

The Sages say "from three things our father's were delivered from Egypt: they did not change their names, their tongue (language) and their dress." Tradition records that the Yemenite Jewish community was first established by King Solomon over 3000 years ago. Yemenite Jewry is a window into Jewish people's past. Yemenites have many customs, traditions, foods, clothing, and language that clearly make them unique from the general divisions of world Jewry like Ashkenazic or Sephardic. For instance, Yemenites are the only members of world Jewish community who base their religious legal code on Moses Maimonides' opus magnum the Mishna Torah. Moreover, Maimonides, or more commonly known by his acronym the Rambam, with his logical and rational approach to the Bible is the adopted hero for Yemenite Jewry. On the other hand, Yemenite Jewry maintains many ancient superstitions which at first glance appear to contradict Rambam's approach. However, Yemenites have been able to strike a balance between their superstitions and Rambam's rationalism and to build a harmony in their lives. It is this ability to harmonize seemingly unbridgeable differences which first attracted me to the study of Yemenite Jewry.