

TIMELINE

Sephardic Jewish History - Iberian Peninsula

- 613 Third Toledan Council under King Sisebut ordered the forced conversion of Jews; as many as 90,000 were converted. Children were taken from their Jewish parents and converted.
- 633 Council of Visigoths in Toledo passed legislation that said that the children of Jews had to be brought up by Christians. Further, there was to be no communication between baptized and unbaptized Jews. Jews who remained in Spain had to be baptized and could not own slaves.
- 680 King Erwig of Spain passed 28 anti-Jewish laws in his first two months of reign. Jews were accused of "leprosy of Jewish corruption" and "contagious pestilence." He advocated for the extermination of Jews.
- 694 The Toledan Council declared all Jews slaves. Children under age seven were given to Christian slave masters to be raised as Catholics.
- 8th Century Pact of Umar delineates treatment of Jews by Muslims and their classification as *dhimmi*. The *Pact of Umar* designates that non-Muslims could maintain their current situation, but does not allow for growth of non-Muslim communities. The document forbids the building of new places of worship, the rebuilding of old ones, and the holding of religious ceremonies. The Pact obliges non-Muslims to provide three days food and lodging to Muslim passersby. It forbids sheltering enemies of the Muslim or teaching of the Koran to their children. It demands deference be shown to Muslims and that distinctive dress must be worn. It forbids the ownership of weapons, the sale of wines, the taking of slaves, the striking of Muslims by non-Muslims, and the building of homes higher than theirs. The first poll tax obligations are explained here.
- 985 Barcelona - A number of Jewish residents were killed by the Moslem leader Al-Mansur. Many of them were land owners who left no heirs. According to the law, all their lands were given over to the Count of Barcelona. In Spain at this time it was not uncommon for Jews to own vineyards and other lands.
- 1031 End of Umayyid Dynasty in Spain the death of Hisham III. The Umayyads had ruled with stability for 250 years, but never recovered from the Berber invasion and the sacking of Cordova in 931.
- 1037 Ferdinand I of Castile seized the province of Leon, marking the beginning of the Spanish Reconquista.
- 1066 Joseph ibn Nagrela, son of Samuel ibn Nagrela, was murdered in Granada. He had served as vizier to Badis, ruler of the Berbers. There had been constant tension between the Berbers and the Arab population which led to a civil war. Joseph attempted to ease the conflict between

the two camps and prevent excesses against the local Arabs. His enemies included Abu Ishak, Berber advisor to the prince, who accused him of trying to cede the city to a neighboring prince. Badis ordered Joseph killed and crucified. In the ensuing massacre of the Jewish population 1,500 families were killed, including Joseph's wife and son. A few years later Jews were readmitted to Granada and resumed high offices.

- 1078 The Synod of Gerona orders Jews to pay the same taxes as Christians to support the Church.
- 1085 Toledo surrendered to Alfonso VI of Castile in Northern Spain, becoming part of Christian Spain. This was the first important conquest of Moslem Spain known as the *Reconquista*. His chief counselor was Joseph ben Ferrusel, also known as *Cidellus* (Little Cid). As his physician and advisor, Joseph was instrumental in helping protect those refugees fleeing Almoravide persecutions.
- 1086 It is reported that 40,000 Jews fought together with King Alfonso VI against the Almoravides at the Battle of Zula in Zallaka, Spain. The Moslem armies also had a large amount of Jews serving in them - so much so that the battle was arranged not to fall on the Sabbath. Although the numbers may be exaggerated, they reflect the fact that Jews actually took part in most of the Spanish wars and fought valiantly.
- 1106 Ali, the son of Yoseph ibn Tashifin, Almoravide leader and founder of the city, decreed the death penalty for any Jews living in Marrakesh. At the same time, one of his military leaders and two of his physicians were Jewish.
- 1107 Yoseph ibn Tashifin, the Almoravide ruler, ordered all Jews to convert or leave Morocco. He based this on limiting Mohammed's "tolerance" of the Jews to 500 years after the Hejira.
- 1115 Alfonso I invited all the Jews to return to Toledo when he reconquered the city from the Moslems. This favorable treatment continued until 1355, partly because of the persecution of Christians in the parts of southern Spain controlled by the Almohads and Almoravides, whose rule eclipsed the cultural renaissance that preceded it.
- 1147 Judah Ibn Ezra is appointed commander of Calatrava, a garrison near the Moslem border in Spain by Alfonso VII, in recognition for his help in conquering the fortress.
- 1148 Almohadin fanatics succeeded the Almoravides as rulers of Moslem Spain and Morocco. They offered Christians and Jews the choice of conversion or expulsion. Many Jews converted but continued to practice Judaism in secret.
- 1162 Jews and Christians in Granada joined to attempt to overthrow the Almohad regime. The Almohads only permitted converts to Islam to live in the city. The rebellion was not successful.

- 1179 The Third Lateran Council attacked the practice of usury (banking or money lending at any interest) and also suspected the Jews of complicity with heretics.
- 1248 Alfonso of Castile, crown prince of Castille, showed his appreciation for Jewish soldiers' part in the conquering of Seville and granted them land for a "village of the Jews." The Jewish quarter was enlarged and three mosques were given to them for use as synagogues. A large number of Jews served him in the treasury (Meir de Maleq), in astronomy (Judah ben Moses Cohen), and medicine (Abraham and Samuel Levi). A famous Astronomical Table (Alphonsine Tables) was named for him by Isaac ibn Sid, the cantor in Toledo. In spite of this, Alfonso also compiled the "seven sets", a legal work reviewing all the anti-Jewish canons against the Jews. A hundred years later this was used as the basis for anti-Jewish legislation.
- 1248 - 1325 Jews in Portugal under Alfonso III and Diniz enjoyed a fair amount of freedom. They were not required to wear a badge or pay forced taxes to the Church. They also held high offices (i.e. Chief Rabbi Judah who also served as the Treasurer). At the end of this period the Church began to resent the position of the Jews and started to complain and pressure subsequent rulers.
- 1215 The Fourth Lateran Council called for the separation of Jews from Christians and that they wear distinctive dress in all Christian countries. This was another attempt to know who the Jews were and to keep them separated from Christian society so they could not spread their beliefs to non-Jews. It was during this period that the Church decided that Christians were not allowed to lend each other money and Jews were relegated to this task, called "usury." The Church also decided at this time that Jews were the servants of Christians.
- 1263 Barcelona Disputation - Rabbi Moses Nahmanides (Ramban) of Gerona debates Pablo Christiani, a Dominican monk converted from Judaism and a product of an anti-Maimonidean school. The Disputation was held in the presence of King James I of Aragon.
- 1264 Nachmanides was convicted for publishing his side of the Disputation with Pablo Christiani. Although Nachmanides was not severely punished by the King, he decided to leave Spain for good and settled in Eretz Israel.
- 1280 King James I of Aragon, under the influence of the Dominican Friar Raymond Martini, he ordered all disparaging statements regarding Jesus and Mary erased from the Talmud. In addition, the *Mishneh Torah* of Maimonides was condemned to be burned due to references to Jesus in the chapter on the laws of kingship.
- 1391 Anti-Jewish riots in Spain
Forced conversions in Toledo, Seville, Lerida, Barcelona, and Majorca

- 1412 Forced Conversions in Aragon and Castille
Punitive laws against Jews issued by Vincent Ferrer in Valladolid – Jews had to grow beards and wear certain clothing, in addition to economic restrictions – demoralization of Jews encourages conversions
- 1413-14 Disputations in Tortosa
- 1449 Riots against Conversos – Limpieza de Sangre Statute Passed giving Old Christians privilege over New Christians
- 1461 Franciscans want to stop socializing between Conversos and Jews
- 1481 Spanish Inquisition begins to rid Church of Heresy
- 1486 Jeronymites adopt Limpieza de Sangre law
- 1491 Holy Child of LaGuardia Case
- 1492 Reconquista completed in Spain and Andalusia with conquest of Granada
- Edict of Expulsion of the Jews issued by Ferdinand of Aragon and Isabella of Castile on March 30, 1492
- Columbus set sail for the new world on Tisha b'Av, (August 2) 1492
- Sultan Bayezid II offers refuge to Jews in Ottoman Empire. He sees them as highly skilled, educated and an economic gain for the empire. Many take the offer, while others flee to Portugal.
- 1497 Jews of Portugal forcibly converted.
- 1536 Inquisition begins in Portugal
- 1550s Conversos begin to move north to Amsterdam and places where no Jews live
- 1555 Limpieza de Sangre laws ratified by Pope Paul IV
- 1571 Inquisition Tribunal established in New Spain
- 1595 First Jew lives openly in Amsterdam
- 1612 Amsterdam becomes magnet for Jews who can worship freely
Jewish cemetery opens in Amsterdam
- 1648 First Ashkenazi Jews come to Amsterdam from German states
- 1650 Virtually no more Judaizing in Castille
- 1654 23 Sephardi Jews, driven from Recife, Brazil land in New Amsterdam on September 1, 1654. They then founded Congregation Shearith Israel.

- 1670 Sephardic community in Amsterdam declines
Ashkenazic community thrives
- 1840 Damascus Blood Libel - An Italian monk and his servant disappeared from Damascus in February 1840, just weeks before Passover. A large number of Jews were charged with ritual murder and declared guilty. News of the case spread across the Middle East, Europe, and the entire Western world (Frankel 29). In Damascus, dozens of Jewish children were imprisoned, along with leading Damascus Jews. They 'confessed' under torture; others died or converted