

## Preface to Iranian Jews Part II

*Hooray and thanks to the Myerberg Staff* for facilitating an online class for Iranian Jews #1. So let's preview what's to come in part #2.

Persian / Iranian Jewish history is ancient. Ashkenazic Jews (like myself and wife) cannot claim that our ancestors were in Poland or Russian before the Common Era. Persian Jews can make that claim. As far as a paragon of survival of our nation, they are quite a prime example. To a degree, the attitudes of the Persian nation at large, influenced the Jews to hold on to tradition. To a degree that is. Unlike many other Middle Eastern people (actually the real name is Near Eastern), Persians always had a strong feeling of heritage and identity. At some level, they could appreciate the Jews and their traditions. This climate would nurture the many years of Jewish community and observance. (Not all of the time though.)

Thus, for most of their 2000 ++ years, the Persian Jews could maintain their religion and its institutions. Yet nothing lasts forever. The Ayatollah regime would put the writing on the wall. They would do that with both rhetoric and violence.

There are still several thousand Jews in Iran (maybe 8,000), but nowhere near the numbers before the revolution of 80,000. The Jews were barely a quarter percent of Iran's population of 35 million. Nevertheless, the tiny population of Jews would be of great influence and import. Eventually some of that would work against them.

In our online course, we will examine what life was like before with the Shah, then during the Islamic Revolution. We will meet Iranian Jews who strived to be patriotic, even as the Ayatollah came to power. Then we'll meet those who did their part in the long Iran-Iraq war. Our biggest focus though, will be on those who took their skills here to America and rebuilt. The American Jewish community worked endlessly for them. Few did a better job than our very own Baltimore!! (Okay, LA is #1) For years, the Jewish Persian community has been building themselves as people, Jews, and restoring their own Persian traditions. Since the 80's they have even been reaching out to long lost Iranian Jews who had been here long before.

At this time of Passover, a time of miracles and redemption, the Iranian Jews are such a wonderful group to teach us what the holiday is all about. No matter how dire things appear, (and indeed they are now) if people work together, despite their many differences, G-d will tow them the rest of the way. But you do have to try hard. It isn't easy.

Join me next Tuesday at 1:00P.M. for the online Myerberg course!!

P.S.

And where would the State of Israel fit in? Just about everywhere.