

Summary of Part 1

- Anti-Semitism: Personal, Philosophical, Political
- The Berbers originate in Western North Africa, separate from the Arabs, in a strong tribal culture
- In 10th century Muslim lands, Jews and Christians are protected with dhimmi status
- The Almoravids are Berbers who take over much of North Africa and Iberia (Andalusia), but become soft
- The Almohads are Berbers, followers of preacher Ibn Tūmart, preaching austerity and strict Islam
- Caliph Abd Al-Mu'min leads the Almohads, and rejects dhimmi protections

1. David Corcos, *The Attitude of Almohad Leaders Toward the Jews*, Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco
Ibn Tūmart's heir, Abd al-Mu'min, executed his political-social vision, and was faithful to all of his ideas. During his conquests, acts of intimidation, exile, injustice, etc. were common. The wild soldiers who descended from the Atlas Mountains were more interested in despoiling the towns of the plains than in spreading a religious ideology they did not much understand. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims from North Africa and Spain lost their lives in these travels, and many Jews certainly shared their bitter fate...

2. Amira Bennison, Maria Gallego, *Jewish Trading in Fes on the Eve of the Almohad Conquest* (2007)
The attitude of Ibn Tūmart and his immediate circle towards non-Almohads became clear during their establishment of their community in the High Atlas mountain town of Tinmall or Tinmalal around 1124. After the Almohads occupied the town, the inhabitants enjoyed a grace period of about four years after which those who refused to accept Ibn Tūmart and his message were brutally driven out and massacred...

The most extensive account of the Jewish plight under the Almohads has been recorded in Shelomo ha-Kohen al-Siljimesi's missive from Fustat to his father coming back from India in 1148. Shelomo ha-Kohen reports to his father the news from the Maghrib that he has learnt from a group of Muslim and Jewish travellers who have arrived in Egypt from the Maghrib, where they witnessed the course of events. According to their account, when Sijilmasa surrendered to the Almohads, the new rulers tried to convert the Jews to Islam by debate and persuasion for over seven months (an episode mentioned as well in a Genizah copy of Abraham ibn Ezra's *Lament*). From a doctrinal perspective, this correlated with the Almohad mission to convert all Abrahamic monotheists to the true faith. It also matches with Ibn al-Qifī's reference to the grace period offered to non-Muslims by 'Abd al-Mu'min...

3. Delfina Serrano Ruano, *Explicit cruelty, implicit compassion: Judaism, forced conversions and the genealogy of the Banū Rūshd*, J of Medieval Iberian Studies 2:2 (2010)

It is generally assumed that the Almohad conquest was very detrimental for the Jews, and this is not without sound reason. A mass killing of Christians and Jews is said to have taken place during the Almohad conquest of Seville in 541/1147. In spite of the fact that the invaders' violence extended to the Muslim population of the city as well, the fact that both Christian and Muslim historians stress the targeting of *dhimmis* is significant... According to this source, after having seized Marrakesh, Abd al-Mu'min, the first Almohad caliph, expressed his will to put an end to the religions of the book in his domains, to demolish churches and synagogues and to oblige Christians and Jews to convert to Islam. Furthermore, as Molénat points out, some Jewish and Muslim sources confirm the veracity of these intentions. Among the former, one of the most often quoted is a poem composed by Abraham ibn Ezra (d. c. 1167 CE) in which he lamented the destruction of Jewish communities in al-Andalus and the Maghrib, including Lucena, Seville, Cordoba, Jaen, Malaga, Mallorca, Sijilmasa, Fes, Tlemcen, Ceuta and Meknes... As regards Muslim authors, both Eastern and Western historians can be mentioned...

4. Rabbi Maimon, Letter of Consolation (Hebrew available at <http://benyehuda.org/gluckson/maimonides.html>)
Our brethren, the Jews who are placed into trouble, may Gd soon have mercy upon you... The troubles which come from Gd upon His creations are for a good purpose... Gd will not exchange and will not trade in the Jewish nation, which He chose among all of the first nations, for another nation... The essence is that one should not cease praying.

Even if, due to the anger of the oppressor and due to the compulsion, one cannot pray the established prayer at its proper time, evening, morning and noon, one should still pray an abbreviated prayer. At least, they should recite daily that they are members of the Jewish nation, holding their Torah in their hearts.

5. Delfina Serrano Ruano, *Explicit cruelty, implicit compassion: Judaism, forced conversions and the genealogy of the Banū Rūshd*, *J of Medieval Iberian Studies* 2:2 (2010)

The reasons why the Almohads saw fit to proceed against the *dhimmi*s in this manner are not clear. In the case of the Christians, it might be a response to the military and economic pressure exerted by their co-religionists in the North of the Iberian Peninsula and in the Mediterranean, whereas the persecution of Jews remains without a proper explanation. Furthermore, as Olivia Remie Constable has pointed out, "at the same time that Almohad rulers made life difficult for Jews living in and moving through their territories, they also allowed foreign Christians to trade in Almohad ports" not to speak of the mercantile treaties undersigned by the Almohad authorities with different Mediterranean Christian powers. For his part, Dominique Urvoy sees the Almohads' anti-*dhimmi* policies as a natural consequence of their ideology, even though the Almohads themselves do not seem to have elaborated any theoretical justification. This fact, according to J.P. Molénat, reflects Almohads' awareness that their actions against the tributaries were blameworthy and therefore to be kept hidden or silenced.

6. David Corcos, *The Attitude of Almohad Leaders Toward the Jews*, *Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco*
From the time that two research papers of Solomon Munk were published about a century ago, his view has become authoritative regarding the subject we are addressing. In his view, the harassment of Jews by the Almohads was ideological, starting with an official, open policy of coercion, and in Munk's picture it continued throughout a defined time period. Historians who dealt with Jewish history, starting with Zvi Graetz and ending with Solomon Baron, accepted without reservation the essential elements of his views regarding the position of Jews under Almohad reign... These views seem to have support in the testimony of Latino-Hispanic chronicles, contemporary with the events they describe. The first historians of the North African church, who had other sources, also come to endorse the accepted assumption... The general Hebrew sources seem to provide great support for Munk's view, when examined without fundamental dissection...

7. Ross Brann, Translation of Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra's elegy, *Woe! Evil has descended from Heaven upon Spain*
<https://books.google.ca/books?id=bbrCTfBSFaEC&pg=PA121&lpg=PA121>

○ woe! Misfortune from heaven has fallen upon Sefarad!

My eyes, my eyes flow with tears!

My eyes weep like ostriches on account of Lucena!

The Exile dwelt there blamelessly in safety

Without interruption for a thousand and seventy years.

But the day came when her people were banished and she became like a widow,

Without Torah study or biblical recitation, the Mishnah sealed shut,

The Talmud as though desolate, all its glory vanished.

With murderers and mourners this way and that,

The place of prayer and praise reduced to ill-repute...

8. David Corcos, *The Attitude of Almohad Leaders Toward the Jews*, *Studies in the History of the Jews of Morocco*
In summary, the general position of non-Muslims was truly bad, as described in many sources. But the assumption that official orders caused, as it were, this descent, is only the fruit of the imagination of certain Arab scribes. The historical truth is quite varied in this matter. In our view, there was no unified, continuous state which was common throughout the Muslim world in any one period...

9. Amira Bennison, Maria Gallego, *Jewish Trading in Fes on the Eve of the Almohad Conquest* (2007)

While violent and intolerant attitudes towards *dhimmi*s seem to be confirmed for specific periods of Almohad rule, the assumption that Almohad persecution of non-Muslim religious minorities was a *systematic* or *official* policy throughout

their rule is more problematic. New readings of the existing primary sources and incorporation of new material can shed fresh light on this episode of Jewish-Islamic history.

10. Rabbi Moses Maimonides, Letter of Assimilation - Declaration on Sanctification of the Divine Name
(Hebrew available at <http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/mahshevt/mekorot/kidush-2.htm>)

From Part I: We would respond to the body of this man's statement even though it is long, weak and burdensome, were it not for our pity upon the great kindness Gd performed with us, meaning the power of speech, as it is written, 'Who gave Man a mouth.' It is appropriate for a person to have greater pity upon his power of speech than upon his property, not increasing his speech, minimizing his discussion....

It is fitting to know that a person should not speak and orate before the nation's ears until he reviews that which he wishes to say once, twice, thrice and four times, studying it well, before speaking... This is regarding speech; when a person will engrave it by hand and write it on a book, it would be appropriate for him to review it one thousand times, were it possible...

From Part II: If the great pillars of the world – Moshe, Eliyahu and Yeshayahu and the ministering angels – were so punished when they raised just a few words against the Jewish people, then how much more so the lightest of the world's lightweights, who would loose his tongue upon the communities of Israel, sages and their students, Kohanim and Levites, to call them sinners and wicked people and non-Jews and people who are disqualified from testimony and deniers of the Gd of Israel! One who writes this in his hand, what will be his punishment? And these people did not rebel against Gd seeking sweetness and benefit, and they did not abandon religion and distance themselves from it in order to achieve benefit and temporal pleasure – "They wandered because of weapons, because of outstretched swords, because of the aligned bow, because of the weight of war (Yeshayah 21:15)."...

It is also known that Rabbi Meir was caught [to be compelled] for *shmad* in one of the *shmadot* in which the sages of Israel were killed. Those who knew him said, "Are you not Meir?" To which he replied, "I am not." They said to him, "Eat this if you are not a Jew," and there was pig before them, and he said, "I will eat it willingly," and he pretended to eat it but he didn't eat it....

From Part III: I will now explain the error in which this one who increased emptiness fell. Achav ben Omri, who denied Gd and worshipped idols – and about whom Gd testified, "There was never another like Achav" – fasted for two and a half hours, and then, the sages taught, the decree upon him was voided... Gd did not cheat him of the reward...

If Gd would give good reward for small good deeds for these well-known heretics, then how could Gd not reward Jews who were forced into *shmad* and who performed mitzvot in private? Would there be no distinction between those who performed mitzvot and those who did not, those who served Gd and those who did not?...

From Part IV: For some of the mitzvot – idolatry, sexual immorality and murder – the law is that whenever one is compelled to violate one of them, he is instructed to be killed rather than violate it, at any time and in any place and in any matter. ...

And if one is not killed, but he violates because of compulsion, then he has not done well, and he desecrates the Name of Heaven under compulsion. However, he is not liable for one of the seven penalties, for we have not found in the entire Torah, not in light or severe laws, any case in which Gd required punishment of one who was compelled. Punishment is only for those who act willingly....

Know that in all of the *shmadot* of the time of the sages, they were instructed to violate the mitzvot in some action, as the Talmud records that they were told not to involve themselves in Torah, not to circumcise their children, or to live with their wives when they were *niddot*. But in this *shmad* they are not obligated to do anything, only to speak. One who wishes to fulfill all 613 mitzvot in private may do so, without liability....

When we are asked whether one should be killed or make this declaration, we tell him to declare it and not be killed. But he should not remain in that king's land, but rather he should sit in his house until he leaves it if he must, and he should engage in his activities in secret, for we have never seen such a remarkable *shmad*, in which one is not compelled in anything other than speech....

One who faces this *shmad* must follow the conduct I advise: That he should place between his eyes to practice and fulfill all mitzvot he can practice. Should it occur that he violate many mitzvot or desecrate Shabbat, he should not transport anything he is prohibited to transport [on Shabbat], and he should not say, "What I have already violated is greater than that regarding which I am now careful." Rather, he should be careful in anything he is able....

The advice I give for myself, and the approach I choose for myself and my loved ones and anyone who seeks my counsel, is to leave these places and travel to a place where he can establish his religion and fulfill his Torah without compulsion...

One who cannot leave due to the desires of his heart or the dangers of the times, so that he remains in those places, must see himself as desecrating the Name of Heaven. It is not by desire, but it is close to being by desire. He is distanced from Gd and punished for his evil desires. However, coupled with this he should know that if he performs any mitzvah, Gd doubles his reward for it. He does it only for the sake of Heaven, and not to be elevated or to be seen to perform mitzvot. The reward for one who performs a mitzvah without fear cannot be compared to the reward of one who performs a mitzvah knowing that should it become known he could lose his life and all he possesses.

Introduction to Martin Luther

11. Thomas Kauffmann, *Luther's Jews*, pp. 3-4

Luther's last public statement, which appeared in print after his death, was an emphatic warning to Christian society against being implicated in 'Jewish sin'. Jews in his view 'contaminated' a Christian community by their evil ways, which in addition to blasphemous practices included 'perverse' economic and other activities. All their energies were aimed at destroying Christians and this must inevitably bring down Gd's wrath upon them. 'Conversion' or 'expulsion': there was no other option because the Jews were so dangerous: they were poisoners; they were sorcerers in league with the Devil, their Gd, and had been out to kill Luther himself for years; they were idolaters and blasphemers whom Gd would crush.

12. Carl Cohen, *Martin Luther and his Jewish Contemporaries*, *Jewish Social Studies* 25:3 (Jul. 1963)

At the beginning of the Lutheran Reformation, the signs of a new era had already been visible for a while. After the discovery of America nobody could believe the earth to be flat... With the Turks, a non-Christian power made its threatening appearance in the heart of Europe... Pious people performed their private reformations in the Low Countries. Renaissance swept Europe, a new learning and thinking took hold... [T]he printing press facilitated the dissemination of knowledge and opinions. The Middle Ages, the Ages of Belief, were over.

13. Thomas Kauffmann, *Luther's Jews*, pp. 12-18

In the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation during the Late Middle Ages the legal category of 'treasury servitude' had been established to link any right the Jews might be granted to exist to the Imperial Treasury, which was entitled to levy taxes on them. In this way their servitude, which was theological in origin, acquired the quality of a secular jurisdiction, from which rights of protection for the Jews were derived...

The precarious nature of the toleration of the Jews meant that they were in no way 'integrated' into the Christian world. From a social and economic point of view they were isolated by being barred from membership of the guilds, which defined themselves as Christian fraternities. They could not live off the land as farmers or peasants because they were not sufficiently rooted in it and they were usually not allowed to own it. The only possible line of work open to them was to trade in goods or money...

Since the Fourth Lateran Council of 1215 all Jews in Catholic Europe had been obliged to wear an emblem of identification... In some places, Worms for example, Jewish homes had to be marked...

The allegation that Jews poisoned wells, either directly or by means of Christians they had suborned, in particular lepers, had originated in France and been in general circulation since a series of plague outbreaks in the middle of the fourteenth century... The allegation that Jews desecrated the host, which belongs in the context of the increased importance being given in worship from the thirteenth century onwards to the bodily presence of JC in the sacrament, was a different matter, for here specifically anti-Jewish factors were dominant [as opposed to poisoning of wells, which was also alleged regarding other undesirable groups]... The most bizarre and emotionally charged allegation against the Jews was that of ritual murder...

14. Jay Berkovitz, *Jewish Law and Ritual in Early Modern Germany*, Jews, Judaism and the Reformation in Sixteenth Century Germany

Whatever stability had been attained through the determined efforts of the aforementioned rabbinic leaders was steadily eroded by deteriorating political conditions in the fifteenth century. Invariably subject to the caprice of princes, dukes, and bishops, the Jews discovered that German emperors were seldom able to provide adequate protection; occasionally, expulsion was averted, as in the case of Lower Austria and Görz, owing to the efforts of *shtadlanim* who were able to gain political support for their coreligionists. But overall, worsening conditions in Germany triggered a precipitous decline in the Jewish population between Rhine and Oder rivers. A series of expulsions removed the Jews from most imperial cities, and from territories such as Bavaria, Bamberg, Passau, Styria, Carinthia, Krain, Mecklenburg, Brandenburg, Salzburg, and Magdeburg. In isolated instances the order of expulsion included a provision permitting them to settle in a nearby city, as in the case of Cologne (to Deutz) and Nuremberg (to Fürth). In addition to suffering the harsh effects of these expulsions, the Jews of Austria, Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia were exposed to the terrors of massacre, forced baptism, and martyrdom during the war on the Hussites.

Martin Luther and the Jews

15. Thomas Kauffmann, *Luther's Jews*, pp. 26-33

A table talk entry... that 'in the early days' there was a record of Regensburg Jews having sent Luther in Wittenberg a German translation in Hebrew characters of Psalm 130 ('Out of the depths'). 'They were so pleased with Luther.'... After Luther's historic appearance before the Emperor and the Imperial Diet (17/18 April 1521) many people flocked to his lodgings. Noblemen and scholars of every kind wanted to see the man whom the whole world was talking about. Two Jews also wanted to see him, perhaps members of the flourishing Jewish community in Worms or connected to the Jewish delegation that was attempting to negotiate at the Imperial Diet about the events in Regensburg...

The next evidence of personal contact between Luther and Jews comes from the mid-1520s. Two or three rabbis... came to see Luther in Wittenberg and engaged in learned discussion with him... At the end of the document he used a Christological formulation along the lines of 'for JC's sake they should be allowed to pass'. In a conversation that followed between the Jewish visitors and the Wittenberg Professor of Hebrew Matthaus Aurogallus, one of them is said to have taken offence at this formulation, referred to JC by the derogatory term 'Thola', that is 'strung up', and was indignant that this man's sufferings alone and not those of history's many innocent victims were regarded as significant... His personal correspondence with a particular Jew, the rabbi Joseph ben Gershon Roschaim, known as Josel von Rosheim, occurred in the summer of 1537. The latter was widely known as the representative (*Schtadlan*) and 'patron' of the Jewish communities at the Emperor's court and at those of other rulers. He approached Luther because Elector Johann Friedrich of Saxony, whose subject Luther had been since 1532, had issued a decree in 1536 expelling all Jews from his territories and even refusing them safe passage on their journey...

16. Martin Luther, *That JC Was Born a Jew* (1521)

Our fools, the popes, bishops, sophists, and monks - the crude asses' heads - have hitherto so treated the Jews that anyone who wished to be a good Christian would almost have had to become a Jew. If I had been a Jew and had seen such dolts and blockheads govern and teach the Christian faith, I would sooner have become a hog than a Christian. They have dealt with the Jews as if they were dogs rather than human beings; they have done little else than deride them and seize their property. When they baptize them they show them nothing of Christian doctrine or life, but only subject them to popishness and monkery. When the Jews then see that Judaism has such strong support in Scripture, and that Christianity has become a mere babble without reliance on Scripture, how can they possibly compose themselves and become right good Christians?...

I hope that if one deals in a kindly way with the Jews and instructs them carefully from Holy Scripture, many of them will become genuine Christians and turn again to the faith of their fathers, the prophets and patriarchs. They will only be frightened further away from it if their Judaism is so utterly rejected that nothing is allowed to remain, and they are treated only with arrogance and scorn. If the apostles, who also were Jews, had dealt with us Gentiles as we Gentiles deal with the Jews, there would never have been a Christian among the Gentiles.