

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד

JESUS CHRIST IS LORD

ISRAELITE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

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THE THREE SONS OF NOAH

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Asia

The Jews of Africa are not the only Jews who live in remote or distant areas, far away from the mainstream of contemporary Judaism. Similarly non-traditional Jewish communities exist all over the world, from the jungles of the Amazon to the distant mountains of India.

The Jewish people can trace their history back several thousand years to the Fertile Crescent, an area bordered by the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in the Central Asian region once known as Mesopotamia. Since their inception as a people, many Jews have traveled eastward from the Fertile Crescent to trade silk and spices with other Central and Eastern Asian merchants. When the Assyrians conquered Palestine in 721 B.C. and the ten northern tribes of Israel fled to points unknown, did some follow those trade routes through Persia and Afghanistan to India, China, perhaps even as far as Japan? Some researchers believe that Jewish practices may more likely have spread eastward through gradual contact with Hebrew traders, but the fact remains that there are practicing Jewish communities sprinkled about Asia. In fact, there are well-documented cases of Jews fleeing eastward to avoid religious persecution by Romans and Muslims, and as recently as World War II, tens of thousands of Jews fled to distant Asian cities like Shanghai to avoid Nazi persecution, joining communities of already-practicing Jews in Central Asia, India and China. Some of the more interesting communities that the authors could feature in *The Jews of Asia* may include:

India:

-- the Shinlung ("cave dwellers") live in the northeastern India near the border of Myanmar. According to tribal lore, this Jewish community descends from the wandering tribe of Menashe, cast out of Israel almost 2,700 years ago. After traveling through Persia to Afghanistan and finally to China, this tribe claims that they fled religious persecution a final time by moving into caves in the mountains of northeastern India. Over the centuries they emerged from the caves and began to live in mountain towns, finally falling prey to Christian missionaries in the late 19th century. In the last twenty-five years, several thousand Shinlung rediscovered their ancestors' religion and have since become observant Jews. Three hundred members of the community have emigrated to Israel, though five thousand remain in India.

The Jews of Indian:

India has a legacy of three distinct Jewish groups: the Bene Israel, the Cochin Jews and the White Jews from Europe. Each group practiced important elements of Judaism and had active synagogues. The Sephardic rites predominate among Indian Jews.

The Bene Israel ("Sons of Israel") lived primarily in Bombay, Calcutta, Old Delhi and Ahmadabad. The native language of the Bene Israel was Marathi, while the Cochin Jews of southern India spoke Malayalam. The Bene Israel claim to be descended from Jews who escaped persecution in Galilee in the 2nd century B.C.E. The Bene Israel resemble the non-Jewish Maratha people in appearance and customs, which indicates intermarriage between Jews and Indians. The Bene Israel, however, maintained the practices of Jewish dietary laws, circumcision and observation of Sabbath as a day of rest.

The Bene Israel say their ancestors were oil pressers in the Galil and they are descended from survivors of a shipwreck. In the 18th Century they were "discovered" by traders from Baghdad. At that time the Bene Israel were practicing just a few outward forms of Judaism (which is how they were recognized) but had no scholars of their own. Teachers from Baghdad and Cochin taught them mainstream Judaism in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Jewish merchants from Europe traveled to India in the medieval period for purposes of trade, but it is not clear whether they formed permanent settlements in south Asia. Our first reliable evidence of Jews living in India comes from the early 11th century. It is certain that the first Jewish settlements were centered along the western coast. Abraham ibn Daud's 12th century reference to Jews of India is unfortunately vague and we do not have further references to Indian Jews until several centuries later.

The first Jews in Cochin (southern India) were the so-called "Black Jews," who spoke the Malayalam tongue.

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The "White Jews" settled later, coming to India from western European nations such as Holland and Spain. A notable settlement of Spanish and Portuguese Jews starting in the 15th century was Goa, but this settlement eventually disappeared. In the 17th and 18th centuries, Cochin had an influx of Jewish settlers from the Middle East, North Africa and Spain.

The Jews of Cochin say that they came to Cranganore (south-west coast of India) after the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. They had, in effect, their own principality for many centuries until a chieftainship dispute broke out between two brothers in the 15th century. The dispute led neighboring princes to dispossess them. In 1524, the Moors, backed by the ruler of Calicut (today called Kozhikode) attacked the Jews of Cranganore on the pretext that they were "tampering" with the pepper trade. Most Jews fled to Cochin and went under the protection of the Hindu Raja there. He granted them a site for their own town that later acquired the name "Jew Town" (by which it is still known).

Unfortunately for the Jews of Cochin, the Portuguese occupied Cochin in this same period and indulged in persecution of the Jews until the Dutch displaced them in 1660. The Dutch Protestants were tolerant and the Jews prospered. In 1795 Cochin passed into the British sphere of influence. In the 19th century, Cochin Jews lived in the towns of Cochin, Ernakulam and Parur. Today most of Cochin's Jews have emigrated (principally to Israel).

Sixteenth and 17th century migrations created important settlements of Jews from Persia, Afghanistan and Characin (Central Asia) in northern India and Kashmir. By the late 18th century, Bombay became the largest Jewish community in India. Bene Israel Jews lived in Bombay, as did Iraqi and Persian Jews.

Near the end of the 18th century, a third group of Indian Jews appears. They are the middle-eastern Jews who came to India through trade. They established a trading network stretching from Aleppo to Baghdad to Basra to Surat/Bombay to Calcutta to Rangoon to Singapore to Hong Kong and eventually as far as Kobe, Japan. There were strong family bonds amongst the traders in all these places.

Typical is the founder of the Calcutta community, Shalom Aharon Ovadiah HaCohen. He was born in Aleppo in 1762 and left in 1789. He arrived in Surat in 1792 and established himself there. He traded as far as Zanzibar. In 1798 he moved to Calcutta. In 1805 he was joined by his nephew, Moses Simon Duek HaCohen, who married his eldest daughter Lunah. Soon the community was swelled by other traders and Baghdadis outnumbered those from Aleppo.

Under British rule, the Jews of India achieved their maximum population and wealth, and the Calcutta community continued to grow and prosper and trade amongst all the cities of the Far East and to the rest of the world. The Indians were very tolerant and the Jews of Calcutta felt completely at home. Their numbers reached a peak of about 5,000 during World War II when they were swelled by refugees fleeing the Japanese advance into Burma.

The first generations of Calcutta Jews spoke Judeo-Arabic at home, but by the 1890s English was the language of choice. After WWII, the rise of Indian nationalism made Jews feel less comfortable because they were identified with the English by the Indians. India's Jewish population declined dramatically starting in the 1940s with heavy immigration to Israel, England and the United States. This is where most Indian Jews live today.

The Telugu: a very poor community of Jewish "untouchables" who live in the eastern Indian region of Andhra Pradesh. They believe that their ancestors are Jews that migrated from northern India, Afghanistan or the North-East Frontier region (Manipur, Mizoram) during the 9th or 10th centuries and settled around the area of Nandial. Most of the current Telugu Jews live in the small town Kottareddipalem, though some scattered families live in Ongole in the Prakasham District.

Cochin: The Jews of Cochin -- a small city in Southwestern India -- claim that they first arrived in India after the destruction of Jerusalem's Great Temple in the year 70. Their sprawling Jewish community consolidated the town of Cranganore in about 1000 when the local Hindu leader granted control of the region to a Jew named Joseph Rabban. When the Moors raided Cranganore in 1524 the Jews fled to Cochin under the protection of a Hindu Raja who granted them their own area of the city, which later came to be called "Jew Town." Though most Cochin Jews have emigrated to Israel or the West, some still inhabit Jew Town and maintain Jewish practices there.

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Bnei Menashe



In North East India, in the land mass that lies between Myanmar (formerly Burma) and Bangladesh, there lives a small group of people who have been practicing Judaism for more than 25 years. They have not taken on a "new" religion. These people, in fact, have returned to the religion of their ancestors. They call themselves Bnei Menashe,

descendants of the Tribe of Menashe, one of the ten lost tribes. Also known as the Shinlung, the Bnei Menashe relate their history of exile from the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 B.C. across the silk route finally ending up in India and Myanmar. The story of these people is an amazing one. After thousands of years of exile they have rediscovered their roots and are returning to Judaism.

In the time of the first Temple, Israel was divided into two kingdoms. The southern kingdom, known as Judah, was made up mostly of the tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levy. Most Jews today are descended from the southern kingdom. The northern kingdom of Israel was made up of the remaining ten tribes. In approximately 721 B.C.E., the Assyrians invaded the northern kingdom, exiled the ten tribes living there and enslaved them in Assyria.

The oral history of Bnei Menashe that was passed down for 2,700 years describes their escape from slavery in Assyria to Media/Persia. From there they moved on to Afghanistan, mostly through less-traveled areas, ever on the lookout for kings or powerful people who might drag them back to slavery. From Afghanistan they traveled toward Hindu-Kush and proceeded to Tibet, then to Kaifeng, reaching the Chinese city around 240 B.C.E.

The Bnei Menashe believe that while in China their ancestors were enslaved yet again. During their years there, large numbers of the Israelites were killed and their assimilation started. These events caused the Israelites to flee and live in caves. The group was expelled in 100 C.E. and their "leather scrolls" were confiscated and burned. At that point different groups went in various directions. Some went down the Mekong River into Vietnam, the Philippines, Siam, Thailand and Malaysia, while some of the Israelites moved to Burma and west to India. Till today, some people refer to these people as "Shinlung" the "cave dwellers."

Today, the descendants of those Israelites who settled in India and Burma have different names depending on where they live. Some are known as Shinlung, some Kuki, Mizo, Lushai or Mar. In 1894, Christian missionaries arrived to the Manipur area of North East India, intent on converting the local population. The Kukis, having been brought up with an oral history of their link to their ancestor "Manmaseh" and other stories, recognized some of the Bible stories. They eventually converted to what they thought was the religion of their ancestors and began practicing Christianity. One Bnei Menashe song, which had been handed down and carried throughout their travels,

describes part of the Exodus from Egypt:

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We must keep the Passover festival
Because we crossed the Red Sea on the dry land
At night we crossed with a fire
And by day with a cloud
Enemies pursued us with chariots
And the sea swallowed them up
And used them as food for the fish
And when we were thirsty
We received water from the rock

In 1951, a Pentecostal minister named Tchalah had what he believed to be a prophecy from God. He was told that his people must return to their original land and the religion they came from, before the war of Armageddon. Additional prophecies led him to write to the Knesset, but the fledgling State of Israel did not invite Bnei Menashe home, nor did Tchalah's movement grow significantly. About 20 years later, some Kukis who were dissatisfied with Christianity started researching the origins of their religion and realized that they were not descended from Christians, but from Jews. They discovered that their tradition of being the "children of Manmaseh" actually referred to the tribe of Menashe.

Small numbers started to learn and practice Judaism. During the process of their research and return to Judaism, contact was made with Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail in Jerusalem. Rabbi Avichail - founder of Amishav, an organization dealing with the dispersed of Israel - took a strong interest in this small but dedicated group. Evidence of their Jewish roots is very strong with customs such as performing circumcision on the eighth day following birth, honouring levirate marriages, offering sacrifices on altars and wearing shawls that resemble the Talit. Despite this evidence, rabbinic authorities determined that the status of these "cousins" to be that of "safek Jews." Since their Jewish status is not known for sure, they require conversions to be considered Jewish.

Over a period of years the group grew, and today there are about 5,000 practicing as Jews in North East India and across the border in Myanmar. The Kuki and Mizo tribes comprise about 1.5 million people. Those who call themselves Bnei Menashe are only a small part of the larger Kuki tribe. Unlike the Naga tribe they live beside, the Kukis are seen as outsiders and transient. Manipur is a closed area, requiring special permits for outsiders to visit because of the fighting. The Nagas hope to rid the region of the Kukis. The morgue in Imphal, Manipur's capital, displays a sign for a coffin maker. Business is brisk with people being killed almost daily in the battle between these groups. Most recently, the village of Churachandpur was attacked, residents killed, the synagogue destroyed and the homes of the Kuki residents burned. If these people are not permitted to move to Israel soon, this lost tribe might become lost forever.

More than 300 Bnei Menashe have gone to Israel, where they have undergone conversion and have settled with the help of Rabbi Avichail and Amishav. Many live in the Gush Katif area, work in agriculture and serve in the army. The rest of Bnei Menashe would like to move to Israel and join the few who have been able to obtain permission from the Israeli authorities to move back home. Past experience with other immigrations might explain Israel's fear that these people are "economic immigrants" "opportunists" and not true Jews. Bnei Menashe look to Zion, not for washing machines or microwaves but for a fulfillment of a dream they carried with them during their exile of 2,700 years. A stanza of a modern poem they wrote speaks volumes:

Oh my brother Judah
Unsatisfied with me,
Won't thou forgive me still, I pray;
Yet I don't think time is a barrier;
When the day of promise arrives...

Postscript: More information on Bnei Menashe can be obtained from the website
<http://www.bneimenashe.com>.

BENE ISRAEL

The largest Jewish community of Indian Jews is that of the Bene Israel. Earlier the Bene Israel lived in the villages of west Maharashtra in the Konkan coast. In the nineteenth century they started moving to the cities, mainly to Bombay (now called Mumbai) and to other cities among them Pune, Ahmadabad and Karachi which is now part of Pakistan. From 1950 onwards they started immigrating to Israel. The Bene Israel community was completely isolated from most of the other Jewish communities of the world. They are known as Bene Israel because that's how they called themselves. The Bene Israel believe that their forefathers arrived in India before the destruction of the second temple. The accepted version is that their forefathers were sailing in a commercial ship from the Land of Israel to India. The ship wrecked near the coast of Konkan. From the ship survived 14 people, seven men and seven women. They swam towards the land and arrived at the village called Navgaon. All their belongings drowned in the sea. The dead bodies of the others from the ship were buried in the village. The survivors somehow managed to settle in the village and started working in agriculture and oil producing which later on became their main profession. As time passed the descendants of the survivors forgot Hebrew and their religious tradition. But they carried out some of the Israeli tradition.

The Bene Israels observed Sabbath (Saturday) and abstained on this day from any work. They circumcised their sons on the eighth day after birth. They didn't eat fish which didn't had fins and scales. They observed a few Israeli festivals and called them by Indian names, but until their association with other Jewish communities they weren't aware of the Hanukkah festival and the ninth of Ab fast. These two traditions became part of Jewish tradition after the destruction of the second Temple and therefore the belief that the Bene Israels forefathers arrived in India before the destruction of the second temple. On each religious occasion such as marriage; circumcision or death the Bene Israelis used to recite the 'Shema' verse.

The Bene Israel community grew and they became a guild or an Indian caste with the profession of oil pressers. They left their first village, Navgaon, and dispersed to other villages and towns in the coast of Konkan becoming the oil producers and oil pressers of their respective villages. From the names of the villages and towns; like Roha, Pen, Pali or Ashtam; they derived their surnames like Rohekar; Penkar; Palkar; Ashtamkar and such others. The Bene Israels used to abstain from any work on Saturday (which wasn't an acceptable feature in India) and were therefore called 'Shenwar Teli' meaning 'Saturday oil pressers'.

According to Bene Israel tradition, somewhere between 1000 AD to 1400 AD a Jewish merchant, David Rahabi, arrived in west India. The Bene Israels believe that Rahabi was Moses Maimonides (a very respected Jewish scholar also called 'Rambam') brother. Rahabi was surprised to find this Bene Israel community which followed some Jewish traditions and festivals. He decided to enlighten them with all the Jewish traditions. He chose three men from the Bene Israel community and taught them Talmud and other Jewish books. These three people became to be known as 'Kaji' (meaning judge in Arabic) and were religious and social leaders of the Bene Israel community. And so, it is believed, began the revivification of the Bene Israel Jews towards Judaism. Later on in the eighteenth century Cochini Jews and other Jewish communities also began to associate religiously with the Bene Israel Jews.

A very important non-Jewish community that had an impact on the Bene Israel was the Christian missionaries. In the eighteenth century many Christian missionaries came to India. Some of them had anthropological interest in India. They began with their own theories about the origins of Bene Israel and other researchers including the Bene Israel themselves also began theorizing the origins of the

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Bene Israel. Different researchers came to different conclusions. Among the theories there were a few which came to conclusion that the Bene Israel's forefathers arrived in India before the destruction of the second Temple and this is because the Bene Israel (meaning children of Israel) did not call themselves Jews (In the narrow sense the Jews are descendants only from the two of the twelve tribes of Children Of Israel, Yehuda and Benjamin) . For the same reason others concluded that the Indian Bene Israel are from the 'Lost Tribes' which are the ten tribes (of the twelve tribes of the Children Of Israel) whom the Assyrians exiled from the Land Of Israel in 800 BC and what happened of them is not known (and are therefore called Lost Tribes) . Others concluded that the Bene Israel originate from the tribes of Zvulun and Asher and that's because the Bene Israel engaged in the profession of oil pressing which is believed to be the profession popular among the tribes of Zvulun and Asher. Other reasons that support the theory that the Bene Israel Jews are in India for over 2000 years is the fact that they weren't aware of the main Jewish tradition which evolved in Judaism between 200 BC to 300 AD. Others concluded that the Bene Israel are Jews who came to India from Arab countries at a much later period, somewhere around the seventh century AD. And there are other theories, among them is that the Bene Israel aren't at all of Israeli origin.

With the revival of Judaism among the Bene Israel by David Rahabi, he selected three men to be the religious leaders of the community and called them 'Kaji'. These Kajis fulfilled all the religious jobs of the community. The Kaji's profession was hereditary. From the eighteenth century the Bene Israel developed contact and communication with other Jewish communities especially with the 'Cochini' Jews who lived in the southern part of India the present state of Keralla and with Jews from Iraq and Yemen. The contacts and communication with the Yemen Jews started when Bene Israels, who were soldiers in the Indian-British army, were posted at Aden in Yemen. The Bene Israel in Aden had their prayer hall in Aden and later on brought Yemenite Jewish cantors to India and so adopting the Yemenite style of praying (Because of the Yemenite way of praying some researchers wrongly presume that the Bene Israel originate from Yemen). In the first synagogues of the Bene Israel Jews the cantors were mainly Yemenite or Iraqi or Cochini. After the cantors, the Bene Israel began to bring to India Jewish circumciser and butchers from Yemen and so the Kajis lost their traditional position as head of the community.

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Yemenite cantor listens while a Bene Israel blows the shofar

The Bene Israels have a few Jewish customs almost unique only to them. The community members almost in every thanksgiving ceremony maintain a ritual called 'Malida'. Malida is a home ritual in which the men sit around a plate full of roasted rice, fruits, spices and flowers. In this ceremony they sing songs praising the Lord. In the main song they also praise Prophet Elaija as the precursor of the Messiah. The Bene Israel legend also narrates of two occasions when Prophet Elaija visited them and returned to heaven. The first occasion occurred immediately after the arrival of Bene Israel to the coast of Konkan. On this occasion he revived the unconscious Bene Israels who swam to the beach from the sea. The second occasion occurred at a much latter period. At this visit the Bene Israel believe, Prophet Elaija also left a footprint from where he rose to heaven. In this place in the village of Khandala near Alibag (there is also a tourist town by the same name near Pune in Maharashtra and that's a different place) the Bene Israels used to have religious rituals. Another custom unique to the Bene Israel was abstaining from eating beef. The majority of Indians are Hindus. The Hindus believe that cow is sacred and therefore to maintain good relations with their Hindu neighbors they abstained from eating beef and instead eat mutton. Another custom of the Bene Israel inspired by their Hindu neighbors was, not remarrying of widows and not maintaining the levirate marriage (a Jewish custom which commands marriage between the widow and her dead husband's brother if the man dies childless) . The Bene Israels were also less strict about the Kosher laws. They didn't keep two complete sets of kitchen utensils but only two sets of cooking utensils.

The Bene Israels divide their community into two groups. 'Gora' and 'Kala'. Gora (meaning white) are majority in the community and their both parents are of Jewish religion. Kala (meaning black) is the smaller group whose father is of Israeli origin but mother is non-Jewish. These two groups use to pray together but the Goras didn't accept the Kalas as complete Jews and didn't mingle with them, nor did they marry with them. The Goras also didn't allow the Kalas to hold the 'Sefer' or to blow the 'Shofar'.

The first Bene Israel synagogue built by Samuel Divekar in 1796. Divekar with other Bene Israels served as a soldier of the British in India. In one of the wars against the kingdom of Mysore in south

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India, he with other British Indian soldiers was captured. The King of Mysore, Tipu Sultan, was a Muslim. He used to execute the captured soldiers, but when his mother heard of the Bene Israel captives, she begged her son to spare the Bene Israel soldiers because the Bene Israel are referred to in the holy Muslim Koran as the Chosen People of the Almighty. Many claim that if the Bene Israels had called themselves Yehudi (Jew) and not Bene Israel they would have been executed because the Koran looks negatively at Jews but in more positive way at the Bene Israels. After being spared Samuel Divekar decided to thank the Lord by building a synagogue. Later on more synagogues were built by the Bene Israels in India. There was even a Reform Jewish synagogue built in 1925. Among the synagogues, the synagogue in the town of Panvel (near Mumbai) is considered special and sacred where it is believed, prayers are fulfilled.

Until the twentieth century the Bene Israels referred to themselves as Bene Israels or Israels and not as Jews. In the twentieth century they slowly began to refer to themselves as Jews but normally they used to refer to themselves as Bene Israel and to the Jews from Arab countries who settled in India (Baghdadi Jews) as 'Yehudi'. In some of the birth certificates and other legal documents of the early twentieth century their religion was specified as 'Bene Israel' and not Jew. Many Indians (non-Jewish) of west Maharashtra even today refer to Jews as Bene Israel or Israel and not as 'Jew'.

The Bene Israel as a community weren't a powerful influential community in their local areas but there were among them some who advanced to high ranks in the armies of local rulers. Some of them also got land from the local rulers as a prize for their services. After the British arrived to India, many Bene Israels joined the British forces in India and fought for the British Empire in their different wars around the world. Later on the Bene Israels adopted the profession of building contractors and other new modern professions that emerged in India such as office clerks, law, modern medicine and other professions. There were some Bene Israels who reach to high positions of judges, lawyers, doctors, institute managers and administrative or other high ranking officers in government services.

The Bene Israel's population at their height was perhaps 30000 in India and that was in the 1950s. Proportionally they weren't even 0.01% of the Indian population. Since the 1950s most of the Bene Israel have immigrated to Israel, and some to English speaking countries like Australia and England. Today in India there are less than 5000 Bene Israels, most of them live in Thana a suburb of Mumbai (Bombay).

India's Bene Israel by Shirley Isenberg. A Comprehensive Inquiry and Sourcebook: This book has lot of information about the Bene Israel community and also about Jewish culture and history. In this book you will also find information about Indian society.

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Orle-Israel Synagogue, Nandgaon



Bethe-El Synagogue, Rewdanda



Burma - Bnei Menashe

by Marvin Tokayer



In the mountainous region which lies on both sides of the border between India and Myanmar (former Burma), lives the Menashe (Shinlung) tribe which numbers between 1-2 million people. They intermarried with the Chinese and look Chinese-Burmas, but the entire tribe is conscious of their Israeli ancestry. Among the tribe of Menashe we can see the custom of animal sacrifice in the same way which had been done among the Ten Tribes of Israel.

The word Menashe appears often in their poetry and prayer. It is the name of their ancestor and they call themselves children of Menashe (Beni Menashe). When they pray, they say, "Oh, God of Menashe," which is from the name Manasseh, one of the Ten Lost Tribe of Israel.

According to the history which they state, they were exiled to Assyria in 722 BCE with other Tribes of Israel. Later,

Assyria was conquered by Babylon (607 BCE), which later was conquered by Persia (457 BCE), which later was conquered by Greece of Alexander the Great (331 BCE), when the people of Menashe were deported from Persia to Afghanistan and other places.

There they became shepherds and idol worshipers. With the conquest of Islam, they were forced to convert to Islam. Because they speaking Hebrew they were called the Semitic speakers. Throughout this entire period they possessed a Hebrew Torah scroll which they guarded with their elders and their priest.

From Afghanistan their migration continued eastward until they reached the area of the Tibetan-Chinese border. From there they continued into China following the Wei River until they reach the central China. They settled there at about 231 BCE.

But the Chinese were cruel to them and enslaved them. Some of them escaped and lived in caves in the mountainous areas called Shinlung, which became another name for the tribe of Menashe. They are also called the cave people or the mountain people.

Menashe people lived in caves in poverty for about two generations but they still kept the Torah scroll with them. But they started to assimilate and have Chinese influences. Later they were banished from their cave area and went west through Thailand and eventually reached the area in Myanmar.

There they wandered along the river until they reached Mandaley. From there they reached the Chin Mountains. In the 18th century a part of them migrated to Manipur and Mizoram which are in northeastern India. Generally, they maintained the tradition about their wandering and they realized that they were not Chinese even though they spoke the local language.

They call them themselves Lusi which means the Ten Tribe ("Lu" means tribes, and "si" means ten).

Israeli Customs Among the Tribe of Menashe

According to the history which Menashe people state, when they were banished from their cave area they lost their Torah scroll when or perhaps it was stolen or burnt by the Chinese. But the priests of the tribe of Menashe continued to hand down their tradition orally including their ritual observances until the 19th century.

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They had kept the custom of circumcision, which when it became difficult was no longer practiced but they blessed the child in a special ceremony on the 8th day. They also had holy days which were very similar to the Jewish days, and even practice levirate marriage where the younger brother had to marry the older brother's widow to keep the name within the family.

The following poem accompanied them throughout their migrations. It is a traditional song about the crossing of the Red Sea which was written by their ancestors. This is the English translation:

*We must keep the Passover feast
Because we crossed the Red Sea by dry land
At night we crossed with a fire
And By day with a cloud
Enemies pursued us with chariots
And the sea swallowed them up
And used them as food for the fish
And when we were thirsty
We received water from the rock*

This content is similar to the experience of Israelites written in Exodus. The people of Menashe call their God Y'wa, which is similar to God's Biblical name.

In every village they had a priest whose name was always Aaron, the brother of Moses and the first Jewish priest. One of his duties was to watch over the village. There were two priests in the larger villages.

The priesthood was passed down only by inheritance. They were involved with worshiping and the offering of sacrifices. The priest wore a tunic and a breastplate and an embroidered coat fastened with a belt and a crown on his head. And they always sang about Menashe at the beginning of each gathering.

In case of illness the priest was called to bless the sick person and to offer sacrifice for his recovery. The priest would slaughter a sheep or a goat and smear the blood on the ear, back and legs of the sick person while reciting verses from the Torah at the same time, similar to Leviticus 14:14.

For the atonement of sins a goat was offered in an altar just as it was in the ancient temple and the blood was sprinkled on the horns of the altar and the meat was eaten by the people. Yom Kippur was observed as a day of atonement once a year same as among Jews. The holy vessels of the priest were not made of metal but of clay, cloth or wood.

Special ceremonies were held by the priest in the case of certain illnesses. This is a form of atonement carried out with a bird the wings of which were sacrificed and the feathers thrown in the wind. In the case of leprosy the priest would offer a bird in the field.

It is also apparent that they practice idol worship and had superstitions regarding spirits and demons. They also believed in reincarnation but at the same time they believed in a God in heaven to whom they would turn in times of trouble.

I met this group in the jungles of Burma in 1963 or 1964 and I can describe their offerings and sacrifices as exactly the same as was offered in the Bible.

The Mizo Tribe

What is so amazing to me that in Burma, the Mizo tribe, untouched by the missionaries, and the source of the Bnai Menashe, have so many ancient Jewish ceremonies and rituals, as circumcision, Sabbath, holidays, etc. and this group must be studied seriously. I think the Israeli universities should send a team of scholars,

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historians, anthropologists, biologists, rabbis to study the Mizo in Burma. I will gladly join them.

In 1854 with the arrival of the first American missionary, V. Petigore of the Baptist Mission, the church was established. In 1910 more missionaries came and they established churches in their area of northern India. As a result, the tribal priest lost his stature and the community was subjected to Christian influences and pressure. With the spread of Christianity along the land, they were again subject to great pressures and many of their religious articles were then thrown away or burned by the British and American missionaries between 1854-1910.

Recently a return to Judaism began. Several thousand people of Menashe decided to observe the laws of the Torah and returned to Judaism. They have synagogues in Manipur, Assam, and Mizoram. There are also those who emigrated to Israel. Thousands long for returning to Israel.

Mystery of the Ten Lost Tribes

Kashmir

by Marvin Tokayer



Leaving Afghanistan and Pakistan where the Pathans live, when one goes east, it is the State of Kashmir in northern part of India which is west of Nepal. Kashmir consists of a very wide and beautiful valley, surrounded by tall mountains and I think it is one of the most beautiful places in the world. There are 5 to 7 million people there. Generally speaking, they have clearer complexions and are different from the other citizens of India. An interesting tradition is passed down among the Kashmir people regarding their ancestry from the Lost Tribes of Israel. This tradition is supported by extensive literature written by both the people of Kashmir and other scholars.

In Kashmir, various places are called with Israeli names, like Har Nevo, Beit Peor, Pisga, Heshubon. These are all the names in the land of the Ten Tribes of Israel. The same thing is true in the names of people, male names, female names, and names of

village.

The people in Kashmir perform a feast called Pasca in Spring, when they adjust the difference of days between the lunar calendar and solar calendar and the way of this adjustment is the same as Jewish. Several books are published on this. The Udu language which is used in Kashmir includes many words of Hebrew.

Most of the people of Kashmir are Muslims. In spite of it, they are sympathetic towards Jews and Israel. It is evident that their origin has also led to their interest in the people of Israel.

The history of the Kashmiris is shrouded in mystery as is the history of other people in that region. Most Kashmir researchers are of the opinion that many inhabitants of Kashmir are descendants of the Lost Tribes who were exiled in 722 BCE. They wandered along the Silk Road into the countries of the East, Persia and Afghanistan until they reached the Kashmir valley and settled there.

Others say the wanderings began approximately 300 years later. The wanderers settled in Kashmir, kept their traditions until they were forced to convert to Islam when the spread of Islam reached the valley. The priest Kitro in his book, the General History of the Mughal Empire, said that the Kashmir people are the descendants of the Israelites.

The traveling Arab historian El Bironi in the 12th century wrote, "In the past, permission to enter Kashmir was given only to Jews."

The priest Monstrat said that in the time of Vasco da Gama in the 15th century, "all the inhabitants of this area who have been living here since ancient times can trace their ancestry, according to their race and customs, to the ancient Israelites. Their features, their general physical appearance, their clothing, their ways of conducting business, all show that they are similar to the ancient Israelites."

Names like Israelites in Kashmir

Recently Mr. Ikbal Chapri, the owner of a houseboat called Haifa (the same name as a big city in Israel) in Srinagar, Kashmir, has written about this topic in the local newspapers.

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His article was about the names of the tribes and places of Kashmir which are exactly Hebrew. I have a copy of two pages of the list. For example, one of the tribes of Kashmir is called Asheriya which is Asher, the tribe of Dand is Dan, Gadha is Gad, Lavi is Levi. The Tribe of Shaul is the Hebrew name of King Saul. Musa is Moses, Suliamanish is Solomon. And you also have the tribe of Israel, the tribe of Abri which is the tribe of Hebrew, and the tribe of Kahana which is the word for Jewish priest.

There are also 50-75 names of places in Kashmir which are in fact the Hebrew names that ancient Israelites were very familiar with. There is a place called Samaryah which is Samaria. Mamre is Mamre, Pishgah is Pisgah, Nabudaal is Mt. Nevo, Bushan is Bashan, Gilgit is Gilgal, Heshba is Heshbon, Amunah is Amon, Gochan is Goshen, Median-pura is Midian, and Guzana is Gozan which is a place name in Assyria and the very place where the Ten Tribes of Israel were deported.

The name Israel is very common among them as it is among the Pathans, and this name is never used among the Muslims. They also light a candle for the Sabbath, have sidelocks, beards, and emblem or design of the Shield of David.

In an area which is on the border of Pakistan, called Yusmarg (Handwara), there lives a group which to this very day calls itself B'nei Israel meaning children of Israel. Many of the inhabitants of Kashmir say that this is the ancient name of all the people of Kashmir.

In Kashmir there is a strange tradition of a small community next to the Wallar Link who point out the grave of Moses. There is yet another tradition in connection with King Solomon according to which even King Solomon reached the Kashmir Valley and through his wisdom aided the people of Kashmir by successfully regulating the Jalum river. This tradition is also connected to a place called Solomon's throne which is situated above the capital of Kashmir, Srinagar. Isn't it strange and fascinating that there are historical and even folkloristic tales of ancient Israeli heroes in these strange and exotic places?

These also resemble legends in Japan. There is the grave of Moses in Mt. Houdatsu, Ishikawa prefecture, and a legend says that many secret treasures of Solomon are kept in Mt. Tsurugi in Shikoku, Japan.

The two primary historians of Kashmir, Mulla Nadiri, who wrote The History of Kashmir and Mulla Ahmad who wrote Events of Kashmir have established without a trace of doubt that the origins of the Kashmiri people are to be found in the people of Israel.

Afghanistan

by Marvin Tokayer



The Bible mentions the city of Medes as one of the locations of the Assyrian exile of the Ten Tribes of Israel. Most explain and understand this area to be the region in Northwest Persia called Kurdistan. It is an accepted tradition that the people of this area are from the Assyrian exile.

When one considers the possibility of the people of this exile wandering north and east, then this would apply to the Tribes of Israel living in the Caucasian Mountains between the Caspian Sea and the Black Sea which includes the areas of Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaidzhan, and Daghistan (areas of Khazar in old days). An eastern expansion beyond the Caspian sea includes the areas Uzbekistan, Bukhara, and Turkemistan. From these areas it is very easy to move south to Afghanistan, India, Pakistan as well as to get to China.

If one travels from the area of Medes or Hamadan to farther east, crossing the Khayber Mountains or the Khayber Pass, he comes into the frontier of Afghanistan today. There I personally found an amazing sight. There are so many of a tribe with names that had Yusuf in the name as Yusufzai, Yusufuzi, Yusufzad, etc., who claimed origin from the Lost Tribes and I personally believe it.

Yusuf means Joseph and Yusufzai means children of Joseph. The tribes of Joseph are the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh who are a part of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. They also call themselves Bani-Israel meaning children of Israel. Their tradition is that they were carried away from their ancient homeland. Formerly they were shepherds in search of pasture but they gave up their nomadic life and settled into village communities.

Israeli Tradition in Afghan Royal Family

Not only the Pathans, but also the Afghan Royal Family has a very well known tradition placing its origin in ancient Israel, they came from the Tribe of Benjamin.

This tradition was first published in 1635 in a book called Mahsan-I-Afghani and has often been mentioned in the research literature. According to this tradition, King Saul had a son called Jeremiah who had a son called Afghana. Jeremiah died at about the time of King Saul's death and Afghana was raised by King David and remained in the royal court during King Solomon's reign.

About 400 years later in the time of disorder of Israel, the Afghana family fled to a land called Gur which is in central Afghanistan. They settled and traded with the people of the area and in the year 662, with the arrival of Islam, the sons of Israel in Gur converted to the prophet with 7 representatives of the Afghan. The leader of the sons of Israel was Kish like the name of Saul's father.

According to this tradition Muhammed rewarded them and Kish's Hebrew name was changed to Arab-A-Rashid by Muhammad and was given the task of spreading Islam among his people. This is the roots of

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Afghan Royal Family.

So Afghan Royal Family has the tradition of ancient Israel - Benjamin Tribe of the Southern Kingdom of Judah.

Afghanistan/Pakistan - The Pathans

by Marvin Tokayer

One subject of the Lost Tribes which has generally been ignored which I found to be personally fascinating are the tribe of the Pathans.

The Pathans are about 15 million people living mainly in Pakistan and Afghanistan as well as in Persia and India. They have a tradition of being of the Lost Tribes and have Israeli customs.

The Pathans have custom of circumcision on the 8th day. This is a known Jewish custom, and is the oldest Jewish tradition. I myself witnessed and was present at a very joyous circumcision ceremony on the 8th day after birth. Muslims have custom of circumcision but it is not on the 8th day, and usually at the age of 12.

The Pathans have a sort of small Tallit called Kafan. This is a 4 cornered garment which they tie strings similar to the fringes (Jews call them Tzitzit) and is one of the oldest Jewish traditions going back to the Torah and it is a sign of their Israeli origin. They also have bigger Tallit which they call Joy-Namaz. It is a garment 2-3 meters sq., and it is made to cover the head and part of the shoulders, and is used for prayer by spreading on the ground in the Muslim fashion. It has no fringes.

The Pathans have custom of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is considered a day of rest and they do not labor, cook or bake. The Pathans prepare 12 Hallot (traditional Jewish bread, Leviticus 24:5) in honor of the Sabbath as was done in the ancient temple. One of the significant indicators proving the Israeli origins of the Pathans is the lighting of the candle to honor the Sabbath. After lighting, the candle is covered usually by a large basket. The candle is lit by a woman past her menopause.

Pathans Live in Customs of Israelites

Pathans have custom of Kosher, dietary laws same as Jews. Pathans do not eat horse or camel meat, which is most common in their area but of course forbidden to Jews. There is some evidence to their not eating meat and milk together which is also an ancient Israeli tradition. And they have a tradition regarding differentiating between pure and impure birds which means permitted and not permitted birds similar to the Torah.

Some still wear a small box which Jews call Tefillin (phylactery) containing a verse of the Bible. This box resemble Japanese Tokin of Yamabushi's forehead, too. This is an ancient custom of Israel. In the Jewish box there is the verse of Shema Israel, that is, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!" (Deuteronomy 6:4) This custom of Tefillin came from a verse of the Scriptures, "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes" (Deuteronomy 6:8).

It is interesting to note that the Pathans retain family names of the Lost Tribes such as Asher, Gad, Naphtali, Reuben and Manasseh and Ephraim. Among them there are people who are called by these names, which are of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. There are also people who are called Israel, Samuel, and so on, which are never found among the Muslims. There are also many areas as locations, neighborhoods and villages with names of places that are similar to names in the land of Israel.

The region has archeological finds testifying to a Hebrew past, and they also resemble Jews of the area and their language Pashtu surprisingly has many Hebrew words. The Pathans are also called Afghans, or sons of the Pashtu which is their language, were mostly called "Bani-Israel" meaning children of Israel even though they live today as devout Muslims.

The external appearance of the Pathans resemble the Jews of the area. Together with their ancient customs and other data there is a definite connection that can be made to the Tribes of Israel.

The Pathans number 6 to 7 million in Afghanistan and 7 to 8 million in Pakistan. They live in the border area between these two countries and about 2 million live as nomads. These Pathans desire for their independence,

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which is supported by Afghanistan and is a cause of constant tension in Pakistan which does not desire their independence.

Pathans' Law Resembles the Torah

Afghanistan is one of the least developed countries of Asia and the majority of the population is illiterate. They work primarily in farming and sheep-raising and other domesticated animals.

Most people still live in villages and some even live as nomads. It is a country that is ruled by Islamic religious law and more than 90 % of the population are Sunni Muslims. But whatever modernization has taken place, it has not reached the mountainous border areas. Here the Pathans continue their centuries old tribal life.

The legal system which is known as Pashtunwali, the law of the Pashtu, is very similar to the Torah, which is the holiest Jewish book and the book of ancient Jewish way of life. There are pages and even complete books among the pathans and they honor greatly what is called Tavrud El Sharif (the Torah of Moses), and they rise at the mention of the name of Moses even though it is not important in Islam.

The Pathans are very healthy, tall, and have strong light-skinned appearance. They are warriors and carry arms from a young age, they are hardworking, wise, truthful and extremely loyal and they also have a worldwide reputation for exemplary hospitality.

The ethnic origin of these Pathans has puzzled people for some time because they are different both externally and in the character traits from the other groups around them such as the Turks, the Mongolians, the Persians, or the Indo-Iranians. It is also difficult to trace their past history in a region in which tens of nations and major tribes of various origins have come and gone.

The personal identification of the Pathan Tribes with their Israelite origin is expressed in various ways. Besides the oral tradition related by the elders of the tribe, there are also interesting testimonies of keeping of scrolls of genealogy among the tribes, reaching back to the Fathers of the Jewish nation.

These scrolls are well preserved and some are written in gold on the skins of a doe. No less interesting and significant are the names of the tribes which bear close resemblance to the Tribes of Israel. The Rabbani Tribe is really Reuben, the Shinware Tribe is Shimon, the Lewani Tribe is Levi, The Daftani Tribe is Naphtali, and the Jaji Tribe is Gad, and the Ashuri Tribe is Asher, The Yusefsai Tribe is sons of Joseph, and the Afridi Tribe is really Ephraim. These are the names of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

The Pathans themselves point out the differences between the original names of the tribes and their present names are because of the different dialects of the languages so that, for instance, Jaji was actually called Gaji for the tribe of Gad.

There are some Jews of Afghanistan today who count the Tribe of Israel among the Pathans. The physical similarity between the Pathans and other Jews is exemplified by the British ruled Afghanistan for a great length of time and called the Pathans Jews. When not wearing their traditional clothing Pathans are indistinguishable from other Jews of the area. Among the 21 nations of Afghanistan only the Pathans and the Jews have Semitic features, their faces are longer and lighter, and some even have blue eyes. Like the Jews of the area, Pathans grow beards and sidelocks which further serve to make them indistinguishable from Jews.

Women of the Pathans keep laws similar to the Jewish laws regarding menstruation. During this time and for 7 days after, no contact is allowed with the husband. After this period, the woman immerses in a river
Israeli Features of the Pathans

The Pathans have many other features as descendants of Israelites.

Their wedding is like Jewish. Wedding ceremony with the Pathans includes a marriage canopy and rings similar to the Jewish custom.

or spring or in a bathhouse if a natural spring is not available. This is exactly the same as the Israeli tradition

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going back to the days of the Bible.

Pathans have custom of levirate marriage, which is the custom when a husband dies without children, his brother marries the widow to keep the name of the house. This custom no longer exists today, but was an ancient Israeli custom mentioned in the Bible (Deuteronomy 25:5-6).

The commandment to honor one's parent is kept in exemplary manner in these tribes. The son must obey the parents in all matters. When the father enters the room all stand and bow their heads in his honor. This was a Israeli tradition as well.

Pathans have custom of Yom Kippur. We know of some of the members of the Lewani Tribe who came to the Jewish synagogue on Yom Kippur each year in Afghanistan. He would stay there until sundown without uttering even one word. He spoke of the tradition of the Temple on this day and of the high priest and his work there.

One year he erred in his calendar and did not come, he wept bitterly for one week for missing the observance of this day.

The Pathans have custom of scapegoat. In ancient Israel there was the custom to put sins of the nation onto a goat and send the goat away to desert. This custom of scapegoat was done to atone the sins of the nation (Leviticus chapter 16). Similar custom is found even today among the Pathans.

The Pathans usually pray in mosque. However some pray towards Jerusalem which is most unusual. There are some very old synagogues in their area and Pathans come to these synagogues on special days in times of great stress or tragedies or for special prayers. The individual who seeks help comes there to touch the lock and to pray. There are those who say that these places once contained scrolls of the Torah. This is interesting because today they are actually devout Muslims.

At the time of plague the Pathans slaughter a sheep and sprinkle its blood on the doorpost of their homes. This is what the Israelites did in ancient Egypt during the plagues that occurred there.

An interesting testimony relates to the placing of a wrapped book of Psalms of the Bible under the pillow of the ill in order to heal that person.

There are those who have said that there are Amulets written in Hebrew. Some contain the phrase "Shema Israel" and it is secretly written by the head of the tribe and it is forbidden to open it.

And the symbol of Shield of David (Star of David) is found in almost every Pathan house. The wealthy make it out of expensive metals and the poor out of simple wood. It can be seen in towers, in schools and also in tools, bracelets, and jewelry. I saw it at least 20 times in a variety of places. In Minerajan, the center of Afghanistan, there are even schools that have the Shield of David on the door or in the stone above the door.

Cambodia



In 1603, then Brother Gabriel de San Antonio, in "A Brief and Truthful Relation of Events in the Kingdom of Cambodia" to King Don Philippe, wrote: "at the entrance to the road, (in the same way as we Christians erect crosses) Cambodian people erect high poles at the top of which is a golden snake. They all worship it; their criminals put themselves under its protection and it constitutes a sacred place. If they have a dispute between themselves and they want to contract a new friendship, they bleed, mix their blood in the same vessel and drink it, each one in his turn; then they dip a knife in it, keep it raised, and through ceremony, promise to be of the same blood, to have only one heart and one will, threatening with the knife anybody who would claim to the contrary. **That practice, and the custom of putting snakes on the top of masts along the roads as well as that of the monks chanting the chorus seven times originates from some roman Jews who once lived in that kingdom. There are many Jews in the kingdom of china: they are the ones who built, in Cambodia, the city of Angkor which, as I said, was discovered in 1570. They abandoned it when they emigrated to china, according to what the Jews from the East Indies told me when, passing through there, I conversed with them about that matter.**"

Laos



Taiwan:



Philippines



*"There are black Negroes in this island who pay tribute to no one."
--Early Spanish historian*

Although the great majority of the people of the Philippines are Tagalog, the country is not ethnically homogeneous. In spite of their small numbers the original inhabitants of the Philippines are the Agta (diminutive Africoids), who still live there in some numbers and are commonly and pejoratively called *Pygmies*, *Negritos* and *Aeta*, and a variety of other names based upon their specific locale. In regards to phenotype, broadly speaking, the Agta can be described as physically small and unusually short in stature, dark-skinned, spiral-haired and broad-nosed. They are an extremely ancient people and, I believe, close representatives of the world's earliest modern humans.

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Very similar groups of Black people in Asia reside in relative small numbers in the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal in the Indian Ocean north of the Indonesian island of Sumatra, and in northern Malaysia and southern Thailand in Southeast Asia. In Thailand they are commonly called *Sakai*. In Malaysia they have been called *Orang Asli* (Original Man). Pejoratively they are known as *Semang*, with the connotation of savage. It is very unfortunate that the contributions of these small Black people to monumental high-cultures characterized by urbanization, metallurgy, agricultural science and scripts remain essentially unexamined.

The presence of diminutive Africoids (whom Chinese historians called "Black Dwarfs") in early southern China during the period of the Three Kingdoms (ca. 250 C.E.) is recorded in the book of the *Official of the Liang Dynasty* (502-556 C.E.). In Taiwan there are recollections of a group of people now said to be extinct called "Little Black Man."

"They were described as short, dark-skinned people with short curly hair....These people, presumably Negritos, disappeared about 100 years ago. Their existence was mentioned in many Chinese documents of the Ching Dynasty concerning Taiwan."

Similar groups of Black people have been identified in Japan, Vietnam, Cambodia and Indonesia, and it seems almost certain that at one time a belt of Black populations of this type covered much of Asia.

In stark contrast to the Agta (the *People*), the Tagalog seem to have only entered the Philippines during the last several thousand years, and while almost nothing is known of the early history of the Agta in the Philippines it has been well-documented that they engaged in bitter martial conflicts with the Spanish invaders, whose presence in the islands began in the sixteenth century. Indeed, the country was named by the Spanish navigator Ruy Lopez de Villalobos for Prince Philip of Asturias, who, as Philip II, became the king of Spain in 1542. It was also the Spaniards who named the native people of the Philippines "Negritos" (*Little Blacks*).

The Spanish observed that "The Negritos, which our first conquerors found were, according to tradition, the first possessors of the islands of this Archipelago." Another account observed that "There are black negroes in this island who pay tribute to no one." Similar documents affirm the widespread presence and distribution of the Agta in the Philippines at the time of the Spanish intrusion. "If we are to believe later historians, the shores of some of the islands fairly swarmed with Negritos when the Spaniards arrived." The Bisayan island of Negroes derives its name from having been an Agta population center. Today, however, the Agta probably comprise less than one per cent of the total population of the Philippines.

The Agta men amassed quite a reputation as warriors, and although the accuracy of the report is somewhat questionable, it is said that the Agta were "such enemies to the Spaniards, that if they happen to kill one, they

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invite all their kindred, and rejoice for three days, drinking out of the skull, clear'd for that purpose; by which means, they afterwards get wives the easier, as being more courageous."

Dr. Pedro A. Gagelonia, a Filipino scholar, citing the commentaries of the European colonizers of the Philippines regarding the Agta, wrote that:

"They were the aborigines of the Philippines, and for a long time had been master of Luzon. At a time not very far distant, when the Spaniards conquered the country, the Aetas levied a kind of blackmail from the Tagalog villages situated on the banks of the lake of Bay (Laguna de Bay). At a fixed period they quitted their forests, entered the village, and forced the inhabitants to give them a certain quantity of rice and maize....After the conquest of the Philippines by the Spaniards, the latter took upon themselves the defense of the Tagalogs, and the Aetas, terrified by their firearms, remained in the forests, and did not reappear among the Indians."

THE ERUPTIONS OF MT. PINATUBO

The violent volcanic eruptions of Mt. Pinatubo in June 1991 were particularly devastating for the Agta. Alternately ignored and discriminated against, many Agta lived on the slopes of the long-dormant volcano that is regarded as the center of their cosmology. Forced down the mountain slopes by the eruptions, numbers of Agta, who have historically relied on the herbal medicines now buried under tons of mud and ash, have perished from dreadful epidemics of measles, diarrhea and pneumonia.

SOURCES:

The Filipinos of Yesterdays, by Pedro A. Gagelonia

The African Presence in Early Asia, edited by Runoko Rashidi

Indonesia:

Descendants of Iraqi Jews who came to Indonesia more than a century ago to trade spices still live and practice in Surabaya in the eastern half of the densely populated (and almost exclusively Muslim) island of Java. Their Jewish traditions are primarily ancient in origin (the Sabbath before Yom Kippur, for example, the community leader slaughters a chicken and swings it around the synagogue courtyard to dispel the community's sins), though Dutch Jewish traders from the 18th and 19th centuries introduced them to some European Rabbinical teachings.

Uzbekistan:

The Bukharan Jewish community, living mainly in Samarkand and Bukhara, traces its origins back to 5th-century exiles from Persia, though some claim that Bukhara is actually the ancient city of Habor, to which the Lost Tribes were exiled. Community members speak their own Tajik-Jewish dialect and have a number of unique festivals and practices that have developed over centuries of relative isolation in the Asian mountains.

Azerbaijan:

Nearly 8,000 "Mountain Jews" live in the Azerbaijan in cities like Baku and in villages such as Krasnaya, Sloboda and Vartashen. These Jews descend from Iranian tribes that moved into the Azerbaijani mountains in the 5th and 6th centuries. They are separate from other Jewish communities in that they speak Tat, a unique New-Persian language, and have developed many practices and traditions in kind with Dagestan mountain tribes. They have traditionally been grain farmers and wine makers, and were allowed to retain many of their skills (although less of their culture) during the Soviet period. The community has become active again since the end of the Soviet period, but Azerbaijani nationalism has recently threatened to curtail their revival.

Afghanistan:

Jews have lived in what is now known as Afghanistan for more than two thousand years. Fleeing persecution in the ancient land of Israel, many stayed to work as merchants, trading silk and spices from the East. In the early 19th century, tens of thousands of Persian Jews settled to Afghanistan fleeing forced conversion. Though the community dwindled throughout the 20th century due to isolation and Islamic suppression, a small, determined Jewish community of merchants and traders does continue in Kabul. Afghani Jews currently live under the strict Islamic Taliban regime and have had scant contact with the international Jewish community in recent years, but they maintain a synagogue in Kabul and pursue their Jewish practices.

Iran:

The roots of the Persian Jewish community reach back to the 6th century B.C. The Jewish community in Persia used to be one of the most culturally vibrant in the world, yet its numbers have dwindled due to centuries of harsh persecution. Before the Islamic revolution in 1979 there were 80,000 Jews in Iran, and though most have emigrated to Israel, there is still a dedicated Jewish community in Tehran. There currently a small number of synagogues in Tehran, as well as three Jewish schools. Though curriculum in the Jewish schools is strictly Islamic and teachers are only allowed to teach the Bible in Persian, there is some Hebrew instruction available through the community's elders. The recent moderate regime in Iran has loosened control on the Jewish minority in Tehran, and the community has been able to revitalize some of its religious practices.

Yemen:

Though Jews have populated Yemen since Biblical times, the first substantial number of Yemenites to accept Judaism did so in the fifth century under King Du-Nuas. As the only non-Muslims in the country, Yemenite Jews have faced constant persecution, including laws forbidding them to wear certain colors, ride animals or build tall houses. Jews began to emigrate from Yemen in 1882 and many landed in Israel. Emigration increased when Israel became a nation in 1948, and the fledgling nation accepted thousands of Jews who fled anti-Jewish riots. Despite the suppression, a small, secretive Jewish community remains in northern Yemen in villages in the vicinity of Saada, which is located in Sa'ata Province, close to the Saudi border. These Jews are not allowed to hold political office and are discouraged from having contact with their Muslim neighbors, so they continue their practices in virtual seclusion.

Mystery of the Ten Lost Tribes China

by Marvin Tokayer



In the mountainous area of northwest China, west of the Min River, near the border of Tibet, in Szechuan lives an ancient people called by the Chinese, Chiang or Chiang-Min, who numbers about 250 thousand people. The language of the Chiang tribe had been forgotten and they had also lost their ancient script. Today they speak Chinese and two other languages, one that originates from Tibet and the other is a slang which is called Chiaring.

The area which they live is famous for its rare animals and plants including the Panda bear. The Chiang people live in villages similar to fortresses which are generally built on hilltops. In the past they were a great people who ruled the provincial territories from Kansu in the north to Liyunan in the south.

Historical maps during the Han dynasty (3rd century BCE - 3rd century CE) show that this tribe the Chiang spread to the northwest part of China. They themselves see themselves as immigrants from the west who reached this area after a journey of three years three months. The Chinese treated them as Barbarians and they related to the Chinese as idol worshippers.

Hate and enmity existed between the Chinese and this tribe for a long time. They lived independently until the middle of the 18th century when they became part of the general population to earn more freedom. The religious pressure from the Chinese, the spread of Christianity, and the influence of intermarriage caused the Chiang tribe to generally and greatly give up their special monotheistic way of life.

However it is still possible even today to learn about the past traditions of the Chiang tribe through their customs and their faith which they still keep. This tribe had been living a special Israeli way of life for 2300 years.

According to their tradition, the Chiang tribe is the descendant of Abraham and their forefather had 12 sons. Those among them who did not take Chinese wives after their victory in war still look Semitic.

The character traits of this people are integrity, love of neighbor, mutual aid, generosity, modesty, shyness, gratitude, and stubbornness. They also have a fear of heaven or respect for God.

They believe in one God whom they call Abachi meaning the father of heaven, or Mabichu, the spirit of heaven, or also Tian, heaven. As a result of Chinese influences they all call Him God of the mountains as the mountains are the central place for worship of God.

Their concept of God is that of an all powerful God who watches over the entire world, judges the world fairly, rewards the righteous, and punishes the wicked. This God gives them the opportunity to do repentance and to gain atonement for their actions. In times of trouble, they call God Yah-weh.

They also believe in spirits and demons and they are forbidden to worship them, but this is probably a Chinese influence. In the past they had written scrolls of parchment and also books but today they only have oral traditions. They themselves do not understand the prayers that they recite every week.

The Custom of Sacrifice Among the Chiang Tribe

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The Chiang tribe lives a very special way of life based on the offering of animal sacrifices which seems to have been seen among the Ten Tribes of Israel. It is forbidden to worship statues or foreign gods and anyone who offers a sacrifice to another god faces the death penalty.

This worship is performed in two ways. It is public sacrifice on platforms erected on mountain tops on which they build altars of stone which may not be fashioned with tools and on which they offer special sacrifices.

They also have domestic or personal sacrifices on domestic altars built on flat surfaces on the roofs of their houses. There is an atmosphere of holy worship in all these sacrifices. They are performed by priests whose priesthood is passed down through inheritance from father to son. This was the same in ancient Israel.

These priests wear clean white clothes and perform the sacrifices in a state of purity as the priests in ancient Israel did (1 Samuel 15:27). I recall that Japanese Shinto priests also wear clean white clothes at holy events.

The priest of the Chiang tribe wears a special head turban. The priest is ordained in a special ceremony in which sacrifices are also offered. Unmarried men may not be a priest, which was the same in ancient Israel (Leviticus 21:7, 13).

The Chiang tribe does not have statues of images but they do have two symbols of holiness. A clean white sheet of paper and a piece of natural white stone. These symbolize absolute purity and perhaps the written parchment which they had in the past. Before one worships God, you must become holy and purify yourself.

It is perhaps because of the Assyrian influence of the past that they try to build their altars next to trees or branches. The altar itself is built of earth which is molded into stones which are then laid one on top of the other without being cut or fashioned by any tool of metal. It is important to remember that in the Torah, the ancient altar could not be made of cut stones (Exodus 20:25), since the sword or whatever tool to be used to cut the stone was also an instrument of war and harm.

The main part of the service is performed at night perhaps to conceal it from other Chinese or because of the special effect of the silence and the tranquility of night. This was also ancient Israeli tradition. It is interesting that the important rituals of Japanese Shinto religion are also performed at night.

Before the offering of sacrifices, one is required to wash one's self and one's clothing and to dress in clean garments. Sacrificial animals themselves must be washed and purified. There is a special place for purification and washing. The elders and priest place their hands on the head of the sacrifice which is to be slaughtered then offer their prayers.

Strangers are forbidden to approach the place of worship. The priest of the Chiang tribe perform the service solemnly. "Unclean ones" are also forbidden to approach the service (Leviticus 21:17-23). These were the same in ancient Israel.

The purpose of the sacrifice is a type of atonement and to bring God's blessings upon those offering the sacrifice. The sacrifice has the purpose of taking away sin and blood must be sprinkled on the corners of the altar to be granted atonement and to have one's prayers accepted.

Prayer Words of the Chiang Tribe

One of the prayers pronounced by the priest of the Chiang tribe in China includes the following prayer:
"Priest of God, You are the Priest of the generations who are witnesses to the fact that our sacrifice is pure and has not been changed by us, but has been performed in the same manner since ancient times. We hereby fulfill our vows. We have not eaten impure foods for three days and we have not been in impure places. We have gathered in the holy place, the bundles of grass for the sprinkling of the blood are in their places and we have brought the sacrifices and have lowered the rope on the bundles of grass for the sprinkling of the blood."

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Following the prayer many of the organs of the animal are burnt with the meat in the fire and the priest receives the shoulder, the chest, the legs, and also the skin, and the meat is divided among the worshippers. At the time of the sacrifice 12 flags are placed around the altar in order to teach that they originate from a father who had 12 sons. This system of sacrifices is very similar to the sacrifices brought in ancient Israel at the time of the dispersion of the Lost Tribes.

Among the ceremonies that the Chiang tribe has include the sprinkling of blood on the doorpost to insure the safekeeping of the house, and the laws of levirate marriage which was an Israeli custom as I mentioned earlier. It is considered shameful for a woman to leave her hair uncovered and therefore, they wear white scarves. Mixed dancing of men and women does not take place. And they have a custom of closing all forests for 50 years after which they have a special ceremony to mark their opening. This is like a custom in ancient Israel.

The the Chiang tribe also has a purification of the earth as well as a ceremony with a white scroll or parchment. They show great love for parchment and take care to make sure that it remains unblemished. They also practice trances for witchcraft and to expel demons and this may be a Chinese influence.

The Chiang tribe has a new year feast, a feast of feast, and a feast of thanksgiving, but circumcision is not performed. But after the 7th day or at the eve of the 40th day of the child's life, a white rooster is slaughtered in the child's honor and he is given a name.

Early Israelite Immigrants (947-950 A.D.)

The Israelites settled in China as early as the Five Dynasties (947-950) or the third year of King Dynasty (1163 A.D.). Israelite temples were built across China, during the King and Tang Dynasties in Kaifeng, Yangzhou, Ningbo, Hangzhou and Ningxia. The Chinese called Judaism the 'Religion of Muscle Picking' (may be because God touched the socket of Jacob's hip while wrestling with him, Genesis 32:25), or the 'Ancient Religion'. Since the Israelites wore blue hats during ceremonies, they were also known as the 'blue hats'. The Bible or the Pentateuch was known as the 'Heavenly Scripture' or the 'Way of Scripture'. The Jewish temples were called the Qing Zhen* Temple. The emperor of China awarded three monuments to the Israelites, who eventually mixed with the Chinese, adopted Chinese customs and last names like Li, Zhao, Ai, Zhang, Gao, Shi, and Kim. By late Qing Dynasty, the Israelites were completely blended into the Chinese.

* Qing Zhen is a term used by Chinese for foreign religions like Muslim and Judaism.

Kaifeng: a once-thriving Jewish community whose members are likely to be descended from Persian Jewish traders who settled in Kaifeng in the 10th & 11th centuries. Most Kaifeng Jews assimilated with local Confucians in the 16th century, but 500 contemporary descendants of those Jews have revitalized their Jewish practices.

Shanghai: During WWII, Shanghai's small Jewish community of merchants and descendants of silk traders became a safe haven for almost 30,000 European Jews who were fleeing from the Nazis. During the war they were allowed to practice freely and even build their own autonomous government. Though most emigrated to the U.S. after the war ended, some Jews still live in Shanghai and practice an increasingly "Chinese" Judaism.

Mystery of the Ten Lost Tribes Japan

by Arimasa Kubo

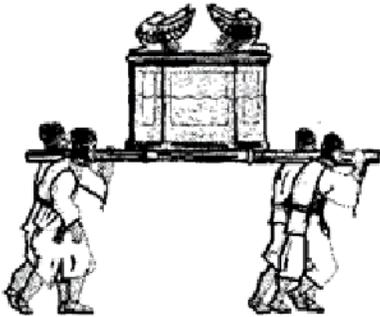
Israelites Came To Ancient Japan

Many of the traditional ceremonies in Japan seem to indicate that the Lost Tribes of Israel came to ancient Japan.

In Nagano prefecture, Japan, there is a large Shinto shrine named "Suwa-Taisha" (Shinto is the national traditional religion peculiar to Japan.)



At Suwa-Taisha, the traditional festival called "Ontohsai" is held on April 15 every year (When the Japanese used the lunar calendar it was March-April). This festival illustrates the story of Isaac in chapter 22 of Genesis in the Bible - when Abraham was about to sacrifice his own son, Isaac. The "Ontohsai" festival, held since ancient days, is judged to be the most important festival of "Suwa-Taisha."



Ark of the covenant of Israel (bottom) and "Omikoshi" ark of Japan (top)

The "Suwa-Taisha" shrine

At the back of the shrine "Suwa-Taisha," there is a mountain called Mt. Moriya ("Moriya-san" in Japanese). The people from the Suwa area call the god of Mt. Moriya "Moriya no kami," which means, the "god of Moriya." This shrine is built to worship the "god of Moriya."

At the festival, a boy is tied up by a rope to a wooden pillar, and placed on a bamboo carpet. A Shinto priest comes to him preparing a knife, and he cuts a part of the top of the wooden pillar, but then a messenger (another priest) comes there, and the boy is released. This is reminiscent of the Biblical story in which Isaac was released after an angel came to Abraham.

The knife and sword used in the "Ontohsai" festival

At this festival, animal sacrifices are also offered. 75 deer are sacrificed, but among them it is believed that there is a deer with its ear split. The deer is considered to be the one God prepared. It could have had some connection with the ram that God prepared and was sacrificed after Isaac was released. Since the ram was caught in the thicket by the horns, the ear might have been split.

In ancient time of Japan there were no sheep and it might be the reason why they used deer (deer is Kosher). Even in historic times, people thought that this custom of deer sacrifice was strange, because animal sacrifice is not a Shinto tradition.

My friend went to Israel and saw a Passover festival on Mt. Gerizim in Samaria. He asked a Samaritan priest how many rams were offered. The priest answered that they used to offer 75. This may have a connection with the 75 deer which were offered at Suwa-Taisha shrine in Japan.

Abraham and Isaac

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People call this festival "the festival for Misakuchi-god". "Misakuchi" might be "mi-isaku-chi." "Mi" means "great," "isaku" is most likely Isaac (the Hebrew word "Yitzhak"), and "chi" is something for the end of the word. It seems that the people of Suwa made Isaac a god, probably by the influence of idol worshipers.

Today, this custom of the boy about to be sacrificed and then released, is no longer practiced, but we can still see the custom of the wooden pillar called "oniye-basira," which means, "sacrifice-pillar."



The "oniye-bashira" on which the boy is supposed to be tied up

Currently, people use stuffed animals instead of performing a real animal sacrifice. Tying a boy along with animal sacrifice was regarded as savage by people of the Meiji-era (about 100 years ago), and those customs were discontinued. However, the festival itself still remains.

The custom of the boy had been maintained until the beginning of Meiji era. Masumi Sugae, who was a Japanese scholar and a travel writer in the Edo era (about 200 years ago), wrote a record of his travels and noted what he saw at Suwa. The record shows the details of "Ontohsai." It tells that the custom of the boy about to be sacrificed and his ultimate release, as well as animal sacrifices that existed those days. His records are kept at the museum near Suwa-Taisha.

The festival of "Ontohsai" has been maintained by the Moriya family ever since ancient times. The Moriya family think of "Moriya-no-kami" (god of Moriya) as their ancestor's god. They also consider "Mt. Moriya" as their holy place. The name, "Moriya," could have come from "Moriah" (the Hebrew word "Moriyyah") of Genesis 22:2, that is today's Temple Mount of Jerusalem. Among Jews, God of Moriah means the one true God whom the Bible teaches.

The Moriya family have been hosting the festival for 78 generations. And the curator of the museum said to me that the faith in the god of Moriya had existed among the people since the time of B.C.E.

Apparently, no other country but Japan has a festival illustrating the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac. This tradition appears to provide strong evidence that the ancient Israelites came to ancient Japan.

Japanese Religious Priests "Yamabushi" Put A Black Box on their Foreheads Just As Jews Put A Phylactery on their Foreheads.



A "yamabushi" with a "token" blowing a horn



"Yamabushi" is a religious man in training unique to Japan. Today, they are thought to belong to Japanese Buddhism. However, Buddhism in China, Korea and India have no such custom. The custom of "yamabushi" existed in Japan before Buddhism was imported into Japan in the seventh century.

On the forehead of "Yamabushi," he puts a black small box called a "token", which is tied to his head with a black cord. He greatly resembles a Jew putting on a phylactery (black box) on his forehead with a black cord. The size of this black box "token" is almost the same as the Jewish phylactery, but its shape is round and flower-like.



Israel and Japan are the only two countries that in the world I
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furthermore, the "yamabushi" use a big seashell as a horn. This is
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very similar to Jews blowing a shofar or ram's horn. The way it is
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blown and the sounds of the "yamabushi's" horn are very similar to
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those of a shofar. Because there are no sheep in Japan, the
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"yamabushi" had to use seashell horns instead of rams' horns.
f
that use of the black forehead box for religious purpose.

A Jew with a phylactery blowing a shofar
"Yamabushis" are people who regard mountains as their holy places for religious training. The Israelites also regarded mountains as their holy places. The Ten Commandments of the Torah were given on Mt. Sinai. Jerusalem is a city on a mountain.

In Japan, there is the legend of "Tengu" who lives on a mountain and has the figure of a "yamabushi". He has a pronounced nose and supernatural capabilities. A "ninja", who was an agent or spy in the old days, while working for his lord, goes to "Tengu" at the mountain to get from him supernatural abilities. "Tengu" gives him a "tora-no-maki" (a scroll of the "torah") after giving him additional powers. This "scroll of the tora" is regarded as a very important book which is helpful for any crisis. Japanese use this word sometimes in their current lives.

There is no knowledge that a real scroll of a Jewish Torah was ever found in a Japanese historical site. However, it appears this "scroll of the tora" is a derivation of the Jewish Torah.

Japanese "Omikoshi" Resembles the Ark of the Covenant.

In the Torah (Divrei Hayamim I ch. 15), it is written that David brought up the ark of the covenant of the Lord into Jerusalem.

"David and the elders of Israel and the commanders of units of a thousand went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the L-rd from the house of Obed-Edom, with rejoicing. . . . Now David was clothed in a robe of fine linen, as were all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and as were the singers, and Kenaniah, who was in

charge of the singing of the choirs. David also wore a linen ephod. So all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the L-rd with shouts, with the sounding of rams' horns and trumpets, and of cymbals, and the playing of lyres and harps." (15:25-28)

When I read these passages, I think; "How well does this look like the scene of Japanese people carrying our 'omikoshi' during festivals? The shape of the Japanese 'Omikoshi' appears similar to the ark of the covenant. Japanese sing and dance in front of it with shouts, and to the sounds of musical instruments. These are quite

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similar to the customs of ancient Israel."

Japanese carry the "omikoshi" on their shoulders with poles - usually two poles. So did the ancient Israelites:

"The Levites carried the ark of God with poles on their shoulders, as Moses had commanded in accordance with the word of the L-rd." (Divrei Hayamim I 15:15) The Israeli ark of the covenant had two poles (Exodus 25: 10-15).

Some restored models of the ark as it was imagined to be have used two poles on the upper parts of the ark. But the Bible says those poles were to be fastened to the ark by the four rings "on its four feet" (Exodus 25:12). Hence, the poles must have been attached on the bottom of the ark. This is similar to the Japanese "omikoshi."

The Israeli ark had two statues of gold kruvim on its top. Kruvim are a type of angel, heavenly being having wings like birds. Japanese "omikoshi" also have on its top the gold bird called "Ho-oh" which is an imaginary bird and a mysterious heavenly being.

The entire Israeli ark was overlaid with gold. Japanese "omikoshi" are also overlaid partly and sometimes entirely with gold. The size of an "omikoshi" is almost the same as the Israeli ark. Japanese "omikoshi" could be a remnant of the ark of ancient Israel.

Many Things Concerning the Ark Resemble Japanese Customs.

King David and people of Israel sang and danced to the sounds of musical instruments in front of the ark. We Japanese sing and dance to the sounds of musical instruments in front of "omikoshi" as well.

Several years ago, I saw an American-made movie titled "King David" which was a faithful story of the life of King David. In the movie, David was seen dancing in front of the ark while it was being carried into Jerusalem. I thought: "If the scenery of Jerusalem were replaced by Japanese scenery, this scene would be just the same as what can be observed in Japanese festivals." The atmosphere of the music also resembles the Japanese style. David's dancing appears similar to Japanese traditional dancing.

At the Shinto shrine festival of "Gion-jinja" in Kyoto, men carry "omikoshi," then enter a river, and cross it. I can't help but think this originates from the memory of the Ancient Israelites carrying the ark as they crossed the Jordan river after their exodus from Egypt.

In a Japanese island of the Inland Sea of Seto, the men selected as the carriers of the "omikoshi" stay together at a house for one week before they would carry the "omikoshi." This is to prevent profaning themselves. Furthermore on the day before they carry "omikoshi," the men bathe in seawater to sanctify themselves. This is similar to an ancient Israelite custom:

"So the priests and the Levites sanctified themselves to bring up the ark of the Lord G-d of Israel." (Divrei Hayamim I 15:14)

The Bible says that after the ark entered Jerusalem and the march was finished, "David distributed to everyone of Israel, both man and woman, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a cake of raisins" (Divrei Hayamim I 16:3). This is similar to a Japanese custom. Sweets are distributed to everyone after a Japanese festival. It was a delight during my childhood.

The Robe of Japanese Priests Resembles the Robe of Israeli Priests.

The Bible says that when David brought up the ark into Jerusalem, "David was clothed in a robe of fine linen" (Divrei Hayamim I 15:27). The same was true for the priests and choirs. In the Japanese Bible, this verse is translated into "robe of white linen."

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In ancient Israel, although the high priest wore a colorful robe, ordinary priests wore simple white linen. Priests wore white clothes at holy events. Japanese priests also wear white robes at holy events.

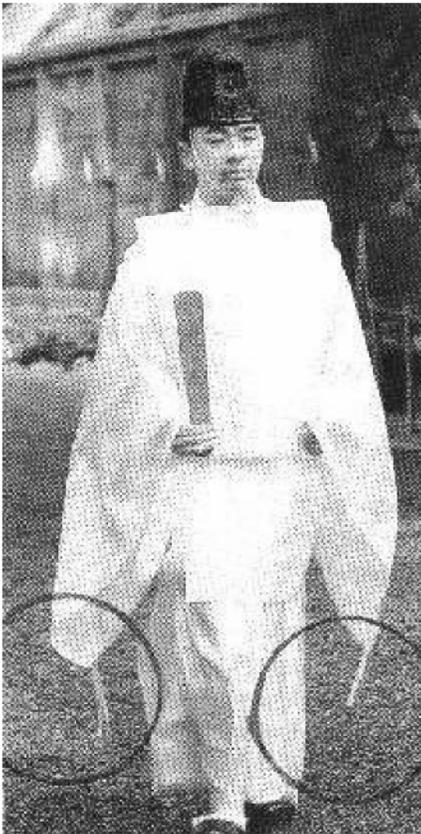
In Ise-jingu, one of the oldest Japanese shrines, all of the priests wear white robes. And in many Japanese Shinto shrines, especially traditional ones, the people wear white robes when they carry the "omikoshi" just like the Israelites did.

Buddhist priests wear luxurious colorful robes. However, in the Japanese Shinto religion, white is regarded as the holiest color.

The Emperor of Japan, just after he finishes the ceremony of his accession to the throne, appears alone in front of the Shinto god. When he arrives there, he wears a pure white robe covering his entire body except that his feet are naked. This is similar to the action of Moses and Joshua who removed their sandals in front of God to be in bare feet (Shmos 3:5, Yehoshua 5:15).

Marvin Tokayer, a rabbi who lived in Japan for 10 years, wrote in his book:

"The linen robes which Japanese Shinto priests wear have the same figure as the white linen robes of the ancient priests of Israel. "



Japanese Shinto priest in white robe with fringes

The Japanese Shinto priest robe has cords of 20-30 centimeters long (about 10 inches) hung from the corners of the robe. These fringes are similar to those of the ancient Israelites. Devorim 22:12 says:

"make them fringes in the... corners of their garments throughout their generations."

Fringes (tassels) were a token that a person was an Israelite.

Imagined pictures of ancient Israeli clothing sometimes do not have fringes. But their robes actually had fringes. The Jewish Tallit (prayer shawl), which the Jews put on when they pray, has fringes in the corners according to tradition.

Japanese Shinto priests wear on their robe a rectangle of cloth from their shoulders to thighs. This is the same as the ephod worn by David:

"David also wore a linen ephod." (Divrei Hayamim I 15:27)

Although the ephod of the high priest was colorful with jewels, the ordinary priests under him wore the ephods of simple white linen cloth (Shmuel I 22:18). Rabbi Tokayer states that the rectangle of cloth on the robe of Japanese Shinto priest looks very similar to the ephod of the Kohen, the

Jewish priest.

The Japanese Shinto priest puts a cap on his head just like Israeli priest did (Shmos 29:40). The Japanese priest also puts a sash on his waist. So did the Israeli priest. The clothing of Japanese Shinto priests appears to be similar to the clothing used by ancient Israelites.

Waving the Sheaf of Harvest Is Also the Custom of Japan.

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The Jews wave a sheaf of their first fruits of grain seven weeks before Shavuot (Pentecost, Vayikra 23:10-11), They also wave a sheaf of plants at Sukkot (the Feast of Booths, Vayikra 23:40). This has been a tradition since the time of Moses. Ancient Israeli priests also waved a plant branch when he sanctifies someone. David said, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean" [Tehilim 51:7(9)]. This is also a traditional Japanese custom.

When a Japanese priest sanctifies someone or something, he waves a tree branch. Or he waves a "harainusa," which is made of a stick and white papers and looks like a plant. Today's "harainusa" is simplified and made of white papers that are folded in a zig-zag pattern like small lightning bolts, but in old days it was a plant branch or cereals.

A Japanese woman acquaintance of mine used to think of this "harainusa" as merely a pagan custom. But she later went to the U.S.A. and had an opportunity to attend a Sukkot ceremony. When she saw the Jewish waving of the sheaf of the harvest, she shouted in her heart, "Oh, this is the same as a Japanese priest does! Here lies the home for the Japanese."

The Structure of the Japanese Shinto Shrine is Similar to G-d's Tabernacle of Ancient Israel.

The inside of G-d's tabernacle in ancient Israel was divided into two parts. The first was the Holy Place, and the second was the Holy of Holies. The Japanese Shinto shrine is also divided into two parts.

The functions performed in the Japanese shrine are similar to those of the Israeli tabernacle. Japanese pray in front of its Holy Place. They cannot enter inside. Only Shinto priests and special ones can enter. Shinto priest enters the Holy of Holies of the Japanese shrine only at special times. This is similar to the Israeli tabernacle.

The Japanese Holy of Holies is located usually in far west or far north of the shrine. The Israeli Holy of Holies was located in far west of the temple. Shinto's Holy of Holies is also located on a higher level than the Holy Place, and between them are steps. Scholars state that, in the Israeli temple built by Solomon, the Holy of Holies was on an elevated level as well, and between them there were steps of about 2.7 meters (9 feet) in width.

In front of a Japanese shrine, there are two statues of lions known as "komainu" that sit on both sides of the approach. They are not idols but guards for the shrine. This was also a custom of ancient Israel. In G-d's temple in Israel and in the palace of Solomon, there were statues or relieves of lions (Melachim I 7:36, 10:19).

In the early history of Japan, there were absolutely no lions. But the statues of lions have been placed in Japanese shrines since ancient times. It has been proven by scholars that statues of lions located in front of Japanese shrines originated from the Middle East.

Located near the entrance of a Japanese shrine is a "temizuya" - a place for worshipers to wash their hands and mouth. They used to wash their feet, too, in old days. This is a similar custom as is found in Jewish synagogues. The ancient tabernacle and temple of Israel also had a laver for washing hands and feet near the entrances.

In front of a Japanese shrine, there is a gate called the "torii." The type gate does not exist in China or in Korea, it is peculiar to Japan. The "torii" gate consists of two vertical pillars and a bar connecting the upper parts. But the oldest form consists of only two vertical pillars and a rope connecting the upper parts. When a Shinto priest bows to the gate, he bows to the two pillars separately. It is assumed that the "torii" gate was originally constructed of only two pillars.

In the Israeli temple, there were two pillars used as a gate (Melachim I 7:21). And in Aramaic language which ancient Israelites used, the word for gate was "taraa." This word might have changed slightly and become the

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Japanese "torii".

Some "toriis," especially of old shrines, are painted red. I can't help but think this is a picture of the two door posts and the lintel on which the blood of the lamb was put the night before the exodus from Egypt.

In the Japanese Shinto religion, there is a custom to surround a holy place with a rope called the "shimenawa," which has slips of white papers inserted along the bottom edge of the rope. The "shimenawa" rope is set as the boundary. The Bible says that when Moses was given God's Ten Commandments on Mt. Sinai, he "set bounds" (Shmos 19:12) around it for the Israelites not to approach. Although the nature of these "bounds" is not known, ropes might have been used. The Japanese "shimenawa" rope might then be a custom that originates from the time of Moses. The zig-zag pattern of white papers inserted along the rope reminds me of the thunders at Mt. Sinai.

The major difference between a Japanese Shinto shrine and the ancient Israeli temple is that the shrine does not have the burning altar for animal sacrifices. I used to wonder why Shinto religion does not have the custom of animal sacrifices if Shinto originated from the religion of ancient Israel.

But then I found the answer in Devarim, chapter 12. Moses commanded the people not to offer any animal sacrifices at any other locations except at specific places in Canaan (12:10-14). Hence, if the Israelites came to ancient Japan, they would not be permitted to offer animal sacrifices.

Many Japanese Customs Resemble Those of Ancient Israel.

When Japanese people pray in front of the Holy Place of a Shinto shrine, they firstly ring the golden bell which is hung at the center of the entrance. This was also the custom of the ancient Israel. The high priest Aaron put "bells of gold" on the hem of his robe. This was so that its sound might be heard and he might not die when ministered there (Shmos 28:33-35).

Japanese people clap their hands two times when they pray there. This was, in ancient Israel, the custom to mean, "I keep promises." In the Scriptures, you can find the word which is translated into "pledge." The original meaning of this word in Hebrew is, "clap his hand" (Yechezkel 17:18, Shir Hashirim 6:1). It seems that the ancient Israelites clapped their hands when they pledged or did something important.

Japanese people bow in front of the shrine before and after clapping their hands and praying. They also perform a bow as a polite greeting when they meet each other. To bow was also the custom of the ancient Israel. Jacob bowed when he was approaching Esau (Breishis 33:3).

Ordinarily, contemporary Jews do not bow. However, they bow when reciting prayers. Modern Ethiopians have the custom of bowing, probably because of the ancient Jews who emigrated to Ethiopia in ancient days. The Ethiopian bow is similar to the Japanese bow.

We Japanese have the custom to use salt for sanctification. People sometimes sow salt after an offensive person leaves. When I was watching a TV drama from the times of the Samurai, a woman threw salt on the place where a man she hated left. This custom is the same as that of the ancient Israelites. After Abimelech captured an enemy city, "he sowed it with salt" (Shoftim 9:45). We Japanese quickly interpret this to mean to cleanse and sanctify the city.

I hear that when Jews move to a new house they sow it with salt to sanctify it and cleanse it. This is true also in Japan. In Japanese-style restaurants, they usually place salt near the entrance. Jews use salt for Kosher meat. All Kosher meat is purified with salt and all meals start with bread and salt.

Japanese people place salt at the entrance of a funeral home. After coming back from a funeral, one has to sprinkle salt on oneself before entering his/her house. It is believed in Shinto that anyone who went to a funeral

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or touched a dead body had become unclean. Again, this is the same concept as was observed by the ancient Israelites.

Japanese "sumo" wrestlers sow the sumo ring with salt before they fight. European or American people wonder why they sow salt. But Rabbi Tokayer wrote that Jews quickly understand its meaning.

Japanese people offer salt every time they perform a religious offering, This is the same custom used by the Israelites:

"With all your offerings you shall offer salt." (Vayikra 2:13)

Japanese people in old times had the custom of putting some salt into their baby's first bath. The ancient Israelites washed a newborn baby with water after rubbing the baby softly with salt (Yechezkel 16:4). Sanctification and cleansing with salt and/or water is a common custom among both the Japanese and the ancient Israelites.

In the Hebrew Scriptures, the words "clean" and "unclean" often appear. Europeans and Americans are not familiar with this concept, but the Japanese understand it. A central concept of Shinto is to value cleanness and to avoid uncleanness. This concept probably came from ancient Israel.

Similar to Judaism, in Japanese Shinto Religion, There Are No Idols

Buddhist temples have idols which are carved in the shape of Buddha and other gods. However in Japanese Shinto shrines, there are no idols.

In the center of the Holy of Holies of a Shinto shrine, there is a mirror, sword, or pendant. Nevertheless, Shinto believers do not regard these items as their gods. In Shinto, gods are thought to be invisible. The mirror, sword, and pendant are not idols but merely objects to show that it is a holy place where invisible gods come down.

In the ark of the covenant of ancient Israel, there were stone tablets of G-d's Ten Commandments, a jar of manna and the rod of Aaron. These were not idols, but objects to show that it was the holy place where the invisible G-d comes down. The same thing can be said concerning the objects in Japanese shrines.

Ancient Japanese Possibly Had a Belief in Yah-weh

A major difference between the Shinto religion and Judaism is the Shinto believe many gods and the Judaic believe in one true God.

However, unlike modern Judaism, the ancient religion of Israel, especially of the Ten Northern Tribes, inclined to idol worship and polytheistic belief (belief in many gods). They not only believed in G-d Yah-weh, they also believed in other gods such as Baal, Asytaroth, Molech. Shinto's polytheistic belief system appears to have been derived from the polytheistic inclination of ancient Northern Israel. Shinto scholars state that the Shinto god, "Susanoh," resembles Baal in several aspects, and the Shinto female god, "Amaterasu," resembles Asytaroth.

Until 40 decades ago, at Mt. Inomure in Ooita prefecture, Japan, people had a ceremony to beg for rainfall. They put wood together in the shape of a Star of David for making the foundation. On it, they constructed a tower made of tree branches, and on its top, they put a bamboo pole tangled with a slough of snake. They burned the tower and prayed for rainfall. This is reminiscent of the story of the ancient Israelites burning incense to the bronze serpent (made by Moses) on the pole until the reign of the King Hezekiah (Melachim II 18:4).

Although Shinto is a polytheistic religion, I think there is the possibility that ancient Shinto had once believed in

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Yahweh as well.

The first born among the Shinto gods is called "Amenominakanushi-no-kami." This god is said to have appeared first, live in the midst of the universe, had no shape, did not die, was the invisible master of the universe, and was the absolute god. He resembles the Biblical God as the Master of the Universe.

Archaeologists state that the religions of Babylon and Egypt had originally believed in one god called "the god of sky," who seemed to have a connection to the Biblical "God of heaven." Later, their religions degraded to the polytheism. I think that we can safely say the same thing happened to the Shinto religion. I suppose that the ancient Shinto religion had the belief in G-d Yahweh, but later degenerated into polytheism. I believe that the Japanese people should come back to believe in one true God whom the Bible teaches.

A friend of mine, Mr. Tsujii, told me the following incident. A friend of Mr. Tsujii's, who was a passionate Shinto believer, came to him. The Shinto believer had read the Torah and said excitingly:

"I read the Torah. I was very surprised to learn about the religious ceremonies of ancient Israel. They are the same as Shinto's. The festivals, the Temple, the value of cleanness, all of those are the same as Shinto's!"

Then, Mr. Tsujii said to him:

"Yes, that is what I have also noticed. If you have discovered it, why don't you believe in God whom the Bible teaches? I believe that is the way to establish and recover the true Shinto religion in which you believe."

Hearing this, the Shinto believer was too surprised to say anything else for a while. Mr. Tsujii's words echo my own belief. I pray that all Japanese people may return to the belief in God of the Bible, because He is also the Father of the Japanese nation.

Festivals of Japan Resemble Those of Ancient Israel

Currently the Japanese celebrate the new year on January 1st, but historically the lunar calendar was used, when January 15th was the official date for the new year's celebration. It is a Japanese custom during the celebration to eat "mochi" (rice cakes) throughout the seven days. This is similar to Judaism, for the Bible states:

"And on the fifteenth day of the same month (first month) is the Feast of Unleavened Bread to the Lord; seven days you must eat unleavened bread." (Vayikra 23:6)

The recipe for "unleavened bread" is the same for Japanese "mochi," because if you use rice as the ingredient instead of wheat flour, it would become Japanese "mochi." The Hebrew word for unleavened bread" is "matzah." Most likely it is not accidental that these two words sound alike.

Furthermore, the Japanese people eat porridge with seven kinds of bitter herbs during celebration. In historical times people ate the herbs on January 15th. The ancient Israelites also ate "with bitter herbs" on the 15th of the first month (Shmos 12:8).

In Japan, the "Gion" festivals take place at many locations during the summer. The most important is the one held at the "Yasaka-jinja" Shinto shrine in Kyoto. The festival in Kyoto continues throughout July each year. However, the most important part of the festival is held from July 17th to 25th (We Japanese call it "the seventh month"). July 1st and 10th are also important. This has been a tradition since ancient times. But the 17th of the seventh month is the day that Noah's ark drifted to Ararat:

"Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat." (Breishis 8:4)

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It is likely that the ancient Israelites had a thanksgiving feast on this day. However after Moses, it was replaced by the Feast of Booths (harvest festival), which is held on the 1st, 10th day of the seventh month, and during 8 days from the 15th of the seventh month (Bamidbar 29:1, 7, 12, 35).

The "Gion" festival in Kyoto started with the wish that no pestilence would occur among people. This is similar to what King Solomon stated, in the wish that no pestilence would occur in the country. The Israeli feast continued for 8 days (including the last meeting day) from the 15th of the seventh month (Divrei Hayamim II 7:8-10).

Over 120 years ago, a business man from Scotland, N. Mcleod, came to Japan to investigate the customs. He wrote a book entitled "Epitome of Japanese Ancient History." In the book, he wrote that the "Gion" festival in Kyoto greatly resembled Jewish festivals.

Rabbi Tokayer made a similar comment. He said that the name "Gion" reminds him of "Zion" which is another name for Jerusalem. In fact, Kyoto used to be called "Heian-kyo," which means "city of peace." Jerusalem in Hebrew also means "city of peace". "Heian-kyo" might be Japanese for "Jerusalem."

At the "Gion" festival in Kyoto, the people start the festival with a shout of "en-yara-yah." Japanese do not understand the meaning of this word. But, Eiji Kawamorita, a Japanese scholar who mastered Hebrew, wrote in his book that the word seemed to be a Hebrew expression "eni ahalel yah" which means "I praise Yah-weh (the Lord)."

Similarity Between the Biblical Genealogy and Japanese Mythology

There is a remarkable similarity between the Biblical article and Japanese mythology. A Japanese scholar points out that the stories around Ninigi in the Japanese mythology greatly resemble the stories around Jacob in the Bible. In the Japanese mythology, the Imperial family of Japan and the nation of Yamato (the Japanese) are descendants of Ninigi, who came from heaven. Ninigi is the ancestor of the tribe of Yamato, or Japanese nation. While Jacob is the ancestor of the Israelites.

In the Japanese mythology, it was not Ninigi who was to come down from heaven, but the other. But when the other was preparing, Ninigi was born and in a result, instead of him, Ninigi came down from heaven and became the ancestor of the Japanese nation. In the same way, according to the Bible, it was Esau, Jacob's elder brother, who was to become G-d's nation but in a result, instead of Esau, G-d's blessing for the nation was given to Jacob, and Jacob became the ancestor of the Israelites.

And in the Japanese mythology, after Ninigi came from heaven, he fell in love with a beautiful woman named Konohana-sakuya-hime and tried to marry her. But her father asked him to marry not only her but also her elder sister. However the elder sister was ugly and Ninigi gave her back to her father. In the same way, according to the Bible, Jacob fell in love with beautiful Rachal and tried to marry her (Breishis chapter 29). But her father says to Jacob that he cannot give the younger sister before the elder, so he asked Jacob to marry the elder sister (Leah) also. However the elder sister was not so beautiful, Jacob disliked her. Thus, there is a parallelism between Ninigi and Jacob.

And in the Japanese mythology, Ninigi and his wife Konohana-sakuya-hime bear a child named Yamasachi-hiko. But Yamasachi-hiko is bullied by his elder brother and has to go to the country of a sea god. There Yamasachi-hiko gets a mystic power and troubles the elder brother by giving him famine, but later forgives his sin. In the same way, according to the Bible, Jacob and his wife Rachal bear a child named Joseph. But Joseph is bullied by his elder brothers and had to go to Egypt. There Joseph became the prime minister of Egypt and gets power, and when the elder brothers came to Egypt because of famine, Joseph helped them and forgives their sin. Thus, there is a parallelism between Yamasachi-hiko and Joseph.

Similarity between the biblical genealogy and Japanese mythology

And in the Japanese mythology, Yamasachi-hiko married a daughter of the sea god, and bore a child named Ugaya-fukiaezu. Ugaya-fukiaezu had 4 sons. But his second and third sons were gone to other places. The fourth son is emperor Jinmu who conquers the land of Yamato. On this line is the Imperial House of Japan.

While, what is it in the Bible? Joseph married a daughter of a priest in Egypt, and bore Manasseh and Ephraim. Ephraim resembles Ugaya-fukiaezu in the sense that Ephraim had 4 sons, but his second and third sons were killed and died early (Divrei Hayamim II 7:20-27), and a descendant of the fourth son was Joshua who conquered the land of Canaan (the land of Israel). On the line of Ephraim is the Royal House of the Ten Tribes of Israel.

Thus we find a remarkable similarity between the biblical genealogy and Japanese mythology - between Ninigi and Jacob, Yamasachi-hiko and Joseph, and the Imperial family of Japan and the tribe of Ephraim.

Furthermore, in the Japanese mythology, the heaven is called Hara of Takama (Takama-ga-hara or Takama-no-hara). Ninigi came from there and founded the Japanese nation. Concerning this Hara of Takama, Zen'ichirou Oyabe, a Japanese researcher, thought that this is the city Haran in the region of Togarmah where Jacob and his ancestors once lived; Jacob lived in Haran of Togarmah for a while, then came to Canaan and founded the Israeli nation.

Jacob once saw in a dream the angels of God ascending and descending between the heaven and the earth (breishis 28:12), when Jacob was given a promise of God that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan. This was different from Ninigi's descending from heaven, but resembles it in image.

Thus, except for details, the outline of the Japanese mythology greatly resembles the records of the Bible. It is possible to think that the myths of Kojiki and Nihon-shoki, the Japanese chronicles written in the 8th century, were originally based on Biblical stories but later added with various pagan elements. Even it might be possible to think that the Japanese mythology was originally a kind of genealogy which showed that the Japanese are descendants of Jacob, Joseph, and Ephraim.

Impurity During Menstruation and Bearing Child

The concept of uncleanness during menstruation and bearing child have existed in Japan since ancient times.

It has been a custom in Japan since old days that woman during menstruation should not attend holy events at shrine. She could not have sex with her husband and had to shut herself up in a shed (called Gekkei-goya in Japanese), which is built for collaboration use in village, during her menstruation and several days or about 7 days after the menstruation. This custom had been widely seen in Japan until Meiji era (about 100 years ago). After the period of shutting herself up ends, she had to clean herself by natural water as river, spring, or sea. If there is no natural water, it can be done in bathtub.

This resembles ancient Israeli custom very much. In ancient Israel, woman during menstruation could not attend holy events at the temple, had to be apart from her husband, and it was custom to shut herself up in a shed during her menstruation and 7 days after the menstruation (Vayikra 15:19, 28). This shutting herself up was said "to continue in the blood of her purification", and this was for purification and to make impurity apart from the house or the village.

This remains true even today. There are no marital relations, for the days of menstruation and an additional 7 days. Then the woman goes to the Mikveh, ritual bath. The water of the Mikveh must be natural water. There are cases of gathering rainwater and putting it to the Mikveh bathtub. In case of not having enough natural water, water from faucet is added.

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Modern people may feel irrational about this concept but women during menstruation or bearing child need rest physically and mentally. Woman herself says that she feels impure in her blood in the period. "To continue in the blood of her purification" refers to this need of rest of her blood.

Not only concerning menstruation, but also the concept concerning bearing child in Japanese Shinto resembles the one of ancient Israel. A mother who bore a child is regarded unclean in a certain period. This concept is weak among the Japanese today, but was very common in old days. The old Shinto book, *Engishiki* (the 10th century C.E.), set 7 days as a period that she cannot participate holy events after she bore a child. This resembles an ancient custom of Israel, for the Bible says that when a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be "unclean 7 days". She shall then "continue in the blood of her purification 33 days". In the case that she bears a female child, then she shall be "unclean two weeks", and she shall "continue in the blood of her purification 66 days" (Vayikra 12:2-5).

In Japan it had been widely seen until Meiji era that woman during pregnancy and after bearing child shut herself up in a shed (called *Ubu-goya* in Japanese) and lived there. The period was usually during the pregnancy and 30 days or so after she bore a child (The longest case was nearly 100 days). This resembles the custom of ancient Israel.

In ancient Israel, after this period of purification the mother could come to the temple with her child for the first time. Also in the custom of Japanese Shinto, after this period of purification the mother can come to the shrine with her baby. In modern Japan it is generally 32 days (or 31 days) after she bore the baby in case of a male, and 33 days in case of a female.

But when they come to the shrine, it is not the mother who carries the baby. It is a traditional custom that the baby should be carried not by the mother, but usually by the husband's mother (mother-in-law). This is a remarkable similarity of purity and impurity of the mother, after childbirth, with ancient Israeli custom.

A Possible Remnant of the Celebration of Circumcision

If the ancient Israelites came to Japan, do the Japanese have the custom of circumcision? Although I have heard a rumor that circumcision had been performed within the Imperial family of Japan, I have not been able to confirm yet whether or not there has been such a custom.

Currently, we cannot see the custom of circumcision among Japanese citizens, but a traditional Japanese custom exists known as "O-shichi-ya," which means 7th night. On the 7th night from the day a baby was born, the Japanese parents have a celebration to introduce the baby to relatives and friends and let them know the name of the baby.

The 7th night is, according to the Jewish way of counting days, the 8th day from the day the baby was born, because it is from the sunset that the next day starts in the Jewish calendar. This is reminiscent of the Jewish custom of circumcision on the 8th day. The Israelites gathered on the 8th day, that was usually 7th night from the day a boy was born. The parents introduced the baby to relatives and friends, circumcised him, introduced his name and rejoiced his birth together. During the 7 days he has no name, just like in the Japanese custom.

From the Study of Blood Types

Professor Tanemoto Furuhashi, who is the authority on forensic medicine at Tokyo University wrote in his book that surprisingly, the blood types of the Japanese and the Jews are very similar. I also heard that a professor at Paris University had discovered that the "Y" chromosome of the Japanese is the same size as that of the Jews. I expect that further research will be done by many individuals.

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To Shinto shrine Japanese people bring rice, Mochi (Japanese Matzah), Japanese liquor (Sake), cereals, vegetables, fruits, confectioneries, salt, water, fish (sea bream, etc.), and bird (pheasant meat, etc.) as their offerings to G-d and place them in the Holy Place of the Shrine. These must be the best ones, and the fire for cooking them must be a holy one lit by flint or heat of rubbing.

The offerings are displayed beautifully on a table of wood and the priest prays to G-d in front of it. After the ceremony the priest and participants are to eat the offerings. In that, modern Shintoists find significance that man eats with G-d or dines with G-d.

In the Holy Place of the Israeli tabernacle or temple, there was also a table of wood on which the bread made of cereals of the land, liquor (wine), and incense were offered (Shmos 25:29-30). These offerings to G-d had to be the best ones. The priest prayed to G-d and after the ceremony the offerings, which had been offered to G-d, were eaten by the priest and his family (Devorim 18:11). And in the Bible there is an article that Moses and the leaders of Israel "ate and drank" in front of G-d on Mt. Sinai (Shmos 24:11).

The Bible does not mention the concept of "dining with G-d" though, later, Jews in Talmudic times find significance of dining with G-d.

With a few exceptions, meat of four legged animals is generally not offered in Shinto religion. The most common offerings are firstfruits, salt, fish as bonito, Mochi (Japanese Matzah), rice, liquor (Sake), seaweeds, etc. Usually most of them are Kosher, or permitted foods in the Jewish dietary laws. But in modern Shinto, shellfish is sometimes offered (Abalone is offered at Ise grand shrine). This is non-Kosher and the Jews not only never eat it, but also never offer to G-d. How was it in the start of Japanese Shinto?

In the Holy Place of the Israeli tabernacle or temple, there were also lamps which were never extinguished (Shmos 27:20-21), since they were holy fire. There is also an eternal light burning in every synagogue to this very day. In the same way, in the Holy Place of Japanese shrine, there is holy fire as lamps lit by divine means. Placing fire as lamps and the table with offerings on it in the Holy Place of the Shinto shrine resemble the Holy Place of ancient Israeli tabernacle. Thus the functions of the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies of the Japanese shrine are very similar to the ones of ancient Israel.

It is noteworthy that the liquor is indispensable for both Israeli and Japanese shrines. Like the liquor was offered in the Israeli temple, the liquor is offered in the Japanese shrine. The Bible says that the drink offering shall be of "wine, one-fourth of a hin" (Leviticus 23:13). "A hin" is about 6 liters, and I hear that its one-fourth is about the quantity of the liquor which is offered in grand shrines of Shinto.

The Land of Far End

There is a book called the Forth Book of Ezra, which was written in the end of the first century C.E.. Although this is not the Bible but just one of the ancient Hebrew documents, an interesting thing is written: "They are the Ten Tribes which were off into exile in the time of King Hosea, whom Shalmaneser king of Assyria took prisoner. He deported them beyond the River and they were taken away into a strange country. But then they resolved to leave the country populated by Gentiles and go to a distant land never yet inhabited by man, and there at last to be obedient to their laws, which in their own country they had failed to keep. As they passed through the narrow passages of the Euphrates, the Most High performed miracles for them, stopping up the channels of the river until they had crossed over. Their journey through that region, which is called ARZARETH, was long, and took a year and a half. They have lived there ever since, until this final age. Now they are on their way back, and once more the Most High will stop the channels of the river to let them cross." (13:39-47)

This article was mentioned in the form of a vision and we cannot immediately think that this is a historical fact. But it is possible to think that there was some fact which became the background for this article. There might be the news or oral tradition that the Ten Tribe of Israel started their journey to the east and settled to a land of

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a year and a half distance away.

Where is ARZARETH which the Ten Tribes are said to have gone to? We cannot find the same name in the world by looking at the map.

Dr. Schiller Sziessy suggests that this is nothing else but the Hebrew words "eretz ahereth" (ARZ AHRTh) which means the other land. Or, if we interpret this as the Hebrew words "eretz aherith" (ARZ AHRITH), they mean the end of land, or most far away land. Not a few people thought that Japan might be the land.

Using Water and Salt for Sanctification

In Japanese Shinto they have a custom to use water or salt for sanctification. Most of the Japanese shrines are built near clean river, pond, lake, or the sea. This is to do sanctification there. In Shinto, water is to purify man. In ancient Israel they had this custom, for the Bible says that before priest serves at holy events or at the temple, he has to "wash his clothes" and "bathe in water" (Numbers 19:7).

So, it was also an ideal in ancient Israel that they have clean water near a worship place. Japanese Shinto priests also wash their clothes and bathe in water before they serve at the shrine. Buddhist priests generally do not have this custom.

In the Shinto religion they also use salt for purification. Japanese Sumo wreslers sow the Sumo ring with salt several times before they fight. The Western people wonder why they sow salt, but the Jews get the meaning immediately that it is to purify the ring. In Japan, salt is used to purify the holy place of shrine, or to purify Omikoshi.

And when you go to a Japanese-style restaurant, you will sometimes find some salt put near the entrance. The Western people wonder why, but the Jews get the meaning immediately that this is for purification. Even today, the Jews have a tradition of welcoming a new neighbor or distinguished guest with salt. If a world leader were to visit Jerusalem, the chief rabbi would welcome him at the entrance to the city with Hallah (Jewish bread) and salt.

Jews start each meal by salting bread, this makes every meal table an altar. Meat is "Koshered" by putting salt on the meat to remove all the blood.

In Japan they offer salt every time they perform a religious offering. So is the offering at Japanese feasts. Salt is not offered in Buddhism. Offering salt is again the same custom used by the Israelites, for it is written in the Bible that one has to offer salt with all his offerings (Leviticus 2:13).

In Judaism, salt is very essential. Talmud (the wisdom of Judaism) confirms that all sacrifices must have salt. Salt is preservative. While, honey and leaven were prohibited with sacrifices since they symbolize fermentation, decay and decomposition, the opposite of salt. There is the words "the everlasting covenant of salt" in the Bible (Numbers 18:19). Salt has meaning of anti-decay and permanence, and symbolizes the everlasting holy covenant of G-d. The Temple of Jerusalem had a special salt chamber, and Joshephus, a Jewish historian in the first century C.E., records a Greek king making a donation of 375 baskets of salt to the temple.

According to Zen'ichiro Oyabe, Japanese people before Meiji-era had the custom to put some salt into baby's bath. The ancient people of Israel washed a new born baby with water after rubbing the baby softly with salt; there is a description about "rubbing baby with salt" in the Bible (Ezekiel 16:4). Salt has cleansing and hygienic power and newborn babies were rubbed with salt.

Thus, there was the common custom of sanctification in both ancient Israel and Japan, and for this sanctification water and salt were used in both countries.

Uncleanness of the Dead

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In Japan, salt in a pouch is distributed to participants of a funeral. After the funeral, when the participants come back and enter their houses, they have to be sprinkled on themselves with the salt for purification. Ancient Israelites who touched a dead body or went to a funeral also had to be purified in a specific way; the Bible says that a clean person shall take hyssop and dip it in the water, sprinkle it on the persons who were at funeral, or on the one who touched a bone, the slain, the dead, or a grave (Numbers 19:18). Thus in Israel the person who touched the dead had to be purified himself.

Even today, you find water outside a Jewish cemetery and outside the home, so people who are returning from a cemetery or funeral can wash their hands before entering the house. Before one goes to a funeral, one prepares water outside the home, so you can wash before reentering your home. Also in Japanese mythology, it is written that deity Izanagi went to the world of the dead (called Yomi in Japanese) to take his dead wife back, and when he came back from Yomi, he bathed in water of a river and purified himself from the impurity of the dead. In addition this Yomi, Japanese Shinto's world of the dead, is very much like Sheol which is the world of the dead mentioned in the Bible.

The very important feature of Japanese Shinto is that it has the concept of uncleanness or impurity of the dead. A house which has the dead, or a person who went to a funeral is said to have touched the uncleanness. The Western people do not have this concept. This uncleanness is not material but religious or ritual. This Shinto concept is the same as was in ancient Israel, for the Bible says that the one who touches the dead body of anyone shall be "unclean seven days" (Numbers 19:11).

In Shinto religion, a person with his/her family dead or relative dead is regarded unclean for a certain period. In the period, the person cannot come to a shrine, which was also a custom of ancient Israel.

Buddhist funeral is held inside temple, but Shinto funeral is held always outside shrine not to bring impurity into it. And the Shinto priest who participated the funeral does not bring things he used at the funeral into the shrine. Even when he has to bring in, he purifies them and then brings. He has to purify himself, too. Also in ancient Israel, funeral is never held at the temple.

The Bible records that the Israelites wept and mourned for "30 days" at the death of Moses and at the death of Aaron (Deuteronomy 34:8, Numbers 20:29). While a Japanese ancient Shinto book called Engishiki, which was written in 10th century C.E., set a period of 30 days for the uncleanness that a person cannot participate holy events, and set a period of 7 days for uncleanness of death of a fetus of within three months and death of a person lacking a part of the body. Thus, the Shinto concept of uncleanness of the dead resembles the custom of ancient Israel.

Impurity During Menstruation and Bearing Child

Not only the uncleanness of the dead, but also the the concept of uncleanness during menstruation and bearing child have existed in Japan since ancient times.

It has been a custom in Japan since old days that woman during menstruation should not attend holy events at shrine. She could not have relations with her husband and had to shut herself up in a shed (called Gekkei-goya in Japanese), which is built for collaboration use in village, during her menstruation and several days or about 7 days after the menstruation. This custom had been widely seen in Japan until Meiji era. After the period of shutting herself up ends, she had to clean herself by natural water as river, spring, or sea. If there is no natural water, it can be done in bathtub.

This resembles ancient Israeli custom very much. In ancient Israel, woman during menstruation could not attend holy events at the temple, had to be apart from her husband, and it was custom to shut herself up in a shed during her menstruation and 7 days after the menstruation (Leviticus 15:19, 28). This shutting herself up

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was said "to continue in the blood of her purification", and this was for purification and to make impurity apart from the house or the village.

This remains true even today. There are no sexual relations, for the days of menstruation and an additional 7 clean days. Then the woman goes to the Mikveh, ritual bath. The water of the Mikveh must be natural water. There are cases of gathering rainwater and putting it to the Mikveh bathtub. In case of not having enough natural water, water from faucet is added.

It may very well be that Jews and Japanese are the only ones to observe certain period of separation during and after the menstruation, and to have similar concept of uncleanness and purification. If so, it is a very interesting and ignored proof of ancient contact of the two peoples.

Modern people may feel irrational about this concept but women during menstruation or bearing child need rest physically and mentally. Woman herself says that she feels impure in her blood in the period. "To continue in the blood of her purification" refers to this need of rest of her blood.

Not only concerning menstruation, but also the concept concerning bearing child in Japanese Shinto resembles the one of ancient Israel. A mother who bore a child is regarded unclean in a certain period. This concept is weak among the Japanese today, but was very common in old days. The old Shinto book, Engishiki (the 10th century C.E.), set 7 days as a period that she cannot participate holy events after she bore a child. This resembles an ancient custom of Israel, for the Bible says that when a woman has conceived, and borne a male child, then she shall be "unclean 7 days". She shall then "continue in the blood of her purification 33 days". In the case that she bears a female child, then she shall be "unclean two weeks", and she shall "continue in the blood of her purification 66 days" (Leviticus 12:2-5).

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But when they come to the shrine, it is not the mother who carries the baby. It is a traditional custom that the baby should be carried not by the mother, but usually by the husband's mother (mother-in-law). This is a remarkable similarity of purity and impurity of the mother, after childbirth, with ancient Israeli custom.

Altar of Earth

While, instead of stone, earth is sometimes used for religious worship. Nihon-shoki records that the first Japanese emperor Jinmu took earth from Mt. Ameno-kagu-yama, made many bricks from it and made an altar for worshiping G-ds. It seems that ancient Israelites also made altar from earth, for the Bible says, "An altar of earth you shall make for me (G-d)" (Shmos 20:24)

Altar could also be made of earth. In case of the altar made of earth, it meant that it was made of bricks. The history of brick is very old; in the Near East many bricks were already used even in the time of the Tower of Babel, about 4000 and several hundred years ago (Genesis 11:3).

It seems that the Israelites sometimes made bricks from earth and made altar of bricks. But compared with stone, brick is weak and easily decomposed by time, so archaeologists have not yet found altar of bricks in Israel, but found in other Near East countries.

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Bronze Serpent

When the Israelites were wandering the desert after their Shmos from Egypt, they met a flock of serpents and many people were bit and died. The poison were very strong like a fire. To save the people, Moses made "a bronze statue of serpent" according to the commandment of G-d and set it on a pole so that the people could look at it, and when one who had been bitten by serpent looked at the bronze serpent, he lived (Bamidbar 21:9).

After this incident ended, this bronze serpent had been in the safekeeping among the Israelites. The existence of this statue was never bad as long as the faith of the Israelites were sound. But when the Israelites degraded later, they began to worship the bronze serpent as their idol rather than to worship true G-d. As a result Hezekiah, a king of the southern kingdom of Judah in the 8th century B.C.E., broke the stature to stop the idolworship. The Bible records that he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made; for until those days the Israelites "burned incense to it" (Melachim II 18:4).

It was before this when the Ten Tribes of Israel were exiled to Assyria (722 B.C.E.). So it seems that the Ten Tribes had the custom of worshiping the bronze serpent when exiled.

At a Shinto shrine on Mt. Inomure, Ooita prefecture, until about 40 years ago, there had been a unique feast for begging rainfall, in which they firstly make a foundation by constructing 6 trunks of tree into the shape of the Shield of David, then on it they pile up a lot of branches and make it a tower, and on top of it they put a vertical pole with a slough of snake twining round it. People burn the branches and the tower and pray for rainfall. They burn incense to the snake expecting a supernatural power from it.

I saw the scene on a video and this reminds us of the custom of ancient Israel to worship the bronze serpent. Besides, G-ds which are worshiped in Japanese Shinto shrines are sometimes snakes. This might have some connection to ancient Israel.

Customs of the First Month

The Japanese traditionally celebrate a new year magnificently. They also do Obon feast on July 15 or August 15 every year as a national event. They have a saying, "It is as if Obon and a new year came together" which means very very busy. These two events are the most magnificent ones throughout a year in Japan.

Looking at the new year first, on January 1 many Japanese people begin to gather together at shrines even before dawn. And on January 1 they sit a happy circle with family and eat Mochi (Japanese Matzah). They eat Mochi for 7 days and on the 7th day they eat porridge with 7 kinds of bitter herbs.

Today, the Japanese use the solar calendar; the New Year's Day is January 1 and the day of eating porridge with 7 herbs is January 7. But historically the Japanese used the lunar calendar, when the New Year's day was the 15th of the first month because on that day was the first full moon. It is a remnant of this that today January 15 is called Small New Year's Day (Koshougatsu in Japanese). This day was also called "New Year's Day of Mochi". New Year's celebration was a feast of Mochi. And the night of January 14 is called New Year's Eve of the 14th Day. In the time of the lunar calendar, the 15th day of the first month was a national holiday.

According to Zen'ichiro Oyabe, before the 12th century C.E., the Japanese had eaten porridge with 7 bitter herbs on the 15th day of the first month, and on the following days they performed events to pray for good harvest of the new year. This is similar to the custom in ancient Israel. They celebrated the Feast of Unleavened Bread throughout the "7 days" "from the 15th day of the first month", when they ate the unleavened bread (Vayikra 23:6).

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The unleavened bread, which is "matzah" in Hebrew, is a very thin bread prepared by kneading and baking without using yeast or leaven. The way of preparing Japanese Mochi is similar to this except for using rice instead of flour. Israeli "matzah" and Japanese Mochi are very similar each other in pronunciation as well as in meaning, recipe and purpose.

And the Israelites ate with "bitter herbs" on the 15th day of the first month (Shmos 12:8). Thus, just as the ancient Japanese ate with 7 bitter herbs on the 15th of the first month, the Israelites ate with bitter herbs on the 15th of the first month.

In the Jewish calendar, the 15th day of the first month, that is the first day of the feast, is full moon and the Sabbath (Leviticus 23:7). On the next day of this Sabbath, the Israelites offered firstfruits and prayed for a good harvest of the year (Leviticus 23:11).

The Japanese clean their houses thoroughly before the coming of New Year's Day. When the Jews look at it, they think, "This is the same custom as ours!" for they also had to clean their houses thoroughly before the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for the Bible says, "you shall remove leaven from your houses" (Shmos 12:15). So they had to purge all the houses and remove leaven from them. Passover among the Jews in India is called Holiday of Cleaning the House and they remove all leaven and clean the house.

Obon Feast

Next, let us look at the Obon feast. In Japan they have an event called Obon on July 15 or August 15. In the time they used the lunar calendar it was held on the 15th day of the 7th month.

Today Obon is regarded as one of the events of Buddhism, but since the time long before Buddhism was imported to Japan, there had been a feast called Tama-matsuri which was the original of Obon. When Buddhism was imported to Japan, this Tama-matsuri was took in the events of Buddhism and became Obon. In ancient Israel on the 15th day of the 7th month was a big feast called the Feast of Booths (harvest feast, Vayikra 23:39).

Today the Japanese use the solar calendar and in many cases they now hold the Obon feast on the 15th day of the 8th month. Strangely this was the day when the harvest feast was held in the northern kingdom of Israel of the Ten Tribes. The Bible records that Jeroboam, the king of the northern kingdom, ordained a feast "on the 15th day of the 8th month" like the feast which was in the southern kingdom of Judah (Melachim I 12:32).

It was an Israeli tradition since ancient times to have the harvest feast on the 15th day of the 7th month, but King Jeroboam rejected this tradition and ordained a new day for the harvest feast on the 15th day of the 8th month.

In Israel, the Feast of Unleavened Bread (New Year) and the Feast of Booths (harvest feast) on the 15th day of the 7th month (or 8th month) were the most magnificent events throughout a year. Similar to this, the Japanese have been performing magnificent feasts at the same times as these. In Japan today, the 15th day of the 8th month is also the memorial day of the end of the last war.

Full Moon On the 15th Day

In Japan there is also a custom called Juugo-ya, which means 15th night, on the 15th day of the 8th month in the Japanese old lunar calendar. This is during September-October in today's solar calendar. This corresponds to the 15th day of the 7th month (Tishri) in the Jewish calendar, which is the day of the Feast of Booths. When the Japanese are celebrating Juugo-ya, the Jews are celebrating the Feast of Booths.

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On this day, the Japanese often build a booth, gather together there with family, put Japanese pampas grass to a vase, offer harvest of the season like dumpling, taro, pear, etc., and enjoy the beauty of the full moon in Autumn. In Israel, on the 15th day of the 8th month in the northern kingdom of Israel, or on the 15th day of the 7th month in the southern kingdom of Judah, they built a booth, gathered together there with family, offered harvest of the season, rejoiced the harvest looking the beauty of the full moon in Autumn (Vayikra 23:39-42).

Offering Harvest

In Japan they have an elegant custom to offer firstfruits of harvest to G-d. They offer the firstfruits of cereals and fruits or a part of what they first get from their production.

Kanname-sai is a feast in October at Ise grand shrine to offer firstfruits to G-d. The ancient Israelites also had the custom of offering first fruits, for the Bible says that the first of the firstfruits of the land shall be brought to the temple (Shmos 34:26).

It is interesting to note that in Ise grand shrine in the time of Kanname-sai feast, the clothes, tables, and tools which are used in the service are all renewed. They do this in the sense of coming into a new year. In Judaism also, the month of the harvest feast (Tishri, September-October) is the time of a new year.

About a month after the Kanname-sai feast of Ise grand shrine, a feast called Niiname-sai is held at the Imperial House of Japan. Although the name is different, this is also the feast of offering a part of harvest.

Niiname-sai feast is held as follows; the feast begins at 6 p.m. and ends at around 1 a.m.. It is held at night. The emperor offers the harvest to G-d and after that, he eats them in front of G-d. By this ceremony the emperor is given from G-d the role as the leader of the nation. In ancient Israel, the leaders of Israel - Moses, Aaron, 70 elders, etc. - also ate in front of G-d (Shmos 24:11).

And the Niiname-sai feast which the emperor performs for the first time after he ascended to the throne is especially called Daijou-sai feast which is a larger Niiname-sai feast, when special booths are built for offering harvest. In the Daijou-sai feast of today's emperor Akihito, there were also simple but large booths built, and after the ceremony they broke the booths and burned them.

Daijou-sai feast is also held at night. Akihito's Daijou-si was held from 6:30 p.m. to the next morning. The emperor offered the harvest and ate in front of G-d. In ancient Israel and also today, the Jewish Feast of Booths begins at sunset. The Israelites came into the booths, decorated with harvest products, ate in front of G-d and rejoiced together.

Wedding

I find several similarities between the Japanese Shinto way of wedding and the Jewish way of wedding.

In Shinto wedding, the bridegroom and bride drink from the same cup of liquor (Japanese Sake). In the same way in the Jewish wedding the bridegroom and bride drink from the same cup of wine, although this is not Biblical but Talmudic (the 3-6th century C.E.).

In the Jewish wedding today, after drinking wine, the bridegroom break a wine glass. This is to remember that the Temple of Jerusalem is destroyed. This custom started after the Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 C.E., and the Israelites before that did not have this custom of breaking the glass.

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In Shinto wedding the bride has a shawl on her head and hides half of her face. The shawl is to the height of her eyes today, but in old days, this was to hide all of her face (called Kazuki in Japanese). In old days, this shawl was also put when a Japanese woman attended a shrine. This custom of shawl was also seen among the ancient Israelites. In the Bible, Jacob, the ancestor of the Israelites, thought that he had married Rachal though, the bride was in fact not Rachal, but her sister Lear. It was due to darkness and the shawl on her face that he could not distinguish her.

Even today, Jewish bride puts a veil on her face in wedding. Ancient Israeli woman had the custom to put a shawl and hide her face when she comes out. Every time she comes to a synagogue, she had to put a shawl on her head.

It is also an important feature of Shinto that every Shinto priest is married. There is no rule in Shinto to make priest single. In modern Japan, most of Buddhist monks are married but this is a custom since Meiji-era. Before then, it was the custom of Buddhist monks to be single. Every Buddhist monk outside Japan is single. Catholic father is single. But Shinto priest is married. This is a tradition from the time immemorial. So was the ancient priest of Israel. So is rabbi of modern Judaism.

Concerning Japanese marriage, a Japanese woman told her memory. One day, her mother told her about the marriage of her aunt. After the aunt's husband was killed in a war, the aunt, who did not have any children then, married her husband's brother who had been at that time unmarried. About this marriage, the mother told her, "This is a traditional custom of Japan," but then she thought that today is the age of free love and it is consequential to marry whom one loves, and she could not understand what the mother said. However she told that later she was surprised knowing that this is the same as a Jewish custom.

It is true that that this is the same as a Jewish custom, for the Bible says that if brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead shall not be married outside the family to a stranger; her husband's brother shall go in to her, and take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her (Deuteronomy 25:5)

In Japan today, we cannot see this custom anymore usually, but it seems that this custom had been performed widely in Japan until recent time.

Atonement

In Japan they have a traditional thought of atonement similar to the one of ancient Israel.

In Old Shintoism, there is a ceremony of atonement called Ooharai, which is a ritual to expel all the sins and impurity of the nation.

In the ceremony of Ooharai, the emperor comes there wearing a white linen clothes, which means a shabby figure. After the ritual, the clothes are placed on a small boat and let flow the river. People look at it flowing and vanishing from their sight, when a prayer is chanted that the Imperial Family of Japan came from heaven (Takama-no-hara or Takama-ga-hara) and started to reign the country of abundant nature, the archipelago of Japan, but there are many sins raise up among the nation and we have to dispose them, however these sins are strong and it is hard to dispose, so we have to have specific days for atonement and the emperor do a ritual of atonement and purification for the nation. That is why the emperor performs a ritual of letting his white linen clothes bear all the sins of the nation and letting them flow the river to abandon.

And among the citizens, priests of shrines give all the people's sins to white papers which are cut in the shape of a man and let them flow the river. Ancient Japanese people thought that they could not come into a new year without the atonement of their sins. Ooharai atonement is held twice a year on June 30 and December 31

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every year at shrines and the Imperial House of Japan. The Jews have actually two New Year's Days in their Jewish calendar: One is the first day of the seventh month, and another the first day of the first month (the former is based on the creation of the world, and the latter on the Shmos).

The thought of Ooharai is similar to the thought of the Hebrew Scriptures. This Japanese custom resembles the Israeli custom of the scapegoat, which was a ritual held by the high priest of Israel at the temple of Jerusalem. The high priest prayed laying his hands on the head of the goat, let the goat bear all the sins of the people of Israel, took the goat to a solitary land, and looked at the goat vanish beyond the horizon, when the people were grateful for that their sins were taken away with the scapegoat to a land which cannot be seen and that G-d would not also look at their sins anymore. This ceremony was held every year (Leviticus chapter 16).

In Japan they also have a custom called Nagashi-bina, which is an atonement ceremony to let dolls with sins attached flow the river. Basically the concept of Japanese Ooharai and Nagashi-bina seem to be similar to the concept of Jewish scapegoat.

Furthermore, one Japanese Shintoist points out that the kinds of sin mentioned in the prayer of Ooharai atonement are very similar to the kinds of sin mentioned in the book of Leviticus. In the prayer of Ooharai, the kinds of sin mentioned are, "injuring a living person, injuring a dead body, leprosy, hunchback, fornication with mother, rape of one's own child, rape of mother and child, fornication with animal, magic, etc.."

These are very similar to the kinds of sin mentioned in Leviticus, which forbids the sins of injuring other person's body or one's own body (19:28), and profaning the dead body. The persons with leprosy (13:10-11), hunchback (21:20), or other deformity could not serve at the temple of G-d (21:17-23). Rape or fornication with mother, with one's own daughter, or with animal are of course forbidden (18:6-23). So is the sin of magic (Deuteronomy 18:11). Thus, the sins mentioned in the prayer of Japanese Ooharai are very similar to the ones mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures.

Custom of Kanka and Jewish Passover

Jews have a holiday called Passover. This originates from the Book of Shmos in the Bible, and reminds that more than 3000 years ago, the Israelites, who had been slaves in Egypt, went out of Egypt under the leadership of Moses. There was an incident called Passover at the night just before they went out from Egypt. When occurred a disaster of death upon the first son of every house in Egypt, the disaster passed over all the houses of the Israelites. The Israelites killed lamb under the commandment of G-d and put the blood to their gates. They soaked a bunch of hyssop with the blood and applied it to the gates. The houses with the blood were passed over by the angel of death. The Israelites grilled and ate the lamb at the night.

The similar custom is seen in the area of Ryuukyuu, Japan. A Christian leader, Juuji Nakada, wrote about 70 years ago that in Ryuukyuu, there was a custom to drive all bad things away by killing cattle and putting the blood to the gates of houses. This custom is called Kanka. Nakada thought that the reason why they used not sheep but cattle in Kanka custom was that there were no sheep in Japan.

I asked the school board of Okinawa about this custom. The answer was that they have in fact the custom called Kanka or Shimakusarashi (meaning driving away). They kill cattle, soak the blood with plant as Japanese pampas grass or leaves of mulberry, and apply the blood to their gates, four corners of their houses, and the entrance of the village not to let bad things come in. They grilled and ate the cattle on the day.

This reminds us of the custom of Passover in ancient Israel. And I hear that the Japanese word Kanka means passover.

We can see the Kanka custom even today, but today in many towns the cattle is replaced by pig. I asked "Why, pig?" The answer was that in the past, they were prohibited to kill cattle, so they changed to pig (There is an article in Okinawa Daihyakka Jiten (Okinawa encyclopedia) published by Okinawa Times).

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Kanka custom is held mainly in the second month and eighth month in the Japanese old lunar calendar (2-3 times a year). The second month in the Japanese lunar calendar corresponds with Spring - March or April in the solar calendar, and it is interesting that this is about the same season as Jewish Passover feast. According to the Bible, the lamb for the Passover was killed on the 14th day of Nisan (Abib) in the Jewish calendar, and this corresponds with March or April in the solar calendar.

Putting off Shoes and Washing Feet

The Japanese emperor performs the Daijousai (the big harvest feast) after his accession to the throne, when he changes his clothes to white ones and come forward to G-d with his feet naked. There he receives oracle of G-d and becomes true emperor and leader of the nation.

This is similar to a thought in the Bible. When Moses came forward to G-d, he put off his shoes and became barefoot (Shmos 3:5). So did Joshua (Joshua 5:15). There they received oracle of G-d and became true leaders of the nation.

When the Japanese come into their house, they put off their shoes, too. The Western and the Chinese come into their house with their shoes on, but the Japanese do not. According to Zen'ichiro Oyabe, until the beginning of Meiji-era (about 100 years ago), there was a custom in Japan to prepare a washtub with water or hot water for a person who walked outside to wash his/her feet before entering the house. Oyabe says that this is a traditional custom peculiar to Japan and not the one they learned from other Asian countries.

The ancient Israelites had the custom of washing their feet; there are several descriptions about washing feet in the Bible (Judges 19:21, etc.). Washing feet before entering a house was a daily custom of the ancient Israelites.

Horses Dedicated to the Sun

In Japanese Shinto religion, the sun Goddess Amaterasu is worshiped as the ancestor deity of the Imperial House of Japan and as the supreme deity for the nation of Japan. Ise grand shrine is built for Amaterasu.

If you look at the inside of Ise grand shrine, near the entrance you will find horses dedicated to the sun Goddess Amaterasu. These horses are not just ordinary ones but are the horses which the Imperial House of Japan dedicated to the sun Goddess. The horses are to be put beautiful clothes on, brought to a holy place of the shrine three times a month and bow their heads to the sun Goddess.

This is a tradition since ancient times in Japan, and also in Israel, for the Bible records that King Josiah, of the southern kingdom of Judah, removed the "horses" that the kings of Judah had "dedicated to the sun" "at the entrance to the house of the Lord", and he also burned "the chariots of the sun with fire" (2 Kings 23:11). This horse dedication is mentioned only once in the Bible, and it is amazing that this ceremony also existed in Israel.

King Josiah, who reigned 639-608 B.C.E., did a religious reformation and removed the custom to dedicate horses to the sun. Until that time, such a pagan custom had been performed throughout generations by kings. This was after the Ten Tribes of Israel were exiled to Assyria. It seems that this custom to dedicate horses to the sun had also been performed in the northern kingdom of Israel, because pagan customs in the southern kingdom were almost without exceptions performed also in the northern kingdom. The custom of dedicating the horses to the sun in Ise grand shrine might originate from this.

And in many other shrines in Japan, you will find a place where many plates of wood are hung, on which painted are horses. Words of people's prayer are also written on them and these plates are called Ema in Japanese meaning horse painting. A priest of a shrine taught me that in old days people dedicated a living horse but later it became difficult to keep and was substituted by the custom to dedicate the plates of horse painting.

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Dedicating of horses was very common in Mesopotamia and this could show a connection to Israel or its neighbors.

The Renewal of Taika

In ancient Japan there was an awful conflict concerning the reign of Japan between the Shintoists and Buddhists; so called the conflict between Mononobe clan (Shintoists) and Soga clan (Buddhists). Once the Buddhists had the power to reign but later in the time of the Renewal of Taika (645 C.E.), the Shintoists recovered the power to reign. In the Renewal of Taika we find appearance and disappearance of the relation with ancient Israel because it was the time of recover of the Shintoists.

For instance, the declaration of the start of a new age of the Renewal of Taika by the new government was in the beginning of the 7th month. The Japanese ancient chronicles, Nihon-syoki, records that on the second day of the 7th month they set a new princess and it seems that the first day of the 7th month was actually the beginning of the Taika era. The first day of the 7th month is the New Year's Day for the Jews. They celebrate it (the first day of Tishri) as the New Year's Day but it is the Sabbath, so they cannot work except for religious things. It was the first day of the 7th month that the priest Ezra let people listen to the Torah and started his religious reformation among them in the 5th century B.C.E. (Nehemiah 8:2). But except for this kind of religious events, the official events must be from the second of the 7th month.

And Nihon-shoki records that the new government sent messengers "on the 14th day of the 7th month" to offer their traditional religious offerings for Shinto G-ds. This is the day, in the Jewish custom, to prepare for G-d the religious offerings for a Jewish big feast, the Feast of Booths. This coincidence is amazing.

This is not everything. In the Renewal of Taika, a new law started for distributing lands to people. This law, which continued until about 900 C.E., was that the government were to redistribute lands to citizens every 6 years. The model for this was a Chinese law but in the Chinese law the redistribution was when a farmer became 60 years old or when he died, and was not every 6 years. Then, why did the Japanese government redistributed the lands every 6 years?

In ancient Israel, there was a law to use lands 6 years and during the 7th year the lands had a rest (Vayikra 25:3-4). This was to avoid continual farming and weakening of the lands and it seems that this Hebrew law became a model for the law of redistributing at the Renewal of Taika. Someone guesses that the Japanese might used the 7th year for the redistribution of the lands.

And in this redistributing, the size of the land was determined according to the number of people of the family. This was the same in ancient Israel, where the size of the land of inheritance was determined according to the size of the number of people of the tribe (Bamidbar 26:54).

The Imperial Edict of the Renewal of Taika Resembled the Laws of Moses

Besides, among the laws which started at the Renewal of Taika there are many which make us feel an association with the laws of the Torah. For instance, in the Laws of Men and Women of the Renewal of Taika, it is written that:

"Give the child who was born between a male slave and a female slave to the mother, female slave."

This was the same in ancient Israel. The master gave the child who was born between a male slave and a female slave to the mother, female slave, and the male slave had to go out alone (Shmos 21:4). And in the page of the Messenger at the Renewal of Taika, it is written:

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"Collect double from the one who got unjustly."

This means to collect double of the amount of money from the one if he got something which is not his by lying that it is his unjustly. This is the same as a law of the Torah, for the Torah says that penalty for stealing is to pay double (Shmos 22:9).

In the page of the Abolition of Old Customs at the Renewal of Taika, it is written:

"Abolish the custom that a living person cuts his hair or spears his thigh for the dead."

Among many nations are the custom that a living person injures himself for the dead. In Taiwan, they have a festival in which people injure themselves and shed blood. It was true also in Japan but the Renewal of Taika forbad it. This was the same as a law of the Torah, for the Torah says that one shall not make "any cuttings in his flesh for the dead", nor "tattoo" any marks on him (Vayikra 19:28).

Jews are forbidden by the Bible to cut the body and to tatoo. Shinto priests do not tatoo nor cut the body. Also in the laws of the Torah it was forbidden that a priest or a citizen shaved the hair of the head (Vayikra 21:5, 19:27). Buddhist monks shave their heads, but Shinto priests do not.

It is interesting to note that in the same page of the Abolition of Old Customs, it is written about justice:

"Even if there are three definite witnesses, all should state facts and then bring the case to the officer. Do not sue recklessly."

Here why does it say "three definite witnesses"? It seems that in this background is a thought that there should be at least two or three witnesses, but even if in the case there are three witnesses they should not sue recklessly; they should state detailed facts before suing. This is associated with a law of Moses, for the Bible says that one witness shall not rise against a man concerning any iniquity or any sin that he commits; by the mouth of "two or three witnesses" the matter shall be established (Deuteronomy 19:15).

This is because the word of one witness could be a lie to entrap the suspect.

Also in the page of Abolition of Old Customs, it is written:

"Until now there has been a trend that, for instance, during a man entrusts a horse to a person, the horse dies accidentally because of the person's fault, the man requires too much compensation from him."

And the law of the Renewal of Taika forbad this kind of requirement for compensation. This is the same spirit as mentioned in a law of Moses, for the Bible says that if a man delivers to his neighbor a donkey, an ox, a sheep, or any animal to keep, and it dies, is hurt, or driven away, no one seeing it, then an oath of the Lord shall be between them both, that he has not put his hand into his neighbor's goods; and the owner of it shall accept that, and "he shall not make it good" (Shmos 22:10-11).

Thus the laws promulgated at the Renewal of Taika are very similar to the laws of Moses.

Did the Ancient Japanese Speak Hebrew?

In Kojiki, Nihon-shoki and other ancient documents, we find many words similar to Hebrew in both meaning and pronunciation.

For instance, the first Japanese emperor Jinmu gave leaders of area the title "Agata-nushi"; "Agata" means area and "nushi" means leader. Also in Hebrew "agudah" means group and "nasi" means leader (In modern Hebrew it is nasi-agudah).

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In Japanese an emperor is called with a title "mikado", which sounds like Hebrew words "migadol" meaning the noble. Every Japanese emperor is called with a title "mikoto", which sounds close to a Hebrew word "malhut" meaning kingdom or king. Every Japanese emperor is also called with a title "sumera-mikoto", which has no specific meaning as a Japanese word, but if we interpret it as a Hebrew phrase "shomron malhuto", it means Samaria his kingdom or king of Samaria. The ancient name for a Japanese Shinto priest is "negi", while a Hebrew word "nagid" means leader.

The ancient Japanese name for a tomb of emperor or empress is "misasagi", while a Hebrew word "mut sagar" means to close the dead.

A researcher interpreted the Hebrew word for Canaan (ancient word for the land of Israel) as a combination of "qanah nah" which means field of reed, while the ancient Japanese called their country "Ashihara" which means field of reed in Japanese.

In the Japanese ancient books Kojiki and Nihon-shoki, we find many other words which remind us of Israel. The ancient name for an area in Nara prefecture is "Iware" which reminds me of a Hebrew word "Ivri" meaning Hebrew. The ancient name of a land in Nara prefecture "Asuka" resembles a Hebrew word "hasukkah" which means the tabernacle. In Asuka was built the ancient house of emperor. A Japanese scholar says that "a" is a prefix and "suka" means tabernacle or dwelling. Also in Hebrew "ha" is a prefix which means the, and "sukkah" means tabernacle or booth.

Similarity Between the Stories of the Bible and the Old Japanese Documents

We find several similarities between the stories of the Bible and the stories of the old Japanese documents. For instance, there is a similarity between Israeli King David (the second king of Israel) and Japanese Emperor Sujin (the 10th emperor, 148-30 B.C.E.).

The Bible mentions that in the reign of King David, there was a famine for three years (2 Samuel 21:1) and in the following pestilence about seventy thousand people died (24:15). While according to Nihon-shoki, in the reign of Emperor Sujin there was a pestilence for three years and about half of the people died. Both kings felt responsible for these terrible sights, and required punishment from G-d. David asked it through a prophet and Sujin asked through divining.

Kojiki also records that Emperor Sujin did his fight in the land of "Idomi", while the Bible records that King David did his fight in the land of "Edom" (2 Samuel 8:14). Here we find not only the similarity of pronunciations but also the similarity of stories.

David's son was King Solomon, who built the first temple for the heavenly G-d. While Sujin's son, Emperor Suinin, built the first Shinto shrine named Ise grand shrine. There are also some other similarities between the two kings.

Another interesting similarity exists between the King Saul (the first king of Israel), and Japanese Emperor Chuuai (the 14th emperor).

The Bible records that King Saul was "a handsome man... and taller than any of the people" (1 Samuel 9:2). While Nihon-shoki records that Emperor Chuuai was "a handsome man and about three meters tall." Both men were very tall and handsome.

King Saul came from the tribe of Benjamin. In the land of Benjamin there is a famous town called "Anathoth". While according to Kojiki, Emperor Chuuai reigned the country at "Anato", which sounds close to Anathoth. King Saul fought Moab, whose another name was Chemosh, in Hebrew "kemosh". This sounds close to "Kumaso" tribe which Emperor Chuuai fought. Saul died early because he committed a sin of disobeying the word of G-d, while it is written that Emperor Chuuai also died early because he disobeyed the word of G-d.

In addition, concerning the similarity between tribal names in the Bible and Japanese mythology, one of the

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tribes which ancient Japanese Yamato tribe fought is called the tribe of "Emisi" or "Ebusu", which sounds close to the tribe name of Jebusites, in Hebrew "yebus" (Joshua 15:63).

Similarity Between Japanese and Hebrew

Joseph Eidelberg points out that there are many Japanese words which are very similar to Hebrew in both meaning and pronunciation.

A Japanese word "anata" which means you is also said "anta", and in the dialect of Kyushu is said "atah". In Hebrew this is also "atah" or "anta". "Aruku" in Japanese meaning to walk is in Hebrew "halak".

Japanese "hakaru" means to measure and Hebrew "haqar" means to investigate or measure. Japanese "horobu" means to perish and Hebrew "horeb" means to become ruined or perish. Japanese "teru" means to shine and Hebrew "teurah" means illumination.

Japanese "meguru" means to circle and "magaru" means to turn, while Hebrew "magal" means circle. Japanese "toru" meaning to take is "tol" in Hebrew. Japanese "kamau" means to mind or care and Hebrew "kamal" means to sympathize.

Japanese "damaru" which means to become silent is "damam" in Hebrew. Japanese "hashiru" means to run and Hebrew "hush" means to hurry. Japanese "nemuru" means to sleep and Hebrew "num" means to doze.

Japanese "ito" which means thread is "hut" in Hebrew. The stick with white papers of zigzag pattern put on its upper part which the Shinto priest waves is called "nusa" in Japanese, while a Hebrew word "nes" means flag. Japanese "ude" means arm and Hebrew "yad" means hand. Japanese "kata" which means shoulder is "qatheph" in Hebrew. Japanese "owari" which means end or finish is "aharith" in Hebrew.

Japanese "kyou" which means today is "qayom" in Hebrew. Japanese "tsurai" means painful and Hebrew "tzarah" means trouble or misfortune. Japanese "karui" which means light in weight is "qal" in Hebrew. Hebrew "qor" means coldness and reminds of a Japanese word "kooru" which means freeze or "koori" which means ice.

Japanese "samurau" means to serve or guard (for the noble) and Hebrew "shamar" means to guard (Genesis 2:15). In Japanese, from "samurau" came a word "samurai" which means Japanese ancient warrior or guard. Also in Hebrew, if we attach a Hebrew suffix "ai" meaning profession to "shamar", it would be "shamarai" which sounds close to the Japanese guard "samurai". [This is the same case as "banai" which is a Hebrew word for builder and is a combination of "banah" (to build) and "ai" (suffix meaning profession) . Modern Hebrew does not have the word "Shamurai" but it fully satisfies the grammar of Hebrew.]

Researchers point out many other similarities between Japanese and Hebrew. A researcher points out more than 500 similarities of words. Among them, there may be several examples of similarity only by chance, even in those I listed here, but can we think all of these are by chance? There could be, by mere chance between two languages, several words which resemble each other in pronunciation and meaning, but when there are many words similar between the two, we may have to think that there is etymologic relationship between the two. Japanese includes many words which seem to have Hebrew origin.

Are Nestorians the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel?

In 1841 a book appeared, *The Nestorians, or the Lost Tribes - Evidence of their Identity*, published in New York, by Asahel Grant, who was a medical missionary. This is a very interesting book, for many Nestorian Christians also came to Japan.

Nestorian Christianity was born in the Middle East, spread to the east, had much power in the Tang dynasty of China (the 7-10th century C.E.), and had much influence on the people of Asia also in the following ages.

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Today, there are but a few Nestorians. Grant lived in the 19th century and spent abundance of time with the Nestorians.

He claims that everyone in the areas of Persia (Iran), Iraq, Armenia, and Kurdistan believes that the Nestorians are the descendants of the Lost Tribes and they indeed behave in manners very close to the Tribes of Israel. Their language is Aramaic which was the ancient Israeli and Middle Eastern language. They do not eat the forbidden foods of the Bible, they have Hebrew and Israeli-sounding names like Abraham, Joshua, Benjamin, Dan, Joseph, etc..

And they have other ceremonies as the tithe, sacrifices, first fruit, Sabbath observance like the Jews, as they do not cook or use fire for cooking on the Sabbath, and have fast days similar to the Jews and a Holy of Holies similar to the Jews, observe Passover, circumcision and baptism on the 8th day, and live in the manner of the ancient tribes, and have cities of refuge should anyone have committed an accidental murder would have a place to escape in safety (Numbers chapter 35), all of which is found in the ancient Israeli tradition.

Concerning the Nestorians, Ikuro Teshima (the founder of Makuya sect, mentioned later) has a similar testimony. In 1939, Teshima was in the outback of China, where he was using a servant who came from a Muslim village for miscellaneous duties under the order of his commander. According to what the servant talked to him, the people of his village now live as Muslims but do not eat pork nor sinew of hip which is on the socket of thigh (Genesis 32:32), their ancestors are Israelites and they escaped to the land because their houses were burnt in the war of one hundred years ago.

Hearing this, Teshima started to check it. He heard from Swedish missionaries Rev. & Mrs. Brom who were working for evangelism there since 50 years ago, "In the outback of China live the descendants of ancient Nestorian Christians. Many of them are now under the influence of superstition of Dao jiao or became Muslims or Catholics.... The Nestorians came to China passing the Silk Road. It is important to note that the Nestorians are actually Jewish Christians. They are Israelites."

The Study by Yoshiro Saeki

Next, let us look at the Nestorians who came to Japan.

In 1908, the president of Tokyo Literature and Science University, Yoshiro Saeki, published a valuable book about the Nestorians who came to Japan. Saeki insisted that Hata (or Hada) clan who came to Japan passing via the Korean Peninsula in the 3rd or 4th century C.E. were "Jewish Nestorians."

In fact, at Oosake shrine in Sagoshi, Hyougo prefecture, there is a foreign mask which a typical person of Hata clan named Kawakatsu Hata brought from Kugyueh in Central Asia to Japan. On the mask is carved a cherub which is an angel in the Bible. The mask has semitic feature having a high nose and somewhat looks like the Tengu, which might originate from the mask.

It is written in Nihon-syoki that in the reign of Emperor Kougyoku (641-643 C.E.) the topic of Hata clan spread among people and a song started to be sung by the people: "Uzu-masa is the G-d of G-ds; he conquered the G-ds."

In Uzumasa, Kyoto, there is a shrine called Oosake shrine which Hata clan founded. At the entrance pillar is carved that it is for deity Uzu-masa. According to the board which explains the history of Oosake shrine there, Oosake came from the Chinese word for David. So it was thought that this shrine was founded in the memorial of David, a king of ancient Israel which was the original land of Hata clan. David is known as a master of harp. At the entrance pillar of Oosake shrine is also carved that it is for the ancestor of orchestral music and dance, which seems to refer to David.

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And near the shrine there is a house of the descendant of Hata clan and in the site of it, there is a well called Isarai even today. In old days there were 12 wells similar to this in the region, and Saeki thought that this Isarai came from the word Israel.

Also near Oosake shrine, there is a temple called Kouryuu-ji which was again founded by Hata clan. A Japanese classical scholar, Kinjou Oota (1765-1825), left a word about the temple, "This has a title of temple but it is not a temple of Buddhism, but of Nestorian Christianity." Oota also thought that Nestorian Christianity came in to Japan in very early times.

In Kouryuu-ji temple they have a traditional unique festival called Ushi-matsuri (meaning cattle festival), in which a man with a mask, which looks not like Japanese, comes in riding on a cattle, reads the prayer of driving all bad things away, and after that, he runs away to a house. Some researchers say that this may be a Jewish ritual added by some pagan elements.

Saeki published an article headlined "Japanese Jews." on Nov. 27, 1908, issue of the Jewish weekly newspaper in Shanghai, Israel's Messenger. According to him, in Japan there are people called Eta, who are forced to live in corners of town and forced to engage in hard work. They belonged to the lowest social class and were under hard discrimination. Eta was the unfair name in despise.

But Saeki claimed that among the people called Eta there were people like Jews. They engaged in various industries, especially shoemaking. As Jews in Europe, they lived in ghettos and preferred to be isolated from the rest of the population. His article drew them as able laborers and stated, "Some of them engaged in commerce and became successful businessmen."

According to Saeki, they did not look like the Japanese and the women among them looked rather Semitic than Mongolian.

The most remarkable thing in the article was that the people called Eta observed Jewish customs. He says that in Nagasaki, their ghetto observes the Sabbath very religiously. They do not smoke or kindle fires or work on that day just like observant Jews.

But I have to mention that as far as I know, no one else of Saeki found these Jewish ceremonies with the Eta. I personally searched about the Eta and did not find any Jewish traces with them. In Japan there are no people called Eta today (officially) and it is difficult to confirm what Saeki mentioned.

However, it is interesting to think of this Saeki's research with the above mentioned insistence by Asahel Grant that the Nestorians were the Lost Tribes of Israel.

Concerning that many Nestorians came to Japan, it is also known by remains of all over Japan. In Gunma prefecture, Japan, there is a place called Tako which means many foreigners. Japanese scholars say that it was named so because there were many foreigners there.

Hitsuji of the name of the monument means sheep, and Japanese scholars say that there were people who bred sheep there. The author of The Secret History of the Japanese Nation (Nihon minzoku hi-shi), Isamu Kawase, had a research in China and stated that a kind of sheep called Kanyan bred in northern China was the same as Awashi sheep which is bred in Israel. He thought that the sheep which had been bred till the Nara-era (the 8th century C.E.) in Gunma prefecture, Japan, were also Kanyan sheep.

Japan did not have sheep originally. The sheep in Gunma might have come to Japan with the Nestorians, who might be the Israelites.

The Study by Ikuro Teshima

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There is a group called Makuya in Japan. The founder of Makuya, Ikuro Teshima, was a great researcher about the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, the Jews, the Hata clan and others.

According to Teshima, among all the Shinto shrines in Japan, the most numerous are Yahata (or Hachiman) shrines, which used to be called Yahada shrines in old days.

The G-d of Yahada was the one which Hata clan believed in. Teshima thought as did Saeki that Hata clan were Jewish Nestorians, and Yahada was originally a Hebrew word "yehudah" (hdwhy) meaning Judea. That is, the G-d of Yahada is to be the G-d of Judea. The Japanese ancient book of history, Kojiki, clearly says that the G-d of Yahada is a foreign G-d. Teshima also claims:

"The Japanese ancient book of history, Zoku-nihon-gi (Nihon-shoki part2), records that in 736 C.E. Emperor Shoumu gave a rank to a Nestorian Kouho and to a Persian Mitsui Lee. This was the first formal record of the arrival of the Nestorians, but it is obvious that even before that, the Nestorians had already engaged in evangelism from Kouryuuji temple as their hub of their activity."

"It is said that the principal image of Hansoubou temple of a mountain on the back of Hamana lake, Shizuoka prefecture, is a Jewish Nestorian monk named Akiba."

"Until World War 2, it was customary in Japan that, when a baby was born, neighbors and friends of the family celebrated the birth by presenting to the family a White Kimono for a boy, or a Red Kimono if the baby was a girl. On the back of these new garments, the well-wishers sewed the symbol of the Shield of David. After the war the custom is gradually dying out, as more and more Western clothes tend to be used instead of the traditional Kimono. However, since time immemorial, the Shield of David has been sewn on the back of the new born baby's kimono, as a time honored symbol of blessing for the infant. This custom of wishing good fortune prevailed through most of Japan, and most people over forty still remember this custom of their youth. It was traditional that the Shield of David be sewn with twelve stitches, symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel."

"In Japan we have a fairy tale that when Momotarou went to conquer Onigashima island, he reanimated his vassal singing "En yalah yah!" But if we parents are asked by a child what this means, we cannot answer because we do not know the meaning. "En yalah yah" sounds like a Hebrew expression "eni ahalel yah" which means "I praise Yahweh." I have seen the festival of Myomi shrine of Yashiro city in Kumamoto prefecture before, and I heard them singing "Hallelujah, harliyah, harliyah, tohse, yahweh, yahweh, yoiton nah..." which also sounds like Hebrew."

All of these are interesting descriptions. Teshima also claims concerning the tombs of the people of Hata clan in Kyoto that these tombs are similar to the Jewish ones in the build. Ancient Jews made a cave by digging a tunnel or piling up rocks and made it a tomb; the tombs of Hata clan have the same build.

And it is interesting to note that oil lamps from 2500 years ago are discovered at Mt. Yuzuki near Oomiwa shrine of Nara prefecture. These oil lamps are, as Teshima states, similar to the ones used in ancient Israel (See the picture).

Hata Clan and Gion Festival

In 794 C.E., the government of Japan moved from Nara to Kyoto. It was Hata clan to play an active part to build the City of Heian in Kyoto to make it the capital of Japan. The chief of Hata clan, Kawakatsu Hata, build the City of Heian mobilizing all his sites, wealth, and technology.

Hata clan, who had come in early ages of Japan with a multitude of people and lived in various places of Japan, already had a potency over Japan in the 8th century C.E.. Please remember that Asahel Grant stated the Nestorians were the Lost Tribes of Israel, and that Yoshiro Saeki and Ikuro Teshima also believed Hata clan were Jewish Nestorians. In fact, the name of the City of Heian reminds us of the name of Jerusalem,

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which means the City of Peace in Hebrew and Japanese Heian also means peace. If we translate Jerusalem into Japanese, it would be the City of Heian (Heian-kyo). It seems there is a Jewish admiration to Jerusalem in this name.

Just after the move of the government to the City of Heian, a festival called Gion festival (Gion-matsuri) began to be performed in Kyoto. Even today the Japanese perform Gion festivals in various places of Japan on July 17 or around that time. The center of the festivals is Gion festival of Yasaka shrine in Kyoto. The central event of Gion festival of Kyoto has been performed always on July 17, or the 17th day of the 7th month, since old days.

The important part of the festival is during 8 days from July 17, and they also have important events on July 1 and 10. The 17th day of the 7th month mysteriously matches the day when Noah's ark drifted ashore mountains of Ararat; the Bible records, "the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat" (Genesis 8:4).

Since then, ancient Israelites might have had a thanksgiving feast on this day every year, although there is no Biblical record. Since Moses, it was replaced by the Feast of Booths (Sukkot) which is performed on the 1st day, 10th day and during 8 days from the 15th day of the 7th month. Nevertheless, the Israelites knew well of the 17th day of the 7th month to be the day when Noah's ark rested, because it is written in the Bible. We know that the Bene Israel of India, whom I mentioned in chapter 3, still observed some lost ancient Jewish festivals. Could it be that a lost Jewish festival is still surviving in Japan?

Gion festival in Kyoto began in the wish that no pestilence might occur among people. This resembles the circumstances that when the temple of Jerusalem was established by King Solomon, he had a festival in the wish that no pestilence might occur among people. Solomon had the festival during 8 days (including the last day of solemn assembly) since the 15th day of the 7th month (2 Chronicles 7:8-10). There is a difference of two days between Solomon's festival and Gion festival but both were performed during 8 days in almost same time of the year and in the same wish.

A Scottish businessman, N. McLeod, came to Japan in Meiji era and saw Gion festival in Kyoto. He wrote that various things in Gion festival reminded him of Jewish festivals.

At Gion festival, carpets, which were imported from Persia and India via the Silk Road in the 16th century, are used as the decoration for the festival cars even today. And Japanese historians say that even in the times before it, and since very early times, many naturalized foreigners lived in Kyoto, which was indeed a big international city of the world. Not a few Jews, who came via the Silk Road, seem to have participated or enjoyed looking at the Gion festival.

Gion festival always starts with a voice of "En yalah yah". Even when we ask a Japanese person, "What does it mean?" he only says, "I don't know." But as mentioned above, to Jews this sounds like a Hebrew expression "eni ahalel yah" meaning "I praise Yahweh."

Is Hata Clan Ancient Jewish Diaspora?

The people of Hata clan were the most numerous among the foreigners who came to Japan in the time of C.E., According to an ancient Japanese book, Shinsen-shouji-roku, a multitude of Hata clan led by Sukune, king of Uzumasa came to Japan in the reign of Emperor Chuuai (according to a theory, in 356C.E.).

And in the reign of Emperor Oujin, another multitude of Hata clan led by King Yuzu came with 18670 people and naturalized into the Japanese (according to a theory, in 372 C.E.). This was an immense multitude. The king offered to the Imperial House many gold, silver, silk, and other treasures which they brought via the Silk Road.

Hata clan came to Japan in the 5th century, too. Even after that, many other people of Hata clan came to Japan and naturalized into the Japanese. But it is written that they were tall and different from the Japanese in their figure, language, and customs.

Hata clan were very good at techniques for sericulture and silk fabric. One of their shrines, Kaiko-no-yashiro

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shrine in Uzumasa, Kyoto, which means shrine of silkworm, was named for this. This reminds us of the Jews on the Silk Road was very good at techniques for sericulture and silk fabric.

Many of the descendants of Hata clan used the symbols of sailboat as their family crests. Is it related to that the crest of the tribe of Zevulun, one of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, was sailboat?

Hata clan is said to have come from Kungyueh which was located in the Central Asia and was a big base of the Nestorians. According to the study by Ikurou Teshima, when Shi Huang Di began to construct Wanli Changcheng, Hata clan was ordered to engage in the construction, but they could not bear the work and escaped via Manchuria to Korean peninsula, where they again experienced predicament, but they were finally helped by the Japanese emperor who wanted to learn excellent civilization from Hata clan. While, Hata clan appreciated the grace of the emperor and they became the people who served Japanese emperors faithfully. It seems that the religion of Hata clan began to change gradually in that process.

Inside Kouryuu-ji temple, which was a base of Hata clan in Kyoto, is placed an image of Miroku bodhisattva. Why does it have an image of Buddhism although it was the temple of Hata clan? The belief in Miroku bodhisattva was, as stated by Mrs. E. A. Gordon, born due to the belief in Messiah of Judaism or Christianity which entered in India. She says that the belief in Messiah entered India and became Maitreya, which later entered China and became Miref, which later entered Japan and became Miroku bodhisattva.

The belief in Miroku (Messiah) was also popular in Kungyueh, their homeland. That was why Hata clan compromised with Miroku bodhisattva which was thought to be the Buddhist Messiah in Japan. They saw their own Messiah through Miroku. Thus, they started to lose their identity as the Nestorian Christians.

Hata Clan and the Imperial House of Japan

Concerning the deep relationship between Hata clan and the Imperial House of Japan, Abraham Kotsuji who was a professor from Monmouth College in New Jersey, USA, states an interesting thing. He came from Kyoto and his ancestors were priests of Shimogamo shrine in Kyoto since the time of the first priest of the shrine. Kotsuji himself was to be the priest. Shimogamo shrine was built in the 8th century C.E. in the memory of a patriarch of Hata clan. Prof. Kotsuji thinks that his ancestors also came from Hata clan.

In old days, the imperial palace was in Kyoto and Shimogamo shrine had the deepest relationship with the Imperial House. Over 70 rituals which related to the Imperial House were performed there a year. This teaches us that Hata clan and the Imperial House were in a deep relationship.

Professor Kotsuji was a scholar of semitic languages and Hebrew scriptures. In 1939, he became the advisor on Jewish affairs for Mantetsu (railroad company of Manchuria by the Japanese government) on the request of Yosuke Matshoka (president of Mantetsu). Kotsuji thought that Hata clan were Jews. Later he moved back to Japan, and he was one of the famous people who helped the Jews who escaped from Nazi Germany to Kobe, at the beginning of World War 2. In 1959 he converted to Judaism. He went to Jerusalem, was circumcised and given the name Abraham. He died in Kamakura, Japan, in 1973, and his dying wish was conveyed to Rabbi Marvin Tokayer to be buried in his ancestral homeland - Israel. It was during the Yom Kippur War and no planes to Israel, but the rabbi arranged for him to be on the first flight to Israel, where he was met by thousands at the airport who remembered his kindness to Jewish refugees in Kobe, and they buried him with honor in Jerusalem.

Kotsuji called the religion of the Bible "Shinto of Israel" or "higher Shinto" (Shinto means G-d's way in Japanese). He was a bridge of Japan and Israel, or I would rather say that Japan and Israel were one in him.

The Existence of Emperor

To think about the relation between Japan the Ten Tribes of Israel, it is important to consider of the existence of Japanese emperor. The Japanese emperor is not just a king, but he is also a high priest. He is a priestly king. The emperor is in a deep relation with Shinto and sits on the central position of Shinto.

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During the chapter 1-4, we saw about the Ten Tribes of Israel in Afghanistan, India, Kashmir, Myanmar, and China, but they did not have such a priestly king as the Japanese emperor. How did Japan begin to have such emperor system of single family line from generation to generation? . A researcher thought that it was due to that the royal line of Israelites came to Japan.

The ancient king of Israel was not just a king but also a priestly king. Although there was a person called a high priest as well as him, but the king of Israel often participated in religious affairs. He was not just a political king, but he often played a central role of religious rituals. The king of Israel was, in a sense, similar to the emperor of Japan.

After King Solomon died, in ancient Israel the royal line was divided into two; one is took over by the southern kingdom of Judah, and another by the northern kingdom of Israel. In the southern kingdom, the royal line reigned the country but lost its power after the Babylonian exile. Then, how was it in the northern kingdom? The first king of the northern kingdom was Jeroboam who was from the tribe of Ephraim, and the last king of the northern kingdom just before the Assyrian exile was Hoshea. According to the Bible, all the kings of the northern kingdom disobeyed the teachings of G-d, but among them Hoshea was a better one, for the Bible records that he did evil but not as the kings of Israel who were before him (2 Kings 17:2). Hoshea and his staff members were exiled to Assyria in 722 B.C.E..

The royal line of the northern kingdom of Israel was originally born in the rebellion against the royal line of Judah. So it was very possible that after the exile they thought to go to a distant land, rather than to go back to Israel, and planned to make a country there and redo what they could not do.

While, when did the Japanese emperor start to exist? It is generally said that it was 660 B.C.E when the first Japanese emperor Jinmu ascended the throne. The Imperial House of Japan had already existed even before Hata clan first came to Japan. Is the Imperial House of Japan in the lineage of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, especially of its royal line?

The Formal Name for Emperor Jinmu

Concerning this, interesting is the similarity between Ninigi and Jacob, between Yamasachi-hiko and Joseph, and between Ugaya-hukiaezu and Ephraim as mentioned earlier (chapter 8). This is a remarkable similarity in mythology between the Imperial House of Japan and the royal line of the Ten Tribes of Israel.

It is also interesting to note that the formal name for the Japanese first Emperor Jinmu is called in Kojiki or in Nihon-shoki:

"Kamu-yamato-iware-biko-sumera-mikoto"

Kanji letters are adopted in Kojiki and Nihon-shoki to this, but this pronunciation had existed even before Kanji letters were imported from China. So the Kanji letters have no connection with the meaning.

This "kamu-yamato- ..." has no satisfactory meaning if we interpret it as Japanese, but Joseph Eidelberg interpreted it as Hebrew. If we think of slight corruption and interpret it as Hebrew, it would be:

"The founder of the Hebrew nation of Yahweh, the noble (first born) of Samaria his kingdom."

This is not necessarily to mean that Jinmu himself was really the founder of the Hebrew nation, but rather, it may mean that the memory of the royal line of the Hebrew nation coming to Japan was included in the legend of the Japanese first Emperor Jinmu. Did the royal line of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel came to Japan? It is a grand mystery.

The Imperial Library Burnt Down

In Japan in 645 C.E., there was a very regrettable thing that the Imperial library, which had kept very important old documents and books, was all burnt down.

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There was a fight between the pro-Shinto and the pro-Buddhism and as the result, the pro-Buddhism, Soga clan, set fire to the library, and all the important records and books in it were burnt down.

The oldest book existing now among all the Japanese books is Kojiki, but even this Kojiki was written in 712 C.E. which was 67 years after the burnt down of the Imperial library. That is, before Kojiki there had existed many ancient books, records, and documents in Japan. In that library there was a mountain of books older than Kojiki. Someone guesses that there was also the Torah Scroll there. We cannot deny the possibility if we think, as we saw above, it seems that the laws of the Renewal of Taika had a help from the knowledge of the teachings of the Torah.

If the ancient Japanese had the Torah, it must have been no doubt kept in the Imperial library, which was unfortunately burnt down. There must have been many other important materials concerning the origin of the Japanese in the library. The genealogy from their ancestors might also be there. When the library was burnt down, the Japanese lost their past.

In the 7th century B.C.E. in the southern kingdom of Judah, a Torah Scroll was accidentally found in the temple when an officer was searching gold in the temple (Divrei Hayamim II 34:15). King Josiah at that time let a priest read the Torah, when the king wailed and tore his clothes, for he clearly understood that the people in the country were not obeying the teachings of G-d.

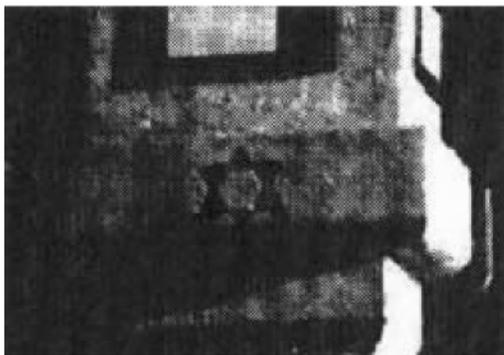
We can know from this that the ancient people did not read the Torah usually; the Torah Scroll was often kept in an important place and no one looked at it. If the Torah Scroll was in Japan, I wish it were found before it was burnt.

But even if the Japanese lost their past, we do not need to say that now there is no way to know the past or origin of the Japanese. I hear that the insides of many of the tombs of the Japanese emperors are not yet researched or exhibited. When they are researched, I believe we can know more about the roots of the Japanese. The insides of tombs of Egyptian kings are well researched and exhibited. If the tombs of the Japanese emperors are researched scholarly, it may be possible that the Japanese take their past back.

Even the day may come when a definite evidence would be found in a tomb. Someone guesses the Israeli Menorah would be found. Other person guesses the emblems of the Lost Tribes of Israel would be found. Would such a day come?

The Symbol Similar to the Star of David Is Used At Ise-jingu, the Shinto Shrine for the Imperial House of Japan.

Ise-jingu in Mie-pref., Japan, is the Shinto shrine built for the Imperial House of Japan. On both sides of the approaches to the shrine, there are street lamps made of stone. On each of the lamps near the top, the mark same as the Jewish Star of David is carved.



The lantern at "Ise-Jingu" Shinto shrine

The crest used on the inside shrine (Izawa-no-miya) at Ise-jingu is also the same design as the Star of David. This has existed since very old days. In Kyoto pref., there is a shrine called "Manai-jinja" which was the original Ise-jingu shrine. The crest of "Manai-jinja" is also the same design as the Star of David.

The Star of David became the formal symbol for Jews in the 17th century. However, the Jews has often used the design on their monuments since old days. The design is present in the synagogue in Capernaum, Israel, which dates from the second century C.E.. I hear that the design was already used for Jewish tombs in the third century C.E.. Professor Gershom Scholem in his book on Kabbalah (Jerusalem 1974, p.362) states that a Star of David is on a seal from

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the 7th century B.C.E., found in Sidon and belonging to the Jew Joshua ben Asayahu, whose Jewishness is certain because of his name.

However, this design has also been used among other nations. American sheriff has a badge in the same shape of the Star of David, but it does not mean that he is a Jew. This design has been used among various nations due to its geometrical beauty. Did the Japanese design which resembles the Jewish Star of David come from Jewish origin or just a coincidence? To know this, we need more investigation.

Finally, I introduce the rumor that G-d's name is written in Hebrew on the holy mirror which is kept at the Japanese Shinto shrine "Ise-jingu" since ancient times.

Concerning the Rumor That G-d's Name Is Written in Hebrew on the Holy Mirror of "Ise-jingu"

In the Imperial House of Japan, there are three valuable treasures which were derived from ancient Japanese myths. These three are a sword, a jewel pendant and a mirror.

The mirror, called "Yata-no-kagami" (mirror of Yata) is placed in "Ise-jingu" shrine. It has been rumored that G-d's name is written in Hebrew on the back of this holy mirror. This mirror is regarded to be extremely holy, and usually no one is permitted to see it. However, there are some individuals who insist that they have seen it.

About a hundred years ago, Arinori Mori (1847-1889), the Minister of Education, Culture, and Science of Japan at that time, insisted that he saw the back of the holy mirror. He said that on it written in Hebrew was G-d's name, "I AM THAT I AM," which is the name used when G-d spoke to Moses (Shmos 3:14).

After World War II, Dr. Sakon, a professor from Aoyama-gakuin University, stated that he had seen a replica of the mirror which was placed in the Imperial Palace. He said that on it written in Hebrew was G-d's name, "I AM THAT I AM".

Later, it has been stated that Yutaro Yano, a passionate Shinto believer, saw the holy mirror, and transcribed the patterns on its back. Yano repeatedly asked a priest at Ise-jingu if he could observe the mirror. Moved by Yano's passion, the priest secretly permitted him to observe the mirror. Yano carefully copied the pattern off the mirror's back.

This copy has been maintained for years in a Shinto group named "Shinsei-Ryujinkai," which is run by Yano's daughter. The copy had been held in secret by the group. Later, they stated that it was "G-d's revelation" to show the copy to His Highness Mikasanomiya, a younger brother of the Emperor Hirohito (Showa Tennoh).

Mr. Wadoh Kohsaka, who is a Shinto researcher, had a role in handing it to Mikasanomiya. After that, Kohsaka decided to show the copy to the public in his book, for he believed that it was important for the Japanese to know the truth. The book was published several years ago.



The monument which was at "Manai-jinja" Shinto shrine

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The pattern which is believed to have been taken from the back of the Japanese Holy mirror by Yutaro Yano

There are two theories on how to interpret the letters on the mirror. One is to interpret the letters as "Hifu-moji" which is believed to be one of "Jindai-mojis", the supposed Japanese letters existed in ancient Japan that existed before Kanji-writing had been imported from China to Japan. Another theory is to interpret them as ancient Hebrew.

The theory of "Hifu-moji" is from Yano himself, but there are contradictions in his interpretation. In addition, no one knows what Hifu-moji really looks like. Hence, I cannot accept them as Hifu-moji. All the known Japanese ancient "Jindai-mojis" are written vertically. I have never seen it written horizontally.

Some people suggest that the 7 letters inside the central circle of the mirror could be read as "I AM THAT I AM," which in Hebrew "ehyeh asher ehyeh," reading "ehyeh" two times. Others suggest that they could be read as "Yahweh's light," which in Hebrew "or Yahweh" ("Or" means light).

However, some letters resemble Hebrew though, some do not. We also have to consider that Aramaic letters which the ancient Israelites used were a bit different from Hebrew. Samaritan letters are also different. If anyone reading this can interpret this, please let me know. We also do not have definite evidence that Yano's copy of the back of the Holy mirror is true to the original. This still remains as a mystery. I wish that someday the mirror or even its photo may be made available to the public.

Old Japanese Words Have Hebrew Origin.

Joseph Eidelberg, a Jew who once came to Japan and remained for years at a Japanese Shinto shrine, wrote a book entitled "The Japanese and the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel." He wrote that many Japanese words originated from ancient Hebrew.

For instance, we Japanese say "hazukashime" to mean disgrace or humiliation. In Hebrew, it is "hadak hashem" (tread down the name; see Iyov 40:12). The pronunciation and the meaning of both of them are almost the same.

We say "anta" to mean "you," which is the same in Hebrew. Kings in ancient Japan were called with the word "mikoto," which could be derived from a Hebrew word "malhuto" which means "his kingdom." The Emperor of Japan is called "mikado." This resembles the Hebrew word, "migadol," which means "the noble." The ancient Japanese word for an area leader is "agata-nushi;" "agata" is "area" and "nushi" is "leader." In Hebrew, they are called "aguda" and "nasi."

When we Japanese count, "One, two, three... ten," we sometimes say:

"Hi, fu, mi, yo, itsu, mu, nana, ya, kokono, towo."

This is a traditional expression, but its meaning is unknown it is thought of as being Japanese.

It has been said that this expression originates from an ancient Japanese Shinto myth. In the myth, the female god, called "Amaterasu," who manages the world's sunlight, once hid herself in a heavenly cave, and the world became dark. Then, according to the oldest book of Japanese history, the priest called "Koyane" prayed with words before the cave and in front of the other gods to have "Amaterasu" come out. Although the words said in the prayer are not written, a legend says that these words were, "Hi, fu, mi...."

"Amaterasu" is hiding in a heavenly cave; "Koyane" is praying and "Uzume" is dancing.

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Joseph Eidelberg stated that this is a beautiful Hebrew expression, if it is supposed that there were some pronunciation changes throughout history. These words are spelled: "Hifa mi yotsia ma na'ne ykakhena tavo."

This means: "The beautiful (Goddess). Who will bring her out? What should we call out (in chorus) to entice her to come?" This surprisingly fits the situation of the myth.

Moreover, we Japanese not only say, "Hi, hu, mi...", but also say with the same meaning:

"Hitotsu, futatsu, mittsu, yottsui, itsutsu, muttsu, nanatsu, yattsu, kokonotsu, towo."

Here, "totsu" or "tsu" is put to each of "Hi, hu, mi..." as the last part of the words. But the last "towo" (which means ten) remains the same. "Totsu" could be the Hebrew word "tetsa," which means, "She comes out." And "tsu" may be the Hebrew word "tse" which means "Come out."

Eidelberg believed that these words were said by the gods who surrounded the priest, "Koyane." That is, when "Koyane" first says, "Hi," the surrounding gods add, "totsu" (She comes out) in reply, and secondly, when "Koyane" says, "Fu," the gods add "totsu" (tatsu), and so on. In this way, it became "Hitotsu, futatsu, mittsu...."

However, the last word, "towo," the priest, "Koyane," and the surrounding gods said together. If this is the Hebrew word "tavo," it means, "(She) shall come." When they say this, the female god, "Amaterasu," came out.

"Hi, fu, mi..." and "Hitotsu, futatsu, mittsu..." later were used as the words to count numbers.

In addition, the name of the priest, "Koyane," sounds close to a Hebrew word, "kohen," which means, "a priest." Eidelberg showed many other examples of Japanese words (several thousand) which appeared to have a Hebrew origin. This does not appear to be accidental.

In ancient Japanese folk songs, many words appear that are not understandable as Japanese. Dr. Eiji Kawamorita considered that many of them are Hebrew. A Japanese folk song in Kumamoto prefecture is sung, "Hallelujah, haliya, haliya, tohse, Yah-weh, Yah-weh, yoitonnah. . . ." This also sounds as if it is Hebrew.

Latin America

When the Jews of Spain and Portugal fled the Inquisition, many emigrated to distant places like the newly developing lands of Latin America. Even in their new surroundings the Jews were not immune to persecution; many publicly converted to Catholicism while continuing their Jewish practices underground. Almost five hundred years after the Inquisition, some South Americans have begun to examine their non-traditional Catholic practices and realize that they have been practicing the underground Judaism of their ancestors. Jews like those in Venhaver and Natal in the Rio Grande do Norte area of Brazil, the Antiquenas of Colombia and Jews from the Naucalpan and Vallejo districts of Mexico City have begun to revisit their progenitors' practices. They live on the margins of already-thriving Jewish communities in Latin American cities like Sao Paulo, Brazil, Lima Peru and Santiago, Chile, the members of which are descendants of Spanish, Persian and Iraqi traders who immigrated to Latin America in the 18th and 19th centuries or European Jews also fled there to avoid the Nazis during World War II. In addition to these more mainstream Jewish communities, there are also a large number of "non-traditional" Jews in Latin America such as the "Iglesia Israelitas" in Southern Chile, a remote Indian tribe with many Jewish practices, and certain communities of mestizos (Mexicans of mixed Indian and European ancestry) who claim ancient Jewish roots, such as the "Iglesia de Dios" and "Casa de Dios." Some of the more colorful Jewish communities in Latin America include:

Peru:

In 1966, an Incan Catholic from the Peruvian city of Trujillo named Villanueva began to learn more about Judaism and, when the Catholic Church excommunicated him for his increasing hostility toward Catholicism, he emigrated to Spain to avoid further prejudice. While in Spain Villanueva studied Judaism and returned to Peru to convert his community of Indians to his new-found faith. More than five hundred of his fellow community members became devoted Jews. As the poor Trujillo Jews became more observant they found that they were not able to acquire sufficient ritual objects such as prayer books (*siddurim*) or prayer shawls (*tallisim*). In the absence of necessary ritual objects the Incan Jewish community began to focus more on studying mystical questions such as reincarnation (*gilgul*) and concept of a Messiah. The European-descended Jews of Lima did not accept the Incas' Judaism and did not allow them to use the synagogue or ritual bath (*mikva*); when Inca Jewish women needed to use the ritual bath they used the ocean or a nearby waterfall. In order to find a more receptive environment for their Judaism three hundred members of the community have emigrated to Israel, but some have remained, assuring that their way of life would not disappear from Peru. Their ranks are growing, and the Incan Jewish community of Trujillo has again had to face poverty, prejudice and the question of how they are going to maintain their Judaism.

Brazil:

In the arid Northern region of Brazil, Rio Grande do Norte, Catholics in villages like Venhaver and Natal have long been recognized for their "unusual" religious practices. Settled in the early 1700s when Portuguese Inquisitional activity was at its strongest in the Brazilian northeast, Rio Grande do Norte is remote enough that Jews fleeing persecution were able to avoid much of it by hiding there. Even so, most of the Northern Brazilian Jews became Catholic, though they wove their Jewish practices into their Catholicism. Even today, members of the Venhaver community eat according to the Jewish dietary laws, hang small bags of dirt on their door post (traditional Jews hang a *mezuzah*

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on their door post, a small container with particular passage of the Torah enclosed), light candles on Friday nights, refuse to kneel in Church when they pray and hold alternative services at a secret place called the "snoga," which some suggest is derived from the Portuguese word "sinagoga," Dozens of Marrano-descended families in the larger city of Natal have undergone "purification" ceremonies to cleanse them of Catholic beliefs and allow them to resume their ancestors' Judaism.

Cuba:

Since the Soviet Union stopped funding Fidel Castro's Communist Cuba in the late 1980s, Castro has slowly loosened the economic and social control of his people and allowed those interested in religion to resume their practices. Approximately 2,000 Jews remain in Cuba, most of whom are of Spanish descent. Most are poor, generally unable to afford prayer books and other Jewish articles, and elderly, as the Communist government has prohibited Jewish practices for nearly thirty years. Jews in Havana and Santiago have recently reopened their synagogues and have held public celebrations and Jewish study sessions in order to interest younger Cubans in the religion, openly affirming their Judaism for the first time in decades

Mystery of the Ten Lost Tribes

Ecuador

by Marvin Tokayer



Intensified attention to the subject took place in the 17th century in England. It was all due to the writings of Manasseh Ben Israel, an Amsterdam Rabbi, who convinced Oliver Cromwell to allow the Jews to Return to England after their banishment from that country four centuries previously.

Manasseh was fully convinced of the authenticity of the Sambatyon legend. He wrote in his book that all think that the Ten Tribes dwelled beyond this Sabbatical river. He cites many authorities in support of his belief including the statement of Josephus that Titus himself had seen the river. Later on, after his meetings with a remarkable missionary, the Marrano Jew (Jew who was forced to convert to Christianity in Spain and Portugal), Antonio de Montezinus, he became fully convinced that the American Indians constituted some of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. Manasseh heard a very remarkable

thing from Montezinus that in 1642 when Montezinus was deep into the mountainous wilderness of Ecuador, he met with four Indians who greeted him with "Shema Israel" which is the traditional creed of Israelites beginning with "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!" (Deuteronomy 6:4). He claimed that he spoke with them in Hebrew and claimed they were from the Lost Tribe of Reuben and Levi.

Through the conversation with Montezinus, Rabbi Manase Ben Israel was convinced that the American Indians were from several tribes of the Lost Tribes of Israel. He wrote on Dec. 23, 1649, in a letter to John Drury, the Puritan divine, "I think the Ten Tribes lived not only there in America, but also in other lands scattered everywhere, these never did come back to the second temple, and they keep to this day still the Jewish religion seeing that all the prophecies which speak of the bringing back into their native soil must be fulfilled."

Menorah Was Found in South America

As for the Indians in South America and the Lost Tribes of Israel, there was an interesting article in a newspaper published in Israel (Maariv, Dec 31, 1974) as follows:

In 1587, a Jesuit Nicholas Deltsu was sent to South America by the king of Spain to convert the Indians. In Argentina, he found a tribe with Hebrew names, Abraham, David, Moshe, etc.. When he asked them if they were circumcised, they answered, "Yes, just as our ancestors." In the same area were found knives of stone used for circumcison. Sharpened stone knives are cited in the Bible as used for circumcison.

Of equal interest is the recent find of a tribe in Argentina related to the Incas of Peru. On a stone tablet were found 3 commandments - "Do not steal." "Do not lie." and "Do not murder." Scholars concluded that these commandments come from the Ten Commandments of Moses but existed hundreds of years before the Spaniards arrived.

And in 1974 in the same area, round stones were found with Hebrew Menorah (candlestick with 7 arms of ancient Israel) on the stone, and on the side is written in Aramaic, Pascha (Passover). Aramaic is an ancient language which ancient Israelites used and this itself means very old.

A few meters away was found a long stone in the shape of a brick with an engraving of a boat (the emblem of Zevulun is ship) with the word Tzipora (the same name as the wife of Moses and one of names of Israelites. The name of the ship?) written on it. Does this mean that they came here on boat? Scholars believe it is 3000 years old.

Jews Of Africa

Africa



lonely planet's map of africa
visit <http://www.lonelyplanet.com>

Yes, there are Jewish communities in Africa, in every part of the continent. These communities have come to Judaism in different ways and have struggled in different ways to maintain their Jewish observances and identity. "The Jews of Africa" presentation will introduce you and members of your group to these communities by involving you in their history, music and food, by giving you a window into their religious and secular lives and by raising the complex religious, cultural, historical and political issues that one must confront after recognizing the existence of African Jewry.

Communities with Jewish practices around Africa:

--The Abayudaya of Uganda: The Abayudaya of Eastern Uganda have been an active Jewish community for more than 80 years since their leader, Semei Kakungulu, discarded the Christianity of the British colonialists for Judaism.

--The House of Israel Community of Ghana: The community, centered in the Southwestern Ghanaian town of Sefwi Wiawso, came to Judaism approximately twenty years ago when a local Ghanaian recognized Jewish characteristics in the ancient traditions of the Sefwi people.

-- The Beta Israel of Ethiopia: Though most of the members of this 2500 year old Biblically Jewish community are in Israel now thanks to two Israeli airlifts, some remain in camps in Addis Ababa and in remote northern villages.

--The Community of Rusape, Zimbabwe: The Rusape Community came to Judaism embarked on a spiritual quest to America and connected with African-Americans practicing "prophetic" Jewry.

--Moroccan Jews: Though much of this ancient Jewish community has emigrated to Israel an active contingent still practices a unique form of spiritual, distinctly North African Judaism.

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-- The Jews of Tunisia: Jews on the Isle of Djerba are part of a community that has been practicing consistently for more than 2000 years.

-- The European-descended Jewish community of South Africa Theirs is the largest and strongest Jewish community in Africa.

--The Lemba of Southern Africa: This community claims to be descended from the foot soldiers of King Solomon; recent genetic evaluations have proven their connection to the Semitic people.

Dormant or recently depleted Jewish communities:

--Mozambique: European settlers seeded a small Jewish community which has the opportunity to reemerge now that the government has softened its stance on Westerners.

--Egypt: The Egyptian Jewish community has effectively disappeared, though the synagogue in Cairo is still a testament to a rich Jewish past.

Historically Jewish communities:

--Timbuktu, Mali: In the middle of the 2nd millennium Timbuktu was an important trading center and home to an active Jewish community. The Jewish community has since disappeared but its descendants are beginning to explore their ancestors' faith.

--Cape Verde: The community of Jews moved to the islands of Cape Verde to flee the Portuguese Inquisition has since stopped practicing actively but has begun to experience a revival.

-- Sao Tome and Principe: A tragic episode during the Inquisition brought Jews to these small islands off the west coast of Africa. The Jewish community has since disappeared but the memory of Jewish Sao Tome and Principe remains.

Jews Of Africa - *History*

More than 2,700 years ago, on a tiny strip of fertile land on the far eastern edge of the Mediterranean, a small band of farmers, metalworkers and merchants lost a war and, at least temporarily, their land. A haughty Assyrian army swept in from the north, and as they advanced through Sameria they ravaged the communities of Hebrews who dwelled there. The Hebrews fought to protect their homes but in the end they had no choice but to flee. Some took their families and escaped to the east, disappearing into unfamiliar Asian nations. Others fled south into Africa, through the desert that their people had crossed in the other direction five hundred years before while escaping enslavement Egypt. A tiny group of Hebrews did remain in nearby Judea, but a century later the Babylonians conquered them, laying waste to their capital city, Jerusalem, and their most sacred structure – the Temple at which they worshipped God. The Hebrew people were homeless, wandering as they had through the Sinai, taking root, as they had become accustomed, in foreign lands.



Such devastation would have marked the end of most peoples, but the Hebrews did not allow their defeat to finish them. Perhaps their Jewish religion made them different enough from the people who conquered them that they had to cling to one another to retain it. Perhaps those who opened their lands to the Hebrews distrusted, disliked or feared them

enough to keep them separate. Whatever quirks of culture and history allowed them to maintain their identity, the Jewish people were able to survive domination by Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians and Romans, as well as Muslim conversions, Catholic Crusades, centuries of Inquisition, even the Nazi Holocaust.

Though Jews maintained their own religious beliefs, rituals and core customs through these tribulations, they did not remain entirely separate from the people whose lands they inhabited. In fact, Jews often intermarried with other peoples, bringing local genetic characteristics (and often local cultural traits) into their community. When the Jewish people began their journey they were dark-skinned people, like any other tribe that originated in the so-called "Fertile Crescent," who spoke Hebrew and dressed in the robes and fabrics of the region. In the Diaspora, some Hebrews found themselves in Asian and African countries; over centuries, their collective skin darkened, they began to speak local languages and live, work and dress in a local fashion. As they developed over centuries into a substantial European population, the Jews there became white as their fellow countrymen, adopting their languages and day-to-day culture. This wandering nation may have maintained its identity through shared history, core beliefs and religion, but it could not reliably define itself by superficial characteristics like skin color, language or style of clothing.

Even today, when more than three quarters of the fourteen million Jews live in North America, Europe, and the largely white nation of Israel, one certainly does not have to have white skin and be identifiable as a "European" to be Jewish. In fact, there are more than a hundred thousand people self-proclaimed Jews in Africa today. Some of the Jews of Africa are white as their Western cousins, but others are dark-skinned as other North Africans, or as black as any African dwelling in the heart of

the continent. They dress and speak like their neighbors, live in the same kind of dwellings, work the same type of jobs – upon a cursory glance one might not be able to tell that they are different.

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But they are different – religiously different from other Africans, culturally different from the Jews who live in other parts of the world and substantially different from one another, for each Jewish community in Africa has its own history, character and view of what exactly "being Jewish" means. Many African Jews are "transplanted" Jews, those who have come to Africa from European nations. Some of them, like the Spanish Jews fleeing the Inquisition who arrived in North and West Africa in the 15th and 16th centuries, have intermingled with the local community so entirely that one can no longer call them "European." Others, like the clearly European Jews of Mozambique, seeded a Jewish community which remained when the political climate of the nation became unfavorable to non-Africans. Still others, like the white Jews of South Africa, have built their community on the African land but, so far, have retained their European identity.

There are "Jews by choice," such as the Abayudaya in Uganda and the Jews of Rusape, Zimbabwe and of Sefwi Wiawso and Sefwi Sui in Ghana, Africans who acknowledge their non-Jewish lineage but in recent years have chosen to practice Judaism. Some of them want Israel's Orthodox Rabbinate to accept them as Jews, others do not seek others' recognition of their faith. These Africans find solace in Judaism and identify with some aspect of the rituals, history or culture of the Jewish people.

There are Jews by lineage, black Jews who some researchers call, "African Hebrew Israelites," such as the Beta Israel of Ethiopia and the Lemba of Southern Africa, who still practice some Jewish rituals of the ancient Hebrews or Jewish traders who they claim seeded their communities. There are also Moroccan, Tunisian and Egyptian communities which have been practicing Judaism continuously since the ancient Hebrews fleeing Babylonian or Roman domination founded them almost two thousand years ago.

While the variety of Jewish communities in Africa today may confound those who have a narrow concept of Jews and Judaism, such a variety is only natural considering that the history of Jewish influence on Africa is a complex, often contradictory jumble of roaming tribes, crusading traders and proselytizing marauders who crisscrossed the continent imposing their own way of life.

According to some historians, Jews first crossed into the Nile Valley nearly two thousand years before the birth of Jesus, perhaps in some relationship with the Hyksos "Shepherd Kings" who may have originated in ancient Canaan. The Hyksos arrived in Egypt in the Second Intermediate period in the 17th century B.C. and roamed the Northeastern region of Africa for centuries. There is scant archaeological evidence to verify the Jews' wanderings, but there is a general agreement that a substantial number of Israelites settled in ancient Egypt in the time of the Pharaohs. The Exodus from Egypt led by Moses most likely took place during the reign of Pharaoh Ramses II (1279-1212 BC). After the Jews fled Egypt they settled in Canaan. The twelve tribal families of Hebrews unified under the Kingdoms of Saul, David and Solomon in the 10th and 9th centuries B.C. The Hebrew kings were powerful rulers who expanded their empires' influence by trading throughout North Africa, Egypt, the Arab Peninsula and the Horn of Africa.

By the 7th century B.C. the Jewish state had already split into the two kingdoms of Judea in the south and Samaria in the north. The Assyrians attacked this divided kingdom in the 6th and 7th centuries B.C. defeating the ten tribes that comprised Israel and scattering them so widely that no one, not political leaders, historians, anthropologists, theologians nor even the true believers, all of



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whom have claimed to have known their whereabouts to suit their own purposes or satisfy their own needs, has been able to prove to have found them.

The Babylonians destroyed the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem and exiled the southern Hebrew kingdom in the 8th century B.C. Some of the defeated Hebrews settled in Babylonia itself, others set up Jewish communities all around the Mediterranean, including Egypt, where they set up a Temple in Elephantine, and on the North African coast, especially in the Tunisian city of Carthage and on the island of Djerba. The Jews used these footholds as a base from which they could explore (and, in some cases, exploit) African tribes further inland and into the Sahara. There are recorded accounts of Jewish traders in ancient Ghana, Tekrur and Tuat in the first centuries after the birth of Jesus. Some historians believe that in this period Jews from either Elephantine or Yemen moved into present-day Ethiopia and gave root to the Beta Israel, and perhaps into the Bantu lands of Southern Africa that are home to today's Lemba. Many of Jewish merchants moved further inland as Muslims conquered North Africa in the 7th century -- Jews were in Tamentit by then; one can still see traces of Jewish architecture today. By the 8th century there were also reports of Jewish merchants in the Saharan regions of Mزاب, Tafilalet and Sijilmasa. In this time Jews (and with them, through intermarriage and some proselytizing) influenced nomadic Berber tribes in the Atlas Mountains both economically and culturally. The Spanish-born, 12th century geographer al-Idrisi, 13th century Arab historian Ibn Khaldun, and the 16th century historian Leon Africanus, wrote extensive tomes about Berber and black Jews they encountered in their research and travels in Africa. The Jewish population in North Africa, Cape Verde and the Guinea coast swelled in the 15th and 16th centuries as both Jews fleeing the Inquisition and those who had "converted" to Catholicism, many of whom still practiced Judaism secretly, settled there. The Jewish communities thrived, especially in North Africa, and though they faced repeated waves of persecution at the hands of Muslim rulers, there were Jews throughout the region until the 20th century. Today most former Jews – especially those in the Sahara and West Africa – have long since converted to Islam or Christianity, leaving only travelers' legend, tribal lore and the odd artifact of their centuries of Jewish observance. A substantial number of the Jews in Africa, especially those in Northern Africa, emigrated to Israel after 1948. The Beta Israel followed suit in the late '80s and early '90s, leaving only a portion of the community in Ethiopia. Even many white South African Jews have left Africa for Israel or the West.

Despite nearly two millennia of persecution, forced conversion and the constant drain of migration, once can still find Jews in most every part of Africa. Perhaps the Jews have been so determined to stay in Africa because they penetrated the continent slowly – they chose Africa as their land with purpose, and have struggled to remain there because, after all, over centuries Africa became their home.

The Abayudaya of Uganda



Out in the green, rolling hills of eastern Uganda, near the city of Mbale in the shadow of Mount Elgon, the Abayudaya Jews live as Ugandans always have, supporting themselves through subsistence farming and struggling against the elements to bring in the next harvest. These rural Ugandans share much with their neighbors; the surrounding fields bursting with mango trees, sugar cane, banana trees and cassava, the frequent communal festivals to celebrate birth, marriage and death, the uncertainty of rapidly changing national politics and the exhaustion of poverty. A significant difference between the Abayudaya and their countrymen is that when they raise their heads to the heavens in prayer, their God is not Jesus, Allah or any tribal spirit, but the God of Israel. They set themselves apart through devout Judaism and their adherence to the belief that some day they will become an accepted part of the international Jewish community.

The House of Israel Community, Ghana



The House of Israel community of Sefwi Wiawso and Sefwi Sui in Western Ghana is either a relatively new one, or an ancient one, depending on one's particular evaluation of the community's history. Members of the community believe that their ancestors, the Sefwi people, are descendants of Jews who migrated south through the Ivory Coast (perhaps originally from Timbuktu), bringing with them ancient Jewish observances. The current community was born in recent years after a local spiritual leader had a "vision" that convinced him that his Sefwi ancestors were actually Jews. The House of Israel has

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faced many challenges because of their beliefs, but since founding the community about 25 years ago the elders have grown their group to encompass several large families. Most members of this community are children and they are the first generation of Ghanaians (at least in recent times) to be raised Jewish.

The Lemba of Southern Africa



"We came from Sena, we crossed Pusela, we rebuilt Sena. In Sena they died like flies. We came from Hundji, to Chilimani. From Chilimani to Wedza. The tribes went to Zimbabwe. They built the walls and lived on the hill. Mwali sent the star. From Zimbabwe to Mberengwe. From Mberengwe to Dumbghe. We carried the drum. We came to Venda, Solomon led us. Baramina was our ancestor."

-- Ndinda Song

The Lemba are a paradoxical population of tens of thousands of self-proclaimed Jews who live in mostly in Malawi, Zimbabwe and the South African region of Venda. Their tribal lore, as told through the above "Ndinda song" which some Lemba sing during funerals and harvest festivals, is extensive, muddled and complex. "We came from Sena," they claim, though none of them can say exactly where Sena is. Is it a town in Israel north of Jericho, as some Lemba claim? Is it a region of Yemen, as some ethnographers suggest, or a village on the Zambesi River in Mozambique, as British explorer and Orientalist Tudor Parfitt, who lived with the Lemba for six months to try to determine their true origin, believes? According to tribal lore, the Lemba are descendants of attendants of the Israelite King Solomon who traveled to Ophir (Zimbabwe) in

search of gold. The Lemba allege that when Solomon returned, some of his men remained, teaching the Africans to worship "Mwali," a single God and spreading their traditions throughout the region. Are the Lemba direct descendants of Jews from King Solomon's court? Are they Africans who developed seemingly Judaic practices through contact with Muslim and Christian proselytizers?

What is certain is that the Lemba are emphatic about being Jewish. "I love my people," a Lemba woman told Parfitt, "we came from the Israelites, we came from Sena, we crossed the sea . . . We were so beautiful with beautiful long, Jewish noses and so proud of our facial structure. We no way wanted to spoil our structure by carelessness, eating pig or marrying non-Lemba gentiles." The Lemba maintain that their traditions are of Jewish origin. Their flag features a Star of David and the Elephant of Judah. They practice circumcision. They bury their dead in accordance with Jewish traditions. They hold the first day of the new moon sacred, shaving their heads to commemorate it. The Lemba do not eat meat from pigs; only circumcised men may sacrifice animals for food. Women must purify themselves ritually after menstruating or giving birth. Though non-Lemba women are allowed to marry into the tribe, Lemba men face expulsion if they marry gentiles.

The Beta Israel of Ethiopia

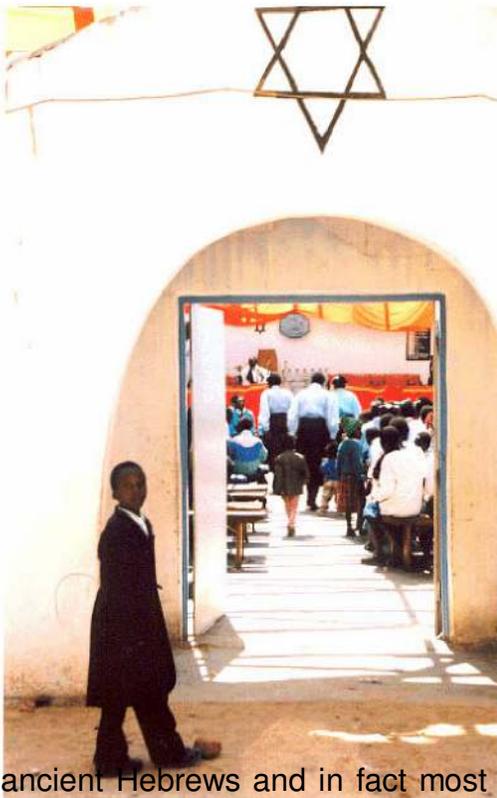
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"I am black, but comely, O ye
daughters of Jerusalem, as
the tents of Kedar, as the
curtains of Solomon."

-- from "The Song of Songs"

The word, "Falasha," means "stranger" or "immigrant" in Ge'ez, the classical ecclesiastical tongue of Ethiopia. Though the Ethiopian Jews prefer to call themselves Beta Israel (the House of Israel), "Falasha" is an apt way to characterize their community's role as an interminable outsider since its inception nearly two millennia ago. Only since the Israeli government accepted the Falashas as "official" Jews in 1975 has this unlikely community begun to find some of the acceptance that it has sought.

Rusape, Zimbabwe



"We believe most African (Black) descendants are in fact the ancient Hebrews and in fact most Blacks are the descendants of the 12 children of Israel We believe the true faith of the African descendants is Judaism and not Islam, as Islam is a revelation for descendants of Ishmael."

-- Solomon Guwazah of the Rusape, Zimbabwe, community, in a letter to *The African Sun*

The community of self-proclaimed Jews centered in Rusape, about two hours from Harare, Zimbabwe, appreciates its unusual history. On one hand they claim to be spiritually, if not genetically, descended from a "Lost Tribe" of Jews who migrated from the North. On the other, they can trace their recent incarnation back to a 1903 meeting between a former American slave named William

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Saunders Crowdy who was also a former Baptist deacon, and a spiritually hungry man named Albert Christian who eventually brought Crowdy's teachings to Southern Africa.

Today's Rusape Jewish community is a vibrant, exciting group that comes together often in song in prayer at their recently rebuilt tabernacle, located about seven kilometers out of town. They follow the same holidays as Western Jews, are learning Hebrew, and are deeply devoted to reviving the Jewish culture of the Old Testament, which they believe is greatly in tune with their own ancient local ways. The community is several thousand strong and growing.

Timbuktu, Mali



Only the most persistent travelers journey to Timbuktu. Though today one may catch a three hour flight from the Malian capital of Bamako, before the late 20th century the only way to reach the legendarily remote city was to take a lumbering five day boat ride up the Niger, or to travel hundreds of miles across the Sahara. The Jews were among the most persistent of ancient travelers, at least when they wished to trade in distant centers of commerce such as Timbuktu. All Jews in Timbuktu converted over the generations to Islam or Christianity, but recent historical research has led several families in the distant Malian city to reconnect with the religion of their ancestors.

Jay traveled to Timbuktu in November, 1999, when he took these photos of life in the ancient trading center, much of which has not changed for centuries. He plans to return this August to further document the Jewish presence there.

Sao Tome and Principe

One of the most tragic episodes in the history of African Jewry occurred on two small islands off the west coast of Africa called Sao Tome and Principe. The islands were not yet under Portuguese influence in 1496 when Portugal expelled its Jews in accordance with the Spanish Inquisition. When the Spanish had expelled the Jews who would not convert to Catholicism three years earlier many of them had fled to Portugal. King Manuel of Portugal had placed a huge head tax on the Jews there in order to finance his nation's colonies. The king wished to colonize the small islands of Sao Tome and Principe but did not wish to risk too many Portuguese to do so. To punish the Jews who would not

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pay the head tax, King Manuel deported almost 2,000 of two to ten year old children to the islands. Only 600 were alive a year later.

Some of the surviving Jewish children retained some semblance of their parents' religion. In the early 1600s the local bishop noted with disgust that there were still Jewish observances on the island and returned to Portugal because of his frustration with them. Observances had declined by the 18th century, but in the 19th and 20th centuries some Jewish traders arrived on the islands and seeded a new, small community. Today there are no known practicing Jews on the Islands but the descendants of the children, who distinguish themselves by skin that is slightly lighter than that of their neighbors, have expressed interest in learning more about the customs of their ancestors.

Cape Verde

"Monument of the grave, a pure and righteous man who made himself walk in his purity, modesty and virtue. He, by his donation, exists. With full funds he sought justice. He strengthens all support of the group of the Burial Society. The wise and important Mister Mordechai Auday who went to his rest 2 day in the month of Tibet 5761 of Creation. May his soul be bound in the bond of life."

– translation from Hebrew of inscription on a tombstone in Cape Verde

The story of the Jewish community in Cape Verde is one of greed, slavery and the Portuguese Inquisition. Since the 1460s, when the Portuguese discovered the array of fourteen islands that sit 450 kilometers off the West African coast, they used the archipelago as a fueling station for explorers on their way to conquer the New World, as a stopover terminal for the slave traders, where they could also refuel and "dispose of" weak or objectionable slaves, and as an outpost for Jews that the Inquisition forced to convert to Catholicism under threat of death.

Morocco

"The worst insult that a Moroccan could possibly offer was to treat someone as a Jew"

-- Moroccan writer Said Ghallab, 1965 in *Les Temps Modernes*

The Jews of Morocco have maintained their faith for more than two thousand years, surviving massacres, political and geographic segregation and continual legal status as second-class citizens. They have remained true to their religion through Roman, Vandal, Byzantine, Arab, Turkish and Vichy-French persecution. Even today, though much of the community has emigrated to Israel, Europe and the United States, its remaining members are confident, prepared to maintain their faith in the face of covert threats like assimilation, secularization and Westernization.

Tunisia

"Visiting this separate colony in an Arab country that not too long ago was home to the Palestine Liberation Organization, I felt like an alien on several levels. I was American, English-speaking and an Ashkenazi Jew, keenly aware of the overwhelmingly Muslim Arab population and unfamiliar with many of the rituals and customs of the local Jewish community. But I felt a kinship, too, with these observant, Hebrew-speaking people who have managed to preserve their traditions over centuries and whose affection for Israel is as deep-seated as it is unspoken, at least in public."

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Garry Rosenblatt, Publisher and Editor of the *New York Jewish Week*, in *The Jewish World Review* July 20, 1998

Jews in Tunisia have always tread a precarious path between social acceptance and downright oppression. From their first documented appearance in 2nd century Carthage to their current status as a tolerated minority, Tunisian Jews have been subject to shifts in regional and international politics that have dictated the relative security of their community. As the Oslo Peace Process has eased tensions between Israel and the Arab world, the Jews of Tunisia are once again able to practice their religion in public and with pride.

Today, the island of Djerba, ten hours from Tunis off the southeast of the country, is a particular center of Jewish spiritualism, one of the few places where scribes still hand print the Torah and community elders chant the words of the *Zohar*, Judaism's book of mysticism. Most of the Djerban Jews still live as they have for centuries, surviving by metalworking and jewelry-making, maintaining strict and spiritual Jewish practices. In Djerba some children still dress in a blusa under which they wear a small, mauve vest to protect them from the cold and belgha, goatskin slippers. Some women wear brightly colored jumpers in red, green or bronze – in public the young women wear futa, striped silk or cotton dresses. They keep their hair covered, in formal occasions, with a gold-embroidered coffia (headdress). In their long prayer robes and dark skullcaps, Djerban men appear to come from a time long past. Though contact with the secular West has begun to influence the younger generation's dress and observances, the Djerban Jewish community is what some would describe as a living museum to the Judaism of their ancestors.

Jews Of Sudan By: William Levi Ochan Ajjugo



When most people think of Judaism in black Africa, they think of the so-called Falashas, Bet Israel, Ethiopian Jews who have kept the essentials of biblical Judaism despite being isolated geographically from other Jews for thousands of years.

The Falashas are in fact the tip of the iceberg. Judaism came to Africa long before Islam or even Christianity, itself an early arrival. Hebrews have been in Africa hundreds of years before the exodus from Egypt. So influential was ancient Judaism in northern and eastern

Africa that anthropologists have devised a test to tell whether a given tribe or people has Hebraic roots: It does so if males are circumcised at age of 1 or earlier.

I am from South Sudan, the largely Christian, African portion of the Sudan, which has long been dominated by Arab Muslims to the north, in Khartoum. I am from a tribe called the Madi, and while we did not retain Judaism as thoroughly as did the Falashas in neighboring Ethiopia, I am amazed as I look back at

how many of our customs seem to have come from the Hebrew Scriptures.



Among Christians and non-Christians like, one G-d was worshipped. As in the Book of Leviticus, blood sacrifices were offered for sins. The worst sins required the sacrifice of a sheep, the ones below these a goat, and the "least" sins a chicken. A hereditary group of elders or priests decided which to sacrifice, and presided over these and other ceremonies.

Dietary laws were practiced; certain animals were "unclean" and could not be eaten. Ceremonial washing of hands was required when leaving home. Certain days of the year were set apart as holy. On such days, all was pledged to the one G-d of the heavens who forgave sins.

The Madi also use a ram's horn ("bilah") to call people together for various purposes. My father, who was an hereditary elder, would often blow the bilah to gather the people together for a ceremony or to discuss a matter of importance.

If a man died, his brother married his widow. This is in Leviticus, and also is imbedded in Madi culture, as is the "kinsman-redeemer" custom found in the Book of Ruth in connection with Boaz's marrying Ruth. In Ruth 4:7, it says that "in earlier times in Israel", the redemption and transfer of property became final when one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This is precisely what the Madi did when I was growing up.

In Deuteronomy 15:19, the children of Israel were commanded to set apart for the Lord all first-born males of their herds and flocks. None were to be put to work or, in the case of sheep, shorn. Again, this is a Madi custom as well.

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Many of these customs are also practiced by other tribes in the Sudan. One Madi custom, though, is most striking in its obvious implication: All males are circumcised -- as I was -- on the 8th day.

When I was growing up, I did not know that any of these were "Jewish" customs. It was only when I began studying the Bible that the connection became clear. Most tribes who practice these customs do not know that "Jewish" means; they only know that these are the ways of their own forefathers.

Christian missionaries have long misinterpreted these "ways", especially missionaries from denominations which de-emphasize the "Old" Testament. Many labeled groups like Madi "pagan", "animist", or, incredibly, "without religion."

Today, the Islamic fundamentalists who rule the Sudan use similar terms to describe the tribes of South Sudan, including the Madi. Unlike the Christian missionaries of the past, however, the Islamicists know better. On more than one occasion, I was called "Jew" in a disparaging way by Muslims when I was living in the Sudan.

The current Islamic regime in Sudan is waging a jihad -- a war of extermination -- against the people and tribes of South Sudan. Almost 3 million of my people have been butchered in a genocide that is worse than anything the world has seen since the Holocaust. Those who know of this underreported slaughter rightly see it as religious in nature -- a war of Islamic imperialism against largely Christian South Sudan. It is also a cultural war of Arab-dominated culture against African culture. And part and parcel of African culture -- at least in this area of Africa -- are the remnants of Judaism.

For those who would like to see such remnants preserved, here is yet another reason to stand up for the brave people of South Sudan.

William Levi Ochan Ajjugo is the President of "Operation Nehemiah for South Sudan".

Photo Captions:

- 1)Yemenite Jews in one of the many tent camps (Ma'abarot) during the first wave of Aliyah. 1954
- 2)Ethiopian boys wearing tefillin and talit and praying
- 3)William Levi Ochan Ajjugo

Hebrew Tribes of Africa

By Jide Uwechia

Proto-Hebrew tribes and historical Jewish communities have existed in Africa over thousands of years. This series of essays on Africa's Black Jewish communities has been written to highlight a part of Africa's heritage that is rarely if ever acknowledged by the stage managed account of history promoted by the mafia-like western educational establishments which control the institutions of learning and research.

That the roots of the Hebrews lie in Africa is attested to by this famous saying in Numbers Chapter 22 verse 5 (often distorted beyond recognition) to wit: "There is a people come out from Egypt: behold they cover the face of the earth..." Another biblical verse goes: "When Israel was a child, then I loved him and called him out of Egypt". Hosea Chapter 11 verse 1.

Even before the advent of Abraham, it appears that a body polity known as the tribe of Dan existed in Kushitic Africa for the book of Genesis narrates in Chapter 14 verse 14 that Abraham pursued some Caananite army until he arrived at a place known as Dan. Prof Ben Johanan has argued that the Falasha Jews of Ethiopia are part of the ancestral tribe of Dan. See Ben Johanan, "We the Black Jews."

During the sojourn of Abraham (the pilgrim from Chaldees) to Kushitic North Africa, the book of Genesis Chapter 13 verse 1 suggested that Abram left Egypt and headed south (which geographically speaking points into Africa) towards the place of "his original tent" (a term which indicates original home land). This verse appears to propose that Chaldeans were originally from the land of Africa, and Abram seemed to have made some sort of pilgrimage into the land of his origin.

This should not be too confusing if one recalls that the first King of Mesopotamia was Nimrod the great, acknowledged in the bible and the Quoran as a black man from Africa. Nimrod famously laid the foundations of one of the earliest civilizations of man known as Sumeria or Shinar in the bible. Nimrod's black African kingdom later morphed into the kingdom of the Chaldees, from where Abraham is said to have commenced his many journeys. See Genesis Chapter 10 verse 8 – 11.

Thus the first geographical location where one encounters the tribe of the Israelites as a nation or a nationalistic expression was in Egypt, Africa. The traditions of the ancient Israelites who supposedly left Egypt for the land of Caanan were a codified strain of the ancient traditions of the Egyptians who had maintained the ways of their first ancestors who lived inside Africa, around the head waters of River Nile. Moses was reputedly very learned in Kemitic science, arts and traditions as noted in Acts Chapter 7 verse 22.

Chapter 19 of the book of Exodus makes it abundantly clear that the God YHWH the god of the Hebrews was originally an African based deity whose special abode was on top of an African mountain known as Mountain Sinai in North East of Africa.

Thus this ancient Israelite presence in Egypt and the ancient Kingdom of Kush suggests that this African tribe rose from the depths of Africa and has maintained an unbroken continuity in Africa since the beginning of living memory.

The Exodus

Even after the so called exodus from Egypt and their settlement in the land of Israel, the Israelite tribes retained certain numerous thriving communities throughout Africa including the ones mentioned in the various books of the bible such as Exodus, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, etc.

Moses's father in law Jethro the Midianite whom traditions regard as an Ethiopian appears as the real founder intellectual and spiritual founder of the Israelites. He thought Moses and inspired him to fight for the freedom

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of his people. He introduced him to his God and gave him the basic laws which governed the lives of the Israelites and formed the basis of all their later laws and traditions. See Exodus Chapter 3 and Exodus Chapter 18 verse 23.

The Midianites, a prototypic Israelite tribe of Ethiopia remained behind in Africa during the so-called migrations to Caanan. See Exodus Chapter 18. The original Danites of the South who introduced Abram to the tenets of Hebrewism remained in Africa, they did not migrate to Caanan.

As well, many Israelites refused to leave Egypt with Moses whereas many others returned back to their African food basket as they quickly tired of the rigours of frontier life on the edges of the Sinai desert. There were also those who had ideological disagreements with Moses, some of who were among the many implicated in the carving of the golden calf (i.e. Horus). Those ones equally did not proceed with Moses to the so-called promised land because they were not willing to modify their ancient African ways and norms to match the version Moses was supposedly seeking to propagate.

Exile and Diapora

By the 10th and the 9th centuries B.C.E., Hebrew communities had thrived for many centuries and was widespread in Africa. It was a veritable network of traders and craftsmen.

Various potentates sought to use this network to further their interest. Kings David and Solomon purportedly sought to utilize this network of different communities to further the trading interests of the Israelite state. Often, in joint venture with the Caananites (i.e. Phoenicians) trade contacts were opened or consolidated in Africa through the mediation of some of those old African Hebrew communities. In addition to this older segment, many relatively recent Israelite immigrants settled in communities found throughout Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Eriteria, Kenya, Tanzania, Mocambique and Southern Africa.

These settlements were intermittenly augmented with new influx of migrant refugees from the so-called holy land driven by insecurity, famine and regional conflicts. Following the conquest of Israel in the 8th century B.C.E. by the Assyrians, and the 6th century destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, even more Jewish refugees fled into their older communities in Africa. At this time, black Kingdoms in and around Africa were overflowing with migrant Jews. Kingdoms like Yemen, Ethiopia, and the North African Punic Kingdoms up to Mauritania had substantial Jewish settlement.

If one were to pause and ask at this point: What ethnicity were those refugee Jews and why flee to Africa of all places? The response to these queries immediately underline the deep roots of Africa relative to the Hebrew tribes. Those fleeing Jews of the 8th and the 6th century B.C.E. were clearly depicted as Black African men and women with tight curly hair (the hair type of a typical west African) in the Assyrian and Babylonian bas-reliefs commemorating the respective conquests. For example, a sculptured wall relief excavated at ancient Nineveh illustrates the fall of Lachish by the army of king Sennacherib of Assyria. The Hebrews depicted therein were all black men. See image:

<http://www.bible-history.com/archaeology/assyria/jewish-captives-lachish.html>.

Salman Rushdie citing Indian history books claims in a book "Last Sigh of Moor" published in 1995, that three waves of Jewish refugees has landed in India in the past. The first Jewish refugees, that had settled in India, arrived after Nabuchadnezer, king of Babylon conquered their land in the 6th century BC and expelled some and enslaved the others. They were dark skinned people, probably of the AFROCOIDAL RACE.

It then becomes clear why segments of that population would seek refugee in Africa...because that was the home land...the motherland...the baseline. It was only within the protective embrace of the African motherland that the harried Jew could be safe from the Babylonian depredations. As an aside, the significance of this epoch must be recognized. This was the first group of Black people in history ever taken and sold into chattel slavery outside their territory.

Jews Of Nigeria, Senegal and Congo

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Moreover, with Israel coming under Greek, Persian and later Roman rule and dependency, renewed waves of Jewish refugees including traders and artisans began to set up more communities in Egypt, Cyrenaica, Nubia and the Punic Empire, notably in Carthage. From Carthage they began to scatter into various historically established, as well as newly emerging Jewish communities south of the Atlas mountains nearer to the modern day Mauritania, Niger, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Cameroon and Congo. Several Jewish nomadic groups also moved across the Sahara from Nubia and the ancient kingdom of Kush towards west Africa.

Various East and West African ethnic nations lay verifiable claim to their Jewish ancestral heritage. The Falashas, the most famous of those Black Jews have been validated. Close to three hundred thousand of those black Falasha Jews live in the modern State of Israel as practising Jews.

The Lembas of South Africa, another so-called Bantu tribe have a cogent and valid claim to Jewish ancestry and heritage backed by solid genetic evidence i.e. the prevalence of the so-called Cohen modal J haplogroup. The Lembas as a group are indistinguishable from their Bantu neighbours suggesting that most Bantus groups possess this archetypal Jewish genetic haplogroup. It implies that there are potentially more bloodline Jews on the continent of Africa than anywhere else including modern Europe and Israel.

The names of old Jewish communities south of the Atlas mountains (around the regions of modern Niger, Nigeria), many of which existed well into Renaissance times, can be found in documents in synagogue archives in Cairo. See "George E. Lichtblau"

Jewish and Islamic chronicles cite the existence of Jewish rulers of certain Jewish tribal groups and clans (self identifying as Jewish) scattered throughout Mauritania, Senegal, the Western Sudan, Nigeria, and Ghana. See Ismael Diadie Haidara, "Les Juifs à Timbouctou", Recueil de sources relatives au commerce juif à Timbouctou au XIXe siècle, Editions Donniya, Bamako, 1999.

According to the Tarikh es Soudan recorded by Abderrahman ben Abdallah es-Sadi (translated by O.Houdas) a Jewish community was formed by a group of Egyptian Jews, who had travelled to the West Africa through Chad. See also: al-Kati M., "Tarikh al-Fattash, 1600".

Another such community was located near the Niger River by the name of Koukiya led by a ruler known as Dia or Dji, a shortened form of "Dia min al Yaman" or Diallaiman (meaning he who comes from Yemen). According to local traditions, Diallaiman was a member of one of the Ethiopian-Jewish colonies transplanted

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from Yemen to Ethiopian-Abbyssinia in the 6th century C.E. Dialliaman is said to have moved to West Africa along with his brother. They set up the Jewish community in Northern Nigeria which later merged with the famous 7 Hausa States. See Meek C.K., "Northern Nigeria Tribes" Volume 1, Oxford, p.66.

A 9th century Jewish traveller Eldad ben-Mahli (also known as Eldad the Danite) related accounts about the location of some of the lost tribes of the House of Israel. According to this account, the tribe of Dan had migrated from Palestine so as not to take part in the internecine civil wars at the time of Yeroboam's succession. It was reported that this section was residing in the land of Havila beyond the waters of Ethiopia where there was much gold i.e. West Africa.

It was further reported that three other tribes had joined the tribe of Dan namely Naphtali, Gad, Asher. Those joined up with Dan in the land of Havila in the times of Sennacherib. They had an entire body of scriptures barring Esther and Lamentations. They neither used the Talmud nor the Mishna, but they had a Talmud of their own in which all the laws were cited in the name of Joshua the son of Nun. See Nahum Slouschz, "Travels in North Africa" Philadelphia 1927, p.227.

Ibn Khaldun, who lived in the 13th century, a respected authority on Berber history testified about the Black Jews of Western Sudan with whom he personally interacted. The famous muslim geographer al-Idrisi, born in Ceuta, Spain in the 12th century, wrote extensively about Jewish Negroes in the Western Sudan.

Black Jews were fully integrated and achieved pre-eminence in many West African kingdoms. For instance Jews were believed to have settled in great West African empires such as Songhai, Mali, Ghana and Kanem-Bornu empires. According to numerous accounts of contemporary visitors to the region several rulers, and administrators of the Songhai empire were of Jewish origins until Askia Muhammad came to power in 1492 and decreed that all Jews either convert to Islam or leave the region. See Ismael Diadie Haidara, "Les Juifs à Timbouctou", Recueil de sources relatives au commerce juif à Timbouctou au XIXe siècle, Editions Donniya, Bamako, 1999.

The 16th century historian and traveler Leon Africanus, was a Hebrew-speaking Jewish convert to Islam, raised in a Jewish household by Jewish parents of Moroccan descent. Leon Africanus travelled extensively in Africa south of the Sahara where he encountered innumerable Black African Jewish communities. Leon later converted to Catholicism but remained interested in Jewish communities he encountered throughout his travels in West Africa. See Leo Africanus (al-Hassan b. al -Wazzan al-Zayyati), Della discriptione dell' Africa per Giovanni Leoni Africano, Settima Parte, in G.B. Ramusio, Delle navigationi e viaggi. Venice 1550, I, ff.78-81r.

Additional evidence is provided by surviving oral traditions of numerous African ethnic groups, including links to biblical ancestors, names of localities, and ceremonies with affinities to Jewish ritual practices. Moreover, the writings of several modern West African historians indicate that the memories of Jewish roots historical in West Africa continue to survive.

For instance, there are a number of historical records of small Jewish kingdoms and tribal groups known as Beni Israel that were part of the Wolof and Mandinge communities. These existed in Senegal from the early Middle Ages up to the 18th century, when they were forced to convert to Islam. Some of these claimed to be descendants of the tribe of Dan, the traditional tribe of Jewish gold and metal artisans, who are also said to have built the "Golden Calf".

Black Jews are said to have formed the roots of a powerful craft tradition among the still-renowned Senegalese goldsmiths, jewelers and other metal artisans. The name of an old Senegalese province called "Juddala" is said to attest to the notable impact Jews made in this part of the world. In addition to the Jewish tribal groups in Senegal who claim to be descendants of the tribe of Dan, the Ethiopian Jews also trace their ancestry to the tribe of Dan.

Additionally, Mr. Bubu Hama, a former president of the National Assembly in Niger and a prolific writer on African history has argued in many treatise as well as lecture tours that the Tuaregs had a Jewish queen in early

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medieval times, and that some Jewish Tuareg clans had preserved their adherence to that faith, in defiance of both Islamic and Christian missionary pressure, until the 18th century. In several of his books Hama cites the genealogies of Jewish rulers of the Tuareg and Hausa kingdoms. See "Lichtblau".

Some accounts place some West African Jewish community in the Ondo forest of Nigeria, south of Timbuctou. This community maintained a Torah Scroll as late as 1930s, written in Aramaic that had been burnt into parchment with a hot iron instead of ink so it could not be changed. See Gonen Rivaka, "The Quest for the Ten Lost tribes of Israel: To the Ends of the Earth", Jason Aronson Inc., Northville, NJ., 2002 at pages 180-181.

The Igbos of Nigeria, one of the bigger nations that comprise Nigeria lay a strong claim to Jewish ancestry as borne out by their mores, laws, rituals and idioms which have a heavily accented old testament Hebrew flavour. See Ilona R, "The Ibos: Jews of Nigeria," volume 1, Research Findings Historical Links, Commentaries, Narratives," 2004, Mega Press Limited, Abuja, Nigeria

Some of the established Jewish communities existed in such still renowned places as Gao, Timbuktu Bamako, Agadez, and Kano. In Timbuktu, the UNESCO still maintains notable archives containing records of the old Jewish community of Mali and the Hausa states of Nigeria.

Tacitus, Ethiopians and Black St. Paul

Roman historian Tacitus wrote that many of his time believed that the Jews "were a race of Ethiopian origin."

The Bible classifies the Ethiopians & Jews together, "Are ye not as children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith the Lord." (Amos 9:7)

Black Paul is mistaken for an "Egyptian" and declares himself to be a "Jew." (Acts 21:37-39, 22: 2,3)

Persia and Ashanti

It has also been speculated that the Jewish presence and influence was greatly helped by the ancient gold trade between Persia and Africa.

Jews were the main intermediaries of this trade in the medieval ages since most Muslims (due to Islamic laws prohibition on usury) were wary of its usurious dimensions.

These Jewish itinerant traders came to rely on contacts with the various Jewish communities of West African who proved no mean help in sourcing the scarce commodity. Thus, for instance, the silk of the Royal Kente cloths of the Ashanti reputedly came from China.

Various historical accounts claim that Jewish travelers from Persia had organized exchanges of Chinese silk for gold in the Kingdom of Ghana; the Ashanti needed the silk for weaving Kente cloth and the Jews need gold for their intrinsic and fiscal value. It is said that the Ashanti words for numbers relate to those in Parsi, the language of Persia. See Lichtblau.

Genetics

Haplogroup E3B

The E3b haplogroup has been observed in all Jewish groups world wide. It is considered to be the 2nd most prevalent haplogroup among the Jewish population.

All the major studies agree that E-M35 is the second highest in prevalence next to J, for "Founding Jewish Lineages." http://www.familytreedna.com/pdf/Behar_contrasting.pdf.

It is found in moderate amounts in all Jewish populations, from Ashkenazi, Sephardic, Kurdish, Yemen, Samaritan and even among Djerba Jewish groups.

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The scientific consensus is that Haplogroup E3b (M35) appears to have originated in East Africa, but has been carried from there to the Near East and then on to North Africa and Europe. Today it is most common in East Africa, North Africa, the Near East and around the Mediterranean.

Haplogroup J

Haplogroup J (previously known as HG9 or Eu9/Eu10) is a Y-chromosome DNA haplogroup. It is subdivided into two subclades: haplogroup J2, defined by the M172 marker, and haplogroup J1, defined by the M267 marker.

Of special interest are maps that show the geographical spread of the J haplogroup. J1 and J2 are both common in southern Europe, central Europe, the Mediterranean region, and Africa. The J haplogroup is considered to be a signature gene of Jewish ancestry and the cohen modal gene happens to be a subgroup of J.

In fact, the highest frequencies of J1 (M267) are seen in the Middle East, north Africa, and Ethiopia. See (Thomas et al. 1999). J2 (M172) also exists in significant proportions across Africa especially among the semitic speaking peoples of Tigriniya, Amhara, and Oromiya.

The J1's from the Middle East and North Africa seem to be distinguishable from the rest of J's by having YCAII=22,22. Behar et al found that a significant proportion of the Jewish population of Europe (more than 20%) carry the J1 haplogroup. The other 20% carry the J2 haplogroup. See Behar et al Hum Genet (2004) 114 : 354-365

Cohen Modal Haplotype

The presence among the Lemba of a disproportionate number of men carrying a particular polymorphism on the Y chromosome known as the Cohen modal haplotype suggests an ancestral link to the Jewish population. One sub-clan within the Lemba, the Buba clan, is considered by the Lemba to be their priestly clan. Among a small sample of the Buba, fifty-two percent of males were found to carry the Cohen modal haplotype CMH, which is generally suggestive of Y-DNA haplogroup J, but notably prevalent among Jewish Kohanim, or priests.

Decline of the Black Jews of Africa

Many reasons have been sought for the decline and virtual disappearance of Africa's once thriving Jewish communities of black Jews. Many see the beginning of this decline as contemporaneous with the advent of the Islamic religion in Africa.

Some historical accounts highlight the fact that black Jews were die-hard nationalistic traditionalists and had led the black African resistance against the influx of the black muslim jihadists and their new interpretation of morality. The most notable of these black Jewish nationalists was Queen Kahina Dahiya Bint Thabitah ibn Tifan otherwise known as El-Kahina. A descendant of one of the priestly Black Jewish families of North Africa, Kahina led the nationalist resistance against the muslim invasion until her defeat at the hands of Hassan Ibn Numman. See Margolis, "History of Jewish people", 1927 pages 278-279. See also Remy Ilona, "The Igbos : Jews in Africa?" volume 1, Research Findings Historical Links, Commentaries, Narratives," 2004, Mega Press Limited, Abuja, Nigeria.

Amidst this tumult, the Jews of Northern and West Africa were given a choice of conversion or emigration. Many left for the deeper forest recesses of West Africa seeking the peace and tranquility that appeared to elude them in each generation. The late incursions by the colonialist christian elements of Europe did not make matters any better. There seems to have been a direct link between the incursion of relatively modern religions in Africa and the decline of the ancient practise of the Hebrews which had a pride of place in Africa, its mother land.

For instance the Jewish enclaves of Qamnurya or Naghira in the area of modern Senegal was destroyed completely in the wake of sectarian unrest. Similarly, Al-Maghili a prominent black Muslim noble not only

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destroyed the Jewish enclaves of Tuat in the old Mali empire, he convinced other potentates throughout the Western Sudan to banish Jews from the empire's cities. See Remy Ilona, *supra*.

Lichtblau speculates that: although "...Jewish presence is also confirmed by numerous surviving accounts of Portuguese and other European visitors in the 14th and 15th centuries, as well as North African and Arab historical records... gradually most of these communities disappeared. Since they existed largely in isolation, there was a good deal of intermarriage which for a while reinforced their influence and expansion. As a result they were increasingly viewed as a threat by Muslim rulers, and most of the Jewish communities and nomad groups south of the Atlas mountains were either forced to convert to Islam or massacred; the remainder fled to North Africa, Egypt or the Sudan, and a few also to Cameroon and Southern Africa."

Jide Uwechia

August 19, 2007

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1. *Eugene Akannam says*

My brother, Al-Sulaimani,

Let me repeat, the language studied in colleges and universities around the world today is not Hebrew. It is at best a generic or Jewish language but not "HEBREW". Jesus did not speak Hebrew and his name Yehoshua is appropriately Aramaic. This suggests that the Jews of his time did not speak Hebrew. And if this is the case, from where did the Jewish authorities learn the language they established as Hebrew in the colleges and universities around the world. I am sure that they did not learn this language in Europe where they majority of the Jews today come from. And another thing, the Hebrew alphabet that they have today is modified to allow for aryan phonetics and pronunciations. In the entire world today, the true Hebrew is spoken only in the Igboland of Nigeria today. My name is Eugene Akannam and I live in Saint Louis, Missouri – I will be ready to come anywhere to school anyone, Jew or Gentile, who says that the language they study in Colleges and Universities or the language spoken in Israel today is Hebrew. The Jews today do not know, speak, or understand the true Hebrew language, For if they did, they will not allow many scholars around the world to be telling people the meanings of Hebrew words that are completely wrong. They would know that all the renowned world religions like Judaism, Islam, Hindu, Shinto, and Hudha are all versions of the original spirituality of the Primordial Igbo way of life. They would know the true meaning of Kaballah or Kabbah. These words are decapitated Hebrew in written form. I bless the "Name" Chi-jire, the Holy one of Israel.

There are other Bene-Israel all over Nigeria who do not speak Igbo (Hebrew). Some speak Tiv, Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba (corrupted Igbo) and other Nigeria languages based on where their forefathers found refuge. I speak Igbo, the true Hebrew language today only because my ancestor "Odu" a Kohen Gadol, left Idah (Judah) in Igala (Igal) Kogi State in Nigeria to Anambra State where our Levite priestly clan found refuge today. I did not know that Igbo language is the true Hebrew until I came to America where there are many Hebrew research materials. Believe me, I am not an expert or authority in anything, but I write only about what I know for sure. I thank you and have a good weekend, my dear.

As for skin color, the Children of Israel as well as their Arab brothers are what we know as colored people – I mean, colored people who also have children with white and fair skin color to this day. The Hebrew range from the very dark to the very pale albino. The only difference is that the Arab of today are heavily Caucasionalized to a greater extent. I thank you.

June 4, 2010, [12:21 pm Reply](#)

o *MIKAL MODEBE says*

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

IM SURE YU WILL MARVEL AT THIS LINK.

m.topix.com/forum/world/ethiopia/T4E44RURL5FJ1T7MB

IT IT A PRE ADAM AND EVE SCRIPT RECENTLY FOUND IN ETHIOPIA. IT SHOULD REVOLUTIONALISE THE WORLD!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! THE MEDEBAYS IN IT IS THE MODEBES OF ONITSHA. THEY INHERITED THE WORLD, THATS WHY THERE IS THE EGWUGWU CULT CHINUA ACHEBE TALKED ABOUT IN THINGS FALL APART.....THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK!!!!!!!!!! YOU CAN ADD ME ON FACEBOOK IF YOU WANA LEARN MORE. "RAS OKALIA MIKAL MODEBE" IS THE NAME. GIVE THANKS. BLESS UP.

June 12, 2010, [4:01 am Reply](#)

2. *Wa karanu says*

Thank you Eugene.Am based in Chicago and we really need a sitting with you.

June 7, 2010, [11:26 am Reply](#)

3. *alhassan yahaya says*

Ishaq Al sulaimani.Iam surprise that someone told me some of the hausa are jews.

June 12, 2010, [8:34 am Reply](#)

4. *Akannam says*

First of all, I will tell my brother – Wa Karanu that I will try to make myself available whenever you are ready, but define what you want to know, and I pray I will be able to make it clear to you, God’s willing.

My brother from Onitsha, I am hoping it is the same Modebe well known family, have just provided another evidence that the earlier Igbo (Hebrews) travelled to the known world. The name Mendebo (ie Madu Ebo) could be one of those evidences. For example, the true Hebrew rendering of the name “Eber” of the Bible is” Ebo”. So, when we look at the word “Mendebo”, the word should first be broken as “Mend” “Ebo”, so in this way one may be able to get the true word because Hebrew words are difficult to pronounce by Non-Hebrews and those who do not speak the language; hence we have the massive confusion we have today in the structure of many Hebrew words. I myself have little difficulty rendering “Mendebo” as “Madu Ebo”. Very few people knows that Abraham’s maternal grandfather’s name is “Kanu Ebo”, a pure and unadulterated Igbo (Hebrew) name that may Igbo citizens of today are named after. This is truly, the end times, for the truth are coming out as never before. I just wanted to contibute here. Thanks.

June 14, 2010, [10:00 am Reply](#)

5. *alhassan yahaya says*

please Akannam here is not talking about the religion so what is that.is blood only .

June 19, 2010, [10:09 am Reply](#)

o *Ishaq Al-Sulaimani says*

Baruch Ben Ahwaray,

NO! your Y-Chromosome is

strictly your direct paternal lineage and stands regardless of admixture. For example if we take two Anglo-Saxon males from England who carry the typical Western European R1B Y-Chromosome. The first has a son from an Anglo-Saxon female and the second has a son from an Igbo woman from Nigeria. The two sons will test positive for the R1B Y-Chromosome and there will be no distinction. There will be no percentage as the Y-Chromosome is simply the male seedline and in the example mentioned above the two males are both of the Anglo-Saxon

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

seedline regardless of their maternal lineage. However if both of these males were to take an autosomal DNA test the results would differ as the son born from the Anglo-Saxon father and mother would read as 100% European (providing that there is no admixtures in previous generations), while the son from the Anglo-Saxon father and the Igbo mother would read 50% European and 50% Bantu(Negroid).

As you put it, the Y-Chromosome is definitely one or the other, while Autosomal DNA Testing is a reading of the overall general genetic composition. The results of the Autosomal Test will read according to the various racial components that are found within the individual being tested.

June 27, 2010, [5:08 pm Reply](#)

6. *Baruch Ben Ahwaray says*

Is it possible to have different percentages in your Y chromosome? Example, can a person be 72% E1B1A and 28% G2A, or is it one or the other?

June 25, 2010, [1:38 pm Reply](#)

7. *meekahaefele masooa says*

No doubt Africa was robbed of the land and human resources. There is ample proof that Israel was part of African Egypt that was conquered by Islam as well as other northern states. One can only look at Egyptian Holy places like pyramids that are denigrated and archeologists from both west and Islam are intensely digging up old african graves to study bones, sovenirs and embroideries of mummies. Surely if the origins of pyramids and mummies were muslim or west in origin they would not be dug up for studies, they do it in order to understand african culture hidden in graves of mummies to publicise under the guise of scientific research. To an african it is a great insult to defile the graves and distort the truth about the originality of Egyptian civilisation that was unmistakably african as in the rest of southern africa. Africa's history cannot be distorted any more and every single liar will be named and shamed for telling lies about african history to date. But those that tell African historical truth as they are will be greatly honoured and exalted. May their truth and revelations about african historical greatness live forever than the obscuration of the historical distorters and their sponsors.

June 26, 2010, [4:21 pm Reply](#)

o *Aden Ahwaray says*

Meekahaefele, I totally agree with what you typed. Most beliefs/religions would never allow the desecration of their ancestor's resting places...and the fact that there exists this insensitivity to another belief/culture is proof that there is more than just scientific study involved. More like spin doctors.

June 26, 2010, [8:34 pm Reply](#)

o *Ishaq Al-Sulaimani says*

Meekahaefele,

The desecration of tombs in Egypt in regards to archaeology is inspired by the financial benefits offered from Western European institutions of higher learning. This is not motivated by a belief in Islam. Egypt was colonized by a number of Non-Muslims such as the Greeks etc. long before it became a Muslim Nation. Ancient Egyptian religion and culture are not respected in the Judeo-Christian world as Egyptians are viewed as the tyrants and oppressors who enslaved the Israelites.

June 27, 2010, [5:36 pm Reply](#)

8. *alhssan yahaya says*

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

In Africa there is not tribe which has good relationship with Hausa tribe we could say only Ethiopia tribe. I want to make you understand BAYAJIDDA OR to say ABUYAJID. They came to HAUSA land. They had done what they wanted to do. They have blood of BAYAJIDDA. There is not this blood in Africa only Ethiopia tribes. Also I am not saying Hausa tribe we are Jews. We are Muslim. Then in Nigeria there is good blood only Hausa tribe which has good relation with Bayajidda. There is not any evidence that Bayajidd came to their area only HAUSA tribe.

June 27, 2010, [9:52 am Reply](#)

9. Eugene Akannam says

Thank “Goodness” people are beginning to point to facts which prove that the people in Egypt today are not the descendants of ancient Egyptians. They are Arabs and other mixed peoples. For, if those people living in Egypt today are descendants of ancient Egyptians, there is no way they will allow both the European and Arab scholars to continually desecrate the tombs of their Pharaohs and their other ancestors in the name of evil-intended archeology.

And people should not tell the world that the lineage and relations of the clan that produced Pharaohs of Egypt are extinct today because I am sure that they are not. I don't know where they are but I believe that a thorough search within the Sub-Saharan Africa may produce stunning results. We already know that there are descendants of Egyptians in many Sub-Saharan nations.

Take for example, a House of David can be traced to the Kogi State in Nigeria today if the doubters can believe this – although many of them may have migrated to parts of Igboland today. Thank God that there is some evidence. First of all, the City of Idah (Judah) in Igal (Igal) in Kogi State is the only City of Judah established anywhere on earth outside of Canaan by a descendant of King David whose name is Asadu (Asa still lives). Ida is the true rendering of Judah and Igal is the true rendering of Igal. If one types in “Igal in Judah” in the internet, the chapter and verse in the Bible, especially in the Book of the Chronicles will show up. Asa is also a descendant of David and king of Judah. So, what we have here is not a strange name but a name that can be found in the lineage of king David (Dewudo or Keep the peace). To belittle Africa, European perverts of the truth want the world to believe that the ancient people of the Asia Minor that flocked to Sub-Saharan Africa are extinct, but I can assure anyone, “none of these peoples are extinct”. Just look harder in Africa, they are there. Thanks.

June 28, 2010, [7:27 am Reply](#)

10. meekahaefe masooa says

Eugene is right, it is possible to find the Egyptian offsprings, well their kings were deposed and some massacred but that alone cannot exterminate the whole people, more so because Egypt was conquered over a long period of time, as Ishaq alludes, and its royalty and nubian citizenry amongst others melted into the surrounding nations to avoid enslavement and death. In southern Africa, for example, it is a common knowledge that Africans migrated from the north sometimes stampeding but at times orderly. What was the push for the Bantus particularly to surge south rather than pushing north? It was amongst others a genocidal pressure caused by many battles against African kingdoms north of Sahara since 8000 years ago to date. To appreciate oneness of Africans you only need to observe common linguistic roots amongst Africans from Euthopia, Mali, Congo to South Africa and you will conclude that there is a common ancestry. For example take the Sesotho word ‘Metsi’ or ‘Amanzi’ in Nguni languages and ask any Bantu or native from South Africa to Israel itself and you will be surprised of the same meaning, or similar syllables in their many dialects of that word and you will tell me the meaning of the word.

The point is that Africans are the same people, the original people who used to inhabit Egypt, Algeria, Libya and many other regions in Africa and simply got assimilated in other African tribes when the war of colonisation devastated them. Therefore George must not worry because we all have Egyptian gene as much as Zulu or any other African blood in us and it cannot rest until we claim our ancient holy places back to our children, and we must start now telling the truth. The African genocide must not be limited to slave ships of the years 1600 or so it goes back to the actual dismembering of African cultures from

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

Egypt Israel to Sudan since 6000 BC to date, today the colonisation on africans is secretive and silent in the form of foreign-religions trying to convert africans and foster their allagiance to their converters. The fact is that Africa, as an original birth place of humanity, became Godly, civilised, educated and religious before any other nations if you accept that many western philosophers and priests came to africa for training. Remember the words of a Greek leader “in Africa you always get something new”, this shows our civilisation was coveted and revered by othe nations. Even today Egyptian Pyramids are still a marvel if not a cause of jealousy in the western and arab sections. So if you are African you are also an egyptian or a nubian, you are not extinct. Except subsahara you are an aboriginal in many parts of the world, you are a vanguished nation but you are still alive and God willing Africa will assume her previous super status and teach the world humaness, Ubuntu / Botho. With africa in the helm all earthly wars of destructions, racism and hatred will be redundant and irrelevant. Our cultural values offer humanity togetherness and peace but the truth be told, we claim our holy lands taken from us by a hook or a crook. Our African cultural values, religions and langauges are ignored at the alter of foreign values in our motherland and this has to stop if we are to realise one nationhood as africans and act as one to promote our interests as a nation and not as devided ethnic enclaves that leads us to nothingness.

June 28, 2010, [4:10 pm Reply](#)

11. *Eugene Akannam says*

My Brother Ishaq, Sulaimani,

Good Morning! I just ran into the shock of my life the other day. During my research, I stumbled into the name of the town and the actual village of Abraham’s mother in Igboland today, and this is confirmed in about two Jewish documents. This is not something that I can just write down casually because people may take this for granted. Besides, every evidence I have seen today shows that the majority of people known to the world as Jews today do not want to be associated with Africa because they are Aryans by race and not Hebrews. So, my problem now is how to secure a grant that will allow me to visit this town and village to question this people. This is big indeed and may later involve a documentary. Do you know any foundation that will be able to provide me with such grant money? I thank you.

July 22, 2010, [7:36 am Reply](#)

12. *Ishaq Al-Sulaimani says*

Eugene Akanam

With the current economic recession grants are not as fluid as in times past. However I will pass on the information to Dr.Grier. Perhaps your research and findings could be incorporated into other projects on Igbo-Israelite identity. I am hoping to meet with Dr.Ujah who will be coming to the United States in August. I will also discuss the issue with him as well. What part of AlaIgbo(Igboland) are you originally from? I am currently researching some of the Igbo descendants from the tribe of Ephraim. These were Moorish Igbo who at one time lived in Morocco. Some of them are found in the Imo State. They were originally ruled by a King named Abraham Ha- Ephrati. Have you heard of any Igbo person,town or village bearing the name Ephrati or a variant thereof??? Keep up the Excellent work in tracking down the Israelite origins of the Igbo!

July 22, 2010, [10:01 pm Reply](#)

13. *Eugene Akannam says*

Good Morning, Al-Sulaimani,

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

First of all, I thank you for the quke response. I am from Levite Priestly Clan of Uno-Odu in Ora-Ivite, Anambra State, Nigeria. Ora-Ivite in Ekwusigo Local government is the only town I presently know in the whole Igboland that contains the entire three major divisions of Israel – Priestly Clan, Other Levite Clan, and some tribes of Israel. No, I don't know any Igbo with the family name, Ephrati. Maybe, it is spelled wrong, I don't know. By the way, Igboland has more people and towns named after the towns and cities of ancient Israel, even more than the State of Israel today – I mean with the biblical verses to support the evidence. Regardless, the entire Southern Nigeria was the ancient origin of the Hebrews and this can be stretch to way, way back in human history when there was no human being with white skin on earth. Hence, Igboland not only validates the Bible Scriptures, it also validates the prophecies of the dispersal of Israel and who are truly, the Children of Israel. Not only that, there are other Children of Israel scattered all over Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African nations. Thanks for the effort. .

July 23, 2010, [6:02 am Reply](#)

14. *IgboAbroad says*

I thank Ezeayana for opening my eyes. Have anyone of you read the book titled " Anajah Everybody's Roots "? Check it out ! You may learn something. G-d Bless.

August 9, 2010, [6:16 pm Reply](#)

15. *ISHAQ AL-SULAIMANI says*

AKKANAM,

There is an old reference from 1930 which reported an Israelite Community in the Ondo district of Southwest Nigeria(Yorubaland). It states that the Yoruba call them Emo Yo Qaim. They call themselves Bnai-Ephraim. They claimed to have originated in Morocco. What became of this group?? Chima Onyeolo of the Imo state petitioned the Israeli court under the very same history and claim of being of the tribe of Ephraim.I met Chima in Israel but have since lost contact with him. He seemed to be under some kind of GAG ORDER and was not revealing too much about his claim. I have discovered the history of the Ephraimite community in Morocco. Is there any connection between the Ephraimites of Ondo and those of Imo??

August 20, 2010, [10:32 pm Reply](#)

16. *Muwanga says*

Halo Doc

Just a note for you and other bros.

The article you wrote on Bayudaya. Ka-ku-ngulu i.e. ngulu means up, or north or to become conscious in Luganda.

Some bantu groups in Southern Africa refer to God as Ngulu-Ngulu . Baganda refer to God as Gulu. ("same word for sky") Another elder (Bambi Baba) with esoteric knowledge says that God's true name is Sse-Gulu-Manda translated as "Most High Power"

Prince Kakungulu is Buganda Royalty and it said by some Baganda that he is supposed to be the Kabaka..... all though he is related to The Kabaka.

August 22, 2010, [1:12 am Reply](#)

17. *ISHAQ AL-SULAIMANI says*

Semei Kakungulu also set out to be a Kabaka.The KaKangulu families are of high royal stature. Idi Amin was only able to come to power through the blessings of Prince Badru KaKangulu. GULU-MANDA (Most High Power) is interesting because in ancient Israel there was a Mandaean sect. The word Manda means knowledge(Power). KAKUN-GULU could also mean HIGH PRIEST OF ISRAEL: KAKUN=KAHAN,KOHEN AND GULU MOST HIGH.

August 23, 2010, [8:58 am Reply](#)

18. *Eugene Akannam says*

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

My Brother, Al Sulaimani,

Yes, I know of the remnant of the tribe of Ephraim in Ondo State. In fact, they are the first clue to me that there are other Israelites in Yoruba. When I read that they use the sacred words Om and Aum to refer to the mother and father respective, I knew then that they are Israelites for real because this is exactly how my children greet me (Aum) and my wife (Om) every morning. For these two sacred words, Aum and Om are the exact two sacred words that all the heavenly hosts greet Chukwunna (God Almighty Father) and Ibenne (Mother of all).

You yourself did a wonderful research that shows that Southern Nigeria was occupied by the Igbo before, Oduduwa, the Arabian Kushite, showed up to colonize them as Yoruba today. So, there were many migrations from Yoruba to the eastern Igbo land and that may include the Ephraimites of Ondo. But there are still many Israelite clans and Igbo enclaves in many parts of Yoruba to this day.

What do you expect from Chima? He wants to remain in Israel. So, he cannot tell you things that reveals that many among the people called Jews today and not blood descendants of Israel, but converts to Judiasm. Look, it just that many Africans find it hard to believe their fellow Africans. The fact remains that the Children of Israel who found refuge in the Igbo States of Eastern Nigeria, to include Delta Igbo have more evidence of their Israelite origin than the Jews living in Israel today. My Goodness! The end-time is here. Both the core descendants, both maternal and paternal, of Abraham's ancestors can be found in Igboland today. It is not maybe or could be, but a matter of pure certainty. They live side by side with the children of Israel in Igboland to this day. For the ancestors of Abraham was Igbo before some remnants among them migrated to Ur (Ore) of the Chaldeans where Abraham was eventually born, and they are still Igbo today. And what is shocking is that the State of Israel and the British know this to be true. Thanks.

August 23, 2010, [9:46 am Reply](#)

o Tonye says

LOL.. Africans are struggling to please themselves.

April 24, 2011, [11:57 am Reply](#)

19. *muwanga says*

Good day

It is said that prince Kakungulu's title is Ka-mu-swaga" i.e. High priest of the Kingdom of Buganda. Buganda could not go to war without his blessings. It is written that the early british colonisers and the Egyptians were scared of him. go figure why idi amin asked his father for blessings before he hood winked Uganda. But I will double check the meaning of Kamuswaga and his role.

Anyway you say mande means Knowledge(power). Well see below

Amanyi means..... knowledge.....in Luganda Language.

Amaanyi meanspowerin Luganda

Do you see the similarity except for the double a in one.

Now the colonisers came to Africa and said ""knowledge is power"

I will post my reply to some guys re – the meaning of Amen.

August 26, 2010, [9:08 am Reply](#)

20. *meekahaefele masooa says*

How good brothers and sisters to comper our langauges, similarities show that we africans come from the same source of origin.

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

Well in Zulu language 'knowledge' is 'Ulwazi' In Sesotho the same word is 'Tsebo'.

Power in Zulu is 'Amandla' and Sesotho is 'Matla'

I like your commends on african language heritages.

September 10, 2010, [7:47 pm Reply](#)

21. *Eugene Akannam says*

In Igbo, "Ama anyi" means the "place of my people" – that your ancestral compound. Thank you.

September 27, 2010, [11:35 am Reply](#)

22. *itorobong says*

so now, main people who were meant to occupy israel are scattered. WE SHALL ALL COME TOGETHER WHEN JESUS COMES.

November 15, 2010, [8:17 am Reply](#)

23. *BEUNA LIVINGSTON says*

I am trying to trace the heritage of the maroons of Jamaica. I am attempting to continue the education of my adult sons. Much of what I know was passed on to me by my grandmother a maroon woman who died when I was 9. The history was passed on orally, I would like my children to know that we were not only slaves, but kings, queens, philosophers and the true Royalty. Any help you can give about the maroons in Jamaica would be greatly appreciated.

January 27, 2011, [1:38 pm Reply](#)

o *Tonye says*

The are a mix Africans from mainly the Niger Delta of Nigeria including South Western Cameroon and Ashanti of Ghana . They are not different from the rest of black Jamaicans. They were just the people that resisted the white man and ran to the top forest part of the Jamaican mountain. They were reserved and it's this reservation that made them become more pro Africa than the rest.

April 24, 2011, [11:54 am Reply](#)

24. *Ze Ra Yzrel says*

Greetings

I am a young brother through my research found out that hebrew isrealites were the prize of the trans atlantic slave trade. My question is what tribes arein the united states and the islands.

March 3, 2011, [3:08 pm Reply](#)

25. *Ufeiamiya says*

You have made my day because all what you have been discussing, I have always known without knowing how I knew. I come from West cameroon and I have always known that being "Jewish" in the world today is actually belonging to a political group, not ethnic. Thanks my brothers

March 4, 2011, [1:12 am Reply](#)

26. *Hebrew4Life says*

Shalom Shalom Brothers & Sisters,

This is amazing information here I took the "DNA" test for the paternal and it showed that I was 100% fula/ Temne of West Africa with "YAP+" which proves I'm of african orgin. I know these roots are much deeper than I realize. I'm so grateful for some of the post here and I'm still in search of my true identy home in Afrika were my ancestors sold,snatched, or forced to be taken to the west and yes I hate the fact they are digging up of ancestors and parading them around the world. I'm sure they will never allow us to dig up "Queen Elizabeth"

April 8, 2011, [6:14 am Reply](#)

27. *Peter Okafor says*

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

A variant of Ephraim may be Ifite or Ihite depending on your dialect. Nobody knows the true meaning of Ifite but it appears in scores of names of towns in Igboland. Another biblical name that is common is Abba or Aba which is a name of so many towns in Igbo-land. Ama-Anyi can also be translated to "the knowledge of us" depending on intonation.

It is not surprising that the present genetic make up the modern Jew is not the same as the Hebrews. There have been so many events in Hebrew history that being a Jew may not guarantee that one has even a Hebrew ancestor either patrilineal or matrilineal. There is suggestion of Hebrew influence on Igbo culture but no incontrovertible DNA evidence to suggest that Igbo/Ibo/Ebo/Eboe are in fact Hebrews. Till this is done we continue to speculate.

April 24, 2011, [5:15 am Reply](#)

28. *Peter Okafor says*

Just to comment on one Ganda man's interpretation of Nze; a highly respected title in Igboland. Nze is a title holder who is highly respected and is expected to maintain the highest ethical standards in his conduct in the community. He is never to bear false witness, never to steal or cheat, never to eat what is unclean (what has fallen on the ground), never to sit on the bare ground hence in the olden days was always carrying a goatskin bag that he would sit on in public gatherings. Only freeborn in the community could hold the title. He must never climb a tree. It was a dignified title.

By this my good Ganda fellow you see that nze does not mean selfishness. Please do discard all your misconceptions about the Igbo people. We have only begun to scratch the surface in understanding these unique people.

It's interesting that the ancient Hebrew word (Maaz) for Israelite man is the same as the present Igbo word for an Igbo man (Mazi) Maazi, Maza in Hausa. See the evidence @ <http://strongnumbers.com/hebrew/4619.htm>

April 24, 2011, [5:39 am Reply](#)

29. *Peter Okafor says*

Even the Hebrew word for Israelite woman "Baara" may be seen in the old Igbo word for woman "Agbara"

April 24, 2011, [5:51 am Reply](#)

30. *Peter Okafor says*

If you remember that Hebrew is written in consonants and that the vowels have to be inferred you may have a few words that sound the same and have a similar meaning in the two languages.

English; Igbo/Variant Igbo ; Hebrew

eye; anya: aya: ayin
ear: Nti (pronounced n-te) tenuk
house ebe biri beth biri
flee gbaraa/ gbara pu barach
run oso/ noso nus
say si/ kwué/ kpe melal/ qol/ peh
bowl efele sephel
thought eche seach
laugh shi ochi/ chiochi tsechoq/sachaq
look neke/ nebe nakar/nabat
consecrate neze/ nezer nazar
reverence kpelachi/kpeluchi pelach/palach

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

I do not purport to be a linguist but I think the similarities are amazing. these are a few words that i took time to look up. See what I found.

April 24, 2011, [6:51 am Reply](#)

31. *Peter Okafor says*

I believe the slave trade affected us more than we are aware of because during the slave trade millions of Africans including Igbo were taken by force into the diaspora and important histories both oral and written were lost. Whole villages were transplanted because insecurity, artefacts were lost. Social upheaval occurred and to worsen the matter the colonialist came along with thier divide and rule tactics and imposed their culture and apologies; religions on us, making us to demonize our own traditional ways. We have benefitted from the western influence but at what price?

Igbos traditionally do not have kings; colonialist imposed warrant chiefs on us. From there we made kings of the warrant chiefs and the rest is history. Eze/ Ezer that we use today does not stand for king in ancient igbo it stands for priest or in its purer form helper or servant. For example Ezeani/ ezeala means the priest of Ani/ Ala or better helper of ani /ala or servant of Ani /ala which is exactly how it would translate in ancient hebrew in which EZER translates as helper.

April 24, 2011, [7:10 am Reply](#)

32. *Peter Okafor says*

I gave serious thought to the queston and I realized that the answer to the question of Ig ancestry may bestaring at us in the face. In one of the ritual Prayers at the breaking of Kolanut the elder recites as follows: it will be well with Igbo, it is also well with olu. the question now becomes what or who is ‘Olu’?

I believe that the OLU are the original inhabitants of the place known now as Igboland and the Igbo came and settled among them, intermarried among them abd produced the modern Igbo of today. The Olu were NOT CONQUERED as Igbo People were essentially peaceful traders and artisans, not warriors. Had there been war between them there would be no blessing of the olu during the breaking of kolanut. The olu may not have been homogenous ; they may have been some several small tribes whose remnants and Descendants are found in the South-South of Nigeria. This implies then that the south-east and the South-south are blood relations. This is verified oral History and linguistic evidence .

No DNA evidence exists as at now unlike the Lembas in South Africa where there is evidence of Hebrew Ancestry. Is anyone aware of a Genetic study of the Igbo Population in comparism to their Nieghbors in the South-South and Other populations world-wide that claim Hebrew ancestry?

April 24, 2011, [9:42 pm Reply](#)

33. *Nocwaka says*

Molweni-Siyanibona -Greetings -South Africa

Thank you for opening my eyes, Just to comment on Nguni history . Our ancient history of the Nguni people is wrapped up in our oral history. According to legend we were a people who migrated from Egypt to the Great Lakes region of sub-equatorial Central/East Africa.[1] We migrated southwards over many centuries, with large herds of Nguni cattle, probably entering what is now South Africa around 2,000 years ago in sporadic settlement, followed by larger waves of migration around 1400 AD. Nguni peoples are pastoralist groups, ethnically part of the greater Bantu group occupying much of the East and Southern parts of Africa.

Many tribes and clans were forcibly united under Shaka Zulu. Shaka Zulu’s political organisation was efficient in integrating conquered tribes, partly due to the age regiments, where men from different villages bonded with each other. The Nguni tribes kept similar political practises to those used by Shaka Zulu.

During the southern African migrations known as mfecane, the Nguni peoples spread across a large part of southern Africa, absorbing, conquering or displacing many other peoples.

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

The Nguni tribes are: Zulus, Xhosa, Swazi and Ndebele and we all can understand each other's languages. Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika is part of the national anthem of South Africa, national anthem of Tanzania and Zambia, and the former anthem of Zimbabwe and Namibia. It is a Xhosa hymn written by Enoch Sontonga in 1897. The first chorus is:

Nkosi, sikelel' iAfrika;
Malupakam'upondo lwayo;
Yiva imithandazo yethu
Usisikelele.

Lord, bless Africa;
May her horn rise high up;
Hear Thou our prayers And bless us.

July 9, 2011, [3:50 am Reply](#)

34. *Muwanga says*

Peter

Please refer to the comment the other writer had i.e. "Naija is now full of people with nze culture". what did he mean? i.r.o poverty... greed etc

Peter also clarify please where did the Igbos get the word "IGWEE" i.e. King.

What do you say to the Kings mentioned in the Hebrew texts e.g Old testament vis a vis Igbo true/original identity?

In Ganda as I explained Nze means me or I .

You also say that Nze is a noble title

Don't you think that it could be related to the Swahili word "Mzee" or "Mze" which can mean elder, aged, old, wise person, noble e.g Mze Julius Nyerere / Kenyatta / Mandela etc

Be good

July 13, 2011, [7:11 am Reply](#)

35. *A Brown says*

I heard that there is a book of recorded history on the Africa people, and tribes, but the book has never been translated into English. Can anyone give me more information, and can this book be purchased?

July 15, 2011, [9:16 am Reply](#)

36. *Peter Okafor says*

It's good to see a reaction to my post. I would like to explain the meaning of IGWE/ Igwee which may have attracted some interest. There are 2 words that are pronounced the same way in Igbo/ Ibo. The first means the "sky". It infers something that is very high. The other "Igwe" is a title which was of very recent origin. It derives from the first above and means your "highness". This 2nd meaning of Igwe comes from an imposed foreign culture in the 1700s when the British created warrant Chiefs for their system of Indirect colonial rule. It has now become a part of Igbo culture. There are as many Igwes as there are towns in Igboland today.

the difficulty of the British with the imposition of any kind of ruler on the Igbo people was that the Igbos traditionally had no kings. Towns and villages practiced a kind of republican democracy in which assemblies made common decisions and the kindred carried out the decision of these assemblies of the people. The word eze/ ezer comes to mind today when you want to describe a king. Yet ezes are not really king but priests who offer sacrifices and act as oracles for the people. A western writer uses as a

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

criterion for describing civilizations the presence of kings and emperors. Blacks were said to be primitive with specisl reference to igbo people because they were not ruled by kings(not slaves). Laughably the same writer did not refer to the Athenians and early Romans as primitive. Today kings, emperors and strongmen are no longer in vogue. These institutions are regarded as anachronisms in almost every country today. Kingship , oligarchy and monarchy are things Igbo people had already discarded as detrimental to personal freedom for thousands of years . There is even an adage that say that to become king you had to pay off the debt of every man (free every slave) first. there were chiefs and titled men which include the Nze, Ozo, Ichie.

The typical Igboman of old, addressed as Mazi/ Maazi was a freeman who jealously guarded his freedom and rights. This shows that he had once been oppressed by strongmen somewhere in history.

With regards to my ongoing research on Igbo origins I have some interesting news which i will post soon.

August 24, 2011, [2:52 am Reply](#)

37. *Peter Okafor says*

Muwanga, Just to clarify: yes NZE could be MZEE because an Nze is cosidered a wise man, elder or counsellor in Igboland.

August 24, 2011, [2:58 am Reply](#)

38. *Malka says*

Jews have a certain feature the ethiopians have that characterstic how come we don't see that similarity ?

• October 1, 2011, [9:12 am Reply](#)

Stay in touch with the conversation, subscribe to the RSS [feed for comments on this post](#).

1. *abass says*

I was wondering whether all these Jews that were in Africa were black or white.

September 24, 2007, [11:22 am Reply](#)

o *dre says*

they were black when the ran into africa in 70 AD to escape roman persecution and slavery they went to west africa before titus killed them

June 12, 2009, [7:39 am Reply](#)

2. *Jacob says*

Dieu avait promis Ã Abraham une dÃ©scendance multiple. C'est la vÃ©ritÃ©. Et le peuple juif est aujourd'hui fondue dans les nations... Dans toutes les nations. En particulier le peuple Bantus est une dÃ©scendance directe du peuple juif...ou plutÃ´t qu'il est l'amant de ce peuple et sa langue une dÃ©rivÃ©e de la langue bantu...

September 29, 2007, [11:07 am Reply](#)

3. *Israel Ibrahim says*

Keep up the good work on the research on Igbo origin. Even though I am not Igbo, I am convinced of this fact and working towards promotion of this legacy. I am ur partner in progress. Thanx

September 30, 2007, [8:09 pm Reply](#)

4. *joshua says*

Yah man bless thank you so much,as a christian I am seecking to know my people sa a Gospel artis I want to help my people Isreal last tribe am a confrence speaker I want to learn more Bless

October 22, 2007, [4:49 pm Reply](#)

5. *austine chukwu says*

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

I want to say there is something about the IGBOS, that needs more research, they have many things in common with Isrealites. 1. some tradiction, 2. some name, eg. A state in the east is called ABIA. Names like ADA. etc. you are doing fine carry on.

October 26, 2007, [6:47 am Reply](#)

6. *Ifeanyi says*

We should let the past be and look forward, fine we're Isrealites yet we've got some of our brothers abroad who dont think it's neccessary going back, and how is the present day Isreally govt working to know if we are, and even if we truely are, it's written that we came from Egypt and so we may be among the sturbon ones in the bible that GOD will not take back to Isreal. all the same praise HIM from where ever you find your self. Shalom

December 16, 2007, [11:59 am Reply](#)

7. *Nicole says*

I thank you for your research and boldness to bring out the truth of our heritage, as i am seeking the TRUTH.

December 17, 2007, [9:21 am Reply](#)

8. *[MOOR MMADIKE](#) says*

i am an igbo, a musician & and a rastafarian student of Afrikology. Afrikans are the first people in creation. You don't have to be Jewish to claim specialness cos every African is a reflection of the creator. The word jew is a western construct, and the so called caucasian jews are imposters. Mind you, the letter "J" didn't exist till 1603AD.

The original Hebrews are Black Afrikans, Amos 9:7, Revelation 2:9.

January 6, 2008, [3:29 am Reply](#)

o *Yisraeli says*

It makes as much sense to argue that the original Africans were white Afrikaners and the Bantu are impostors. Afrocentric as much as Eurocentric people should let the Jews/Israelites be themselves without trying to impose their own identity on other people whether of past or present. Israelites and Jews have always had some black mixture but have not been predominantly black. Israel is in a central geographical where some sub-saharan Africans have arrived, many European groups arrived, Semitic groups are there, so mixture of different elements even in ancient times was natural.

September 27, 2010, [10:15 pm Reply](#)

9. *[RICHARD ALLINGER](#) says*

Iran turned up the heat this week on still-simmering concerns about its atomic aspirations. It crowed that its 1,000-megawatt Bushehr nuclear power plant would be "online" as early as this spring, putting in place another important building block of its nuclear program. That sort of news can't help but rattle the steadiest of nerves, no matter what the US National Intelligence Estimate on Iran's nuclear-weapons program said about the current state of affairs. Seemingly not swayed one iota by the NIE's conclusions, you have to wonder if Israel – the country most threatened by an Iranian nuclear weapons breakout – might take matters into its own hands. It has done so twice before – and the time may be here again. In a 1981 dawn raid lasting less than 90 seconds, Israeli Defense Force fighters attacked the nearly completed 40-megawatt Iraqi Osirak nuclear-reactor complex, setting back Saddam's ability to produce fissile material for nukes. And again last September, the IDF allegedly struck a nascent Syrian nuclear program, which possibly was benefiting from outside help, in a preventive air strike that may have also been meant as a warning to Iran of unpleasant things to come. But why strike

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

now? Well, within about a year of Bushehr becoming operational, some of its spent nuclear fuel could be stripped of enough plutonium to produce a handful of nuclear weapons if the rods aren't returned to their owner/provider, Russia. Because the production of fissile material is the long pole in the nuclear-weapons tent, the diversion of material at Bushehr is potentially as big a problem as the 3,000 centrifuges that Iran has whirring at supersonic speeds, enriching uranium. Attacking Bushehr – like Osirak – before it comes online would not only stop it from being used to produce bomb material, but would also prevent radiation from the reactor being spewed into the atmosphere after a strike. Also possibly spurring Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert to put the IDF into action is other recent news: Iran is reportedly buying the highly capable Russian S-300 air-defense system to bolster the Tor-M1 surface-air missile systems Moscow supplied last year. The Iranians purchased the Tor-M1 to prevent a modern-day Iranian version of Israel's successful Osirak strike. The lethal S-300s – likely a response to the Syrian strike - will enhance Iran's ability to protect its nuclear sites scattered around the country. A strike would bring Iranian retaliation, including terrorist attacks by Tehran's allies, such as Hezbollah, as well as missile strikes against large Israeli cities. By association, US interests could come into Iran's crosshairs. The new year will likely bring more unwelcome news about Iran's nuclear program as it cascades toward a weapons option. It will also be a fateful year for Israel, one that may require action – no matter what the latest NIE says.

US considering international force in West Bank.

Israel will have to strike Iran's nuclear program on it's own soon because they have set themselves against Israel and take counsel against the Lord and His anointed.

In this historically prophetic time [70th week of Daniel] the military option is growing more likely with time. Jesus spoke of this time and the prophet Jeremiah refers to this integral of time as "Jacob's Trouble".

February 2, 2008, [3:17 pm Reply](#)

10. [obong nelson](#) says

Ibibio of South south nigeria ,by far,retains uncompromised Jewish traits in language and beliefs.

March 19, 2008, [4:20 am Reply](#)

o [okoronkwo](#) says

please visit the origin of the Talmud a fore runner of the Torah:

also kindly get familiar with <http://www.ekwenche.org>

Remember Jewish is a misnomer for Hebrewism. The fore runner is Oha Biri.

Then study about Eboe and Teleboe

Thanks.

July 11, 2010, [6:48 pm Reply](#)

11. [Felix Ogbenna](#) says

The Igbos are not Jews. The Jews in Russia have Jewish names over generations. Igbo mans' identity is unquestionable. We are Igbos - enterprising as well as a white man, an Indian, the Japanese, the Chinese. The equation with the Jews most come from our brutal impoverished "Nze" culture which undermine collective empowerment. Igbo children are hugely uneducated against the Jewish children. The Igbos are poor in spirit, the Jews encourage collectivism. Please the Igbos are not Jews and I hope in the next few years we won't be claiming the Igbos came from China.

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

March 31, 2008, [5:50 am Reply](#)

- o *gideon Yesheria* says

You a fool and a barstard you have no knowldge of who you are.

May 30, 2011, [9:10 am Reply](#)

12. *Hellraiser* says

I am certain that the Afro-American descendants of the Southern Confedrate Slave states are Jewish. This is good for Afican-Americans to learn the truth about where they came from and what the inheritance is. God created male and female, Jew and Gentile none other. i.e. Catholic etc... The decsendants of the American Slave need to wake up to who they are and stop falling what they were told they are.

May 13, 2008, [12:34 am Reply](#)

- o *Charity Dell* says

Does anyone have information on the Ibo origins of African-americans? Are we from specific Ibo clans? I know we are not all Ibo, but perhaps some African researchers can give us more information on the ancestral clans we represent within our respective African heritages...

November 23, 2011, [4:45 pm Reply](#)

13. *mas* says

I am from west africa, Liberia. Some tribes in Liberia claimed some Jewish links too. What can you tell me about this.

June 2, 2008, [9:48 am Reply](#)

14. *Ruth* says

What is known of Jewish slaves transported to the Americas in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade? Is there anthing known of the Ports from which they were transported?

Thank you,

Ruth

June 3, 2008, [9:20 am Reply](#)

15. *Ruth* says

while we are on the subject, it's time for the daughters of Moab to be reveled to those in need of them. Do you know of what I speak.

June 3, 2008, [10:19 am Reply](#)

16. *Yhoshua ben Yisrael* says

The Jews of Eastern Europe i.e. Russia, Germany, Poland, etc are the result of the Edomites migrating to the Khazarian empire after the King of Khazar converted to Judaism. Thus, changing the national religion of the Khazarians to Judaism.

FYI, read Arthur Koestler's Thirteenth Tribe. He and his wife were murdered after the release of this book.

Also, read carefully the book of Deuteronomy chapter 28 (speficially the curses) for clues on how to identify the children of Israel.

March 31, 2009, [9:59 am Reply](#)

- o *gideon Yesheria* says

Brother, You are in track, for tha good quot from the scripture, Now you can refrence who the Israel or the jews are.

May 30, 2011, [9:17 am Reply](#)

17. *alhassan yahaya* says

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

I am hausa tribe but we not jews.

June 26, 2009, [10:39 am Reply](#)

o *gideon Yeshariah says*

Alhassan you are right about that, you can not find any of the hausa outside the west to be reference slave in America and other nations across.

May 30, 2011, [9:21 am Reply](#)

18. *alhassan yahaya says*

We are hausa then we are muslim these who came to us died several year iam saying about jews we now we are muslim

June 26, 2009, [10:47 am Reply](#)

19. *alhassan yahaya says*

I am hausa tribe i believe all those jews who came first .They came to teach us about islamic ,but is not .They got islamic students,is not quite long,they married four women and several women slave. It not quite long last two hundred there were jew in Hausa land not they were doing teaching us on how to magic in islamic, the evidence their symbols.

June 30, 2009, [9:57 am Reply](#)

20. *HAMZA AND ABUBAKAR says*

HELLO, WE READ THE ABOVE ARTICLE ABOUT US, WE ARE REALLY HAUSAS FROM NIGERIA, WHAT EVIDENCE CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT WE BEEN JEWS TO CONVINCING US, BECAUSE WE TELL OUR PARENTS THEY REFUSE TO AGREE

July 10, 2009, [11:14 am Reply](#)

o *HAMZA AND ABUBAKAR says*

we agreed that jew has come to nigeria how sure you are that every hausa get the blood of jews in his body, please your reply will be convincing

July 10, 2009, [11:20 am Reply](#)

21. *auwal khalid says*

Hey this AUWAL KHALID,i just want to ask how do in particular you will make me to agree that all the hausas that resides in nigeria are all have the blood of jews,when i have had that i tell it to my parents but they refused to agree so tell the proof evidence that make me and my parents to put an agree 100 percent,so that i promise you that i will even want myself to come and join you as soon as possible.do the above request immediately when you received my comments on that issue,send all the reply to me through my email address.

July 12, 2009, [12:19 pm Reply](#)

22. *auwal khalid says*

Hey this is auwal khalid from zaria kaduna state nigeria.i am really want to show my appreciation to that i'm have had everything on what you have saying which is also criticized that hausas are jews as you people saying,i auwal i do really agree with you but my parents refused to agree so this the reason why i'm really wanted you people to pitch out the that will make my parents to agree with you have said about hausas blood link with jews.i'm also want to assure you that i am even been on my way to you to join with you as spoke person in my society.do as soon as possible,just send me the confirmation through my email address.

THANKS

URS SINCERELY AUWAL KHALID.

July 12, 2009, [12:47 pm Reply](#)

23. *auwal khalid says*

Hello,compliment of the day.

i am very sure that of what i'm doing in the sense that i cannot see you and i have to had a physically conversation with,so that you can understand me in particular better,.it is generally agree and in my

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

observation i have had experience about that bonody love each other,i have nothing to offer u it,i know that but i had and expensives things for you,which is (believe).so for that u must make me(great)i will like to have your cell fone number so that talk much and u can do for me,and what i could do for u.pls put this issue as emergency.

SINCERILY YOURS AN AFRICAN BLACK JEWS AUWAL KHALID.

August 12, 2009, [11:26 am Reply](#)

o *auwalkhalid says*

hi i dont have much to say for now i just need your phone number .if you cant this is my phone number 08066035393 from nigeria.

August 15, 2009, [10:50 am Reply](#)

24. *alhassan yahaya says*

what are you doing .You are colling your selvies jews. Do you know jews go and think enough.They are difference.Allah gave them chance to do whatever they want to do.you are saying there is blood in your tribes. The people from Ethiopia are saying so they are jews this is lie.Our people in Africa are suffering then is difficult for us to get three dollar of USA. Our leaders chaged our good condition.

September 26, 2009, [8:25 am Reply](#)

25. *cyntajah says*

Wake up ISRAEL. Let us thank Jesus Christ who sacrificed himself and paid for our sins with HIS OWN BLOOD.He has redeemed us from all the countries were we are scattered.JAH said it is time for the Israelites abroad to return home to ZionIf you are a descendant of that Syrian -duet. 26.who because of a famine left out of Caanan and went into EGYPT when we were just a few then this message is for you.Remember Israel knows no colour.Therefore to the Israelites in China I say wake up.Wake up ISRAELITES in Japan. Wake up Israelites in Eastern and Western Europe.Wake up Israelites in the Americas. Wake up Israelites in the Islands of the seas. To quote Robert Nester Marley–'I Idren , I Sistren which way will you choose? You better hurry,hurry, o'hurry now for we have no time to loose'. CHECK OUT ANAJAH EVERYBODY'S ROOTS

December 13, 2009, [11:38 pm Reply](#)

26. *cyntajah says*

HOUSAS ARE DESCENDANTS OF THE HIVITES .In the biblical times the Housas were the inhabitants Gibeon in the land of Caanan

December 14, 2009, [12:26 am Reply](#)

27. *cyntajah says*

When we hear any leader in this evil world talks about combating evil ,know for sure that he has no peaceful meansWe know so far in this world violence begat voilence.To all the head of states around this world it is your duty to let the Children Of Israel who resided go out from among you in your respective domain.All Israelitesabroad-the descendants of Jacob the Syrian who left out of Caanan and went into EGYPT Tthe time has come .for the Israel to head home to Umunta Ezeajanah—the same is Mt Zion.located in the East of River Niger the equatorial areaknown in ancient times as etti offia just as we say Ethopia—This area was referred to as the Central jungle

December 14, 2009, [1:06 am Reply](#)

28. *Alhassan yahaya says*

From 800 to 1808 Jews leaders.Abuyazidu who is called bayajidda.That we should call themHAUSA leaders jews.Ufortunate for them at bening of the ninteenth century these fouten state were force to quite the Jews leaders Hausa tribe.

This was as a good result of the jihad decllearedand fought by the tribe called fulan.

The Hausa tribe came from Habbsha today is call Ethiopia.please go Eglanndn musum you should see a book which the son of Usman Dan fodio said in his book the history of Hausa tribe as i said from the next page.

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

PHILIP K . HITITI

PROFESSOR EMERITUS PRINCETON UNIVERCITY.

He said in his book hausa tribe in Syria more than five thousand year ago.

Hausa tribes are good muslim.

| They came with Prophet musa mosis' s religion they had chaged it to ISLAMIC.

February 6, 2010, [9:10 am Reply](#)

29. *r says*

Thanks for EVEN more evidence....of Judaism...being black and african....any refutation of the legitamacy of black Jews is illogical

June 16, 2010, [10:51 am Reply](#)

30. *meekahaefele masooa says*

It is very simple Africans once inhabited Israel that was then part of Egypt. When the Arabs / muslim Persians, Greeks, Romans conquered North Africa africans scattered all over the world mainly migrating cenral and south of africa where they could survive in the midst of their own people. It is true than in many respects those that stole african lands also stole the names in order hide the historical ownership of african heritages. For example Sudan means 'of blacks' but blacks were pushed down south beyond Darfu, Egypt is means african yet its inhabitants including Jews were scattered south, jews in israel today are not the original ones, they stole african identity to confuse and claim historical ownership of that land bordering Egypt. In the past there was no man-made fence between Egypt and Israel, it was one country of black african origin like south sudan to south africa today. So original black jews are africans not imposters of today, Israel is a historical african land and we are proud of that fact. My plea is that historical records must be studied not with 2000 years of christianity but 6000 years before Christ was born, there you find true africa in its classical perspective, the world superpower before any one could dream of being such. The African dehumanisation was cost by this colossal land and cultural disposition, a malady were are reversing in ernest from south to north.Africa's return to her former glory and the whole world will benefit emesenly and wars will be habits of the past. Peace and true Botho / Ubuntu will be the order of the new dispesantion and our spirits will rejoice as deprivation will a past sin.

June 26, 2010, [6:12 pm Reply](#)

31. *R.C.Ilona says*

Jide my book is The Igbos: Jews In Africa Vol 1.

July 24, 2010, [1:16 pm Reply](#)

32. *MOOR MMADIKE says*

To be more explicit, not all Black Africans are Hebrews. Hebrews are people of different skin tones & pigmentation. There are white Hebrews. So as I said (above) that caucasian Jews are imposters I didn't mean white Yehudim. Yedudim is original Hebrew. The very people that changed the name "Yehudim" to "Jew" & equally don't like to accommodate other Hebrews because of their skin colour are the ONES I call imposters.

July 25, 2010, [5:18 pm Reply](#)

33. *Ishaq Al-Sulaimani says*

The name Jew does NOT necessarily refer to Judah. Jew also referred to the Wisemen or the Rabbis. In this regard the name Jew is rooted in the word Yudea meaning to KNOW . The Yudea(Knowlegable Ones)were originally known in Babylon as those who mastered the knowledge of the Anakim,being the giants who " Fell " from the Planet Nibiru(IBIRU=HEBREW). As the followers of the Anak they were called Enkidu(ENK-IDU). Enki was known as the

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

“Hairy-Hunter” . The worshippers of Enki customarily placed goat skins on their hands and brought goat dish offerings. In the Bible Enki is transformed into the mythological twin of Jacob named ” Esau ” who is the ” Hairy Hunter “. Enki was also known as the ” Trickster “. When Jacob placed the goat skins on his hands and brought his father the goat dish offering he was really worshipping Enki. Being disguised as Esau(Enki), Jacob becomes one with the “Trickster” Enki. Later Jacob bows down to Enki(Esau) 7 times and states: “To see your face is to see the face of God” The planet Nibiru was known as the RED PLANET and is believed by many to have been Mars. The followers of the Anakim were also known as the RED ones referring to the knowledge of Nibiru. This is the real reason why Esau is called the RED one. Esau is really Enki and the followers of Enki are known as the Enki-Idu or the Idumeans. The Idumeans are the JEWS. The So-Called Torah of today was written by the ENKI-IDU being the Idumeans or Edomites. The modern day Jews do NOT take their name from Judah but from the word Yudea(IDU) meaning to know. The real name Judah means to Praise. The real Judahites were singers who praised the Lord. The Book of Samuel states that King David taught the Judahites the Song of the Bow as is written in the Book of Yashar(Songs). The Judahites served amongst the Levites by Praising the Lord through Songs. The real Judahites came under the banner of the Levites which was the LION. In Hebrew Lawi(Levi) is another way of saying LION. The personal symbol of Judah was not the Lion but the Elephant. The Elephant represented the Praiser or trumpet blaster. The Lemba tribe maintains the ” Elephant of Judah “. Interestingly it was the Buba priest clan of the Lemba that tested positive for the Kohen DNA. According to the Lemba the name Buba means Judah.

July 25, 2010, [6:57 pm Reply](#)

34. *IgboAbroad* says

No one tells it like the “ANAJAH Everybody’s Roots” Learn the ” Literal ” meaning of “Words” Check it outU may learn something. Here In the “ANAJAH” you have the Igbo word PLUS the English pronunciations AND the “literal meaning” of every word hi-lighted in the passage. I say that “ANAJAH Everybody’s Roots” was written for the scholars. Blessed.

August 9, 2010, [6:58 pm Reply](#)

35. *CLAY35Bianca* says

That’s perfect that we are able to get the [mortgage loans](#) moreover, this opens new possibilities.

August 25, 2010, [8:19 am Reply](#)

36. *alhassanyahaya* says

I what i understood that who want to become Jew is simple to change his religion.Is good for me to be staying in Islam.

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

December 17, 2010, [10:11 am Reply](#)

37. *Muwanga says*

Felix Ogbenna

Please explain this “Nze culture” I would like to know more. Is this in Igbo language?

December 20, 2010, [6:32 am Reply](#)

38. *Alhassan yahaya says*

there is no evidence to say you are Jews.Ethiopia is the poor which Jews are used them to stop gun before reach the Jews.No evidence in Ethiopia there are Jews .The evidence which we are under standing is to find someone who created something.there is not good education .

January 21, 2011, [10:33 am Reply](#)

39. *Muwanga says*

Can some one explain “Nze” culture i.e. what it means in Igbo

I am curious becoz ” Nze” means me or I in Ganda tongue.

Nze culture I therefore understand it to mean selfishness

Thanks

January 22, 2011, [2:47 am Reply](#)

40. *David Montagnier says*

I was in several villages in Senegal in the north, Dakar and the south and in the PEUL-TOUCOULEUR Tribes, the story of their family descends from father to sons generations away, it?s an oral tradition like in much of Africa.

They claim very clearly that they are nomads that have descended from the “Horn of Africa”

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horn_of_Africa

They were forced into conversion to Islam in order to survive, but many of the customs resemble jewish sefarad customs.

It would be interesting to run DNA tests on the Peul-Toucouleurs to see how deep the story really is, but many of the facial features are very resemblant to Ethiopians and other jewish races.....

In the end, I think we will discover that most of us are jews!

April 26, 2011, [8:26 am Reply](#)

41. *Hezekiah Yahuda Ben Israel says*

We the Hebrew Israelite Nation should never call our selfs Black Jews or Black Hebrews because when we say Jews then we are not a Nation of People. And when you call your self a hebrew which hebrew are you talking about. The Moabites,Edomites,Ismaelites,Midinites, All these are hebrews but not Hebrew israelites you feel me.

October 18, 2011, [3:41 pm Reply](#)

42. *[Sampson Iroabuchi Onwuka](#) says*

The thing of Color, the thing that divides the world. What else are we talking about here saving the game of status, patron and polity. What is Judaism without AFRICA. The only Chance that Hebrews have to make a case for themselves in the world is those of new facility of the language similarity between Igbo and Hebrew. I shall publish a book next year’s October’ 2012, on ‘Etymology and the Problems of African History’ that will lend additional eyes to this dibble with race and religion, since enough exist to tow the lines of world languages as official guide to better synthesis of world history.

1. *Eugene Akannam says*

My brother, Al-Sulaimani,

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

Let me repeat, the language studied in colleges and universities around the world today is not Hebrew. It is at best a generic or Jewish language but not “HEBREW”. Jesus did not speak Hebrew and his name Yehoshua is appropriately Aramaic. This suggests that the Jews of his time did not speak Hebrew. And if this is the case, from where did the Jewish authorities learn the language they established as Hebrew in the colleges and universities around the world. I am sure that they did not learn this language in Europe where the majority of the Jews today come from. And another thing, the Hebrew alphabet that they have today is modified to allow for aryan phonetics and pronunciations. In the entire world today, the true Hebrew is spoken only in the Igboland of Nigeria today. My name is Eugene Akannam and I live in Saint Louis, Missouri – I will be ready to come anywhere to school anyone, Jew or Gentile, who says that the language they study in Colleges and Universities or the language spoken in Israel today is Hebrew. The Jews today do not know, speak, or understand the true Hebrew language, For if they did, they will not allow many scholars around the world to be telling people the meanings of Hebrew words that are completely wrong. They would know that all the renowned world religions like Judaism, Islam, Hindu, Shinto, and Hudha are all versions of the original spirituality of the Primordial Igbo way of life. They would know the true meaning of Kaballah or Kabbah. These words are decapitated Hebrew in written form. I bless the “Name” Chi-jire, the Holy one of Israel.

There are other Bene-Israel all over Nigeria who do not speak Igbo (Hebrew). Some speak Tiv, Hausa, Fulani, Yoruba (corrupted Igbo) and other Nigeria languages based on where their forefathers found refuge. I speak Igbo, the true Hebrew language today only because my ancestor “Odu” a Kohen Gadol, left Idah (Judah) in Igala (Igal) Kogi State in Nigeria to Anambra State where our Levite priestly clan found refuge today. I did not know that Igbo language is the true Hebrew until I came to America where there are many Hebrew research materials. Believe me, I am not an expert or authority in anything, but I write only about what I know for sure. I thank you and have a good weekend, my dear.

As for skin color, the Children of Israel as well as their Arab brothers are what we know as colored people – I mean, colored people who also have children with white and fair skin color to this day. The Hebrew range from the very dark to the very pale albino. The only difference is that the Arab of today are heavily Caucasionalized to a greater extent. I thank you.

June 4, 2010, [12:21 pm Reply](#)

o *MIKAL MODEBE says*

IM SURE YU WILL MARVEL AT THIS LINK.
m.topix.com/forum/world/ethiopia/T4E44RURL5FJ1T7MB

IT IT A PRE ADAM AND EVE SCRIPT RECENTLY FOUND IN ETHIOPIA. IT SHOULD REVOLUTIONALISE THE WORLD!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! THE MEDEBAYS IN IT IS THE MODEBES OF ONITSHA. THEY INHERITED THE WORLD, THATS WHY THERE IS THE EGWUGWU CULT CHINUA ACHEBE TALKED ABOUT IN THINGS FALL APART.....THE ORDER OF MELCHIZEDEK!!!!!!!!!! YOU CAN ADD ME ON FACEBOOK IF YOU WANA LEARN MORE. “RAS OKALIA MIKAL MODEBE” IS THE NAME. GIVE THANKS. BLESS UP.

June 12, 2010, [4:01 am Reply](#)

2. *Wa karanu says*

Thank you Eugene.Am based in Chicago and we really need a sitting with you.

June 7, 2010, [11:26 am Reply](#)

3. *alhassan yahaya says*

Ishaq Al sulaimani.Iam surprise that someone told me some of the hausa are jews.

.

June 12, 2010, [8:34 am Reply](#)

4. *Akannam says*

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

First of all, I will tell my brother – Wa Karanu that I will try to make myself available whenever you are ready, but define what you want to know, and I pray I will be able to make it clear to you, God’s willing.

My brother from Onitsha, I am hoping it is the same Modebe well known family, have just provided another evidence that the earlier Igbo (Hebrews) travelled to the known world. The name Mendebo (ie Madu Ebo) could be one of those evidences. For example, the true Hebrew rendering of the name “Eber” of the Bible is” Ebo”. So, when we look at the word “Mendebo”, the word should first be broken as “Mend” “Ebo”, so in this way one may be able to get the true word because Hebrew words are difficult to pronounce by Non-Hebrews and those who do not speak the language; hence we have the massive confusion we have today in the structure of many Hebrew words. I myself have little difficulty rendering “Mendebo” as “Madu Ebo”. Very few people knows that Abraham’s maternal grandfather’s name is “Kanu Ebo”, a pure and unadulterated Igbo (Hebrew) name that may Igbo citizens of today are named after. This is truly, the end times, for the truth are coming out as never before. I just wanted to contribute here. Thanks.

June 14, 2010, [10:00 am Reply](#)

5. *alhassan yahaya says*

please Akannam here is not talking about the religion so what is that.is blood only .

June 19, 2010, [10:09 am Reply](#)

o *Ishaq Al-Sulaimani says*

Baruch Ben Ahwaray,

NO! your Y-Chromosome is

strictly your direct paternal lineage and stands regardless of admixture. For example if we take two Anglo-Saxon males from England who carry the typical Western European R1B Y-Chromosome. The first has a son from an Anglo-Saxon female and the second has a son from an Igbo woman from Nigeria.

The two sons will test positive for the R1B Y-Chromosome and there will be no distinction. There will be no percentage as the Y-Chromosome is simply the male seedline and in the example mentioned above the two males are both of the Anglo-Saxon seedline regardless of their maternal lineage. However if both of these males were to take an autosomal DNA test the results would differ as the son born from the Anglo-Saxon father and mother would read as 100% European (providing that there is no admixtures in previous generations), while the son from the Anglo-Saxon father and the Igbo mother would read 50% European and 50% Bantu(Negroid).

As you put it, the Y-Chromosome is definitely one or the other,while

Autosomal DNA Testing is a reading of the overall general genetic composition.

The results of the Autosomal Test will read according to the various racial components that are found within the individual being tested.

June 27, 2010, [5:08 pm Reply](#)

6. *Baruch Ben Ahwaray says*

Is it possible to have different percentages in your Y chromosome? Example, can a person be 72% E1B1A and 28% G2A, or is it one or the other?

June 25, 2010, [1:38 pm Reply](#)

7. *meekahaefele masooa says*

No doubt Africa was robbed of the land and human resources. There i ample proof that Israel was part of African Egypt that was conquered by Islam as well as other northren states. One can only look at Egyptian Holy places like pyramids that are denigrated and archeologists from both west and Islam are

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

intensely digging up old african graves to study bones, sovenirs and embroideries of mummies. Surely if the origins of pyramids and mummies were muslim or west in origin they would not be dug up for studies, they do it in order to understand african culture hidden in graves of mummies to publicise under the guese of scientific research. To an african it is a great insult to defile the graves and distort the truth about the originality of Egyptian civilisation that was unmistakably african as in the rest of southren africa. Africa's history cannot be distorted any more and every single liar will be named and shamed for telling lies about african history to date. But those that tell African historical truth as they are will be greatly honoured and exalted. May their truth and revelations about african historical greatness live forever than the obsfuciation of the historical distorters and their sponsors.

June 26, 2010, [4:21 pm Reply](#)

o *Aden Ahwaray says*

Meekahaefe, I totally agree with what you typed. Most beliefs/religions would never allow the desecration of their ancestor's resting places...and the fact that there exists this insensitivity to another belief/culture is proof that there is more than just scientific study involved. More like spin doctors.

June 26, 2010, [8:34 pm Reply](#)

o *Ishaq Al-Sulaimani says*

Meekahaefe,

The desecration of tombs in Egypt in regards to archaeology is inspired by the financial benefits offered from Western European institutions of higher learning. This is not motivated by a belief in Islam. Egypt was colonized by a number of Non-Muslims such as the Greeks etc. long before it became a Muslim Nation. Ancient Egyptian religion and culture are not respected in the Judeo-Christian world as Egyptians are viewed as the tyrants and oppressors who enslaved the Israelites.

June 27, 2010, [5:36 pm Reply](#)

8. *alhssan yahaya says*

In Africa there is not tribe which has good relationship with Hausa tribe we could say only Ethiopia tribe. I want to make you undersnd BAYAJIDDA OR to say ABUYAJID. They came to HAUSA land. they had done what they wanted to do .they have blood of BAYAJIDDA. There is not this blood in Africa only Ethiopia tribes .Also iam not saying Hausa tribe we are Jews. we are Musulim. Then in Nigeria there is good blood only Hausa tribe which has good relation with Bayajidda. there is not any evidence that Bayajidd came to their area only HAUSA bribe.

June 27, 2010, [9:52 am Reply](#)

9. *Eugene Akannam says*

Thank "Goodness" people are beginning to point to facts which prove that the people in Egypt today are not the descendants of ancient Egyptians. They are Arabs and other mixed peoples. For, if those people living in Egypt today are descendants of ancient Egyptians, there is no way they will allow both the European and Arab scholars to continually desecrate the tombs of their Pharoahs and their other ancestors in the name of evil-intended archeology.

And people should not tell the world that the lineage and relations of the clan that produced Pharoahs of Egypt are extinct today because I am sure that they are not. I don't know where they are but I believe that a thorough search within the Sub-Saharan Africa may produce stunning results. We already know that there are descendants of Egyptians in many Sub-Saharan nations.

Take for example, a House of David can be traced to the Kogi State in Nigeria today if the doubters can believe this – although many of them may have migrated to parts of Igboland today. Thank God that there is some evidence. First of all, the City of Idah (Judah) in Igalala (Igal) in Kogi State is the only City

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

of Judah established anywhere on earth outside of Canaan by a descendant of King David whose name is Asadu (Asa still lives). Ida is the true rendering of Judah and Igal is the true rendering of Igal. If one types in "Igal in Judah" in the internet, the chapter and verse in the Bible, especially in the Book of the Chronicles will show up. Asa is also a descendant of David and king of Judah. So, what we have here is not a strange name but a name that can be found in the lineage of king David (Deweudo or Keep the peace). To belittle Africa, European perverts of the truth want the world to believe that the ancient people of the Asia Minor that flocked to Sub-Saharan Africa are extinct, but I can assure anyone, "none of these peoples are extinct". Just look harder in Africa, they are there. Thanks.

June 28, 2010, [7:27 am Reply](#)

10. *meekahaefele masooa says*

Eugene is right, it is possible to find the Egyptian offsprings, well their kings were deposed and some massacred but that alone cannot exterminate the whole people, more so because Egypt was conquered over a long period of time, as Ishaq alludes, and its royalty and nubian citizenry amongst others mellowed into the surrounding nations to avoid enslavement and death. In southern Africa, for example, it is a common knowledge that Africans migrated from the north sometimes stampeting but at times orderly. What was the push for the bantus particularly to surge south rather than pushing north? It was amongst others a genocidal pressure caused by many battles against African kingdoms north of Sahara since 8000 years ago to date. To appreciate oneness of Africans you only need to observe common linguistic roots amongst Africans from Euthopia, Mali, Congo to South Africa and you will conclude that there is a common ancestry. For example take the Sesotho word 'Metsi' or 'Amanzi' in Nguni languages and ask any bantu or native from South Africa to Israel itself and you will be surprised of the same meaning, or similar syllables in their many dialects of that word and you will tell me the meaning of the word.

The point is that Africans are the same people, the original people who used to inhabit Egypt, Algeria, Libya any many other regions in Africa and simply got assimilated in other African tribes when the war of colonisation devastated them. Therefore George must not worry because we all have Egyptian gene as much as Zulu or any other African blood in us and it cannot rest until we claim our ancient holy places back to our children, and we must start now telling the truth. The African genocide must not be limited to slave ships of the years 1600 or so it goes back to the actual dismembering of African cultures from Egypt Israel to Sudan since 6000 BC to date, today the colonisation on Africans is secretive and silent in the form of foreign-religions trying to convert Africans and foster their allegiance to their converters. The fact is that Africa, as an original birth place of humanity, became Godly, civilised, educated and religious before any other nations if you accept that many western philosophers and priests came to Africa for training. Remember the words of a Greek leader "in Africa you always get something new", this shows our civilisation was coveted and revered by other nations. Even today Egyptian Pyramids are still a marvel if not a cause of jealousy in the western and Arab sections. So if you are African you are also an Egyptian or a Nubian, you are not extinct. Except Sub-Sahara you are an aboriginal in many parts of the world, you are a vanquished nation but you are still alive and God willing Africa will assume her previous super status and teach the world humaneness, Ubuntu / Botho. With Africa in the helm all earthly wars of destructions, racism and hatred will be redundant and irrelevant. Our cultural values offer humanity togetherness and peace but the truth be told, we claim our holy lands taken from us by a hook or a crook. Our African cultural values, religions and languages are ignored at the altar of foreign values in our motherland and this has to stop if we are to realise one nationhood as Africans and act as one to promote our interests as a nation and not as divided ethnic enclaves that leads us to nothingness.

June 28, 2010, [4:10 pm Reply](#)

11. *Eugene Akannam says*

My Brother Ishaq, Sulaimani,

Good Morning! I just ran into the shock of my life the other day. During my research, I stumbled into the name of the town and the actual village of Abraham's mother in Igboland today, and this is confirmed in about two Jewish documents. This is not something that I can just write down casually because people

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may take this for granted. Besides, every evidence I have seen today shows that the majority of people known to the world as Jews today do not want to be associated with Africa because they are Aryans by race and not Hebrews. So, my problem now is how to secure a grant that will allow me to visit this town and village to question this people. This is big indeed and may later involve a documentary. Do you know any foundation that will be able to provide me with such grant money? I thank you.

July 22, 2010, [7:36 am Reply](#)

12. *Ishaq Al-Sulaimani says*

Eugene Akanam

With the current economic recession grants are not as fluid as in times past. However I will pass on the information to Dr.Grier. Perhaps your research and findings could be incorporated into other projects on Igbo-Israelite identity. I am hoping to meet with Dr.Ujah who will be coming to the United States in August. I will also discuss the issue with him as well. What part of AlaIgbo(Igboland) are you originally from? I am currently researching some of the Igbo descendants from the tribe of Ephraim. These were Moorish Igbo who at one time lived in Morocco. Some of them are found in the Imo State. They were originally ruled by a King named Abraham Ha- Ephrati. Have you heard of any Igbo person,town or village bearing the name Ephrati or a variant thereof??? Keep up the Excellent work in tracking down the Israelite origins of the Igbo!

July 22, 2010, [10:01 pm Reply](#)

13. *Eugene Akannam says*

Good Morning, Al-Sulaimani,

First of all, I thank you for the quke response. I am from Levite Priestly Clan of Uno-Odu in Ora-Ivite, Anambra State, Nigeria. Ora-Ivite in Ekwusigo Local government is the only town I presently know in the whole Igboland that contains the entire three major divisions of Israel – Priestly Clan, Other Levite Clan, and some tribes of Israel. No, I don't know any Igbo with the family name, Ephrati. Maybe, it is spelled wrong, I don't know. By the way, Igboland has more people and towns named after the towns and cities of ancient Israel, even more than the State of Israel today – I mean with the biblical verses to support the evidence. Regardless, the entire Southern Nigeria was the ancient origin of the Hebrews and this can be stretch to way, way back in human history when there was no human being with white skin on earth. Hence, Igboland not only validates the Bible Scriptures, it also validates the prophecies of the dispersal of Israel and who are truly, the Children of Israel. Not only that, there are other Children of Israel scattered all over Nigeria and other sub-Saharan African nations. Thanks for the effort. .

July 23, 2010, [6:02 am Reply](#)

14. *IgboAbroad says*

I thank Ezeayana for opening my eyes. Have anyone of you read the book titled " Anajah Everybody's Roots " ? Check it out ! You may learn something. G-d Bless.

August 9, 2010, [6:16 pm Reply](#)

15. *ISHAQ AL-SULAIMANI says*

AKKANAM,

There is an old reference from 1930 which reported an Israelite Community in the Ondo district of Southwest Nigeria(Yorubaland). It states that the Yoruba call them Emo Yo Qaim. They call themselves Bnai-Ephraim. They claimed to have originated in Morocco. What became of this group?? Chima

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Onyeolo of the Imo state petitioned the Israeli court under the very same history and claim of being of the tribe of Ephraim. I met Chima in Israel but have since lost contact with him. He seemed to be under some kind of GAG ORDER and was not revealing too much about his claim. I have discovered the history of the Ephraimite community in Morocco. Is there any connection between the Ephraimites of Ondo and those of Imo??

August 20, 2010, [10:32 pm Reply](#)

16. *Muwanga says*

Halo Doc

Just a note for you and other bros.

The article you wrote on Bayudaya. Ka-ku-ngulu i.e. ngulu means up, or north or to become concious in Luganda.

Some bantu groups in Southern Africa refer to God as Ngulu-Ngulu . Baganda refer to God as Gulu. (“same word for sky”) Another elder (Bambi Baba) with esoteric knowledge says that God’s true name is Sse-Gulu-Manda translated as “Most High Power”

Prince Kakungulu is Buganda Royalty and it said by some Baganda that he is supposed to be the Kabaka..... all though he is related to The Kabaka.

August 22, 2010, [1:12 am Reply](#)

17. *ISHAQ AL-SULAIMANI says*

Semei Kakungulu also set out to be a Kabaka. The KaKangulu families are of high royal stature. Idi Amin was only able to come to power through the blessings of Prince Badru KaKangulu. GULU-MANDA (Most High Power) is interesting because in ancient Israel there was a Mandaean sect. The word Manda means knowledge(Power). KAKUN-GULU could also mean HIGH PRIEST OF ISRAEL: KAKUN=KAHAN, KOHEN AND GULU MOST HIGH.

August 23, 2010, [8:58 am Reply](#)

18. *Eugene Akannam says*

My Brother, Al Sulaimani,

Yes, I know of the remnant of the tribe of Ephraim in Ondo State. In fact, they are the first clue to me that there are other Israelites in Yoruba. When I read that there use the sacred words Om and Aum to refer to the mother and father respective, I knew then that they are Israelites for real because this is exactly how my children greet me (Aum) and my wife (Om) every morning. For these two sacred words, Aum and Om are the exact two sacred words that all the heavenly hosts greet Chukwunna (God Almighty Father) and Ibenne (Mother of all).

You yourself did a wonderful research that shows that Southern Nigeria was occupied by the Igbo before, Oduduwa, the Arabian Kushite, showed up to colonize them as Yoruba today. So, there were many migrations from Yoruba to the eastern Igbo land and that may include the Ephraimites of Ondo. But there are still many Israelite clans and Igbo enclaves in many parts of Yoruba to this day.

What do you expect from Chima? He wants to remain in Israel. So, he cannot tell you things that reveals that many among the people called Jews today and not blood descendants of Israel, but converts to Judiasm. Look, it just that many Africans find it hard to believe there fellow Africans. The fact remains that the Children of Israel who found refuge in the Igbo States of Eastern Nigeria, to include Delta Igbo have more evidence of their Israelite origin than the Jews living in Israel today. My Goodness! The end-time is here. Both the core descendants, both maternal and paternal, of Abraham’s ancestors can be found in Igboland today. It is not maybe or could be, but a matter of pure certainty. They live side by side with the children of Israel in Igboland to this day. For the ancestors of Abraham was Igbo before some remnants among them migrated to Ur (Ore) of the Chaldeans where Abraham was eventually born, and

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they are still Igbo today. And what is shocking is that the State of Israel and the British know this to be true. Thanks.

August 23, 2010, [9:46 am Reply](#)

o *Tonye says*

LOL.. Africans are struggling to please themselves.

April 24, 2011, [11:57 am Reply](#)

19. *muwanga says*

Good day

It is said that prince Kakungulu's title is Ka-mu-swaga"" i.e. High priest of the Kingdom of Buganda. Buganda could not go to war without his blessings. It is written that the early british colonisers and the Egyptians were scared of him. go figure why idi amin asked his father for blessings before he hood winked Uganda. But I will double check the meaning of Kamuswaga and his role.

Anyway you say mande means Knowledge(power). Well see below

Amanyi means..... knowledge.....in Luganda Language.

Amaanyi meanspowerin Luganda

Do you see the similarity except for the double a in one.

Now the colonisers came to Africa and said ""knowledge is power""

I will post my reply to some guys re – the meaning of Amen.

August 26, 2010, [9:08 am Reply](#)

20. *meekahaefele masooa says*

How good brothers and sisters to comper our langauges, similarities show that we africans come from the same source of origin.

Well in Zulu language 'knowledge' is 'Ulwazi' In Sesotho the same word is 'Tsebo'.

Power in Zulu is ' Amandla' and Sesotho is ' Matla'

I like your commends on african langauge heritages.

September 10, 2010, [7:47 pm Reply](#)

21. *Eugene Akannam says*

In Igbo, "Ama anyi" means the" place of my people" – that your ancestral compound. Thank you.

September 27, 2010, [11:35 am Reply](#)

22. *itorobong says*

so now, main people who were meant to occupy israel are scattered. WE SHALL ALL COME TOGETHER WHEN JESUS COMES.

November 15, 2010, [8:17 am Reply](#)

23. *BEUNA LIVINGSTON says*

I am trying to trace the heritage of the maroons of Jamaica. I am attempting to continue the education of my adult sons. Much of what I know was passed on to me by my grandmother a maroon woman who died when I was 9. The history was passed on orally, I would like my children to know that we were not only slaves, but kings, queens, philosophers and the true Royalty. Any help you can give about the maroons in Jamaica would be greatly appreciated.

January 27, 2011, [1:38 pm Reply](#)

o *Tonye says*

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

They are a mix of Africans from mainly the Niger Delta of Nigeria including South Western Cameroon and Ashanti of Ghana. They are not different from the rest of black Jamaicans. They were just the people that resisted the white man and ran to the top forest part of the Jamaican mountain. They were reserved and it's this reservation that made them become more pro Africa than the rest.

April 24, 2011, [11:54 am Reply](#)

24. *Ze Ra Yzrel says*

Greetings

I am a young brother through my research found out that Hebrew Israelites were the prize of the transatlantic slave trade. My question is what tribes are in the United States and the islands.

March 3, 2011, [3:08 pm Reply](#)

25. *Ufeiamiya says*

You have made my day because all that you have been discussing, I have always known without knowing how I knew. I come from West Cameroon and I have always known that being "Jewish" in the world today is actually belonging to a political group, not ethnic. Thanks my brothers

March 4, 2011, [1:12 am Reply](#)

26. *Hebrew4Life says*

Shalom Shalom Brothers & Sisters,

This is amazing information here I took the "DNA" test for the paternal and it showed that I was 100% Fulani/Temne of West Africa with "YAP+" which proves I'm of African origin. I know these roots are much deeper than I realize. I'm so grateful for some of the posts here and I'm still in search of my true identity home in Africa where my ancestors sold, snatched, or forced to be taken to the west and yes I hate the fact they are digging up our ancestors and parading them around the world. I'm sure they will never allow us to dig up "Queen Elizabeth"

April 8, 2011, [6:14 am Reply](#)

27. *Peter Okafor says*

A variant of Ephraim may be Ifite or Ihite depending on your dialect. Nobody knows the true meaning of Ifite but it appears in scores of names of towns in Igboland. Another biblical name that is common is Abba or Aba which is a name of so many towns in Igbo-land. Ama-Anyi can also be translated to "the knowledge of us" depending on intonation.

It is not surprising that the present genetic make-up of the modern Jew is not the same as the Hebrews. There have been so many events in Hebrew history that being a Jew may not guarantee that one has even a Hebrew ancestor either patrilineal or matrilineal. There is suggestion of Hebrew influence on Igbo culture but no incontrovertible DNA evidence to suggest that Igbo/Ibo/Ebo/Eboe are in fact Hebrews. Till this is done we continue to speculate.

April 24, 2011, [5:15 am Reply](#)

28. *Peter Okafor says*

Just to comment on one Ganda man's interpretation of Nze; a highly respected title in Igboland. Nze is a title holder who is highly respected and is expected to maintain the highest ethical standards in his conduct in the community. He is never to bear false witness, never to steal or cheat, never to eat what is unclean (what has fallen on the ground), never to sit on the bare ground hence in the olden days was always carrying a goatskin bag that he would sit on in public gatherings. Only freeborn in the community could hold the title. He must never climb a tree. It was a dignified title.

By this my good Ganda fellow you see that nze does not mean selfishness. Please do discard all your misconceptions about the Igbo people. We have only begun to scratch the surface in understanding these unique people.

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

Its interesting that the ancient hebrew word (Maaz) for Isrealite man is the same as the present igbo word for an Igbo man (Mazi) Maazi, Maza in Hausa. see the evidence @ <http://strongnumbers.com/hebrew/4619.htm>

April 24, 2011, [5:39 am Reply](#)

29. *Peter Okafor says*

Even the hebrew word for israelite woman “Baara” may be seen In the old igbo word for woman “Agbara ‘

April 24, 2011, [5:51 am Reply](#)

30. *Peter Okafor says*

If you remember that hebrew is written in consonants and that the vowels have to be inferred you may have a few words that sound the same and have a similar meaning in the two languages.

English; i gbo/Variant Igbo ; Hebrew

eye; anya: aya: ayin

ear: Nti(pronounced n-te) tenuk

house ebe biri beth biri

flee gbaraa/ gbara pu barach

run oso/ noso nus

say si/ kwué/ kpe melal/ qol/ peh

bowl efele sephel

thought eche seach

laugh shi ochi/ chiochi tsechoq/sachaq

look neke/ nebe nakar/nabat

consecrate neze/ nezer nazar

reverence kpelachi/kpeluchi pelach/palach

I do not purport to be a linguist but I think the similarities are amazing. these are a few words that i took time to look up. See what I found.

April 24, 2011, [6:51 am Reply](#)

31. *Peter Okafor says*

I believe the slave trade affected us more than we are aware of because during the slave trade millions of Africans including Igbo were taken by force into the diaspora and important histories both oral and written were lost. Whole villages were transplanted because insecurity, artefacts were lost. Social upheaval occurred and to worsen the matter the colonialist came along with thier divide and rule tactics and imposed their culture and apologies; religions on us, making us to demonize our own traditional ways. We have benefitted from the western influence but at what price?

Igbos traditionally do not have kings; colonialist imposed warrant chiefs on us. From there we made kings of the warrant chiefs and the rest is history. Eze/ Ezer that we use today does not stand for king in ancient igbo it stands for priest or in its purer form helper or servant. For example Ezeani/ ezeala means the priest of Ani/ Ala or better helper of ani /ala or servant of Ani /ala which is exactly how it would translate in ancient hebrew in which EZER translates as helper.

April 24, 2011, [7:10 am Reply](#)

32. *Peter Okafor says*

I gave serious thought to the question and I realized that the answer to the question of Ig ancestry may bestaring at us in the face. In one of the ritual Prayers at the breaking of Kolanut the elder recites as follows: it will be well with Igbo, it is also well with olu. the question now becomes what or who is “Olu”?

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

I believe that the OLU are the original inhabitants of the place known now as Igboland and the Igbo came and settled among them, intermarried among them and produced the modern Igbo of today. The Olu were NOT CONQUERED as Igbo People were essentially peaceful traders and artisans, not warriors. Had there been war between them there would be no blessing of the olu during the breaking of kolanut. The olu may not have been homogenous ; they may have been some several small tribes whose remnants and Descendants are found in the South-South of Nigeria. This implies then that the south-east and the South-south are blood relations. This is verified oral History and linguistic evidence .

No DNA evidence exists as at now unlike the Lembas in South Africa where there is evidence of Hebrew Ancestry. Is anyone aware of a Genetic study of the Igbo Population in comparism to their Nieghbors in the South-South and Other populations world-wide that claim Hebrew ancestry?

April 24, 2011, [9:42 pm Reply](#)

33. [Nocwaka](#) says

Molweni-Siyanibona -Greetings -South Africa

Thank you for opening my eyes, Just to comment on Nguni history . Our ancient history of the Nguni people is wrapped up in our oral history. According to legend we were a people who migrated from Egypt to the Great Lakes region of sub-equatorial Central/East Africa.[1] We migrated southwards over many centuries, with large herds of Nguni cattle, probably entering what is now South Africa around 2,000 years ago in sporadic settlement, followed by larger waves of migration around 1400 AD. Nguni peoples are pastoralist groups, ethnically part of the greater Bantu group occupying much of the East and Southern parts of Africa.

Many tribes and clans were forcibly united under Shaka Zulu. Shaka Zulu's political organisation was efficient in integrating conquered tribes, partly due to the age regiments, where men from different villages bonded with each other. The Nguni tribes kept similar political practises to those used by Shaka Zulu.

During the southern African migrations known as mfecane, the Nguni peoples spread across a large part of southern Africa, absorbing, conquering or displacing many other peoples.

The Nguni tribes are: Zulus, Xhosa, Swazi and Ndebele and we all can understand each other's languages. Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika is part of the national anthem of South Africa, national anthem of Tanzania and Zambia, and the former anthem of Zimbabwe and Namibia. It is a Xhosa hymn written by Enoch Sontonga in 1897. The first chorus is:

Nkosi, sikelel' iAfrika;
Malupakam'upondo lwayo;
Yiva imithandazo yethu
Usisikelele.

Lord, bless Africa;
May her horn rise high up;
Hear Thou our prayers And bless us.

July 9, 2011, [3:50 am Reply](#)

34. [Muwanga](#) says

Peter

Please refer to the comment the other writer had i.e. "Naija is now full of people with nze culture". what did he mean? i.r.o poverty... greed etc

Peter also clarify please where did the Igbos get the word "IGWEE" i.e. King.

What do you say to the Kings mentioned in the Hebrew texts e.g Old testament vis a vis Igbo true/original identity?

THE DISPERSED ISRAELITES

In Ganda as I explained Nze means me or I .

You also say that Nze is a noble title

Don't you think that it could be related to the Swahili word "Mzee" or "Mze" which can mean elder, aged, old, wiseperson, noble e.g Mze Julius Nyerere / Kenyatta / Mandela etc

Be good

July 13, 2011, [7:11 am Reply](#)

35. *A Brown says*

I heard that there is a book of recorded history on the Africa people, and tribes, but the book has never been translated into English. Can anyone give me more information, and can this book be purchased?

July 15, 2011, [9:16 am Reply](#)

36. *Peter Okafor says*

It's good to see a reaction to my post. I would like to explain the meaning of IGWE/ Igwee which may have attracted some interest. There are 2 words that are pronounced the same way in Igbo/ Ibo. The first means the "sky". It infers something that is very high. The other "Igwe" is a title which was of very recent origin. It derives from the first above and means your "highness". This 2nd meaning of Igwe comes from an imposed foreign culture in the 1700s when the British created warrant Chiefs for their system of Indirect colonial rule. It has now become a part of Igbo culture. There are as many Igwes as there are towns in Igboland today.

the difficulty of the British with the imposition of any kind of ruler on the Igbo people was that the Igbos traditionally had no kings. Towns and villages practiced a kind of republican democracy in which assemblies made common decisions and the kindred carried out the decision of these assemblies of the people. The word eze/ ezer comes to mind today when you want to describe a king. Yet ezes are not really kings but priests who offer sacrifices and act as oracles for the people. A western writer uses as a criterion for describing civilizations the presence of kings and emperors. Blacks were said to be primitive with special reference to Igbo people because they were not ruled by kings (not slaves). Laughably the same writer did not refer to the Athenians and early Romans as primitive. Today kings, emperors and strongmen are no longer in vogue. These institutions are regarded as anachronisms in almost every country today. Kingship, oligarchy and monarchy are things Igbo people had already discarded as detrimental to personal freedom for thousands of years. There is even an adage that says that to become king you had to pay off the debt of every man (free every slave) first. There were chiefs and titled men which include the Nze, Ozo, Ichie.

The typical Igboman of old, addressed as Mazi/ Maazi was a freeman who jealously guarded his freedom and rights. This shows that he had once been oppressed by strongmen somewhere in history.

With regards to my ongoing research on Igbo origins I have some interesting news which I will post soon.

August 24, 2011, [2:52 am Reply](#)

37. *Peter Okafor says*

Muwanga, Just to clarify: yes NZE could be MZEE because an Nze is considered a wise man, elder or counsellor in Igboland.