

TWO

Basic Jewish History

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Basic Jewish History

1. From Adam to Noach to Avraham: The First Twenty Generations

The Six Days of Creation

- Day 1 Heaven and earth.
 Light and darkness.
- Day 2 The sky.
- Day 3 The seas, dry land, and vegetation.
- Day 4 The sun, moon, stars, and planets.
- Day 5 Living creatures of the sky and sea.
- Day 6 Mammals that walk the land.
 Man and woman.
- Day 7 Hashem blessed the seventh day and rested.

The Four Species at Creation

1. *Inanimate objects*: a form but no life-force.
2. *Plant life*: a form and enough life-force to reproduce but not to move.

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3. *Animal life*: a form and enough life-force to reproduce, to move, and to act by instinct.

4. *Man — the Crown of Creation*: Man has a Divine soul and the power of speech, which set him above and apart from the rest of Creation.¹

The Beginnings of Mankind

Adam HaRishon was the first man. Hashem created him from the earth of the ground, and thus he was called Adam, meaning “earth.” Hashem created a wife for Adam. Adam called his wife Chavah because she was the mother of all people.²

Hashem planted a garden in Eden, to the east, and placed Adam and Chavah there. Hashem told them, “Of every tree of the garden you may eat, but from the Tree of Knowledge of good and bad you may not eat.”³

However, Adam and Chavah ate from the Tree of Knowledge, and Hashem banished them from Gan Eden. Henceforth, Chavah would have to endure pain at childbirth, and Adam would have to find his sustenance only through hard work.

Chavah conceived and bore a son and named him Kayin. She bore a second son named Hevel. Hevel became a shepherd and Kayin a tiller of the ground.⁴

Both Kayin and Hevel brought offerings to Hashem, but Hashem accepted only Hevel’s offering. In jealousy, Kayin killed Hevel. Hashem cursed Kayin and decreed for him a life of wandering.

Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son called Shes.

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1. Rabbi Yehudah HaLevi (1180–1145), *Sefer HaKuzari, sha’ar sheini*. (Biography of Rabbi Yehudah HaLevi, p. 176.)
 2. The name חַוָּה (Chavah) is from the same root as the word “חַיָּה” (*chayah*), which means “living” (Bereishis 3:20 [*Rashi*]). Thus, the name Chavah indicates that she was the mother of all people.
 3. Bereishis 2:17.
 4. Bereishis 4:2.

The Ten Generations from Adam to Noach

The world was populated by the descendants of Adam and Chavah. After ten generations, in the year 1056, Noach was born.⁵ He was descended from Adam and Chavah through Shes and lived for 950 years. Noach had three sons: Shem, Cham, and Yafes. In Noach's generation, the world was corrupt and evil. People practiced idolatry, and theft was common. Only Noach remained righteous, as it says: "Noach was faultless in his generation; Noach walked with God."⁶

Hashem told Noach that he must build an ark, a *teivah*, for He intended to bring a flood that would destroy all life on the earth.⁷ Hashem told Noach to bring to the ark one pair of all non-kosher creatures, a male and a female, and seven pairs of all kosher creatures, so that life could be replenished after the Flood.

In the year 1656 after Creation, the Flood came and destroyed all life. The fountains of the deep opened up, and from the heavens the rain fell for forty days and forty nights. Only after a full year was the earth habitable again. The ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat, and only those in the ark survived — Noach, his family, and the animals. After the Flood, the world was repopulated through the sons of Noach.

Mankind had been given six laws as the basis for life. After the Flood, Noach was given another mitzvah, since, for the first time, man was permitted to eat meat. This additional mitzvah was: "Do not tear a limb from a living animal."⁸

These seven mitzvos are known as the *sheva mitzvos b'nei Noach* (Seven Mitzvos of the Children of Noach), and *all* of mankind is required to live according to them.⁹

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5. See page 42 for list of the generations from Adam to Noach.
 6. Bereishis 6:9.
 7. Bereishis 6:17.
 8. Bereishis 9:4.
 9. See "The Transmission of Torah," ch. 6, p. 125.

The Ten Generations from Noach to Avraham

Avraham was descended from Noach by ten generations.¹⁰ He was born in the year 1948 after Creation and was the father of the Jewish people.

At the time of Avraham Avinu, the people were evil and they gathered together to build a tower to reach and conquer heaven. Hashem confused them by causing them to speak different languages, and in the confusion the building — which became known as the Tower of Babel — came to an end, and the people were dispersed across the world.¹¹

Avraham had set himself apart from the rest of the world. Thus he was called Avraham Ha'lvri, meaning “the one from the other side.” He stood on one side, while the rest of the world stood on the other.¹²

2. The Patriarchs.

Yosef. Moshe Rabbeinu. The Exodus

The Command to Avraham and Avraham’s Journey

Avraham left his birthplace and traveled to Charan, together with his father, Terach. Then Hashem told Avraham to leave Charan and to journey to the land of Canaan. Hashem promised Avraham, “I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great.”¹³

Later, Avraham underwent bris milah (circumcision).¹⁴

The Three Patriarchs

Avraham’s wife, Sarah, bore him a son in their old age, whom they named Yitzchak. Yitzchak married Rivkah, and Rivkah bore two sons, Yaakov and Eisav. Yaakov bought the birthright from his

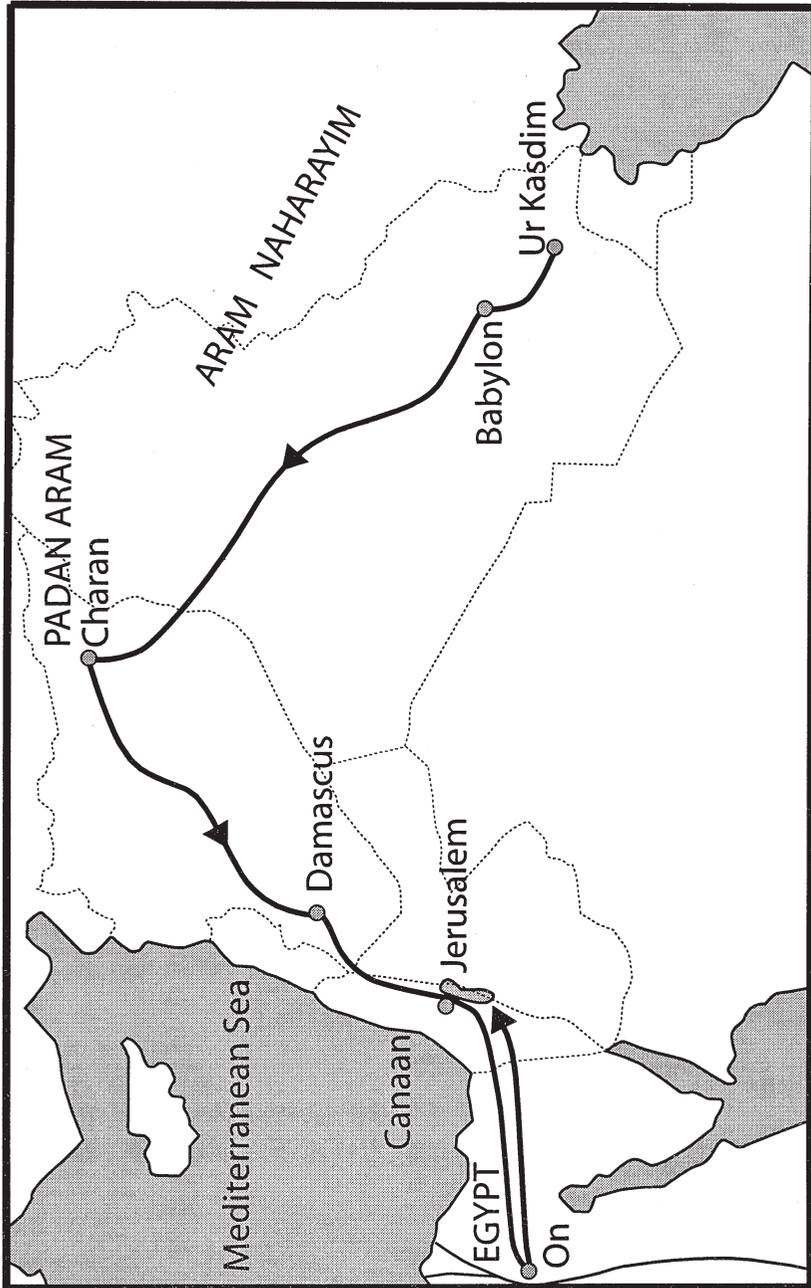
10. See page 42 for a list of the generations.

11. Bereishis 11:9. This generation was called the דור הפלגה — the “Generation of the Dispersion.”

12. *Midrash Rabbah*, Bereishis 42:8.

13. Bereishis 12:2.

14. Avraham underwent ten trials to test his love for Hashem (Mishnah: *Avos* 5:3). The commandment to circumcise himself was one of these tests.



Avraham's Journey

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brother and was blessed by his father, Yitzchak.

Yaakov had twelve sons, from whom are descended the Twelve Tribes of Israel. One of the youngest sons of Yaakov was Yosef, the son of his old age. Yosef aroused the jealousy of his brothers, for he told them that they would eventually come to bow down to him. Yosef's brothers came together and made a *Beis Din*, and found Yosef guilty of being a *rodef*.¹⁵ Consequently they sold him as a slave to traders traveling to Egypt.

Yosef Becomes Viceroy in Egypt

In Egypt, Yosef became a servant in the house of Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officers. Potiphar grew rich through Yosef's work. Hashem had blessed Yosef, and all that he did was successful.¹⁶

Yosef was wrongly accused of acting improperly with the wife of Potiphar and was imprisoned. In prison, Yosef interpreted the dreams of Pharaoh's minister in charge of stewards and minister in charge of bakers. Eventually, the minister of stewards was released, but the minister of bakers was hanged. Later, when Pharaoh himself had two dreams that no one could interpret, the minister of stewards suggested that Yosef be taken out of prison to interpret them. Yosef told Pharaoh the meaning of his dreams — that there would be seven years of plenty followed by seven years of famine in Egypt.

Pharaoh realized that Hashem was with Yosef, and Pharaoh appointed Yosef viceroy over all of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. Yosef ordered the storing of grain in preparation for the seven years of famine.

The years of famine began, and the famine affected the whole region. Eventually Yosef's own brothers came down to Egypt to buy food. Yosef later revealed himself to his brothers, and then his father, Yaakov, also came down to Egypt. All those of Yaakov's household who came to Egypt — his sons, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren — were seventy.¹⁷

15. A *rodef* is one who puts other Jews in danger.

16. Bereishis 39:3.

Pharaoh gave them the fertile land of Goshen in which to dwell, where they were to survive the years of famine.

With that, the period of exile in Egypt had begun.

A New King in Egypt

The generation of Yosef died, and a new king came to the throne in Egypt. The Israelites had increased rapidly in number, and the new king saw them as a threat. He enslaved them and ordered them to build the storage cities of Pison and Raamses.

However, the Israelites continued to increase in number, despite their slavery, and Pharaoh decreed the killing of all new-born Jewish males. Then Pharaoh made another decree: the killing of all newborn males — whether Egyptian or Jewish — for his astronomers told him that one was about to be born who would be the savior of the Jews.¹⁸

At this time Moshe was born, from the tribe of Levi. At his birth the whole house became filled with light.¹⁹ His mother saved him from the Egyptians by hiding him. When she could no longer hide him, she made a reed basket for him and placed him on the River Nile. He was rescued by Pharaoh's daughter, who had come down to the Nile to bathe.

Moshe's sister fetched a Hebrew nurse to look after Moshe, who was his mother Yocheved, and later Moshe was brought to Pharaoh's daughter.

Moshe Rabbeinu

Moshe grew up in the palace of Pharaoh, but later was forced to flee Pharaoh and went to Midian. In Midian Moshe married Zipporah, the daughter of Yisro. Moshe was shepherding the sheep of his

17. Bereishis 46:27.

The great numbers that Avraham had brought to know Hashem (see above, p. 20) were not the first Jews but those who Avraham turned away from idol worship. The Jewish People are descended from Avraham Avinu himself and his offspring — the seventy who went down to Egypt. Other than the offspring of Avraham Avinu, only *gerei tzedek* (righteous converts) can be part of *klal Yisrael*.

18. Talmud: *Sotah* 12a.

19. Talmud: *Sotah* 12a.

father-in-law Yisro in the wilderness — when before him he saw a bush burning with fire, yet it was not consumed. Moshe turned aside to look at the bush, and from the bush Hashem called to him. Hashem said, “take off your shoes for the place upon which you are standing is holy ground.”²⁰ Then Hashem said: “I am the God of your father, the God of Avraham, the God of Yitzchak, the God of Yaakov... Now go to Pharaoh and you shall take My people the Children of Israel out of Egypt.”²¹ Moshe was to go to Pharaoh together with his brother Aharon to ask for the release of the Israelites.

Moshe and Aharon went to Pharaoh, but Pharaoh refused to let the Israelites go and instead increased their burden.

Through His servant Moshe, Hashem brought about the Ten Plagues in Egypt and revealed His Kingship over the entire world.

The Ten Plagues²²

1. **דם** (*dam*) — Blood: The Nile and all other water in Egypt turned to blood.
2. **צפרדע** (*tz'fardei'a*) — Frogs: Frogs were everywhere in Egypt.
3. **כינים** (*kinim*) — Lice: The dust in Egypt turned into lice, attacking man and beast.
4. **ערוב** (*arov*) — Wild Animals: Wild animals attacked people throughout Egypt.
5. **דבר** (*dever*) — Epidemic: An epidemic caused the death of livestock.
6. **שחין** (*shechin*) — Boils: Boils appeared on the bodies of people and livestock.
7. **ברד** (*barad*) — Hail: Hail destroyed men, beasts, and vegetation throughout Egypt.

20. Shemos 3:5.

21. Shemos 3:6–10.

22. Rabbi Yehudah made a mnemonic (memory device) to help remember the Ten Plagues: **דצי"ך עדי"ש באח"ב** — “*d'tzach adash b'achab*,” which in Hebrew consists of the first letter of each plague (Pesach Haggadah).

8. **ארבה** (*arbeh*) — Locusts: Locusts ate all the plants and trees in Egypt.

9. **חשך** (*choshech*) — Darkness: There was thick darkness over Egypt, except in the region where the Israelites lived.

10. **בכורות** (*bechoros*) — Death of the Firstborn.

On the night of the tenth and final plague, Hashem passed through Egypt, killing all firstborn males of man and animal alike, except in the houses where the Israelites had marked their doorposts and beams with blood. This was the blood of the Pesach sacrifice — a lamb or young goat — which the Israelites had slaughtered that afternoon and which they had eaten that night in great haste, ready to leave.

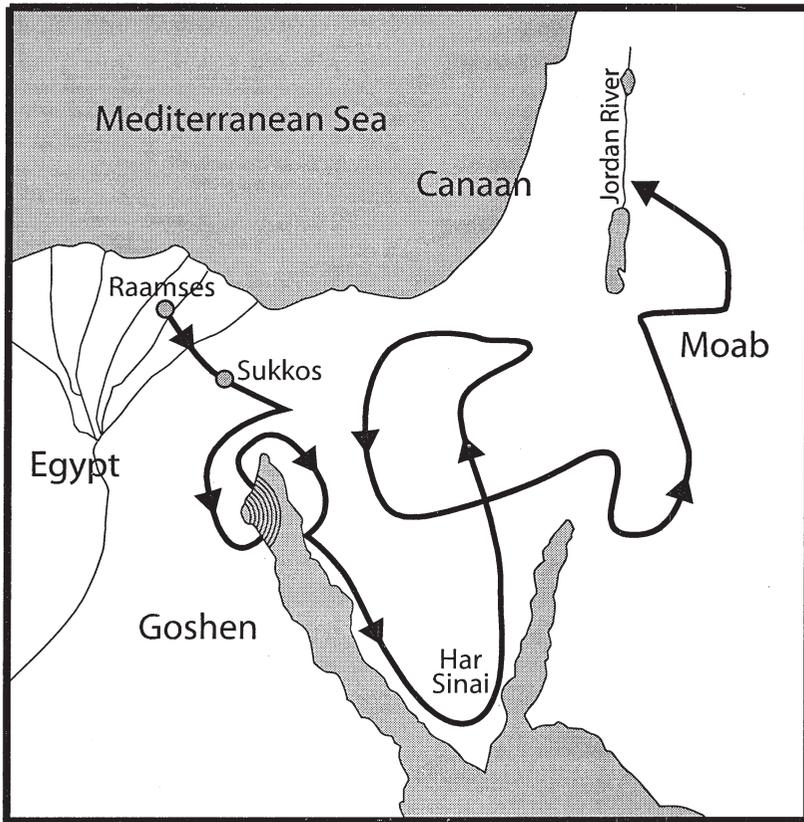
There was a huge cry all over Egypt. Pharaoh told Moshe and the Israelites to leave. The Israelites asked for gold and silver from the Egyptians as Moshe had instructed them. Hashem gave the Israelites favor in the eyes of the Egyptians, who gave them what they requested, and they drained Egypt of its wealth. In their haste, the Israelites did not have time to let their dough rise before they left. Their dough baked into unleavened bread called “matzos,” which they had also eaten as slaves in Egypt. This was the night of the tenth and final plague in Egypt — the first seder night in the history of the Jewish people.

The Israelites left Egypt in the month of Nissan, in the year 2448. Although an exile of 400 years had been prophesied, after only 210 years Hashem had brought His people out of Egypt. According to one opinion, the exile came to an end earlier because the degree of the suffering of the Israelites was so great. According to another opinion, the 400-year exile began not when *klal Yisrael* came down to Egypt, but earlier, at the birth of Yitzchak Avinu.²³

The Israelites left Egypt, heading from Raamses to Sukkos. There were six hundred thousand men, besides their families, and a huge amount of livestock.²⁴

23. Shemos 12:40 (Rashi).

24. Shemos 12:37–38.



The Route of the Exodus

The Exodus

Moshe led the Israelites out of Egypt on the morning of 15 Nissan in the year 2448, over 3,300 years ago. Hashem went before them by day in a pillar of cloud, and by night in a pillar of fire, so that they could travel by day and night.²⁵

One week after the start of the Exodus, the Israelites reached the Yam Suf, the Red Sea. The Egyptian army gave chase and overtook them when they were encamped by the sea — and the Children of Israel cried out to Hashem.

25. Shemos 13:21.

The angel of Hashem who had been in front of the Israelites moved and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud also moved from in front of them and went behind them. It came between the camp of Egypt and the camp of Israel and one did not draw near the other all the night.

Hashem told Moshe: “Lift up your staff and stretch out your arm over the sea” (Shemos 14:16).

Moshe stretched his hand out over the sea and Hashem split the sea. The Children of Israel came within the sea on dry land, and the water was a wall for them, on their right and on their left. Egypt pursued and came after them — every horse of Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen — into the sea.

Towards morning, Hashem looked down at the Egyptians and caused panic amongst them, making them drive with difficulty in the sea. Then Hashem said to Moshe, “Stretch out your hand over the sea, and the waters shall go back upon Egypt, upon its chariots, and upon its horsemen” (Shemos 14:26). Moshe raised his hand over the sea, and the waters returned to normal, and the Egyptian army that gave chase was drowned in the sea — there remained not one of them.

“On that day, Hashem saved the Israelites from the hand of Egypt, and the Israelites saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. Israel saw the great hand that Hashem had inflicted against Egypt, and the people feared Hashem, and they had faith in Hashem and in His servant Moshe” (Shemos 14:30–31).

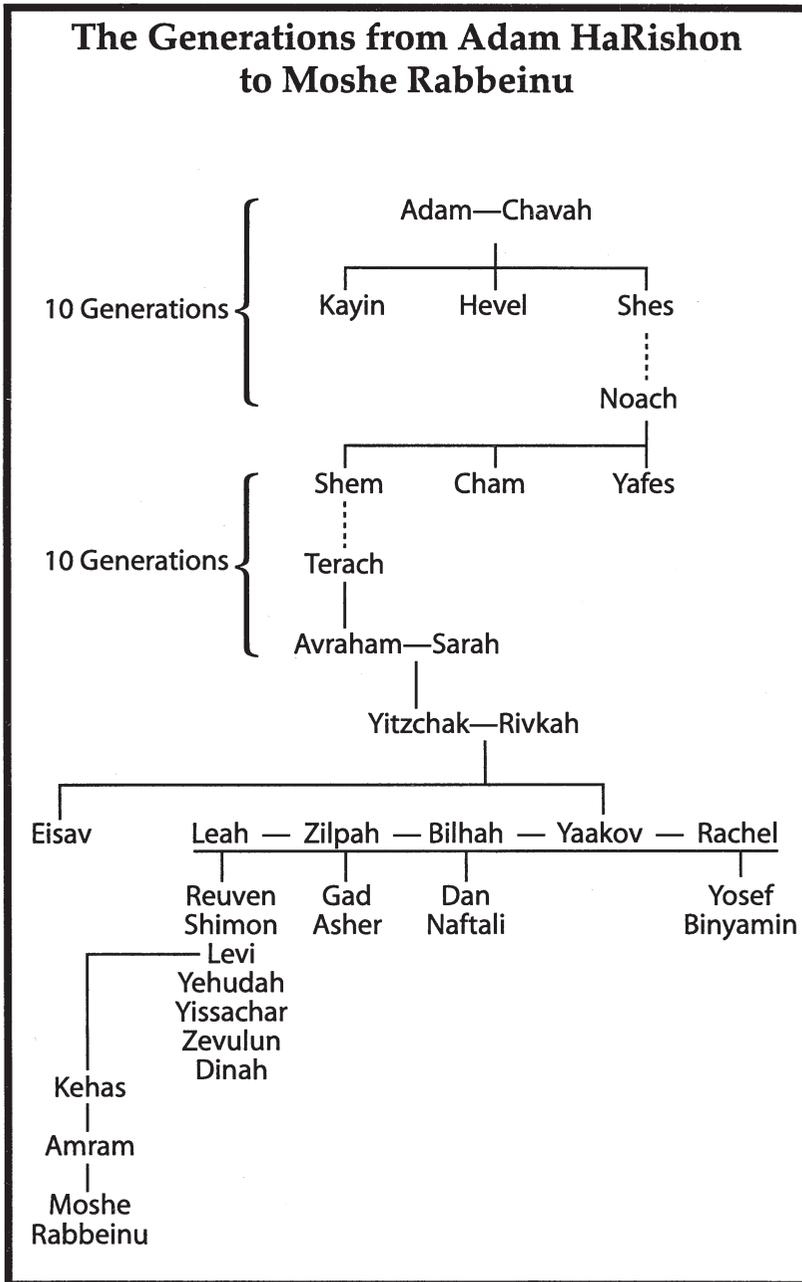
Then Moshe and the Israelites sang a great song of praise to Hashem for the miracle at the sea. This song is called “The Song of the Sea” — שירת הים (Shemos 15:1–19).²⁶

Afterwards, Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Moshe and Aharon, and all the women also sang a song of praise to Hashem.²⁷

Five weeks after the crossing of the Red Sea, the Israelites

26. According to one opinion, Moshe led the song and the people answered the same after him. According to another opinion Moshe and *khal Yisrael* all sang together (Talmud: *Sotah* 30b).

27. The revelation of Hashem was so great that a handmaiden saw at the sea what even the prophets could not see (Shemos 15:2 [Rashi]; *Mechilta, parshas HaShirah* 3).



reached Har Sinai in the Sinai desert. This was on 1 Sivan. On 6 Sivan, in Divine Revelation, Hashem declared the *Aseres HaDibros* — the Ten Commandments — before the entire Jewish people. The following day, Moshe ascended Har Sinai, and there Hashem taught him the entire Torah — the Written Torah and the Oral Torah.

After forty days and forty nights, Moshe descended from Har Sinai carrying the *luchos habris*, the Tablets of the Covenant. However, he found that in his absence the Israelites had made a golden calf, the *eigel hazahav*. Upon seeing the golden calf, Moshe cast the *luchos* from his hands.

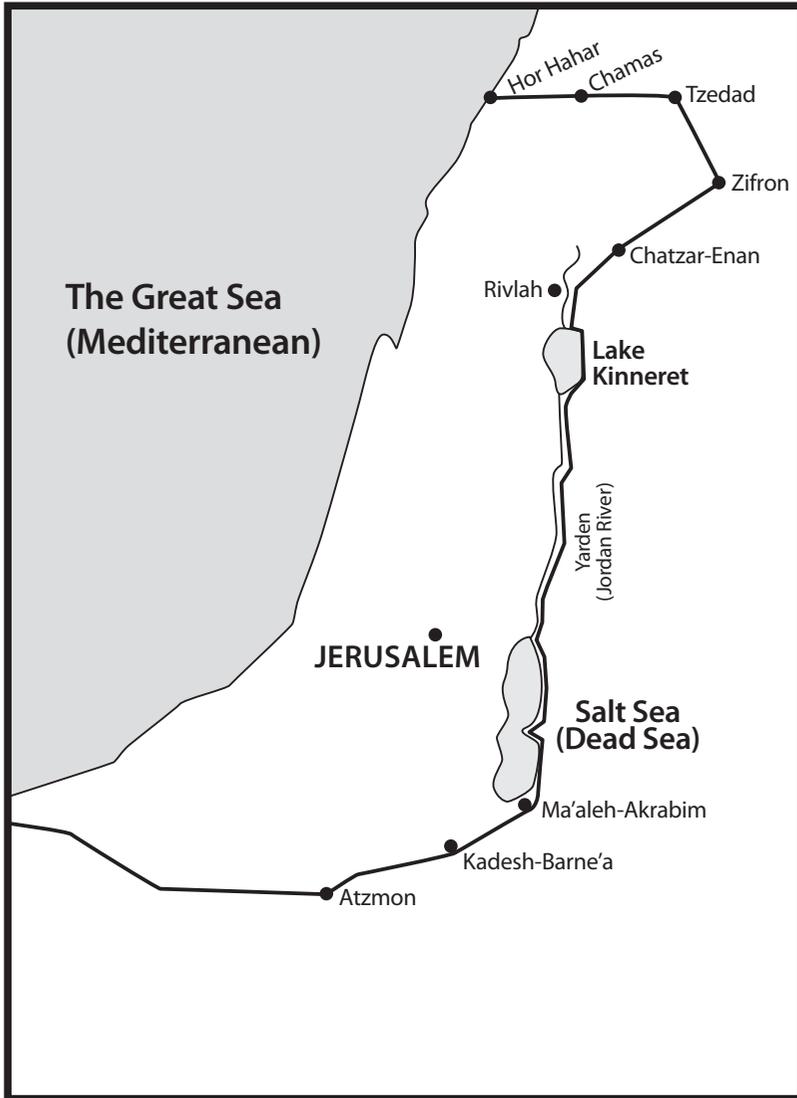
Moshe destroyed the idol and punished those involved in making it. Then he ascended Har Sinai again to pray for forgiveness for the Jewish people. Moshe descended from Har Sinai with new *luchos* on 10 Tishrei, which is Yom Kippur.

The Israelites built a home for the *luchos*: the golden *Aron* — Ark — which was kept at the center of the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle, or “Mishkan,” which the Israelites had been instructed to build, was to be the center of Divine worship during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness.²⁸

Moshe was not permitted to enter Eretz Yisrael (the Land of Israel), and at the end of the forty years, Moshe and Aharon were gathered to their people. Yehoshua became the leader of the Jewish people after Moshe, and he led a new generation of *b’nei Yisrael* across the River Jordan into the Promised Land.²⁹

28. The day of the erection of the Mishkan was a *simchah* before Hashem like the creation of heaven and earth (Talmud: *Megillah* 10b). On that day Israel was like a bride coming to the *chuppah* (Bemidbar 7:1 [Rashi]).

29. Yehoshua was the Divinely designated successor to Moshe Rabbeinu. Moshe’s face shone like the sun, whilst Yehoshua’s face shone like the moon (Bemidbar 27:20 [Rashi]).



**Borders of the Land of Israel
according to the Torah**
Parshas Masei – Bamidbar 34:1-12

3. Entry and Conquest of the Land. The First Beis HaMikdash.

Entry into Eretz Yisrael

Under the leadership of Yehoshua, the Land of Cana'an was conquered and divided among the Tribes of Israel, each Tribe receiving its own portion of the Land. Nine tribes and half of the tribe of Menasheh received their portion in Eretz Yisrael, and the remaining two and a half tribes received their land on the east bank of the River Jordan.³⁰

The Mishkan, which had been the center of Divine worship during the forty years of wandering in the wilderness, continued as the center of the Divine worship in Eretz Yisrael, at first in Gilgal, then in Shiloh, and later elsewhere in the land.

After the passing of Yehoshua, *klal Yisrael* was led by the Elders. This period was also known as the period of the Elders and Judges, as some of the Elders arose as Judges in the Land. There was no single national leader in *klal Yisrael* at this time as had been Moshe Rabbeinu and Yehoshua. Rather, *klal Yisrael* was led by the Judges, the authority of each Judge usually limited to his local geographic location, while still being accepted as a leader over the whole people.³¹

The Elders were succeeded by the *nevi'im* (prophets). A prophet was a person who received a message from Hashem, either in a dream or trance, to tell to his generation. In each generation there were many *nevi'im*, however only those prophecies that would be needed for future generations were retained and written down as the Books of the Prophets.³²

The *nevi'im* also served the purpose of transmitting Oral Torah through their generations and were responsible for anointing the kings of Israel.

30. It took seven years to conquer the Land of Israel, and a further seven years for the division of the Land amongst the Tribes.

31. This is the period described in Sefer Shoftim (the Book of Judges) and Megillas Rus (the Book of Ruth). See further, ch. 5, p. 115, 118.

32. Talmud: *Megillah* 14a. See ch. 5, p. 112, for the Books of the Prophets.

The prophet Shmuel anointed Sha'ul as the first king of Israel in the year 2880. At first, the reign of Sha'ul was successful. However, although Sha'ul was very righteous, he was later to prove unworthy of leadership, and Shmuel was instructed to anoint a new king to succeed him.³³

Dovid HaMelech — King David

Shmuel anointed Dovid (David) as king already during Sha'ul's lifetime, and following the passing of Sha'ul, the people gathered together to crown Dovid as king. Under Dovid HaMelech, preparations were made for the building of the Beis HaMikdash. However, Dovid was not permitted to undertake the actual construction since he had been a man of war.³⁴ Instead, the work was to be carried out by his son Shlomo HaMelech (King Solomon), the third king of Israel. Thus, under Shlomo HaMelech, the construction commenced, and the finest materials were brought from across the Land and from abroad.

The Beis HaMikdash took seven years to complete, until it was finally dedicated, in the year 2935, amidst great rejoicing. The *kohanim* (priests) began their service in the Beis HaMikdash, which succeeded the Mishkan as the center of Divine worship, in the holy city of Jerusalem.

This period under Shlomo HaMelech was the golden age of the Jewish kingdom. There was peace and prosperity across the land, and the kingdom of Israel stretched from the Euphrates in the north to the border of Egypt in the south.³⁵

33. Sha'ul lost the throne because he failed to completely annihilate Amalek.

34. Our Sages give us a deeper understanding why Dovid HaMelech could not be allowed to build the Beis HaMikdash. They explain that Dovid HaMelech was so great that had he built the Beis HaMikdash it would have lasted forever. However, Hashem saw that *klal Yisrael* would later stray from Torah, and because the Beis HaMikdash was not built by Dovid it would be possible to punish *klal Yisrael* by destroying the Beis HaMikdash instead of exacting punishment on *klal Yisrael* themselves (Midrash *Yalkut Shimoni*, Shmuel 145). The Beis HaMikdash nevertheless became known as the House of David because he had prepared the way for its building, as it is written, "*mizmor shir chanukas HaBais le Dovid*" (Midrash *Schochar Tov* on Tehillim 30:1).

35. Melachim I 5:1–5.

The passing of Shlomo HaMelech gave way to the rule of his son Rechavam. However, his succession saw the division of the kingdom into two parts — the northern “Kingdom of Israel,” made up of the land of ten tribes, and the southern “Kingdom of Yehudah,” made up of the land of Yehudah and Binyamin.³⁶

The southern kingdom remained faithful to Rechavam. However, the northern kingdom established its own capital, set up idols for worship, and followed a path that led to the moral and spiritual decline of the people. Eventually the northern kingdom was invaded and defeated by the Assyrians, and the ten tribes were led into exile.³⁷

4. Galus Bavel. The Second Beis HaMikdash.

The southern kingdom withstood the Assyrian Empire, but before long it was threatened by a new power — the empire of Babylon under King Nevuchadnetzar.³⁸

The Babylonian empire conquered the region, and the Holy Land fell into their hands. The Babylonians permitted Jews to remain in Eretz Yisrael, although they led many leading families away into exile in order to maintain control of the land.³⁹

After nine years of subjugation, a revolt broke out against Babylonian rule. The Babylonians sent their huge army against the Land, and Judea fell to them.

When the Babylonians reached Jerusalem, they laid siege to the holy city. After bitter warfare, the city fell into their hands. Finally the Babylonians came to the Beis HaMikdash, which they desecrated and destroyed. They set fire to the holy site on 9 Av 3338, and the fire

36. See chart “The Kings of Israel,” p. 121.

37. According to one opinion, individuals from the ten tribes returned to Eretz Yisrael before the destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash (Talmud: *Eruchin* 33a; *Tosafos “b’zman” Gittin* 36b). What happened to the remainder is unknown. The Jews of today are either Kohanim, Levi'im (both being of the tribe of Levi), or Yisraelim, who are descended from all the other tribes.

38. Nevuchadnetzar was so evil that during his reign laughter disappeared (Talmud: *Shabbos* 149b).

39. Melachim II 24:14.

continued to burn until the next day, the tenth of Av. Thousands of Jews were led off to Babylon, and holy vessels from the Beis HaMikdash were taken as spoils of war.

The Beis HaMikdash had stood for 410 years, but now the Jews were dispersed from the Holy Land, and the land became almost desolate.⁴⁰

The Babylonian empire was huge and wealthy, stretching from Egypt to the Persian Gulf. But eventually the Babylonian empire itself fell to the growing empire of Media-Persia. The Jews were still in exile when Babylon succumbed to the Medes and Persians, and so *galus Bavel* became *galus Paras-Madai*.⁴¹

The Miracle of Purim

The people of the time still remembered the daily miracles that had taken place in the Beis HaMikdash, and they feared the prophecies of the Jews. In particular, they feared the prophecy of Yirmiyah that after seventy years of exile, the Jews would return to Eretz Yisrael and the Beis HaMikdash would be rebuilt.⁴²

Achashveirosh, King of Persia, calculated that this period of seventy years would come to an end in the third year of his reign. When the time arrived without the fulfillment of the prophecy, he ordered that a huge feast be held.

Achashveirosh invited all his loyal subjects to this feast, where

40. King David wrote with prophetic vision about the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash and the exile to Babylon: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat, and also we wept when we remembered Zion" (Tehillim 137).

41. *Galus* mean "exile," either physical exile from Eretz Yisrael or spiritual exile, that is, being able to live in Eretz Yisrael but being unable to serve Hashem fully. At the end of the period of the First Beis HaMikdash the Jewish People were exiled from Eretz Yisrael by the Babylonians (*galus Bavel*), which became the Persian exile (*galus Paras-Madai*) after the defeat of Babylon by the Persians. Later, during the period of the Second Beis HaMikdash, *klal Yisrael* were in exile in Eretz Yisrael under the Greeks (*galus Yavan*), who allowed the Jews to remain in Eretz Yisrael although they issued harsh decrees against the Torah. Finally, at the end of the period of the Second Beis HaMikdash, *klal Yisrael* were exiled from Eretz Yisrael by the Romans (*galus Edom*) who destroyed the Beis HaMikdash and drove them from the Land.

42. *Yirmiyah* 29:10.

The Babylonian Exile ❶			
Seventy Years (3338-3408)			
KING	KINGDOM	YEARS OF RULE	COMMENT
Nevuchadnetzar	Babylon	3319-3363	Destroyed First Beis HaMikdash
Evvil Merodach	Babylon	3363-3386	Freed King Yehoyachin
Belshatzar	Babylon	3386-3389	Last King of Babylon
Daryavesh (Darius) the Mede	Media-Persia	3389-3390	Defeated Belshatzar
Koresh (Cyrus)	Media-Persia	3390-3393	Authorized rebuilding of Beis HaMikdash but later stopped during his reign
Achashveirosh	Media-Persia	3393-3407	Ruled at the time of Miracle of Purim
Daryavesh (Darius) the Persian	Media-Persia	3407-3442	Authorized completion of Beis HaMikdash

3320	3330	3340	3350	3360	3370	3380	3390	3400	3410	3420	3430
Destruction of the First Beis HaMikdash		Nevuchadnetzar		Evvil Merodach		Belshatzar		Darius the Mede		Koresh	
Darius the Persian		Evvil Merodach		Belshatzar		Darius the Mede		Koresh		Achashveirosh	
Authorization to complete the Second Beis HaMikdash		Evvil Merodach		Belshatzar		Darius the Mede		Koresh		Achashveirosh	
Seventy Years of Exile 3338-3408		Evvil Merodach		Belshatzar		Darius the Mede		Koresh		Achashveirosh	
Period of First Beis HaMikdash		Evvil Merodach		Belshatzar		Darius the Mede		Koresh		Achashveirosh	
Period of Second Beis HaMikdash		Evvil Merodach		Belshatzar		Darius the Mede		Koresh		Achashveirosh	

❶ Talmud: Megillah 11b - 12a (Rashi)

he brought out the holy vessels that had been taken from the Beis HaMikdash.⁴³

This feast marks the beginning of Megillas Esther (the Book of Esther), which relates how Haman plotted against the Jews of the Persian Empire, under whose rule most Jews lived at the time. The Jews were saved through the hand of Mordechai and Esther, and Haman and his sons were hanged on the gallows. Hashem “nullified his counsel and frustrated his intention and caused his design to fall on his own head, and they hanged him and his sons on the gallows.”⁴⁴

Three years later, when the period of the seventy years was indeed complete, the Jews returned to Eretz Yisrael with the express permission of the new Persian king, Darius, and the reconstruction of the Beis HaMikdash commenced. The prophecy of Yirmiyah had been fulfilled.

The Second Beis HaMikdash

The Second Beis HaMikdash was not of the same spiritual standing as the First Beis HaMikdash, for the *luchos* and certain holy vessels were no longer present.⁴⁵ Furthermore, at this time, our Sages prayed that idol worship be taken away from the Jewish people, and therefore *ru'ach hanevu'ah* — the spirit of prophecy — also disappeared, bringing to an end the period of *nevi'im* (prophets) of *klal Yisrael*.⁴⁶

At this time, the leadership of the Jewish people continued under the Men of the Great Assembly — the Anshei Knesses HaGedolah — who had led *klal Yisrael* since the latter part of *galus Bavel*.⁴⁷ These Sages built a foundation for *klal Yisrael* that would last through the generations. They determined which of the prophecies and holy writings of *klal Yisrael* would be retained for future

43. Achashveirosh was not of royal lineage; he elevated himself to the throne. He was evil from his beginning to his end (Esther 1:1 [*Rashi*]).

44. *Al HaNissim* prayer.

45. Talmud: *Yuma* 21b.

46. Talmud: *Yuma* 69b.

47. At the beginning of the Babylonian exile, Doniel (Daniel) was one of the leaders of *klal Yisrael* (see *Sefer Doniel*, p. 118). Towards the end of the Babylonian exile *klal Yisrael* was led by Ezra HaSofer, who was head of the Anshei Knesses HaGedolah.

generations. These are known as the Books of the Prophets and the Holy Writings.⁴⁸ The Anshei Knesses HaGedolah also set the text and order of our prayers. In addition, they set many *seyagim* (fences) around the Torah to protect the Torah, and they determined the public Torah reading for each occasion during the year.

The Fall of the Persian Empire

The period of stability during the reign of King Darius of Persia did not last, for the continent was conquered by a new empire emerging from Greece under Alexander the Great.⁴⁹

Alexander permitted freedom of worship in Eretz Yisrael, and Greek rule was at first benevolent. Furthermore, Alexander encouraged Jews to settle throughout his empire, promising equality and opportunity, for wherever Jews settled, they created economic wealth. Jews came and settled throughout his empire, especially in Alexandria, Egypt, which became a great trading city and the largest Jewish settlement outside of Eretz Yisrael. However, some Jews were attracted by the Greek way of life, and Greek culture, or Hellenism, began to make inroads into Jewish life.

With the death of Alexander, his empire was divided between his three generals, and in Judea a new ruler came to power. The new ruler was called Antiochus Epiphanes (the Madman) by his own people. Antiochus was determined to force Greek culture on the Jews, and on pain of death, he forbade many Jewish practices. He desecrated the Beis HaMikdash and erected a statue of a Greek god there, and throughout the land, Jews were forced to bow down to pagan idols.

Those Jews who were determined to continue the Jewish way of life fled to mountain caves in the desert, led by the priestly family of Chashmonai, the Hasmoneans. The Greek army was huge and powerful, but the Jews, under Yehudah HaMaccabee, defeated the Greeks in a miraculous victory and drove them from the Land. Hashem delivered "the many into the hands of the few, the impure into the

48. See ch. 5, p. 112.

49. In his conquest of the region Alexander came to Jerusalem. He spared the holy city in the merit of the Kohen Gadol (Talmud: *Yuma* 69a).

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hands of the pure, the wicked into the hands of the righteous, the Greeks into the hands of the diligent students of Your Torah.”⁵⁰

Following the recapture of Judea, the Jews came to the Beis HaMikdash and cleansed and purified the Holy Site. On the twenty-fifth of Kislev they rekindled the lights of the Menorah of the Beis HaMikdash. However, they were only able to find one jar of oil with the seal of the *kohen gadol* still intact. The quantity was sufficient to last for only one day, but instead lasted for eight days.

Chanukah commemorates the miracles of that time; our Sages established these eight days of Chanukah as days of praise and thanksgiving to Hashem.⁵¹

Chanukah means “dedication,” as it was the time when the Beis HaMikdash was rededicated to the service of Hashem.

5. Galus Edom

The Maccabean era lasted for seventy years under the rule of the Hasmonean princes, who held Judea together and restored the Torah way of life.

However, the period of peace was not to last, for the growing empire of Rome began to make inroads into the region. The Romans finally dominated the region, bringing the Greek era to a close.

Judea came under the rule of Rome in 3697, when Pompeii captured the land, killing thousands and placing a heavy tax burden on the people. The Romans ruled through their own appointed king and later through procurators, whose usual conduct was to act with little sympathy for the people.

At first, despite the oppression, the Jews were permitted freedom of worship, and the service in the Beis HaMikdash continued. However, persecution intensified and life became increasingly difficult under Roman rule. This led to the growth of the mood of rebellion against Rome, until eventually a major revolt broke out led by the “Zealots.” The Zealots attacked the Roman garrisons across the Land, defeating them in many places and eventually taking control of

50. *Al HaNissim* prayer.

51. Talmud: *Shabbos* 21b.

Jerusalem. Thus they drove the Romans from Judea.

Emperor Nero sent his most able general, Vespasian, to quell the revolt. By this time the Romans knew how to deal with guerilla warfare, and they laid siege to the zealot strongholds throughout the Land. The stronghold of the Galilee was the first to fall to the Romans, followed by the fall of other strongholds. Then the Romans turned to Jerusalem and laid siege to the holy city.

The Romans had a sophisticated army, but the city was well fortified and supplied with provisions and was able to hold out against siege. The Romans planned to make an agreement with the Jews, but it became clear that internal strife within the city was weakening the ability of the defenders to resist. The Romans resolved to continue the siege.

The sage Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai saw that the situation was becoming hopeless and decided to salvage what he could out of the impending destruction. He had a rumor spread that he had become ill, and later that he had passed away. Thus his students were permitted to carry him out of the city in a coffin for burial.

Once out of the city, Rabbi Yochanan made his way to Vespasian and greeted him as Emperor of Rome. The general was surprised to be greeted this way, but while they were together, a messenger arrived to tell him that he had indeed been elected emperor following the death of Nero. Vespasian was impressed by the great sage and granted him three requests. Rabbi Yochanan asked that the Romans spare the town of Yavneh and its Sages; that the royal lineage (descending from Hillel) should be spared; and that a physician heal the old sage Rabbi Tzadok, who had fasted for forty years in his attempt to save Jerusalem.⁵²

Vespasian returned to Rome as emperor, leaving his son Titus to take over the siege of Jerusalem.

The Romans continued the siege in brutal warfare. Eventually, on 17 Tammuz 3828, they breached the outer walls of the city. Inside Jerusalem, thousands were dying, not only through warfare but also due

52. Talmud: *Gittin* 56b.

Rabbi Yochanan did not ask for Jerusalem itself to be spared because it would have been refused (*Rashi ad loc*).

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to hunger, as internal conflict had led to the depletion of food stocks.

Eventually the inner walls of Jerusalem also fell. The Romans were now able to make their way to the Beis HaMikdash. They desecrated and destroyed the Holy Site, and on 9 Av 3828,⁵³ they set the Beis HaMikdash on fire. The fire continued to burn until the next day, the tenth of Av. It had been three weeks since the Romans had first breached the walls of the city.⁵⁴

Approximately one million Jews lost their lives during the siege of Jerusalem, and in addition tens of thousands were led to Rome as slaves. Holy vessels from the Beis HaMikdash were taken to Rome as spoils of war, and the procession that entered Rome was recorded on the Arch of Titus, built to commemorate the victory. In Rome, Vespasian minted coins marked with the words "*Judea Capta*."

The Romans appointed four generals to destroy the four walls of the Beis HaMikdash, but they were unable to destroy the Western Wall.⁵⁵

In 3831, three years after the fall of Jerusalem, one of the last areas of resistance was crushed at the mountain fortress of Masada, a natural desert fortress which had been fortified by Herod as his winter palace.⁵⁶

Now the Romans set out to force Jews to adopt Roman religion and culture and issued harsh decrees against them. They forbade many Jewish practices, until, eventually, sixty-two years after the fall of Jerusalem, a revolt broke out led by Bar Kochba and under the spiritual leadership of Rabbi Akiva. Under Bar Kochba, the Roman legions were driven from the land.

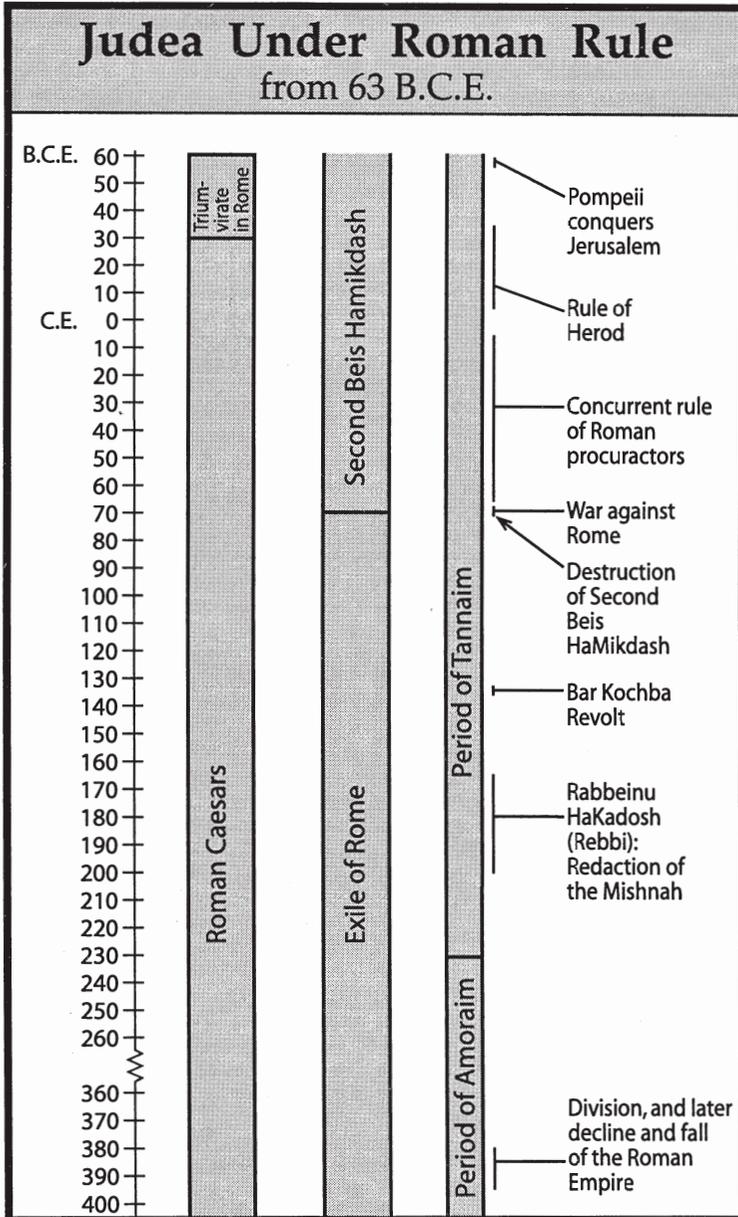
Emperor Hadrian summoned Julius Severus from Britain to

53. Corresponding to the year 70 C.E.

54. This three-week period is marked each year by three weeks of mourning in the Jewish calendar, called "the Three Weeks."

55. The Beis HaMikdash is called the בית עולמים — the Everlasting House — because the *Shechinah* (Divine Presence) rests there. After the destruction of the Second Beis HaMikdash, the *Shechinah* withdrew to the Western Wall, and so it was decreed in *Shamayim* that it would never be destroyed (*Midrash Rabbah, Eichah* 1:31).

56. Herod had been the Roman-appointed king over Judea. He was known as Herod the Great because he restored the Beis HaMikdash and built other important buildings in Eretz Yisrael. However, his reign was a rule of terror and he killed many Jewish Sages (Talmud: *Bava Basra* 3b).



B.C.E = Before the Common Era
C.E = Common Era

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retake Judea, and Severus brought with him the Roman legions stationed in Britain. Severus isolated the rebels, cut off their supplies, and starved them out. Despite heavy losses, the Romans defeated Bar Kochba at Betar in 3893. The defeat at Betar was the final defeat in the Bar Kochba revolt.

The revolt of Bar Kochba had lasted three and half years and cost six hundred thousand lives, and in the end, Judea had become almost a desert.

In the years that followed the revolt, many of the greatest Jewish Sages were captured and cruelly murdered by the Romans. The most prominent of these Sages are known as the “*aseres harugei malchus*,” the ten martyrs slain by the Romans.⁵⁷

Jews were no longer allowed into Jerusalem, and a temple to a Roman god was erected where the Beis HaMikdash once stood. Many Jews left the Holy Land for communities in Babylon and around the Mediterranean, which had developed since the time of the first Beis HaMikdash.

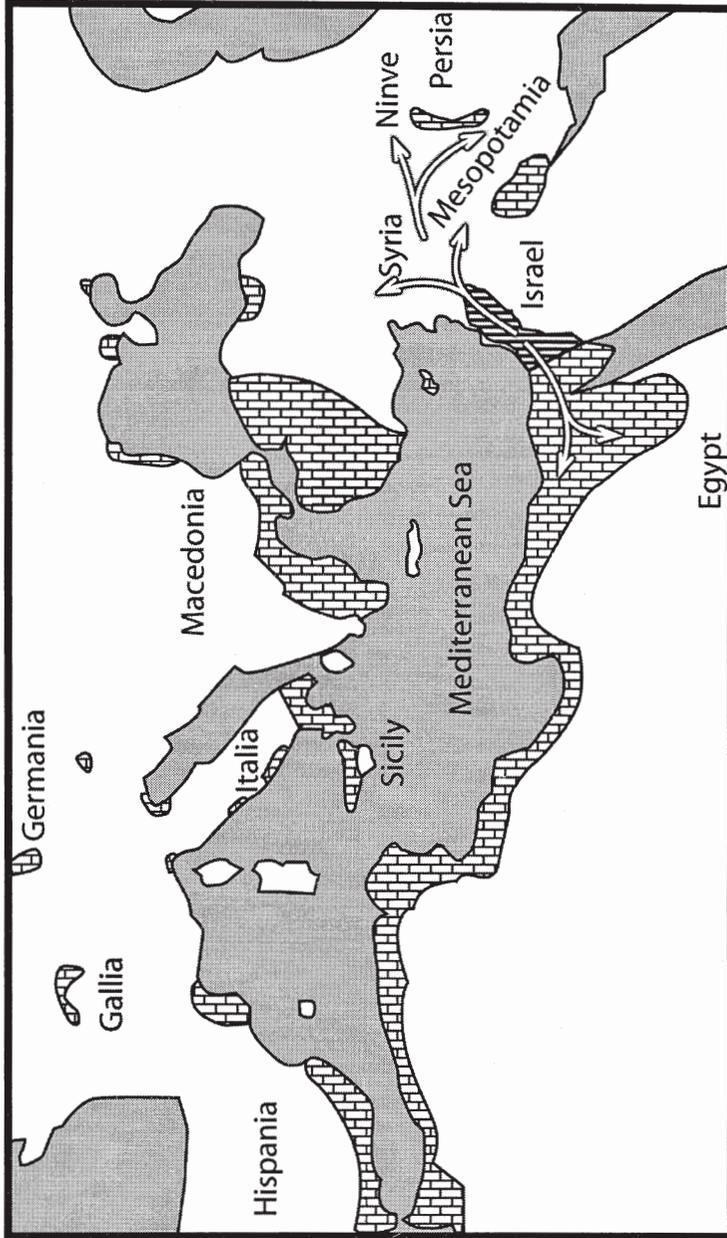


As this period of exile continued, the Roman Empire continued to grow stronger and stronger, and the Jews became dispersed across many lands, under greater foreign influence than ever before. The quality of learning in *klal Yisrael* declined, and the Sages feared for the continued transmission of Torah.⁵⁸

At this time, the Jewish people were led by Rabbi Yehudah

57. *Kinnos* for Tishah B'Av: *Kinnah* 21.

58. Rambam: Introduction to *Mishnah Torah*.



Areas of Jewish Settlement

From the time of the First Beis HaMikdash until three hundred years after the Second Beis HaMikdash

HaNasi, or Rebbi, as he was known. Rebbi was both the spiritual leader of the Jewish people and the leader of the Jewish state vis à vis the Roman Empire. Together with the Sages of his generation, Rebbi set out to compile in writing a framework of Oral Torah to serve as a foundation for future generations. Although it was forbidden to write down Oral Torah, the Sages acted on the basis of the rule ‘עַתָּה לַעֲשׂוֹת לַה’ — “Time to act for Hashem” (Tehillim 119:126).

This compilation was the work of a lifetime for Rebbi and his Sages, and it became known as the Mishnah, meaning “a teaching.” Rebbi and his Sages, who were the last of the generations called “Tannaim,” had written down publicly, for the first time, a framework and foundation on which Oral Torah would rest.

In the years that followed the sealing of the Mishnah, great yeshivos were established in Babylon by the students of Rebbi, who were the first of the generations of Sages called the “Amoraim.” In Eretz Yisrael, the population continued to decline because of the difficulty of life under Roman rule, and by the time the last communities had to leave the Land, there were already flourishing communities in Babylon.

About two hundred and fifty years after the sealing of the Mishnah, Ravina and Rav Ashi, the last of the Amoraim, began the task of collating and editing all the discussions of the Amoraim, which had been passed down through the generations before them.

Ravina and Rav Ashi were the great *roshei yeshivah* of their generation, and this compilation, too, was the work of a lifetime for them and their students. This work became known as “*Talmud Bavli*,” or simply as “the Talmud,” the central pillar of Jewish learning.

In Eretz Yisrael, too, a Talmud had been compiled, by the Sages of Eretz Yisrael, called *Talmud Yerushalmi*.

For another three hundred years after the destruction of the Second Beis HaMikdash, the Roman Empire continued to expand, until it was divided into two halves: the Western Empire in the west and the Byzantine Empire in the east. The Byzantine Empire became dominated by Muslim culture, and the Western Empire became divided among European tribes whose territory later emerged as independent kingdoms, and eventually the nation states of today.

Across Europe are architectural remains from the period 2,000

years ago when Rome rose to dominate Europe.

The Last Twelve Hundred Years

About twelve hundred years ago Jews began to migrate up from the Mediterranean lands, north-eastward through Europe. They fled persecution, seeking security and opportunity elsewhere. Those Jews who remained in the Mediterranean and Eastern lands became known as Sephardi (meaning Spanish) Jews, although by no means did all Sephardi Jews live in Spain. Those who migrated up through Europe became known as Ashkenazi (meaning German) Jews, although the largest communities of Ashkenazi Jews would later be further east, particularly in Poland and Russia.

Thus, over a period of hundreds of years, Ashkenazi Jews migrated up through Europe, building communities wherever they settled, eventually absorbing German as their language and taking it with them as Yiddish into new lands as they migrated.

By the end of the sixteenth century, there were large areas of Jewish settlement in Poland. Jews were encouraged to come and settle in Poland. The Polish aristocracy wanted Jews to develop Poland's economy and offered them freedom of religion and security. The Jews came, and these lands became areas of great Jewish settlement and learning, the beginning of Jewish settlement in Eastern Europe that would last for five hundred years.

Although this had been a period of great productivity in Jewish life, no community was long safe from persecution, and in almost every generation Jews were forced to flee their homes. In particular, the Crusades from 1096 onwards devastated Jewish communities, and there were pogroms and expulsions almost everywhere in Europe.⁵⁹

Between the years 1347–1350, the Jewish communities of

59. The Crusades were "Holy Wars," called to liberate the Holy Land from Arab hands. The Crusaders made up massive hordes which rampaged through Europe on their way to the Holy Land, devastating Jewish communities and destroying many altogether.

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Europe also suffered in the wake of the Black Death. The Black Death was a plague transmitted on board merchant ships from Asia, which in the space of a few years swept Europe, killing a third of Europe's inhabitants. Jews survived the plague better than others and were blamed for causing it, sparking pogroms across Europe.

The Jews of Europe were also to suffer at the hands of the Cossacks under Bogdan Chmielnicki. In 1648 the Cossacks were united under Chmielnicki, and for nearly the next ten years they ravaged Eastern Europe, devastating Jewish communities. These massacres became known as the massacres of *Tach veTat*.⁶⁰

Shortly after the end of the Chmielnicki massacres there appeared a man amongst *klal Yisrael* who proclaimed himself to be the Mashiach. This man was called Shabbetai Tzvi. Shabbetai Tzvi was a gifted, charismatic person who in this period of turmoil convinced many that he was indeed Mashiach. When he was eventually exposed, there was dismay in many parts of the Jewish world.

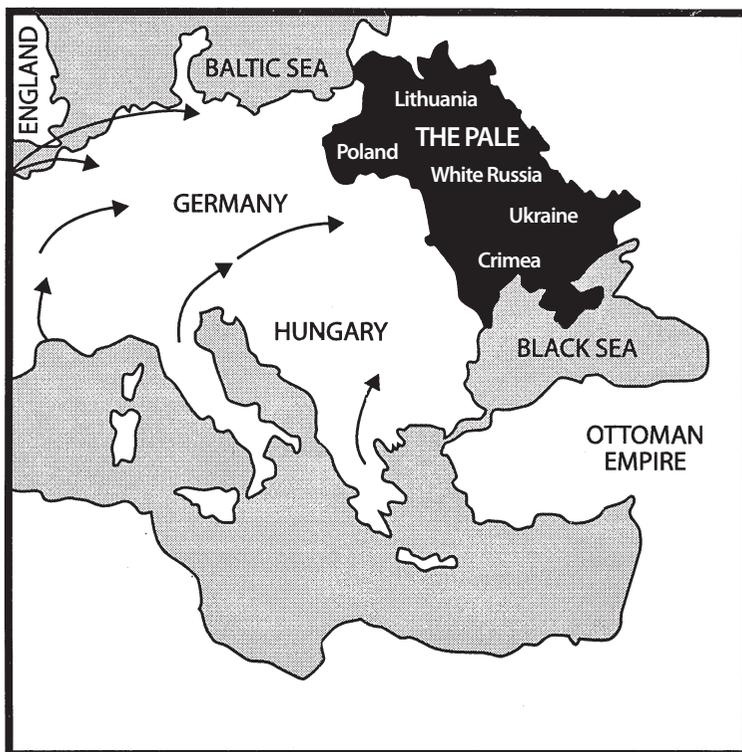
However, in the year 1698, a new light came into the Jewish world. He was Yisrael ben Eliezer, who became known as the Ba'al Shem Tov, the "Master of the Good Name." Even as a young man, the Ba'al Shem Tov was known as a healer and holy man, and as he crossed the provinces of Poland and the Ukraine he began to draw many followers. The followers of the Ba'al Shem Tov became known as Chassidim, meaning "pious ones." The offspring and *talmidim* of the Ba'al Shem Tov included many great scholars who were to become founders of chassidic dynasties across Eastern Europe, particularly Poland, the Ukraine, and Hungary.⁶¹

By the time the Ba'al Shem Tov passed away on Shavuot 1760, he had sown the seeds of a revitalization of much of Eastern European Jewry.

In Eastern Europe the lives of Jews were simple. Jews lived in *shtetlach*, small impoverished towns, where they earned their living as artisans and traders. Jews were not forced to live in these areas, but where Jews lived, the towns were predominantly Jewish. In Russia,

60. In Hebrew, the letters תח (*tach*) and תט (*tat*) have the numerical values 408 and 409 respectively, meaning the years 5408 and 5409. These correspond to the years 1648–1649 in the secular calendar.

Migration of Ashkenazi Jews over the last twelve hundred years



Most Russian Jews were forced to live in the Pale of Settlement. Between 1835-1914 over four million Jews lived there.

61. One of the grandsons of the Ba'al Shem Tov was Rabbi Baruch of Mezibuzh and another of his grandsons was Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, the founder of Breslov Chassidim. The principal pupil of the Ba'al Shem Tov was Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezeritch, known as the Maggid of Mezeritch. The Maggid of Mezeritch reared the next generation of the leaders of Chassidism, including the brothers Rabbi Pinchas HaLevi Horovitz and Rabbi Shmelke of Nicholsburg; Rabbi Aharon Perlow of Karlin; the brothers Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk and Rabbi Zusia of Hanipoli; Rabbi Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl; Rabbi Abraham of Kalisk; Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev; Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liady, founder of Chabad Chassidus; Rabbi Yisroel of Kozhnitz; and Rabbi Avraham Yehoshua Heschel of Apt. These great leaders, their sons, and *talmidim* firmly established Chassidus across Eastern European Jewry.

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however, under the last czars, Jews were restricted to living within the Pale of Settlement, along the western border of Russia. Under the last czars, too, there was a drift to the larger towns within “the Pale.”

In the countries in Western Europe, however, the pattern of life was different. These lands were comparatively wealthy, and in Germany in particular, society was more organized and centered in towns.

The French Revolution in 1789 brought changes in society, initially in France and then gradually in other parts of Europe, breaking down the previous structure of society.⁶² In addition, the Industrial Revolution, which started moving through Europe from the west about two hundred years ago, brought with it changes in the lives of the people of Europe. Great industrial and commercial centers began to develop, and people were attracted away from the countryside to the towns.

These changes in society brought with them the movements of emancipation that swept Western Europe. For the Jews of these lands, barriers came down between Jew and gentile, and Jews became involved in wider society.

These changes, however, took longer to reach Eastern Europe, and there Jewish life was more likely to remain unchanged.

During this period of Ashkenazi migration up through Europe, great communities had also developed in Sephardi lands. In these Mediterranean lands, Spain had become the crown of the Sephardi world. There were also important Sephardi communities around the Mediterranean, in Italy, Turkey, and Arab North African lands. Sephardi communities had also developed as far as India and Asia.

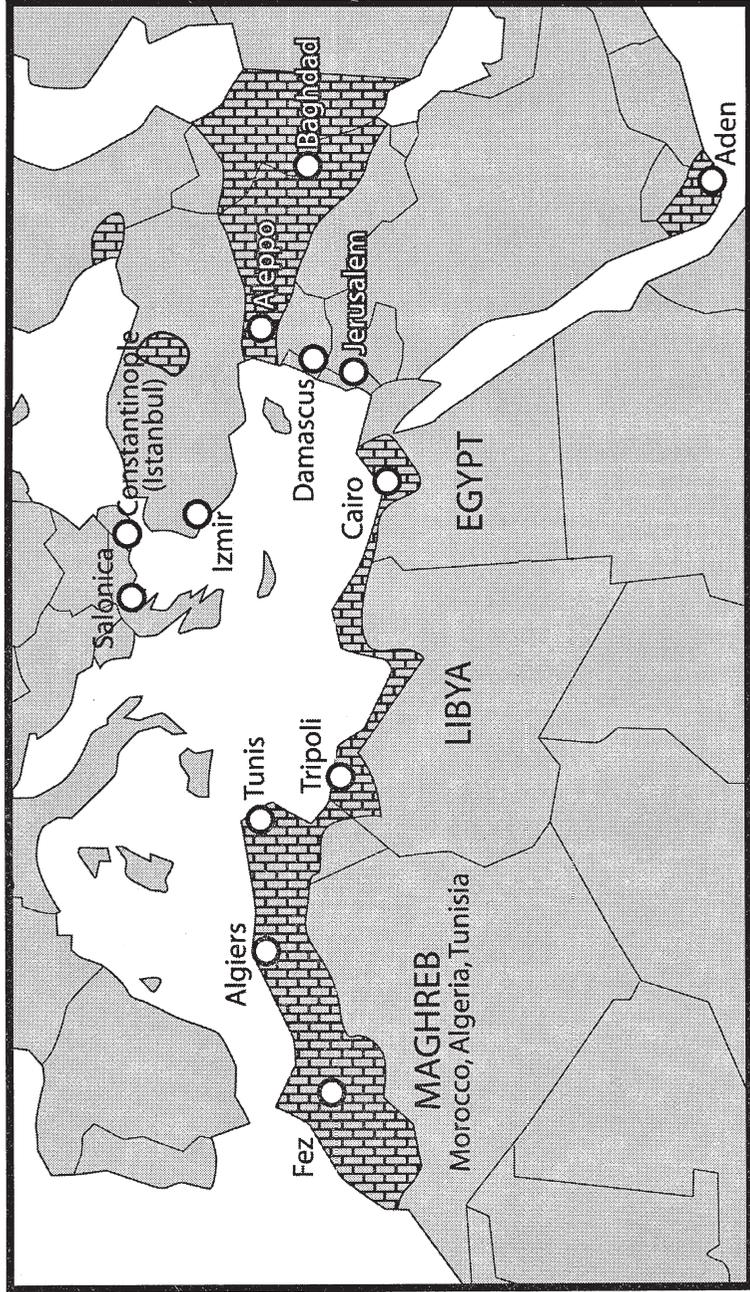
In Spain, however, in 1479, the individual kingdoms became united under Ferdinand and Isabella, and in 1492 they issued a decree expelling all Jews from Spain.⁶³ The Expulsion brought to an

62. A decade after the French Revolution, a new ruler came to power in France called Napoleon Bonaparte, who brought the ideas of the Revolution with him in his march across Europe.

63. One of the leaders of Spanish Jewry at the time of the Expulsion was Rabbi Don Yitzchak Abarbanel. Biography p. 181.

Jewish Population in Moslem Countries—1900

KEY:  Areas of widespread Jewish Settlement



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end the glorious era of Spanish Jewry, and Spanish Jews were forced to flee to wherever they could find refuge. Their distinguished communities disappeared, but they transplanted their learning and culture onto new soil, building up important communities in North Africa, the Ottoman Empire, Italy, and Holland.⁶⁴

The Last One Hundred Years

Between the years 1880–1939, there was a huge emigration of Jews from Europe. At first, Jews fled from Eastern Europe, driven by pogroms and persecution under the czars. During this period, over two million Jews left just from the Pale of Settlement alone.⁶⁵ Jews went to North America, South America, Great Britain, South Africa, Eretz Yisrael and to other lands, escaping persecution and building new communities where they settled.

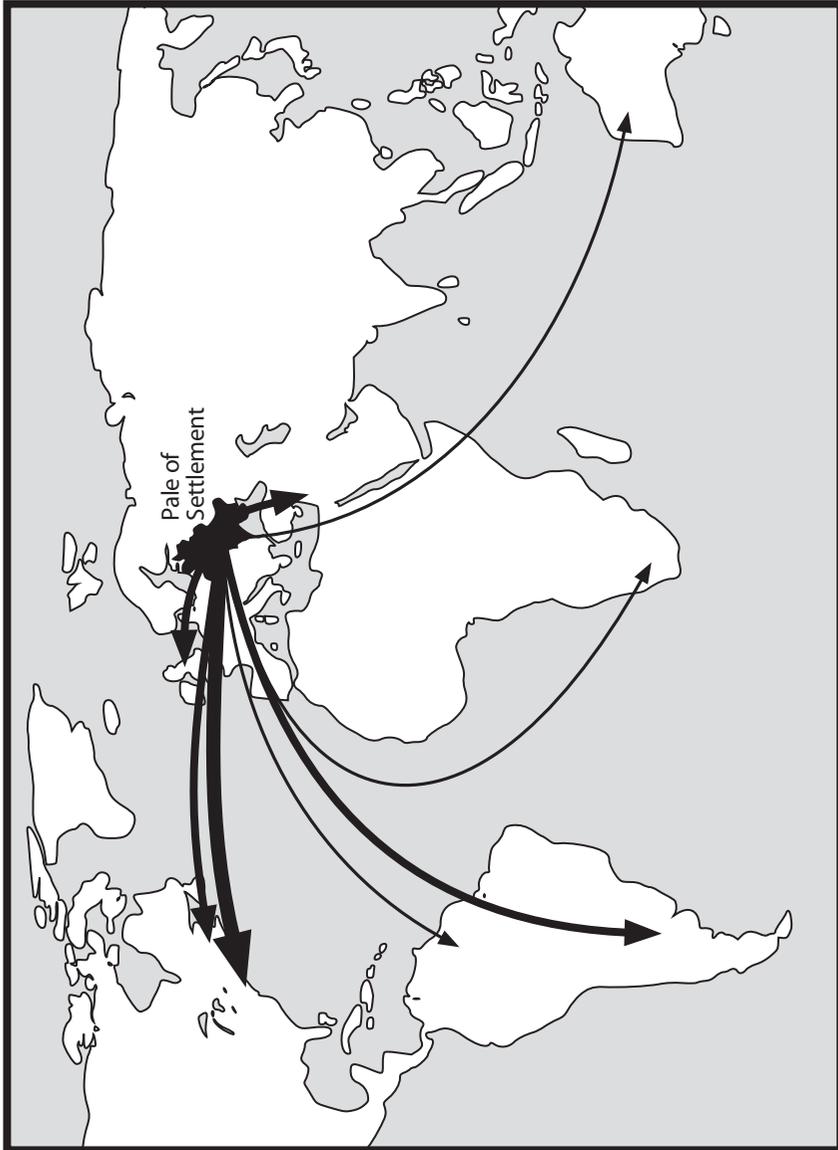
The First World War, 1914–1918, although not aimed directly at Jews, caused great suffering amongst Jews. Many Jewish communities were situated in areas of warfare, and, in addition to the difficulties of wartime, Jewish communities were dislocated, causing the breakdown of Jewish communal life.⁶⁶ The First World War was also to lay the foundation of greater destruction.

In 1933 a dictator came to power in Germany who was openly against the Jews, and who embarked immediately upon the persecution of German Jewry. Now Jews began to flee from central

64. Jews first came to Spain after the destruction of the First Beis HaMikdash over two thousand years ago, and Spanish Jews were to achieve great heights of spiritual and material wealth that became known as the “Golden Age of Spanish Jewry.” However, as persecution set in and became intense, some Spanish Jews were driven to outwardly give up their lives as Jews, although continuing to practice Judaism in secret. These Jews, who became known as Marranos, were ruthlessly pursued by the Inquisition, a tribunal set up in Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella to seek out such “insincere converts.” Finally, Ferdinand and Isabella issued a decree expelling all Jews from Spain, giving them three months in which to leave, a period which ended on 9 Av 1492.

65. Antisemitism was deeply embedded in Russia under the czars, and during the 1880s and 1890s, and again between 1903 and 1906, waves of pogroms swept Russian Jewry.

66. Jews were also enlisted into the armies of each side, costing many lives.



Migration of Ashkenazi Jews 1880-1939

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Europe. Finally, they would flee to wherever they could find a place that would take them. Of those who remained, few survived.

On the night of November 9, 1938, Germany launched a massive attack against the Jews. Hundreds of synagogues, Jewish homes and businesses across Germany were destroyed, in a night that became known as *Kristallnacht*, the “Night of Broken Glass.” This was only a sign of what was to come.

On September 1, 1939,⁶⁷ Germany invaded Poland, bringing upon the world the Second World War. Simultaneously, Germany waged another war, against the Jews, at first against the Jews of Poland and then against the Jews in all the lands of occupation, in the holocaust of European Jewry. The Holocaust was the greatest loss of Jewish life since the time of the Second Beis HaMikdash, which brought to an end Jewish life in most of Europe.⁶⁸

After the war, as beforehand, in the Soviet Union and neighboring lands, Jews continued to be persecuted — spiritually far more than physically, with the practice of Judaism a punishable offense — until eventually the fall of the Soviet Union brought new freedoms and the doors opened to emigration.

In 1947, the United Nations voted in favor of the “Partition Plan,” the partition of Palestine into two parts, Jewish and Arab. The following year, in May 1948, the State of Israel was declared. Immediately, Arab armies surrounding its borders attacked, prompting Israel’s War of Independence, the first of an ongoing series of conflicts in the Arab-Israeli dispute.⁶⁹

For the Jews of Arab lands over this period, the intense anti-semitism of Europe remained distant, although even here Jews were persecuted and segregated from the rest of society. In recent

67. Corresponding to Friday, 17 Ellul, 5699, *erev Shabbos Parshas Ki Savo*.

68. Certain names were to become synonymous with Jews for mass murder, death and destruction: Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Belzec, Chelmno, Sobibor, Majdanek, Bergen-Belsen, Mauthausen, Ravensbruck, Dachau, Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald, and many more.

69. Other than the War of Independence, 1948–9, the Arab-Israeli conflict includes the Sinai Campaign, 1956; the Six Day War, 1967; the War of Attrition, 1969–70; the Yom Kippur War, 1973; the First Lebanon War, 1982; the Persian Gulf War, 1991; and the Second Lebanon War, 2006.

years, however, with the emergence of the State of Israel, anti-Jewish sentiment has caused most of these Jews to emigrate, to Eretz Yisrael and elsewhere. Some of these Jewish communities had existed in Arab lands for centuries.

Today, the Jewish people are threatened both physically and spiritually, in the final stage of the period called *Galus Edom* (the “Exile of Rome”) — the exile of the Jewish people from the Land of Israel and dispersion amongst the nations in the wake of the destruction of the Second Beis HaMikdash.

6. The Ge’ulah Sheleimah (Final Redemption). Messianic Times.

The Last Lap

In the future, Mashiach will arise and return the Kingdom of David to its original glory, to its original rule...and bring the whole world to serve Hashem as one.⁷⁰

ובא לציון גואל (ישעיה נט, כ)

“And a Redeemer will come unto Zion.”

(Yeshayah 59:20)

The World at the Time of Mashiach

“The upright will see and be glad.”

(Tehillim 107:42)

“Knowledge of Hashem will fill the world like water covering the sea bed.”

(Tehillim 107:42)

70. Rambam, Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon (1135–1204).
Sefer Shoftim, Hilchos Melachim 11:1,4.
(Biography of the Rambam, p. 134.)

BASIC JEWISH HISTORY
OUTLINE

1. Period of History Covered by Torah

Adam and Chavah

Noach

The Jewish People:

Avraham Avinu (Abraham)

Yitzchak Avinu (Isaac)

Yaakov Avinu (Jacob)

Yosef HaTzaddik (Joseph)

Moshe Rabbeinu

The Exodus

The Period in the Midbar (Wilderness)

2. Period of History Covered by Nach

Yehoshua (Joshua)

Conquest of the Land

Division of the Land amongst the Tribes of Israel

Period of the Elders and Judges

Period of the Nevi'im (Prophets)

Beginning of the Period of the Kings

 Sha'ul HaMelech (King Saul)

 Dovid HaMelech (King David)

 Shlomo HaMelech (King Solomon)

The First Beis HaMikdash

The Division of the Kingdom

Exile of the Ten Tribes of Israel

Destruction of the First Beis HaMikdash — 3380

Galus Bavel (Babylonian Exile) and Galus Paras-Madai (Persian Exile)

Period of the Anshei Knesses HaGedolah (The Men of the Great Assembly)

Purim

Ezra HaSofer

Beginning of the period of the Second Beis HaMikdash

3. Post Nach Period

Main part of the period of the Second Beis HaMikdash

Alexander the Great

Galus Yavan (Greek Exile)

Chanukah

Rule of the Chashmonaim (Hasmoneans)

Conquest of the Roman Empire

Rule of Herod — 35–4 B.C.E.

Rule of Roman procurators

4. Galus Edom (the Exile of Rome)

Destruction of the Second Beis HaMikdash — 3828 (70 C.E.)

Fall of Masada

Bar Kochba Revolt

Redaction of the Mishnah

Continued growth of the communities of Babylon

Redaction of the Talmud

Further Development of Jewish communities in
Mediterranean Lands

Development of Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jewry

The Crusades⁶⁹

The Black Death — 1347-1350

The Expulsion from Spain — 1492

Chmielnicki Massacres — 1648–1649

Shabbetai Tzvi — 1626–1676

The Ba'al Shem Tov — 1698–1760

The Vilna Gaon 1720–1797⁷⁰

The French Revolution — 1789

Napoleon — 1769–1821

69. The First Crusade took place between 1096–1099; Second Crusade 1147–1149; the Third Crusade 1189–1192; and the Fourth Crusade 1202–1204. There were also further Crusades until the middle of the thirteenth century.

70. Rabbi Eliyahu of Vilna, the Vilna Gaon — biography p. 185.

70 / THE FOUNDATION OF JUDAISM

The First World War — 1914–1918

The Second World War — 1939–1945

The Holocaust

The Post-War Period

5. The *Ge'ulah Sheleimah*. The Final Redemption. Messianic Times

The World at the Time of Mashiach

BASIC JEWISH HISTORY

CHAPTER SUMMARY

1. Period of History Covered by Torah
2. Period of History Covered by Nach
3. Post-Nach Period
4. Galus Edom (the Exile of Rome)
5. The Geulah Sheleimah. The Final Redemption. Messianic Times.