendl* [2001]) and *The Railroad Stories* (New York: Schocken, 1987); and immigration and life in the United States as in his unfinished novel, *Motl, the Cantor's Son* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), with which he was preoccupied at the time of his death. Rabinovich is probably best known for his novel *Tevye the Dairyman* (1987), which served as the basis for the 1964 musical *Fiddler on the Roof.*

In addition to his literary work, Rabinovich was an important activist for the cause of Yiddish literature, supporting other writers and inspiring the creation of a national Yiddish literature through his essays, journalistic writing, and reading tours, all of which drew many admirers and supporters. During the years in which he was well off, Rabinovich funded *The Yiddish Library,* an almanac of Yiddish writers featuring various new works. The third volume of this almanac was not published, as it was completed in 1890, the year in which Rabinovich lost most of his money. His generosity during good times was repaid after 1908, when Rabinovich's health did not allow him to work, and his family was supported for a while by his many admirers and sponsors. For a while, he was the beggar king of a beggar's nation, a public figure who symbolized a newly acquired legitimacy for Yiddish language, culture, and literature. Rabinovich also embraced the cause of Zionism, both in his work *Why Do the Jews Need a Land of Their Own?* (1984), and as a delegate to the Eighth Zionist Congress held in The Hague in 1907. In 1908 he was prevented from attending the First Conference for the Yiddish Language in Czernowitz for health reasons. Rabinovich also wrote an autobiography, *From the Fair* (1916; English trans., 1986).

Folklore

Rabinovich's very first literary work was a lexicon of epithets used by his stepmother. It foretells his great interest in documenting the language, customs, and lifestyles of East European Jews. Most Jewish intellectuals at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century were educated according to the values of the Enlightenment (Haskalah): a scholarly, anticlerical tradition, which took a didactic approach in trying to improve the language, beliefs, and lifestyles of common readers. Later, romantic literature, and the interest in folklore that developed in the second half of the nineteenth century, inspired Jewish writers as well. Influenced by theories such as that of British writer William John Thoms and projects such as the collection of folk stories by the famous Grimm brothers, Jewish intellectuals also began to document Jewish life and culture. Among the best known of those documents is the collection *Yiddish Folksongs in Russia,* by Saul Gins-

Sholem Aleichem. *(Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary)*

burg (Ginzburg) and Pesaḥ Marek (1991), comprising folk songs and melodies from various Jewish towns in imperial Russia. Rabinovich was no exception, and his education in the spirit of enlightenment was soon supplemented by the desire to document and describe authentic Jewish culture.

Rabinovich's folklore tendency was also motivated by the economic and political situation of East European Jews and the realities of war, poverty, immigration, and the destruction of the Jewish family wrought by economic necessity, immigration, and loss of traditional life. While nineteenth-century writers like Shalom Jacob Abramovich and Solomon Ettinger could envision the Jewish town, a rabbinical elite, and a class of rich Jewish merchants as worthy adversaries whose authority should be dismantled, for writers of Rabinovich's generation, the Jewish town (shtetl) was already an object of nostalgia and of pity, as well as a site of old traditions that might be lost forever if not saved by more affluent and well educated Jews. The trilogy of major Yiddish writers—Abramovich, Peretz, and Rabinovich—all arrived at some affinity to Jewish tradition, though they did so in different ways. Isaac Leib Peretz is best remembered for his documentation of Hasidic legends and traditions. And the comparison between *The Little People,* roughly

similar titles of novels by Abramovich and Rabinovich (Abramovich's more accurately translated as *The Little Person* [1924] and Rabinovich's better remembered for the name of his imaginary town, Kasrilivke), reveals a marked difference: Despite Abramovich's empathy for poor Jews and his philological interest in Yiddish, he uses his story as a pedagogical tool for sharp criticism of the social and economic structure of East European Jewish society. Rabinovich also uses a fair amount of irony in his work, but his irony is less systematic and is by far less judgmental of the circumstances of Jewish poverty and provincialism. As Miriam Roshwald argues in *Ghetto, Shtetl, or Polis,* Rabinovich does not use his imaginary city of Kasrilivke for "patronizing the shtetl or branding it a ghetto" but, rather, is "identified with his material . . . [and] can imbue the setting with the spirit of his characters" (2007: 50–51). Moreover, Rabinovich documents all walks of Jewish life during his time, treating with equal ridicule urban and rural, rich and poor, East and West European Jews as well as Jewish immigrants to the United States, and even his own fans and sponsors. He creates a "comedy of manners," drawing types rather than espousing a particular political agenda.

However, Rabinovich's authored folk literature, as well as that of other Yiddish writers of his time, was also criticized as unauthentic and distortive of real Jewish tradition. In *A Bridge of Longing,* David Roskies (1995) argues that the documentation of East European Jewish life by Yiddish authors, dramaturges, poets, songwriters, and researchers was skewed by the secular tendencies of such intellectuals and their education in the spirit of the Enlightenment. Such writers, Roskies argues, were motivated not only by a secularist agenda but also by their lack of knowledge of Jewish tradition. Roskies recalls Rabinovich's defense of Mark Warshavsky's songs in a debate with music critic Joel Engel about the nature of folk songs. Rabinovich claimed that "folk songs" are songs written in the language of "the folk" and for their benefit (1995, 13). This argument was probably meant to extend to Rabinovich's work itself. His work is, for better or worse, a popular depiction of East European Jewish life that has been adopted by many factions and contingents of world Jewry. In fact, a significant feature of Rabinovich's work is that during a time of sharp ideological disputes, political rifts, and sometimes even a lack of communication between Jewish communities around the world, it was accepted by very distant and extreme components of the Jewish world. Immensely popular among Yiddish readers in the United States and Western Europe, Rabinovich's work was also widely translated into Hebrew, to the extent that Rabinovich has been virtually accepted as a major original Hebrew writer. And even the heavily censored publications of Soviet-Yiddish literature include many volumes that transcribe Rabinovich's work in the special orthography of Soviet Yiddish, abandoning

the original spelling and orthography of Hebrew words. Consequently, if Rabinovich's work does not fit a certain strict definition of folk literature, it must at least be admitted that "the folk" never cared.

Autobiographical Approach

In *Author as Character in the Works of Sholom Aleichem* (1985), Victoria Aarons suggests an additional reading of Rabinovich's work. According to Aarons, Rabinovich's use of fictitious narrators allows for dramatic monologues, such as those of characters Menachem-Mendl and Motl, the cantor's Son, in which the author indirectly addresses the more sophisticated reader, inserting his own comments about social customs and political developments. In this light, Rabinovich is no longer a mere "documenter" of Jewish life but an engaged participant who is partially depicted and partially disguised in the characters of his fictitious narrators. Aarons provides even greater room for the reading of contemporary context and the representation of historical development in Rabinovich's work.

Dror Abend-David

See also: Shtetl.

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SHTETL

The word "shtetl" (Yid., town; pl. *shtetlekh*) refers to what was the archetypal East European Jewish place of residence from the sixteenth century until World War II. Since the time of East European Jews' encounters with the Haskalah (Jewish Enlightenment), the West European movement to offer a philosophical defense of Jewish modernity), in the late 1800s, the shtetl has assumed a symbolic value as the quintessential locus of Jewish folkways, articulated in a wide array of cultural practices, including ethnographic and folkloristic studies, as well as works of literature, music, visual art, theater, and film that are informed by folk idioms. The attention to the shtetl as a cultural fountainhead of Jewish folkways has continued after the Holocaust, taking on new significance in connection with remembering Jewish victims of the Nazi genocide.

Origins of Shtetl Folklore

As early as the thirteenth century, Jews began to settle in cities and towns in the kingdom of Poland. During the sixteenth century, Jewish settlement under Polish rule expanded significantly, especially in newly established towns in what is now Ukraine. As part of this expansion, Jews came to play a central role in the regional economy, in which these towns served as vital nodes of trade and commerce. Eventually, Jews became a sizable presence in towns throughout Eastern Europe, where the Jewish population began to surge during the eighteenth century. By the nineteenth century, the majority of the world's Jews lived in these towns.

As a consequence of the Haskalah, the shtetl became an object of self-scrutiny for Jews as they began leaving these towns behind—whether physically, as immigrants, or intellectually, as *maskilim* (advocates of the Haskalah). For these Jews in particular, the shtetl came to exemplify a parochial, premodern way of life. During the twenti-

eth century the symbolic value of the shtetl expanded, emerging both as a fount of Jewish folk creativity for an array of writers, composers, artists, performers, and folklorists and as a social paradigm of Jewish communal life for anthropologists and sociologists. In the wake of the Holocaust, the shtetl came to serve not only as the point of entry par excellence into pre–World War II European Jewish life but also as a model for characterizing Jewish life elsewhere, including American small towns and suburbs.

Shtetl lore informed the literary efforts of *maskilim,* writing in Yiddish and Hebrew, beginning in the late eighteenth century, usually within satires that assailed shtetl traditions as exemplary of all that hindered Jewish progress. These early efforts constitute what literary scholar Dan Miron termed an "anti-folklore" that both documented and derided shtetl mores. The shtetl figured centrally in seminal works of modern Yiddish and, to a lesser extent, Hebrew literature—including in the prose of Isaac Mayer Dik, S.J. Abramovitch, and, most famously, Sholem Aleichem—who, following the pattern established by *maskilim*, offered astute critiques of traditional Jewish mores and provincial society through satire. Other writers, including I.L. Peretz and S. An-Ski, transformed traditional Yiddish folklore, especially Hasidic storytelling, into works of modern Jewish literature set in *shtetlekh*.

The early twentieth century witnessed a new interest in traditional East European Jewish life among modernizing Jews, prompting early ethnographic efforts to collect folklore in these towns and in rural villages. Among the first of these efforts was that spearheaded by political activist and philologist Noyekh Prilutski (Noah Prylucki), who helped organize a circle of Jewish folklorists in Warsaw at the beginning of the twentieth century. Their collections of folklore materials appeared in Jewish newspapers and in books, such as the anthology *Bay undz yidn* (Among Us Jews), edited by M. Vanvild, published in 1923. Though Jewish folklorists tended to be based in major cities (such as Vilna and St. Petersburg), the target of their collecting efforts was the *folksmentsh*—the "ordinary" person, whose life was relatively unaffected by modern education, politics, or culture—whose archetypal setting was the shtetl.

The most famous organized effort to collect Jewish folklore in East European towns and villages was the 1912–1914 expedition in Ukraine led by An-Ski. His expedition amassed thousands of folktales, proverbs, folk songs, objects, photographs, and sound recordings. An-Ski's collecting efforts were interrupted by the outbreak of World War I. Even as he devoted his energies to relief work, An-Ski also documented the lore of Jewish communities experiencing unprecedented violence. An-Ski subsequently drew on his folklore collection to write *The Dybbuk,* the best-known Yiddish play.

During the interwar years, scholarly efforts to study East European Jewish folkways were organized by the Ethnographic Committee of the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research in Vilna and by researchers in state-supported institutes in the Soviet Union. These undertakings included grass-roots projects, such as a pamphlet published in Minsk in 1928, which exhorted amateur folklorists, "Forsht ayer shtetl" (Research your town). Individual ethnographies, memoirs, literary works, and journalistic accounts of shtetl life also appeared during this period in Yiddish, Hebrew, Polish, Russian, German, and other languages.

For Jewish immigrants to North America, Old World *shtetlekh* remained important symbolic resources, especially as realized in the activities of hundreds of *landsmanshaftn,* mutual aid societies whose members were *landslayt* (immigrants from the same hometown). American Yiddish popular culture in the interwar years spawned an extensive number of songs, plays, and films that celebrated the shtetl in nostalgic terms as the embodiment of a traditional past left behind by immigrants. By contrast, Soviet film and theater portrayed shtetl life from a Marxist perspective that situated these towns as the locus of an obsolescent Jewish life to be transformed by Soviet society.

The Shtetl After the Holocaust

During World War II, the majority of Jews who had lived in these towns were murdered; those who survived seldom returned to their former homes, and Jewish community life in most of these towns came to an end. In the wake of the Holocaust, many former residents of these towns initiated efforts to memorialize their local histories, customs, and murdered townsfolk, most notably by compiling *yisker-bikher* (communal memorial books). At the same time, American anthropologists undertook a major project to write a composite study of prewar East European Jewish life, based on research from a pioneering wartime "anthropology-at-a-distance" project overseen by Margaret Mead and Ruth Benedict. The resulting book, *Life Is with People: The Jewish Little-Town of Eastern Europe* (1952), quickly became the standard work in English on shtetl life. As folklorist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett has observed, this book's approach offers an idealized, paradigmatic vision of the shtetl—timeless, uniform, insular—that is as intellectually problematic as it was affectively appealing in the aftermath of the Holocaust. The impact of *Life Is with People* has been extensive, influencing, among other works, *Number Our Days* (1978), anthropologist Barbara Myerhoff's study of storytelling among elderly American Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe. Having become in the post–World War II era the metonymy of prewar East European Jewish life generally—even as this population had been urbanizing and immigrating—the shtetl serves as a paradigm for conceptualizing and presenting

East European Jewish history, Yiddish songs, and works of fiction in a number of anthologies.

   At the same time, the growing interest in documenting the life stories of Holocaust survivors has generated an extensive body of individual recollections of prewar life in former hometowns, both in written memoirs and in audio- and videotaped interviews. The postwar era is also witness to a distinctive Hasidic remembrance of particular towns; memorialized in religious storytelling and in the preservation of local religious customs, the names of these towns mark the original of Hasidic communities that now thrive in an international diaspora.

   Shtetl memory practices have increasingly expanded beyond literary efforts to other activities. A number of memory artists—including Mayer Kirshenblatt, whose memoir of his childhood in Apt (Pol., Opatów) interrelates narrative with works of visual art—have documented their recollections of prewar life in these towns in paintings and drawings. Prewar shtetl life has been realized in several feature films, including *Moi Ivan, toi Abraham,* directed by Yolande Zauberman (1993), and *Train de Vie,* directed by Radu Mihaielanu (1999). Travel back to *shtetlekh* is the subject of a number of documentary films, such as Willy Lindwer's *Return to My Shtetl Delatyn* (1992) and Marian Marzynski's *Shtetl* (1996). The desire to visit these towns has engendered new tourist practices in the years since the collapse of communist rule in Eastern Europe; among these efforts is ShtetlSchleppers, a tourist service run by genealogists at Jewishgen.org. Descendants of East European Jews, such as Theo Richmond (author of *Konin: One Man's Quest for a Vanquished Jewish Community,* 1996), have written about their return journeys to their forebears' *shtetlekh.*

   In some instances, recalling one's shtetl has engendered multiple undertakings. Aaron Ziegelman, for example, has underwritten the creation of a documentary film, a traveling exhibition, an archival project, and a Web site dedicated to his native town of Libivne (Ukr., Liuboml). Similarly, Yaffa Eliach's desire to commemorate Jewish life in prewar Eishyshok (Pol., Ejszyszki; Lith., Eisiskes) has inspired her to collect hundreds of photographs of the town's Jews (many of which are installed in a monumental display, the Tower of Faces, in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC), to write an extensive history of the town, and to participate in the production of radio and film documentaries on returning to Eishyshok. Her culminating effort—a plan to create a living history shtetl museum that replicates Jewish life in prewar Eishyshok on a plot of land in Rishon Le'Zion, Israel—is perhaps the most ambitious postwar undertaking to engage the shtetl as a fountainhead of bygone Jewish folkways.

Jeffrey Shandler

See also: An-Ski, S.; Poland, Jews of; Russia, Jews of; Sholem Aleichem.

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SHTYYAH STONE

The Shtyyah stone is the name given to the large rock embedded in the floor of the Temple's holiest place, the Holy of Holies (Dvir). It is identified by scholars as the rock situated in the center of Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock Mosque. The Shtyyah stone was first mentioned in tannaic sources (*m. Yoma* 5:2, *t. Moed Kippurim* 2). The oldest etymology of the Hebrew word "*shtyyah*" gives its definition as "foundation" (*t. Moed Kippurim* 2). Later in the Talmud, it was related to the word "*shti,*" meaning "crisscross weaving" (*y. Pesaḥim* 4:1), and in the Midrash to the root word "*shata,*" meaning "to drink" (*Torah Shlema Bereshit* 28).

   The rabbinical and midrashic sources related to it can be divided in two, based on their emphasis. The first refers to this rock as an omphalos, the center and navel of the earth (*Tanḥuma Qedoshim* 10; *Yalqut Shimoni*, Vayetze 120; *Midr. Tehilim Buber* 91:7), from which the world was created (*Num. Rab.* 12:4; *Tanḥuma* Piqudei 3; *Midr. Tehilim Buber* 11:2). It restrained the expanding world (*b. Ḥagigah* 12a); it sits on primordial waters and seals the primordial void (Tehom) (*Yalqut Shimoni* Yona 550; *Midr. Tehilim Buber* 91:7; *Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer* 9). The world could be destroyed if this rock were to be removed (*Yalqut Shimoni* Vayeshev 145).

   The second focus is on the Axis Mundi: the site on earth where one has the most direct route to communicate with Heaven. It is identified by the Midrash as the sacred center where the Temple was erected (*Sehel Tov Buber Gen.* 30; *Midr. Tehilim Buber* 91:7); it is the site of the Altar (*Otzar Midrashim* 104). It is believed to be

Mount Moriah, on which some of the major events in Jewish history occurred, such as Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. Jacob prostrated himself on it, praying for God's assistance, and took an oath on it, according to the narrative in Genesis 28:22 (*Midr. Tehilim Buber* 91:7). The stone on which Jacob slept and dreamed (Gen. 28:18) is identified by the Midrash as the Shtyyah, the emplacement of both Beth El and Jerusalem (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer*, end of ch. 35).

In the Temple in Jerusalem, on the Day of Atonement, since the tabernacle was no longer there, the ritual of purifying the Dvir was performed on this rock (*m. Yoma* 5:2; *t. Moed Kippurim* 2).

Interesting resonances of the Shtyyah etymology are preserved in folk customs. Based on the etymology of the word "*shti,*" meaning "crisscross weaving," an Eretz Israel amoraic source mentioned that at the beginning of the month of Av, when the Temple was destroyed and the Shtyyah stone ceased to be used, women abstained from weaving (*y. Ta'anit* 1:6; *y. Pesaḥim* 4:1). This custom prevailed in the sixteenth century (*Kitzur Shulḥan arukh* 126:11).

Idit Pintel-Ginsberg

See also: Stones.

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SHVAT, FIFTEENTH OF (TU BE'SHVAT)

Tu Be'Shvat (the fifteenth of Shvat) is a minor festival on the Jewish calendar, celebrated on the fifteenth of Shvat. It is also called the Festival of Trees or Jewish Arbor Day.

History and Interpretations

Unknown in the Bible, the first phases in the festival's development are mentioned in the Mishnah (*m. Rosh Ha'shanah* 1:1), specifically in a list of dates on which different new years start. There, Tu Be'Shvat is the date of the "New Year for Trees." This date was set for taxation purposes.

Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai (the two schools of Jewish legal thought active in Jerusalem in the first century C.E.) argued about the exact date on which it should occur. Beit Shammai determined that it should start the first day of the month of Shvat. Beit Hillel, however, ruled a two-week delay, for meteorological reasons, letting the weather warm up so that the first signs of vegetative revival would be visible all over the country. The Halakhah adopted Beit Hillel's ruling. No celebration or rituals are connected to this date in the Mishnah or either of the Talmuds.
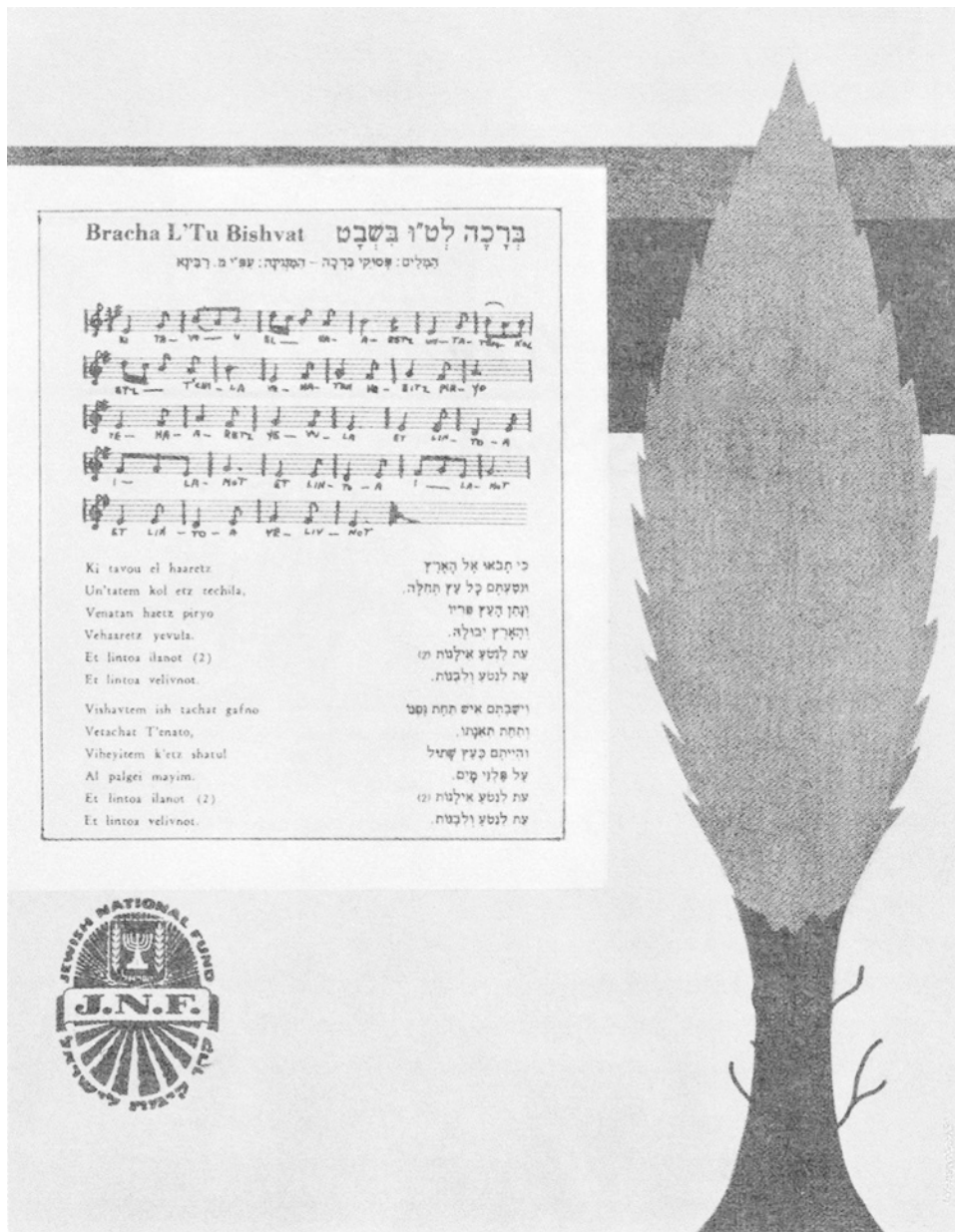
Liturgical poems dating from the tenth and eleventh centuries praising the Land of Israel and its fruits were found in the Cairo Geniza. Scholars interpreted them as dedicated to Tu Be'Shvat.

The medieval Ashkenaz introduced several customs to Tu Be'Shvat. By the ruling of Rabeinu Gershom Maor Hagola (tenth to eleventh century), communal fasts (Ta'anit Tzibur) were not allowed. The recitation of Repentance Prayers (Tahanun) was forbidden as well.

According to testimony by Rabbi Issachar ben Mordecai ibn Susan (1510–1580), during Tu Be'Shvat in sixteenth-century Zefat, the custom was to abstain from fasting or to prostrate during the Tahanun. Ashkenazis (descendants of western and Eastern Europe Jewry) commonly eat numerous types of fruits on this day, but this custom was unknown to Sephardim (descendants of Jews who lived on the Iberian Peninsula, before their expulsion in the late fifteenth century).

Major changes occurred in Tu Be'Shvat celebrations after the sixteenth century, when the ritual called a Tu Be'Shvat Seder was introduced. It is described for the first time in the book *Ḥemdat Yamim*, written by an unknown author and published in 1731–1732 in Izmir, Turkey.

Chapter 3 of this book has a detailed description of the Tu Be'Shvat Seder. This chapter is still currently in print, as a separate pamphlet titled "Pri etz hadar" (the citrus fruit, lit., "fruit of the tree of splendor"). The Seder includes the consumption of twenty-one different fruits (six of them from the seven species mentioned in the Bible as crops of the Land of Israel: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates) and four cups of wine (the first white, the second mostly white mixed with a small amount of red wine, the third half white and half red, and the last cup mostly red with a little bit of white wine). Eating and drinking are combined with spiritual reflections on the various pronunciations of the explicit

A poster for Tu Be'Shvat issued by the Jewish National Fund. *(Jewish National Fund)*

name of God, according to the Lurianic Kabbalah's (the kabbalistic doctrines of Isaac Luria, Zefat, sixteenth century), and readings mainly taken from the Zohar (lit. "Book of Splendor," the major text of Kabbalah, written in Spain in the thirteenth century) with some additions from the Mishnah (canonic text of the Jewish Law, redacted in the second century).

The identity of this ritual's initiator is unknown and disagreed upon by scholars. Some attribute its origin to kabbalist Lurianic disciples from seventeenth-century Zefat. Others agree upon the period but attribute it to a Shabtaic (followers of Shabbati Zvi, who led a Jewish messianic movement in the seventeenth century) source. Finally some researchers agree on the Shabtaic source but postpone the time of its writing to the eighteenth century, around the time *Ḥemdat Yamim* was published. The author of *Ḥemdat Yamim* claims that he invented this ritual. But scholars have raised doubt over the credibility of his statements.

Tu Be'Shvat Seder, according to the *Ḥemdat Yamim* tradition, is held to this day by Balkan, east Mediterranean, and North African Jewish religious communities. Ashkenazi communities, strongly opposed to even the slightest Shabtaic influence, have rejected this ritual and do not perform it. Among religious communities that do not hold Seders for Tu Be'Shvat, the prevalent ritual is eating different kinds of fruit.

Contemporary Celebrations

Another turning point in Tu Be'Shvat's development occurred with the modern return to the Land of Israel. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Zionist movement transformed it into a tree-planting holiday. In 1908, the Teacher's Union in Tel Aviv declared this day a planting festival for students. This remains the major secular custom associated with this festival.

Songs were specially written in its honor: "So Walk the Tree Planters" (written in 1926, with lyrics by Isaac Shenhar/Sheinberg and music by Yedidia Admon/Gorohov), "The Almond Tree Blossoms" (written in the 1930s, with lyrics by Israel Dushman and music by Menashe Rabinah/Rabinowitz). Even in the 1940s these songs were considered folk songs. Today, they are taught to toddlers and in kindergartens as part of the preparations for the festival.

Government agencies and national groups, mainly the Jewish National Fund (JNF, a not-for-profit organization founded in 1901 to purchase and develop land for the Jewish state), usually organize formal planting activities. Lack of suitable planting spaces, a more professional approach to tree planting, and disagreements over where to plant the trees, together with inclement weather and perhaps an insufficient ritual framework to the celebration, have made these planting ceremonies more and more problematic (Pintel-Ginsberg 2006). At the beginning of the twenty-first century, even virtual plantings have been proposed through JNF Web site.

In Israel, since the beginning of the 1970s, along with the custom of planting trees, Tu Be'Shvat Seders were introduced to secular Jews. Inspired by the *Ḥemdat Yamim*, the late Amnon Yadin first celebrated a Seder at the Oranim Teachers' Seminary. This Seder differs from the traditional one, mainly in its textual content and the abandonment of mystical reflection. The structured framework was kept; the first twelve of the twenty-one fruit species are used, and four cups of wine are drunk in the same order and mixture as the traditional cups with one slight difference: the last cup is completely red.

New texts were introduced from various sources, some traditional and some secular: midrashic and Hasidic sayings and tales, modern Israeli poetry and prose. Their content is related to the festival, to the Land of Israel's nature and love for it. Songs are incorporated into the Seder. The different wine combinations and colors are explained as symbolizing various aspects of nature during the four seasons.

Another type of secular Seder was introduced by Noga Hareuveni, one of the founders of Neot Kedumim (Biblical Landscape Reserve in Israel, which aims to recreate the physical setting of the Bible). These Seders do not resemble the traditional Tu Be'Shvat Seder. Their ritual structure is mainly influenced by the Passover Seder.

The textual emphasis of these Seders is learning about Tu Be'Shvat sources and its development.

Since the 1970s, the practice of celebrating Tu Be'Shvat Seders has been adopted by kibbutzim, educational establishments, and Zionist youth movements in Israel and abroad. It is celebrated on Tu Be'Shvat eve, but often, when the weather or other reasons make the planting ceremony impossible, it is celebrated on Tu Be'Shvat. The structure of the ritual and the texts are usually printed in a Haggadah, the same term as used for Passover. Dozens of different versions of these Tu Be'Shvat Hagaddot are found in the Kibbutz Festival's Archives, in Kibbutz Beit Ha'Shita. The ritual structure is more or less stable, as the quantities of fruit vary, but the texts and the songs are often changed. More traditional texts, such as blessings and prayers, are sometimes included. Songs are constantly updated to fit current trends.

Since the late 1990s, several editions of Tu Be'Shvat's *Haggadot* were written by Yoel Rapel and distributed to Israeli schools before the holiday. The ritual described in them is a combination between Amnon Yadin's and Noga Hareuveni's Seders.

Along with the deepening of the Seder ritual on Tu Be'Shvat, an invented tradition is emphasized among the secular Jews: It claims that this ritual's source is Isaac Luria, who invented and practiced it. This tradition has no historical basis and lacks Lurianic ritual logic. Nevertheless, it is used to intensify ideals and promote the love of Israel, the land and people, and the ideas of returning to Zion and celebrating its natural heritage.

This festival has been the subject of different studies. Yom-Tov Lewinsky, in his 1954 broad survey of Jewish festivals, devoted an entire chapter to it. Avraham Ya'ari thoroughly researched its development and presented his findings in several articles during the 1950s and early 1960s. Sharing the same views on the early stages of Tu Be'Shvat development, these two scholars are divided on the causes and the exact period when major changes occurred to the festival since the sixteenth century. Although often using the same sources, they interpret them differently. More recent reviews on Tu Be'Shvat (such as Hacohen 1969; Hacohen and Hacohen 1980; Goldberger 1994) are based mostly on Levinsky's conclusions and tend to repeat them.

Idit-Pintel Ginsberg

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SILVERMAN WEINREICH, BEATRICE

See: Anthologies

SIMCHAT TORAH FLAGS

In the folklore of Simchat Torah—a rabbinical festival marking the completion and the beginning of the annual reading of the Torah—the object associated most with the holiday, at least in the world of children, is undoubtedly the small ornamental flag (Heb., *degel simchat Torah*) made for children out of paper or cardboard and printed with rich and colorful designs pertaining to the holiday and its meaning. Until a few years ago, most flags were customarily attached to wooden sticks topped with apples, which were hollowed out and filled with a burning candle.

While it is not known when and where this custom originated, it is certainly an Ashkenazi tradition, which in the past was especially popular in Eastern Europe. The earliest known source that mentions a flag for Simchat Torah is found in the enactments (*Takkanot*) issued in 1672 by Polish Jews who settled in Amsterdam. The leaders of the community feared that the candle atop the flag might cause a fire in the synagogue and therefore limited its usage. It is evident from this document that the custom existed much earlier and most likely was brought to the Netherlands from Poland.

A few other sources mention the flag in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The German Hebraist Johann Bodenschatz describes the custom in *Kirchliche Verfassung der heutigen Jüden* (Erlang, 1748): "On the night of Simchat Torah . . . when the children leave the synagogue, they hold onto their flags upon which is inscribed 'standard of the camp' and the names of the tribes. They march as if they were soldiers." In southern Germany the children were rewarded with sweets and cookies, while in Hungary the *shammash* (a synagogue's beadle and caretaker) would provide each child with a candle before marching.

Some rabbinical authorities attempted to explain the symbols behind the flag and its features. Thus, the children marching with the flags have been compared to military units: While the latter march with fluttering banners to battles in which people are killed, the Jewish banners of war and war tactics are tantamount to the Torah. In the words of one rabbi: "And the reason for the flags is to show that as in tactics of war, the [children] carry flags as a sign of war . . . and we show in this way that our flags and our tactics are the Torah, and [that we are] students of the war of Torah." Lighting a candle atop the flag carries a parallel association, which is based on the verse "For the commandment is a light and Torah is light" (Prov. 6:23). Evoking the love of Torah in the children by lighted candles is also implied by the words of Isaiah: "Therefore glorify you the Lord in the regions of light" (Isa. 24:15).

The earliest extant Torah flags date to the last quarter of the nineteenth century and come from Eastern Europe. They are printed in black from woodcuts on oblong light-colored paper, depicting Hasidim rejoicing with Torah scrolls, lions of Judah holding flags and "guarding" an open scroll, a deer, and a lion, accompanied by the saying "Be fleeting as a deer and mighty as a lion [to do the will of your father in Heaven]" (*Pirqe Avot* 5:20), building a sukkah, and biblical scenes and figures (e.g., the Binding of Isaac, Moses and Aaron, David and Solomon). Toward the end of the century colored flags, printed (mainly in Warsaw) in the technique of lithograph, appeared. These are swallow-tailed in shape, resembling medieval European knights' banners or town flags. Several common motifs are repeated in these flags: the lawgiver

Zionist Simchat Torah flag featuring Zionist leaders Theodor Herzl and Max Nordau. Belarus, 1902. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

Moses with horns and his brother, Aaron, dressed as the high priest, flank a Torah ark topped by heraldic lions, flanking the tablets of the Ten Commandments. Flags were also prepared at home by the family members and were hand-painted or cut out (no old cut-out flags have survived, however).

With the mass immigration to the United States in the early twentieth century, the swallow-tailed flags with their popular designs at the time reached the United States and later also the Land of Israel. The majority of the flags produced in Israel repeat the typical Polish prototypes, but gradually new motifs were added, reflecting Zionist sentiments and the new realities of life. The depicted children are *sabras* (native-born Israelis) or newly arrived immigrants. One flag has a Boy Scout, standing next to a Yemenite boy. New national buildings, such as that of the Jewish Agency or the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, appear on some flags as well.

In the 1950s and 1960s national symbols (menorah, flag of Israel) appeared side by side with farmers toiling on the land. The desired holy sites, in particular the Western Wall and the Tomb of Rachel, became more and more dominant. After the Six Day War, soldiers carrying Torah scrolls and war heroes (e.g., Yitzhak Rabin and Moshe Dayan) became favorite themes. These themes disappeared following the Yom Kippur War and the traditional motifs were revived.

In the 1980s and 1990s the production of flags was no longer limited to commercial manufacturers and organizations. Yeshivas, banks, and even religious political parties started to produce their own flags. Rabbis and religious political leaders of the various sects in Israeli society appear on these flags as well. Today, cheaper, plastic flags (some manufactured in Asia) often replace the paper flags. Little creativity can be seen in the flags used in the Diaspora communities in the past several decades; they mostly either perpetuate earlier traditional designs or use Israeli models.

Shalom Sabar

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SINGER, ISAAC BASHEVIS

See: Bashevis-Singer, Isaac

SIPORIN, STEVE (1947–)

Steve Siporin is a prominent American folklorist distinguished by his research and publication on Italian Jewry. Born Stephen Charles Siporin in Omaha, Nebraska, on February 3, 1947, he graduated from Stanford University in 1969 and then spent a year working on a farm in Italy followed by a kibbutz experience in Israel for another year. He returned to the United States to pursue graduate studies in English at the University of Oregon, where he had his first folklore classes from Barre Toelken, who encouraged Siporin's Jewish folklore work. After receiving the M.A. in English from Oregon in 1974, Siporin entered the doctoral program in folklore at Indiana University and became a lecturer there in Jewish folklore in 1976. In 1978, he undertook fieldwork in Venice that led to his dissertation, completed in 1982, "Continuity and Innovation in the Jewish Festivals of Venice, Italy." In the dissertation and a number of articles that grew from it, he interpreted the declining community's broad tolerance for creative innovation so as to suggest the possibility of revitalization.

Siporin extended his work on the issue of Italian-Jewish identity in the midst of a majority Catholic culture and later expanded this kind of research on American-Jewish identity, in contrast to predominant trends in Jewish studies concentrated in metropolitan areas of the East and West coasts, to examine Jews as a small minority in the American West, and in particular in the Mormon cultural region, where Jews are colloquially called "gentiles."

Siporin worked as a folk arts coordinator for the Oregon Arts Commission (1980–1981) and the Idaho Commission on the Arts (1982–1986) before being hired in 1986 as an assistant professor in the folklore program at Utah State University (USU). At USU he built upon his experience in public folklore, folk art, and ethnic and religious folklore to teach general courses on folklore, Jewish folklore, and ritual and festival. In 1992–1993 he received a Fulbright grant to teach at the Universidade Nova in Lisbon, Portugal, and in 2010, he was a Lady Davis Fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where, in 1985, he had been a research fellow at the Folklore Research Center, recording narratives of Italian immigrants to Israel. In 2008, he became director of the folklore program.

In addition to making contributions to research on Jewish festival, Siporin developed specialties in Italian-Jewish foodways, legendry, and cultural tourism. Foodways in the modern Italian context, he has argued, symbolically ease a tension caused by the ambiguous nature of Italian-Jewish identity. In his influential article "From Kashrut to Cucina Ebraica" for the *Journal of American Folklore*, he interpreted the integration of food for Jewish festivals within the traditional structure of an Italian meal. His structural analysis was that this combination in cookbooks and practice provided a model for Italian-Jewish identity in modern Italian society. As part of the concern for the tensions on Italian-Jewish identity, Siporin continued this query with studies of the cultural perception by Italian non-Jews of Jews in places such as Pitigliano, where tourists flock to Jewish-themed attractions although Jews no longer live in the town.

Siporin was active as a translator from the Italian into English of Augusto Segre's twentieth-century memoirs of Jewish life in Rome and Jerusalem, and chronicles of the Jews of Pitigliano, Italy. He participated in several important global publication projects in Jewish folklore studies, including serving as associate editor for the *Jewish Folklore and Ethnology Review* from 1985 to 2000 and as an inaugural editorial board member of the Jewish Cultural Studies series for the Littman Library of Jewish Civilization established in 2008.

Simon J. Bronner

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SLOBIN, MARK

See: Anthologies

SODOM

See: Abraham

SOLOMON, KING

King Solomon, the son and successor of King David, ruled over the united kingdom of Judah (Judea) and Israel between 970 and 930 B.C.E. He is a key part of Jewish folklore and the subject of hundreds of folk narratives. Most of the folk narratives portray him as a wise ruler who knows how to solve enigmatic cases as well as a riddler and one who solves riddles; this is the main reason many of the folk stories about him are novellas of wisdom.

Folk Elements in the Bible

The portrayal of King Solomon in the Book of Kings reflects the historiographers' conflict: On the one hand, they wished to enhance Solomon's name and perpetuate him as both the builder of the Temple and as living evidence of the fulfillment of the divine promise to establish the House of David (2 Sam. 7). But, on the other hand, they needed to provide a theological justification for the tragic division of the monarchy, which occurred immediately after Solomon's death and which, in the end, led to the fall of the Northern Kingdom (722 B.C.E.) and, finally, to the destruction and exile of Judah (586 B.C.E.) (Walsh 1995).

According to their view, the biblical historiographers related the reason for the chain of developments to Solomon's sins: His foreign women "turned away Solomon's heart after other gods, and he was not as wholeheartedly devoted to the Lord his God as his father has been" (1 Kgs. 11:4).

However, all throughout the biblical narratives, the first trend overshadows the second one, thus imprinting the apparent image of Solomon as a legendary paragon.

Unlike King David, there are no biographical stories about Solomon. The bulk of the literary material consists of elaborate reports of his glorious reign. As part of this, the narrators indulge in lengthy descriptions of Solomon's riches as well as of the expanded borders of his kingdom, his wide-ranging international relations, and his success in ensuring his kingdom's peace and security.

The historiographers' evaluation of all these events is indicated by their descriptions such as "Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sands of the sea; they ate and drank and were content" (1 Kgs. 4:20) and "All the days of Solomon, Judah and Israel from Dan to Beer-Sheba dwelt in safety, everyone under his own vine and under his own fig tree" (1 Kgs. 5:5). Since this positive judgment of Solomon's reign contrasts with the negative one, scholars relate these two attitudes to two different literary levels. However, it is within the positive stratum that three prominent folktale motifs are interspersed: The first is the story of Solomon's dream at Gibeon (1 Kgs. 3:4–15), which is mainly based on the universal motif of "three wishes." The second is the story of the two harlots (prostitutes), which demonstrates the characteristic of the king as a wise judge (1 Kgs. 3:16–28), and the third is the story of the visit of the queen of Sheba, which is actually based on the genre of "riddles" (1 Kgs. 10:1–13). All three could be gathered under the heading of "wisdom," since they mainly illustrate the various aspects of Solomon's wisdom. Yet it is noteworthy that these folklore examples also imply a most significant contribution to the historiographers' ideology: The motif of the divine gifts and Solomon's wish could be interpreted as a counter-balance of David's tragic choice between three possibilities of divine punishment, in the story of the Census and the Pestilence (2 Sam. 24), thus achieving an image of Solomon not only as David's successor, but also as the compensatory and complementary half of David's enterprise.

The story of the two harlots is a familiar one in folktales. Yet the plot itself is quite problematic: There is no agreement among commentators about the identity of the real mother. Some maintain that the real mother was the shy one, not the talkative one. Others even question the cleverness of Solomon's first decree: "Cut the live child in two, and give half to one and half to the other" (1 Kgs. 3:25). Therefore, rather than a story about the king's wisdom, this appears to be a story about real motherhood. Accordingly, we can interpret it as an allegorical protest against the division of the monarchy by Jeroboam—the "false mother" being the monarch who prefers a torn kingdom, which in the end means that "it shall be neither yours nor mine," for it was the division that led to the final destruction of both kingdoms. Solomon's ability to preserve the united monarchy, even though it had the high costs (heavy taxes, compulsory labor), is therefore regarded as an incomparable achievement.

Another folk element, which includes the riddles, is mainly meant to glorify Solomon's international relations. This becomes apparent by the fact that the narrative, while consisting of an elaborate description of the grandeur and the rich presents, tells nothing about the topics of the riddles themselves.

Much like in other cases, here, too, the folk motifs are interwoven in order to illustrate the historiographers' trends and their ideology. Their main effort seems to be meant to advocate all of Solomon's political initiatives. The nature of this justification is most apparent in this concluding paragraph: "The Lord endowed Solomon with wisdom and discernment in great measure, with understanding as vast as the sands on the seashore. Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all Kedemites and than all the wisdom of the Egyptians. . . . His fame spread among all the surrounding nations. He composed three thousand proverbs, and his songs numbered one thousand and five. He discoursed about trees . . . and discoursed about beasts, birds, creeping things and fishes. Men of all peoples came to hear Solomon's wisdom" (1 Kgs. 5:9–14).

Because Solomon's enterprises could thus be summarized as manifestations of his wisdom, it is no wonder that this characteristic became the most prominent factor in all further presentations of Solomon. This is why later biblical sources ascribed to Solomon the authorship of the books of the Song of Songs, the Book of Proverbs, and the Book of Ecclesiastes (Songs 1:1; Prov. 1:1; Eccl. 1:1,12), although all three of them are relatively late compositions, and even the talmudic sages subtly intimated their doubts on this matter (*Shir Ha'Shirim Rabba*, A, a:10). The same is true about ex-biblical composition, such as The Book of Solomon's Wisdom (= Sapienta, Σοφια Σαλωμωνος), the origin of which is uncertain, but which had become part of the Christian holy scriptures, and the book of Solomon's Psalms (Ψαλμοι Σαλομωντος), which consists of eighteen hymns in Greek, of various sources, all of them translated from the Hebrew.

Solomon in Postbiblical Literature

The postbiblical literature, mainly the Talmud and midrashim, includes a large number of legends that present a variety of attitudes toward Solomon. Some of them recount miraculous events, and in many of them Solomon's image is expanded far beyond historical and earthly limits. He is endowed with prophetic visions (*Bam. Rab.* 19), and, in the scene of the trial of the two harlots, the Holy Spirit is present (*b. Makoth* 3, 23 b). The visit of the queen of Sheba is described in detail, including the riddles (*Targum Sheni*, Esther A, 3; cf. *Midrash Mishle*). He composed three thousand proverbs on each single issue of the Torah (*b. Eruvim* 2:21b), and before

his time the Torah was like a vessel without handles, but Solomon came and provided it with handles (*b. Jebamoth* 2:27a). He who sees Solomon in his dream should expect wisdom (*b. Berakhot* 9:57b). Yet other sayings intimate a critical attitude, such as "even in the days of Solomon wisdom and greatness never dwelt under the same roof" (*b. Gitin* 8:59a; *Sanhedrin* 4:36a), and in some legends Solomon was punished for his pride and greed. He was deprived of his kingdom and was cast away to live as a beggar, in order to learn the ways of humility (*b. Gitin* 68ab; cf. *y. Sanhedrin* 2:20, 3; Midrash Tanḥuma Leviticus). Moreover, for a while Solomon was even accompanied, guided, and dominated by Ashmedai, the king of demons (*y. 2 Sanhedrin* 20:3). Yet in other legends he was even ruling over the demons, guiding them to be useful to humankind. Some of these themes also became prevalent motifs in medieval mysticism.

The most varicolored image of Solomon has been the source of inspiration for many literary works. In the Israel Folktale Archives at the University of Haifa, 204 folk narratives were recorded from oral tradition.

Shamai Gelander

See also: David, King; Folk Narratives in the Bible; Magic.

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Soul

See: Afterlife

Spain, Jews of

The Jews of Spain produced a glorious chapter of Jewish history from the tenth through the thirteenth century, a period that scholars and historians have called a "Golden Age." This chapter's uniqueness derives from the impact on Jewish history and culture of (1) a wide-ranging cultural burgeoning in different fields over a long period; (2) acquisition of high social status; (3) solid economic standing; and (4) Jewish religious autonomy that included religious courts with the authority to adjudicate and to impose sanctions.

During this period, Spain took over from Babylonia as the center of the Jewish world. Works in different areas, such as philosophy, mysticism, grammar, astronomy, rabbinic literature, and belle lettres shaped Jewish culture for generations.

According to ancient traditions handed down through the generations, Jewish settlement in Spain originated in the early Second Temple period. References in midrashic and talmudic literature (in which Spain is called Ispamya), however, mention that the start of the Jewish settlement predates the destruction of the Second Temple (*m. Bava Batra* 3:2; *b. Yevamot* 63a; *Niddah* 30a;

Lev. Rab. 3:6; 29:3). The same information is found in Josephus Flavius (*J.W.* 7.3.3) and in the New Testament (Epistle to the Romans 15:24, 28).

Yet the initial blossoming of Jewish culture and creativity began only a few centuries later with the Islamic conquest (710) and reached its zenith in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. During those centuries, Jews functioned as neutral bearers of religion between Muslims and Christians, which enabled productive cultural contact and reinforcement of the Jews' economic and social status. A number of Jews held high positions at the royal court and were among the country's elite. As early as the tenth century, Hisdai ibn Shaprut served at the caliph's court in Córdoba, and Samuel Hanagid was appointed vizier of Grenada in the eleventh century.

During these centuries, Jews produced works in Hebrew, Spanish, and Arabic in all fields: religious and secular poetry; halakhic, ethical, and homiletic literature; grammar, philosophy, and mysticism. They demonstrated expertise in the hard sciences and were at the forefront of projects translating Greek and Latin texts into Arabic. Almost all these areas are also reflected in folklore.

Hebrew Poets as Legendary Figures

The greatest poets writing in Hebrew, such as Solomon Ibn Gabirol (1021–1058), Judah Halevi (1075–1141), and especially Abraham Ibn Ezra (c. 1092–1167), became the heroes of cycles of legends in oral folk tradition.

The most widely disseminated legends are the story of Ibn Gabirol's murder under a fig tree, in which after the figs ripened, they revealed the identity of the murderer; the story of the marriage of Judah Halevi's daughter to Abraham Ibn Ezra; and the death of Judah Halevi at the Western Wall. More than a hundred stories are about Ibn Ezra, who is presented as an eternal wanderer, the Other who is disguised as a pauper, rejected by the community, but ultimately revealed to be a greatly learned Jew and a miracle worker who saves the community.

Folktales in Books of *Māqāma*

Folk motifs and folktales incorporated in their entirety in literary writing are found in particular in the genre called *māqāma,* which is a narrative in rhymed prose.

This is the case with *Minhat Yehudah sone nashim* (The Tribute of Judah the Misogynist), by Judah ibn Shabbethai, *Sefer Taḥkemoni* (The Wise One), by Judah al-Harizi (d. before 1235), and especially in *Sefer Sha'ashuim* (Book of Delights), by Joseph ibn Zabara (b. 1140), who interpolates into *māqāma* fables, animal tales, and ethical tales taken from both Jewish and non-Jewish sources. So it is with the stories about the fox, which successfully

used his wiles to kill the lion even though the latter was his friend and loved him, and with Aesop's fable about the thin, hungry fox that entered the vineyard through a hole but could not leave, having become too fat from overeating. An example of an ethical tale is the story that is usually told about King Solomon, who proved the treacherousness of a woman. In the book of *māqāma,* it is related to one of the kings of Arabia who tested the nature of a man and a woman. The woman was ready to kill her husband in order to be free to marry the king, but her husband relinquished the prize to marry a princess since he took pity on his wife and refused to kill her. This story functions as an illustration of the biblical verse: "I found only one human being in a thousand, and the one I found among so many was never a woman" (Eccl. 7:28).

In the same misogynist vein, the *māqāma* goes on to tell about a widow from Ephesus, a story taken from Petronius. The widow, while mourning her husband at the cemetery, made love to a guard who was watching over the remains of a robber who had been hanged. When they realized that the robber's body had been stolen while the guard's attention was diverted, the widow hanged her husband's body to put in its place in order to save the guard.

From an Arab source comes the tale of a king who dreams about a monkey jumping on his wives' necks. From the dream, he understood that the women were hiding a man in the palace and being unfaithful to him. From a Hebrew source comes a story of a test for a true son, who was unwilling to mutilate his father's corpse, in contrast to a servant who was pretending to be a son.

Center of Jewish Learning

Halakha (Jewish Law)

The center of Jewish learning that developed in Spain severed its links with the Babylonian gaonate and became an independent center considered supreme in the Jewish world of its time and henceforth for hundreds of years. This process, which reached its zenith in the eleventh century with the arrival in Spain of Rabbi Isaac Alfasi, called the Rif (the acronym in Hebrew for his name), had begun during the tenth century with the arrival of Rabbi Moses and his son Hanokh to Córdoba, where they founded a yeshiva, which became the highest Jewish religious and halakhic authority in Spain. A description of Rabbi Moshe's arrival had appeared in a legendary story in Abraham Ibn Daud's *Sefer ha'Kabbalah* (written after 1161).

The story, called "Legend of the Four Captives," tells about four captives who were redeemed, one in Alexandria, the second in Kairouan, the third in Córdoba (and the fourth not discussed). Each of them founded a yeshiva in his new location. But the main story and most of the details are about Rabbi Moshe, who founded a center of learning in Córdoba.

Kabbalah

Most of the rabbinic written works in Spain until the time of Nachmanides (Moshe ben Nachman) dealt with making practical decisions in Jewish law or with interpretations of Hebrew canonic sources for the same purpose. Nachmanides was the father of a new Spanish school of talmudic exegesis that remains influential to this day. He worked in Gerona in the thirteenth century until he emigrated to the Holy Land in 1263. Also active there in the same period was Rabbi Jonah Gerondi. Both of them were esteemed scholars of Jewish law who commanded great authority as well as being kabbalists.

At this time, at the beginning of the thirteenth century, kabbalistic teachings began to flower in Spain, apparently under the influence of proponents of the Kabbalah in Provence. A group of kabbalists formed in Gerona, disciples of Rabbi Isaac Sagi Nahor (1160–1235), who, like their teacher, advocated putting Kabbalah into writing and disseminating it. Nachmanides opposed spreading it to the masses and instead established his own kabbalistic school of thought, which viewed Kabbalah as a hidden, esoteric system orally passed down from teacher to disciple. Most of Nachmanides's mystical conceptions are interwoven in his highly influential commentary on the Torah.

Nachmanides himself became the hero of a cycle of legends that establish his practical mystical ability through the working of miracles and the display of wondrous characteristics such as moving from place to place instantly by means of magic (*kfitzat ha'derekh*), passing through walls, changing into the shape of another person, and possessing knowledge of hidden things. Legends like these appeared in writing in the mid-sixteenth century in Gedaliah ibn Yahya's *Shalshelet ha'kabbalah* (The Chain of Tradition).

The main trend in Kabbalah, however, was the theurgic theosophical one that developed in Castile. This strain of Kabbalah gave rise to an extensive literature, a great deal of which became the masterpieces of Kabbalah. The main figures in this group were Rabbi Moses de Leon, Rabbi Joseph Gekatilla, and Rabbi Joseph of Hamadan. Through their writings, Kabbalah established itself as a central literary, experiential, and intellectual phenomenon in Judaism. The most important achievement of this trend is the Zohar (end of the thirteenth century), attributed to Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai (Rashbi) of the second century.

The pseudoepigraphic framework of the work creates the legend upon which the book is based: how Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai received the Zohar from the supernal

worlds and how he wrote it down while hiding in a cave. Attributing the Zohar to Rashbi in the second century (according to the legend intentionally created by those who produced the book in the thirteenth century) also required adapting the work to the ancient format of midrashic literature, including the interpolation of tales, fables, and folklore elements.

To make the *tanna* Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai an exceptionally holy figure, the authors of the Zohar created the hagiographic legend, which describes the lives of Rashbi and the members of his group as a sequence of astonishing, miraculous events replete with linkages between this world and the supernal worlds. An additional factor emphasizing the narrative element in Kabbalah literature is the mythic perception of the worlds, the way the divine world is understood, and the description of the system of the spheres and the relations between them using the symbolic dynamics of relationships: familial, sexual, between good and evil, between God and Satan. There is a mythological dimension in the description of the world and man aimed at the creation of narrative, to the handing down of a chain of events. Many sections in the Zohar are written as mythic stories.

Philosophical and Ethical Literature

More surprising is the interpolation of literary and folk genres into philosophical literature in Spain, mainly in ethical literature, since, according to the philosophers' way of thinking, only people incapable of high, abstract thought need stories to understand abstract ideas. Obviously, following this notion, it is clear that the most fitting genre for this purpose is the parable. Even in decidedly philosophical works, including Maimonides's *Guide to the Perplexed,* there are parables—for example, the parable of the Heikhal (*Guide for the Perplexed,* chap. 51, part 2), in which Maimonides reveals his idea of the ways of serving God and indicates the superior status of the philosophers in contrast to all others. But greater use is made of parables and proverbs in the ethical literature, which is intended from the outset for the general public. The assumption was that the use of stories promised popularization. So the collection *Musarei hapilosofim u'mivhar peninim* (The Teachings of the Philosophers and Selection of Pearls) attributed to Solomon Ibn Gabirol comprises, for the most part, proverbs and literary parables; the same is true of Ibn Gabirol's ethical work *Tikkun middot hanefesh* (The Improvement of the Moral Qualities), and it is particularly true of Bahya Ibn Paquda's *Hovot halevavot* (Duties of the Hearts), written in Arabic. The sources of the parables are varied and mixed. Some of them are known from Persian and Indian literature and reached Spain through the intermediary of Arab culture; others are based on rabbinic literature, in which one commonly finds parables with formulaic openings such as "a parable of the kings" or "a tale about a sage"; still others are parables whose authors produced them to elucidate their aims. For example, in "Sha'ar habehinah" (Gate of Reflection) in *Ḥovot ha'levavot,* there is a parable about a group of blind people brought to a house in which everything is arranged to accommodate them, including a physician who can cure them. They do not listen to his advice, and so they bump into furniture, stumble, fall, get hurt, and vilify the owner of the house. Bahya tries to refute those who complain about the rules of nature and the reality created by God and to reinforce the traditional philosophical argument that the Lord created the world in his goodness to bring loving kindness to his creatures. Whoever does not discern this suffers from moral blindness: A person who refuses to be cured prefers in his foolishness to fall and be injured.

The uniqueness of the genre of the parable is that at times there is more to the parable than to the moral drawn from it. The use of a plot, figures, and poetic means occasionally makes the parable more extreme in relation to the moral, as in the comparison between the nonphilosopher and a stubborn, stupid blind man. The genre of the parable helps to reveal ideas not formulated or explicitly expressed in the ongoing discussion.

Even though Maimonides despised stories as suited only to simple people incapable of abstract thinking, folk stories needed to attribute legendary characteristics to such a central figure. Thus, even close to his own lifetime, legends began to develop depicting him as a miracle worker, rescuer of the Jewish community, punisher of its enemies, and curer of its members in wondrous ways, including revival of the dead. The need to tell praise legends predominated the historical biography of the man, who was a strict rationalist. The image of him was linked to reality by only a few isolated facts, such as the family's journey from Córdoba to Morocco, Maimonides's escape from Morocco to Egypt, his appointment as court physician, and the writing of the *Guide for the Perplexed.* Maimonides remains one of the most popular figures in Jewish folk narrative.

Decline of Jewish Predominance

The flourishing of culture in Spain continued until the middle of the thirteenth century, when signs began to appear of a decline in the status of the Jews (mainly in Aragon) under the influence of the Catholic Church and as a result of decisions made by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215. In Saragossa in 1250, for the first time in Spain, a blood libel was spread through a rumor about the killing of a Christian child by Jews and about the miracles that the child experienced. This marked a turning point in the standing of the Jews in Spain.

Thereafter followed the extensive code promulgated by King Alfonso X called "La Siete Partidas," named for its seven divisions. The code ratified the laws of the Church regarding Jews and established a special legal procedure for blood libels, which the king and his advisers considered trustworthy accounts. The prohibition against charging Christians interest began to be enforced, and from that time on Jews were targeted as usurers, in line with a repeated motif in Spanish anti-Semitic narrative, both written and oral, that describes the Jews as avaricious, money-chasing, exploiters of the poor. Limitations were increasingly imposed on the Jews' living conditions. In the 1260s King Enrique I coined the phrase "freeing the country from the burden of the Jews."

Riots that broke out in Seville in June 1391 ushered in a period of increasing violence against the Jews in Spain as well as Portugal. About a third of Spanish Jews died, about a third converted to Christianity (some of them as crypto-Jews), and about a third survived, some fleeing to North Africa and others to countries of the Ottoman Empire.

During this period of sweeping anti-Semitic decrees, great homiletical activity developed that left its mark in a plethora of written works that were useful as springboards for sermons (*derashot*) as well as for debates on them. This may have resulted from the influence of Christian society, which during this period developed an interest in the art of preaching and tried to establish norms and methods for it; alternatively, it may have come out of the harsh, increasingly bitter reality itself, which led to the development of this genre, whose aim was to moralize and to teach the proper way to conduct one's life.

In 1432 the leaders of the Jewish communities of Castile assembled in Valladolid to discuss the establishment of new regulations for the renewal of community life, with a guiding principle of modest behavior. At around the same time, the first third of the fourteenth century, Rabbi Joshua Ibn Shueib, one of the great preachers of that period, wrote his *Derashot al ha'Torah* (Sermons on the Pentateuch), a comprehensive book with sermons for every public Torah reading: the weekly portions and those read on holidays. The work contains a rich treasure of midrashim (rabbinic interpretations), and in many instances, Ibn Shueib used legends as the basis for his ideas. He demonstrates great ability as an interpreter of legends, through an allegorical-philosophical lens as well as using kabbalistic concepts. All of these sermons are accompanied by images, parables, and short stories.

At the end of the fifteenth century, Rabbi Isaac Arama wrote *Akedat Yitzhak* (The Sacrifice of Isaac), which is a homiletical, philosophical exegesis of the Pentateuch that deals with the question of the relationship between the written and oral homily—two different methods that

he believes should remain distinct. The oral sermon is much more folk-oriented and rhetorical.

The genre of preaching about morality had appeared about a hundred years earlier in *Proverbios Morales* (Moral Proverbs) by Santob de Carrion (d. 1360). Composed of proverbs and short poems written in Spanish, the book was also aimed at the Christian audience. The author himself used the term *derashah* (sermon) in defining his writing: "The Lord the King the sublime emanation / hear this Sermon / that will be given by Santob / a Jew from Karyon."

In 1474 Ferdinand and Isabella, called the "Catholic monarchs," ascended the throne and initiated the unification of Castile and Aragon as a single monarchy under one faith. This policy enabled broad expansion of the application of Tomas de Torquemada's concept that proposed a three-stage program: the expulsion of Jews who maintained their faith, the solution of the problem of the *anusim* (the Hebrew term for forced converts who maintained Judaism secretly), and the conquest of Granada, which was the last Muslim city. Now Spain was entirely Christian, and the kings could turn to the problem of the Jews. The Inquisition was founded and Torquemada was appointed to lead it. One of the first acts of the Inquisition was to accuse a number of Jews and *anusim* of murdering a Christian child and using his blood for magical purposes that would lead to the destruction of Christianity and its institutions (the trial of the Holy Child of La Guardia, 1490–1491). In 1492 Granada was captured and the edict of expulsion was signed.

One of the most important historical sources for the history of the expulsion from Spain is the historiographic work *Shevet Yehudah* (The Tribe of Judah) by Rabbi Solomon ibn Verga. The book's value derives not only from its importance as a historical source but also from its literary quality and its place in Jewish culture. Written in Italy during the 1530s, a generation after the expulsion, the book uses a pseudoepigraphic technique. It continues to serve as a source for tales told orally about the tribulations of the Spanish Jews before the expulsion and about the vicissitudes of the expulsion itself. Rabbi Solomon attributes the book to a relative in the generation before his own, Rabbi Judah ibn Verga, one of the leaders of Spanish Jews who had been deported to Portugal, converted, and ultimately died a martyr.

The narrative traditions included in *Shevet Yehudah* move between stories whose plots remain realistic and faithful to historical events and those that exceed reality and glide into the supernatural. These variations stand out, for example, in the blood libel story type, all four of whose subtypes appear in *Shevet Yehudah* and are described as events that took place in Spain. Yet in the folktale, as opposed to reality, a miracle occurs and the dead child is resurrected and reveals who murdered him.

In July 1492 the last Jews left Spain and scattered, mainly to the lands of the Ottoman Empire, North Africa, and Italy (except Sicily, from which the Jews had been expelled as well). The oral narrative tradition says of this day that the expellees took with them the keys to their homes so that they could reclaim their property when they returned one day. A contrasting literary tradition is manifested, for example, in a tale that explains the source of the family name Toledano, still common among Jews with origins in Spain: According to the sound of the name, the meaning is Toledo-No, that is, "we will never return to the land that spewed us out."

Some of the Jews who remained in Spain converted outwardly but remained crypto-Jews. All the anti-Semitic stereotypes that had gained strength as the expulsion approached were then transferred to them, now called New Christians.

During the period called the "Golden Age" in the arts and literature of Spain, from the mid-sixteenth century to the end of the seventeenth, anti-Semitic expression in Spanish society became more pronounced, as seen in the works of the most prominent Spanish authors, such as Lope Felix de Vega, Francisco de Quevedo, and Tirso de Molina. The negative attitude toward Jews stands out even more sharply in folk literature, in stories, and in proverbs. A typical proverb epitomizes the lack of faith in Jews and converts, as seen in this one from a comprehensive collection of Spanish proverbs edited by Louis Martínez Kleiser that includes collections from the fifteenth century:

> *No fíes del judío converso ni de su híjo ni de su nieto*
>
> Do not trust a converted Jew, not his son nor
>   his grandson
> (Martínez-Kleiser proverb no. 34,775)

The Jews responded in the same vein in Ladino (Judeo-Spanish), as seen in this verse taken from a poetic work by Abraham Toledo.

> *No ay emuna en goy ni afilu en la fuesa*
>
> There is no trust in a non-Jew even in the grave.
> (*Coplas de Yoçef hazaddik* [1732], ll. 1820–1821)

Other oral versions of this verse are still commonly heard among Jews of Spanish origin.

The *anusim* were cruelly persecuted by the Inquisition to make them confess their heresy, that is, that they maintained their Jewish faith. Members of the Inquisition kept close watch over the lives of the New Christians and their habits to discover whether they were practicing Jewish customs or whether there was pork in their homes. Did they begin observance of the Sabbath on Friday night? Did they go outside on Saturday night and point heavenward to see whether three stars were visible, indicating the end of the Sabbath? This custom developed into the popular belief, still commonly found among Jews of Spanish origin, that one should not point at stars lest warts grow on one's fingers, an explanation that began during the Inquisition to frighten the children and prevent them from engaging in this dangerous custom.

Many converted Jews fled Spain, leading to an unceasing stream of refugees throughout the sixteenth century who migrated to other lands in order to practice Judaism. In this way, large Jewish centers came into being in Amsterdam, England, southern France, Mexico, and Peru.

Those who remained in Spain tried to assimilate into Christian society and wrote in Spanish in an attempt to blur their Jewish origin. Today various scholars are grappling with traditions, and literary works attempt to determine their historical origin. For example, was Columbus or Cervantes, the author of *Don Quixote*, of Jewish origin?

The Sephardic Traditon

The Jews who left took with them not only written works but also the oral heritage that was handed down to them from previous generations, largely in the language they had used even before the expulsion, Judeo-Spanish (Ladino). This language is still employed for telling stories, reciting proverbs, and singing *romancas* (ballads) *coplas* (actual songs), and *canciones* (lyric songs) that originated in Spain. In this way Jewish oral tradition has preserved songs that Hispanist scholars thought were lost.

The study of Sephardic culture (the culture of the decendants of the Jews expelled from Spain) and their folklore flourishes today in different universities and research centers in Israel and all over the world. Ladino language and culture are taught at all Israeli universities. Important research centers were established in Israel: Moshe David Gaon Center at Ben Gurion University and the Yehoshua Salti center at Bar Ilan University. Research centers operate in Europe and the United States, such as the Higher Scientific Council of Spain (CSIC) in Madrid, and other centers in Berlin, Basel, Paris, Istanbul, and Stanford. International conferences are held every year all over the world.

Sephardic folklore is gaining more and more research attention (see bibliography below). Three books were published by Tamar Alexander on folktales and proverbs. Samuel Armistead published his groundbreaking work on the study of ballads, Elena Romero on *coplas* and Ladino folk plays, Shmuel Refael on ballads and *coplas*, Shoshana Weich-Shahak on folk music, and many others. Dozens of collections of folk stories have been published by researchers and people in the community. For example, Matilda Koén-Sarano alone has published nearly twenty-five collections of folktales in Ladino and Hebrew. Hundreds of proverb collections have been published since

the nineteenth century for almost every community: For instance, those by Enrique Saporta y Beja (Greece, 1978), Yitzhak Moscona (Bulgaria, 1981), Jamila Kolonomos (Macedonia and Bosnia, 1978), Yosef Gabai (Tetuan, 1990), and Klara Perhaya (Turkey, 1994).

There are still approximately 300,000 speakers of Ladino (mostly in Israel and Turkey), although it is no longer a living language used by the present generation of children and young adults.

Tamar Alexander

See also: Bulgaria, Jews of; Folk Narratives, Sephardi; Folk Songs and Poetry, Judeo-Spanish (Ladino); Greece, Jews of; Illuminated Manuscripts; Kabbalah; Languages, Jewish; North Africa, Jews of; Turkey, Jews of.

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STAR (SHIELD) OF DAVID

See: Kurdistan, Jews of; Symbols; Tombstones

STEINSCHNEIDER, MORITZ

See: Russia, Jews of

STERNBERG (SHTERNBERG), LEV

See: An-Ski, S.; Russia, Jews of

STONES

Throughout history, stones have been intertwined in different aspects of Jewish life, culture, and folklore. Whether used to construct buildings and altars, to mark sacred grounds, or to carve sarcophagi, stones provided a practical material for daily life while symbolizing eternity, permanence, firmness, solidity, and hardness.

Ancient Daily Life and Culture

In daily life, stone, being a natural structure of the geological layers of the soil, was the major construction material of ancient Israel. Stones were commonly used in agriculture as borders, terraces, fences, and fill for ditches. In trade, they were used as weights. Various biblical verses refer to the commandment that only "just stones," meaning accurate stone weights, should be used in commerce (Lev. 19:35–36; Deut. 25:13; Mic. 6:11; Prov. 20:10, 23). In the Midrash, this biblical term is viewed as representing one of the principles of divine justice (*Pesiqta de'Rav Kahana* 3:4; *Esth. Rab.* 1:3).

During the Second Temple period (2 B.C.E.–1 C.E.) stone was considered one of the main materials which remained clean and pure, even after it was touched by an impure person or object (*m. Ohalot* 5:5; *m. Kelim* 5:11). A soft type of limestone was used to manufacture furniture,

such as tables, chairs and benches, as well as utensils—vases and vessels. The remains of a high priest's house in Jerusalem with its stone interior, dating from the first century B.C.E., are a good example of this trend. A rather negative meaning related to stones is their ability to be used to inflict lethal injury. Mentioned in the Bible as a weapon in feuds, the stone could be used to kill (Exod. 21:18; Num. 35:16–18). Capital punishment in the Bible was death by stoning, performed by the whole community (Deut. 17:5; 22:21, 24). Hail was regarded as stones falling from heaven and as a divine lapidation specially targeting Israel's enemies (Joshua 10:11). The Midrash developed this concept further (*Sifrey Zuta* 6:26; *Mekhilta de'Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai*, Exod. 20:5; *Song Rab.* 1:10). Yet another negative aspect connected to stones is their relation to idolatry. In the Bible, the "Other" is identified as a stones and trees worshipper (Deut. 4:28; 28:36, 64; 2 Kgs. 19:18; Isa. 37:19). This view has been adopted by later generations (*Eccl. Rab.* 3:8; *Pesiqta de'Rav Kahana* I 16:1).

The symbolism of stones as the embodiment of strength and endurance is manifested in the fact that it was the main construction material of the Temple and other holy sites in ancient Israel. It included the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the walls surrounding it, the First and Second Temples, and their altars (e.g., 1 Kgs. 6:2, 7, 36; 7:12; *m. Tamid* 1:1; *m. Midot* 2:3, 7). In particular, the Shtyyah stone, the name given to the rocky floor of the holiest part of the Temple, was considered the holiest site in the world. The same symbolic context may also explain the fact that in some instances God is called a "rock" (e.g., 2 Sam. 22:2–3, 47; Ps. 18:3, 31:4, 71:3).

In the Bible, stones were mounted in heaps or erected as pillars (Gen. 31:45–6), to attest a meaningful event, as remembrance (Gen. 31:48; Joshua 7:26), and to mark sacred grounds (Gen. 28:18). Certain stones were related to major figures and hence received attention in later generations. For example, the stone on which Moses sat during the war against the Amalekites (Exod. 17:12) was referred to in talmudic sources (*b. Berakhot* 54a; *b. Ta'anit* 11a). Midrashic tradition considers the stone on which Jacob slept and dreamed at Beth El (Gen. 28:11–21) the location of Mount Moriah, the Temple in Jerusalem, and the Shtyyah stone (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer*, 35).

Stones are intertwined with the Jewish life cycle. In the Bible, women gave birth on a special stool, whose name in Hebrew can be read as either "a stool" (*ovnaim*) or "stones" (*avanim*). Some Midrash prefer the latter version (*Mekhilta de'Rabbi Yishmael*, Bashelah: 5; *Mekhilta de'Rabbi Shimon bar Yoḥai*, Exod. 15:5).

Pregnant women, in order to prevent miscarriages, used to wear an amulet called a Tkumah stone, a small stone encased in another one (*t. Moed Shabbat* 4:12; *b. Shabbat* 66b) (see also the medieval dictionary: *Aruch*: "Even Tkumah").

Stone is one of the materials used in burial. Coffins, sarcophagi, and ossuaries made of stones were commonly in use during the Second Temple period. Burial caves were sealed with a large stone. Tombstones were used by Jews throughout the Diaspora, and some remnants can be dated to the early Middle Ages. A characteristic custom among Jews is to place a small stone on the tombstone when visiting the grave, a symbolic silent greeting or a token of honoring the deceased. This custom may have universal echoes of ancient nomads' burial practices: Graves were marked by a pile of stones and restructured when revisited. In the Bible, marking graves with stones indicates the site of outcast people's graves (Josh. 7:25–26; 8:29; 2 Sam. 18:17). In rabbinical sources, putting a stone on one bier had a context of abomination; it signified that the deceased deserved lapidation (*m. Eduyot* 5:6; *b. Moed Qatan* 15a). Among the Ashkenazi communities in the Middle Ages, putting a stone on a grave was considered to counteract the ill effect of reading the inscriptions on tombstones, which caused forgetfulness of acquired Torah knowledge.

Numerous parables, idioms, and proverbs refer to stones (Exod. 15:16; Ezek. 11:19, 36:26; Ps. 118:22; Job 14:19; Eccl. 3:5; *b. Sanhedrin* 14a; *Exod. Rab.* 22:4). Jewish folktales (IFA 502, IFA 553) tell of stones flying to Jerusalem in order to assist in building the Temple (*Song Rab.* 1:4) or stones brought from Jerusalem to the Diaspora to build new synagogues.

Stones Today

In modern times, stones remain important in Jewish culture, such as the placing of a small stone on a tombstone of the deceased during a cemetery visit. Large rocks are left to mark the site of violent deaths along roads, on battlegrounds, and at the location of a terrorist attack. Stones and rocks are used in Holocaust memorials, such as the Treblinka Memorial, which integrates 17,000 stones, each representing a perished Jewish community, and the "Valley of the Communities" at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, carved in rock. The stones of the Western Wall in Jerusalem are the center of renewed veneration: prostrated to, caressed, and kissed, visited on Jewish holidays and on private family celebrations. Small scraps of paper with wishes written on them are tucked between these stones in the belief that they will thus be fulfilled. These stones are also a common topic in songs and in poems. They are considered "stones with a human heart" (after the song "Ha'Kotel," written in 1967, with lyrics by Yossi Gamzo and music by Dubi Zeltser), symbolizing the yearning of the Jewish people for a physical sacred center.

Idit Pintel-Ginsberg

See also: Shtyyah Stone.

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SUKKAH

See: Sukkot

SUKKOT

Sukkot is one of the three pilgrimage festivals, along with Passover and Shavuot (Exod. 23:14). Sukkot begins on the fifteenth of the month of Tishrei and lasts for seven days (Lev. 23:39, 42). The name "Sukkot" (Tabernacles) derives from the principal religious object associated with it, the sukkah (booth). The holiday is also referred to as the Feast of Ingathering (Exod. 34:22), as "the season of our rejoicing" (in the liturgy), and, throughout the Talmud, as simply "the Festival" (the last two are oblique references to Deut. 16:14, "You shall rejoice on your festival").

The talmudic designation reflects the holiday's primacy during the Second Temple period, when it was considered the most important festival. (After the destruction of the Temple, that role was taken over by Passover.) There were several reasons for the centrality of Sukkot. First, it is a harvest festival—and in those days the vast majority of the Jewish residents of the land of Israel, as well as the community in the Babylonian Diaspora, were farmers and agricultural laborers. Further, harvest festivals are not celebrated until the harvest has been completed, when farmers no longer have any work to do in the fields. This makes it an appropriate season for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to give thanks for the bounteous harvest. Another reason is simply that in autumn the journey on foot to Jerusalem was easier.

All work is forbidden on the first day of the festival (the first two days in the Diaspora). The next six days (five in the Diaspora) are ḥol ha'mo'ed (intermediate days), when most work is permitted. The eighth and concluding day, when all work is again forbidden, is a separate holiday (Shmini Atzeret), with its own rituals and customs.

Reasons for the Festival

The Torah provides two totally different reasons for Sukkot. The first is historical: "That your generations may know that I housed the Israelites in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt" (Lev. 23:43). The second is contemporary: to thank the God of Israel for the harvest (Lev. 23:39; Deut. 16:13). The Midrash adds another reason: "Why does Israel build a sukkah? [To remember] the miracles that the Holy One Blessed be He worked for them when they left Egypt, when clouds of glory surrounded and covered them" (*Pesiqta de'Rav Kahana* 169a).

According to Philo of Alexandria, the sukkah is intended to remind the Jews of their ancestors' years of wandering in the wilderness. Another reason is to spur human beings to recognize that one must not take pride in material wealth or be ashamed of poverty. For an entire week, all are commanded to leave their homes—whether lavish or ramshackle—to live and sleep in the sukkah. Rashbam (Shmuel ben Meir), the biblical commentator and grandson of Rashi (Solomon ben Isaac of Troyes), takes a similar approach. He says that the festival was set in the season when farmers gather the harvest from the threshing floor and winepress to keep them from excessive pride and to remind them that in the wilderness no one had a house or field. This recognition will lead them to praise the Lord for what they have received from him.

According to the *Shulḥan arukh,* the sukkah is a symbol and reminder of the clouds of glory that accompanied the Israelites in their wanderings in the wilderness. The talmudic sages saw the sukkah as a symbol of the messianic renewal of the Israelite kingdom. The grace after meals recited on Sukkot includes an extra petition: "May the Merciful One rebuild the booth of David that is fallen" (after Amos 9:11). The sages also said that those who are meticulous in their observance of the precept of the sukkah will merit being seated among the righteous in the World to Come, in the "booth made of the skin of the leviathan" (based on the legend in *b. Bava Batra* 75a).

A decorative sukkah plaque, featuring a verse from the Scripture. Italy, 1800. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

The Four Species

The Torah enjoins the enjoyment of the four species (*arba'at ha'minim*) on this holiday: "You shall take on the first day the fruit of the *hadar* tree, branches of palm trees, and boughs of leafy trees, and willows of the brook" (Lev. 23:40). The Talmud rules that the fruit in question is the *etrog* (citron).

The four species are interpreted as symbolizing four types of Jew. Those who have both flavor (the Torah) and fragrance (good deeds) are represented by the *etrog,* which has both of these. Those with savor but no fragrance are represented by the palm branch, which has a flavor but no aroma. Those who have a scent but are tasteless are represented by the myrtle, and those who have neither, by the willow.

Alternatively, some of the four species bear fruit (the palm and the *etrog*), while others do not (the myrtle and the willow); the same is true for the Jews. To fulfill the precept of the four species, all of them must be present and held together. This symbolizes the unity of the Jewish people.

Halakhah goes into great detail about the four species. The most important stipulation is that the *etrog* be whole and shaped somewhat like a tower, that is, broad at the bottom and narrower toward the top. For the past 400 years some *etrogim* have been produced by grafting an *etrog* branch onto the stock of a lemon tree, to make it hardier. Because rabbinic authorities disagree as to whether a grafted *etrog* is fit for performing the precept, many people insist on buying one that is certified as not having been grafted.

There is also disagreement about the size of the *etrog.* Some hold that the minimum size is that of a walnut. Others speak of a maximum size. The Talmud reports that Rabbi Akiva came to the synagogue with an *etrog* so large that he had to carry it on his shoulder. Very large

etrogim are customary in some Jewish communities today, notably among the Yemenites.

The *lulav* is the frond at the apex of the palm tree, whose leaves are still unopened and flush against the central spine. The *lulav* must be moist, green, closed, and perfectly straight. Moroccan Jews tie colored strings around the *lulav* to reinforce and decorate it; other communities tie up the *lulav* with its own leaves, so as not to add another species to the four ordained by the Torah.

The myrtle must be moist, green, and "threefold," meaning that the leaves are arranged in groups of three, with each set of three leaves attached at a single point on the branch. The willow must be moist and green and often has a reddish stalk. Because the willow dries out quickly, the custom is to replace it at least once during the course of the festival. Three myrtles are bundled on the right side of the *lulav* (with the spine facing the person holding it) and two willows on the left side.

The Torah ordains that the four species be assembled only on the first day of the festival. In the Temple (according to Maimonides, throughout Jerusalem as well) the custom was to do so all seven days. After the destruction of the Temple, Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Zakkai decreed that they be gathered on all seven days of the festival (except for the Sabbath) everywhere, in commemoration of the Temple.

The blessing over the four species mentions only the largest of them—the *lulav.* They are held during the recitation of the Hallel psalms in the morning service and again in a procession around the synagogue during the recitation of the *hoshanot* supplications (see below).

The Sukkah

The sukkah (booth) is the main manifestation of the festival. Although the Bible is silent as to its construction and use (except for a list of the types of branches employed [Neh. 8]), the talmudic tractate *Sukkah* enumerates the halakhic provisions in great detail.

Those most meticulous in the observance of the commandments start work on the sukkah as soon as they return from the synagogue at the end of the Day of Atonement, to go straight from one observance to another or in order to begin the new year by fulfilling a commandment, in keeping with the homiletic understanding of the verse "they go from strength to strength" (Ps. 84:8). The walls are erected first, followed by the roof (*skhakh*). The roof must be made of materials that cannot acquire ritual impurity—vegetation that is no longer connected to the ground and has not been used for some other purpose. The original idea was to use the scraps of the threshing floor and winepress, abundant in the autumn, for this purpose. The *skhakh* must be dense enough that the shaded area within the sukkah exceeds the unshaded area, but not so thick that the stars cannot be seen through it at night.

Because the "splendor of the precept" is particularly important on this festival, the custom is to use one's finest utensils in the sukkah and to decorate it lavishly. There may be brightly colored paper ornaments, fresh fruits, and pictures of the Western Wall, ancient Jerusalem, and important rabbis. The minimum height of a sukkah is 10 spans (about 90 centimeters); the maximum, 20 cubits (about 10 meters). The length and width must be at least 7 spans each (60 centimeters). There is no maximum size, however; the sages said, "would that all Israel would sit in a single sukkah." The sukkah may not be built under a tree or solid roof; nothing can encroach between a kosher sukkah and the sky.

The talmudic sages interpreted the injunction to "dwell in booths for seven days" to mean that one must "dwell as you normally dwell" in your house all year long (*b. Sukkah* 26a). Consequently one may not eat a regular meal outside the sukkah, and the most meticulous even sleep in the sukkah throughout the festival. On the first night, all must eat in the sukkah (regardless of whether they are hungry); but for the rest of the festival, although meals must be served there, there is no obligation to eat. Women are exempt from the sukkah because it is a time-dependent positive precept.

Another ritual associated with the sukkah is that of the *Ushpizin,* an Aramaic word derived from the Latin *hospes* (guest). The Ushpizin are the ancestors of the nation—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, and David—who are invited to visit the sukkah. Many Jews also invite human guests—the poor—hosting them lavishly as the representatives of the spiritual guests.

Sukkot in the Temple

In the Temple ritual for Sukkot, special burnt offerings were made each day, in diminishing numbers: thirteen bullocks on the first day, twelve on the second day, eleven on the third day, and so on, winding up with seven bullocks on the seventh and last day. This brought the total to seventy, corresponding to the seventy nations of the world. They were offered on the altar in order to atone for the transgressions of the nations and to pray that peace reign among them. According to Rabbi Joshua ben Levi, "had the nations of the world realized what a benefit the Temple gave them, they would have surrounded it with fortifications to protect it" (*Num. Rab.* 1).

The Jewish pilgrims were required to bring the festal sacrifice—"every one according to this capacity" (Deut. 16:17). There were other precepts as well. One of the most important of these was the "water libation." Throughout the year, every sacrifice had its accompanying libation of wine; during Sukkot, the morning sacrifice was also accompanied by a libation of water.

Hoshana Rabbah

Another feature of the Sukkot ritual is the worshippers' procession, the four species in hand, around the altar (when the Temple stood) or around the central lectern of the synagogue (in modern times), while the congregation recites the supplications called *hoshanot.* On the seventh day of Sukkot, which has its own name—Hoshana Rabbah or "the great *hoshana*"—the worshippers make seven circuits. After the last one, they beat a special bunch of willows on the ground. (In Tunisia and Morocco it was customary to strike the members of one's household with the willows on their hand, to wish them well in the year to come.)

Why seven circuits? "Rav Aha said, in commemoration of Jericho" (*y. Sukkah* 19a), whose wall fell on the seventh day, when the Israelites circled it seven times. Why should Jericho be remembered precisely then? Because "on Rosh Ha'Shana all pass in front of God to be counted, including Israel. . . . The tutelary angels of the nations say, 'we have triumphed and won our case.' But no one knows who has triumphed—Israel or the nations. . . . But when Hoshana Rabbah comes, they take the willows and make seven circuits, and the prayer leader stands like an angel of god with the Torah scroll in his arm and the people circle him as if he were the altar. . . . At once the ministering angels rejoice and say, 'Israel has triumphed, Israel has triumphed!'" (*m. Tehillim* 17:5).

The judgment rendered on the High Holy Days is given its final ratification on Hoshana Rabbah. The kabbalists of Safed initiated the custom of staying awake the entire night to study, with a fixed order of texts from the Bible, Mishnah, and the Zohar. Some recite special penitential prayers.

According to the Mishnah, the amount of rainfall for the coming year is set on Sukkot: "The world is judged concerning water on the festival" (*m. Rosh Hashanah* 1:2). This, according to Rabbi Akiva, is why Temple ritual for Sukkot included the special water libations: "The Holy One, blessed be He, said: 'Pour out water before Me on Sukkot, so that your rains this year may be blessed'" (*b. Rosh Hashanah* 16a). Today, in addition to the special prayer for rain that is recited on the eighth day of the festival, the festival liturgy contains many references to rain.

Hakhel

The Torah prescribes a ceremonial reading of the Torah (or sections thereof) at a public assembly (Heb., *hakhel*) of all of Israel, on the first intermediate day of Sukkot at the conclusion of each sabbatical year (Deut. 31:10–13). Although it is not clear from this passage whether the reading was to take place in the Temple only or in each city, the sages of the Second Temple period understood it to mean the former. The talmudic literature, which

refers to the ceremony as the "chapter of the king" (*m. Sotah* 7:8), prescribes that the king himself conduct the reading, in a festive celebration attended by many of the pilgrims. There is documentary evidence on several of these observances from the last years of the Second Temple. In modern Israel the custom has been revived to some extent.

Ecclesiastes

Ecclesiastes (Kohelet) is one of the Five Scrolls. In Ashkenazi communities, it is read on the intermediate Sabbath of Sukkot. Some read it from a parchment scroll and recite the corresponding benediction as well as the "Sheheheyanu" blessing ("who has kept us alive and preserved us and enabled us to reach this season"). Several reasons have been given for this custom, which dates to the period of the Geonim (seventh to eleventh centuries). The true reason seems to be the desire that all five of the scrolls be read in the synagogue during the course of the year. Another explanation links the book of Kohelet to the *hakhel* ceremony (the words derive from the same Hebrew root): King Solomon, the author of Ecclesiastes, is supposed to have read it during the *hakhel* ceremony.

Customs of the Various Communities

Ashkenazi Jews hang colorful fabrics in the sukkah; some also hang small containers of flour, wine, oil, and honey, along with strings of dried figs, a fresh branch of dates, and a pomegranate, representing the seven characteristic species of the Land of Israel. They supplement them with colorful paper lanterns and birds made of dyed eggshells. Rosettes of colored paper are hung from the walls, along with small baskets containing a pebble. Imaginary portraits of Moses and Aaron and important sages, along with signs welcoming the Ushpizin, may also adorn the walls. A plan of the Third Temple is often hung at the center of the eastern wall.

Jews in Kurdistan lay precisely seven beams across the walls of the sukkah, one for each of the Ushpizin, to support the *skhakh.* In one corner they place a chair covered with a colorful cushion, to serve as the throne of the patriarchs, meaning the seven Ushpizin (like the chair of the prophet Elijah at circumcisions).

Moroccan Jews hang a small stool, which they call "the chair of the prophet Elijah," on the wall of the sukkah and decorate it with colorful fabrics. They use it to hold books used during the festival, such as prayerbooks.

Jews in Tunisia use palm fronds to cover the sukkah. If this is not possible, they try to stand at least one palm frond in each corner of the sukkah.

In Persia, Jews would build large *sukkot* to be shared by several families. The children built smaller ones nearby and decorated them lavishly. They referred to the festival as *Muddeh Sukkah,* a corruption of the Hebrew *Moed sukkah* (Sukkah festival), and this was sometimes corrupted further to *Madda Sukkah.* People left their shoes by the door when they entered the sukkah; otherwise it was thought to be invalid. When the men returned from the synagogue, they stood at the door. One of them, usually a scholar, would read various prayers and invite the seven "sustainers of the covenant" to enter, each on his own evening, following the sequence of the Ushpizin.

Joel Rappel

See also: Jerusalem and the Temple; Papercut.

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SYMBOLS

In a cultural context, symbols are vehicles that convey the worldview and ethos of a society. They have two parts: One is the physical aspect that can be captured objectively by the senses (the symbolizer), such as a word, an image, or an object; the other (the symbolized) is its significance, the sum of all the various meanings derived from the first part. These meanings require a constant process of interpretation by both the user and the receiver of the symbol. Some scholars differentiate between types of cultural symbols according to their meaning. A symbol conveying one clear and defined meaning is called a "referential" or "instrumental" symbol, while a symbol conveying several meanings, often unclear or contradictory, is called a "condensed" symbol.

Jewish symbols in general are condensed. They are the corollary of Jewish culture's singular characteristic: its substantial bonds to traditional Holy Scriptures.

Every generation carries out a continuous creative dialogue with the previous generations' texts and commentaries. The meanings of Jewish cultural symbols are composed of various layers, including a layer of universal or archetypical meanings and a body of meanings that derive from cultural contexts. This cultural entity comprises different types of meanings. The first is the layer of instrumental meanings, derived from the daily usage of the symbolizers. The second has actual and current meanings which originate in a specific period by the latest generation. Some groups in different periods extensively contributed new meanings to Jewish symbols: the rabbinical and midrashic literature, the Spanish and Lurianic Kabbalah, Hasidism, and the Zionist movement. These new meanings were added to the immense pool of all the former meanings of the same symbol and became for latter generations a part of the symbol's density. The third layer is made up of the cumulative meanings existing in Jewish culture since the Bible, adopted by further generations through an interactive process of commentaries.

In Jewish culture, there is an extensive pool of symbolizers. It is partially composed of universal archetypes shared by mythologies and religions around the world. They reflect humanity's close acquaintance with heavenly bodies, still-life, fauna and flora, family, the human body, and geometrical symmetric shapes (such as the Star of David). However, the main body of symbolizers in Judaism is derived from a cultural context.

Major landmarks in Jewish history such as divine revelations to the patriarchs, the Exodus from Egypt, the wandering in the wilderness, the building and destruction of the Temple, conflicts with conquering empires and the diasporas have all been used as symbolizers throughout the generations. Unique biblical references, such as the patriarchs, the well and the pillars of cloud and fire accompanying Israel in the wilderness, Jacob's ladder, Beth El, the Tabernacle, the Temples, the menorah, kings and heroes, just to name a few, became major symbolizers over time. Subjects borrowed from the immediate surroundings and daily life, such as construction features, local distinctive trading habits, agriculture, arts and crafts, domestic animals, typical Israeli landscapes, fauna and flora, social establishments and relationships, also provided symbolizers.

Symbols have been used since the Bible to express major issues relevant to the Jewish discourse. Among them: the affinity between God and the people of Israel, the rhythmic patterns of Jewish history viewed as a sequence of destruction/exile/redemption, God's essence, the people of Israel, their essence and nature, and human faith and existence.

Various symbolizers were used to discuss common issues, each of them emphasizing a slightly different aspect of these issues. For example, the nature of Israel is symbolized by numerous symbolizers, some taken from Israel's fauna and flora, such as the dove (*Song of Songs Rab.* 2:2; 4:2), the vine (*Lev. Rab.* 36:2–3), the palm tree (*Gen. Rab.* 40:1), the olive (*Exod. Rab.* 36:1), and the lily (*Lev. Rab.* 23:5). The stormy relationships between God and Israel are symbolized through family ties—for example, a loving father and his beautiful daughter (*Song of Songs Rab.* 1:5; 3:2), an enraged father and his rebellious son (*Eccl. Rab.* 4:14), a moody king and his weary mistress (*Song of Songs Rab.* 5:1), a vanished husband and his faithful wife (*Pesiqta de'Rav Kahana* on Jesaiah 51:12). Humanity's ephemeral existence is symbolized by diverse objects, such as an oil lamp and a plucked fig (*Gen. Rab.* 62:5), a passing shadow (*Gen. Rab.* 96:1), and a stone (*Gen. Rab.* 100:7).

Jewish cultural symbols are expressed verbally in the cultural literary corpus, beginning with the Bible and its commentaries, and are integrated into parables, proverbs, Midrash, and tales. They are also present in material culture, as meaningful objects integrated into customs and rituals connected to daily life and the Jewish calendar and life cycle.

Idit Pintel-Ginsberg

See also: Animals; Jerusalem and the Temple; Menorah; Papercut.

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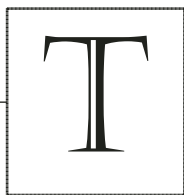
TAMAR

In Jewish and world folklore, Tamar represents the lethal woman, a familiar motif since biblical times. A lethal woman is one who has become a widow twice and who, according to custom, is not to be married again. She has no male counterpart; there is no such example of a lethal man, no matter how many times a man becomes a widower.

According to Genesis 38, Judah betroths Tamar to his oldest son Er; and after Er dies childless, Judah gives Tamar to Onan, to raise offspring for his brother. Onan, who knows that children born to him and Tamar will not be his, spills his semen on the ground, and the Lord slays him in punishment. Judah sends his daughter-in-law to her father's home as a widow; she is to wait there until his son Shelah grows old enough to wed her. But Judah delays this marriage, fearing that his young son will also be struck down.

Tamar hears that Judah (after the death of his wife) is headed to Timnah to shear his sheep, and from this moment on, she no longer plays the role of the passive object, whose fate is shaped by Judah and his sons. She appears in the guise of a determined, forceful woman, who acts quickly and decisively: She takes off her widow's clothes, wraps herself in a scarf, sits in a conspicuous place by the road, consents to the proposal of Judah (who does not recognize her), and receives meaningful gifts and guarantees from Judah in support of her agreement to marry into his family—Judah's signet and cord and staff, and a kid from his flock. After three months, Judah discovers that his daughter-in-law has become pregnant, and he declares that the "harlot" should be brought out and burned. Before this punishment is carried out, she shows her father-in-law the signet, cord, and staff, and he acknowledges her propriety.

This sequence is familiar in folklore: A man who condemns someone to death recognizes a sign (a ring) given at a time of sexual relations, and the execution order is overturned after this discovery.

The "happy ending" comes when Tamar gives birth to twins, and her desire to have sons is fulfilled twice over.

When Tamar is in labor, one of the infants extends a hand, and the midwife wraps a scarlet thread around it; but his brother comes out first. Tamar exclaims: "What a breach you have made for yourself" and names the boy Perez, after the Hebrew word for "breach." Then the infant with the scarlet threat comes out, "glowing" (*zoreah*, which has the same Hebrew root as "scarlet"), and is called Zerah.

Tamar thus emerges as a determined woman who is unconcerned about the means and is not afraid of taking risks in order to secure her rights and fulfill her destiny by conceiving with the seed of the family to which she was betrothed. She transgresses the limits and rules of the framework in which she is confined.

Some have speculated that Tamar was holy in the original story (as a sacred harlot)—the scarlet thread, a symbol of prostitution (Joshua 2:18), is used as evidence of her connection to the profession. Midrashic literature holds that Tamar, like all matriarchal figures, was blessed by a prophetic spirit. She anticipated that a messiah would be born to her descendants; this prophetic knowledge compelled her to comply with the local law that required a young woman to wait by the gate of a city for seven days before her wedding and offer herself to strangers.

Some scholars have claimed that Judah, a righteous man, should have continued on his way without stopping for Tamar. She, however, prayed to God, who sent an angel to stir lust within Judah (*Bereshit Rab.* peh 8, *Tanḥuma Buber Hakdama*, *Shevet Yehuda* 11, 14:3–5).

The Midrash relates that the guarantee provided by Judah to Tamar was lost. Only her pleading, and promise that her survival would bring three holy figures who would sanctify God, saved her (*Tirgum Yonatan Bereshit* 38:25).

The Midrash compares Tamar's acts with Ruth's—both tempted Jewish men. In other words, there is no denunciation of the bold act carried out by the women, because their intentions are worthy. The dynasty of Solomon and David was thus conceived out of acts involving incest and mixed marriage.

Regarding Tamar's overall moral status, the judgment of traditional commentators can be misleading. The phrase "she is more righteous than I" suggests that Tamar is holier than Judah, a male head of a family in a patriarchal society. Yet subsequent Aramaic translations of the Bible, and Jonathan Ben Uzziel's translation, obscure this suggestion of Tamar's superiority; their formulations, "Tamar was right, she has conceived by me," appear to conceal the moral superiority of the woman figure.

Aliza Shenhar

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See: Russia, Jews of

TOBIT, THE BOOK OF

The Book of Tobit (*Sefer Tuvya*) is a Jewish composition from the Second Temple period, dated no later than the beginning of the second century B.C.E. In its Greek translation, it was included in the Septuagint and preserved in Christian writings in two principal versions (short and long) and was also translated into Latin, Syriac (a dialect of Aramaic), and Ge'ez. The work was translated back into Hebrew and Aramaic from these languages in the course of the Middle Ages.

Textual History

Its place of composition is unknown. A theory of Egyptian origin has never been substantiated, and despite the evidence of influence of the Persian religion, it would appear that the author's lack of familiarity with Babylonian geography—the plot takes place there between Media (in modern-day Iran) and Nineveh (in modern-day Iraq) in the reign of "Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria," immediately following the exile of the Ten Tribes—disproves the theory that the story originated in this region. It is possible, therefore, that it originated in Palestine or its vicinity, although this view, too, lacks solid proof. Hebrew and Aramaic fragments of the work, found in the caves of Qumran, confirm scholars' speculations, based on internal textual evidence, that the work was originally composed in Hebrew, and from this language it was then translated into Aramaic and Greek. However, it would appear that its versions in Semitic languages, which preceded the Greek version, were already lost to the Jews in ancient times, and at the same time all recollection of the work was lost, too. It is not mentioned at all by the ancient Jewish writers Philo and Josephus, or even in the rabbinic literature.

The Story

The story opens with a description of the life of Tobit, who was exiled to Nineveh, where his only son, Tobias, was born. Tobit, meticulous in the observance of the divine commandments in his homeland, amassed wealth in the service of Shalmaneser, and persevered in his benevolent ways for both the living and the deceased. Once, on the night following the festival of Shavuot, having contravened the express order of the king and buried a corpse that had been cast into the street, Tobit slept in the courtyard of his house on account of his ritual impurity (resulting from handling the deceased). Birds that hovered overhead released their droppings into his eyes, which blinded him. This initial loss, which is the turn of events that sets the development of the plot in motion, is magnified when he also becomes impoverished. In his sorrow, Tobit turns to God in prayer. At this point in the story, a second front is created in the plot, which is later woven together with the first. At that very moment Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, a relative of Tobit, prays to the Lord in Ecbatana to deliver her from her bitter fate. She had wedded seven husbands, but the demon Asmodeus had slain them all on her wedding night before the consummation of the marriage, and now she was despised and humiliated by her family. The two prayers are heard in the heavens, and God sends Raphael, the angel charged with healing, to alleviate their pain by means of Tobias, the son of Tobit, and Sarah's future groom, who is the main hero of the narrative. Raphael reveals himself to Tobias in the form of a man named Azariah, when Tobias sets off on a journey to Rages, accompanied by his dog, in order to redeem money that Tobit had left with his relative. Raphael directs him and helps him at the only event mentioned in the story that visits them along the way.

While Tobias is washing in the Tigris River, a fish comes out of the water and attempts to swallow him up. Upon the instructions of the angel, Tobias throws the fish onto dry land, pulls out its gall, heart, and liver, and puts them away for safekeeping. Tobias and the angel then make a detour to Ecbatana, to the house of Raguel, in order to meet Sarah. Tobias wishes to marry her, but he fears the demon who is enamored of her and murders her grooms. Her relatives and family members also warn him against the marriage. The angel, however, instructs him to smoke the fish's heart and liver on coals in the bridal chamber and to expel the demon in this way. By following his instructions, Tobias forces the demon to flee, which it does to the furthermost extremes of Upper Egypt, where it is bound by Raphael.

Now that this thread of the story has been resolved, the narrator resumes the former part (Tobias's original mission). Tobias sends Raphael to Rages and when he returns with the bags of money, Tobias, Sarah, the angel, and the dog all return to Nineveh. Following the angel's instructions, Tobias smears the fish's gall over the blind eyes of his father, who regains his sight. When they desire to thank him and to share with him their fortune equally, Azariah's true identity is revealed to them, and he declares his divine mission to heal Tobit and Sarah, his intended daughter-in-law, as a reward for Tobit's exemplary righteousness, especially toward the deceased. The story concludes with Tobit's song of praise to God and with his bidding his son to remove himself to Media

on account of the prophecy on Nineveh's approaching fall. With the death of his parents, Tobias buries them beside each other, in accordance with his father's wishes, and moves to Media where he learns, at the end of his days, of the destruction of Nineveh.

Folkloristic Elements

The folkloristic elements of the Book of Tobit, both the motifs woven into a narrative type and the customs and beliefs reflected therein, are most conspicuous. Scholars, at the same time, are divided over the question of whether it is a novella, in the composition of which the author made use of folkloristic elements, or a written and reworked version of a Jewish oral popular story. Regarding the narrative type, the plot of the Book of Tobit combines two elements: the grateful dead and the intended bride (scholars are divided, as well, on which element is at the core of the plot and which is added to it). As for the first element, the story is the earliest known version of this folktale type (AT 505–508; cf. Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, E341, E341.1). The basic theme of the grateful dead tales involves a corpse lying unburied because the creditors of the deceased will not allow its burial until the dead man's debts are paid. A stranger who passes through has compassion upon him, pays his debts, and buries him. The deceased, for his part, recompenses the favor sevenfold. He returns in the form of a mysterious personage (an old man, a manservant, an animal, an angel), accompanies the stranger on his travels, saves him from dangers that await him, and leads him to success and riches. Finally, he also helps his benefactor to attain the wife he desires by showing him how to deliver her from the monster that has taken hold of her. In some versions, the deceased promises his help in return for an equal division of the gains attained by the hero with his help. All these motifs are indeed woven into the version of the narrative type that is laid before us in the Book of Tobit. Its uniqueness, being a Jewish oicotype, is in the absence of any appearance of the deceased person himself, as the mysterious personage. In place of this, our version offers the appearance of an actual angel, sent by God, to bestow kindness on the righteous man who buries the dead.

The intended bride folktale type (AT 930A), or the match made in heaven, originates in the notion that the match between two people is preordained and may not be changed. In stories of this type, this motif develops in two main directions based on the principle guiding the chief protagonist: knowledge of his fate, and his opposition to it, or lack of knowledge, and acting innocently. However, whether they relate the hero's attempts to harm the intended bride and to remove her from his path, or they envelop his life with wanderings and dangers

that end in revelation and, on occasion, even saving the intended bride, who is controlled or imprisoned by a monster or other evil powers, all these plots lead to the recognition that the intended fate will be realized. Every attempt by one of the couple to escape it and to link his or her life with someone else is doomed to failure. In the Book of Tobit, the entire plot is arranged around the motif of the intended bride, as it becomes apparent that Tobit's illness, the appearance of the helpful angel, and Asmodeus's love for Sarah and his slaying of the prospective husbands contribute jointly in the plot to the purpose of the intended unification of Tobias and Sarah. Nevertheless, the explanation provided by Raphael for the virtue of Tobias's marriage with Sarah provides this story with a Jewish foundation, while revealing to us the custom of the marriage of relatives that was apparently widespread among the Jews at that time. The *ketubbah* (marriage contract) is mentioned in the story for the first time in Jewish literature (long before it became explicit law adopted by the rabbis), as are some other marriage customs. Pieces of information on Jewish customs in the areas of ritual purity, prayer, festival, and burial are revealed, too, in the story, here and there.

Two additional foundations are added to this combination of two folktale types in the Book of Tobit. The first is the legend, known throughout the ancient Middle East, of the Babylonian sage and teller of parables and morals, Ahiqar, the adviser to King Sennacherib. This serves the author of the Book of Tobit in two ways: (a) regarding the narrative, the very adoption of the figure of Ahiqar, and his assimilation into the story as the Jewish nephew of Tobit who supports him in time of need and rejoices with him when his fortunes take a turn for the better; (b) from the structural perspective, the incorporation into the plot of two moral sermons by Tobit. The second essential foundation of the story is the demonological side. The narrative function of Asmodeus is as the bride's protector for her intended husband, while he makes her into what the rabbis later termed "a murderous woman," whose husbands die one after the other (in this aspect the story is also tied to the popular motif of the hero predestined to die on his wedding day. Cf. AT 934b). In rabbinical law, such a woman was limited to no more than three husbands (*b. Yevamot* 64b; *Niddah* 62a). The story of Tobit indicates that this law was not yet in practice at the time of its composition, even in the form of a custom. The system of beliefs and the popular praxis related to demons, as revealed in the story, is broad.

The Book of Tobit provides the earliest evidence in Jewish literature of the notion of an emotional connection between a demonic creature and a human being. The actions of Asmodeus, on the one hand, and the accusations against Sarah by her family members as a result of the death of her husbands, on the other, reveal the perception of the demon as evasive, invisible, and possessing great

destructive power. Alongside this, the story provides the first testimony of the magical practice of the exorcism of demons. The angel's instructions to Tobias (6:8)—"With regard to the heart and the liver, make a smoke in front of a man or a woman whom a demon or evil spirit has attacked; and they will no longer be harmed"—seem to be an exorcistic, magical recipe. The way it continues— "And as for the gall, anoint a man's eyes, over which white films have crept, and they will become well"—tells us something of contemporary popular medicine (one should note that at the time of the Talmud a cataract was viewed as a case of demonic possession and its cure was, therefore, achieved through exorcism).

It may be that the surprising occurrence of the dog in this cultural context, as Tobias's companion on his journey, is also related to this matter. A number of scholars hold that the inclusion of the dog within the story originates in the belief and practice of the Persians, who associated the dog with the expulsion of demons. From this perspective, it was for the express purpose of struggling with Asmodeus that the dog came along on the journey. Others hold that it is no more than a decorative narrative motif, concerned with reflecting the brotherhood and partnership between man and dog that was retained in the Jewish version of the story. Either way, it would seem that the dog testifies to the foreign origins (Hellenistic, Babylonian, or Persian) of the Book of Tobit. At the same time, scholars have argued that the appearance of the dog in the Jewish oicotype (twice, and with no function apart from accompanying Tobias on the road) challenges the common view of sweeping antagonism to dogs in Jewish culture in ancient times. In this case one might be able to derive information on the custom of Jews to strike up a friendly relationship with this animal at the time and place of the author of the work, or even in the time and place of the oral version of Tobit, if such existed before being put into writing.

Yuval Harari

See also: Asmodeus; Demon; Magic.

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TOMBSTONES

Throughout Jewish history, tombstones have marked the burial places of Jews, evolving over history. Their shapes, decorations, rich symbolic motifs, and inscriptions provide one of the best-documented and most elaborate cases of development of Jewish folk traditions and forms of material culture. Millions of tombstones known to us, either preserved or at least documented, constitute undoubtedly the richest and most available repository of Jewish material culture.

Early History

Ritual burials and graves were known in Palestine as early as the Neolithic period. The earliest evidence of the settlement of Judaic tribes in the land of Canaan in patriarchal times unequivocally connects this settlement to the establishment of ancestral burial places (see Genesis 23:17 regarding the purchase of the cave of Machpelah by Abraham), both materially and symbolically. The custom of marking places of burial certainly already existed at this time, as references in the Bible to Jacob's placing of a monument (*tsiyun*) at the grave of

Rachel (Gen. 35:20) attest; this custom was continued later (see, e.g., 2 Kgs. 23:17 and Ez. 39:15). The marking of graves at that time could already be tied to the goal of preserving the ritual purity of the *Cohanim* (Jewish priests); placing heavy stones on graves was meant to prevent them from being dug up by wild animals.

The first known burial structures of the Jews date from a significantly later period. In addition to the so-called monolith from Siloam and several other simple sepulchral structures (e.g., Jerusalem tombs located in the area of the so-called tomb in the garden) possibly from the period before the Babylonian exile, the earliest known and preserved burial structures date to the period of the Second Temple: the supposed tomb of Jason to the west of ancient Jerusalem, the so-called tomb of Herod, and in the valley of Kidron the greatest concentration of such tombs, such as the so-called tomb of Absalom, the tomb of Zacharias, and the tomb of the sons of Hezir. Without exception, these were monumental family vaults (similar to the description in 1 Macc. 13:27–29 and Josephus, *Ant.* 13:211, the grave of the Hasmoneans), with an architectural character making them difficult to recognize as the equivalents of typical gravestones. These monumental architectural graves were apparently the subject of critique by Simeon ben Gamliel and the Talmudic dictum that "the just do not need a tombstone" (*y.* Shekalim 2:7, 47a). Though this critique continued within rabbinical circles (and was also made by Maimonides), later halakhic tradition sanctioned the custom of placing tombstones (not ostentatiously large ones) as a sign of honor for the dead.

At least from the second century B.C.E. ossuaries and sarcophagi, common under the influence of Greek culture, were known in Palestine and sometimes decorated with typical later motifs of rosettas, heraldic arrangements of animals, or floral, geometric, or architectural motifs. The largest and most valuable necropolis of this type is located in Beit She'arim, where in the period from 200 C.E. to 351–352 C.E. was found the central place of burial of Jews living in Palestine. Catacomb burials were also practiced in the Diaspora, especially in Italy, at least beginning in the first century C.E. The greatest concentration of Jewish catacombs is found in Rome (Monteverde, Vigna Randanini, Vigna Cimarra, Via Labicana, Via Appia Pignatelli, Villa Torlonia). The epitaph tablets found there were inside closed, isolated burial alcoves and the sporadic sarcophagi were, as a rule, decorated with figurative representations and an epitaph most often in Greek. Of 191 inscriptions found in Monteverde, 130 were written in Greek, twenty-nine in Latin, and five in Hebrew. This proportion is common for all Jewish epitaphs of the ancient period. Of approximately 1,600 known burial inscriptions from that period, 68 percent were in Greek, 18 percent in Hebrew or in one of the Aramaic dialects, 12 percent in Latin, and 2 percent were bilingual. Figurative representation, frequently

developed into a rich iconographic program, drew on Greco-Roman mythological motifs, Jewish symbolism, and universal decorative motifs. Among the ostentatious elements related to Greco-Roman mythology are found Fortuna with a horn of plenty, Pegasus, Nike, and winged geniuses (mythological protective semigodly creatures). The most common Jewish symbol is the menorah, but representations of *etrogs* (citrons), *lulavs* (palm leaves), shofars (ram's horns), and cabinets with Torah scrolls also appear. Also popular were images of animals, especially birds, and plant motifs that can be connected to the symbolism of the tree of life.

Middle Ages

The epitaph tablets found in the later ancient catacombs of Italy, in Rome and Venosa, can be seen as a transition between the ancient burial markings and the tombstones created in the early medieval period. Archaeological finds in Venosa suggest the following evolution there: The period of the catacombs was from the third to around the sixth centuries, during which were preserved fifty-four epitaph tablets; twenty-three tombstones found in a cemetery operating from the fourth century to 1241 and similar to those known from later Jewish cemeteries in medieval Europe continued the form of the fifty-four epitaph tablets. A similar evolution can be seen in the case of Jewish tombstones from the Iberian Peninsula.

The basic features characteristic of Jewish medieval tombstones differ fundamentally from later ancient epitaph tablets in the lack of ornamental motifs and the dominance of the Hebrew language, which is virtually the only language of Jewish burial inscription from the earliest known medieval tombstones beginning in the tenth century (epitaphs of the elite include Aramaic barbarisms, though this does not usually go beyond standard religious vocabulary, only sometimes playing a bit with references to the religious literature). The Hebrew alphabet was written in block script, though in its different types (cursive and semicursive script appeared sporadically only in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the writing of final letters or parts of letters). These features are common on tombstones from the areas of Ashkenazi and Sephardic culture and also from the independently developing Middle Eastern traditions, for example, tombstones from Yemen and Afghanistan (though frequently inscriptions in Judeo-Persian also appear there), and even for Karaim tombstones from the Crimean Peninsula.

In Europe, the fundamental feature distinguishing tombstones of the Sephardic and Ashkenazi areas, the placement of the tombstone, appeared probably somewhat later, perhaps in the twelfth century. While in the Ashkenazi tradition the tombstone as a rule is placed vertically, in the earlier Sephardic tradition, the stone may also be

horizontal. In the period after the expulsion of Jews from Spain in 1492, horizontal tombstones were becoming the dominant form in Sephardic Jewish cemeteries through other areas of settlement of the Sephardic Jews in the Mediterranean, the Netherlands, England, and elsewhere. Medieval tombstones from Spain were also often larger than Ashkenazi tombstones, and their epitaphs longer and stylistically richer. The oldest dated medieval inscription found on the Iberian Peninsula comes from Calatayud in 919; in addition to this inscription, numerous tombstones or their fragments from Toledo, Barcelona, Gerona, and individual tombstones in many other locations (e.g., in Puento Castro from 1026) have been preserved. Unfortunately, the poor state of their preservation and the lack of continuity after the 1492 expulsion prevents us from seeing their evolution in Christian Europe. Sephardic Jews who settled in the Ottoman Empire continued the form of the horizontal tombstone, as a simple stone or conical pseudo sarcophagus, initially richly decorated, but introducing in the eighteenth century an increasingly rich arabesque, plant, or, less frequently, architectural decoration. Under the influence of Islamic culture, these tombstones were usually devoid of animal or anthropomorphic motifs, even in places where the Sephardic and Ashkenazi traditions overlapped (the Hasköy cemetery in Stambul is an interesting example).

The tombstones of Sephardic Jews in Northern Europe and the Americas in the seventeenth century recall medieval Sephardic tombstones in their horizontal placement. However, given that, culturally, the community was dominated by Marranos returning to Judaism, the art of tombstones and the language of inscription refer directly to the sepulchral art of Christian Europe. An excellent example of this is the best-known cemetery of Sephardic Jews in Ouderkerk in the Netherlands, active since 1614. Until the end of the eighteenth century, almost all tombstones there include an epitaph in Portuguese (sometimes supplemented with a short Hebrew formula), and the rich ornamentation and symbolism refers directly to Christian art. Especially well represented there are full figured anthropomorphic biblical representations (Abraham in Mamre, the sacrifice of Isaac, Rebekah at the well, Jacob's ladder, the death of Rachel, Joseph's dream, David playing the harp, Daniel in the lion's den), usually referring to the name of the dead person, but also Christian sepulchral motifs (hourglasses, crying angels, skulls and crossbones) and motifs of mythological provenance (cherubim, Chronos). An extreme case is the scene of Samuel's dream in the temple in Shiloh (1 Sam. 3: 1–14), depicted by an anthropomorphic figure of God rising from the clouds and speaking to Samuel. After the eighteenth century, this type of representation foreign to the Jewish halakhic tradition disappears, Portuguese is supplanted by Hebrew, and ornamentation becomes somewhat limited. Similar, though not so spectacular,

are features from seventeenth- to eighteenth-century graves in Sephardic Jewish cemeteries in Curaçao in the Caribbean (from 1656), Emden (from 1705), and Hamburg-Altona (from 1611). There one can find shocking *danse macabre* images and a portrait of a scholar in a monastic cassock.

More than in the Sephardic tradition, the condition of preservation of tombstones from the Ashkenazi areas allows us to see the continuity in the development of burial forms from the early medieval tombstones from the eleventh century to contemporary times. The oldest tombstones from the Ashkenazi region were preserved in cemeteries in Mainz (1064), Worms (1077), and Speyer (1112), in Worms in situ with the continuity of tombstones preserved from the eleventh to the twentieth centuries. Numerous tombstones appear in other German cities from the thirteenth century on, as well as in France (Paris, 1230–1235), England (after 1259), Poland (1203), Moravia (1269), and Hungary (1278). Tombstones from the eleventh, twelfth, and the beginning of the thirteenth centuries (individual tombstones outside the Rhineland, e.g., from 1130 in Völkermarkt in Carinthia and from 1203 in Wrocław in Silesia) carry numerous archaic features and differ from the type dominating from the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. These earlier tombstones were small, topped flat or with a full arch, devoid of decoration, with short very formulaic inscriptions in a broad, indented band encircling the stone and engraved with script of a pre-Ashkenazi type (with Middle Eastern influences) with equal thickness of vertical and horizontal lines.

From the thirteenth century on, tombstones in all of Northern Europe from France to Silesia and Hungary became significantly larger, and the length of the inscription increased as well. Indeed, until the end of the Middle Ages, simple architectural motifs remained the single decorative element, primarily simple lines encircling a shallow inscription with figurative motifs appearing sporadically (e.g., the tombstone of Bluma in Speyer from 1365 ornamented with a large decorative flower and the fourteenth-century tombstone from Prague decorated with images of the sun and moon); the introduction of script of the Ashkenazi type, with a significant difference in the thickness of vertical and horizontal lines as well as numerous fractures of the lines, increases the artistic value of the tombstones from this period. Epitaphs from the same period contain the basic elements of the formulas that characterized later inscriptions, although individual elements of the epitaph (the opening formula, closing formula, and information block) had at this point not yet been entirely differentiated. The inscription is always engraved.

Expulsions of Jews from England (1290), France (1395), and the majority of Germany meant that the Ashkenazi type of medieval tombstone continued in only a few German cities (the most important cemeteries from this

period are in Frankfurt am Main and Worms) and, above all, in the Czech lands, in Moravia, and in Poland. From the period before 1500, these include more than twenty examples in Bohemia (Prague, from 1439; Cheb [Eger], 1242–1385; also, though the documentation there is lacking), sixty-one in Moravia (Olomouc, 1269–1338/39; Znojmo, 1306–1430; Brno, 1349–1443), twenty-nine in Silesia (Wrocław, 1203–1345; Świdnica 1289–1383; Brzeg 1348; Nysa 1350), and thirty in Hungary (Buda, 1278–1431, 1492?; Trnava, 1340–1396; Skalica, 1398; Sopron, 1411/12). Only in Prague and Kolín, however, have the tombstones survived in situ, and the use of the cemeteries continued without interruption into the early modern era. In Germany, numerous medieval tombstones have been recorded in the Jewish cemeteries of Worms, Frankfurt am Main, Spandau, Vienna, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Regensburg, and Ulm, while individual tombstones have been preserved in many other communities. In Poland, aside from Silesia, which Poland lost to Bohemia in the mid-fourteenth century, the oldest surviving Jewish tombstones date from the mid-sixteenth century, but the medieval type of tombstone predominated in all of Eastern Europe until the second half of the sixteenth century, and in more remote localities until the beginning of the seventeenth. The most interesting and largest groups of gravestones of this type, dating from the second half of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth centuries, are preserved in Busk near Lwów (from 1520), Lublin (1541), Szczebrzeszyn (1545), Lesko (1548), and Buczacz (1587).

Modern Times

A new type of gravestone appeared in the mid-sixteenth century in cemeteries of the large Jewish communities of Central and Eastern Europe, for example, Kraków (where the oldest-known tombstone dates from about 1549), Przemyśl (1574), Frankfurt, and, above all, Prague, where the sixteenth century saw the development of a school of sepulchral stonemasonry of high artistic value and very particular local traits. For instance, Prague's tombstones used figurative anthropomorphic motifs, family symbols, and the Star of David, rarely encountered elsewhere. Sixteenth-century tombstones from Prague, as is the case with those found in large Jewish communities in Germany and Poland or even in provincial centers such as Chęciny or Pińczów that had a highly developed artistic culture, embodied a Renaissance (and later Baroque) aesthetic, incorporating classical architectural motifs to enrich the composition of the face of the tombstone. Locally, for example, in Prague and Kraków, tombstones in the shape of pseudo sarcophagi became very widespread.

By the mid-seventeenth century, this type of tombstone spread throughout the region, at the same time undergoing significant simplification and a rapid evolution toward folk art forms. The folk version of this type of gravestone, sometimes referred to as Jewish Baroque, became the best-known type among East European Jewish communities; it predominated until the mid-nineteenth century and, in many localities in Ukraine, eastern Poland, and Belorussia, as late as the Holocaust. The inscription field continued to be the most prominent element in a tombstone of this style, but the composition of the front of the stela changed under the influence of contemporary architectural models, as seen, for instance, in the motif of the arcade, the aedicula (decorative niche), and, beginning in the early seventeenth century, a notable tendency toward dividing the front of the stela into clearly differentiated parts: a pediment, a framed inscription field, and a base. Initially, the pediment contained the opening formula of the inscription (or at least part of it), but beginning in the late seventeenth century, it was more frequently filled with ornamental and symbolic images; at the same time, the pediment itself grew larger. An extreme example of this tendency can be seen in the gravestones of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century southeastern Poland, Ukraine, and Moldavia, where the pediment, richly ornamented and filled with symbolic motifs, constituted almost half the tombstone, and the main principle of its composition seems to have been horror vacui.

The repertoire of motifs employed to decorate tombstones included ornamental architectural elements as well as about 100 symbolic, figurative motifs, often tied together in stylized, complex, and very specialized compositions. Examples of these specialized hieratic schemes include crowns flanked by heraldic lions or deer, the pitcher and bowl of Levite tombstones, professional symbols (such as the caduceus often seen on physicians' graves), and family symbols (e.g., a goose seen on the tombstones of the Gans family in Prague). The inscription field was often filled with ornamented epitaphs done in relief script, with much variation in the height and style of the letters, and flanked by various sorts of ornamental fringe, pilaster strips, pilasters, or demicolumns. The epitaph formula was also elaborated, with laudatory and elegaic sections enriched by poetic elements, frequently with rhyming verse (initially monorhymes, then geminate, cruciform, and encircling in form), acrostics, or chronograms. Stylistically, folk literature with its bead-string structure predominated as a model, in the elite version suggestive of biblical figures of speech and employing citations from and allusions to the Bible. More commonly, however, the epitaphs were quite simple, often with spelling and grammar mistakes, with very simple forms and a limited repertoire of formulas. The largest and most remarkable collections of tombstones of this sort are preserved in Satanów, Międzyboż, Sienawa, and Lesko. Traditional tombstones were often covered

Tombstone of Zeev ben Abraham Landau (1813–1899), from Warsaw. *(Courtesy of Marcin Wodzinski)*

with paintings, scarcely preserved to this day (one might conclude that this feature was common for all medieval and early modern Jewish tombstones, but this is not certain). The *ohel*, that is, simple architectural constructions protecting the graves of famous scholars, rabbis, and *tzaddikim*, was also a characteristic sepulchral form in the cemeteries of Eastern Europe; they appeared at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries and quickly became important pilgrimage centers, especially in the Hasidic movement.

The development of this style of tombstones in eastern Poland, Ukraine, Moldavia, and Belorussia in the eighteenth century resulted in a growing divergence between the eastern and western parts of Europe. In German lands, Bohemia, western Poland, and the reemerging Jewish settlements in France, tombstones continued to resemble and imitate Christian sepulchral art, and in some areas (including small provincial towns such as Lesko, Krotoszyn, and Dobruška) the influence of high-art styles such as Baroque, rococo, and, later, classicism, was notable. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, Eastern and Western traditions again began to resemble each other, as Jewish burial art in all areas of Europe evolved quickly in the direction of traditional

Christian art. In Western regions, alongside the German language (initially written in Hebrew letters), obelisks, columns, full relief sculpture, and greater architectural foundations became a popular, broadly applied historical style; traditional Jewish symbolism almost disappeared. There also appeared symbolic tombstones and collective graves (e.g., war graves), and even monuments placed on burial urns. In the nineteenth century, a style of more traditional East European sepulchral art also evolved. Beginning in the nineteenth century, symbolic elements of non-Jewish origin (e.g., hourglasses, butterflies, pommels, or poppies) became increasingly common. Inscriptions grew increasingly formulaic, stiff, and segmented. The number of available symbolic motifs gradually decreased. At the same time, however, there was a loosening of hieratic symbolic compositions, as a result of which symbols were composed more freely and new compositions of a narrative character began to appear.

Decline

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, just as the influence of Christian sepulchral art intensified, there followed the mass production of tombstones and further

standardization. One can safely assume that the most common material for tombstones, also before the nineteenth century, was wood. Grave markers were simple planks with painted inscriptions or images of full-size gravestones carved into the wood. Given the material's lack of permanence, very few of these have survived (a few are in Belarus; others are preserved in museums in, e.g., Bucharest and Helsinki), and, to be sure, their lives were quite short. Until the end of the eighteenth century, only elite members of society were able to afford stone tombstones, while the more popular burial signs were made of wood. The former, because of their durability, have been preserved in relatively large numbers; the latter, because of their impermanence, were very quickly ruined. Material preserved from medieval and early modern cemeteries, then, is not representative of all Jewish burial art; rather, this material represents only the graves of the wealthiest. In the later nineteenth century, alongside the universalization of the mechanical production of stone, there appeared mass engraved, inexpensive, and at the same time relatively durable stone tombstones; similarly, *matzevot* (tombstones) of cast iron were mass produced, though only locally. In areas where stone suitable for production was difficult to find, inscriptions were engraved in small boulders (glacial erratic) or made by breaking off stone from rocks of a layered structure. The proliferation of prefabricated tombstones reached the most traditional centers of Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and caused an evident regression in Jewish sepulchral art and the further disappearance of traditional iconography. Ornamental plane lettering was replaced by typographic styles, while relief inscriptions gave way to sunken lettering. This type of a tombstone was also reproduced in the twentieth century in Palestine and even now dominates among the Orthodox. There was no revival of the earlier style of sepulchral art after the Holocaust.

In the twenty-first century, Jewish tombstones in Europe are made according to generic stone-working models, with Jewish symbolism principally restricted to a Star of David, while Hebrew is generally used only for the closing formula of the epitaph.

Marcin Wodziński

See also: Cemetery; Death.

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TORAH ARK

The Torah ark, called *aron* or *aron kodesh* (Holy Ark) in Ashkenazi communities and *hekhal* in Italian, Middle Eastern, and Sephardic communities, is the receptacle in which the Torah scroll and its accessories are kept. Therefore, it is one of the two focuses of the sacred service in the synagogue, the other being the *bimah* (platform) or (in Italy, the Sephardic Diaspora, and Middle Eastern communities) the *tevah*. The ark is always located on the wall facing the direction of prayer; in most communities it is covered by a curtain.

Early Representations

The earliest representations of receptacles in which Torah scrolls are kept appear in the burial art of the fourth century C.E. in the Land of Israel and in Rome (drawings and engravings found in Beit She'arim and in the catacombs of Rome). These representations, along with remains of niches (Dura-Europos, Susiya) or installations built into ancient synagogues, indicate that when the practice of keeping the Torah scrolls in a permanent place developed in antiquity, two types of ark took shape in the Land of Israel, Babylonia, and the territories of the Roman Empire: a freestanding wooden cabinet and a niche embedded in the synagogue wall, or in an adjacent room, in the wall facing the direction of prayer.

Arks of this type were used in the Middle Ages throughout the Diaspora. Over time, the niche, sometimes without doors, became the accepted form of the

ark in Muslim countries. In these communities, the ark ultimately became a niche with wooden doors. Open niches were used in Iran and Bukhara (in present-day Uzbekistan) until the beginning of the twentieth century; in Afghanistan, the ark was a room with niches in the walls for Torah scrolls. In a few Middle Eastern communities, as well as North Africa, synagogues sometimes had more than one ark, sometimes in the form of an ark with multiple doors, spanning the entire width of the synagogue. In European synagogues, two main forms may be distinguished from the Middle Ages on: a niche with wooden doors, which evolved into a wooden cabinet with its back embedded in the niche and its front protruding from the wall; and a freestanding wooden cabinet standing against the wall. In many cases, the freestanding arks were simply ordinary storage cabinets, used as they were without change or converted for use as Torah arks by the addition of a Hebrew text. In most communities, however, Torah arks were designed for that purpose from the outset and are therefore characterized by well-defined Jewish content.

That content derives primarily from the perception of the synagogue as a "lesser sanctuary" (Ezek. 11:16), in consequence of which the Torah ark is seen as a representation of the Ark of the Covenant. Accordingly, in Central and Eastern Europe, the upper part of the ark represents the *kapporet,* the golden cover of the Ark of the Covenant (Exod. 25:17, 21). It hence became customary to place on the ark reliefs, or even statuettes, of the two cherubim that, in the Tabernacle, were mounted on the Ark of the Covenant (Exod. 26:31–35). In keeping with traditional interpretation, these cherubim were made in the shape of a pair of lions, eagles, or an imaginary combination of these creatures—griffins. In time, a short curtain or valance, with depictions of the cherubim, was added to the upper part of the ark. The identification of the ark with the Ark of the Covenant was the source of inspiration for depiction of the Tabernacle utensils on the doors of the ark, mainly on their inner sides. This design is typical of Italian synagogues, as well as those in Central and Eastern Europe. When the doors of these arks are opened, one sees the seven-branched candelabrum on the right-hand door, that is, to the south, in accordance with its position in the Temple; similarly, the Showbread Table is seen on the left-hand door, that is, to the north (Exod. 26:35). The Torah scroll kept in the ark was also a source of inspiration for two of the most common symbols of the Torah: the Torah crown, which appeared simultaneously on Italian and Polish arks in the mid-sixteenth century, and the Tablets of the Law, first found on the ark of the Portuguese Synagogue in Amsterdam (1675).

The perception of the synagogue as a "lesser sanctuary" is also the root of the comparison of the ark with the gate of heaven. This metaphor is frequently used in the liturgy, and it explains the custom of opening the doors of the ark for especially important prayers. The inscription "Our Father, our King, open the gates of heaven to our prayers," often seen on the doors, is an obvious expression of this idea. The architectural depiction of the ark as a gate—a physical expression of the metaphor—was common in many European communities and later also outside Europe.

A unique phenomenon in Eastern Europe in the eighteenth century was the construction of tall arks in two or three tiers, which offered considerable scope for the introduction of new, complex motifs against a background of decorative floral and faunal patterns. These arks, especially those carved in wood and painted in a profusion of colors, were a major outlet for Jewish folk art. They influenced the design of ceremonial objects in the synagogue in general, in particular that of the *shiviti* plaques mounted on the cantor's desk; their influence is also manifest in the popular genre of *mizraḥ* papercuts sometimes hung on the eastern wall of the home.

In the nineteenth century, when the Moorish style of synagogue architecture came to the fore in Europe and the United States, arks in the form of large niches appeared, often with sliding doors and stiff curtains. In the twentieth century, in particular, after World War II and the establishment of the State of Israel, new motifs were incorporated in the design of Torah arks, many of which, especially in wealthy communities, have been designed by famous artists.

Torah Ark Curtain (*Parokhet*)

The Torah ark curtain is a screen hanging over the Torah ark that serves as a partition between the ark and the prayer hall. The Hebrew word "*parokhet*" is based on its identification with the curtain, which separated the holy section of the Tabernacle and the Temple from the Holy of Holies (Exod. 26:31–35; 40:21). This identification is based on the concept of the synagogue as a "lesser sanctuary" (Ezek. 11:16). According to the available literary and visual sources, the curtain became a fixture in Ashkenazi and Italian synagogues during the Middle Ages. Scholars have no information about the existence of Torah ark curtains in communities outside Europe until the twentieth century. According to the literary and visual material from Spain, it seems that the outer curtain was not customary in Spanish communities. However, they did apparently use an inner curtain, as evidenced by the presence of an inner curtain in all Sephardic diasporic communities. In Italy, all arks have inner curtains, whereas an outer curtain is present only in some communities—perhaps out of reluctance to hide the ornate doors. Because the curtain serves as a cover for the ark, its position within the hierarchy of ceremonial objects is that of a "secondary" ceremonial object. Only when the need arises to use it as a covering for the *bimah,*
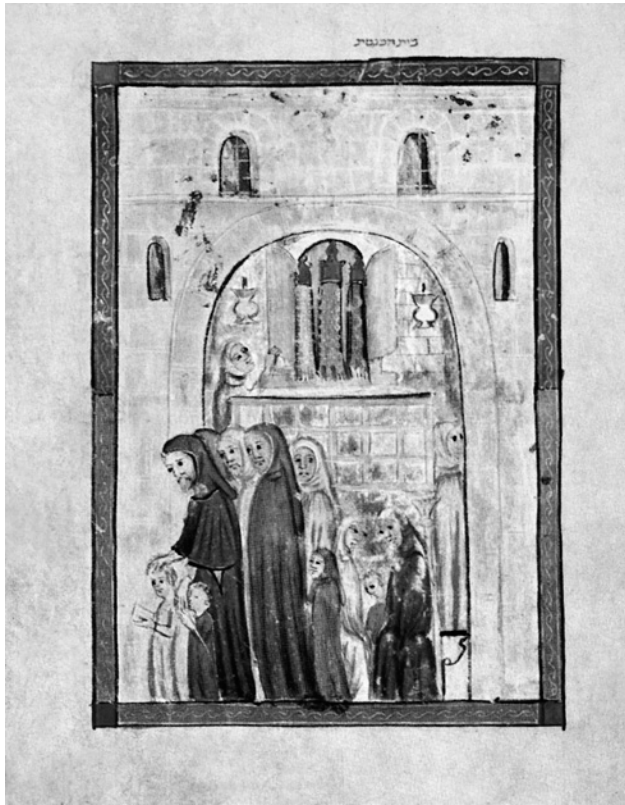
"Making a request in front of the open Torah Ark." From the Sarajevo Haggadah, fol. 34r. Spain, ca. 1350. *(National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo)*

that is, as the cloth on which the Torah itself is rested, does it become a primary ceremonial object.

Like other ceremonial objects in the synagogue, the Torah ark curtain is usually donated by individual members of the congregation, to commemorate life-cycle events, such as the birth of a son or a marriage, or as a memorial to a deceased family member. This has engendered the custom of embroidering the name of the donor and the occasion of the donation directly on the curtain or on an attached piece of cloth. In the twentieth century, dedicatory plaques of beaten silver appeared in Iraq.

The traditional design of the Torah ark curtain varies from community to community. In most, the curtain was made of a choice fabric according to the local cultural conception. In most communities, a luxurious fabric, which had previously been in the family's possession, was used, and a common practice was specifically to use a costly piece of woman's clothing. The typical curtain in Iraq was made from the *izar,* a woman's upper veil that she wears when leaving the house. This veil, a rectangular piece of brocade, was donated by women in memory of their husbands or, upon their death, by relatives in their memory. It was the embroidered dedicatory inscription that transformed the piece of clothing into a ceremonial

object. There was a similar custom among the Cochinese Jews in India, who covered the coffin of a deceased man with a wraparound skirt, which was made of especially costly material. After the funeral, the skirt was used to make a Torah ark curtain dedicated to the memory of the deceased person. Torah ark curtains in the communities of Iran and Afghanistan were principally made of *suzani* embroidered sheets, and in Iran a tradition also developed of using paisley-printed cotton material with Hebrew inscriptions.

Yemeni Torah ark curtains were designed, as were covers for the *tevah* and for Torah scroll cases, in the form of a large sheet in the center surrounded by a broad patchwork frame with a chessboard pattern. In the Sephardic communities of the Ottoman Empire, it became customary to make Torah ark curtains from silk velvet with gold embroidery or from women's dresses, also of embroidered velvet with silk embroidery. In such cases, the different parts of the dress were ripped and resewn to create a rectangle.

It appears that neither in the Middle Eastern communities nor in the Sephardic Diaspora did this custom arouse opposition on the part of the rabbis. European rabbis, however, differed regarding the fashioning of Torah ark curtains from used material, especially from clothing in general and from women's clothing in particular. The circumstances under which pieces of clothing were used generally involved vows taken by women in times of stress or used elegant clothing purchased for reuse of the cloth. Rabbinical objections to the practice abound in the responsa literature, where we find repeated questions on this subject. Those objecting to the reuse of fabrics relied on the law that the Temple utensils must be made of new material, which was not previously used (*b. Menachot* 22a). The more permissive rabbis, who were willing to take popular feeling into consideration, cited midrashic commentaries on the episode of the copper mirrors donated by the women of Israel for the Tabernacle (*Midr. Tanḥuma Pequdei* 9). According to this interpretation, it is permitted to use a piece of clothing, provided that its form is changed. The many examples of secondary use of clothing, both in rabbinical literature and in actual Torah ark curtains, indicate the popularity of this practice in Europe beginning in the Middle Ages.

Alongside curtains of costly materials, European communities began to use embroidered Torah ark curtains. In Italy, a center of the art of embroidery, many communities traditionally embroidered curtains using the Florentine stitch technique, which is particularly conducive to the execution of detailed and precise patterns. Women used it to embroider a variety of Jewish motifs, including biblical themes, such as the Giving of the Torah, and scenes from festivals and life-cycle events.

An entirely different embroidery tradition developed in the communities of Central and Western Europe,

where there were professional embroiderers who specialized in gold embroidery on a silk velvet background. The most outstanding motif of the eighteenth-century Torah ark curtain in these communities is that of a pair of columns, topped by a pair of lions flanking a Torah crown. Between the two columns is an ornate sewn or embroidered rectangular sheet. This motif dates back to the earlier architectonic motif of an actual gate, above which is the verse that identifies it as the gateway to heaven: "This is the gateway to the Lord—the righteous shall enter through it" (Ps. 118:20). Underlying the depiction of this motif on Torah ark curtains is the identification of the Torah ark with the "gateway to heaven." Originally found in Italy, the motif spread eastward to Turkey, northward to Bohemia and Moravia, and westward to Germany.

Turkish Jews carefully preserved the architectonic form of the gateway and the verse woven or embroidered above it. The presence of the verse was essential, because Jews not infrequently converted Muslim prayer rugs, which typically featured the shape of a gate, into Torah ark curtains. It was the addition of the biblical verse that achieved the conversion. In all other communities, however, the architectonic form of the gateway was corrupted by the addition of a dedicatory inscription in place of the gate's arch or gable. After the original motif had been corrupted, a pair of lions was added above the columns on each side of the Torah crown, reminiscent of the cherubim mounted on the Ark of the Covenant. The components of this motif—columns, lions, and Torah crown—may still be found today on Torah ark curtains embroidered in Israel. A new generation of artisans has emerged in the modern era, who have transformed the traditional Torah ark curtain by the use of new techniques and motifs.

Torah Ark Valance (*Kapporet*)

The *kapporet* is a short curtain hung on the Torah ark, above the *parokhet*. This ceremonial object, which first appeared in Eastern Europe at the end of the seventeenth century, evolved in connection with the identification of the upper part of the Torah ark in the synagogue with the *kapporet* on the Ark of the Covenant in the Tabernacle (Exod. 25:21). This identification was one manifestation of the concept of the synagogue as a "lesser sanctuary" (Ezek. 11:16). On that basis, the Torah ark in the synagogue is identified with the Ark of the Covenant, and its upper part with the *kapporet,* the cover of the Ark of the Covenant. Accordingly, it was customary in Eastern Europe to inscribe the verse "He made a cover of pure gold" (Exod. 37:6) on the upper part of the ark. The identification then came to be applied to the short curtain hung over the upper part of the ark to conceal the rod on which the main curtain was mounted. Indeed, we find the verse "Place the cover

[*kapporet*] upon the Ark of the Covenant" (Exod. 26:34) embroidered on early Torah ark valances. As part of the synagogue furnishings, the valance was most likely introduced under the influence of seventeenth-century interior decoration in Europe, where such valances were integral parts of curtains in general. Further influence of the cultural environment is evident in the scalloped lower edge of the valance.

The identification of the valance hung on the Torah ark with the gold cover on the Ark of the Covenant is also evident in the motifs used in its decoration. Thus, most early valances employ the motif of a pair of cherubim flanking a Torah crown, as per the biblical description of two golden cherubs with outspread wings mounted on the ends of the cover (Exod. 37:7–9). The depiction of the cherubim as a pair of eagles, lions, or griffins is based on the traditional interpretation of the creatures figuring in Ezekiel's Vision of the Chariot (Ezek. 1:5; 10:14–15). Another characteristic motif of the valance is the Tabernacle utensils embroidered on the scalloped edges. The Ark of the Covenant is embroidered on the central scallop below the Torah crown; the Showbread Table and the menorah are generally embroidered on matching scallops on either side of the central one, as are the golden altar and sacrificial altar on another pair of matching scallops. Eventually, the two motifs—the cherubim and the Tabernacle utensils—developed and changed, the most significant change being the appearance of the motif of three crowns (*Pirqe Avot* 4:13) in the upper part of the Torah ark valance.

The Torah ark valance spread from Eastern Europe to Central Europe and Western Europe (but not to the Italian communities), and by the beginning of the eighteenth century it had already become a regular iconographic feature. In most instances, valances were donated separately from the Torah ark curtain, most of them being embroidered by professionals. During the eighteenth century, a workshop in Prague specialized in the embroidery of Torah ark valances, and thus many of the valances produced in that city during this period show remarkable similarities. A unique feature of the Prague valances is the addition of a pair of freestanding wings attached to the upper part of the Torah ark on either side of the valance. These wings were fashioned from rigid materials and covered with an embroidered cloth. In southern Germany, however, Jewish embroiderers worked separately; German valances are therefore less similar to one another, displaying a richer vocabulary of iconographic motifs.

In Eastern Europe, where Torah arks typically show greater iconographic variety, the two motifs on the valance disappeared in the course of the eighteenth century, most of the valances known from this area being made of patterned fabrics without embroidered motifs or inscriptions. In contrast, in Central and Western Europe, velvet

valances with motifs and dedicatory inscriptions in rich gold embroidery continued to be fashioned until the twentieth century. The existence of valances in distant communities at the beginning of the twentieth century, and even into the twenty-first, is evidence of the influence of the European valances.

Bracha Yaniv

See also: Torah Ceremonial Objects; Torah Ornaments.

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TORAH CEREMONIAL OBJECTS

The sacred and ceremonial objects in the synagogue revolve around the Torah scroll: the case and the mantle in which it is kept; the cloth cover (*mitpaḥat*); the binder and wrapper that hold it closed when not in use; the Torah crown and finials for decoration. The breastplate designates the scroll to be used for the Torah reading, and the pointer is used during the reading to keep the place. In addition, there is a Torah ark in which ceremonial objects are kept. The curtain hides the ark and the valance is hung above it. These objects differ from one place to another and not every object exists in every community.

The earliest of these artifacts are the objects used to store or wrap the Torah: the cloth cover and the case. These two items are mentioned in the list of sacred objects in the Babylonian Talmud (*Megillah* 26b) and are still used today. Over the course of the centuries, they have assumed a variety of forms, according to the needs and customs of the community, as well as the material culture of the host society. The other objects evolved in the Middle Ages, and their design differs from one community to another, in light of the differing artistic traditions of the localities where they were made.

There is a hierarchical relationship among ceremonial objects, depending on their physical proximity to the Torah. For instance, the mantle, which actually touches the parchment, is considered holier than the curtain hung on the ark. The latter is defined as a secondary object, since it serves the ark and not the Torah scroll. Popular tradition attributes to ceremonial objects the capacity to heal, protect, or confer blessing, through direct or indirect contact with the object. This belief resulted in the development of certain customs, such as the European custom of wrapping a Torah binder around a woman's body to prevent miscarriage, or the custom of Jews in Afghanistan, who drink water in which a Torah finial is dipped as a guarantee of a successful marriage.

Torah *Mitpaḥat* and Case

The length of cloth known in Hebrew as the *mitpaḥat* is the earliest known item used in storage of the Torah scroll. The *mitpaḥat* (pl. *mitpaḥot*), also known as

Torah case. Jerusalem, 1914. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

mappah, is mentioned in the Mishnah and in the Tosefta and later in the Jerusalem and Babylonian Talmuds (*m. Kelim* 28:4, *Megillah* 4:1, *Kil'ayim* 9:3; *t. y. Berakhot* 6:4; *b. Megillah* 26b, etc.). These sources state that in ancient times woolen or linen *mitpaḥot* were used, sometimes with colorful stripes woven in; some were provided with bells. Greek and Latin literature describes ancient Middle Eastern scrolls of importance regularly wrapped in cloth. In time, the Jewish communities of the East Mediterranean Basin, as well as Eastern communities, began to keep their Torah scrolls in special cases. Such cases were common in the classical world; they are referred to as *theca* in Greek or *capsa* in Latin. Archaeological finds from all parts of the Roman Empire attest to the shape of the case: a cylindrical or prism-shaped container used to carry various objects, including scrolls. Used in the Jewish world to carry Torah scrolls, such cases were eventually used as the main permanent receptacle for Torah scrolls in the communities of the East and the East Mediterranean Basin. In European communities, several textile objects ultimately evolved from the *mitpaḥat* in which the Torah scroll was originally kept.

The case is a small wooden cabinet, either cylindrical or prism-shaped with eight, ten, or twelve faces, in two parts, which open lengthwise. It may be adorned with colorful drawings or covered with leather, a rich fabric, or beaten silver plates. In some communities, such as in Yemen, Tunisia, and Libya, the case is usually wrapped in a rich fabric. There are three main types of case: the flat-topped case used in Yemen, Cochin (India), eastern Iran, and Afghanistan; the case with a circular or onion-shaped crown used in the Babylonian communities, that is, Iraq and western Iran; and the case with a coronet used in Libya, Tunisia, and the Greek Romaniote communities.

The Torah cases generally have inscriptions around the edges, on the front or inside. In Eastern cases, in which the crown is divided into two, the inner sides serve as dedicatory plaques. In the Mediterranean Basin, a silver inscription plaque is attached to the front of the case. Two types of inscription are characteristic: biblical verses extolling the Torah, mainly from the books of Proverbs and Psalms, and personal information about the donor. The personal information is generally concerned with commemorating a deceased relative, but one also finds prayers for healing or for the birth of a son or inscriptions giving thanks for salvation from danger. Inscriptions in eastern Iran frequently pronounce a curse on whoever would harm the Torah scroll.

Because historians' knowledge of Torah cases and *mitpaḥot* in premodern times is meager, the process of the evolution from a mere receptacle for carrying the Torah into a sacred artifact can only be conjectured. It can be assumed that in the first stage, when the case was used

only for storage, the scroll was wrapped in a *mitpaḥat* when placed in the case, as is still done in the Yemenite community. However, it was difficult to handle the Torah scroll wrapped in the *mitpaḥat* in its case, and most communities therefore removed it from the case. Only in Yemen did the Jews continue to wrap the Torah in two or three *mitpaḥot,* and until they immigrated to Israel they used colorful, cotton prints with a geometric pattern of Indian manufacture. Among the Yemenite Jews, the *mitpaḥat* has an important function during the Torah reading: It is used to cover the text adjacent to the text being read, thus preventing its unnecessary exposure. In other communities, the *mitpaḥat* is used only to cover the scroll during pauses in the reading, when it is placed on the case and not on the Torah scroll itself. In Eastern communities, the *mitpaḥat* is usually tied to the poles of the finials when not in use; in Tunisia and Libya, it is placed on the top of the case, in the Torah ark, or hung on the platform (*bimah* or, in Italy, among the Sephardim, and in Middle Eastern communities, *tevah*). The *mitpaḥat* became a very popular dedicatory item, as it enabled even congregants who could not afford to donate a whole Torah scroll to contribute an inexpensive ceremonial object to the synagogue.

The Torah case is customarily used in all Middle Eastern and eastern Mediterranean communities. The westernmost communities using Torah cases were those of Tunisia, while the northernmost recorded use in the Mediterranean Basin was in the Romaniote communities of Asia Minor. Cases were still being used in Greece and the Levantine Synagogue in Venice as late as the twentieth century. In Israel in the twentieth century, Torah cases were introduced in Sephardic synagogues, which originally kept their Torah scrolls in the same way as other European communities, that is, in textile wrappers, a practice that continues to the present.

Torah mantle. Prague, 1879. *(Réunion des Musées Nationaux/ Art Resource, NY)*

Torah Wrapper, Binder, and Mantle

The Torah wrapper and binder are two textile objects developed from the *mitpaḥat* in European communities. The wrapper (*yeriah*), found only in Italy and in communities of the Sephardic Diaspora, is of a height equal to that of the parchment sheets from which the Torah scroll is made and rolled up together with the scroll. Sephardic communities in Israel have not consistently preserved the use of these wrappers, which are gradually disappearing. The binder, wound around the Torah scroll in Ashkenazi communities, in Italy, and in the Sephardic Diaspora, is a long narrow strip of cloth with which the Torah is bound, either on top of the wrapper or directly on the parchment. Its purpose is to keep the scroll securely bound when not in use. Both wrap-

per and binder are referred to in rabbinic literature as *mappah* (the same term used occasionally in the Talmud for the *mitpaḥat*).

There are also various terms for the binder in the local vernacular. In Italy and in the Sephardic communities, for example, the term used is *fascia;* it is made of a costly material or of linen embroidered in silk thread. In the sixteenth century, it became customary in northern Italy to embroider binders with biblical verses or personal dedicatory inscriptions. Such binders, embroidered by girls and young women, were often dedicated to life-cycle events. The decorative patterns in these binders resemble those of contemporary Venetian embroidery, but the variety of inscriptions is original, personal, and rich in content and design. In Germany, it became customary in the second half of the sixteenth century to prepare a binder for the

Torah scroll on the occasion of the birth of a son. This binder was fashioned from a piece of square linen cloth, which was placed near the infant during the circumcision ceremony. After the circumcision, the cloth was cut into four narrow strips, which were sewn together to form a long strip on which the infant's name, his father's name, and his date of birth were embroidered or written, as well as the blessing recited during the ceremony: "May he enter into the Torah, the marriage canopy, and into good deeds." Binders from the sixteenth century feature only the inscription, with the letters themselves the only means of ornamentation. In the seventeenth century, however, binders could also have drawings illustrating the three elements of "Torah, the marriage canopy, and good deeds." These embroidered or painted depictions, executed by members of the infant's family, exhibit a great variety of decorative patterns, representations of everyday life, and visual imagery. The binder was donated to the synagogue on the occasion of the child's first visit to the synagogue and wound around the Torah scroll for the first time in a special ceremony. This custom spread to Northern and Central Europe as German Jews emigrated there; it is still in practice today, mainly in Alsace and in communities of German origin in Israel and the United States.

The Torah mantle is the clothing of the Torah scroll. In Sephardic communities, Italy, and Germany, and in halakhic literature, it was occasionally known as *beged* (garment) or *mappah,* but later the term *me'il* became standard in most communities. The earliest attestation to the shape of the mantle appears in the fourteenth-century Sarajevo Haggadah, created in Spain. The mantles shown there are made of a costly material, probably not embroidered. This tradition of using a costly, unembroidered material is still common in Sephardic communities, with the exception of Morocco and Algeria, where Torah mantles are made of velvet with elaborately embroidered patterns and dedicatory inscriptions. Common motifs on these mantles are the Tree of Life (in Morocco) and a gate (in Algeria). The Torah mantle in Italy and the Spanish Diaspora is wide and open in the front; it consists of a rigid top with a trapezoid robe sown around it. In Italy and in the Portuguese Diaspora in the Netherlands and in England one finds mantles predating the seventeenth century on which there is a kind of cape above the robe. In Algeria another type of Torah mantle took shape, comprising a rectangular length of material gathered at its upper borders.

In other European communities, that is, those following Ashkenazi tradition, the Torah mantle is generally narrower and smaller than the Sephardic mantle, with the robelike part made of two rectangular lengths of material sewn together. Two openings at the upper end of the mantle enable the staves to protrude. The earliest German mantles are described in fifteenth-century manuscripts.

Even at this early stage, it is already possible to distinguish two types of mantle. One was made of costly patterned material, depending on the donor's economic situation; if there was a dedicatory inscription, it was embroidered on a piece of plain material attached to the front. The second type was made of a single-colored material, usually velvet, on which motifs and dedicatory inscriptions were embroidered. The designs on Torah mantles in Germany and Central Europe are influenced by the ornamentation of the Torah ark curtain, with such motifs as a pair of columns, lions, and the Torah crown most frequent.

"Tablets of the Law" Plaque

A unique object, the "Tablets of the Law" plaque, was used in Iraqi Kurdistan to call congregants up for the Torah reading. The silver plaque was engraved with the Tablets of the Law and kept in the Torah ark in an embroidered cloth purse. Before the beginning of the Torah reading, the synagogue official responsible for distributing the honors (the *gabbai*) approached each man to be called up and offered him the plaque. A man who wished to accept the honor would take the plaque, kiss it, and return it to the *gabbai;* otherwise he would motion rejection with his hand (as direct refusal to perform a mitzvah would be considered improper).

Ceremonial objects in the synagogue are donated by individuals or social groups and are considered the property of the congregation, unless otherwise indicated. Generally speaking, the donors specify their names, the occasion of the gift, and the date on the object, in a dedicatory inscription. The occasions differ for different objects. In most communities, it is customary to commemorate the departed by the dedication of sacred objects, in particular, Torah scrolls and their mantles or cases. In Europe, it was customary for wealthy members of the congregation to dedicate sacred objects in their lifetime, mainly sumptuous Torah ark curtains, often to commemorate a life-cycle event, such as a marriage or the birth of a son. Life-cycle events often inspired women to embroider dedicatory inscriptions on sacred objects, such as the linen wrappers wound around Torah scrolls in Italy and the linen binders embroidered in Germany to commemorate the birth of a son. In addition, ceremonial objects were often donated to fulfill vows, especially those taken by women.

Bracha Yaniv

See also: Torah Ornaments.

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TORAH ORNAMENTS

The earliest Torah ornaments are the Torah crown and the finials mounted on the Torah case or on the staves of the Torah scroll. These two objects are interconnected and, historically speaking, appeared one after the other, first in the East, in Egypt, Spain, and Italy, and later also in Germany. From there they spread to Central and Eastern Europe. Another ornamental object that appeared later is the breastplate—a metal plate or shield hung in front of the Torah scroll in all European communities and in the Sephardic communities of the Balkans. It was known in Italy as the "crown" (*keter*), since its design was that of a flat crown; but in all other communities, including Turkey, it was called the "breastplate" (*tas*). These three objects—crown, finials, and breastplates—are usually richly ornamented and made of silver or silver-plated base metal. Many of them carry bells, whose tinkling announces that the Torah is being taken out of the ark or being returned there. Other objects, used during the Torah reading, are the pointer and small plaques used to call people up to the Torah reading. Like all ceremonial objects in the synagogue, these may be dedicated by congregants, social groups within the synagogue, or individuals in memory of deceased family members, or in honor of themselves or their family on important life-cycle events.

Torah Crown

The Torah crown was first mentioned in the eleventh century, in a responsum of Rav Hai Gaon, head of the Pumbedita Yeshiva in Babylonia, concerning the use of

a crown for a Torah scroll on Simchat Torah. The use of the Torah crown is linked in this responsum to the custom of crowning the "Bridegrooms of the Law," that is, those called up on Simchat Torah to complete the annual cycle of the Torah reading and to initiate the new cycle. Another detail evident from the same event is that, at the time, the Torah crown was an ad hoc object made from various decorative items, such as plants and jewelry. About a hundred years later, fixed crowns, made of silver and used regularly to decorate Torah scrolls in the synagogue, are mentioned in a document from the Cairo Geniza. Later, in the fourteenth-century Spanish Sarajevo Haggadah, one illustration depicts Torah crowns on Torah scrolls. Over time, the Torah crown became a regular ornament mounted on the Torah scroll. In most communities where Torah cases are used, the crown is mounted on the upper part of the case; in European communities, it is removable and used either together with or separately from the finials, depending on its design.

Torah crowns are used in almost all communities (the exceptions are those in Morocco and Yemen), their design being influenced in each locality by local tradition. The shape of the spherical crown of the Iraqi-Persian Torah case follows the tradition of the crowns of the Sassanid kings, the last Persian dynasty prior to the Muslim conquest. Apparently the earliest of all Torah crowns, it is onion-shaped or conical. In Cochin, India, and in Aden, a tapering domelike crown developed, through which protrude finials mounted on the staves on which the Torah scroll is wound; the crown is not fixed to the case.

By the twentieth century, the Torah crown in Cochin showed distinct European features. In eastern Iran, where the Torah had a small crown, the outer sides of the crown lost their spherical shape and became flat dedicatory plaques. Today this crown looks like a pair of flat finials, and only their designation as "crowns" hints at their origin in the Torah crown. The circlet or coronet on the Mediterranean case, which became an integral part of the case, was based on a local medieval crown tradition typified by floral patterns. The European crown is shaped like a floral coronet with arms closing over it. In Eastern Europe, a two- or three-tiered crown developed, inspired by the crown motif on the Torah ark in this region. The closed structure of the European crown made it unsuitable for use together with the finials, and in Europe it therefore became customary to use the finials on weekdays and the crown on the Sabbath and festivals. In Italy, however, the Torah crown (Heb., *atarah*) was a coronet, which could be used together with the finials.

Torah Finials

The finials evolved from knobs at the upper end of the staves on which the Torah scroll is wound, possibly be-

Torah crown. Ukraine, 1820. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

cause of the appearance of the Torah crown, which could not be mounted stably on the Torah scroll unless the knobs were separated from the staves. The knobs were therefore mounted on two hollow shafts, thus becoming separate, independent objects. Because the shape of the spherical finial recalled that of a fruit, it was called a *tappuaḥ* (apple) among the Jews in Spain and in the Sephardic Diaspora, and a *rimmon* (pomegranate) in all other communities.

The earliest-known reference to Torah finials occurs in a document from 1159, found in the Cairo Geniza, from which scholars have learned that by the twelfth century finials were already being made of silver and had bells. Around the same time, Maimonides mentioned finials in his great legal code *Mishneh Torah* (*Hilkhot Sefer Torah* 10:4). Despite the variations on the spherical shape that developed over the centuries and the addition of small bells around the main body of the finial, the spherical, fruitlike form remains the basic model for the design of finials in Middle Eastern communities. The spherical form was also preserved in Europe, but with some variations, of which the most obvious was the addition of a crown on top of the sphere.

A most significant variation appeared in fifteenth-century Spain, Italy, and Germany, where the shape of finials was influenced by that of various objects of church ritual, whose design often incorporated architectural motifs. Imitating Christian silverwork, a miniature tower was added on top of the spherical body of the finial and eventually merged with it. The resulting towerlike structure, which seems to have appeared around the same time in different parts of Europe, became the main type of finial in eighteenth-century Germany and Italy. The tower-shaped finial was also brought by the expelled Spanish Jews to their new countries of residence. In Morocco it became the dominant form of finial.

Breastplates and Metal Shields

Breastplates—ornamental metal plates or shields hung in front of the Torah scroll—are found in all Ashkenazi communities, as well as in Italy and Turkey, but designed differently in each community. In most cases the breastplate is made of silver or silver-plated base metal. In Italy the breastplate is shaped like a coronet and known as the *keter,* "crown," whereas the coronet atop the Torah scroll is known as the *atarah.*

In Turkey, the breastplate can assume a variety of different shapes—circular, triangular, oval, or even the Star of David. In Western, Central, and Eastern Europe the breastplate's function is not merely ornamental: It designates which Torah scroll is to be used for the Torah reading on any particular occasion. To that end, small interchangeable plaques are kept in a special holder fixed in the center of the breastplate, indicating that the scroll is to be used for the Sabbath or a specific festival, as the case may be. The most notable early breastplates, from seventeenth-century Germany and the Netherlands, were either square or rectangular. Later, in the eighteenth century, the border of the breastplate became rounded and decorative, and bells or small dedicatory plaques were suspended from its lower edge. During this period, the design of breastplates was influenced by that of the Torah ark and the *parokhet* (curtain) concealing it, featuring various architectural motifs, the menorah (the seven-branched candelabrum), Moses and Aaron, lions, or Torah crowns.

Beginning in the early twentieth century, some Ashkenazi communities that do not use breastplates hang small plaques on the Torah scroll to indicate which Torah scroll is to be read on a particular occasion.

Torah Pointer

The pointer used by the Torah reader to keep the place is known in European communities as the *yad* (hand) or the *etzba* (finger), and in Sephardic and Middle Eastern communities as the *moreh* (pointer) or *kulmus* (quill), the

Torah pointer. Ukraine, 1850. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

former because of its function and the latter because of its shape. Halakhic sources also use the terms *"moreh"* or *"kulmus."* The pointer was originally a narrow rod, tapered at the pointing end, usually with a hole at the other end through which a ring or chain could be passed to hang the pointer on the Torah scroll.

The original form of the pointer was preserved in Middle Eastern communities, the differences from one community to another being mainly in length and ornamentation. In Europe and North Africa, however, changes occurred in its design. In Libya and Tunisia, the pointing end took the form of an oval spatula, and in Europe certain parts were added to the rod. Thickened joints were added at the holding end and in the middle of the rod; at the other end a hand with a pointing finger was added. The "hand" model influenced the design of the pointer in Morocco, and local influence then transformed it into a *ḥamsa.* In most communities the pointer is suspended from a chain on the Torah scroll or the Torah case.

Pointers are made for the most part of metal, but in a few European communities they used to be made of wood. In such cases the "hands" were carved in the local folk-art style. In most Sephardic and Middle Eastern communities the pointer is made of silver, while in Europe,

depending on the economic circumstances of the donor, it is made of silver or silver-plated brass.

Bracha Yaniv

See also: Torah Ceremonial Objects.

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TRACHTENBERG, JOSHUA (1904–1959)

Joshua Trachtenberg is influential in Jewish folklore scholarship for locating medieval Central European sources of present-day Jewish customs and anti-Jewish beliefs held by non-Jews. He identified a "folk Judaism" that he defined as "the beliefs and practices that expressed most eloquently the folk psyche—of all the vagaries which, coupled with the historic program of the Jewish faith, made up the everyday religion of the Jewish people" (1979 [1939], viii). As his mention of "folk psyche" indicates, he posited psychological rationales for the persistence of customs in place of the view that Jews lived in ignorance or resisted progress. He explained the concentration of rituals around life-cycle events responding to anxiety and danger. He argued against the popular view that Jewish belief and magic were forms of witchcraft or idolatry. He hypothesized that the primary principle of Jewish magic was an implicit reliance upon benevolent powers associated often with attributes of God.

Unlike many rabbinical scholars who, prior to Trachtenberg's studies, had criticized or ignored folk Judaism as embarrassingly "unworthy of the Jew," Trachtenberg advocated for an objective understanding of Jewish folklore "if we are truly to learn what Judaism has been for its adherents" (1942, 174). He advocated for the study of Jewish practices in the historical and cultural context of the locations in which Jews lived. He proposed that much of present-day Jewish folklore arose from a syncretic process of Jewish customs' being affected by their non-Jewish surroundings and, in some cases, preserving in Ashkenazi folklore practices and beliefs of non-Jews that had disappeared from the Central European culture.

Trachtenberg was born in London on July 11, 1904, and moved to New York City at the age of three. He received a B.S. degree from City College of New York in 1926 and then was ordained a Reform rabbi at Hebrew Union College in 1930. Thereafter, he served Congregation Brith Shalom (now called Temple Covenant of Peace) in Easton, Pennsylvania. He completed his Ph.D. in history at Columbia University in 1939 and received a D.D. from Hebrew Union College in 1945.

Completed under the guidance of Jewish social historian Salo Baron, medievalist Lynn Thorndike, and Talmudist Louis Ginzberg, Trachtenberg's dissertation was published in 1939 as *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion.* Trachtenberg drew attention for his thesis that Judaism evolved from, and owed its persistence to, the incorporation of folklore into the everyday religious practices of Jews. His provocative thesis was that Judaism became essentially a folk religion during the medieval period and owes its enduring flexibility to this transformation. A religious implication of his study related to his Reform background is that Judaism, if it is to survive, needs to respond to the communal needs of Jews in historic periods and the conditions of the surrounding community. The core of his study is in printed sources from medieval Germany, and modern scholars have raised questions about the representativeness of and tendency to generalize from these specific community experiences.

Trachtenberg developed the theme of the medieval folk roots of gentile anti-Semitism in *The Devil and the Jews: The Medieval Conception of the Jew and Its Relation to Modern Antisemitism* (1943), which has enjoyed several popular reprint editions. In the book, Trachtenberg expanded the first chapter of *Jewish Magic and Superstition* on Jewish magical practice into an extensive study of the gentile accusation that Jews practiced sorcery. Well aware of state policies demonizing Jews in Nazi Germany at the time of its writing (he cites Hitler in the preface), Trachtenberg editorialized: "If the Jew is today despised and feared and hated, it is because we are the heirs of the Middle Ages. If it is possible for demagogues to sow the seeds of disunion and discord, to stir fanatical emotions and set neighbor against neighbor, it is because the figure of the 'demonic' Jew, less than human, indeed, antihuman, the creation of the medieval mind, still dominates the folk imagination."

The Devil and the Jews is influential for developing the area of "exoteric folklore," or symbolic narratives about groups by outsiders to the group, and showing its impact upon visual as well as oral traditions. Trachtenberg connected, for example, exoteric Christian beliefs in the secret mystical knowledge possessed by Jews to images of Jews with horns and the blood libel legend. As with *Jewish Magic and Superstition*, which posited a medieval source for developments in Judaism, *The Devil and the Jews* had a religious implication, although more for Christian churches. He claimed that medieval folk narratives became institutionalized within Christian theology and were then used by modern anti-Semites as authentic Christian values. He noted the split between official Christian efforts to separate from the anti-Semitic medieval sources by stating, "The Christian religion is in disfavor today among certain leading anti-Semitic circles whose consuming aim it is to destroy all Christian values; among others hatred of the Jew is preached in the name of a hypocritical and false Christianity."

Inspired again by his mentor Salo Baron, in 1944 Trachtenberg turned to American-Jewish community history with the publication of *Consider the Years: The Story of the Jewish Community of Easton, Pennsylvania, 1752–1942*.

An ardent Labor Zionist using the community-bonding concepts of folklore to build a united foundation for a new Israel, he spent 1951 and 1952 on a survey sponsored by the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Central Conference of American Rabbis of religious conditions in Israel toward a campaign to further Reform Judaism there. Upon his return to the United States in 1952, he briefly served as chaplain of the United States Veterans Hospital in Northport, New York, before becoming rabbi at the Bergen County Reform Temple (now called Temple Emeth) in Teaneck, New Jersey.

Trachtenberg died of a heart attack at his temple office on September 14, 1959. His widow, Edna Suer Trachtenberg, donated his extensive rare book collection to the temple library as the core of the Rabbi Joshua Trachtenberg Memorial Library Center, and the temple sponsors an annual Rabbi Joshua Trachtenberg memorial lecture.

Simon J. Bronner

See also: Magic.

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TRANSMIGRATION OF THE SOUL (*GILGUL NESHAMOT*)

See: Afterlife

TRIBES, TEN LOST

The claim of belonging to the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel (Reuben, Simeon, Issachar, Zebulun, Menasseh, Ephraim, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher) dates back to biblical times and is shared by hundreds, if not thousands, of groups throughout the world, from Africa to Asia to Australasia. Folk beliefs abound as to the Israeli or ancient Hebraic customs of these different groups.

According to the Bible, the northern Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrians in the eighth century B.C.E. and the ten tribes in the Kingdom were exiled "in Halah, and in Habor by the river of Gozan and in the cities of the Medes" (2 Kgs. 17:6). The fate of these Ten Lost Tribes has always been something of an enigma. Although it was generally assumed that the Israelites who were exiled eventually assimilated, particular biblical passages documenting their place of exile (1 Chr.

5:26) and prophetic proclamations (Isa. 11:11–12; Ezek. 37:21–23) suggested that they continued to live on and would be "ingathered" in latter days. Hopes of discovering the Ten Lost Tribes and belief in the possibility of their ultimate return were kept alive throughout the ages. The myth of the Ten Lost Tribes gained momentum in certain historical periods, particularly during periods associated with the rise of messianism or the growth of fundamentalism.

The Universal Legend

While particularly pervasive in the Jewish world, the legend has become universal. Numbering more than 15 million, the Pathans comprise the largest single tribe in the world, inhabiting an extensive area from Afghanistan through Pakistan to Kashmir in India. They are divided into distinct local tribes reminiscent of the Ten Lost Tribes: Rabbani may be Reuben; Shinwari may be Shimon; Daftani may be a corruption of Naphtali, Jajani of Gad, Afridi of Ephraim. Yusufzai, another tribe, means "the sons of Joseph."

The Ten Lost Tribes legend was also popular among various Christian denominations that sought out "Israelites," among both Jews and gentiles, whom they could convert to Christianity in order to hasten the arrival of the messiah. Thus, in the sixteenth century, the Spanish priest Bartolome de Las Casas attempted to "prove" that the Native Americans were lost Israelites in order to protect them from the Spanish colonizers. In the nineteenth century, Reverend Wolff, a missionary for the London Society for Promoting Christianity Among the Jews, believed that the Jews in Bukhara (in present-day Uzbekistan), as well as other non-Jewish tribes in the Hindu Kush area, were descendants of the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun. In this vein, nineteenth-century missionary work among the Karen tribe of Burma (Myanmar) was inspired by the belief that they, too, were part of the Lost Tribes. Dr. Francis Mason, of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society, arrived with his wife in Toungoo, Burma, in 1814. By the mid-nineteenth century, Mason became convinced that indigenous Karen worship and, in particular, their belief in a monotheistic eternal god called Y-wa, were similar to that of the ancient Israelites and that they were of the seed of Israel. In recent years, some groups, including the Shinlung of northeast India, desire to "return" to the people of Israel by adopting Judaism and immigrating to Israel.

Folk Beliefs

Examples abound from the world over, but this discussion is limited to two groups that claim or have others claim lost tribe status for them. According to the Shinlung (also called Bnei Menashe), their ancestors were Israelites exiled by Shalmaneser, the king of Assyria, in 722 B.C.E. They lived in Persia and Afghanistan and were then pushed eastward into northern India, through the Hindu Kush, and to Tibet. They migrated to China and settled in Yunnan province. From there, they moved to central China, where they came into contact with the now-extinct Jewish community in Kaifeng in around 240 B.C.E. During the reign of the emperor Qin Shihuangdi, who built the Great Wall of China, they were treated as slaves. They retained their own customs, but were persecuted by the Chinese, who killed all their priests and burned their holy books. In order to escape from the emperor's soldiers, some of the Shinlung escaped and took refuge in caves. They became known as "cave dwellers," a familiar motif in this part of the world. Emerging from the cave, the people established a separate village named Shinlung (hence, their collective appellation, Shinlung). In approximately 1300 C.E. they moved to Shan state in Burma and crossed the great river Irrawady and penetrated into the Aupalling hills. Here, they were mistreated by the king and again escaped. They reached their present location in India on the Burmese border in about 1600 C.E., and to this day, it is obvious that their origins are different from that of the rest of the local population.

In addition to a song in their repertoire about what seems to be the crossing of the Red Sea, several stories in their folklore seemed to be biblical in origin, such as one resembling the Joseph story, and another about the Noah's ark flood story. In a popular song, they recall "Manmaseh," and as a result, in the late twentieth century, they have been called the "Bnei Menashe" (Children of Menashe).

Pathan legend has it that King Saul bore a son by the name of Jeremy, whose birth is not recorded in Jewish texts. Jeremy fathered a royal prince called Afghana, whose descendants fled to Jat in Afghanistan. In 662 C.E. the descendants of Afghana were converted to Islam at the explicit request of Mohammed. The mission was accomplished by his emissary Khalid ibn al-Walid, who returned to his master with "proof" of his activities: seventy-six converts and seven leaders of the "Children of Israel."

Afghan and Western scholars alike who have made detailed investigations into the subject provide folk "proofs" of the Israelite origins of the Pathans. Some write that they "look" Jewish: They have sallow skin and dark hair and eyes, are of medium stature, wear beards and sidelocks, and have a typically "Jewish" profile. They also "act" Jewish: They perform circumcision on their boys on the eighth day or after; the women observe purification laws prescribed in the Torah; and they wear amulets, which may contain the words of the Shema, "Hear, O Israel . . ."

Shalva Weil

See also: Sambation.

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TURKEY, JEWS OF

Within the geographic areas that form modern Turkey, permanent Jewish communities can be traced back to the third century B.C.E. Jews have lived there under the Seleucid, Roman, Byzantine, Seljuk, and Ottoman empires and still live there today, in the Republic of Turkey. Their history and folklore are rich and diverse.

History

From medieval times well into the twentieth century, Hebrew writers referred to the Turkish lands by the biblical name Togarmah. Togar and his brothers Ashkenaz and Riphat were sons of Gomer, grandsons of Japheth (Gen. 10:3). The people of Togarmah—Togar's descendants—were renowned horsemen and horse traders (Ezek. 27:14) and were associated with the Turks.

When the Ottomans captured the city of Bursa in 1324, Sultan Orhan granted the Jews of the city permission to build a new synagogue—the famous Etz Ha'Ḥaim (Tree of Life) synagogue, which was active in Bursa until the last quarter of the twentieth century. When Sultan Mehmet II took over Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1453, he transferred subjects from other areas of his kingdom to Constantinople, in order to populate the newly conquered city. Thus, the size of Jewish communities outside Constantinople was reduced, only to dramatically increase with the arrival of vast numbers of Jewish exiles from Spain. Constantinople, too, had a special name in Jewish writings: It was called Coshtandina, abbreviated as Coshta—the Aramaic word for "truth" and the name of a legendary city of truth-speakers (*b. Sanhedrin* 11a).

In the sixteenth century the Jewish population in the Ottoman Empire was divided among four major communities: the Romaniote Jews, who lived in Asia Minor beginning in the time of the Byzantine Empire; an Ashkenazi community of Jewish immigrants from Central Europe; *musta'rib* (arabicized) Jews who lived in the Arab lands conquered by the Ottomans; and Sephardic Jews, those expelled from *Sepharad* (Heb., Spain) and from Portugal. The Sephardic Jews were welcomed by Sultan Bayezid II, and their community soon became the largest and most dominant of the four Jewish groups in the empire.

The exiles from Spain founded large communities in Constantinople, Salonika, Edirne, Bursa, Izmir, and many other cities throughout the empire. Details about their legal, social, and economic life were recorded not only in official Ottoman documents but also in vast rabbinical responsa written over the centuries. The Sephardic community was at first divided within itself into many congregations, according to the various Spanish and Portuguese cities of origin: Toledo, Aragon, Lisbon, and so on. Over the centuries, the differences among those congregations faded, until only the synagogues' names echoed the exact Iberian places of origin.

The pluralistic character of Ottoman society, and the unprecedented measure of freedom that Jews enjoyed, made the Ottoman Empire an attractive home for them. Soon, that attraction was magnified: With the victory of Sultan Selim I (1465–1520) over the Mamluk sultanate, the Holy Land became part of the Ottoman Empire. A seventeenth-century Jewish legend tells how his son and successor, Suleiman I (1494–1566), discovered the location of the Western Wall, which was until then unknown: The location was found when the sultan's men saw a Christian woman from Bethlehem dropping garbage at a certain spot in Jerusalem. When asked why she brought garbage from afar specifically to that location, the woman explained that such was the tradition. The sultan then ordered the place to be dug up and cleared, and soon the Wall was fully revealed. Upon hearing of the rediscovery, the sultan ordered the Wall to be washed with rosewater.

Ottoman Jews, who now had the opportunity to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land and even settle there, were also impressed by Suleiman's efforts toward rebuilding the city walls of Jerusalem. The sultan, who was called "Suleiman the Magnificent" in the West, was referred to in some Jewish writings as Shlomo ha'Melekh, an honorary comparison to the admired biblical king Solomon.

Language

The Sephardic Jews throughout the Ottoman Empire held on to elements of their Spanish culture, of which the most important was the language: Judeo-Spanish (known as Ladino) was their everyday language well into the twentieth century. They settled in neighborhoods

Tas (breastplate). Tukat, Turkey, 1844. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

with a Jewish majority, but with Muslim and Christian neighbors. Jewish men spoke Turkish and worked with their neighbors in a variety of occupations. Jewish women, by contrast, hardly had any contact with non-Jews. Their lives were centered at home, and until the late nineteenth century most of them did not speak Turkish, did not attend school, and rarely worked outside the home. These conditions made them an important instrument through which the Judeo-Spanish language and folklore were preserved for centuries, orally transmitted from one generation to another.

Folk Songs, Customs, and Traditions

In the field of folk songs, Sephardic Jews have preserved the old Spanish genre of the *romanca,* which is, to this day, a source of great interest for scholars: *Romancas* passed on by Jews in Turkish communities are compared to those preserved by Spanish Jews in Morocco, and both these traditions are studied in light of the *romancas* of Christian medieval Spain. Alongside old *romancas,* Jews throughout the Ottoman Empire created new *romancas,* keeping the poetic and thematic old forms and at the same time reflecting the cultural changes: Turkish words appeared in the Judeo-Spanish text, joining the Hebrew words already present in the Judeo-Spanish language, and customs of the time were reflected within the medieval style.

In the mid-seventeenth century, Shabbatai Zvi, a native of Izmir, declared himself to be the messiah. He established circles of believers, causing turmoil in the Jewish world. Zvi was banished by the rabbis, arrested by the Turkish authorities, and in the end converted to Islam. At the time the singing of *romancas* was very popular, so it was only natural that this religious drama was expressed in song. Researcher Moshe Attias mentions two such songs: The *romanca* "Melizelda hija del emperante" (Melizelda, daughter of the Emperor"), which Zvi is believed to have sung in mystic conviction, and an original *romanca* written about Zvi by his followers, "Hakhamim van airando" (The rabbis are angry).

In the genre of the *canción,* also sung in Ladino, contemporary life in the Ottoman Empire was much more evident, and Turkish words or customs were common in folk love songs such as this one, documented in Moshe Attias's *Judeo-Spanish Cancionero* (1972):

> *Konca mia, konca mia,*
> *Çiçek de mi cabeza*
> *La luna me s'escuricio*
> *La mar me se hizo preta*

> (My rosebud, my rosebud [*Konca* is Turkish for "rosebud"]
> Flower of my head [*Çiçek* is Turkish for "flower"]
> The moon has darkened upon me
> The sea has turned black)

While some of the Judeo-Spanish folk genres were strongly connected to Spanish tradition, others were influenced by the local Turkish tradition. The humorous tales about Joha are such a case. Joha the fool, a well-known folk character throughout the Middle East, became a folk hero among Jews as well. In a multicultural manner characteristic of the Sephardic Turkish Jews, the "Jewish" Joha kept his cross-cultural image as a fool, remaining loyal to his local Turkish roots, occasionally facing specific Jewish circumstances, and always speaking Ladino.

An interesting cultural dialogue took place in the field of music, where melodies of Ladino folk songs and of Turkish songs were used for singing liturgical Hebrew poems, performed by Jewish men in the synagogue. In their religious singing, Turkish Jews have adopted elements from Turkish art music, such as vocal techniques, musical forms, and the *māqāma* modal system.

The Sephardic betrothal and marriage were celebrated in several events, each having special rituals, customs, and folk expressions, such as specific songs, food, and clothes. One of the events was the presentation of the bride's dowry to the groom's family. The dowry included many items—sewed, knitted, and embroidered by the bride, her mother, and other female relatives—accumulated over many years, starting in the girl's early childhood. The long preparation,

trouble, and worry are reflected in many Judeo-Spanish wedding songs and in proverbs, such as these:

> *La hija en la faja, l'anjugar en la caja.*
> (The girl in her diaper, the dowry in the chest.)
> (Juhasz, 1999)

> *Hija de cazar—nave de encargar.*
> (To marry a daughter—to load a ship.)
> (Gaon, 1989)

The most elaborate embroidered objects—such as the bride's gown and the nuptial bed cover—were inspired by the Ottoman style, with gold braid embellishment that initially had been seen only in the sultans' courts and later became popular among the Turkish middle class. After being used in the Sephardic home, these embroidered objects were given as presents to the synagogue, where they enjoyed a new life as Torah ark curtains (*parokhet*) or Torah mantles.

A similar wealth of folk traditions was connected with *la parida*—the new mother—and her newborn baby, especially a baby boy. The new mother would stay in bed for eight days, covered by beautiful bedding, adorned with jewelry as well as with amulets to protect her and the baby from the female demon Lilith. Special protective herbs such as *ruda* (rue) were hidden in her clothes, in her bed, and in the newborn's clothes and cradle, in order to protect them from *mal ojo* (evil eye). Throughout these days, the mother and her baby were not left unattended. Female relatives would stay with her, visitors would come to congratulate her, and special songs were sung for her.

The Turkish art of paper cutting—used in the Ottoman Empire for decoration as well as for the *karagöz* shadow play—was adopted by the Sephardic Jews and used in religious contexts: Papercuts were popular decorations in the synagogue and in the sukkah and were used to decorate the *ketubbah* (marriage contract). The Judeo-Spanish art of illuminated *ketubbot* was popular in medieval Spain and characteristic of Sephardic Jews in Europe as well as in the Ottoman Empire. In Istanbul and in Izmir, this art was expressed in new styles, first hand-painted and then printed.

In the field of folk medicine, Sephardic women in Turkey, well into the second half of the twentieth century, maintained various domestic practices. Such practices included the recitation of blessings and charms; the making of ointments and medicines; the use of sugar and sugarwater against the evil eye, and against *espanto* (fright) caused by *los mijores de mozotros* (those better than us), as the demons were referred to. These practices were considered superstitious by the normative male religion represented by the rabbis, yet they were a vital part of everyday life.

Among the many important religious works created in Turkey by Sephardic sages, the one that should be mentioned in this discussion of folklore is the commentary on the Pentateuch "Me'Am lo'ez." Initiated by Rabbi Ya'akov Culi and completed by other scholars, it was published in Constantinople in 1733 and became one of the most popular volumes published among the Sephardic Jews. The commentary was written in Ladino, with materials from the Talmud, Midrash, Zohar, and rabbinic literature. These materials were woven together in a highly readable language, full of legends and tales, accessible to ordinary people. Indeed, this was the most popular Ladino book in Turkey.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, during the gradual decline of the Ottoman Empire, its large Jewish communities suffered economic hardship. Yet they continued to be intellectual centers, and in the nineteenth century they were also active in the field of secular literature and journalism. Jews, who in 1494 had established the first printing press in the empire—printing Jewish writings in Hebrew and Ladino—now published Ladino translations of European literature and had several Ladino newspapers. In the nineteenth century, the founding of branches of the international Jewish school system Alliance Israélite Universelle added the French language to the Sephardic Jews' multilayered cultural life. Newspapers and scholarly and literary works were written in French, and the Judeo-Spanish folk songs started to include French words.

The process of the Ottoman Empire's disintegration and the rise of nation-states in its territory came to its final stage in 1923 with the empire's fall and the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. To the vast reforms implemented in the empire during the nineteenth century were added new reforms by the republic's first president, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. As part of these reforms, all children were required to attend school, including children of minority groups and girls. A mixture of influences—modernization, secular education, Zionism—changed the Sephardic folk traditions completely. Several traditions were abandoned, and others changed. The bride's dowry, for example, was still important, but instead of elaborate embroidered costumes, it now included modern objects, such as a sewing machine.

Beginning at the end of the nineteenth century, Sephardic Jews started emigrating from the Ottoman Empire, mainly to North and South America. After the State of Israel was founded in 1948, they immigrated there in massive numbers. In Israel, Turkish Jews integrated into society with relative ease, learning to speak Hebrew and leaving behind their Sephardic customs in favor of a modern Israeli identity. At the same time, Jews who remained in Turkey abandoned Ladino in favor of Turkish, as part of the process of assimilation in modern Turkey. At the beginning of the twentieth century, an estimated 450,000 Jews lived in the Ottoman Empire,

The Altalef family, Turkey, early twentieth century. *(Courtesy of the Altalef family Yehud. Photographic Archive of the Isidore and Anne Falk Information Center for Jewish Art and Life, Israel Museum, Jerusalem.)*

of which more than 200,000 lived in territories that later comprised modern Turkey. A hundred years later, the Jewish community in Turkey totals about 23,000, among which only the older generation still speaks Ladino. One Jewish weekly newspaper serves the community: *Salom* (Shalom), printed in Turkish with one page in Ladino.

For descendants of the Turkish Jews, the Sephardic folk tradition ceased to be a part of everyday life. Yet some of its treasures have gained new life, as in the case of the Ladino songs, which are enjoying a revival on concert stages. Web sites and Internet forums are dedicated to Judeo-Spanish language, folk songs, tales, proverbs, and food, as well as to documentation of personal stories told by Sephardic Turkish Jews—the parents and grandparents of the forums' members.

Etty Ben-Zaken

See also: Greece, Jews of; Illuminated Manuscripts; Joha; *Ketubbah*; Languages, Jewish; Lilith; Papercut; Spain, Jews of.

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TZITZIT

Attaching *tzitziyot* (Heb., fringes or tassels) to one's clothes or outer garment is the only explicit biblical precept regarding Jewish dress; it applied traditionally exclusively to men, as women are exempted from this precept. In the modern age, it is fulfilled by two separate ritual garments: the prayer shawl (or *tallit*) and the poncho-like garment called "tzitzit" (lit., fringe), *tallit katan* (lit., "small *tallit*"), or *arba kanfot* (lit., "four corners").

According to the biblical commandment (Num. 15:37–41; Deut. 22:12), one should attach fringes or tassels to the four corners of one's dress. "You shall make yourself tassels {fringes} on the four corners of the garment with which you cover yourself" (Deut. 22:12). These fringes are intended to serve as constant reminders of faith and of the religious precepts a Jew must follow. "That shall be your fringes: look at it and recall all the commandments of the Lord and observe them" (Num. 15:39).

In biblical times, fringes were attached to the outer garment, which was probably a kind of sheet-like wrap with four corners. (Scholars do not know when the *tallit*, which was a garment regularly worn during the rabbinical period, became a ritual garment.) When dress styles changed, two separate ritual garments evolved to fulfill this precept. Only among Jews in Yemen did a variation of the biblical custom survive, until the twentieth century: *tzitziot* or tassels were attached to a shawl that was a regular part of the costume. The prayer shawl is a rectangular fringed shawl, worn for morning prayers every day of the year, all day on the Day of Atonement, and for important events in the Jewish lifecycle. It is used as a *ḥuppah* (wedding canopy). Traditionally in Ashkenazi communities, it is customary that a man dons the *tallit* only after marriage and the bride's family gives the groom a *tallit* as a wedding present. According to other customs, a boy dons the *tallit* when he becomes a bar mitzvah. A Jewish man is also buried wrapped in a *tallit,* and according to some traditions it is the custom to cut one of the fringes to render it ritually unfit. Prayer shawls are preferably made of sheep's wool, but they may also be made of silk or other fabrics. The tassels should not be made of a material contrary to the *sha'atnez* prohibition (in Deut. 22:11) on wearing a garment made of a mixture of wool and linen.

In some communities, mainly Sephardi, the four corners of the *tallit* are decorated. Among Ashkenazi Jews, a decorated neckband marks the top of the *tallit* called *atarah*. Today, the most common type of *tallit* is white with black stripes; others have blue stripes or are all white.

The *tallit katan*, which evolved probably in the twelfth century, was introduced in order to allow the fulfillment of the precept of wearing tzitzit all the time and not only while praying. A poncho-shaped garment, it is worn by men and boys mostly under their regular shirt all day.

According to the Torah, one tassel of the tzitzit should be blue (Num. 15:18), but since the process of production of the blue dye extracted from the *murex purpura* (a snail used to produce blue and purple dye in the Mediterranean) was lost, the fringes are usually white.

The fringes themselves consist of four cords that pass through holes at the four corners and are folded to produce eight strands, knotted and wound in differing numerical combinations that have various symbolic meanings. As each Hebrew letter has a numerical value, the number of loops and knots represents the numerical value of the letters (*gematria*) of the Names of God or the number of the mitzvoth. The religious, mystic-symbolic meaning attributed to these garments is believed to protect the wearer from immoral conduct and imbued them with protective and magical powers.

Esther Juhasz

See also: Costume.

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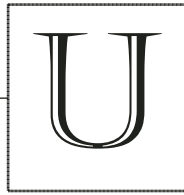
UKRAINE, JEWS OF

See: Poland, Jews of; Russia, Jews of

UNITED STATES, JEWS OF

Folklore has been at the center of debates about the relation of Jewish identity to a gentile "host society" in the United States since 1654, when twenty-three Jews from Brazil established the first Jewish community in New Amsterdam (now New York City). Depending on the measure of population used, the United States has either the largest or second largest (after Israel) population of Jews among countries of the world (as of 2010, the U.S. figure was estimated between 5 million and 7 million, or 35 percent of all Jews in the world). Yet Jews compose a tiny proportion of the U.S. population, approximately 2 percent. The Jewish community ranges widely in terms of religious denomination, country of origin, and regional difference. Nonetheless, some general patterns—such as placing a greater importance on the observance of Ḥanukkah and the holding of the bar or bat mitzvah than Jews in other countries—can be discerned indicating the existence of a normative American tradition of Jewish folk practice. Although Jewish communities still predominantly are found in urban centers such as New York, Philadelphia, Chicago, and Los Angeles, according to surveys in 2010, American Jews have become increasingly intermarried with non-Jews, unaffiliated with a synagogue, secular, and spread out across the country. Against this tendency, at the same time growth is apparent in both the Reform and Orthodox denominations, revivals abound in Jewish arts and music, and tradition and continuity—hallmarks of folkloric concerns—are the keywords of public campaigns undertaken by Jewish organizations in order to reaffirm Jewish identity.

Because of the relationship between Jews and the wider American society, scholars have often made a distinction between *Jewish folklore*—that which Jews perpetuate within their own communities—and the *folklore of Jews*—transmitted by non-Jews about Jews, such as in ethnic jokes. The two areas converge in the discourse on identity—because the former is concerned with the public and private cultural displays of Jewishness and the latter refers to societal attitudes to which Jews respond. A historical review of the role of Jewish folklore in American culture reveals the changing character of Jewish identity in the United States and the role that folklore has played in its construction.

Early Settlements

A Jewish merchant class arose in important economic enclaves of New York, Philadelphia, Charleston (SC), Newport (RI), and Savannah (GA) along the Eastern seaboard, although the total population did not exceed 2,000 when the American Revolution erupted in 1776. Many were descendants of Dutch-Jewish refugees who were forced to leave the Recife region of northern Brazil after the Portuguese displaced the Dutch West India Company. Congregation Shearith Israel, comprising Spanish and Portuguese Jews, was organized in 1654, although it was not allowed to establish a synagogue until 1730. The conquest of New Amsterdam by the English in 1664 changed the pattern of immigration to the New World with more British Jews, including a number of merchant families from the British islands of Barbados and Jamaica who had been displaced by the changing economy of the large sugar plantations. Reflecting the national origins of many in this merchant class, Sephardic religious customs prevailed, and Jews who settled outside the main communities often made accommodations to gentile society.

After the first quarter of the eighteenth century, Ashkenazi Jews from Central Europe, many of whom were village Jews whose trades were displaced by the European Industrial Revolution and who sought religious or political autonomy, grew in numbers in the New World. By the mid-eighteenth century, most Jews lived on the East Coasts in northern British colonies in the three settlements of Newport, New York, and Philadelphia. In the South, Kahal Kadosh Mickva Israel, composed of Spanish and Portuguese Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition, was established in 1735 in Savannah, Georgia, and rented a building for use as a synagogue. As Jews from different backgrounds joined congregations in the early years of the republic, synagogues began to be formed to reflect their traditions, which varied from the Sephardic rites. In 1795, Dutch and German Jews, who were Ashkenazi, left the Sephardic Congregation Mikveh Israel in Philadelphia to organize a second congregation in the city. This first secession from a founding congregation in the United States signaled the first of a series of often heated discussions among American Jews about, first, establishing a normative tradition for the country's Jews and, second, the appropriate public forms of ethnic display by a minority culture. The first president of the new republic, George Washington, drew praise from American Jews when, in answer to concerns about anti-Semitism from the Jews of Newport, Rhode Island, he underscored the principle of religious freedom. When Washington's

Dedication of the Kesher Israel Synagogue in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1948. *(Photo courtesy of Simon Bronner)*

birthday in February became an official national holiday in 1800, Jewish congregations often celebrated it with events to commemorate his support of the principle of tolerance.

The early synagogues quickly established cemeteries, and many communities recorded the presence of a *shochet* (ritual slaughterer) to provide the community with kosher meat. Early records indicate that finding a qualified *mohel* for ritual circumcision was often more difficult. Shearith Israel, having erected a synagogue in 1730, later built a separate small stone building for a *mikveh* (ritual bathhouse). The synagogue exteriors built in the eighteenth century often reflected British Georgian and federal styles, but interiors were modeled after European precedents for Sephardic (with use of a *teba,* or platform "box") and Ashkenazi layouts (with a *bimah,* or platform, typically in the middle) and influences from American Protestant churches, such as lecterns and theater-style seating.

A narrative theme that emerged from the early republican period in the *folklore of Jews* was the humor, and sometimes ethnic slurs, in the comparison between the New World folk type of the pioneer Yankee and the Old World Jew transplanted to a new land. Both are attributed with entrepreneurship, deception, and mobility, but the Yankee typically prevails in tales in which the

narrative frame involves a contest. As the motif of trickery by Jew and Yankee developed in American humor, the Jewish merchant replaced the Yankee peddler and the comparison extended to blacks, with the implication that Jews occupied a liminal racial category, as is evident in widely circulating stories that begin "There was a black man, a Jew, and a white man":

> A white man, a black, and a Jew die and go to heaven. When they get there, Saint Peter says to the white, "What do you want?" The white man answers, "Nice food, a nice pasture, and some nice sheep." Saint Peter then asks the black what he wants. He says, "A big flashy Cadillac, a million dollars, and a big white house." Saint Peter then asks the Jew what he wants and the Jew replies, "All you got to give me is a suitcase full of trinkets and the address of that black."
>
> (collected by Simon Bronner in the 1970s)

Another form of this comparison in jokes has a religious theme, involving a Protestant, a Catholic, and a Jew, but the Jew is separated from the other two in the derisive punchline:

> There was these fellas one time, were friends, and they all agreed that whichever one died first, the others

would each put $10 in his coffin. So the one died, and the Protestant came and put $10 in his coffin, and the Catholic came and he put $10 in the coffin, and the Jew, he wrote out a check for $30 and put that in, and took out the $20 change. (collected by Mac Barrick in 1968)

Other themes in American narrative folklore that emerge from the image of Jews in the early United States are more often focused on the exotic representation of the lone Jew rather than the folklife of Jews in a community. Indeed, the international legend of the "wandering Jew" was applied to many Jews who ventured out to the American frontier. The Jew with Yiddish-inflected English is not as evident in folk narratives during this period, when most Americans were foreign born, as it became in later periods, when Yiddish became attached to the American-Jewish persona. Much of the out-group lore revolves around how peripatetic Jews were identified—their noses and eyes—or by their aversion to pork. Legends persist, however, about "lost" Jewish settlements during the early period, such as a mystery surrounding a cemetery with Hebrew inscriptions in rural Schaefferstown, Pennsylvania. Townspeople today credit the influence of this early group in the local custom of avoiding eating milk with meat.

The Wave of Central European Immigration

The American-Jewish population dramatically grew in the mid-nineteenth century as a result of a tide of immigrants from German-speaking countries. By 1880, the number of Jews in the United States swelled to 250,000, most of them German Jews from the Ashkenazi tradition who subsequently redefined American-Jewish folkways that they encountered. Many of these Jews settled inland in the rising industrial cities of Cincinnati, St. Louis, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee, and St. Louis. Many Irish also came in this wave of immigration, and they enter into an emerging ethnic lore in which Jews and Irish become joined as stereotyped folk types, sometimes appearing together in ethnic humor comparing comical immigrant behavior. There is some interchangeability with some of the motifs of misunderstanding "English" ways of Americans because the stereotyped immigrant characters of "Pat and Mike" are involved in humor similar to that of "Abe and Sol." Out of this period of Jewish mobility came the legends and anecdotes of the Jewish peddler selling wares to non-Jews as a new American folktype, as many German-born Jews established country peddling routes and opened general stores to serve the growing westward movement. A number of ghost stories circulating throughout the frontier featured Jews, with the commentary on the

repercussions of attacking the lone vulnerable figure. Some ambivalence enters into many legends because the Jewish peddler is valued for bringing trade to the countryside, but suspicion lingers about his background. The following example is from a reminiscence documented in a local history:

> A German peddler was murdered. His body was found under a lone pine tree on the edge of the open [field], his pack rifled, all his valuables and some of his clothing removed. . . . The country people saw strange sights and one young man, returning home late at night, reported that he had seen the peddler, whom he had known well in life, running around the tree pursued by a man with an axe. So great was the dread of the spot, that no one ventured to pass the grave if they could avoid it, and there were rumors of moans and cries in that vicinity, heard from a distance. (collected by Ella Zerbey Elliott in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, 1906)

In *Jewish folklore,* German Jews actively engaged in folk art and craft, producing calligraphy, paper cutting, decoration, and needlework to be used for religious purposes. From this period date artifacts made by German Jews: elaborate decorations for eastern walls of synagogues, embroidered and appliquéd challah covers, micrographic portraits, illuminated *ketubbot* (marriage contracts), Torah binders (Ger., *wimpel*), embroidered prayer shawl bags, illuminated family registers, carved arks, and crafted metal Hanukkah lamps (*ḥanukkiyot*).

The East European Influx

By most estimates, more than 3.5 million Jews came to the United States from Eastern Europe between 1880 and 1920, increasing the American-Jewish population by a factor of fifteen. Driven to leave Russia, Poland, Romania, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire because of state-sanctioned anti-Semitism, which resulted in pogroms and severe legal and economic restrictions, they established in their new home a tradition of *Yiddishkeit,* or folkways brought from Yiddish-speaking areas of Eastern Europe. Many historical narratives recount conflicts between the new immigrants and assimilated German Jews, who apparently resented the purported superstitious and pietistic East European Yiddish speakers. There is evidence that many East European immigrants remained separated from gentiles and Americanized Jews by language (Yiddish), custom (in areas of dress, hair, and food), and location (establishing many dense urban "Jewish neighborhoods"). Social organizations that perpetuated homeland traditions were *landsmanschaften* (hometown benevolent associations), Yiddish-speaking union locals, and synagogues devoted to immigrants from the town of origin. They often spon-

sored cultural events featuring art and song and ensured that burial ceremonies and gravestones would follow that town's customs. The distinct Jewish urban settlements of the immigrants, such as the Lower East Side in Manhattan and Brownsville in Brooklyn entered into folk songs, dramas, and narratives as common settings for American-Jewish folk characters. Fusion of Old and New World traditions occurred on the American scene with new band music played for weddings (sometimes referred to as "klezmer"), labor and protest songs, legends of miracle-working rabbis, and tales of ghosts and demons in the new land. Immigration restrictions created by the U.S. government that essentially cut off the influx after 1924 also created an association of these traditions with a historic period (1880–1920) and place (New York City). In narrative folklore that entered Jewish folklore as well as folklore of Jews, a number of developments could be discerned: the folktype of the selfless, overprotective Jewish mother, the Yiddish dialect joke told by second-generation immigrants, and the figure of the assimilated Jew struggling with public assimilation and private ethnicity. Some examples of these developments illustrate the use of humor to redress the balance between Americanization as a sign of success and the emotional security of Jewish tradition.

> Sophie Goldberg was social climbing and had gone so far as to change her last name to Mont d'or [gold mountain, or a French translation of the literal meaning of Goldberg]. At a society dinner party, she asked, in her best upper-class accent: "I beg your pardon. Would you pass the butter?" But as the butter was passed, it fell into her lap. "Oy vey!" she yelled. Then, hastily composing herself, she added, "Whatever *that* means!"

> An old Jewish man was going to take a vacation in Hawaii, and he was worried about sounding too Jewish when he went there. So he asked his agent, "Excuse me, could you tell me again how to pronounce *Havaee*? The agent slowly pronounced it for him—H-a-w-a-ee. The man practiced and finally said "Hawaii" correctly. He came back to the agent all excited and thanked him for his help. "You're *velcome,*" the agent replied.
>
> (collected by Simon Bronner, 1970s)

In addition to narrative, an active Yiddish folk song tradition emerged in American-Jewish communities during this period. Many songs of uncertain origin using Old World tunes circulated with texts about the joys and frustrations of the American experience. In contrast to the out-group humor of the "rich Jew," in-group Yiddish folk songs about the United States often express emotional conflict. Folklorist Ruth Rubin identifies the American contribution to Yiddish folk song as theater

songs based on folk tunes and songs written by poets working in a folk style.

The East European immigrants also brought other beliefs, foodways, and material culture that became integrated into American-Jewish culture. Bagels and lox (a ring-shaped bread associated with origins in Jewish Poland where the hole in the middle allowed for peddlers sticking a stick or string through it; it is commonly eaten with cream cheese and cured salmon fillet called *laks* in Yiddish) became standard American fare, for example (facilitated by the automated production and distribution of frozen bagels in the 1960s by the commercial enterprise Lender's Bagels, established by a Jewish immigrant from Poland, Harry Lender), but other foods such as *kishke* (stuffed derma) and blintzes (crêpes with a filling such as cheese or fruit) did not spread from immigrant Jewish communities to general American culture. In Jewish folklore, parents protected Jewish infants from the "evil eye" (*kein ayin hora*) by hanging *roytten bendele* (red bands) on doors and carriages and spitting three times.

Federal immigration restrictions, including the Emergency Quota Act of 1921 and the Immigration Act of 1924, limited the flow of Jews from Eastern Europe. With new immigrants lacking, this interwar period has often been characterized by historians such as Henry L. Feingold (1992) as a time for second-generation Jews to leave immigrant "ghettos" and work to enter the American cultural mainstream with organizational development and college attendance. Many of the organizations battled anti-Semitism and the imposition of quotas on Jews in higher education admissions. The groundbreaking Jewish organizations were Pi Lamda Phi, founded in 1895 at Yale, and Zeta Beta Tau, established in 1898 by students attending the Jewish Theological Seminary and New York colleges. The separation of Jews in these organizations followed the parallel development of Jewish and non-Jewish law firms, summer camps, sports leagues, and hospitals. The Jewish fraternity became an important social link to an ethnic professional network in a society through the twentieth century that restricted Jews' access to position and power. The rate of membership by Jewish college students was high up to World War II: As much as one-fourth to one-third of all young Jews from 1920 to 1940 attending universities outside New York City joined Jewish fraternities.

Post-Holocaust, Cold War, and Zionism

A surge of displaced persons, survivors of the Holocaust, as well as political refugees from communist regimes in Eastern Europe after World War II, added to *Yiddishkeit* in the United States, because many of them were

Yiddish speakers and joined existing urban communities where previous waves of Jewish immigrants had already settled. Indeed, the number of Yiddish speakers identified by the United States Census reached an all-time high in 1970 before rapidly declining thereafter. Vacation resort communities also featured Jewish folk entertainment appealing to these groups in the hotels and bungalow colonies of the Catskill Mountains in New York State during the summer and in Miami and other cities in southern Florida during the winter. The influence of the Holocaust survivor immigrants on the American experience is evident in traditional memorials filled with song and ritual on Yom Hashoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day) and in the frequent commemoration of Kristallnacht (Night of Broken Glass, which initiated Nazi violence against the Jews in Germany in 1938) in November.

The prevailing tendency among second- and third-generation immigrants was to leave the original ethnic neighborhoods in the city and move out to houses in the suburbs, following the trend of young families in postwar American society at large. Indeed, many commentators observed that the growth of Zionism in the postwar period informed a reorientation from European heritage to Israel, including adoption of Sephardic Hebrew used in Israel, increasing popularity of Middle Eastern foods and dance, crafts such as decorative *ḥamsa* making, and celebration of Israeli Independence Day. During this period, the celebrations of the bar mitzvah and weddings expanded in importance for most American Jews. Cultural historians such as Jenna Weissman Joselit (1994) have been influential in interpreting their functions changing from familial religious ceremonies to social occasions for drawing together an increasingly dispersed Jewish family unit and pronouncing economic arrival in the country to a wider community. In some areas of the American South, where Jewish social occasions required significant travel to draw a community, the rites of passage would often be planned to last several days. The egalitarian concern in many Reform and Conservative congregations influenced the American innovations of the bat mitzvah for girls and the naming ceremonies for newborn girls of the *simchat bat* or the older *zeved habat* (Sephardic).

In the *folklore of Jews,* the perception during the 1970s that Jewish daughters were given special consideration resulted in a derisive acronym—JAP—for Jewish American Princess. Building on the earlier stereotype of the selfless, overprotective Jewish mother, a JAP riddle-joke cycle spread widely in American society, usually ridiculing the selfishness of the daughter. The Jewish mother themes dwell on her providing food for the family to show love and silently accepting suffering so that the children could succeed.

What does a JAP make for dinner? Reservations.
What do you call 12 JAPs locked in the basement? A whine cellar.
How many Jewish mothers does it take to change a light bulb? None—I'll sit here in the dark.
How many Jewish princesses does it take to change a light bulb? What, and ruin my nail polish!

The joke cycle was interpreted variously as to whether it was anti-Semitic or, as told by Jews, self-deprecating. Folklorist Alan Dundes believed that Jewish women in the cycle had become symbolic in American society of *all* upwardly mobile American women who grew dissatisfied, during the period of the women's movement, with the traditional WASP (White Anglo Saxon Protestant) roles of submissive wife and mother, perceived to be normative in America. While Jewish men in humor appeared emasculated, Jewish women were conspicuously liberated. Replacing the racialized male Jew in humor, the Jewish woman as controlling and independent becomes symbolic of subtle but significant differences between assimilated Jews and the American society into which they integrated. Feminist literary critic Judith Stora-Sandor saw in the cycle an insidious extension of the "rich Jew" trope applied to the Jewish woman, with the implication that civil, and civic, values had been abandoned. In ethnographies of its exoteric performance on college campuses, the joke cycle also suggested baneful "Jew-baiting" in this period: forcing assimilated Jews to identify themselves by their reactions to the accusatory jokes. Another interpretation of the JAP and Jewish mother cycles when performed as esoteric lore by Jews is their similarity to the dialect joke in dealing with conflicts about the religious and social values lost from the older immigrant generation to the new Americanized, upwardly mobile, individualistic generation. The jokes often ask for a commentary on the differences between the immigrant generation of the sacrificing, socially concerned Jewish mother and the acquisitive, ungrateful Jewish daughter.

While such joke cycles circulating in the United States suggested secularization and assimilation by American Jews, Modern Orthodox as well as Hasidim and other ultra-Orthodox groups reasserted cultural separation and religious pietism. Strengthened by post-Holocaust immigration and a high birth rate, Hasidim grew from bases in Brooklyn, New York, to new localities such as Monsey and New Square (named for Skver, their town of origin in Ukraine), New York, where they could create homogeneous communities. Divided into separate movements such as Lubavitch, Bobover, and Satmar, according to their town of origin in Europe, they formed urban folklife enclaves revolving around charismatic rabbinical leaders such as Menachem Mendel Schneerson (Lubavitch), Shlomo Halberstamm (Bobover), Joel

Teitelbaum (Satmar), and Mordechai Shlomo Friedman (Boyaner). Massive gatherings where the rabbi speaks and *nigunim* (chanted melodies) are sung are distinguishing events. They reinforce separation from American society as well as identifying themselves to other Hasidic groups by donning prescribed clothing for everyday use (e.g., a *kapote,* or long black overcoat) and holidays (e.g., a *shtreimel*, fur hat made of sable). Non-Hasidic Jews thus often refer to the Hasidim as "black hatters." Hair customs also distinguish the groups, since the men wear untrimmed beards and *payes* (sidelocks) and married women don a *sheitel* (wig). Yiddish is still spoken in these communities, and ritual specialists including a *shochet, sofer* (scribe, who repairs Torahs and inscribes the text for *mezuzot*), and *mohel* are active. In addition to European-based legends of the founder of Hasidim, the Ba'al Shem Tov, new legends of miracle-working rabbis in America and of the Holocaust experience have entered into the rich oral tradition of Hasidim.

As congregations identified themselves as Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, or Reconstructionist in orientation, a folk humor arose to comment on diversity, and divisiveness, within American-Jewish religious identity. The common types include:

> A Jewish man who graduated from college wanted to know if there was a *bracha* (blessing) appropriate for the occasion. He first went to the Orthodox rabbi in town and asked him. His reply was, "I'll have to check the Talmud." He then went to a Conservative rabbi who said, "We can write one for the occasion based on tradition." He finally went to a Reform rabbi who said, "What's a *bracha*?"

> A shipwrecked Jewish man is rescued from a desert island, and the rescuers notice two imposing structures that he has built on the island. The rescuers ask him what they are, and he replies, "They're synagogues." "But why two?" they ask. He answers, "One is the one I pray in, and the other one is the one I'm mad at [or the one I wouldn't set foot in]."

> (collected by Simon Bronner, 1980s)

In response to a growing perception by Jews in the 1970s that they had become more assimilated and homogenized in the third and fourth generations after immigration, grassroots Jewish movements emerged, advocating for renewal, ethnic diversity, and, in many cases, innovation in the performance of religious customs. The Havurah (Fellowship) movement, for example, encouraged small groups to define traditions for themselves, create an intimate face-to-face folk experience, and adapt custom to their social needs as members of gay, deaf, feminist, and convert networks. Congregations such as the Yemenite Jewish Center of America in Brooklyn,

New York, acted to preserve rites that were neither Sephardic nor Ashkenazi. Further adding to diversity, African-American congregations were established in Philadelphia and Baltimore and adapted African heritage to the practice of Judaism.

Interest in East European heritage was also informed by the new tide of Jewish immigration from the former Soviet Union. These immigrants spread into many urban areas, but Brighton Beach in Brooklyn became one particular focus and was dubbed "Little Odessa" in recognition of the special ethnic atmosphere of the neighborhood. While Russian Jews were not known for their religious pietism, they reinvigorated the foodways repertoire of breads, meats, and fish, and various folk arts, associated with *Yiddishkeit.* Yet folklorists noted the distinctive subcultures of the Soviet immigration that represented evolving forms of tradition, much of which was not in Yiddish, such as folk music and customs from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The Bukharan community from Uzbekistan in particular settled in towns in Queens, New York, where its Central Asian dress and music drew folkloristic interest. Fatima Kuinova, founding member and vocalist of the Bukharan Jewish Ensemble, received a National Heritage Award from the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) in 1992 in recognition of masters of traditional arts.

In addition to this East European influx, a new wave of Sephardic immigration took place from the 1960s to the 1990s that helped form new folk communities. After the Six-Day War in 1967 and the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, among other factors, Jews who had long lived in Arabic-speaking countries began to depart in large numbers, migrating to the United States and other Western countries. Jews from Morocco, Syria, Yemen, Iran, and Iraq often settled in ethnic enclaves and established cultural institutions of music, food, and art. Much attention has been paid to Syrian Jews who settled in Brooklyn, many of whom came from Aleppo, Syria, and continued a repertory of folk song called *pizmonim* (lit., adoration or praise). These paraliturgical hymns consist primarily of Hebrew texts set to melodies borrowed from Middle Eastern Arab music. Other communities of Moroccan Jews settled in Los Angeles and Miami, and a new transnational identity—Israelis distinct from the previous immigrant waves in their back and forth migration—formed ethnic cultural zones in Los Angeles, Miami, and New York. Ladino, the ancient language of Sephardim that combined Spanish with Hebrew, experienced a revival as some immigrants recorded the legacy of Ladino song, narrative, and music. Flory Jagoda, who came from Bosnia and settled in the area of Washington, D.C., became revered as a prominent American Ladino performer; she recorded extensively, had a film made about her (*Key from Spain: The Songs and Stories of Flory Jagoda,* 2000), and received a National Heritage Award in 2002.

As the profile of American Jews diversified with varieties of religious expression, forms of community, and ethnic and national backgrounds, the ways in which Jewish identity is culturally expressed, and would be perpetuated, became a public issue of concern. Population surveys in the early twenty-first century showing high rates of intermarriage, assimilation, dispersal, and commercialization in the United States raised questions about the sustainability of Jewish communities and the role of holiday traditions, ritual observance, folk storytelling, and music making in perpetuating a singular Jewish culture.

Simon J. Bronner

See also: Dialect Stories, Jewish-American; Dundes, Alan.

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USHPIZIN

See: Sukkot

W

WAHL, SAUL
(C. 1542–1622)

The legend about Saul Wahl is one of the most famous and popular legends in the folklore of Polish Jewry. It tells about a Jew who became the king of Poland for a short time.

Saul Wahl was a historical figure of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. According to Meir Bałaban, Wahl was a well-to-do merchant who dealt in lumber, salt, customs duties, highway tolls, and so on. His business interests included the famous salt works of Wieliczka, near Kraków. In 1588 King Sigismund III granted him a ten-year lease on the revenues of the fortress of Brisk. In a decree published on June 7, 1589, the king conferred on him the highest title that a Jew could attain, that of *servus regis* or "royal servant," which meant, among other things, that he could not be summoned before an ordinary court of law, only the royal tribunal, and had to report on his actions exclusively to the king. This dignity elevated Wahl's status among his fellow Jews, who were proud of the "royal servant" who could appear before kings and princes and need fear no one. Wahl was an important and honored member of his community and renowned throughout Lithuania. He was the head of the community in Brisk, saw to the welfare of the Jews of that town, and became a member of the Council of the Four Lands when it was founded in 1581. His son Meir, who became the rabbi of Brisk, was the first to bear the family name Wahl.

According to the legend, Saul Wahl had a very brief reign as king of Poland (twenty-four hours or even just one night). Another Jew said to have been king of Poland is Abraham Prochownik (see: Prochownik, Abraham). Several versions of the legend appear in *Gedulat Sha'ul: Memories, Stories, and Tales About the Rabbi and Sage Rabbi Saul Wahl,* by Hirsch Edelmann, printed in London in 1854 (and reprinted in Warsaw in 1925, with an introduction by Meir Bałaban). The book was commissioned by Wahl's descendants, who treated it as a sacred heritage. The legends about Wahl circulated orally, as Bałaban attests; they existed in slight variants in different places and in the accounts of different narrators. Common to all versions is that Wahl was briefly king of Poland. The legends are replete with etiological elements. In particular, they explain the hero's surname: Saul, the son of Rabbi Samuel Judah Katzenellenbogen, the head of the rabbinical court in Padua, received the surname Wahl because he was elected (Yid., *veyl'n*) king of Poland. According to Bałaban (ibid.), however, the name derives from Saul's birthplace, Italy. Italian Jews were known as *Vlokh* (Ger., *Wohl*), whence the surname Wahl. Saul's paternal grandfather was a German Jew from the town of Katzenellenbogen in Nassau who studied in Polish yeshivas in his youth and then moved to Italy, where he married the daughter of the rabbi of Padua and eventually inherited his father-in-law's post. His son Samuel Judah, Saul's father, served in the rabbinate there until his death in 1597. In a letter from Rabbi Leon (Judah Aryeh) de Modena to Rabbi Phineas Horowitz in Kraków, he is referred to as "the prince, our teacher Saul, son of our teacher the Gaon Samuel Judah [Katzenellenbogen] of Padua." In royal documents he is referred to as Saul Judycz (i.e., son of Judah).

The legend explains Wahl's unanimous acclamation as king of Poland by the fact that, after the death of the previous king, the assembled nobles failed to elect his successor within the period fixed by law. Consequently, they decided to enthrone Saul temporarily until they could agree on a permanent ruler. Historians dismiss this possibility outright. According to Bałaban, the folk imagination turned a leading figure of the Jewish community, who was "rich as a king," into a flesh-and-blood king of Poland. But, he adds, the narrators understood that a Jew could not be elected king in the normal fashion and consequently added the disagreement among the electors and his selection for a limited term.

The legend ascribes legislation favorable to the Jews and especially the establishment of synagogues to Saul Wahl's brief reign. After his enthronement, all the nobles and clergy proclaimed, "Long live the king!" Shortly thereafter, they brought forth the *Great Book of Privileges*, in which Saul proceeded to inscribe in his own hand various decrees to benefit the Jews. The holdings of the Israel Folktale Archives at the University of Haifa include a legend (IFA 5217) that ascribes the construction of the synagogue in *Szczebrzeszyn* to the Jewish king of Poland, Saul Wahl (Bar-Itzhak 2001, 155–158); Saul Wahl's name was in fact associated with the synagogue. In Lublin it was customary to distribute the various honors on Simchat Torah "with the permission of the prince Reb Saul Wahl." The Lublin synagogue, too, was known as the Saul Wahl Synagogue. Bałaban conjectures that Wahl was responsible for its construction and may even have prayed there when the Council of Four Lands was in session. Although documentary evidence is lacking, it is known that his descendants ran the synagogue for centuries. In his final years, he also seems to have sponsored the construction of a synagogue in Brisk. When it was torn down in 1840, on orders of the Russian tsar Nicholas I (r. 1825–1855), an inscription was found in the women's gallery: "The prince Reb Saul, son of

the sage our teacher Samuel Judah of Padua, built the women's gallery for a sign and testimonial, in memory of his wife, Deborah, of blessed memory, the pious and righteous woman, daughter of [Reb David Dr]ucker, his memory for eternal life . . . [the month of] Tevet in the year . . . in her house."

Another point explained by the legend is Wahl's eminence. He is said to have traveled in many countries before he reached Lithuania and settled in Brisk. There he married the daughter of David Drucker and lived with his wife in extreme poverty. Around that time, the rich nobleman Prince Radziwiłł made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Returning home through Italy, he found himself short of funds. To avoid being humiliated among his peers, the prince turned to Rabbi Samuel Judah, who lent him a large sum of money. Before he resumed his journey, Prince Radziwiłł l asked the rabbi whether he had any relatives in Poland. When he reached Brisk, he gave orders to summon the rabbi's son and showered him with largesse. From then on, luck was with Saul, and he rose steadily in wealth and honor.

Bałaban reports that Prince Karol Mikolaj Radziwiłł (known as Sierotka, "the orphan") did make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1582–1584. On his way home, he was robbed by highwaymen in Italy and forced to borrow money to cover his expenses. In his published account, Radziwiłł reported that he obtained the funds from a Venetian merchant named Quinctilius (thus not from a Jew), offering as collateral several small items he had brought back from Palestine.

Contrary to the legendary version that young Wahl was destitute until his encounter with Prince Radziwiłł, Bałaban cites historical documents to show that, as early as 1578, he was a well-to-do merchant, running important salt works. But the prince did not set out on his pilgrimage until 1582, was waylaid in 1584, and returned to his estate that same year.

Another legend concerns Saul's daughter Ḥannah. Saul's prominence had won him many enemies among the Jews of Brisk. When all their slanders had come to naught, they decided to tell the court officials, who were looking for a bride for their widowed monarch, about the beautiful young girl. Ḥannah delighted the courtiers and was a princess, besides; so they decided to abduct her from her father's house by night and smuggle her to the royal palace.

But one nobleman, Saul's friend, tipped him off, and he resolved to marry the girl off without delay and forestall the plot. Because of the difficulty of finding a suitable groom within a short time, his choice fell on the recently widowed rabbi of Brisk, the sixty-year-old Zalman Shor, author of the book *Tevuot Shor.* Their son became a great scholar in his own right.

This legend touched off friction within the Jewish community, including slander and attempts to harm

Saul even if it meant violating a major Jewish taboo. The motif of marriage between an old rabbi and a young girl, whose offspring is a great sage, is found in many legends about women in troubled times, such as that about the sister of Rabbi Shabbetai ben Meir HaCohen (1621–1662), known as the Shakh (Ben-Yehezkiel 1961, vol. 3: 273–278).

According to tradition, Wahl died in 1617; the biographer Sergei Bershadski assigned his death as 1622. His tombstone has never been located.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Poland, Jews of; Prochownik, Abraham.

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WANDERING JEW

The Wandering Jew, also called "the Eternal Jew," is a legendary figure known especially from European Christian folklore. The tradition of the Wandering Jew is manifest in a number of major modes: (1) local legends announcing his arrival at a specific location usually close but not identical to the narrator's; (2) a religious legend narrating the etiology of his wandering in a meeting between the Wandering Jew and Jesus at the Crucifixion; (3) chapbooks including both aforementioned elements; (4) visual images of the figure in chapbooks and other media; (5) inclusion of the figure in works of art, literature, and drama.

The Plot

The religious legend that serves as the narrative core of the Wandering Jew tradition tells how Jesus, when he was carrying the cross on the Via Dolorosa toward Golgotha, asked to rest for a while against the wall of a

Postcard of "The Wandering Jew." Original artwork by Leonid Pasternak. *(Joseph and Margit Hoffman Judaica Postcard Collection, Folklore Research Center, Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Cat. no. hof9–0211)*

local Jerusalemite cobbler's house. The cobbler denied the request, and consequently Jesus cursed him, saying: "Also you shall not rest but wander until my return," or a similar phrase that constitutes in general the most stable element of the legend's tradition. Ever after the man is condemned to wander the world and is seen in various locations, especially in times of catastrophe and war.

In many versions, the man is called Ahasver, or Ahasverus, emulating somewhat mysteriously the name of the Persian king of the biblical Book of Esther. Because surely this name was never given to any Jewish person, the theories explaining its choice for this particular tradition range from a reference to the famous stupidity of the king in Jewish folklore, to his role in the Purimshpil performances that may have been known even among non-Jews in late medieval Central Europe, and to King Ahasverus's hanging of Haman in the Purim story, which had satirically been compared to the Crucifixion in some rabbinic traditions in late antiquity. Whereas

English-language traditions prefer the Wandering Jew, as does the French "le juif errant," in Scandinavian oral traditions he is almost invariably known as "the Cobbler of Jerusalem," and the German language has favored the name "Ewige Jude"—the Eternal Jew—referring to his immortality, rather than to his wandering. The local legends that accompany the religious legend mention the curious imprints left by his feet and his strange apparel often replete with features such as a tiger-hide hat or a camel-hair coat. It is also made clear by the legends that he is now a repentant and believing Christian who is generous with alms, that he knows all languages wherever he goes, and, above all, that he cannot die.

Sources

The earliest-known version of the complete legend was published in German chapbooks more or less simultaneously in 1602 in a number of editions in various European cities, including Basel and Reval, bearing a long and detailed title: "The Short Description of a Jew Who etc." The frame narrative describes his meeting in a church in Hamburg in the mid-sixteenth century with the priest Paul von Eitzen, one of the students of Philip Melanchton who was also the teacher of Martin Luther and his main adviser in his translation project of the Bible into the German vernacular. The legend about the Crucifixion is told to von Eitzen by the Wandering Jew himself—here named Ahasverus for the first time—to explain his strange destiny.

Research, above all by George K. Anderson in a masterful comprehensive monograph (1965), has unearthed a great number of earlier sources that have been integrated in the legend's full-fledged form. Some eternal wanderers, such as the biblical Cain, on the one hand, and Elijah, on the other hand, are natural candidates; the Quranic Sameri, incessantly wandering after having been cursed by Moses, is another. In addition to Jesus's own promise to return (Matt. 16:28), the New Testament figures of Malchus, the Roman soldier who hurts Jesus's ear, another nameless one who slaps Jesus on one hand, and John the beloved disciple who immortally awaits his master's Second Coming (John 21:22 ff.) appear more plausibly linked to the legend. An early-thirteenth-century (1228) note in Roger de Wendover's chronicle *Flores Historiarum*—recounted in Matthew Paris's chronicle of St. Alban's Abbey in England (1252), and before that in a French-language text by Philippe Mouskes (1243)—mentions a visiting Armenian bishop who told about an immortal, cursed wanderer related to the Crucifixion story.

Thus the tradition seems to have circulated in southern Europe by the time of the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance, plausibly distributing traditions carried from the Holy Land by those returning from the Crusades

and by the more and more frequent pilgrims. Learned texts, too, sometimes refer to an eternal wanderer, notably an astrological treatise from the fifteenth century reporting on the earliest visit of the figure in Europe, allegedly in the thirteenth century; however, no mention is made of his being a Jew. Some names from those traditions include the Italian Giovanni Buttadeo, referring to the slapping, and Juan Espera en Dios, he who awaits the coming of the Lord.

Context

The function of the legend in the context of Reformation theology seems obvious: an immediate eyewitness report of the life of Jesus and the Crucifixion as a worthier substitute for the mediated traditions in the Orthodox and Catholic traditions. It is thus no wonder that the legend was widely distributed, most typically in German but later in almost every European language. According to Leonhard Neubaur, who made the first full-length and thorough philological-historical study of the legend in the late nineteenth century (1884), the chapbook was one of the most popular German chapbooks of the seventeenth century, second only to the *Faustbuch.* The legend was also widely integrated in anti-Semitic rhetoric culminating in the Nazi propaganda film *Der ewige Jude* (1940). The visual representations of the Wandering Jew figure constitute a very important medium of transmitting the concrete elements of the image as well the beliefs associated with it and reflect its versatility in changing cultural environments.

Contrary to the general view, however, the Wandering Jew was not only an image projected by Christian Europeans on Jews, as there also exist intra-Jewish traditions about wanderers such as the early medieval travelers from Europe to the Holy Land (e.g., Benjamin of Tudela, Petaḥiah of Regensburg), but also typological wanderers, such as itinerant merchants or sages, and even restless souls wandering around in the universe. Naturally these did not traditionally apply the motifs and themes extant in the Christian legend that constitutes the major European tradition of the Wandering Jew. This is, however, true until modernity. From the early nineteenth century onward, the Wandering Jew was adapted from the until then predominantly folk and popular traditions into canonized literature and art. Famous adaptations are Eugene Sue's novel *Le juif errant* (1844) and Hans Christian Andersen's drama *Ahasverus* (1847). It is from canonical literature and art that Jewish authors, especially in German but later also in English, Hebrew, and many other languages, adapted the figure, combining the characterization of the wanderer as embodying modernity itself, its dynamism and changes, as well as a growing sense of estrangement, most famously and masterfully embodied in the Jew Leopold Bloom, the protagonist of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922).

Galit Hasan-Rokem

See also: Dundes, Alan; Hasan-Rokem, Galit.

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WEDDING

See: Marriage

WESTERN WALL

Dating from the Second Temple period, the Western Wall commonly refers to an 187-foot (57-meter) exposed section of ancient wall situated on the western flank of the Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem. The wall functioned as a retaining wall, built to support the extensive renovations that Herod the Great carried out around 19 C.E. It is a sacred Jewish religious site that has appeared in multiple folktales.

Over the centuries, land close to the Western Wall became built up. Following the Six-Day War (1967), a large plaza for prayer was created that stretched from the wall to the Jewish Quarter. Archaeological finds have revealed a much shorter section known as the Little Western Wall, which is located close to the Iron Gate.

The Western Wall is venerated by Jews as the sole remnant of the Temple. Since the seventeenth century, it has become a place of pilgrimage and prayer for Jews, as it is the closest accessible site to the "Holy of Holies," which lies on the Temple Mount, access to which was permitted to Jews by the Muslim authorities until 1917 and by the British authorities during the Mandate period (1917–1948). During the Jordanian occupation of the old

Silver tobacco box, engraved with the Western (Wailing) Wall. Jerusalem, late nineteenth century. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

city of Jerusalem (1948–1967), Jews from Israel were not allowed to visit the site.

Every year on Tisha Be'Av large crowds congregate at the wall to commemorate the destruction of the Temple. The Western Wall Plaza is the site of worship and public gatherings, including bar mitzvah celebrations and swearing-in ceremonies of newly full-fledged soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces, following basic training.

The Western Wall is mentioned several times in the Midrash (*Shemot* [Exodus] *Rabba* 2:2; *Bamidbar* [Numbers] *Rabba* 11:2; *Shir Ha'Shirim Rabba* 2:4; *Eicha Rabba* 1:3; *Midr. Kohelet Zuta* 7:8; *Tanḥuma, Shemot* 10, and more). All these refer to the western wall of the temple and not to the present Western Wall. According to these midrashic sayings, God promised that the Western Wall would never be destroyed and the *Shekhinah* (The Divine Presence of God) never moved from the western wall of the temple. According to the Zohar, the word *kotel* (wall) is made up of two parts: *ko,* which has the numerical value of God's name, and *tel*, meaning "mount," which refers to the temple, that is, the Western Wall (Zohar, Vol. II [Shmot]; Mishpatim 116:1). These sayings were the basis for the sanctification of the Western Wall as a holy place.

According to Jewish custom, one is obligated to feel grief and rend one's garment upon visiting the Western Wall. This custom is based on the Babylonian Talmud (Mo'ed Katan 26:1).

There is a practice of placing slips of paper containing written prayers in the crevices of the wall. The earliest account of this custom is by Abraham Isaac Sperling in his book *Sefer ha'minhagim u'mekorei ha'dinim* (The Book of Customs and Origins of Laws) (1891). There is a legend about Rabbi Ḥaim ben Atar (1696–1743), who wrote an amulet on parchment and advised a poor man to place it between the stones of the wall in order to obtain help from God. Recently, the Israeli Telephone Company has actually established a fax service to the Western Wall, so that petitioners can send notes to be placed in the wall.

An old custom of removing one's shoes upon visiting the wall has faded over the years and is no longer observed. Other customs that no longer exist involve inserting one's finger into cracks in the wall to receive God's mercy, putting a palmprint with blue paint on the wall or inserting a nail into a crack in the wall before going on a journey. This last custom is based on the biblical verses: "And I will fasten him as a peg in a sure place" (Isa. 22:23); "and to give us a nail in His holy place" (Ezra 9:8). Another custom is measuring some stones with a woolen thread and putting the thread around the loin of pregnant women to relieve the pain associated with childbirth or to prevent a spontaneous miscarriage.

Some people rented houses with a window that faced the wall. This custom was based on a biblical verse about Daniel: "His windows were open in his upper chamber toward Jerusalem" (Dan. 6:11). There are many legends and traditions connected with the wall. A legend that was probably created in the fifteenth century recounts that on the night of Tisha Be'Av the candles in Mosque of Omar (Al-Aqsa Mosque), which is near the Western Wall, burn out. Another tradition states that when water starts trickling through the stones of the wall, it is a sign of the advent of the messiah.

The Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa holds about thirty folktales about the wall. Many legends concern miracles that occurred to worshipers who came to pray near the wall (IFA 1002, 3542, 10680, and 11827). A Yemenite-Jewish story that is found in the IFA in two versions (IFA 1026 and 3096) and appears also in other communities (IFA 10613, 12990, 13575, and 13848) tells of rioters who tried to hurt Rabbi Shalom Sharabi (1720–1777) when he came to pray near the wall, and their limbs were paralyzed as a punishment. An Iraqi-Jewish legend (IFA 489) tells about a stone used for the purpose of idolatry that is stuck in the wall and prevents salvation. There are also some modern jokes about the wall: A tourist is looking for the "Wailing Wall" and is directed to the office of the income tax (IFA 17712); a groom brings his bride to the wall to teach her about "speaking to a stone" (IFA 21590).

Yoel Perez

See also: Bar and Bat Mitzvah; Jerusalem and the Temple.

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WOMEN IN RABBINIC LITERATURE

In rabbinic literature, folk motifs related to women can be found in two themes: (1) the cycle of life, including birth, childhood, marriage, the conceiving and bearing of children, and death; and (2) the contents of life, such as personality traits, activities, and physical appearance.

Life Cycle

The birth of a baby girl historically was seen as less desirable than the birth of a baby boy. Many sayings by different sages suggest methods for ensuring the birth of a son. For example: "He who sanctifies himself during cohabitation will have male children" (*b. Shevuot* 18b), "From the third to the fortieth day (after conceiving) he should pray that the child should be a male" (*b. Berakhot* 60a), and so on.

Other sayings present a clear distinction between the joy of fathering sons and the misery of fathering daughters. For example: "The rabbi said: . . . nor can the world exist without males and females, happy is he whose children are males, woe to him whose children are females" (*b. Pesaḥim* 65a).

In spite of the misery attributed to parenting girls, there are many stories in the Talmud that praise the wisdom, the grace, and the moral strength of daughters. These include the stories of Rabbi Joshua ben Ḥananiah's meeting with wise and brave girls (*b. Erubin* 53a; *Lam. Rab.* 1), the stories of arguments between Rabban Gamliel's wise daughter and the Roman governor (*b. Sanhedrin* 39a, 90b–91a), the stories of Rav Hisda's wise daughter (*b. Bava Batra* 12b, 141a), and many others.

The sages assumed that the mental development of girls is more rapid than that of boys. Therefore, according to their judgment, a girl becomes a woman when she reaches the age of twelve years and one day while a boy becomes a man only when he is thirteen years and one day.

The usual concept in the sages' world was that even though it is natural that a man pursues a woman, it is the woman who desires to marry. Perhaps this belief was prevalent because the bride, not the bridegroom, was the center of the marriage celebration.

The obligation of bringing joy to the bride was considered so important that the sages themselves used to dance in front of or even with brides and sing hymns of praise for them. "Our rabbis taught: How does one dance before the bride? Beit Shammai say, 'the bride as she is.' And Beit Hillel say, 'beautiful and graceful bride'" (*b. Ketubbot* 16b–17a). "When Rabbi Dimi came, he said: 'Thus they sing before the bride in the West: no powder and no paint and no waving (of the hair) and still a graceful gazelle'" (*b. Ketubbot* 17a). "They tell at Rabbi Judah ben Illai that he used to take a myrtle twig and dance before the bride and say beautiful and graceful bride. Rabbi Samuel, the son of Rabbi Isaac danced with three twigs. . . . Rabbi Aḥa took her on his shoulder and danced [with her]" (*b. Ketubbot* 17a–b).

Many folk motifs are connected to what was considered women's most important role: bearing children. Conception itself was viewed as a miracle that could not occur without the interference of God and angels.

"Our rabbis taught: There are three partners in man: the Holy one blessed be he, the father, and the mother" (*b. Qiddushin* 30b). "Rabbi Ḥanina ben Papa made the following exposition: The name of the angel who is in charge of conception is 'Night' and he takes up a drop and places it in the presence of the Holy One" (*b. Niddah* 16b).

There are numerous beliefs related to the right ways to conceive, proper behavior during pregnancy, appropriate foods for women to eat during pregnancy and while breast-feeding, and the changes a woman's body undergoes after having a baby. The difficulties with regard to conception and the pains women suffer during delivery are topics of many folk stories, words of advice, and idioms that appear in many places in the talmudic and midrashic literature.

Burial and mourning customs for men and women are almost equal. They differ in two ways: (1) in cases where the death occurs simultaneously, the woman is buried first; and (2) a woman's body should not be presented in public, unlike that of a man.

Women participated in funeral ceremonies just as men did, but not side by side with them. In the Galilee, women went in front of the deathbed and men behind it, and in Judea vice versa. Women had specific roles as mourners in the funeral and burial ceremonies.

Contents of Life

Many negative human qualities are attributed to women in the sages' sayings and in folk stories. They were accused of being: lazy, envious, talkative, overly curious, quick to anger, apt to speak too loudly, vain, and of a disposition to become prostitutes and thieves. Some of these bad qualities were in dispute, with certain sages disagreeing that women speak too loudly, are vain, and are disposed to become prostitutes. Ancient Jewish sources also attributed to women some positive qualities, such as a pleasant voice, beauty, sensitivity, and compassion.

Women were usually expected to stay in their homes and gain their satisfaction from caring for their husbands and children. The typical occupations of women, apart from housework, were sewing and knitting.

However, some professions were regarded as more suitable for women, even though historians do not know whether women received payment for their tasks. Women were known for being mourners, hairdressers, midwives, and the source of sustenance for their children.

Sorcery was also considered a woman's domain. The connection between women and magic is expressed in general sayings found in many sources such as *Mishnah Avot* 2 and *b. Soferim* 15. This connection is also expressed in many specific tales, such as the story of Yohani bat Retivi, who disturbed women during labor (*b. Sottah* 22a), the story about eighty witches who troubled the whole world from their cave in Ashkelon until Rabbi Simeon ben Shatach suppressed them (*y. Ḥagigah* 2,13), and many others.

Another field in which women were active was medicine. Numerous talmudic stories relate to the medical knowledge of a woman who was called "Em" (mother) by the Babylonian sage Abbaye. Women would gather at, for example, riverbanks, where they would fetch water and launder clothes, and where they used to discuss their problems.

Although the predominant view at the time of the Mishnah and the Talmud was that women should stay in their homes, there are many talmudic stories about women who were active in male domains. For example, despite laws that made women economically dependent and a world view that regarded negotiation with men and going to court as unworthy of women, both the Babylonian and Yerushalmi Talmuds give instances of women who were familiar with business practice and show independence and expertise in business transactions (an anonymous woman who had a quarrel with Bibi bar Abbaye in *b. Bava Batra* 137b; Rav Zutra's mother, Ramei bar Hama's mother, Rav Toovi bar Matanah's sister, and Rav Dimi bar Yosef's sister, *b. Bava Batra* 151a–b; Rabbi Honya's sister, *y. Bava Batra* 8:7; Rabbi Gurion's sister, *y.* Peah 3:7; a daughter of Rav Nahman's relative, *b. Ketubbot* 85b–86a, and many others). Moreover, many stories tell of women who were involved in the sages' world and were famous for their knowledge of the laws, language, and manners (a female guest, an anonymous little girl, a rabbi's handmaid, and Beruria, *b. Erubin* 53a–54a; a rabbi's handmaid, *b. Rosh Hashanah* 26b; *b. Megillah* 18a; *y. Megillah* 2:2; *y. Shevi'it* 9:1, and others).

There were no substantial differences between the clothing of women and men. A story about the sage Judah bar Illai states that he and his wife shared the same garment. Women were expected to cover their entire body, as the exposure of skin was believed to arouse men's sexual desires. It was also considered a good custom for women to cover their hair using either a veil or a wig. The Mishnah *Ketubbot* (5:8), which deals with a man's obligations to his wife, teaches that the regular clothes of women were: a small hat (*kippah*), a belt, shoes, and simple garments.

Other sources tell that women liked colorful clothes and that rich women used to wear silk clothes. During religious festivals, unmarried women wore white clothes. Use of perfume, makeup, and jewelry was considered a feminine act. Some sages believed that the ultimate desire of women is to own jewelry. One of the sages said that the sole purposes of women's existence are beauty and procreation.

Shulamit Valler

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WONDER TALE

The wonder tale, also called the "fairy tale" in modern vernacular, is a folktale that contains a supernatural, marvelous element and is a characteristically timeless and placeless tale. The wonder tale is prevalent in the Israeli folktale tradition. Because the genre is international, beyond boundaries of place and time, the distinction between the Jewish wonder tale and the international one is complex. This distinction has been analyzed over the past few decades by several scholars, most notably Dov Noy in 1971, Aliza Shenhar in 1982 and 1987, Tamar Alexander in 1984, Haya Bar-Itzhak in 1993, and Eli Yassif in 1992, all of whom described the ways in which Jewish versions differ from international ones and characterize the adjustments the international versions went through in order to fit into Jewish culture. Despite the important contribution of these studies, more research is needed to refine these distinctions.

Versions of the Jewish wonder tale can be found in print—with different versions for each ethnic

community—and in documented narratives in the Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa. Most of the tales were told by women. According to the Aarne and Thompson classification index, many Jewish wonder tales belong to different international tale types. Among them are the tales "Beauty and the Beast" (AT 425), "Brother and Sister" (AT 450), "Midwife to Demons" (AT 476), "Cinderella" (AT 510), "Hero Fights Against His Father" (AT 519), "The Dumb Princess" (AT 559), "The Sun Rises in the West" (AT 570), "The Animal Languages" (AT 670), "The Slandered Maiden" (AT 706), "Snow White" (AT 709), and "King's Mother Persecutes Her Daughter-in-Law" (AT 712).

In many wonder tales in the IFA, specific Jewish characteristics can hardly be distinguished and the tales remain similar to their international counterparts. This fact coincides with Yassif's finding that Jewish oicotypes exist mainly in other genres of folk literature, such as the legend, while the wonder tale tends to retain its international character.

In other cases, Jewish characteristics infiltrated international tales but not in a way that changed the structure and plot of the tales, such that they require a special classification, deviating from the international one. Examples of such characteristics are Jewish customs, holidays, the existence of a synagogue, the Torah, biblical verses, and mentioning the fact that the hero is a Jew. Sometimes characters who tend to appear in other genres of Jewish folk literature can be found in Jewish wonder tales, such as the prophet Elijah, King Solomon, Moses, and Rabbi Akiva.

There are some Jewish versions that deviate from the international tale types in their structures and plots and present a repeating Jewish special pattern, so they could be described as Jewish oicotypes. Among them are the ethnic types "The Abducted Wife" (AT 300*B), "Miraculously Born Child, Studies with Saint" (AT 314*C), "Faithless Sister and Her Faithful Son" (AT 315*B), "The Blinded Queen" (AT 321*A), "Marvelous Being Woos Princess" (AT 425*Q), "The Fortune of the Greatest Fool" (AT 460*C), "Persecuted Stepdaughter" (AT 480*D), "Dead and Elijah the Prophet as Helpers" (AT 506*C), "The Maiden in the Chest" (AT 510*C), "Killing the Mother" (AT 510*D), "Prince Marries the Ogre's Sister, with the Help of His Friend" (AT 516*D), "The Child Who Rescues the Community" (AT 517*A), "The Princess Prefers the Poorest Suitor" (AT 653*C), "Woman Revives Decapitated Husband and Lover" (AT 653*D), "The Clever Advisor and the King's Reward" (AT 655*B), "Cast Thy Bread upon the Water" (AT 670*B), "The Miraculous Journey" (AT 681*A), "The Slandered Maiden" (AT 706*D), and "The Peak of Good Luck" (AT 736*B).

The Jewish character of the aforementioned oicotypes can be divided into two different groups. In the first one, a structure that appears exclusively in Jewish culture does not necessarily include overt Jewish features. Because all these cases refer to tales that deal with family relationships, this adjustment process, which might be called "neutral absorption" (Yassif 1992), touches upon the concept of the family in Jewish culture. Two typical examples of this kind of tale are the oicotypes "The Maiden in the Chest" (AT 510*C) and "Killing the Mother" (AT 510*D), which were subjected to a multidisciplinary examination by Bar-Itzhak, and "The Slandered Maiden" (AT 706*D), which was studied by Shenhar (1987). In cases like these, the deviations appear at the beginning of the story as well as at the end. In addition, they may appear in decorative elements and special remarks. Different ethnic communities provided distinct expressions to the Jewish versions. As an example, in the tale "Smeda Rmeda" (the Moroccan-Jewish version of "Cinderella"), the storytellers use expressions such as "God was everywhere" or "Nothing is great but God." Although these additions are indicative of the centrality of religion in the culture of the storytelling community (a phenomenon that deviates from the common characteristics of the wonder tale genre), the tale still maintains its generic appearance. It seems that the purpose of these cultural additions is to strengthen the bonds between the tellers and the audience and to enhance their sense of cultural affinity.

The second group includes those tales that went through oicotypification processes, altered to suit the particular Jewish culture, which resulted in the loss of their generic nature, so that they transmuted into local legend or moral tales. The pattern remained identical to that of the international tale-type, but the tale had changed its genre. This is the case of the type "The Fortune of the Greatest Fool" (AT 460*C), which, in contrast to the international type, has a happy ending and preaches the importance of following religious law. Other examples are the Jewish versions of the type "Beauty and the Beast" (AT 425), which when told in the Jewish culture changed their nature and became sacred legends (Shenhar 1982). The aim of the Jewish addition is to strengthen religious belief and to preach support for following religious law.

In some cases, the evil characters are punished and change their ways. The anonymous characters are replaced by specific common figures originating in the Jewish folktale tradition, such as the prophet Elijah, Moses, or Rabbi Akiva. In other cases, figures such as a saint or rabbi appear ("Miraculously Born Child, Studies with Saint," AT 314*C). Another motif repeated in the Jewish versions is the saving of the Jewish community ("The Child Who Rescues the Community," AT 517*A). Occasionally, such tales will include biblical verses and reminders from the Talmud and the Haggadah.

The adjustment that the international wonder tales went through in order to fit into Jewish culture can be

divided into four different groups. Many wonder tales, which are common in the folktale tradition of Israeli ethnic communities, present a similar or even an identical pattern to those that appear in their international equivalents. Other tales contain Jewish characteristics, such as Jewish customs and figures, but these additions do not alter the structure of the narratives in a way that requires a special classification. Some other Jewish versions of wonder tales present a repeating special pattern; these could be described as Jewish oicotypes, but their special structure does not necessarily include overt Jewish characteristics. The last group includes tales that in their adjustment process to Jewish culture lost their universal nature and became sacred legends.

Ravit Raufman

See also: Israel Folktale Archives.

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World to Come (*Olam Ha'ba*)

See: Afterlife

Writing

The alphabetic script of the Western world was born in Canaan (roughly corresponding to present-day Syria, Lebanon, part of Jordan, Palestine, and Israel) in the second millennium B.C.E. When it emerged, other scripts already existed: To the south, the Egyptians were using a hieroglyphic script, while to the north, the Sumerians in Mesopotamia used a cuneiform script. The pictographic script that was created at the crossroads between these two cultures is known as the Proto-Canaanite script. The famous Proto-Sinaitic inscriptions from ca. 1500 B.C.E. written by west Semitic workers or slaves, discovered in 1905 by the English Egyptologist Flinders Petrie in the turquoise mines of Serabit al-Khadim, also used a Proto-Canaanite script. Several alphabetic scripts split from the Proto-Canaanite script, among them the Phoenician script and its descendants, the Aramaic and ancient Hebrew scripts, the latter referred to in the Talmud (*Sanhedrin* 22a) as *Da'atz* or *Ra'atz* script.

The archaeological finds that are written in ancient Hebrew, although not numerous, provide information concerning the methods of writing that were employed during the period of the first Temple. *Ostraka*—pieces of broken pottery—were a common writing material, mainly for administrative documents. The text on the *ostraka* was sometimes engraved but was usually written with brush and ink. Dedication inscriptions were engraved on stones. Such is the inscription that describes the impressive water project of Hezekiah, the king of Judea, who prepared the city of Jerusalem in anticipation of a siege by the Assyrian king Sennacherib (2 Kgs. 20:20; 2 Chr. 32:2–4, 30). Inscriptions on papyrus or parchment did not survive, yet historians assume that they existed because inscriptions in other ancient Middle Eastern languages have been found. In 1979/1980, during archaeological excavations in Jerusalem, two small silver scrolls were discovered. Archaeologists believe that these silver objects served as amulets. Incised on each are the names of their owners and the priestly benediction. Monumental epigraphs on stone, written in ancient Hebrew, do not exist. Nevertheless the stela of Mesha, the Moabite king from the ninth century B.C.E., is written in a script identical to the ancient Hebrew, thus providing scholars with an example of engraved monumental script.

Jewish Script

Hebrew script developed in Judea and Israel without interruption until the destruction of the First Temple, in 587 B.C.E., and the exile of most of the literate class to Babylonia. In 539 B.C.E., the Babylonian Empire was conquered by Cyrus, the Persian king, and Aramaic became the official script of the Persian Empire, hence among the Jews.

With the fall of the Persian Empire and the Greek occupation of the region, Aramaic lost its power and the various nations in the region, among them the Jews, developed their own scripts based on the old. The new script of the Jews was named by the Talmudic sages "Assyrian," while the name "Hebrew" was assigned to the ancient script. But although this new script developed from Aramaic, it was quite distinct. For this reason, the

Fragments of the Temple Scroll (early Jewish script). The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel. *(Shrine of the Book. Bridgeman Art Library)*

proposition of Frank Moore Cross to rename it "Jewish script," was accepted by the scholars. This new script, which has been in constant use since its creation, is known today as Hebrew script.

A large number of texts written in Jewish script were discovered in the late 1940s and the 1950s in the Judean desert—at Qumran, and Nahal Hever and Wadi Muraba'at—and in the Negev—at Masada. These discoveries included fragments of scrolls with biblical texts and fragments of phylacteries, apocryphal texts, various treatises, and several hundred *ostraka.* One of the more unusual texts, belonging to the Dead Sea sect, is an astrological-physiognomic treatise that analyzes the human character according to the form of a person's limbs and zodiac sign. The text is ciphered, written in Jewish script from left to right, with additional ancient Hebrew and Greek letters.

Writing Techniques

The early phase of Jewish script appears in diverse types of writing material: *ostraka,* engraved or written with ink; texts written on hide, parchment and papyrus with ink and a reed brush; and epigraphs engraved on stone, among them burial inscriptions on ossuaries and representative epigraphs, some of which are influenced by the elegant Greek and Roman epigraphs. Another type is the synagogue inscription. Apart from the engravings, some were written with *tesserae* (mosaic pieces), as part of the mosaic floors' decoration. Such is the inscription in the synagogue of Rehob, which deals with tithes, or another from the Ein-Gedi synagogue. The latter details the names of the thirteen patriarchs of the world (based on 1 Chr. 1:1–4), the signs of the zodiac, the Hebrew months of the year, the three patriarchs, the three Hebrews in the furnace (the book of Daniel [chapter 3] tells the story of the three Hebrews who were thrown into the furnace by order of Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, and were saved by God), and finally an oath, accompanied by a curse, directed at anyone who intends to harm members of the community. All these types of Jewish text were also discovered outside Israel, in the Middle East (Dura Europos, Babylonia, North Africa, and Egypt), in Europe (Greece, Italy), and elsewhere. Some of these inscriptions predate the revolt of Bar Kochba (132–136 C.E.); others belong to the Byzantine period.

The main source of texts from the Byzantine period is the Cairo Geniza (translated "hiding, concealing"; a room or a chest in the synagogue or outside in which worn-out sacred books or their fragments were hidden) in the Ben Ezra Synagogue of Fustat (old Cairo), where administrative and personal documents were found, in addition to biblical, liturgical, and literary texts. The Geniza

also revealed a large number of amulets and magic and incantatory texts, which were very popular at the time. The incantation was a prayerful plea for help directed to the supernatural powers. Books of magic that were found in the Geniza provide instructions for writing amulets. One of these books suggests different writing media for the amulets according to their function: deer parchment for a barren woman; plates made of copper, gold, or lead to prevent miscarriage; eggs to enable sleeping; leaves to ensure love; and bones to protect against hatred. Incantations were also written on cloth and clay. Most of the surviving incantations are those written in Babylonia with ink on clay bowls, in Egypt on papyrus, and others, from the Land of Israel, incised on metal amulets.

While papyrus, *ostraka,* and stone served as main writing materials at the time of the First Temple, most of the surviving texts from the Second Temple period are written on parchment; only a few are written on papyrus. The common use of parchment for writing a sacred text led to the creation of a series of laws regarding the writing of scrolls of the Torah, phylacteries (*tefillin*), and *mezuzot* (pl. of *mezuzah*).

Although Mediterranean Christian society had already adopted the codex by the first century B.C.E., Jews substituted the scroll for the codex much later; the earliest manuscripts found in the Cairo Geniza date to the tenth century. These manuscripts were produced in the Middle East, either Syria, Israel, or Egypt.

The Hebrew script in the Middle East is called Oriental script. In the eleventh century it spread westward, via Byzantium and Italy to Ashkenaz (Germany, northern France, and England), and was called Ashkenazi script; it also spread via North Africa to Spain and was called Sephardi script. In all regions, Jewish script had three main forms: square (the representative type), semicursive, and cursive script. The Jewish scribes in the Diaspora used the local writing material—calamus, a pen made of reed, in Spain and the Orient, and a quill pen in Ashkenaz and Italy—and were influenced by the local script: The semicursive and the cursive Sephardi scripts were influenced by Arabic script; the semicursive Ashkenazi script was influenced by the Gothic style that took over in the thirteenth century. In addition to copies of the Bible and prayer books, medieval scribes wrote all sorts of halakhic books, philosophic and kabbalistic treatises, and medical treatises, many of which were translated from Arabic by Jewish scholars.

In the mid-fifteenth century, when Johannes Gutenberg invented movable type (the first dated mass-printed book is from 1460), the production of Hebrew manuscripts was quite intensive. Initially, the printed Hebrew books (the first was printed ca. 1470) did not replace those written by hand. Moreover, the early printed letters mimicked the various script styles of the manuscript. In the Hebrew incunabula (books printed before 1500) one can identify the Sephardi, Ashkenazi, and Italian square and semicursive script. The printed Hebrew letters began flourishing in the sixteenth century with the printing press established by Gershom Soncino. New letters were constantly designed in Italy, France, Flanders, and Germany. In the eighteenth century, the center of Hebrew printing, which moved to Eastern Europe, did not produce innovations. Following a stagnation in the development of the Hebrew letters in the nineteenth century, it was imbued with new life after World War II, first in Europe and then in Israel.

Yael Zirlin

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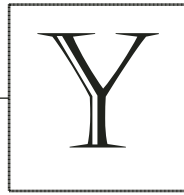
YASSIF, ELI

Eli Yassif contributed to the study of Jewish folklore in the area of medieval Hebrew storytelling, the history of folklore research, folk literary genres, anthologies, and written folk literature.

Yassif was born in Bucharest, Romania, on March 15, 1946. He studied Hebrew literature and Jewish folklore at the Hebrew University, where he received his Ph.D. in 1977 after completing his dissertation, "Pseudo Ben-Sira: The Texts, Its Literary Character, and Status in the Hebrew Literature of the Middle Ages." He completed his postdoctoral work in folklore at the University of California, Los Angeles.

The main areas of research Yassif worked in were the history of Jewish folkloristics and Jewish folk literature in the Middle Ages. Among his contributions to the first area was *Jewish Folklore: An Annotated Bibliography* (1986)—the first attempt in Jewish folkloristics to list research publications from the beginning of the study of Jewish folklore in mid-nineteenth century to the 1980s. This publication was not only a source for specific studies but also an overview of the major developments and trends in the study of Jewish folklore. On this was based the series of studies on the contribution of Jewish folkloristics to the various fields of Jewish studies, "Folklore Research and Jewish Studies: Directions and Goals" (1987). The editing and publication of the research papers of Haim Schwarzbaum (1990, 1994), the study of folklore in Israel (1990), and the work of one of the greatest scholars of Jewish studies, Moritz Steinschneider in the field of Jewish folklore (2011), are some of his contributions to the history of Jewish folkloristics.

Despite these accomplishments, Yassif's long-lasting contribution is not in the historiography of Jewish folkloristics but in the history of Jewish folk literature. His book *The Hebrew Folktale: History, Genre, Meaning* (1994; English translation, 1999) is a bold attempt to write the history of the Hebrew folktale from its sources in the biblical period through the Apocrypha and talmudic and midrashic literature to the Middle Ages and modern Jewish folklore. The folk literature of each major period of Jewish history is studied in its historical and cultural context, in an effort to understand its meaning and function in Jewish society of its time.

In the field of medieval studies, Yassif followed in the footsteps of the great scholars of the second half of the nineteenth century, Moses Gaster, Israel Lévi, and Louis Ginzberg, who considered the Hebrew folk narratives of the Middle Ages an essential component of Jewish culture of the time and a major factor in understanding the role of Jewish culture as mediating between the Muslim East and the Christian West. In this field, his contribution can be divided into three areas: the preparation and publication of critical editions of medieval narrative texts (*Tales of Ben-Sira in the Middle Ages,* 1984; *R. Yehuda Yudle Rosenberg: The Golem of Prague and Other Tales of Wonder,* 1991; texts from *Sefer ha'Ma'asim,* 1997; *Sefer ha'Zichronot,* 2001; and the *Collection of Tales in Jerusalem,* forthcoming). The second area in this field is folkloric and literary studies of books, collections, and narratives, and specific tales written down in medieval manuscripts. Some of these studies were published again in the book *The Beginning of Hebrew Prose Literature: The Hebrew Collection of Tales in the Middle Ages* (2004), and many others were published in scholarly journals. The third direction in Yassif's medieval studies is his ongoing theoretical attempt to understand the interrelationship between legend and history in Jewish culture of the Middle Ages. The major claim in these publications is that Jewish historiography of the Middle Ages did not understand and did not have the proper research tools in order to fully understand the importance of folk narratives for understanding Jewish culture of the Middle Ages.

Safed Legends: Life and Fantasy in the City of Kabbala (2011) is a research effort in the same direction. Sixteenth-century Safed was one of the most interesting cultural periods of Jewish culture. Typically, while its historical background, its halakhic achievements, its kabbalistic innovations, and its contribution to Jewish moral literature have been explored in depth, Safed legends—perhaps the most "authentic" expression of its society during that period—were almost neglected. This book is another attempt to expose the importance of folk narratives in Jewish culture of a historical period.

Yassif contributed to the study of Jewish folklore as one of the founders of the Department of Hebrew Literature and the Haim Schwarzbaum folklore archive at Ben-Gurion University in Beer-Sheva. He serves on the faculty of the Literature Department and as the head of the folklore program, which he founded in 1995 at Tel Aviv University.

Yassif has been a visiting professor of folklore and Jewish studies at numerous universities, including the University of California at Los Angeles, University of Oxford, University of California at Berkeley, University of Chicago, University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, and Institute of Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

Haya Bar-Itzhak

See also: Folk Narratives in the Middle Ages; Safed, Legends of.

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YEDA AM

Yeda Am (Folklore) was the Hebrew name of both the Jewish Folklore Society and its periodical. The Jewish Folklore Society was founded in 1942 by Nahum Sluszec and Yom Tov Lewinski. According to the bylaws adopted at its founding meeting, its objectives were "to make contact with all ethnic communities in order to collect customs, lifestyles, beliefs and religion, foods and beverages, poetry and music, etc., to sponsor conferences for the study of folklore, and to publish books and periodicals."

The first issue of *Yeda Am,* a forum for Jewish folklore, appeared in 1948, under the editorship of Lewinski and Getzel Kressel. It was intended to be a continuation of *Reshumot,* an anthology of memoirs, ethnography, and folklore in Israel. A letter that accompanied the first issue of *Yeda Am* emphasized the challenge that the mass immigration of Jewish communities to Israel posed for the Society, namely, collecting, preserving, and studying the folklore traditions that these communities were bringing with them: "The ingathering of the exiles in our land, dozens of communities with their customs, languages, and ways of life, will provide a firm foundation and inexhaustible source for our work. On the soil of the homeland, where brethren dwell together, new lifestyles become entrenched and cultural values mix and fuse. Much will be lost if we do not make the effort to rescue what can be saved from oblivion and the ravages of time."

For the more than fifty years, since its first issue, *Yeda Am* has published a wealth of material dealing with many areas of folklore (various genres of folk literature, realia, folk music, folk dance, and so on), presenting material collected and documented by veteran folklorists alongside studies by young scholars for whom it was the arena of their first publication. Both the veterans and the newcomers performed their labor with enthusiasm and boundless dedication to collecting and preserving the folk traditions of Jewish communities. The articles found in the volumes of *Yeda Am*—which, as stated, were written, edited, and organized with love and effort by a group of veteran writers and volunteers—constitute a vast treasure-house and inexhaustible source for future generations of scholars, teachers, and students. After the death of Lewinsky in 1973, the periodical was edited by Haim Schwarzbaum, Yitzhak Ganuz (Ganuzovitch), and S.Z. Kahane, and subsequently by Ganuz alone.

Over the years, the Society has sponsored many conferences, lectures, and symposia in various parts of Israel. The topics addressed have included the patriarchs and matriarchs in Jewish life; the legend of the Ten Lost Tribes and the Sambation in the rabbinic sources; the Prophet Elijah; Jerusalem in folklore; motifs in Aggadah; legends of saints (legenda); the relationship between stories and customs; magic and amulets in Jewish tradition; the longing for redemption in Jewish folklore; and Holocaust stories over the generations. Today the Jewish Folklore Society is not active, but the journal continues to be published.

Yitzhak Ganuz

See also: Lewinski, Yom-Tov.

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YEMEN, JEWS OF

Jewish-Yemenite traditions date to the last years of the First Temple, when the first Jews left Jerusalem to settle in Yemen. Although these traditions cannot be considered a reliable source, there are some data and scholarly findings that support them. The earliest unequivocal proof for Jewish existence in Yemen is from the beginning of the third century C.E.: the burial inscriptions in Beit She'arim (near Haifa) of Himyarites, Jews whose corpses were brought for burial in the Land of Israel

from the kingdom of Himyar, at that time the main kingdom in Yemen.

Historians have concluded that by the second half of the second century there already existed a flourishing Jewish community in Yemen. Jews who left Jerusalem as a consequence of the destruction of the First Temple appeared to settle in the northern part of Arabia (later known as Wādī al-Qurā). From there, some of them went farther south and settled in central Arabia (Khaybar) and western Arabia (Yathrib and its environs) and eventually reached the southwestern corner of the Arabian Peninsula: Yemen. From that time until the modern era, a Jewish community existed in Yemen, though it was decimated by immigration to the Land of Israel beginning in 1881. The most heaviest stream of immigration took place between 1949 and 1951, when about 55,000 of the Jews of Yemen made *aliyah,* leaving behind hundreds of their brethren who remained for economic reasons. Even before 1948, almost half of the community had already settled in the Land of Israel, where it stood out among all the other ethnicities.

Yemeni Jews are distinct in terms of their continuity and stability, having been in Yemen continuously for at least 1,800 years without being expelled or forced to relocate. That means that Yemeni Jews could preserve their original traditions; some of them, such as their pronunciation of Hebrew, date to the era of the First Temple. Nevertheless, Yemeni Jews have never been completely secluded, and nearly all trends and streams that developed in Jewish centers outside Yemen trace their roots to that community.

Yemeni Jews never attained prominence among all the Jewish communities; however, they have been highly appreciated by scholars of Judaic studies are who interested in the old Jewish traditions—which have been kept alive by Yemeni Jews even though they have been nearly or entirely forgotten by other Jewish groups.

From the very limited information scholars have about the Jews of Yemen in antiquity, they have determined that they appear to have made their living from agriculture, including the ownership of large palm plantations. Their social and political status and power were so high that they could eliminate the influence of the local Christians, backed by strong kingdoms such as Ethiopia and the Byzantine Empire, and bring the local Himyarite kingdom to Judaicize in the fourth century. Recent research, based on written Muslim sources and ancient inscriptions deciphered in Yemen since the mid-nineteenth century, reveals that perhaps the majority of the Yemeni population had converted to Judaism.

But after the fall of the Jewish Himyarite kingdom in 525, a consequence of the Christian invasion from Ethiopia, the Jews quickly lost their special status. It did not improve under the new Muslim regime after the country was invaded by the army sent by Muhammad in 628. In fact, the legal status, and consequently the social and economic status, of the Jews of Yemen diminished, as they became, religious-political "protégés" of the Muslim Empire who had to pay a poll tax and conduct themselves in accordance with many oppressive and discriminatory rules, such as the prohibition on wearing fancy cloths, building tall houses, or carrying weapons.

In the tenth century, when, as a result of the expansion of the vast Muslim empires from China to Spain, along with the Mediterranean, in the Middle Ages, the general population in the East changed the main source of its livelihood from agriculture to commerce; Jews of Yemen followed suit. Moreover, they successfully took advantage of their proximity to the area's most important port in Aden, on the main international maritime route from the Mediterranean to India. During those years, from the tenth to the thirteenth century, Yemeni Jews formed an integral part of the Jewish communities living in Muslim/Arab countries, a fact that is well documented in the high level of their literature, as evident in midrashic compilations, poetry, philosophy, and halakhic works. Of all should be noted their close ties with Maimonides, his understanding of Jewish tradition and his philosophy, and his decendants.

With the rise of a new Sunni dynasty in Yemen—the Rasulids, in 1225—Jews' social and economic status once again began to change. This tendency was strengthened under the rule of the Tahirids (1454). They gained some measure of relief after the Ottoman Turks took control of the country (1536), but after the Qāsimis expelled the Turks from Yemen and established a new Zaydi dynasty, conditions for the Jews deteriorated. The culmination of those conditions was in 1679, when the imam expelled them from Yemen, but only to Mawza, a locality in western Yemen, because the imam could not enforce his decree, even though it had the support of most of the religious Muslim authorities.

The Jews were permitted to return from their exile after about a year and a half, now deprived of their agrarian possessions and many of their civil rights. They were gradually pushed almost exclusively to the status of craftsmen, with no access to the main sources of the local economy: land and trade.

Jewish-Yemenite culture of the past two centuries had only a few features of traditional Yemeni culture, loosely updated with post-Sabbatean cultural developments in Europe and North Africa. At the same time, it was sharply colored by the local Arab folklore, especially in the spoken language and the culture of women. In many aspects of life, the Jews retained their uniqueness amid the Muslim majority. Even the Jewish houses in Sana'a were designed differently than those of the Muslims. There was a sharp distinction between the music specific to Jewish synagogiues and that of men outside the synagogue and of women, which is fundamentally a

moderate version of Muslim Yemenite music. The same situation pertains regarding dance and cloth.

The singularity of Jewish-Yemenite culture and its ancient features began to be revealed to other Jewish communities and the academic world only with the publication of Ya'aqov Sappir's *Even Sappir* (vol. I, Lyck 1866; vol. II, Mainz 1874), in which he provided a detailed depiction of Yemenite Jewry, based on his stay in Yemen for about eight months in 1859. More was learned only when Yemenite Jews immigrating to the Land of Israel beginning in the 1880s brought with them their old manuscripts. Even in Israel today, Yemeni Jews and their third- and fourth-generation descendants retain their unique traditions more than any other community in Israel.

Folklore and Folklife

The culture of the Jews of Yemen derived from both Jewish and Arabic sources. Scholars know, however, that contacts with Persian, Indian, and Abyssinian folk cultures influenced Jewish culture in Yemen. This influence was naturally not limited to the Jews there but encompassed Muslim culture as well. Jews had lived for so long in the social and economic environment of Yemen that in many respects they can be considered Arabicized Jews. Their language was Arabic, colored, in each district, by the local vernacular.

They were influenced in almost all walks of life by the Arab majority—indeed, they shared that life. Hardly any village, however remote or tiny, failed to have Jewish families or at least one such family. They were intensively and extensively bound up in economic life, not isolated from their Arab neighbors. Thus, for example, no one, except the Jews could repair the broken tools of the farmers or the gun of the warrior tribesmen; not to mention that only Jews could fashion the jewelry, eagerly sought by Muslim women.

Admittedly, Jews and Arab Muslims maintained separate societies from the point of view of religion and politics. Yet the Jewish community nonetheless shared some Arab traits, in addition to language. Jewish folklore and ethnology in Yemen combined Jewish traditions and Arab characteristics. In every sphere, even those that might be considered purely Arab, Jewish uniqueness can still be discerned in clothing, craftsmanship, music, and style of construction. Even the dialect of Arabic spoken by Jews is not the same as that spoken by Arabs.

In cities and townships, where differentiation was clearer and more conspicuous, because they resided in separate neighborhoods, the ethnographic differences were greater than in villages, where Jews and Muslims were more involved in each other's daily lives. Urban Jews were less Arabicized than those who lived in the villages.

Jewish-Yemenite ethnography has benefited from many descriptions and much research, starting with

Amulet for a Jewish groom, used to prevent harm during the wedding. Yemen, ca. 1920. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

Ya'aqov Sappir's books in the 1860s. But only a little has been accomplished in comparative research with Muslim ethnography in Yemen. Some research of this kind has been conducted recently, but most is still yet to be done.

The Jews of Yemen had a folktale tradition both oral and written in Judeo-Arabic. The written tales appear in various manuscripts sometimes as single tales and sometimes in series. So far no single manuscript has appeared that is devoted to folk narratives. At the end of the nineteenth century, Jewish-Yemenite printers started publishing folk narratives in traditional editions. In the twentieth century, these tales have been included in Jewish-Yemenite folk narrative collections, followed by Hebrew translations. The narratives draw upon traditional Jewish themes that are common in exempla (see: Exemplum) and in the accounts of Jewish history. Among them are "The Death of Moses," "The Death of Aaron," "The Conquests of Joshua bin Nun," "Ḥannah and Her Seven Sons," and "The Story of Moses ben Maimon

(Maimonides)." This narrative corpus is closely related to the collections of rabbinic exempla that were common in manuscripts from Yemen and Persia, similar to *The Exempla of the Rabbis,* edited by Moses Gaster (1924).

These written folk narratives became an integral part of the Jewish canonic literature that presented to the members of Jewish community a definite set of spiritual and social values, models of imitable exemplary characters and advocated the supremacy of Judaism. The oral folk narratives were recounted mostly by women. Because they were transmitted from generation to generation through the female line in society, these tales were not part of rabbinical or scholarly discourse. In contrast to written tales, the respective oral narratives, many of which belong to the international folktale tradition of Jews and Muslims, had a great deal of overlap. There are also tales with Jewish-Yemenite themes concerning personalities such as the poet Rabbi Shalom Shabazi, historical events such as the exile of the Jews in Mawza (1678–1679), and relations with Muslim society.

Folk narratives of the Jews of Yemen after their immigration to Israel were collected by Jewish-Yemenite intellectuals, by scholars, and by institutions. The Israel Folktale Archives (IFA) at the University of Haifa holds 1,586 folk narratives recorded by Yemeni Jews in Israel.

Yosef Tobi

See also: Shabazi, Shalom.

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YIDDISH

See: Languages, Jewish

YIVO ETHNOGRAPHIC COMMITTEE

See: Cahan, Y.L.; Poland, Jews of

YOM KIPPUR

Yom Kippur (or Day of Atonement) is a twenty-five-hour fast from sunset to nightfall, falling on the tenth of Tishrei, even if it falls on a Sabbath. The most solemn day in the Jewish calendar, it is observed in accordance with the biblical commandment found in the Book of Leviticus (Lev. 23:26–32). Specifically, verse 27, enjoining that "you shall afflict yourselves," was interpreted by the sages of old as prescribing five forms of mortification: abstinence from food and drink, marital intercourse, bathing, anointment with oil, and wearing of leather shoes. In addition, all Sabbath prohibitions on work apply to Yom Kippur.

In the days of the Temple in Jerusalem, one elaborate ritual of sacrifice took place on this day, consisting of two parts: first, a sacrificial ceremony during which the high priest confessed sins on behalf of himself, the priesthood, and the people of Israel. He then entered the holy of holies (the most sacred place in the Temple) dressed in white linen robes—the only occasion when this visit was permitted—and sprinkled the blood of the offerings on the *parokhet* (curtain covering the holy ark) and offered incense on the golden altar. Second, a scapegoat "bearing upon him all their [the Jews'] iniquities" (Lev. 16:22) was hurled to his death in the wilderness, or from a mountaintop, called Azazel (Lev. 16:26; *m. Yoma* 6:4), symbolically redeeming the people of their sins. In medieval Hebrew illuminated manuscripts, Azazel is portrayed as a devil and identified with Samuel, rather than being understood as a place name. This tradition dates to Byzantine sources (*Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer*, chapter 76) and medieval biblical commentators (e.g., Ibn Ezra, Ramban). A detailed description of the entire ceremony is recorded in the Mishnah tractate *Yoma* and in the Talmud. Since the destruction of the Temple, this ancient ceremony has been commemorated in an elaborate *piyyut* (liturgical poem) based in the Mishnah, and included in the Musaf prayer service.

The night of Yom Kippur begins with a very emotionally moving incantation of the "Kol Nidrei," in which vows of the past year (and, according to some, of the future) are annulled and sinners who have been banned from the synagogue are permitted to enter and participate in the services.

Unlike all other festive days, Yom Kippur has five (not four) services, the additional one being the conclud-

Sefer Torah *tas* (breastplate) with inscription "Yom Kippur."
Germany, 1700. *(Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv)*

ing Neilah service, whose dominant item is the closing (Neilah) of the Judgment Day and the sealing of the divine verdicts. The other prayer services stress confession of sins (listed alphabetically) and asking for forgiveness, even for the unworthy. The Saḥrit morning service includes a Torah reading relating to the sacrificial rituals in the Temple (Lev. 16, 19:7–11), and the *haftarah* (57:14–58) emphasizes that without true repentance ritual is meaningless. In the Minḥa afternoon service, devoted to forbidden marriages, is read, followed by reading the Book of Jonah, with its message of divine forgiveness for true repentance. At the close of the day, usually after the Arvit (Ma'ariv) (from the word for "nightfall") service, the shofar (ram's horn) is sounded, followed by the exhortation "*Le'shanah ha'baah bi'Yerushalayim*," translated as "next year [may we be] in Jerusalem" (with those living in Israel adding: "in Jerusalem rebuilt"), and the congregants greet one another, saying, "*gemar ḥatimah tovah*" (lit., a propitious sealing [of the divine judgment], or, more idiomatically, May you be inscribed [in the Book of Life] for good). And in order to begin the new lease on life with a mitzvah, the male congregants gather outside the synagogue to bless the new moon (*kiddush ha'ḥodesh).*

Many folk customs developed over the generations following the destruction of the Second Temple. Thus, in the absence of the Azazel scapegoat, the Kapparot ceremony came into being, in which a rooster for a male and a hen for a female symbolically served in place of the scapegoat. On the eve of Yom Kippur, they were held by the legs over the head declared to serve as a substitute for their owners, who transferred the burden of his sins upon them. They were ritually slaughtered and usually given to the poor as charity.

Additional forms of mortification were practiced, such as *malkot,* the whipping (thirty-nine times) of a bare-backed male congregant in the synagogue close to the onset of Yom Kippur, a symbolic form of punishment and atonement. Similarly, it is customary to make ritual ablutions in the *mikveh* (ritual bathhouse) on the eve of Yom Kippur, in order to cleanse oneself of one's impurities and sins.

It is a natural human desire to try to ascertain what the future may bring, "who will die, who will live, whose end will come, whose end will not come" (from the *piyyut* "Unetaneh tokef"). In order to do so, some would make an especially long wax candle that would burn for twenty-five hours; it would be brought to the synagogue before Yom Kippur, and the beadle would light it. If the candle stopped burning before the fast ended, its owner would depart this life during the coming year. However, in many communities the various candles had no specific identification of their owners, so if a particular candle went out early, one could not know which congregant would die. The whole congregation would then have an additional incentive to genuinely repent their sins and pray for God's clemency.

Male worshippers, many of whom would spend the entire twenty-five hours in the synagogue in prayer, and the hardiest of whom might even remain standing throughout, would wear white robes (called *kittel* or *sargenes*), evoking the high priest's white vestments. These were variously interpreted as symbolizing the pristine purity of angels, to whom the worshipers wished to be compared, or alternatively (or additionally) they were likened to funerary shrouds, indicating the extreme humbleness of the wearer, who sees himself as having as little value as a corpse.

Although Yom Kippur was a day of fasting and solemnity, mistakenly called "the black fast" by gentiles, it was not seen as a day of sadness but, on the contrary, as one of joyful thanks for the opportunity to be forgiven and granted an additional year of life. Medieval philosophers (such as Judah Halevi, Maimonides, ha'Meiri), following earlier philosophers and the sages, describe it as the day when the soul, freed from corporeal fetters, attains the peak of perfection in the service of God. Thus it has the dual character of a fast day and a festival day. A mishnaic statement (*m. Ta'anit* 4.8) declares Yom Kippur one of the happiest days of the year, when maidens dressed in white danced in the vineyards and sought out their marital partners. What better time to find a mate than on the day of penitence and forgiveness.

Daniel Sperber

See also: Lamps and Candles.

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YOSEF DELA REINA, THE STORY OF (*MA'ASEH YOSEF DELA REINA*)

The story of Yosef dela Reina is the account of an attempt by a kabbalist-magician by this name to destroy the Sitra Aḥra ("the other side" of the divinity, that is, Satan and his evil forces) by magical means and thereby to bring about the redemption.

Textual History

The core outline of this narrative underwent a number of transitions. The story, which was apparently originally composed in Spain at the beginning of the sixteenth century, echoed an actual event that had taken place about half a century earlier in either North Africa or Spain. Yosef dela Reina's failed attempt aroused the wrath of contemporary kabbalists and was condemned. The account on it was put in writing by an anonymous kabbalist as an explanation for the delay in the redemption, which was expected to occur in 1489.

In this form, the story reached the Land of Israel, and in 1518 it was told anew by Rabbi Abraham ben Eliezer Halevi in the earliest version known to scholars. It was apparently in this version that the narrative spread and reached the circle of the famous kabbalist Rabbi Isaac Luria (known as Ha'Ari), in Safed. In the writings of his disciple, Rabbi Ḥaim Vital, the story is evoked as testimony to the dangers inherent in the use of "practical Kabbalah" (i.e., the practical use of the power embedded in Kabbalah secrets). At this stage, a conclusion had already been appended to the story in which the punishment had shifted from the national dimension (delaying the redemption) to the individual dimension (Yosef dela Reina's personal fate). Some fifty years later, Rabbi Solomon Navarro wrote down another version of the story, which by then had developed and expanded into a folk magic legend featuring

a resident of Safed and set in the Land of Israel. It was this version of the legend that became widely known, starting in the mid-seventeenth century, among the Jewish communities in both the East and the West, in Hebrew, and in translation into Ladino, Arabic, Persian, and Yiddish (in this language there also exists a Sabbatean version of the narrative). In the twentieth century, it was also translated into other European languages.

The Story

According to the most prevalent version of the story, a kabbalist from Safed named Yosef dela Reina set out, together with five trustworthy disciples and equipped with a scribe's inkstand (for writing incantations) and "all kinds of herbs" (for carrying out the required rituals), to eliminate Satan (Samael) and Lilith in order to bring redemption to his people. Various figures appear to him along the way: Rashbi (Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai, who is traditionally considered the author of the Zohar); the prophet Elijah; and the angels Sandalfon, Akatriel, and Metatron. All warn him against the aspired deed, yet all encourage him and guide him for the rest of his journey. Rashbi and Elijah instruct him on how to bring the angels down to earth, whereas the angels reveal to him the information required for his mission: the path to Samael's location, the obstacles in the way and the incantations that nullify them, and the way to trap Samael and Lilith (by means of lead plates upon which is written the tetragrammaton). Likewise, they warn Yosef dela Reina against succumbing to Samael and Lilith's shrewdness and their pleadings to grant their requests.

The group indeed encounters all the dangers and difficulties of which they were forewarned but overcomes them. They bind Samael and Lilith and deny Samael's pleadings for food while continuing on their way to bring Samael to receive God's judgment on Mount Seir. However, when very close to the mountain, Yosef—arrogant and self-satisfied—is lured into permitting Samael a moment to smell the frankincense that is in his hands. This small pinch of idolatry is sufficient to revitalize Samael. Now strengthened, he burns the ropes that bind him, casts from him the magical lead plates, and attacks Yosef's disciples. Two of them die, and two others become insane. Yosef, however, reaches the city of Sidon, loses his faith, and is caught in the world of demons. He makes a pact with Lilith and delivers his soul to her. With this power, he adjures demons and every night has them bring the queen of Greece from her palace to his bedchamber. When her husband, the king, hears of this, he sends for Yosef, who throws himself into the sea and dies. His last disciple, the account relates, lies bedridden until his death, injured and pursued by evil spirits.

A different version of the story bases the whole journey on the revelation of Elijah to Yosef dela Reina. It sketches

the voyage relatively briefly, whereas Yosef's end is told at length. He is cast onto a mountain close to France and reaches the king's city, where he becomes famous for his magical power. When the king realizes that Yosef uses his power for bringing his wife, the queen, to his bedchamber he sends someone to seize him, but Yosef makes himself disappear and flees. The Jews, however, fearing that they will be harmed, entreat him to surrender, and in his distress dela Reina leaps off a tall mountain and dies.

Folkloric Elements

The folkloric elements of this legend of magic and redemption are pronounced. In contrast to the succinct early version, concerned primarily with the danger of trying to bring about the redemption, at the center of the more developed version is the figure of a folk hero who sets out on a hazardous quest in an effort to overcome and destroy, with the aid of magic, the cosmic forces of evil in order to save his community. The heroic plot is developed through means common to the folk legend: the triple format, the repetition of words and situations, and the portrayal of the tribulations of the protagonist developing from minor difficulties to greater ones that reach their climax in a dramatic struggle with the mythical monster. This narrative, however, undermines both the normative view that the redemption should be brought by heaven alone and the common objection to the manipulation of divine names for magical purposes. A tale relating the failure of Yosef dela Reina is not, therefore, merely holding onto the sorrow of an unrealized redemption. It is foremost an exemplum aimed at the condemnation of the use of "practical Kabbalah," especially for messianic purposes. In contrast to the early version of the story, the obstacle to completion of the objective in the legendary version is not the mission that Yosef undertakes but his character. Like the heroes of many legends and fairy tales, Yosef stumbles at the last moment. His courage, determination, magical knowledge, and ability to mobilize supernatural agents for his cause did not save him at that (human) moment of weakness on account of his pride and complacency.

The dread of the cosmic evil forces is embodied in the story as a demonstration that the boundary between attempting to cope with them on their metaphysical magical court and surrendering to them is thin and pregnant with danger. This is the source of the inner tension between the mold of the heroic legend within the plot and its comprehensive moral, which portrays the failure as exemplary. He who aspires to rise up to the level of holy ones in ways other than the normative path (the study of the Torah and the fulfillment of the commandments) will ultimately find himself subordinated to evil and will sink deep into impurity. Thus, the story rejects the popular messianic yearning for an immediate redemption by a charismatic human figure, such as Yosef with his heroic actions, and calls instead for normative obedience.

The magical, demonic, and angelological world of the story of Yosef dela Reina is rich and varied. It reflects a common perception of the power of the angels, alongside a belief in man's ability to bring them down to earth and to gain their assistance through the use of charms and adjurations. At the same time, the story reveals a belief in the role of Satan in the shaping of human life, in general, and in the dejected Jewish existence, in particular, and explicitly links the destruction of Satan (Samael) and the redemption of the nation. This set of ideas and beliefs is anchored in the world of theosophical Kabbalah and in the magical tradition that preceded its rise and integrates them. Lilith is familiar from many medieval Jewish sources (kabbalistic and other). Her figure in the story constitutes a further transformation of a literary motif that expresses the common dread of this malicious demoness, against whom, since antiquity, Jews had used amulets and other means of protection (see: Lilith). The erotic aspect that is often implicated in the Jewish notion of the relations between a man and a female demon is replaced in the story by two factors: subordination to the demoness, on the one hand, and manipulation of her power for the purpose of sinful sexual relations with a woman of flesh and blood, on the other. As regards this last aspect, the story ties practices of erotic magic, which are attested in many contemporary Jewish books of magical recipes together with the literary motif of relations with the king's wife or daughter, aided by Satan, that is found in both European and Middle Eastern sources.

Yuval Harari

See also: Messiah and Redeemer.

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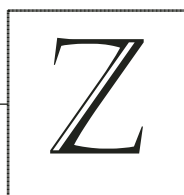
ZEFAT

See: Safed, Legends of

ZIPPORAH

Zipporah is mentioned in the Book of Exodus as Moses's wife and one of seven daughters of Jethro (also called Reuel), the priest of Midian. In one of the most dramatic incidents in the Hebrew Bible, she appears to save Moses's life. Moses met the daughters of Jethro by a well, where they had come to draw water, when he fled Egypt after having killed an Egyptian, an offense for which his own life was at risk. Moses chased away some shepherds who were preventing the daughters from drawing water from the well and stayed to live at Jethro's home; subsequently he married Zipporah (Exod. 2:10–22). Despite her betrothal to Moses, Zipporah is not described in any way that would distinguish her from her sisters; this omission might reflect the fact that her character and relationship to Moses do not play a major role in the remainder of the story. The use of seven—a familiar token in folklore—for the number of daughters attests to the folk origins of the story and to a literary intention to evoke an archaic ambiance.

The Midrash Shemot Rabbah (1:32) locates the root *tzipor* (Heb., bird) in Zipporah's name. When Jethro asks his daughters to invite Moses to dine at his home, she flies off like a bird to bring him back.

Zipporah plays a leading role only in the enigmatic story of the "blood groom": At God's commandment, Moses returns to Egypt with his wife and two children, and en route, according to some interpretations, God meets him and seeks to slay him. Zipporah takes a "flint and cuts off her son's foreskin and touch[es] Moses's feet with it" and declares, "Surely, you are a bridegroom of blood to me!" God relents, and Moses is saved (Exod. 4:24–26).

This enigmatic passage has promoted considerable interpretive controversy, and Zipporah's exact contribution in the biblical narrative remains a matter of debate. According to one account, she saves Moses from God's wrath by carrying out the circumcision on their son. Some commentators propose a different account, suggesting that Zipporah saves her son Gershom, either from some third-party assailant or from his father, Moses, whose anger subsides only after Zipporah carries out the cir-

cumcision. According to the Midrash to Exodus, Shemot Rabbah, an angel comes and swallows Moses from his head to his circumcised part, so Zipporah knows that Moses was harmed by the circumcision.

The passage leaves a number of lingering, intriguing questions. How does the specific action Zipporah takes, circumcising her son, prevent disaster? What is the significance of touching the foreskin to Moses's "feet," a common biblical euphemism for genitals? Is there any connection between this act and the sprinkling of blood in the anointing of the priesthood, as described in Exodus 29:20?

This text is unique not only within a biblical framework but also within the context of the ancient Middle East as a whole, where there is no other evidence that women performed acts of blood sacrifice.

Saving Moses from the wrath of God, Zipporah follows in a line of heroines, such as the two midwives to the Israelites in Egypt Shiphrah and Puah (who defy Pharaoh's decree to kill male newborns), Moses's mother, Yocheved, and Pharaoh's daughter. Like her predecessors, Zipporah allays the wrath of a vengeful God in a manner familiar in international and Jewish folklore: partial sacrifice, on the theory of a "part instead of the whole." She offers the foreskin and some blood instead of the sacrifice of her husband. By means of the circumcision ceremony and spilling the drop of blood, Zipporah converts destructive violence into an expression of institutionalized violence; she transforms blood from a symbol of death itself into a symbol to ward off death. Only a woman, who is linked to the life cycle at birth (by giving birth or assisting at a birth as a midwife) and at death (mourner) can assume such a vital role.

The physical heroism displayed by Moses by chasing off the shepherds at the well originally stands as a contrast to the weakness of Zipporah and her sisters. But his prowess appears somewhat transient. In the blood groom sequence, roles are reversed: Zipporah embraces the role of a protective mother not only toward her son but also toward Moses himself, and she saves him from death.

At some point, one not detailed in the biblical narrative, Moses casts off Zipporah and their children. The text refers to this only in Exodus 18:2, in which Jethro hears about the exodus from Egypt: "Now Jethro, Moses's father-in-law, had taken Zipporah, Moses's wife, after he had sent her away and her two sons." Jethro takes them to the desert, to Moses. The text describes at length the meeting between Jethro and Moses, but it is reticent about Moses's meeting with his wife, and "her" (not "their") two sons, Gershom and Eliezer. But in the Midrash the names of the two sons are bestowed by Moses, not by Zipporah (this departs from the custom in tales of mothers and matriarchs). The major national stories that are linked to the fate of the people are what appear central to those who prepared the text; the feelings and status of a woman are neglected, since they do not pertain to the male world of political power.

Moses's brother, Aaron, and sister, Miriam, speak out against Moses because of the "Cushite" woman he married (Num. 12:1). God's furious response to Miriam for having defamed a prophet is described in this passage, along with the punishment Moses's sister receives. The Midrash holds that the Cushite is Zipporah (*Sifrei Bamidbar* 99), explaining that "Cushite" is used to connote difference: "In the same way that Cushite is different in skin color, so too did Zipporah's beauty distinguish her from other women."

In this Midrash, Zipporah hints that Moses has taken to abstinence from conjugal relations. The Midrash praises Zipporah for her vitality and righteousness, and thus emphasizes the injustice done to her as a result of Moses's choice of abstinence.

The Midrash also emphasizes Zipporah's love for and loyalty to Moses. When Jethro first discovers that Moses had fled Egypt, fearing punishment by Pharaoh, he hurls him into a hole; Zipporah tends to him secretly for ten years. Afterward, she asks her father to find out whether Moses is still alive, and Jethro is amazed to discover that he is (*Yalkut Shimoni* Shemot 168). Zipporah then demands her father's consent to become betrothed to Moses (*Midrash Shechem* Shemot 4). She emerges as a righteous woman who follows the trail of the Hebrew matriarchs.

Aliza Shenhar

See also: Moses.

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ZLOTNICK, YESHAYAHU

See: Poland, Jews of

APPENDICES

The Hebrew Bible

Pentateuch, Hebrew: *Torah*—Law.

Genesis (Gen.), Hebrew: *Bereshit.*
Includes the creation of the world and humankind; the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden; the first murder of Abel by Cain; the story of the Ark of Noah; the Tower of Babel; and stories of the Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Exodus (Exod.), Hebrew: *Shemot.*
The Israelite's departure from Egypt. Includes the rescue of Moses the child from the Nile; the story of the burning bush; the confrontation with Pharaoh and the ten plagues; the miraculous escape from Egypt; the giving of the law and construction of the tabernacle.

Leviticus (Lev.), Hebrew: *Vayikra.*
Deals with ceremonial law—religious regulations and priestly rituals.

Numbers (Num.), Hebrew: *Bamidbar.*
Starts with the census of the people at Sinai and concentrates on the harsh trials of the life in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy (Deut.), Hebrew: *Devarim.*
Includes the words of Moses to the Israelites before his death, the rehearsal of the law, the appointment of Joshua as Moses' successor, and the death of Moses.

Prophets, Hebrew: *Nevi'im.*

Joshua (Josh.), Hebrew: *Yehoshua.*
The story of the conquest of Canaan including the Battle of Jericho. Ends with the death of Joshua.

Judges (Judg.), Hebrew: *Shoftim.*
The history of the biblical heroes known as judges, including the stories of Samson, Gideon, Deborah, Jephthah and his daughter.

1 Samuel, 2 Samuel (1 Sam., 2 Sam.), Hebrew: *Shemuel.*
The first book deals with the story of the nation during the judgeship of Samuel and the beginning of the kingdom—the reign of Saul. The second book concentrates on the reign of David.

1 Kings, 2 Kings (1 Kgs., 2 Kgs.), Hebrew: *Melakhim.*
Contain the history from David's death; Solomon's reign and the construction of the Temple in Jerusalem; the division of Solomon's kingdom into two separate northern and southern nations; the story of the first northern king Jeroboam and his sin and the stories of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. The book ends with the destruction of Jerusalem and exile of the people of Judah to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (586 B.C.E.).

Isaiah (Isa.), Hebrew: *Yeshayah.*
Includes prophesies attributed to Isaiah (eighth century B.C.E.).

Jeremiah (Jer.), Hebrew: *Yirmiyah.*
Prophecies attributed to Jeremiah (seventh–eighth century B.C.E.) announcing the captivity of Judah and its sufferings and the final salvation from its enemies.

Ezekiel (Ezek.), Hebrew: *Yeḥezkel.*
Includes messages of warning and prophecies of redemption. It contains several visions, including the vision of the dry bones.

The Twelve Minor Prophets, Hebrew: *Trey Asar.*

Hosea (Hos.)
Joel (Joel)
Amos (Amos)
Obadiah (Obad.)
Jonah (Jon.)
Micah (Mic.)
Nahum (Nah.)
Habakkuk (Hab.)
Zephania (Zeph.)
Haggai (Hag.)
Zechariah (Zech.)
Malachi (Mal.)

Writings, Hebrew: *Ketuvim*

Psalms (Ps.), Hebrew: *Tehilim.*
Sacred poems traditionally ascribed to David.

Proverbs (Prov.), Hebrew: *Mishle.*
A representation of Jewish wisdom literature traditionally attributed to Solomon.

Job (Job), Hebrew: *Yiov.*
   A story describing the trials of Job, a righteous man of Edom. Deals with the problem of evil and justice of God.

Song of Songs, Hebrew: *Shir Ha'Shirim.*
   A most famous book of love poems, mostly in the form of a dialogue between a man and a woman. In the Jewish tradition it was interpreted allegorically as love between God and the Jewish people.

Ruth, the Scroll of, Hebrew: *Megillat Ruth.*
   The story of the foremother of King David, a Moabite woman, Ruth, who follows her mother-in-law back to the Judah tribe territory, and marries Boaz, her deceased husband's kinsman.

Lamentations (Lam.), Hebrew: *Megillat Eikha.*
   The book consists of five poems that recount the horrors experienced during the destruction of the first temple and exile to Babylon.

Ecclesiastes (Eccles.), Hebrew: *Kohelet.*
   A collection of sayings on the meaning of life. The author presents himself as Solomon, son of David.

Esther, Scroll of, Hebrew: *Megillat Esther.*
   The story of a plot to commit genocide against the Jews by Haman in the time of Ahasuerus, the king of Persia. The Jews are saved by Mordechai and the Jewess Esther, queen of Persia. The Esther scroll is the basis for the Purim holiday.

Daniel (Dan.)
   The story tells about Daniel, an Israelite who becomes the adviser of Nebuchadnezzar, the ruler of Babylon.

Ezra (Ezra) and Nehemiah (Neh.)
   Historiographical books describing the rebuilding of Judah after Babylonian exile.

1 Chronicles, 2 Chronicles (1 Chron., 2 Chron.), Hebrew: *Divrey Ha'Yamim.*
   The final book of the Hebrew Bible. Chronicles tell the history also included in the Books of Samuel and the Books of Kings.

Rabbinic Literature

Tannaitic—Early Rabbinic—Works (Third Century C.E.): Palestine, Mainly Hebrew

Mishnah: A collection of mainly religious law (halakhic), attributed to R. Yehudah ha'Nasi; consists of six main divisions or orders (*seder*, pl. *sedarim*). Each order is comprised of tractates (*masachtot*), reaching the overall sum of sixty-three tractates. Although it mainly addresses halakhic matters, the Mishnah includes some aggadic (nonlegal) material. Tractate *Avot*, for example, which appears in *seder Neziqin*, is comprised entirely of rabbinic aggadic maxims and lore.

References to the Mishnah are according to tractate, chapter, and mishnah, e.g. (tractate) *Avot*, (chapter) 1, (mishnah) 1.

Tosefa: A halakhic work that corresponds in structure to the Mishnah, at times interpreting the Mishnah, at times deviating from it. Like the Mishnah, although predominantly concerned with rabbinic law, it includes nonlegal narratives.

Mekhilta de'Rabbi Yishmael, *Mekhilta de'Rabbi Shimeon Bar Yoḥai*: Works that interpret the book of Exodus, each one attributed to a different rabbinic school, respectively.

Sifra (also known as *Torat Cohanim,* the Law of the Priests): A work that explicates the book of Leviticus.

Sifrei on Numbers: A work that explicates the book of Numbers.

Sifrei on Deuteronomy: A work that explicates the book of Deutoronomy.

Tannaitic midrashic works, addressing the five books of the Pentateuch, usually follow the sequence of the biblical books they address. Their compositional framework is thus defined as exegetical. They are mainly, but not exclusively, halakahic in nature.

Amoraic Works (Fifth–Sixth Century C.E.):

Palestine (Hebrew and Aramaic)

Jerusalem or Palestinian Talmud (*Talmud Yerushalmi*): Commentaries on and expansions of the Mishnah, arranged according to thirty-nine of the mishnaic tractates. In additions to halakhic material, the JT (PT) contains much aggadi*c* (nonlegal) discourse. References to the JT (PT) are according to tractate, chapter, and halakhah (and usually with the addition of page and column, referring to the Venice printed edition).

Genesis Rabbah: One of the most important aggadic midrashim that addresses the book of Genesis. Comprised of 100 chapters, arranged according to scriptural sequence, thus described as an exegetical Midrash.

The name "Rabbah," meaning great/big, may have originated in order to distinguish this work from another, smaller, compilation on Genesis. Subsequently, the name "Rabbah" was used for other midrashim on the Pentateuch as well as on the five Scrolls. The entire body of the midrashim called "Rabbah" is of heterogeneous character, comprised of different poetic principles and edited in different contexts, including ones that postdate the rabbinic period. The name that these midrashim share thus does not indicate any essential connection between them.

Leviticus Rabbah: An aggadic midrash that address the mostly legal-cultic book of Leviticus. It is comprised of thirty-seven chapters, each one referring to a portion of the Torah as read in a three-year cycle at the synagogue. In contrast to Genesis Rabbah, whose composition does not appear to have coherent internal principles, Leviticus Rabbah strives for greater coherence within each chapter, both structurally and thematically. Because of its compositional structure, it is referred to as a homiletic midrash.

Lamentations Rabbah: An aggadic midrash that addresses the book of Lamentations. The destruction of the First Temple, which is the subject of the biblical Scroll, serves the rabbis as a template to discuss the more recent, and in some respects more relevant, event of the destruction of the Second Temple. The work is comprised of numerous proems (*petichta'ot*). These are followed by exegesis of the book of Lamentations according to the scriptural sequence (thus, referred to as an exegetical midrash).

Pesiqta de'Rav Kahana (Cahana): A homiletic midrash that addresses portions of scripture that were read in the synagogue on festivals and special Shabbats—the total sum varying according to the edition. There are five chapters that overlap with Leviticus Rabbah (the origin of which is debated).

Esther Rabbah I: Addresses the Esther Scroll, read on Purim. Esther Rabbah I includes sections 1–6 and belongs to the end of the classical midrash period. The continuation, Esther Rabbah II, is possibly an eleventh-century work. The combination of both parts took place in the twelfth or thirteenth century.

Ruth Rabbah: A complete commentary on the book of Ruth, read on Shavuot, comprised of eight sections. It was known as Midrash Ruth until the Venice edition of 1545 renamed it.

Song of Songs Rabbah: An exegetical midrash, offering a typological reading of Song of Songs. Has been dated to the sixth century, or alternatively, to the post-Amoraic period (seventh or eighth century). Either way, it clearly includes early material as well.

Babylonia (Hebrew and Aramaic)

Babylonian Talmud (*Talmud Bavli*): Commentaries on and expansions of the Mishnah, arranged according to thirty-seven of the mishnaic tractates. In contrast to the amoraic literary poly-system in Palestine that included both a Talmud and separate midrashic works, the Babylonian rabbis produced one major work—the Babylonian Talmud (BT)—which is an expansive and elaborated composition encompassing a wide range of materials and whose final editorial process reached into the seventh century. References to the Babylonian Talmud follow tractate, page (in turn divided into a/b, depending on the side of the page).

Late and Post-Amoraic Works (Seventh–Eleventh Century C.E.)

A large variety of works of different nature, scope, and provenance. Composed and edited in both Muslim and Christian environments, throughout the Mediterranean, Southern Europe, and the Near East. The date and place of many of the late midrashim is uncertain. Although considered postclassical midrashim, they also contain material from earlier periods.

Tanḥuma (known also as *Yelamdenu*), a major work of that period, arranged according to the portions of the Pentateuch read in the synagogue, containing early material as well as later starta, maybe as late as of the ninth century. The Tanḥuma circulated in different versions (two of which have been published: the printed edition and the Buber edition). There are numerous midrashim of this period that contain distinctly Tanḥuma material (see below).

Ecclesiastes Rabbah: An exegetical midrash addressing the book of Ecclesiastes. The work discusses an array of topics, rendering it encyclopedic in nature. It may have originated in Palestine in the eighth century, or even earlier.

Pirqe de'Rabbi Eliezer (The Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer): An eighth-century work, probably composed in Palestine or its vicinity, presenting a comparatively continuous narrative that retells events recounted in the Bible, beginning from the creation of the world and ending with the leprosy of Miriam. Its poetics have been described as a combination of the second temple period's "rewritten Bible" and midrash.

Deuteronomy Rabbah: Consists of twenty-seven homilies that relate roughly to the three-year cycle of Torah reading. Probably of an early Palestinian origin but due to its complicated textual history the time of its final redaction remains unclear, anytime between the fifth and ninth century. Two versions exist: the printed version and one published by Saul Lieberman.

Pesiqta Rabbati (the "big" Pesiqta, applied to the work in order to distinguish it from *Pesiqta de'Rav Kahana*): A collection of sermons for the feasts and special Shabbats. A composite work that prevents an overall assessment regarding its time and place of redaction.

Exodus Rabbah: A work that addresses the book of Exodus, comprised of two parts. The first, chapters 1–14, is an exegetical midrash on Exodus 1–10; the second part, chapters, 15–52, is homiletic in nature and belongs to the Tanḥuma tradition. It has been dated to the tenth century but its place has remained obscured.

Midrash on Proverbs: An exegetical, or rather commentary-like, midrash on Proverbs. It is dated roughly to ninth to eleventh centuries. Its place of redaction is unknown. It contains a few novel narratives and mystical themes.

Numbers Rabbah: Consists of two parts. Part one (sections 1–14, about three-quarters of the composition) is an aggadic exegesis of Numbers 1–7. The second part (sections 15–23) is a homiletic midrash that address Numbers 8–36, and is similar to the Tanḥuma tradition. It has been suggested that the text was edited—either only the first part or in its entirety—by R. Moshe ha'Darshan of eleventh-century Provence, but this is far from clear.

MEDIEVAL COMPILATIONS

Midrash of the Ten Commandments (*Midrash Aseret ha'Dibberot*): A midrash written in the East (Babylon or Persia) during the Gaonic period (eighth to tenth century), explicating the Ten Commandments. The discussion of each biblical verse begins and ends with scanty and unoriginal homiletic sermons. In between, about fifty stories are enclosed, included so as to demonstrate each biblical commandment. The stories comprise the main bulk of the material, and the midrashic aphorisms are secondary. Thus, the compilation is considered to be a transition stage between ancient aggadic literature, in which literary works were an addition to texts of religious (halakhic) law, and medieval literature, in which stories were legitimized for their own right.

The Ben-Sira Story in its two versions—Alphabet of Ben-Sira (*Alfa Beta de'Ben Sira*) and The History of Ben-Sira (*Toldot Ben Sira*): A text written in Babylon or Persia during the ninth to tenth century, and pseudepigraphically attributed to Ben-Sira, the author of Ecclesiasticus. The compilation is divided into four parts: (a) The miraculous conception and birth of Ben-Sira; (b) Ben-Sira and his tutor, who teaches him the alphabet at the age of one year (comprising of twenty-two proverbs on the letters of the alphabet, and relevant stories); (c) Ben-Sira and King Nebuchadnezzar, who asks him twenty-two questions and is answered by aetiological stories; and (d) Homiletic-like discussions between Ben-Sira's son and grandson, who provide commentary and interpretation on twenty-two of his Aramaic proverbs. The work contains bawdy humor, parodies rabbinic learning, and satirizes accepted norms of Judaism. It is considered to be the second stage in the development of the medieval story, already regarding the story as substantive.

The Book of Josippon (*Sefer Yosiffon*): An anonymous composition compiled in 953 in Southern Italy, as if according to Latin translation of the writings of Josephus Flavius. The book pretends to survey the history of the Jewish people, and was highly esteemed by medieval Jewry as such. In fact, it provides "fictional history," including stories taken from Strabo, Lucian, and Eusebius, as well as from Josephus.

The Book of Stories, also known as A Beautiful Composition of Salvation (*Sefer Ma'asiyyot ha'Ḥakhamim vehu Ḥibbur Yafeh meha'Yeshu'ah*): Written at the middle of the eleventh century by Nissim ben Jacob of Kairouan. Written in Arabic yet known mainly by its medieval Hebrew translation, the book is a compilation of Talmudic-midrashic stories combined with Judaized Arabic

medieval folktales. It contains diverse stories on many subjects, yet its declared aim is to comfort a suffering friend and to strengthen his faith in God by telling him stories that teach the ways of Providence, exalt God, preach moral behavior, and explain why the righteous suffer and the wicked thrive.

The Book of Genealogy (*Sefer Yoḥasin*), known as The Chronicle of Aḥima'atz *(Megilat Aḥima'atz*, ed. by B. Klar, 1945): Written in 1054 by Aḥima'atz ben Paltiel in Capua, Italy. The book depicts in rhymed prose the history of Aḥima'atz's family and chronicles the early Jewish communities in Italy, from the eighth until the eleventh centuries. Among stories with some historical foundation, the book also consists of realistic stories, legends, and miraculous tales.

The Exempla of the Rabbis (*Sefer Ma'asiyyot*), published from a manuscript by Moses Gaster (1924; repr. 1968): An anonymous work compiled in the East in the eleventh or twelfth century. The book contains above 300 mainly talmudic-midrashic stories, as well as Hebrew medieval folktales, all edited and combined together into narrative sequences.

Book of the Pious (*Sefer Ḥasidim*): A moralistic book written mostly by Judah ben Samuel he'Ḥasid, in Germany of the eleventh to twelfth centuries. The book contains almost 400 mostly original stories, embedded in discussions on diverse historical, social, and religious matters concerning the life of the pious Ashkenazi Jews in the Middle Ages. All stories are exempla, artistically minimalized, serving to demonstrate moralistic, conceptual, and mystic context. A central place is given to stories with demonological and fantastic elements. It was one of the most influential works of the Middle Ages.

The Book of Tradition (*Sefer ha'Kabbalah*): Written by Abraham Ibn Daud (RABD) of Toledo, Spain, in 1161. Ibn Daud attempted to oppose Karaism by establishing the chain of Jewish tradition as a sequence from the age of Moses to his own time. The book includes valuable information about contemporary Spanish Jewry, as well as legends and tales providing "fictional history" (such as the story of the four captive rabbis who were redeemed by four Jewish communities where they spread Jewish culture).

The Book of Delight (*Sefer Sha'ashuim*): Written in Spain by Joseph ibn Zabara (Barcelona, twelfth century). The book is written in rhymed prose, in the nonclassical form

of the Hebrew *māqāma* genre. It contains animal stories, fables, proverbs, folk tales, and misogynistic tales—all interwoven among other things into a continuous plot, enabling us to consider the work as the first picaresque novel written in Hebrew.

Fox Fables (*Mishle Shu'alim*) by Berechiah ha'Nakdan (France and England, twelfth–thirteenth century): A book of 107 (119 in another edition) animal fables written in rhymed prose, reminiscent of the Hebrew *māqāma* genre. The fables are gathered from non-Hebrew medieval bestiaries, especially that of Marie de France, and are the main source from which medieval Jews became familiar with Aesop's fables. The book is the first fable collection written in Hebrew, and the greatest to be written in the Middle Ages. It was widely circulated and was translated into Yiddish, Latin, German, and English.

The King's Son and the Ascetic (*Ben Ham'elekh Ve'ha'nazir*): A rhymed prose work of *adab* (morale literature), written in the first half of the thirteenth century by Abraham Halevi ben Samuel Ibn Ḥasdai of Barcelona. The story is a translation-adaptation of the celebrated legend of *Barlaam and Josaphat*, which is based on a second to fourth century Buddhist Sanskrit text about the life of Gautama Buddha.

The Book of Deeds (*Sefer ha'Ma'asim*): Redacted at the middle of the thirteenth century, probably in Northern France. It contains sixty-one stories, many of which are sacred legends and Jewish (Judaized) novels. The origin of eighteen stories is unknown; twenty-four stories have parallels in the writings of the Sages; and nineteen are known from earlier medieval books—mainly Midrash of the Ten Commandments and *Ḥibbur Yafeh me'ha'Yeshu'ah*.

The Fable of the Ancient (*Mashal ha'Qadmoni*) by Izḥak ibn Sahula (Spain 1281): A book of animal fables and moral tales written in rhymed prose, in the nonclassical form of the Hebrew *māqāma* genre. Ibn Sahula's declared aim was to prove that Hebrew was not inferior to Arabic as a literary medium.

Kalilah wa'Dimnah (*Kalila ve'Dimna*, also: The Fables of Bidpai): Indian book of fables, composed in India in about 300 C.E., in its two Hebrew translations (made from the Arabic translation), by Rabbi Joel and by Ya'akov ben Elazar (1283). The book consists of didactical stories aiming to guide the readers in how to live their lives. The Hebrew translation by Rabbi Joel was translated-redacted into Latin by the converted Jew John of Capua, and his variant, titled "Directorium Vite Humane," was the basis for the translations into many vernacular languages.

ANTHOLOGIES OF JEWISH FOLKLORE

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