

In and Out of the Ghetto

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1. This is the third in a series of presentations looking at the Jewish experience over the last 2600 years.
2. Today, we will look at that experience from the middle of the fifteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century, a period that includes the Reformation and the Enlightenment, both of which had an effect on the treatment of Jewish people.
3. During this period Jews were forced to live in ghettos and during this period they began to be freed from that isolated existence, both physically and intellectually.

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1. As we ended last week in 1453 A.D., Turkish forces had captured Constantinople, renaming it Istanbul and bringing an end to the Byzantine Empire.
2. At the same time, Christian forces of the *Reconquista* had retaken almost all of the Iberian Peninsula, with only Granada and its famous Alhambra still in Muslim hands.
3. With most of Spain under Christian control, thousands of Jews accepted baptism to avoid being killed by Christians, becoming known as *conversos*.
4. *Conversos* **“reach[ed] the higher echelons of the trades and professions, of the universities, the judiciary, and even the Church.”** Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* at 135.
5. Despite their baptism as Christians, many *conversos* continued at least some of their prior Jewish practices, such as not eating pork or not working on Saturday – this painting shows a secret Seder by a family of *conversos*.
6. For some of them, these practices were simply habits, but other *conversos* either were not sincere in their conversions or later regretted them.
7. Whatever their reasons, so-called “Old Christians” labelled baptized Jews who continued their Jewish practices as *Marranos* or pigs.
8. Both Jews and Christians resented the *Marranos*, the Jews because they were treated like Christians and the Christians because they were still Jews.
9. *Marranos* throughout Spain were attacked and killed, with some of the animus being simply that they carried Jewish blood.

10. As one author writes: **“Antisemitism and anti-marranism fed upon one another and the notion grew that the evil in Judaism and marranism had a common source – hereditary Jewishness, *mala sangre* (bad blood): Jews, baptized or not, were perverse and defiled.”** Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* at 136.

11. As a result, people were suspected of being Jewish even if their wet nurse had a Jewish ancestor, people believing that bad Jewish blood could be carried by breast milk.

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1. Because Christians believed that even baptisms resulting from coercion were binding forever, they considered *Marranos* to be heretics, deserving of punishment.

2. Since the thirteenth century, the Catholic Church had used inquisitions to detect and punish heresies, often using torture to obtain confessions.

3. In 1480, Pope Sixtus IV granted Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile, the so-called “Catholic Kings” whose marriage had united two Spanish kingdoms, the right to conduct inquisitions against suspected *Marranos*, the first time the power to conduct inquisitions had been given to secular authorities.

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1. In 1483, Thomas Torquemada, a *converso* who became a Dominican friar, was placed in charge of the inquisitions.

2. He soon published a list of 37 clues that a person was a secret Jew, including not burning a fire on Saturday and not wearing his or her best clothes on Sunday.

3. Under Torquemada the Spanish Inquisition became a **“gigantic operation that would spread to all major Spanish cities, condemn thousands of *Marranos* to the stake and many times more to imprisonment, public humiliation, and confiscation of property.”** Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* at 137.

4. Many of those accused were tortured until they confessed, sometimes with a device that crushed their heads.

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1. The *Marranos* who confessed and repented were punished, often by being required to wear a coarse robe with crosses or sent to sea to row on a Spanish galley.

2. Those who were found guilty and did not repent were burned in a religious ceremony called *auto-da-fe*, an act of faith.

3. The executions **“were as popular as Roman games and as elaborately staged,”** attended by the royal family and preceded by a parade of dignitaries, including the vendors who provided wood for the fires. Moynahan, *The Faith* at 448.
4. This 1496 painting in the Prado in Madrid shows a Dominican friar presiding over an *auto-da-fe* – you can see the nearly naked couple about to be burned.
5. If a person repented while tied to the stake, he or she was strangled to death before the flame was ignited – otherwise he or she was burned alive.
6. Church leaders justified the burning of *Marranos* by referring to the words of Jesus in *John 15:6*: **“If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.”**
7. **“Within twelve years 13,000 people, most of them Jews, had died as victims of the Inquisition.”** Armstrong, *Holy War* at 459.
8. The assets of those who died went to the crown and even dead Jews who were suspected of having been *Marranos* were convicted posthumously, with their bones burned and their estates appropriated.
9. Pope Sixtus correctly suspected that many of the executions were motivated by a desire to obtain the assets of the Jews, but did not stop the practice.

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1. The Spanish Inquisition did not stop *conversos* from engaging in Jewish practices, which Old Christians attributed to the influence of Spain’s unconverted Jews.
2. In fact, the Inquisition may have driven the converted Jews back to their original faith.
3. There were reports that many *Marranos*’ last words as they died in the flames were **“Hear, O Israel, the Lord is one,”** the *Shema*.
4. The killings also made the unconverted Jews of Spain more supportive of the *Marranos*, whom they had previously shunned because they had abandoned their faith.
5. As a result, Torquemada, the converted Jew who became the *Marranos*’ chief opponent, began demanding that all unconverted Jews be expelled from Spain.
6. He soon found receptive listeners.
7. On January 2, 1492, the sultan of Granada surrendered the Alhambra to Ferdinand and Isabella and Isabella immediately occupied the sultan’s chair in the Alhambra.

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1. With Spain once again united under Christian control, Ferdinand and Isabella saw expelling the Jews as a way to unite the country religiously as well as geographically.
2. On March 31, 1492, they issued the Alhambra Decree, ordering all Jews to leave Spain within four months unless they converted to Christianity.
3. Those failing to convert or leave would be summarily executed.
4. By July 31, about 50,000 Jews were baptized and an estimated 400,000 left Spain.
5. Those leaving forfeited their gold and silver to Ferdinand and Isabella.
6. The Inquisition was continued to assure that those who were baptized and stayed in Spain did not revert to Jewish practices.

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1. The Turkish sultan sent ships to take the Spanish Jews to Turkey and the Middle East, saying that by expelling the Jews Ferdinand had **“impoverished his country to enrich mine.”** Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* at 140.
2. Some of the Jews ended up in Jerusalem, then under Turkish control.
3. Some of the expelled Jews went by land to Portugal, which then instituted its own inquisition that **“was, if possible, more brutal than its Spanish counterpart but less successful in attaining its objective.”** *Id.*

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1. During their hundreds of years living among both Muslims and Christians, Jews in Spain had acquired distinctive language and customs and some had intermarried with Spanish Christians.
2. As you can see in the red lines, the Jews who left Spain in 1492 settled primarily in southern Europe, northern Africa and in the eastern Mediterranean, where they became known as the “Sephardim,” a term that means from people from Spain.
3. **“Wherever these Sephardic exiles went, they carried their culture and even their language with them, evinced their cultural superiority, and assumed leadership of their communities.”** Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* at 140.
4. Those Jews who had settled earlier in central Europe were known as the “Ashkenazim,” a term that derives from a name once given to Germany.

5. Many had come to these areas after being driven from other areas.

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1. While at the Alhambra in 1492, Isabella reportedly received Christopher Columbus.
2. Columbus, who had seen Granada fall to the Christians, pitched Isabella on his plan to sail west to India and convert the Muslims there to Christianity, perhaps as a step in a grand plan to retake Jerusalem from the Muslims.
3. On April 17, 1492, Isabella commissioned Columbus to sail to India.
4. Columbus left Granada on May 12, 1492.
5. Many scholars believe that Columbus, who did not speak Italian, was a *converso*, a converted Jew whose family had earlier escaped Italy to avoid persecution there.
6. As Karen Armstrong writes: “[T]he name Colón was common among Italian Jews, he used to boast of his connection with King David, observed Jewish superstitions and sought out the company of Spanish Jews.” Armstrong, *Holy War* at 458.
7. The first letter Columbus sent back to Spain reporting his discoveries in the New World was directed to a wealthy *converso* working as finance minister to King Ferdinand who financed the first voyage from his own funds.
8. Several scholars have speculated that Columbus’ plan to convert Muslims to Christianity was intended to conceal his Jewish identity from Ferdinand and Isabella at the time they were expelling Jews from Spain.
9. The later voyages of Columbus were financed from the appropriated assets of Jews who had been forced from Spain.

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1. Some of the Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal ended up in Venice.
2. In 1516, the Republic of Venice required that all Venetian Jews live in an area of the city that became known as the “Ghetto” after the foundry originally in the area.
3. Although Jews had previously chosen to live together in cities, this was the first time they had been required to live behind walls, with the gates locked at night.

4. The Venice Ghetto became a Jewish cultural hub, with nearly one-third of all Hebrew books printed in Europe before 1650 made in Venice.

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1. A year after Venice had established the first mandatory ghetto, Martin Luther published his ninety-five theses, challenging practices of the Roman Catholic Church.

2. In 1523, he wrote *Jesus Christ was born a Jew*, arguing that Jews had not accepted Jesus as their Messiah because they were mistreated by the Catholic Church.

3. As Clark Williamson, Professor Emeritus at Christian Theological Seminary, writes: **“Luther’s hope was that Protestants would become friendly toward Jews and that, consequently, Jews would convert to his church.”** Williamson, *Has God Rejected His People?* at 102.

4. But, as Karen Armstrong notes, Luther’s hope that Jews would accept Protestant Christianity was a **“monstrous piece of impertinence [that] showed absolutely no appreciation of the strong objection Jews have to the main Christian message.”** Armstrong, *Holy War* at 469.

5. It was not the Catholic version of Christianity that Jews rejected, but the conclusion of orthodox Christianity, including Luther’s Protestant version, that Jesus is the divine Son of God.

6. **“To the Jew, God has no human form and no human being has been or ever can be the incarnation of God.”** Trepp, *A History of the Jewish Experience* at 100.

7. As a result, few Jews accepted Luther’s call to become Christians.

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1. As Luther got older, he had what one author describes as **“a furious disappointment that despite the signs that the Last Days were approaching, Jews were refusing to fulfill their appointed destiny in the end-time by converting to Christianity.”** MacCulloch, *The Reformation* at 690.

2. In 1543, three years before his death, Luther published *On the Jews and their Lies*, in which he **“recommends that in retaliation for Jewish obstinacy, synagogues should be burned, Jewish literature confiscated, Jewish teaching forbidden and vengeance taken for the killing of Christ.”** *Id.*”

3. **“Instead of conversion, Luther [now] strove for expulsion of Jews from Christian territories.”** Nirenberg, *Anti-Judaism* at 266.

4. **“In his last sermon, delivered a few days before his death, he called urgently for expulsion from all Germany.”** Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* at 153.

5. **“His writings resulted in the expulsion of Jews from Saxony in 1543.”** Williamson, *Has God Rejected His People?* at 102.

6. In *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich*, William Shirer writes: **“It is difficult to understand the behavior of most German Protestants in the first Nazi years unless one is aware of two things: their history and the influence of Martin Luther He wanted Germany rid of the Jews. Luther's advice was literally followed four centuries later by Hitler, Goering and Himmler.”**

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1. **“Unlike Luther, [John] Calvin did not go out of his way to harass Jews. He was content to keep them out of Geneva and to repeat traditional anti-Judaic statements.”** Williamson, *Has God Rejected His People?* at 102-03.

2. But Calvin’s teachings had an effect on Jews in Europe.

3. He articulated guidelines allowing Christians to charge interest on loans as long as the charge was not extortionate, putting Christians in competition with Jewish moneylenders, one of the few occupations in which the Jews had been allowed to prosper.

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1. The so-called “Counter Reformation” of the Catholic Church repudiated many of Luther’s Protestant ideas.

2. But it essentially ratified his ideas about the Jews.

3. In 1555, Cardinal Gian Pietro Carafa became Pope Paul IV.

4. As Cardinal, he had persuaded Pope Paul III to set up an inquisition modeled on the Spanish Inquisition, with him as one of the chief inquisitors, and had publicly burned copies of the Talmud, the collection of Jewish writings, in Rome.

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1. Within two weeks of becoming pope, Paul issued the notorious *Cum Nimis Absurdu* bull, named for its first line declaring that it was absurd that the Jews, having been condemned by God to eternal servitude, should seek to live among Christians.

2. The papal bull decreed that Jews were to live only in selected quarters of cities and were not permitted to own land outside those quarters.

3. Thousands of Jews were now confined to the small, flood-prone area in Rome near the Tiber River you see on this map, whose single gate was locked at night.
4. If Jews ventured outside their ghetto during the day, they had to wear a yellow hat.
5. Under the papal bull, towns could have no more than one synagogue, leading to the destruction of numerous synagogues.
6. Jews were barred from virtually all occupations desirable to Christians.
7. They were required to listen to sermons by Christian ministers, with the hope that they would finally see the light and become Christians – few, if any, did.

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1. Although Pope Paul's decree applied only to the Papal States, his successors extended the requirement that Jews live in ghettos to other Italian cities and eventually to neighboring states.
2. These European ghettos, as well as ones that had been established previously, were limited in size and became extremely crowded as the Jewish population increased, with houses being built higher and higher to accommodate new families.
3. In the Frankfurt ghetto, 4000 Jews lived in 190 houses along a single street.
4. Space for Jewish burials was also limited and could not be increased.
5. In this cemetery in the Prague ghetto, bodies were eventually buried twelve deep.

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1. Confining European Jews to ghettos had a harmful effect on them, both physically and intellectually.
2. Because of inbreeding, the average Jew **“lost inches off his stature.”** Roth, *A Short History of the Jewish People* at 308.
3. **“Cut off from participating in the larger world about, life was concentrated on the past.”** Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* at 146.
4. **“Most trades and professions remained closed to them, which resulted in their monopolizing such occupations as pawn-brokerage, the second-hand clothing trade, and peddling, which were accessible.”** *Id.* at 147.

5. **“The Jew as a treacherous skinflint, an avaricious Judas, became the archetype that needed little root in reality for its sustenance.”** *Id.* at 148.
6. Shylock, the Jewish moneylender in Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice*, written near the end of the sixteenth century, reflected the stereotype popular even in England, which had not seen a Jew since they were all expelled in 1290.
7. Interestingly, Shakespeare’s Christian father was a money lender, an occupation made available to Christians in England in 1571.

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1. Poland was the one bright spot in Europe for sixteenth century Jews, where rulers tolerated Jews in hopes of improving the Polish economy.
2. In the sixteenth century, Jews were granted almost complete autonomy, with the power to govern themselves according to Jewish law.
3. They were free to engage in whatever occupation they chose.
4. **“Rich, powerful, they had lived on equal footing with the Christians.”** Lazare, *Antisemitism* at 80.
5. Sephardic Jews expelled from Spain, Portugal and other areas increasingly settled in Poland, where they joined Ashkenazi Jews who had been there for generations.
6. There are estimates that by the middle of the sixteenth century, three-quarters of all Jews in the world, or at least in Europe, lived in Poland, which became known as *paradisus judaeorum*, the paradise of the Jews.
7. This period became known as the second golden age of Judaism, the first being in medieval Spain under the Muslims that we talked about last week.

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1. The golden age of Poland’s Jews came to an end in what one author calls the Jews’ **“bloodiest decade since Biblical times.”** Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* at 157.
2. In 1569, the Cossacks of Ukraine came under the control of Poland and its Catholic rulers, who also controlled Lithuania.
3. To help colonize the Cossacks, the Polish government turned to Poland’s Jews, who **“acted as tax collectors, bailiffs and stewards.”** Armstrong, *Holy War* at 478.

4. Thousands of these Jewish middlemen moved to Ukraine, where the Eastern Orthodox Cossacks came to see them as the source of their oppression.
5. In 1648, a Cossack named Bohdan Chmielnicki initiated an attack on the Poles and their supporters, first in Ukraine and then in southeast Poland.
6. The Cossacks **“ravaged Poland in a most barbarous fashion, reserving their worst cruelties for the Jews.”** *Id.*
7. Here is one description of the treatment of Polish Jews by the Cossacks: **“Estates were devastated, manor-houses reduced to ashes, and human beings barbarously done to death. The victims were flayed and burned alive, mutilated and left to the agony of a lingering death. Infants were slit like fish or slaughtered at the breasts of their mothers or cast alive into pits. Women were ripped open and then sewed up again with live cats thrust into their bowels; many, married or unmarried, were violated before the eyes of their menfolk, and those that were comely were carried away.”** Margolis, *A History of the Jewish People* at 552.
8. By the time the attacks were over, between 100,000 and 500,000 Polish Jews had been killed, a significant part of the entire Jewish population of Europe.
9. Between 300 and 700 Jewish communities had been destroyed.
10. **“Refugees, starved and impoverished, swarmed over Europe as the dispersion turned again toward the West.”** Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* at 158.

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1. Many of the Polish Jews fleeing the Cossacks went to Amsterdam, where some Puritans had settled after fleeing England to escape persecution there.
2. The Amsterdam Puritans had concluded that the Last Days were upon them and that Jesus should return in 1666.
3. Like Martin Luther, the Puritans believed that Jesus could not return until at least some Jews had become Christians.
4. And, like Luther, the Puritans arrogantly and naively believed that they had finally found a version of Christianity that would prove irresistible to Jews.
5. So, the Puritans believed that the more Jews there were in Amsterdam, the more likely it was that there would be sufficient conversions to allow Jesus to return and they welcomed Jews in such large numbers that they began to fear a backlash.
6. A Jewish leader in Amsterdam named Menasseh ben Israel proposed a solution – send the surplus Jews to England, which had expelled all its Jews in 1290 but was now under the Puritan government of Oliver Cromwell.

7. By allowing Jews to return, Cromwell could fulfill the Old Testament prophesy that Jews would be scattered **“among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other,”** thought to be another requirement for the return of Jesus. *Deuteronomy 28:64*.
8. Amsterdam’s Jews agreed with this solution, noting that they called England *Kezar ha-Aretz*, which literally means the “end of the earth,” and it was therefore also important to the Jews that they be allowed back into England.

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1. Menasseh ben Israel personally delivered a petition to Cromwell to allow the Jews to return to England.
2. Cromwell liked the idea, both because it would hasten the return of Jesus and because the Jews **“would help the ailing economy of the country, which had been badly damaged by the Civil War”** that put him in power. Armstrong, *Holy War* at 479.
3. In 1655, Cromwell submitted a proposal to Parliament to allow Jews to return to England, but it died amid great public opposition.
4. During the debate, English Jews living secretly as Christians disclosed their identity and Cromwell quietly gave them citizenship and allowed them to build a synagogue.
5. With this action, Jewish immigrants began arriving in England, with all the rights of the Puritans, who tried without noticeable success to convert them.
6. **“The Jews were readmitted to England, it has been said, by the back door.”** Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* at 150.

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1. The decision to allow Jews back to England had an impact in the New World.
2. In 1654, a group of Jews originally from Spain left Brazil, which had just been taken over the Portuguese, fearing another inquisition.
3. They landed in Dutch New Amsterdam, where they thought they would be welcomed as they would be in the Netherlands.
4. However, New Amsterdam was under the control of Peter Stuyvesant, who argued aggressively against their presence.
5. In a letter to the Dutch West India Company that controlled New Amsterdam, he requested that **“the deceitful race, — such hateful enemies and blasphemers of the name of Christ, — be not allowed to further infect and trouble this new colony.”**
<http://www.nycourts.gov/history/legal-history-new-york/luminaries-dutch/stuyvesant-pieter.html>

6. The Company, some of whose investors were Jewish, denied Stuyvesant's request to reject the Jews, but he refused to allow them to build a synagogue.

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1. In 1664, English Puritans took control of New Amsterdam from the Dutch, renaming it New York.
2. Reflecting the decision of Cromwell in England, the Puritans in New York gave the Jews citizenship.
3. **"American Jewry had been born."** Armstrong, *Holy War* at 479.
4. The Colony of Rhode Island, founded by Roger Williams in 1636, also accepted Jewish immigrants.
5. Although Williams believed Jews would go to hell when they died, **"it was not his responsibility to make matters worse for them in this life."** MacCulloch, *The Reformation* at 539.

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1. Baruch Spinoza, whose Jewish ancestors had been driven from Portugal, was born in Amsterdam in 1632.
2. As a very young man, Spinoza began arguing against traditional Jewish beliefs, including the belief that Moses had personally written the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew Scriptures.
3. As a result, at age 23 he was banned for life from his synagogue for claimed heresies, demonstrating that **"Judaism could be just as fiercely aggressive as Christianity in abhorring heresy and deviation."** Armstrong, *Holy War* at 481.
4. Spinoza spent the rest of his life among Christians, arguing in favor of religious tolerance and against the idea of revealed religious truth.
5. For Spinoza, the only God for which human beings could be certain was a God whose characteristics could be derived by observing the laws of nature.
6. When Albert Einstein was asked if he believed in God, he answered: **"I believe in Spinoza's God, who reveals himself in the harmony of all that exists, not in a God who concerns himself with the fate and the doings of mankind."**
7. Because Spinoza believed that God was otherwise unknowable, he advocated that governments get out of the business of trying to control religious beliefs.
8. His teachings are among those leading to the Enlightenment, which eventually had an impact on the Jewish experience.

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1. John Locke was an English philosopher, born in the same year as Spinoza.
2. Beginning in 1683, after the death of Spinoza, Locke spent five years in Amsterdam, where he learned of the ideas of Spinoza about the inability of anyone to be certain that their religious beliefs represented absolute truth.
3. His library later included all of Spinoza's important writings.
4. In 1689, at the end of this stay in Amsterdam, Locke wrote a letter on religious toleration that was soon printed and made its way throughout Europe and across the Atlantic. <http://www.thefederalistpapers.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/John-Locke-A-Letter-Concerning-Toleration.pdf>
5. Locke started his letter by saying that he believed **“toleration to be the chief characteristic mark of the true Church.”**
6. For Locke, the only religious belief that mattered to a person's salvation was one that came from within -- such a belief could not be compelled.
7. Even a person compelled to act in accordance with the teachings of a particular religion could not be forced to believe those teachings.
8. Consequently, Locke argued that governments could not impose religious qualifications on people seeking its benefits or protection.
9. As he said: **“[I]f we may openly speak the truth, and as becomes one man to another, neither Pagan nor Mahometan, nor Jew, ought to be excluded from the civil rights of the commonwealth because of his religion.”**

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1. Although these views would eventually lead to increased freedom for Jews, at the time they had little, if any, impact on the treatment of Jews in most of western Europe, who were still trapped in ghettos.
2. In Rome at the beginning of the eighteenth century, 10,000 Jews were confined to about 250 acres near the Tiber River.
3. **“Excluded from most trades, the Roman Jews took to tailoring; in 1700 three fourths of their adult males were tailors.”** Durant, *Rousseau and Revolution* at 631.
4. In 1717, the Inquisition in Portugal burned 27 Jews for continuing to observe Jewish customs.

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1. Between 1710 and 1760, Jews in Poland repeatedly faced the medieval accusation that they had killed a Christian child to obtain blood for use in a secret ritual.
2. “[I]n many cases they were tortured, in some cases to death; some were flayed alive; some died slowly by impalement.” Durant, *Rousseau and Revolution* at 633.
3. In 1733, a Polish synod of the Catholic church repeated the claim that originated with Augustine that the only reason for even allowing Jews to exist was so they could be a **“reminder of the tortures of Christ, and be an example, by their enslaved and miserable condition, of the just chastisement inflicted by God upon infidels.”** *Id.*

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1. In 1742, Russian Empress Elizabeth Petrovna ordered that **“from our whole Empire . . . all Jews shall . . . be immediately deported, . . . and shall henceforth under no pretext be admitted into our Empire . . . unless they . . . accept the Christian religion of the Greek persuasion.”** Durant, *Rousseau and Revolution* at 632.
2. **“By 1753 nearly 35,000 Jews had been expelled.”** *Id.*
3. Many of the expelled Jews went to England, one of the few places where they could become citizens.
4. **“The Jews [also] continued to enjoy a relative freedom in the Netherlands and Scandinavia.”** *Id.* at 635.

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1. Surprising to many today, the treatment of Jews in Islamic Turkey, where many had gone after the Spanish and Portuguese Inquisitions, was much better than in most of Christian Europe at the time.
2. A visitor to Turkey in 1717 wrote about her observations: **“The Jews . . . are in incredible power in this country. They have many privileges above all the natural Turks themselves, . . . being judged by their own laws. They have drawn the whole trade of the Empire into their hands, partly by the firm union among themselves, partly by the idle temper and want of industry of the Turk. . . . They are the physicians, the stewards, and the interpreters of all the great men. . . . There are many of them vastly rich.”** Durant, *Rousseau and Revolution* at 632.

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1. European attitudes toward Jews began to change in the middle of the eighteenth century.
2. In 1758, Polish Jews appealed to Pope Benedict XIV to stop the repeated charges against them of ritually murdering Christian children.
3. The pope asked Cardinal Ganganelli, who later became Pope Clement XIV, to investigate the claims of ritual killing.
4. In 1763, the investigation concluded that there was no evidence supporting the persistent claims that the Jews were killing Christian children for their blood.
5. The old blood libel had officially been put to rest, although accusations would continue but at a reduced rate.

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1. Eighteenth century writers of the Enlightenment provided the intellectual basis for a more tolerant treatment of the Jews in Europe.
2. Voltaire, the great French writer and philosopher, had a personal hatred of the Jews because of his own financial dealings with them.
3. On one occasion, he wrote: **“In short, we find in them only an ignorant and barbarous people, who have long united the most sordid avarice with the most detestable superstition and the most invincible hatred for every people by whom they are tolerated and enriched.”** Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* at 176.
4. On another, he described Jews as **“a petty nation, a brigand people, atrocious, abominable, whose law is the law of savages, and whose history is a tissue of crimes against humanity.”** Durant, *Rousseau and Revolution* at 630.
5. Hitler later relied on Voltaire’s views in supporting his own ant-Jewish views.
6. However, despite Voltaire’s own personal prejudices, **“[h]e repeatedly denounced the Christian persecution of the Jews,”** recognizing that they had become traders because they had been unable to purchase land. *Id.* at 629.
7. Building on the earlier arguments of Spinoza and Locke, Voltaire argued that all religious beliefs except those based on observation and reason are equally unverifiable and equally subject to abuse and argued that governments should not discriminate against people because of their religions.
8. For Voltaire, intolerance was **“as absurd as it is barbaric,”** writing: **“[I]t is the law of the jungle. Nay, it is worse, for wild animals kill only to eat, whereas we have exterminated one another over a parcel of words.”** Nirenberg, *Antisemitism* at 353.

9. In a 1763 essay, Voltaire wrote: **"It does not require great art, or magnificently trained eloquence, to prove that Christians should tolerate each other. I, however, am going further: I say that we should regard all men as our brothers. What? The Turk my brother? The Chinaman my brother? The Jew? The Siam? Yes, without doubt; are we not all children of the same father and creatures of the same God?"** Voltaire, *A Treatise on Toleration*.

10. The writings of Spinoza, Locke, Voltaire and other Enlightenment writers, including Jean-Jacques Rousseau, began to have an impact on the treatment of Jews.

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1. 1772, a part of Poland came under the control of Russia.
2. Empress Catherine the Great allowed the Polish Jews to retain the freedom they had as Polish citizens despite the absence of such freedoms in the rest of the Russian Empire.

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1. The Republic of Venice, which had been the first jurisdiction to require that Jews be confined to a ghetto, became the first jurisdiction to abolish that requirement.
2. **"[I]n 1772 the Jews of the republic were declared free and equal with the rest of the population."** Durant, *Rousseau and Revolution* at 631.

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1. In 1779, Thomas Jefferson, as a member of the Virginia General Assembly, introduced what became known as the Statute for Religious Freedom, one of three achievements he wanted on his tombstone.
2. Paraphrasing Locke's letter on religious tolerance, Jefferson argued that **"the opinions of man are not the object of civil government, nor under its jurisdiction."**
3. As Jefferson later wrote in his autobiography, the statute **"comprehended within the mantle of its protection the Jew and the Gentile, the Christian and Mahometan, the Hindoo and infidel of every denomination."** Jefferson, *Autobiography* (1821).

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1. The ongoing political emancipation of Jews during the second half of the eighteenth century was not the only consequence of Enlightenment ideas.
2. Moses Mendelssohn provided what one Jewish writer calls a **"moral emancipation"** from Jewish **"ignorance and humiliation"** resulting from years of forced isolation in European ghettos. Lazare, *Antisemitism* at 82.

3. Mendelssohn was born to a poor Jewish family in Dessau, Germany, in 1729.
4. At age 14, he moved by himself to Berlin, where he **“paid the toll charged for cattle and Jews”** at the city gate. Trepp, *A History of the Jewish Experience* at 173.
5. He studied the works of Spinoza, Locke and others and became convinced that **“[t]he coercive power of religious leaders such as rabbis or priests must be abolished.”** *Id.* at 176.

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1. Mendelssohn argued that Jews should move away from their intellectual isolation and join the secular world, even accepting alien ideas if those ideas seemed reasonable.
2. As he once wrote: **“There is not one single command in Mosaic law telling us ‘Thou shalt believe’ or ‘not believe.’ . . . Faith is not commanded. In questions of eternal truth nothing is said of believing, the terms are understanding and knowing.”** Trepp, *A History of the Jewish Experience* at 177.
3. Mendelssohn translated the Torah into German as a **“bridge between the Hebrew and German cultures.”** Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* at 162.
4. **“[Y]oung Jews learned German from it, and the next generation of Jews moved into active participation in German intellectual life.”** Durant, *From Rousseau to Revolution* at 639.
5. **“[Mendelssohn] was one of the most influential figures of his generation. Inspired by his writings and his successful crossing of religious frontiers, young Jews came out of the ghetto, and soon made their mark in literature, science, and philosophy.”** *Id.* at 640.
6. After he died, **“Christians joined with Jews in erecting a statue to honor him in Dessau, the city of his birth.”** *Id.*
7. Felix Mendelssohn, the great German composer we will talk more about next week, was his grandson.

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1. Before Mendelssohn died, a group of Jews in Alsace asked him to help end their persecution.
2. In response, Mendelssohn asked his friend, Christian Wilhelm von Dohm, a German Christian historian and political writer, to get involved.
3. In 1781, Dohm published a document called, in English, *On the Betterment of the Jews in Germany*, in which he argued for the emancipation of Europe’s Jews, **“point[ing]**

out what a loss it was to Western civilization that it made so little use of the intellectual gifts of the Jews.” Durant, *From Rousseau to Revolution* at 642.

4. He wrote: **“These principles of exclusion, equally opposed to humanity and politics, bear the stamp of the Dark Ages, and are unworthy of the enlightenment of our times.”** *Id.*

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1. It did not take long for some of the world to agree with Dohm’s arguments.

2. In 1782, Austrian Emperor Joseph II issued the Patent of Tolerance for Jews in Vienna and Lower Austria, **“abolishing the Jewish badge, the body tax, and other disabilities; granting Jews access to schools and universities; and ruling that Hebrew schools include the German language and liberal subjects.”** Flannery, *The Anguish of the Jews* at 163.

3. Joseph soon **“issued similar edicts for Bohemia, Moravia, and Austrian Silesia. He appreciated Jewish contributions to his treasury; he raised several Jews to the nobility, and employed several as state financiers.”** Durant, *From Rousseau to Revolution* at 632.

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1. Art. VI, Clause 3 of the United States Constitution, submitted to the States in 1787, provided: **“No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any office or public trust under the United States.”**

2. Jews could now hold even the highest office in the United States, a step that even Dohm had said the world was not yet ready for.

3. The First Amendment to the Constitution prohibited Congress from making laws prohibiting the free exercise of religion.

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1. In 1789, the revolutionary National Assembly of France proclaimed *The Declaration of the Rights of Man*, implying the full emancipation of Jews in France.

2. That implication was made express in 1791 and was immediately followed by protest riots in French cities with significant Jewish populations.

3. Napoleon enforced emancipation in the lands he captured, bringing complete **“freedom to the Jews of Holland in 1796, of Venice in 1797, of Mainz in 1798, of Rome in 1810, of Frankfurt in 1811.”** Durant, *From Rousseau to Revolution* at 642.

4. As one author writes: **“The Jews were on the threshold to society.”** Lazare, *Antisemitism* at 83.

Slide 42

1. Unfortunately, even the complete political emancipation of the Jewish people did not liberate them from the hatred and resentment that continues to this day.
2. Next week, we will take a final look at the Jewish experience, including nineteenth century efforts to categorize Jews as members of an inferior race, an idea that Hitler used in trying to exterminate them.
3. We will see the surprising role that Henry Ford had in forming Hitler’s beliefs.
4. Along the way, we will look at some of the extraordinary achievements of Jews that ironically were used against them.
5. We will end our look at the Jewish experience by examining the anti-Jewish hate that has reappeared in American and European culture.

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