There are plenty of Jewish Roots in Africa I

A few webs that consider the Igbo & other Africans & Blacks as Israelites:


http://www.yahspeople.com

Although there was much sympathy in Europe and elsewhere, only five countries (Tanzania, Gabon, Côte d'Ivoire, Zambia and Haiti) officially recognised the new republic.
These are important west African cities that had Jewish influence: aGaDez (GaD), KaNo (CaNaan) ibaDaN (DaN)…not to talk about the Senegalese JuDdala which is clearly related to JuDah.
There are many African ethnic groups with interesting pre-Christian beliefs, many of them being monotheistic. Some have pre-Christian beliefs in a great flood like Noah's.

The Baoule are aKaN (CaNaan) & believe in one god called Nyamien, similar to Yaweh as several scholars pointe before. The name Akan might come from Canaan, their land of origin.

It's considered that Igboland had a very ancient civilization. Ebri is an Ibo or neighborly tribe's last name strikingly similar to Ibri, Hebrew in Hebrew. Abiriba, an Igbo village, might have the same root.

The Balanta Council of Elders takes all important decisions. That the Balanta have a Council of Elders (including the importance given to this council) & that they have "sacred woods" resemble the ancient Israelites.

The KaDaru are 10000 thousand people. Are they GaDites?

The Ivorian department of Rubino may have taken its name from the tribe of Reuben. Other interesting toponyms are Lakota, like the Amerindian land in the USA & SiKensi, that bears the consonants of iSaaC.

Does the Sout Sudanese GoLlo people receive its name from GaLut, diaspora in Hebrew?

The name of the African country Gabon is strikingly similar to Gabaon, a biblical Israelite city.
It's interesting that even the Wikipedia affirms the Orons are Israelites, being reinforced by the same wikipedia when it quotes their language as to have Holy Land influence. It's not coincidental either that the two "Oron" (toponyms) in the world are found in Nigeria & Israel.

Mwari, the only Lemba god is strikingly similar to the Aramean word Mari, meaning "My God".

Awlad Mana is a people in Sudan. Their name means something like "Mana people". Is this the "people of the manna", or in other words "the Israelite people that were fed with manna"? Are the KaLigi & the KaLiko (or KaLiko) Israelites of the GaLut?

Would there be a day that world Jewry would talk about Afriki... as today they talk about Ashkenazi, Sephardi?

Are the Pari people related to the Parisi Israelites? Are the Ruweng Reubenites? It's interesting that both peoples are in Sudan close to each other as theoretically the Parisi & the Reubenites are.

The Sara Gambai bear the name of Sarah, the matriarch. The Selim bear the Semitic root for peace. The CaNing have CaNaan's name as part of their name.

The Shatts may have the origin in an Arab or in a Jewish last name. The Sinyar people may have originated from the hamlet of Ein-Sinya, next to Shilo, Israel.

Have the sunGoR Israelite origin in the GoLa, diaspora? Are the taGaLe part of the diaspora too? Do they have any relation with the taGaLa people of the Philippines? The TiNGaL might be the diaspora of DaN, according to their possible meaning.

The TuNjur or TuNGuR might be DaN's diaspora too. The TuNGuRahua Ecuadorean volcano would come from the same roots too. Do the Tumma come from the Hebrew Tumah & taharah meaning "impurity & purity"?
Does the Rubatab tribe come from the tribe of Reuben? Are the Manasirs from Manasseh?

There are countless oral traditions of countless ethnic groups all over Africa describing an origin in Egypt, Ethiopia, Arabia, Israel... I think there are too many testimonies to deny these origins. Many of these ancient peoples were Israelites running away from their dwelling lands. There are many reasons why they ran away from these & other areas: conquests, pogroms, antismite decrees, trade... No wonder why there are so many peoples in Africa (& all over the world) claiming Israelite ancestry. Many people, especially in western countries don't even conceive the idea of the existence of black Israelites despite the many undeniable facts supporting it. They're used to two kinds of Jews: Europeans & Middle Easterners. Both being two hues of the same white skin. I would say that their Judaism or Israelism is rather different from the normative one because of their long isolation from their fellow Israelites.

Is madagaSCaR an iSSaChaRite area or simply Israelite from iSaaC?

Does makGaDiGaDi (in Botswana, close to the Zimbabwean border), have GaDite roots?

Moxico, is in anGoLa. If México comes from Meshiah, then Moxico would come from Mosiach, another name for Mesiah.

Is it a coincidence that diaspora in Hebrew is Galut & in Haiti, the eastern coast of the USA... some black people speak a language called GuLlah? To me it sounds as they are part of the Israelite diaspora. Under the Hebrew rule of vowelization it doesn’t mind what the vowels are.

BeN is son in Hebrew. Other names with BeN: Be Nin (son of Nun like Joshua?) BenGaL (son of the diaspora), BaNgladesh, BeNi, BeNimámet, BeNidorm, BeNicàssim, BeNicarló, BeNifaió, VaNuatu, VeNice,
VeNezuela, VeNeto, BeNjamin, BeNson (son in Hebrew & in Indoeuropean), BaNdung, caBiNda, masViNgo, BiNga, inhamBaNe, BeNguela, LuBaNgo.

Senghor, former Senegalese president, admitted his Jewish origins. There were also Jews among the Ibadyah (the d & the r are very close in some languages, so Ibadyah could give iBaRya, or iBeRia, or Hebrew land, or simply iBri, Hebrew), Wolof & Mandingos. It's also interesting that seneGaL & senGhoR have the consonants gl-gr of diasporain Hebrew & sen, seine, sene, sena was also an Israelite name. The river Seine (the one that splits Paris), originally Sena, has also this origin.

The fact that certain inscriptions in Carthage indicate origin in the Israelite tribes of Asher & Zebulun gives further weight to the conclusions affirming the Israelite origin of many, if not most, of the colonists of Phoenician & Carthagenean empires.

Are the GuLle & GuLud Israelites of the GoLa (diaspora)?

There are claims of a historic presence of Jewish communities in certain regions of Africa ... such as the Malinke, Peul/Foulani, Mossi, Fanti.

Do Bozos have any relation from the Buzi Israelite priest? They, the Bozo people as well, have the exact consonants of Booz (also known as Boaz), husband of Ruth & ancestor of kings David, Solomon, Jesús Christ... Is it a coincidence? Maybe the Bozos come from Boaz, one of the columns of the Temple of Solomon, the other being Jachin.
Are the Evalue, Akans from Ghana, an Israelite people? Is Evalue a corrupted way of Ivri? Is Ebrié (part of the Akan people) a corrupted way for Hebrew? Are the Mosse (or Mossi) people of Moses, (Moshe in Hebrew)? Is the Yerwa people called this way as People of Yehowa?

The Hidden History Of The Biblical Jews Of The Kingdom of Cacongo. Kingdom of Cabinda or En-Goy.

It is stated that the Falashas are not the only Jews of negro race. Bastian speaks of negro Jews living on the Loango Coast in Western Africa. They are called there “Mavambu” or “Judeos.” “They are, on the whole, a fair looking race,” says Bastian. “They are more serious and restrained than the rest of the negroes. Although in other places they are despised, here they take a dominating position, or at least such as to be respected and partly even feared, because they are rich and have most of the commerce in their hands.” The same author claims that though they are of negro race, still he detected Semitic facial features in their physiognomies. Even in Madagascar a traveller has discovered Jews. Sibree mentions that in Ambohipeno, on the east coast of that island, he met natives who called themselves “Zafy Ibrahim,” or descendants of Abraham, and who claim to be altogether Jews. “But I could not detect any difference in colour, features, or dialect between them and the other people of the eastern coast,” comments the author.

A fact worthy the attention of travelers is, that, according to Oldendorp, The kingdom of Loango contains black Jews, scattered throughout the country; they are despised by the Negroes who do not
even deign to eat with them; they are occupied in trade, and keep the sabbath so strictly that they do not even converse on that day; they have a separate burying ground, very far from any habitation. The tombs are constructed with masonry, and ornamented with Hebrew inscriptions; the singularity of which excites the laughter of the negroes, who discern in them only serpents, lizards, and other reptiles. M. Ehrinann, finding it impossible to explain the origin of these Jews, doubts the reality of the fact.

Busching, however, Michaelis, and Zimmermann, do not hesitate to admit their existence; Bruns considers them the descendants of the Falashes of Habesch, or Abyssinia, and Sprengel wishes them to be considered as the descendants of Portuguese Jews, who, having quitted their country, are no longer afraid to profess openly the religion of their fathers. Five leagues to the north of Loango is Quilonga, a river of very difficult access, whither trading vessels sometimes go.

The pair of consonants GB & KP in the iGBo language

The pair of consonants GB & KP are often interchangeable sounds & in the iGBo language are pretty common: eKPe ye, oKPe, afiKPe, aKPe ti, UkPee, oGBa, aGBa, uGBua, eleGBde, uGBo, aGBani, aGBo, oGBo, aKPa buyo, oduKPe, oGBete, oKPor, mGBoko, mGBo, leGBo, ugwanaGBo, iGBojiakuru, nKPor, oGBU, oGBURE, aGBoji, mGBala, aKPor, mGBuakara, oGBond, esoGBue, iGBuzo. oGBoli, oGBogoro, isioKPe, eKPe, eGBara, aGBoha, ameKPe, aKPe a, uruKPe, usuKPe, akPe go, ekweGBE, umulumGBE, aKPe u, oKPe tuya, nKPe, oduKPe, aKPe ha, ehuGBo, akamKPe, oGBuGBU, oGBuunike, oGBodu du, eGBema, akamKPa, afiKPe, iGBanke, atoGBuo, mGBe, GBara, eGBe... I wonder if the very word Igbo turned into iGBo because of the large extension of the "GB KP" ibo sounds.

Igbo Nationalism and Biafra

It is common in northern Nigeria to see the Igbo as representatives of Western civilisation and to involve them in wars by proxy. No other people have so fervently striven to acquire Western education and lifestyle, and when judging global events, the Igbo are generally more supportive of Western policies than are their fellow-Nigerians.
Although the Igbo still tend to side with governments in North America and Europe when global conflicts are concerned, they are more inclined to identify with the Jews who seem to have suffered a similar fate since they were also abandoned, without protection, in the face of genocide. It has become common to assume that Jews and Igbo share basic historical experiences and that their traditional cultures bear many striking similarities, as can be seen from Biblical descriptions of purity taboos, circumcision rites and animal sacrifices.

The terms Ibo, Eboe, Heebo or Hackbous were first used by outsiders. The earliest known reference dates from 1627 when a Spanish priest in Cartagena listed the names of nineteen places in Africa from which slaves originated from.

Communities that are today called Igbo, Ibibio, Ekoi or Efik shared many cultural practices. The main distinction between the Igbo and neighbouring groups was their language.

Although language is most important for nation building, it does not reliably delineate the boundaries of belonging. The Ikwerre communities around Port Harcourt, although speaking an Igbo dialect, were divided about their ethnic affiliation and maintained an ambiguous position. When Biafra was founded, most Ikwerre emphasised their common origin with the Igbo; after the defeat of Biafra, they opted for a separate identity.

In 1968, Biafra was "the most important foreign issue in public opinion surveys throughout Western Europe, and it was regarded as second only to Vietnam among the majority of Americans". Public opinion in the West was largely on the side of Biafra, but Western governments, though under strong pressure, tenaciously refused to give in to popular demands.

Ojukwu had not participated in the coup that had toppled Nigeria’s conservative, pro-British leadership in January 1966. The young coup plotters, though mostly Igbo, had not trusted him because he did not share their radical pan-Africanist views. He looked like an exponent of the new African bourgeoisie, with strong links to pro-British circles. His father, Sir Louis Philippe Odumegwu-Ojukwu, one of Nigeria’s richest businessmen, had sent him to exclusive schools: King’s College in Lagos, Epsom College in Surrey and Oxford University. Since his childhood, he had been in close contact with the colonial establishment, and he had cultivated these links when he returned from England.
The historian Ekwe-Ekwe accused the former colonial masters of having planned the genocide of the Igbo, and he warned that British authorities have not given up their hostile attitude (like toward the Jews).

After Biafra's declaration of independence, Britain adopted a wait-and-see attitude. Anxious not to antagonise the Biafran side which controlled two-thirds of the oil resources, the British government did not interfere when Shell-BP agreed to pay the secessionist republic £250,000 as a first instalment of oil revenues, thereby giving a tacit recognition to Ojukwu's government as the de facto owner of the oil fields. The Nigerian side, however, reacted strongly in defence of its sovereignty. Its navy sealed off the Biafran coastline to stop tankers from loading oil. The British High Commission protested the blockade which threatened to have dramatic consequences for Britain's oil supplies. Just a week after the Biafran declaration of independence, the Six-Day War (June 5–10, 1967) between Israel and its Arab neighbours had constricted the flow of oil. The Suez Canal had been closed, and some Arab countries had placed an oil embargo on Britain. In this tense situation, British officials warned the Gowon regime that they would stop the delivery of weapons, which they had been supplying since independence, if the Nigerians did not lift the oil blockade. But Gowon did not give in. His government had already begun negotiations with the Soviet Union over arms supplies, and in August 1967 it received its first consignment of MiG fighter jets. The threat that their most loyal ally in Africa might establish closer links with communist countries raised serious concern in British government circles. The most pressing need, however, was to secure the flow of Nigerian oil which was ten per cent of British oil use.

Public protests calling for a ceasefire and an arms embargo placed England's Labour government in an embarrassing situation. It had played down the role of oil interests and justified its support for the Gowon regime as a matter of principle, arguing that it was in the best interest of Africans to crush separatist rebellions: If Nigeria fractured along ethnic lines, this would encourage secessionist movements elsewhere in Africa and contribute to the Balkanisation of the entire continent. Given this principled stance which coincided with the position taken by the Organisation of African Union, the British government found it difficult to reverse its policy. It even increased its arms sales

In Jos as in other Northern towns it is obviously not in the interest of the Igbo diaspora to be seen as representatives of American and European ‘crusaders’. Their role as stooges of the West has been imposed on them by their adversaries, in an attempt to discredit them. Muslim newspapers cast them in the role of traitors who allowed themselves to be used as instruments of the erstwhile colonial masters and their American successors: "Nigerian Christians are doing their own part of work as stipulated by the American New World Order". The Igbo are indeed more Western-oriented than other peoples in Nigeria, but their relationship with the West is fraught with bitter experiences. During the war, Biafrans presented themselves as "the most ‘westernised’ of all Africans, indeed, perhaps, of all Third World peoples".
Today, after a long history of persecution, there may be no other people in Africa as keen as the Igbo on joining the fight against Muslim ‘fanatics’. The American president, who – in a reaction to 9/11 – appealed to all nations to join the US-led ‘coalition of the willing’ to eliminate terrorism, could have found a close ally in the Igbo. Yet such an alliance never materialised.

While conflicts in Nigeria have increasingly assumed a religious colouring, Western states have become even more reluctant than in the 1960s to choose African allies on the basis of common religious bonds. Thus it is strange for observers in Europe to be told by Muslim critics that Western policies are guided by a religious strategy that aims at destroying Islam. Of course, President Bush fuelled suspicions, when in an early reaction to 9/11 he announced a ‘crusade’ against terrorism. But allegations that Western statesmen are bent on effecting the downfall of Islam predate the presidency of George W. Bush. When his predecessor Bill Clinton visited Nigeria and met its democratically elected president (the first after 15 years of military rule), the Supreme Council for Sharia claimed that he had come on a religious mission: invited by President Obasanjo, a reborn Christian, “to complete the Christianisation of Nigeria”.

Many Igbo are inclined to adopt alien identities that set them apart from their African neighbours. As a member of Ohanaeze explained, the Igbo seem to have a natural affinity for modern Western culture: "We are rabidly republican. When a Yoruba is greeting a superior he is kneeling down. And among the Hausa, they are crawling on the ground. Not we. We don’t even respect seniority and old age. We fit well into America and Europe, because you are also republican".

A study of religious violence by Freedom House, which sought to generate sympathy for the Christian minorities, pointed out that in their protest marches in north Nigerian cities, Muslims carried posters of Osama bin Laden, while Christian demonstrators waved American flags. A few weeks after 9/11, when American forces conquered Afghanistan, members of an Igbo youth organisation took to the streets with placards proclaiming: "We are in total solidarity with USA", "Ohanaeze Youth Council celebrates the fall of the Taliban Government", "Religious fanatics must stop". The Igbo may feel some affinity for ‘Western’ attitudes such as individualism and achievement orientation, but they have learnt to distrust Western powers.

The Biafran national anthem was set to the moanful tune of ‘Be still my soul, the Lord is on thy side.’ The radio propaganda maintained a high level of religious consciousness as if Biafrans were the Israelites and others Gentiles". While there was a strong "identification of Biafra with Biblical Israel", Britain was perceived as a godless nation, sunk into "spiritually bankruptcy". "Thus a Biafran leader could confidently speak, as early as 1968, of post-war Biafra sending missionaries for the re-evangelisation of
Britain. To the Igbo, a Christianity which does not take seriously the matter of social justice is false. Britain’s refusal to take sides with justice – with Biafra – was evidence of her failure as a Christian nation”.

While the Europeans have ‘betrayed’ their Christian heritage, many Igbo nationalists speak with pride about the religious enthusiasm of the Biafrans who were "butchered for Christ by hordes of fanatical Northern Nigerian Moslem Fundamentalists". During my research on Nigeria’s Sharia conflicts, Igbo often asked me why Westerners do not care when Christians, who are defending religious liberty, are killed by the thousands.

Their unique suffering can be understood as a sign of being chosen. It indicates that they are closer to God than other Christians in Nigeria who sided with the ‘jihadists’ and participated in the genocide.

The future of the Igbo is largely determined by people with whom they cannot communicate directly. This may be one of the reasons why they have taken such passionate interest in the West’s reaction to the threat of Muslim terrorism. While citizens in Jos were moved by the scenes in New York, Westerners did not care about the massacres in Nigeria. What can the Igbo do to get the attention of policy makers in the US and draw them to their side? The crucial problem is access to the media, and here the Israeli experience is again a source of inspiration: "At the end of the Second World War in 1945, the [J]ews found themselves surrounded by a very hostile world. The Jewish caucus met and agreed to do something to change world perception of their race. Part of that resolution was to seek to own and use ownership of the media to mould world opinion in their favor (At the end of the Second World War in 1945, the Jews found themselves surrounded by a very hostile world. The Jewish caucus (in the USA) met and agreed to do something to change world perception of their race. Part of that resolution was to seek to own and use ownership of the media to mould world opinion in their favor (Jewish votes, Jewish media...lobby for Israel & Christians join in. Since a large amount of African Americans have Igbo ancestry they could form a huge pro-Igbo lobby of voters. African American media could join too & given the Christian (& Jewish) affiliation of Igbos, the same Jewish Christian voters & media could support the Igbo cause. In this way we could be creating a huge lobby that no major political party or president could dismiss. An independent Biafra could be an African leading country alternative to the often anti-western & anti-Israel South African Republic. Under the entrepeneurial leadership of the Igbos, Africa as whole could get rid of poverty & their fellow Israelis could help in agriculture & against desertification. This alliance could expand spanning the defense of other Christian & Jewish minorities throughout the world. To achieve this Igbos have to be very publicized in the African American media & in the Jewish & Christian media. Igbos need a worldwide net of Igbo collaborators & representatives... They also need to explain their culture, onidani, language, music...).
A Northern magazine put it: "You can kill them easier than send them home. They are essentially parasites. They only serve as middle men, buying from A to sell to B. ‘So if they all go home who will buy from whom?’" (like the Jews).

A born-again Biafra "will have no majority and minority tribes. We embrace ourselves as brothers and sisters. We are committed in this new Biafra project to carry everybody along, be he Ibibio, Ogoni, Ijaw, Igbo, Efik".

When 620,000 Montenegrins demanded their own state, Western politicians allowed them a referendum; at the same time they have forced 25 million Igbo to live in a multi-ethnic federation where they are resented nearly everywhere. To some extent, the Igbo see themselves as a beleaguered outpost of Western civilisation, defending religious freedom in the face of rising Islamism, but – as a MASSOB functionary explained – the West does not appreciate that: “When some Palestinians are killed, it makes headlines in the Western media, but when 700 Igbo are executed, as happened in Onitsha last September and October [2006], the West looks the other way. The Whites do not help, when you are friendly to them. You have to attack them, like the Arabs do, before they send aid and seek to solve your conflicts”.

Other Nigerians would admit that Igbo are talented people, and thanks to their talents they are sometimes compared to Jews: "The Igbo have the Jewish blood. They are enterprising and intelligent". More often, however, their success is associated with sharp practices and ruthless competition. The Igbo are, of course, aware of their bad reputation: "To a Yoruba and a Hausa man, an Igbo man is a fraudster", "a thief", "a gambler". In a title story on Biafra, the magazine Tell summed up the usual stereotypes: "The general perception of the Igbo by other people is that they are arrogant, aggressive, greedy and ungrateful. It is believed that the Igbo will do everything and anything to make money".

"We survived three years of blockade. We were able to build our own rockets hitting their targets with precision. We had our means of getting things done. We refined petrol and brake fluids from coconut". "Since then, no other Black race has done it. During the time, our own airport was the busiest night airport on the continent of Africa. We did it. The range of our broadcast was fabulous. Practically, the whole continent of Africa was hearing the Voice of Biafra. And it came from the back of a lorry. the great thing about Biafra was that everybody was working for everybody else. That was a great thing. There was no stealing".
Some participants of the 12th World Igbo Congress in Boston aptly explained this creation of permanent bonds. They approached representatives of the Jewish community in Boston and suggested “to forge a unique friendship” since they felt “a spiritual bond with the Jewish population”: “We want to join and walk together with the Jews. Whenever Israel suffers in any possible way, the Igbos feel it”.

When discussing religious aspects of Igbo nationalism, it is important to bear in mind that their interest in Jewish history emerged long before the genocidal experiences of the Biafran war. When Olaudah Equiano, a liberated slave living in late eighteenth-century England, wrote an autobiography with descriptions of his 'Eboe' childhood, he already described parallels between his African home and ancient Israel:

We practiced circumcision like the Jews and made offerings and feasts on that occasion in the same manner as they did. Like them also, our children were named from some event, some circumstance, or fancied foreboding at the time of their birth. We had many purifications and washings; indeed almost as many and used on the same occasion, if my recollection does not fail me, as the Jews. Those that touched the dead at any time were obliged to wash and purify themselves before they could enter a dwelling-house. Every woman too, at certain times, was forbidden to come into a dwelling-house or touch any person or anything we ate.

More than a hundred years later, an Anglican missionary who became one of the first Igbo ethnographers also reflected on Igbo-Jewish similarities. Government anthropologists assumed that the royal lineage of the Jukun kingdom, north of Igboland, had immigrated from Pharaonic Egypt, and that the Aro, a prominent Igbo ‘clan’ that had established an extensive trade network, were "an offshoot of Jews expelled from Spain in 1492, or were of Portuguese extraction or were some of the lost tribes of Israel".

As keen readers of the Bible who have compared Jewish history with their own, Igbo Christians have found it fascinating to detect "striking similarities in cultural practices [and] in character traits". In 1951 the first locally produced book appeared which traced the origins of the Igbo to the patriarchs of the Old Testament. During the civil war, "the identification of Biafra with Biblical Israel [became] commonplace", although the details of how both nations were historically connected have not attracted much scholarly interest. After the war a few books about the relationship between Igbos and Jews were published locally, two of them written by university professors. Igbo nationalists have occasionally referred to the paradigm of Igbo Judaism and used it to explain past and present events. An Igbo journal claimed that there is a "widely held view of common ancestry of the Israelites and Ndigbo", and the historian Harneit-
Sievers observed that today “the idea of a Middle Eastern origin of the Igbo pervades oral historical accounts”.

“The Ibos far more than any other group in Nigeria were carried away into slavery” and that perhaps "one quarter of all black Americans and all African ex-slaves in North and South America are all of Ibo descent". Some commentators have placed this suffering in a religious context. It was interpreted, for instance, as the fulfilment of a Biblical curse that seemed to anticipate the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. The verse (in Deuteronomy 28:68) is quoted thus: "The LORD will send you back in ships to Egypt (this time, Hebrews (Ibos) in Nigeria, to America) on a journey I said you should never make again. There you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as male and female slaves". The Old Testament tells many stories about the misery of slavery, remembering the time when the Jews were captives in Egypt and Babylon. However, when picking up these stories, Igbo nationalists would not normally use them to reflect their own period of slavery and slave trade. They rather interpret Biblical passages that speak of slavery in a metaphorical sense, applying them to Igbo captivity in present-day Nigeria. Ojukwu is cast in the role of Moses who started the exodus towards independence. Like Moses he may not live to see the land God promised him, but he has already handed over the baton to MASSOB leader Uwaruzuike, the new "Joshua who will lead the Biafran Jews to the promised land of the Rising Sun".

In order to get rid of ‘pagan’ strongholds that tie them to the spirits of the past, a Biafran Council of Christian Pastors demanded "that the entire [[I]gbo land should be cleansed of idols" by "physically destroying" them. In Anambra State, MASSOB allegedly compiled a list of 200 shrines "with a view to praying for their destruction". [399] Ancient shrines have sometimes been attacked and demolished, but it is doubtful whether the MASSOB leadership has lent official support to acts of iconoclasm. For an organisation that seeks to unite all Igbo, it would be unwise to take sides in the controversy between Christians and ‘traditionalists’. Most Igbo nationalists see the future Biafra as a Christian state, there are others who defend the ancestral heritage: "the destruction of sacred groves must stop.

Some Christians have argued that the Igbo should look inwards and accept that they bear part of the blame: "The biggest problem facing the Igbo people in Nigeria is idolatry. Our relationship with these gods was why we are decimated, scattered and divided among other Nigerians. Unless the Igbos repent of this sin and turn to God with a broken heart and contrite spirit, they will never rule Nigeria".

Secular discourses find it difficult to tell tales that link the agonies of the past to future redemption. Moreover, they find it difficult to make sense of the premodern history and integrate it into their narratives of social development. Biblical texts, by contrast, talk a lot about the 'traditional' world of patriarchal authority, when people were guided by purity taboos and paid respect to their elders. It is a
world still close to many Igbo, not separated from their daily life but in constant interaction with it: changing, adapting and conflicting with 'modern' elements of their social environment.

Igbo patriots marvel at the way Jewish settlers (or returnees) turned an arid piece of land into a lush and prosperous country. And they are fascinated by the military might of Israel, which is attractive because it gives its citizens security in a hostile environment:

The Jews who neglected political power and central leadership prior to 1945 have sworn that they will never be humiliated again. [...] if a hostile nation humiliates a Jew, the government of Israel does not go to sleep. In fact the title of their national anthem is NEVER AGAIN, and the idea behind this is that it is unacceptable for any Jew to be insulted anywhere in the world again. It is a doctrine no Jew plays with. Every Israelite is a soldier. He knows the attitude of his hostile neighbours. He is ever prepared to defend himself.

Texts about the Biblical origin of the Igbo and their divine mission seem to reinforce the ideological, doctrinaire aspects of nationalist discourses, but even here we find a wide variety of opinion. Reconstructions of a Hebrew past can be used by the Igbo to reject their African heritage or to affirm an afrocentric identity. The Old Testament refers repeatedly to the ten tribes of the northern kingdom whose members were partly carried away into exile after the Assyrian conquests in 732 and 721 B.C.

Remnants of the Lost Tribes that had preserved much of their ancient Hebrew customs were allegedly discovered in such distant places as China, Japan and the Americas. Among the "myriad peoples identified as Israelites" by European travellers, missionaries and later by colonial officers were also numerous Africans: the Ashanti in today’s Ghana, the Songhay in Mali, the Maasai in Kenya, the Tutsis in Rwanda-Burundi, the Baluba in the Congo and many others. In the case of the Zulu in South Africa, their culture seemed so close to that of the ancient Hebrews, that an Anglican Bishop of Natal, who lived among them in the nineteenth century, "suggested that anyone who wanted to really understand the Bible had best study Zulu customs".

Although the idea that the Zulu and other Africans are scattered groups of Israelites was spread by colonial authors, it has often been internalised by members of the groups concerned. "the myth of the Lost Tribes has penetrated every corner of the African continent". Bible readers in Igboland had the impression of "a unique cultural sameness with the Jews". Prof. Ogbukagu listed 45 common features, from rules of land tenure and inheritance to burial rites and purity taboos. In addition he claimed that more than half of the Igbo vocabulary derives from Hebrew. A more direct piece of evidence allegedly
came to light in 1997, when a "fact-finding team of Israelites" from the King Solomon Shepherd Federation, an African American Jewish association in New Jersey, visited Igboland and made a spectacular discovery. Near the town of Aguleri, which had once belonged to the famous kingdom of Nri, they unearthed an onyx stone with a message written in Hebrew. The inscription consists of a single syllable: Gad, the name of the seventh son of Jacob and progenitor of one of the ten tribes that got lost. In the Book of Exodus, 12 onyx stones are mentioned, "each stone bearing the name of one of the twelve tribes". The discovery of one of these stones was taken as proof of an ancient migration. Prof. Alaezi holds that an "estimated number of 400,000 Hebrews arrived the apparently safe territory of Nigeria in about 638 BC". Fleeing religious persecution by the Assyrians, they were looking for a home where they could practice their strict form of monotheism. After travelling for 80 years, they came to the area of today's Nigeria which looked like a hospitable place because it was not populated by "Arabs" yet, only by Kwas and Pygmies.

An early account of "The Origin of the Ibos", published in 1951, depicts the arrival of the Jewish ancestors as an invasion. The "original inhabitants" were so weak that they were "beaten and chased away". This recalls the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites, as described in the Bible. Narratives that were written after the Biafra War emphasise that the immigrants peacefully interacted with the indigenous population and adopted much of their way of life. By marrying Africans and by being exposed to the tropical climate, the children of Israel turned into blacks. Their assimilation to the new environment also changed their religious beliefs and practices. They preserved, of course, the idea of a creator god, but they also venerated "gods of wood and stone". Although many of their customs remained unmistakably Hebrew, they forgot many details of the Mosaic laws and practiced Judaism only in an "adulterated form".

God had warned them "to desist from marrying non-Jewish ethnic groups", but they did not "resist the temptation". They turned away from him and "degenerated into the Nigerian Gentile demigodism", reverting to witchcraft, sorcery, "fetishism", human sacrifices and other "abominations". Furthermore they lost God’s favour and were punished for disobeying him. Their suffering in Nigeria, where they have been at the mercy of foreign people, has been imposed on them by God’s wrath, as foretold in the Bible: "You have not served the LORD your God; therefore in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and extreme want, you will have to serve the enemies whom the LORD will send against you. He will put a yoke of iron on your neck until you are subdued". In a way, their whole existence in African exile is nothing but a "curse", brought upon them by their Biblical forebears who had digressed from God: "The Heebo (Ibo) nation in Nigeria exists because God made a promise of scattering the Jewish people to all corners of the earth to suffer for their sin of idolatry".

God’s favour has not been lost forever. His punishment is just a means to correct the people he has chosen and to lead them to future greatness: "I shall gather them from all the lands to which I banished
them in my furious anger and great wrath; I shall bring them back to this place and let them dwell there undisturbed. So shall I bring them all the prosperity which I now promise them". In order to regain his favour they have to break with paganism by destroying the idols they have tolerated in their midst. Such "cleansing" of every town and village "releases whole communities from demonic stranglehold and unleashes Jehova’s favours on the land so that the blessing of the Messiah will come". By shedding all the "heinous characteristics acquired in diaspora", they will be able to reintegrate "into the noble world Jewry". If God’s promise is taken literally, redemption would mean that they will return to their ancestral home. But is it possible for 25 million Igbo (and other scattered Hebrews) to settle in the Near East? "Can small Israel contain all the Jews?". Alaezi gives an apocalyptic answer. Before the Igbo are redeemed, the world has to go through another war that will separate the "righteous" ones from those unworthy to enter the holy land: "Those Jewish people irrespective of where they reside who will survive the 3rd World War will be gathered back in Israel for good after the sinful ones amongst them shall have received their punishment".

There are many ways of finding the Promised Land. A "Jewish cultural rebirth" of the Igbo does not depend on a physical reunion of all Jews; it may take place in Igboland, in a future Biafra whose mission would be to bring about a "Hebrew Renaissance". The Igbo paper Body & Soul presented a "vision" of Biafra as a state which is "committed to political as well as spiritual Zionism". Although an independent state, it would be firmly aligned to "the Commonwealth of Israel". The political and spiritual primacy of the ancestral homeland would be recognised in various ways: "The cities of Biafra will be named after Israeli cities, just as Australian cities are named after English cities". The currency will be the "Biafran Shekel", and the national flag will display the Star of David. Administratively, Biafra will be subdivided into 12 states, and "the legislature shall be a 120-member single chamber house to be known as the Biafran Knesset". This commitment to Zionism, however, does not rule out a commitment to Christianity. The new Biafra, with its Knesset and Israeli flag, is at the same time a "Pure Christian state, an evangelical republic. Therefore all systems and other instruments of worship will not be allowed". "The president of Israel automatically becomes the president of the Christian Democratic Republic of Biafra". A common bond uniting the states of the Commonwealth of Israel would be their commitment to a strict form of monotheism. Eradicating idol-worship is a central theme in the Old Testament, whose God speaks to both Jews and Christians: "I will get rid of every trace of idol worship throughout the land, so that even the names of the idols will be forgotten". In the case of the Igbo, the fight against gods of wood and stone would be carried far beyond Biafra because "10% of the nation[al] revenue will be devoted to zealous evangelization of the world".

The internal structure and the geographical extension of a Jewish Biafra are of course disputed. Both depend on how one defines the identity and composition of the Hebrew migrants that came to settle in today’s Nigeria. A study by Ezeala, published in 1992, suggests that the ancestors of the Igbo are descended from Shechenigbo, a clan of the tribe of Judah living in the province of Judea. Prof. Alaezi, however, considers this to be a legend. There must have been several waves of migration to West Africa
involving various tribes. The first settlers may already have come with the Exodus from Egypt, when the Israelites fled Pharaonic oppression. Only a part of them probably followed Moses across the Red Sea into the Sinai desert; others headed southwards through Sudan and the Chad basin. The following waves of migration were triggered by the Assyrian persecution, the Babylonian captivity, and the destruction of the Second Temple in A.D. 70 under Roman rule. Since the groups of refugees came independently, they must have settled in various places: in today’s Igboland as in neighbouring areas. The names of some ethnic groups surrounding the Igbo still betray their Jewish origins. The Idoma, living to the north, derive from the Biblical Edomites, while the people of Calabar at the south coast stem from Caleb Arba, and the Igala from Igal.

The paradigm of a "multi-tribal origin" of the Jewish immigrants makes it easier to embrace other Nigerians as fellow Jews. The Ijaw, Ibibio and Igbo, although distinct nations, share a common destiny as descendants of the 12 tribes that once formed Israel. From an Igbo perspective, this could be the basis for a political cooperation, as envisaged by MASSOB. Its Director for Information appealed to Igbo and Niger Deltans to overcome the enmity which Nigeria’s "divide and rule" policy has created between them, and retrieve their former unity: "we’ve understood that we are the same, that it is the Hausa man and Yoruba man that are our enemies". All groups in eastern Nigeria that had been marginalised for decades would gain if they set their petty jalousies aside and joined forces to fight for independence. The model of the scattered tribes that lost contact but have to recover their Jewish origins is well suited to express these common aspirations: "The new Biafra is supposed to comprise [the] lost but recovered Jews who settle on the coasts of the Niger Delta and in the hinterlands of Eastern Nigeria". An article in Body & Soul suggested that parts of the Jos Plateau and southern Cameroun may join the new republic and that its western boundary should extend westwards across the Niger: "The River Niger is not, and will never be the boundary of the Christian Democratic Republic of Biafra, lest as the River Jordan is not the boundary of Israel". "if all the people from Benin to Calabar to Nsukka come together and if this state reached out to the Idoma, Tiv and Igala and incorporated them in the new state[, that] will be the most powerful and prosperous state in Black Africa". How would such a state be organised? Would it be a federation of autonomous Jewish nations, or would it be dominated by the Igbo, the most populous group in the region? According to Alaezi, the Igbo have preserved their "Jewish racial dignity" to a larger extent than some of their neighbours: "not all Igalas are of Hebrew (Ibo) descent. Many also come from the stock of Oduduwa [the ancestor of the Yoruba, J.H.]", while the "people of Onitsha are purely Hebrews or Heebos (Ibos) of Eri stock from the tribe of Gad".

Prof. Ogbukagu identified its original black inhabitants with the Essenes, a Jewish sect that was seen as heretic by members of the old priestly establishment. Biblical texts do not mention the Essenes, but some authors of the first century A.D. described their way of life and highlighted their religious zeal and asceticism. Ogbukagu calls them "the strictest and the most sincere religious practitioners ever known", and counts Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, King David, King Solomon, John the Baptist and Jesus Christ among them. When MASSOB invited foreign statesmen to attend the official proclamation of the
Republic of Biafra on 27 May 2000, it sent an invitation letter to the Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. In Alaezi’s account of Igbo-Jewish relations, both nations are tied by a genealogical bond that has persisted through the ages. Alaezi appreciates the "liberation of Jerusalem" by Israeli soldiers in June 1967 as fulfilment of a divine promise and integrates the event into a scheme of Christian salvation: "The restoration of Israel in 1948 after the World War II and the miraculous Jewish occupation of Jerusalem after the 1967 Six-Day Desert War are a guarantee of the return of Jesus Christ".

In June 1967, when Israeli soldiers ‘liberated’ Jerusalem, Biafra and Israel were in a similar situation, confronted by armies far superior in numbers and equipment. Barely a week after the Igbo declared their independence, the Six-Day War broke out and Israel destroyed the hostile forces. This victory proved to the beleaguered Biafrans that David could win against Goliath.

The killings of Igbo from 1966 to 1970 can be called a 'genocide', following the definition adopted by the United Nations in 1948: "genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such: (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part".

The very fact that they survived is taken as prove that picking up the fight was right. Although General Ojukwu fled to Cote d'Ivoire on 11 January 1970 and the few remaining troops capitulated two days later, it is said that the war was not lost: "the Igbo, as a people, did not disappear ... They survived; they were, therefore, victorious". In a similar vein, Ojukwu argued that the Igbo survived by fighting tenaciously: "the Igbo were not defeated in the war".

Few Hausa in Kano would concede that Igbo should have the same rights. Shehu Sani, leader of the Kaduna-based Civil Rights Congress, told me: "The Igbo are here to make business, not to meddle into politics". The Sharia campaign was, among others, a brutal reminder to the Igbo and other Christians from the South that they have to accept the political conditions set by the 'indigenous' population. 'Infidels' have no business telling Muslims how to organise public affairs.

The humiliation in the diaspora is hard to bear. On 26 December 1994, demonstrators marched to a prison in Kano, dragged out an Igbo who had been accused of having desecrated the holy Qur'an by tearing out one of its pages and using it as toilet paper, chopped off his head, put it on a spike and paraded it for hours around town. A group of Shiites, who later published a photo of the incident in their journal, claimed responsibility for the attack, but none of them was brought to court.
Notes

Statement of the Colonial Office, 1917, in Crampton 1979:60. – British as well as French colonisers in West Africa gave Muslims the chance to spread their faith: "in half a century of European colonization Islam progressed more widely and more profoundly than in ten centuries of precolonial history". Today, these aspects of the Islamic encounter with the West seem to have been forgotten and confrontations between Muslims and Christians have been projected into colonial times: "the British imperialists were infidels and grandsons of the crusaders whose aims and objectives were to wipe out Islam from the face of the earth.

Western support for a referendum in southern Sudan that will probably lead to the creation of a new state may indicate a paradigm shift. With regard to Nigeria, Herbst (1996) has hinted at a similar solution: As Nigeria is not a viable state it should be split into smaller, more workable units.

"Ndigbo indeed have the tradition for open discussions, inclusiveness, transparent democracy and a hunger for private business and rapid modernization. Ndigbo [could] lead the nation in the search for democracy and industrial development. What should Ndigbo do to place themselves in the vacant position of progressive leadership in our greatly troubled nation?"


At a conference on Igbo culture, held in Owerri, Igbo scholars from USA claimed that "most of the African Americans are of Igbo origin". The New Republican assumed that the Igbo nation lost two million men and women to the trans-Atlantic slave trade.

The Lemba, a Bantu-speaking group in Zimbabwe and South Africa, seem to be an exception. Genetic tests suggest that some of their ancestors came from the Middle East, perhaps from ancient Israel. Another exceptional case has been studied in Mali, in the area of Timbuktu, among a few Islamic families that claim Jewish roots. Historical evidence indicates that some of their ancestors migrated hundreds of years ago with the trans-Saharan trade from Morocco, Algeria and Spain.
Ilona suggests that the waves of migrants, crossing the Sahara, consisted not only of Jews but also of ancient Greeks and other Mediterranean peoples. At least one of them were Canaanites, as their name Yoruba indicates: 'Yerubbaal' – 'people of Baal'.

In his ‘Origin of the Ibos’, written in an early period of Igbo nationalism, Ike argued that the Aro subgroup, to whom he belonged, had been "the first to come". They had been privileged to serve as priests of the supreme deity, and their hometown Arochukwu had functioned as "capital" for the whole of Igboland.

Ogbukagu differs from Abasika in yet another respect. He shows a more ambivalent attitude towards blackness, pointing out that the black Jews, among them the Igbo, were lighter in complexion while still living in Israel: "they were dark skinned or moderately white skinned, very tall and good looking". Their present appearance is a result of changed climatic conditions and intermarriage with black Africans.

THE IGBO DIDN'T LEARN HEBRAIC CULTURE FROM THE MISSIONARIES

This is absurd, for it has already been clearly established that the missionaries and white men on their first encounters with the Igbo have clearly seen and described a Hebraic culture as depicted in the Bible like unto the Children of Israel in the Wilderness. And why or how could they have learned it from the missionaries when the missionaries purposefully hid and taught against a Hebraic culture by introducing Western Christian thought that such Hebraic practices such as dietary laws have been done away with by the advent of the Christ!?

In 1789 Olaudah Equiano, an Igbo and former slave who lived in London said in his autobiography that the Igbos were one of the lost tribes of Israel and cited the many identical cultural similarities between them and the Jews.
Missionaries when they came to Nigeria were dumbfounded to discover when they came to evangelize the Igbo People that the Igbo’s practiced many Hebraic/Jewish customs which they could not have learned from anyone else, it had to come from ancient practice of their people from antiquity; for they had no Bibles and met no one with a Bible until the missionaries came along.

They found that the Igbo’s practiced:
Eating of animals that meet the Biblically clean requirements as well as the complete draining of blood from the animal as well as other laws concerning Kashrut

The use of ritual washings like unto the mikvah

Washing of Hand before and after meals

Has a concept of clean and unclean, acceptable and abominable or taboo

Animal sacrifice like unto the Levitical sacrificial system

Believe in a Supreme, All-Powerful Deity (Chukwu) above all other deities

Circumcision on the 8th day as well as had the naming ceremony of the 8 day old child

Giving names that bear the name or title of G-d within it

Separation of menstruating women

Adah or Ada the name of the second woman mentioned in the Bible after Eve/Chavah (Gen. 4:19-20) and is also the title used to address the first born daughters of Igbo families

The keeping a lunar calendar

Shemita and Jubilee years: The annulment of debt and servitude every seven and fifty years

The concept of a lifetime servant (Odibo) – Deut. 15:12-14, Ex. 21:2-6

Burying their dead facing East, the direction of Jerusalem and the Promised Land

Burying their dead as quickly as possible

Sitting Shiva (seven day mourning period where one sits on low stools, remains unkempt and shave their head in grief)

Belief in a resurrection

Send the body’s home of Igbos who die outside of Igboland to be buried, like Joseph and Jacob desiring not to be buried in a pagan or foreign land

Lengthy funeral ceremonies such as found in Gen. 50:1-3
Preference of Inheritance and leadership was given to the first born and passed down through the fathers

Sung prior to and carried a type of Ark into battle when they went to war

Hospitality like unto the traditions and legends know of Abraham offering water, meal and lodging to travelers

The Yam Festival is like unto Shavuot (Feast of Weeks) and the Ovala Festival in the fall is like unto Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles)

Conversation and deliberate among men and leaders like that of Rabbi’s and students in a Yeshiva

Levirate type marriages, brothers marrying deceased brothers wives to carry on the brother's name

Marriage negotiations (Onye aka ebe) between families, like unto the story of Isaac and Rebecca

Polygamy

A type of, “Cities of Refuge,” where an Igbo who has committed a crime can seek refuge in his mother’s natal home, known in Igbo as, “Ikunne”

The concept of Sanctuary, similar to the Igbo Osu caste concept where a victim of violence may flee to the altar (alusi) for divine protection (I Kings 2:28-30)

Shunning of those who willingly break Igbo laws

Shunning of those who marry outside of the Igbo people

Laws against sexual perversion, incest and the like, they had to marry among their people but outside their immediate tribal clan

Justice and punishment for certain crimes followed the lines of, “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth”

A rule of Torah (Law) was developed and was passed down by Eri

No jails or penal system

Rite of passage into adulthood

Governance of the people by a conglomerate of tribal elders and judges prior to the institution of kingship dynasties

The coronation of the Kings have rituals and customs that closely remember that of the coronation of Kings of Judah and Israel
Symbolic attire and accessories of the Kings and Elders closely resembled that of Kings and Tribal leaders of Judah and Israel.

Igbo idioms are very much like, and carry similar meanings as Solomon’s book of Proverbs.

These among many other Jewish laws and customs that we will get into great depth here shortly were found to be kept by the Igbo people and sadly, the Christian missionaries forced them to abandon many of these Hebraic practices because though they resembled Biblical worship of G-d, they believed many have been done away with due to the advent of Messiah and they believed they practiced these customs unto pagan gods and as such should be abandoned. The Igbo’s are slowly beginning to return to the pre-missionary practices, desiring to return to their Hebraic roots.

One Igbo man named Avraham, a Cantor of the Natsari Jewish community in Nigeria said,

“In a nutshell, every law as stated in the Torah was being practiced by our forefathers before the advent of Christianity. Except that our fathers went into idol worship, but they still kept the tradition as was handed over to them by their forefathers.”

Israel as documented in the “Old Testament” was known for being a stubborn and stiff necked people (Ex. 32:9, 33:3,5, 34:9), rebellious, hard to govern and control by their many conquerors (Ezra 4:11-19). Igbos are known also for this trait and such a parallel has been observed and voiced by their former British occupiers, who were amazed at their native organizational and governmental structure and how well they resisted the British advance and attempt at control. This was also noted by the slave traders who could not control some of them and exiled them to Haiti or Jamaica.

Tribe of Dan and the Igbo
Danites Among the Igbo?

It is fairly clear and conclusive that the Igbos are predominately from Gad, but also from Levi (Nri Priests), Zebulun and Judah, because Judah one of the largest tribes, like Levi mingled and traveled and could be found throughout virtually all the tribes. However, some have speculated that some Igbo may be of the tribe of Dan. From my research among Igbo scholars and Black Hebrew scholars, it is in the opinion of the minority that the Igbo are from Dan or have Danites among them. There is simply not enough evidence to substantiate a Danite presence among the Igbo, although we should not rule this idea out completely.

Students of the Scriptures know that Israel was taken into captivity and exile and therefore dispersed throughout the world to this day as a result of sin, which is disobedience to Torah (Deut. 27-28, I John 3:4). Idolatry as well as a lack of brother love was the main reason the GOD of Israel scattered His people to the four winds.

My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations. – Hosea 9:17

This I have found to be the major premise why some feel Igbos have Danites among them. Allow me to elaborate:

And Rachel said, God hath judged me, and hath also heard my voice, and hath given me a son: therefore called she his name Dan. – Gen. 30:6

And the sons of Bilhah, Rachel's handmaid; Dan, and Naphtali: - Gen. 35:25

Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. – Gen. 49:16-17

And of Dan he said, Dan is a lion's whelp: he shall leap from Bashan. Deut. 33:22
According to those who accept the premise that Dan is among the Igbo, the Danites as well as other waves of Gadites, Judeans, Zebulunites and Levites made their way to be with their Gadites brothers who settled in Nigeria to escape the Assyrian exile and persecution. In this wave of Israelites to Nigeria is believed to be brought the Shalmanezer influenced Idol worship of those who replaced the Jews and Hebrews in Samaria.

For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; Until the Lord removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day. And the king of Assyria brought men from Babylon, and from Cuthah, and from Ava, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria instead of the children of Israel: and they possessed Samaria, and dwelt in the cities thereof. – II Kings 17:22-24

Evidence for those who are proponents of the Danites being among the Igbo is taken from the prophecy of Jacob (Israel) concerning the tribe of Dan.

Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. – Gen. 49:16-17

In reading between the lines of this Jacobic prophecy concerning the Dan, some believe that because some Igbo of Uga in Aguata in Anambra State do not kill snakes and that idolatrous python worship cults can be found among the Igbos in Nigeria who treat the python with great respect and buries them as human and must make atoning sacrifices if they kill one, that such is, “proof” Danites reside among the Igbo; a very weak premise indeed in my humble opinion. Snake worship is prevalent among the tribes that surround the Igbo in Nigeria, could the pagan religious influence of such tribes have rubbed off on such Igbo, seeing as how Idolatry was a major problem for Israel in general, which essentially caused the scattering of the tribes?

If they base the Danite presence among the Igbo on that prophetic verse, what of Moses prophecy in Deut. 33:22, how does that fit with the Danites of Ndi Igbo? What about the principle of confirmation by two or three witnesses? One biblical witness is a very shaky foundation indeed on which to claim Dan is among the Igbo.
I do not dismiss the possibility that the remnants of the tribe of Dan can be found among the Igbo, for who knows what tribes of Israel came in the various waves of migration into Igboland. If they did, they were likely a small remnant and were eventually absorbed into the Gadite Igbo communities that settled and spread out from Aguleri in Anambra State.

To be sure much more inquiries and research into the oral history and linguistics of Igbo communities claiming Danite origins must be made in order to better flesh out the truth, if Danites reside among the Igbo.

Ethiopia and Sudan; a Better African Candidate?

Could a better Candidate for Dan be as some have suggested in the Sudan, Liberia, Ghana, Benin Republic, Togo, The Ivory Coast and Ethiopia?

Due to the Assyrian captivity and exile of the 10 Northern Tribes of Israel, as well as the scattering of Israel after the revolt at Masada, as well as the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. it is believed many Danites ventured into Africa, settling in what is now known as the Sudan (SuDAN) and Ghana, also call GaDangme, meaning “People of Gad and Dan.” Ancient Ghana was referred to as Wagandu. Dan is also believed to have settled in Dahomey or Dan Homey, which being translated means, “Belly of Dan” and is now known as the Benin Republic and Togo. As a result of such scattering it is believes some of Dan possibly mingled or merged with the Igbo’s of Gad and become the sect of Igbo who reveres and later began to worship pythons. Some scholars links this to the prophesied paganization of exiled Israel as recorded in Deut. 28 as well as Jacobs prophetic blessing linking Dan to a serpent (Gen. 49:17).

“The Dan Tribe and sub Tribes Guere and Yacouba live in Western Ivory coast (Côte d'Ivoire) and Liberia. They are people from the rainforest. Their traditional masks and masquerades are some of the best known in Western countries.

Dan masquerades are usually performed by male associations for rituals, education, social control and entertainment. Masks were thought to embody the most powerful of spirit forces called gle. Each gle has its own character. These bush spirits and masquerades brought control and order to village life.” - http://www.kinyago.com/DANTRIBE.htm
Notice the sub tribe, “Yacouba” a corruption of the Hebrew “Yacob” in English known as “Jacob”?

Louise Ginzberg in “Legends of the Jews” speaks of Eldad ben Mahli ha-Dan of the 9th century, better known as Eldad the Danite. Ginzberg speaks of the division of Israel through Eldad’s account of Jeroboam after his return from Egypt and how Jeroboam and the elders wanted to have the warrior tribe of Dan to attack the other 10 tribes and Dan refuses and actually threatens to attack Jeroboam. Eldad says instead they left the Promised Land by way of Egypt. Eldad speaks of three ways Jews and Israelites made their way to Ethiopia and the Sudan.

Other sources tell of Ptolemy the First bringing Jewish prisoners to the Sudan, known then as Nubia by way of Ethiopia.

“In the 9th century CE, there was a man named Eldad ha-Dani who was a Jewish merchant and traveler and came and went to the Jewish communities of Babylonia, North Africa, and Spain. He left a record of
his travels which constitute more legend than fact, but this stirred many people’s interest. Eldad claimed that he was a merchant and scholar from an independent Jewish state that was situated in East Africa. He declared categorically that his country was the home of the Lost Tribes of Asher, Gad, Naphtali, and Dan, and that he himself was from the Tribe of Dan. His name ha-Dani means the Tribe of Dan in Hebrew.

Eldad mentions that in "Kush" of East Africa which is today’s Ethiopia live a lot of descendants of the tribe of Dan and other tribes of Israel.

It is interesting to note that still in the 20th century CE there live a Jewish group called Falashas of Ethiopia. Their skin is black and they call themselves "Beta Israel" which means the House of Israel in Hebrew. They have been following the precepts of the Bible since ancient times in a loose fashion. The Falashas in Ethiopia speak Hebrew and keep the Sabbath. Tragically enough many of them were killed by a recent insurgence in Ethiopia, but the remnants immigrated to Israel. They were transported to Israel by the airplanes chartered by the government of Israel in 1983 and 1991. Over 90% of Beta Israel now live in Israel, accepted as Jews.”

“As part of the Kingdom of Israel, the territory of Dan was conquered by the Assyrians, and exiled; the manner of their exile led to their further history being lost.

Ethiopian Jews, also known as Beta Israel, claim descent from the Tribe of Dan, whose members migrated south along with members of the Tribes of Gad, Asher, and Naphtali, into the Kingdom of Kush, now Ethiopia and Sudan, during the destruction of the First Temple. This position is supported by former Sephardic Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef. They are said to have fought with the natives. Religious writers have tried to attach the serpent voodoo God Danbhala to this group, as the practice they suggest was a heterodox form of Ethiopian Judaism.”

“In the latter part of the twelfth century, a legend appeared which persisted for several centuries and reached Egypt, Palestine and Europe. According to this legend, a Christian priest named Prester John ruled as monarch over a vast and wealthy Christian Empire.

According to many traditions, Ethiopia was the land of the powerful Prester John’s kingdom, as well as the home of the ten lost tribes. Persistent rumor had it that these African Israelite kingdoms were at constant war with Prester John, and that their armies were advancing on Rome.
Who are these African-Jewish tribesmen so central to the Prester John legend? These are the Ethiopian Jews known both as Falashas, the Amharic word for landless, wandering Jews, and as Beta Israel, the house of Israel. In Ethiopia, they engaged primarily in agriculture, but were known also for their exquisite crafts and jewelry.

Today, most of the Beta Israel live in the state of Israel. In the 1970's and 80's, the Israeli government airlifted thousands of Ethiopian Jews to Israel, rescuing them from political and economic distress.

According to one tradition, the Ethiopian Jews are the descendants of one of the ten tribes, as their religion is an ancient form of biblical Judaism. Their religious practices are prescribed by the Orit, the Torah translated into their Gez dialect. They possess none of the post-biblical laws. Over the centuries, the Beta Israel have been connected with the tribe of Dan. This association has eased the process of their return to the state of Israel in recent times.”

On March 14, 1977 Israel decided that Beta Israel of Ethiopia and Sudan were a part of the Lost Tribe of Dan and were permitted to make “aliyah” meaning a lawful return to Israel as Danites. More Danites came from the Sudan back to Israel under “Operation Brother” devised by the Israeli and American government from 1979-1990, this according to Wikipedia’s post on Beta Israel. And it takes a lot of evidence to convince the government and religious community of Israel that a certain group is indeed a lost tribe of Israel. For them to accept Beta Israel and Falasha’s as Danites speaks volumes!

“Some 65,000 Ethiopian Jews from different groups have moved to Israel since 1974. Israel's chief rabbis believe they are descended from the lost tribe of Dan.”

“The Beta Israel, meaning House of Israel, are a sect of Ethiopians who practice Judaism. They have also long been referred to as the Falasha, an Amharic word for exile, which has fallen out of favor because of its derogatory connotation. Located in the Northern region of contemporary Ethiopia since their origin, the number of Beta Israel continuing to live in Ethiopia has declined as Israel welcomed them in the 1980s and encouraged them to migrate there.

The rise of Beta Israel dates back to the reign of King Solomon in the late Tenth Century B.C. According to Beta Israel accounts, Queen Sheba of Ethiopia heard about the legendary wisdom of Solomon, the
King of Israel, and decided to visit him. Her visit resulted in her being lured into sleeping with the King, which resulted in the birth of their son, Menelik I. Upon reaching his manhood Prince Menelik I embarked on a journey to Israel to see his father. When he departed, Menelik I took with him the Ark of the Covenant which he had stolen from his father.

The Ark of the Covenant, one of the holiest objects of the Bible, was, according to the Bible, built under God’s instruction through Moses. The Ark carried inside of it two stones upon which were inscribed the Ten Commandments as well as Aaron’s rod and the Golden Pot of “Hidden” Manna. Upon its arrival in Axum, according to Beta Israel accounts, the Covenant was quickly concealed and to this day remains in Axum.

With Queen Sheba’s death, Menelik I became Emperor and Judaism became the official religion of the Empire. Judaism remained the religion of Ethiopia until King Ezana of Axum was converted to Christianity in 327 A.D. As Christianity swept across Ethiopia, its own rulers adopted the faith. Despite their conversion they continued to claim descent from the Solomonic dynasty created by King Menelik. The Beta Israel became a sometimes revered but more often persecuted religious minority in Ethiopia.

The peak of the oppression of the Beta Israel came in the early 1600s. The Portuguese, who during that time became the first Europeans to reach Ethiopia, advised its rulers that Judaism represented a threat to the Ethiopian Empire. By 1624 the Beta Israel were stripped of their lands and forced to convert to Christianity. Those who disobeyed were persecuted and many were enslaved. They also became isolated from other Jewish communities around the world.

Over time the harshest measures were eased but the Beta Israel were essentially internal exiles in Ethiopia. Nonetheless they secretly maintained many of their religious traditions and continued to survive state and societal persecution.

In the early 1980s the Israeli government and religious leaders recognized the Beta Israel as Jews. Beginning on November 21, 1984, the Israel government organized military airlifts to transfer the Beta Israel from Ethiopia to Israel. From 1984 to 1991 Operations Moses, Joshua, and Solomon, as the three airlifts were called, relocated over 20,000 Ethiopian Jews. Despite this highly publicized rescue effort an estimated 25,000 Beta Israel currently live in Ethiopia.”
“Once they were kings. A half million strong, they matched their faith with fervor and out-matched the Moslem and Christian tribesmen around them to rule the mountain highlands around Lake Tana. They called themselves Beta Israel—the house of Israel—and used the Torah to guide their prayers and memories of the heights of Jerusalem as they lived in their thatched huts in Ethiopia.

But their neighbors called them Falashas—the alien ones, the invaders. And even three hundred years of rule, even the black features that matched those of all the people around them did not make the Jews of Ethiopia secure governors of their destiny in Africa” (“Falashas: The Forgotten Jews,” Baltimore Jewish Times, 9 November 1979).

For centuries, the world Jewish community was not even aware of the existence of the Jewish community of Ethiopia in the northern province of Gondar. The miracle of Operation Solomon is only now being fully understood; an ancient Jewish community has been brought back from the edge of government-imposed exile and starvation.

Christanity spread through the Axum dynasty of Ethiopia in the 4th century CE. By the 7th century, however, Islam had surpassed Christianity and had separated Ethiopia from its Christian African neighbors.

Prior to this, the Beta Israel had enjoyed relative independence through the Middle Ages. Their reign was threatened in the 13th century CE under the Solomonic Empire, and intermittent fighting continuing for the next three centuries with other tribes.

In 1624, the Beta Israel fought what would be their last battle for independent autonomy against Portuguese-backed Ethiopians. A graphic eyewitness account described the battle:

“Falasha men and women fought to the death from the steep heights of their fortress... they threw themselves over the precipice or cut each other's throats rather than be taken prisoner—it was a Falasha Masada. [The rebel leaders] burned all of the Falasha's written history and all of their religious books, it was an attempt to eradicate forever the Judaic memory of Ethiopia” (Righteous Jews Honored by Falasha Supporters, AAEJ Press Release, 1981).
Those Jews captured alive were sold into slavery, forced to be baptized, and denied the right to own land. The independence of the Beta Israel was torn from them just as it was from their Israeli brethren at Masada centuries before."

It is also worth mentioning that in the 1400’s Rabbi Ovadia Yare of Bertinora attested to the possibility of Danites living in the Sudan.

When Egypt is mentioned in Scripture it actually is referring to a large portion of Africa, not just the State we recognize as modern Egypt today.

“The Greek historian Herodotus reveals that some of the ancient Greeks actually came from Egypt, and that the ancestor of the Dorian princes in southern Greece was a certain "Danae, the daughter of Acrisus" (Herodotus, VI, 1, iii). The term "Dorian" apparently comes from the name of a city of Manasseh, in northern Israel, called "Dor," near the Mediterranean coast. The Dorians were apparently Danites, of the tribe of Dan, perhaps mixed with some of the descendants of Manasseh.

The Irish word "tuath" means literally "a tribe" or "people." These people were the tribe of DAN of Biblical fame! They came from the Greek "Danaans," and were the same people as the tribe of Dan. Hecateus of Abdera says that the Egyptians, troubled by calamities, in order that the divine wrath might be averted, expelled the foreigners -- all aliens gathered together in Egypt. Of these, some, under their leaders DANUS and CADMUS, migrated to Greece, others to other regions, but the greatest number to "Syria," that is, Palestine, their leader said to have been Moses.

Says Diodorus of Sicily:

"They say also that those who set forth with Danaus, likewise from Egypt, settled what is practically the oldest city of Greece, Argos, and that the nations of the Colchi in Pontus and that of the Jews, which lies between Arabia and Syria, were founded as colonies by certain emigrants from their country . . . ."

Danites in the Northern Hemisphere
My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations. – Hos. 9:17

Dan shall judge his people, as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward. – Gen. 49:16-17

Because of the above blessing and prophecy Dan’s tribal banner is the snake, and just as a snake can be easily tracked in sand by the path that it leaves, so to Dan left a trail behind him. It has been the tradition of the Tribes of Israel to name dwelling places and settlements after their Patriarch and ancestors. Dan is the epitome of this trait. From Egypt to Israel to the scattering abroad Dan has left behind its namesake, like footprints for a sleuth to trace and follow.

“Is Ephraim (Ten Tribes, which includes Dan) my dear son? Is he a pleasant child? For since I spake against him, I do earnestly remember him still: therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord. Set thee up waymarks, make thee high heaps: set thine heart toward the highway, even the way which thou wentest: turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities. How long wilt thou go about, O thou backsliding daughter? For the Lord hath created a new thing in the earth, a woman shall compass a man.” – Jer. 31:20-22 – italics mine

Yair Davidiy, Steven M. Collins as well as John D. Keyser of Hope of Israel Ministries believe Dan also traveled North through Europe and Scandinavia.

“In Hebrew there are no vowels, so the name Dan is written DN, or its Hebrew equivalent. Thus words like Dan, Din, Don, Dun, Den, or Dn, correspond to the name of Dan.

Just west of the Black Sea, ancient geographers designated a region by the name of Moesia, which means the land of the "Moses-ites." These people revered a person whom they called Zal-moxis. "Zal" signifies "chief," so this person, "chief Moxis" or "leader Moxis" was actually "chief MOSES," the man of YEHOWAH God who led Israel to the promised land, and whom these people remembered as their original leader. The tribe of Dan also passed through this region, and the surrounding territory, leaving its name in Mace-DON-ia, and the Dar-DAN-elles, and to the north by the river DAN-ube. In the territory of Sarmatia (or Samaria, meaning the Israelites), were located the rivers DN-iper, DN-ister, and the DON.
Denmark, the name of the modern country in Europe north of Germany, means, literally, "Dan's mark." Its people are called "Danes." In fact, because at one time Denmark ruled all the surrounding region, the whole region took its name from them -- the ScanDINavian peninsula! Clearly, here are remnants of the people of DAN, who migrated westward overland from the Caucasus to their present location in northern Europe!

However, other Danites, who dwelt or abode in ships, and who associated themselves with the sea peoples of Tyre and Sidon, fled westward through the Mediterranean when northern Israel fell. Early Danites fled Egypt at the time of the Exodus, and migrated through SarDINia, and left their trail along the sea-coasts of the Mediterranean. Thus Dan, who was a "lion's whelp" who would "leap from Bashan," leaped all the way to Ireland, where historians explain that the early settlers were known as the "Tuatha de Danaan" -- literally, the "tribe of Dan." The Greeks called them the Danoi, the Romans called them Danaus.

In Ireland, today, we find their customary evidence -- their place names -- in abundance. Such names as Dans-Lough, Dan-Sower, Dan-Monism, Dun-dalke, Dun-drum, Don-egal Bay, Don-egal City, Dun-glow and Lon-don-derry, as well as Din-gle, Dun-garven and Duns-more, which means "MORE DANS." Of course, the most famous Irish ballad of all time is the song, "Danny Boy." It should be plain that the country of Ireland is replete, filled with names which derive from the ancient patriarch of the Hebrews -- DAN, the son of Jacob! It should be plain that the ancient Danites settled in Ireland, and most of them dwell in that land, today.

There is also a river Don in Scotland, and another in England. These countries, also, show the evidence of the presence or passing of the tribe of Dan, who migrated with the other tribes of the northern kingdom of Israel, especially the tribe of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh). Here we find such names markers, or "guide posts" as YEHOVAH God called them in Jeremiah -- as Dun-dee, Dun-kirk, Dunbar, Dunraven, E-din-burgh, and Lon-don."

The Tuatha De Danaan came to Ireland in and around 721 B.C. which corresponds to the time when many Israelites fled Assyrian captivity. With Dan especially know as seamen, it is no surprise they sailed and settled and wandered through many places. Many Irish people today believe they are remnants of the lost tribe of Dan.
“In Biblical Times the Tribe of Dan had been divided into three (or more) different sections. One section had been in the northern Galilee (Joshua 19; 42) and neighbored Gad. Later part of this section moved with other Israelites to Scythia. The Damnae in Serica (east of Scythia), were also called "Dingling" and were linked to the "DANGALAI" whose name means "DAN-OF-GALILEE". They had been neighbors of the Goths (from Gad) of Gadrosia in Ancient Eastern Iran. The DAMNAE of Scythian Serica were named similarly to the DAMNONII of Scotland (who lived besides the northern River DON of Scotland) and the DAMNONES of DANNONIA which was the name given to Devon and Cornwall. DANNONIA in Britain was named after the Tribe of DAN. The Tribe of Dan was recalled in the Children of DON in Welsh legend and the Tribe of DANA ("Tuatha de Danaan:) who came to the British Isles (according to Irish tradition) from the Land of Israel via Greece and Scandinavia. The area Damnonia in southern Britain as well as being alternatively called Dannonia was also known as "Defenia". The name "DEFENIA" is similar to that of DAPHNIA which was the former place of DAN in the Galilee in the Land of Northern Israel. "Daphne" (i.e. "Defenia") is also a name associated by the Talmud with the Lost Ten Tribes.

In Scotland the Damnonii (of Dan) adjoined the Gadeni probably of Gad. Somewhat to the south (in Northern England) according to Ptolemy was the city of Danum which area was later to be occupied by Danes from Denmark. In this case we see the possibility of a group of Celtic culture descended from Dan who gave their name to the city of Danum being followed by Scandinavians who were also descended from Dan and settling in the same area. We have come across similar phenomenon several times in this study.”

Gilead abode beyond Jordan: and why did Dan remain in ships? Asher continued on the sea shore, and abode in his breaches. – Jud. 5:17

Danite territory in the Promised Land was in the North by the coast and so from this we gather that Dan were fierce seafaring warriors, lion striking serpents and leap or pounce as young lions and claiming new territory in their travels (Gen. 49:16-19, Deut. 33:22).

The Encyclopedia Britannica tells us of these Danite seafaring warriors; “in the Levant, between 1230-1190 B.C.,” This is the Eastern Mediterranean which is encompasses the Israeli seacoast where Dan settled when the tribes were allotted their inheritance. Egypt called then “Danuana... (and) Tzakari,” Greeks simply called them the “Danaans.”
We have already discussed the name Dan and how it and its variants are found where Dan has trod. But notice the “Tzak” in “Tzakari”, the Tzak comes from the Hebrew “Yitzak” or as we know the word in English, “Isaac.” Meaning the Israelites and their tribes were also known as Isaac’s sons.

In Modern Turkey and the ancient city of Troy used to be called Dardania and the straits between the Aegean and Black Seas still carried the name, the Dardanelles.

I think predominately the greatest concentration of Danites is in the Scandinavian country of Denmark. As seafaring warriors it is not a stretch to believe they became what are known today as Vikings who came from that region. Even Viking lore has traces of Hebraism in it. For example, the Hebrew word for Lord is Adonai and the god of the Vikings is Oden; same consonants, but different vowels. Recall Hebrew originally had no vowels. One legend tells how Oden sacrificed himself on the Life Tree and was pierced in his side in order to give the Viking people the alphabet of the Ruins, which can actually be traced to ancient Hebrew ("Scandinavian Secrets: The Hebrew Code of the Runes" by Orjan Svensson). This legend sounds uncannily like Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah dying on the tree to give us Life through His Word. Note as well that the Vikings were bearded as the Israelites were. Could their side braids have sprang from the tradition of peyot, the side locks Israelites grew in keeping with the commandment not to shave off the corners or the temples of one’s head (Lev. 21:5, Deut. 14:1?)

Even the symbolic icons that represent Dan is found in the nations which is suspected to be Dan: “The Tribe of Dan was represented by a snake or by a lion (Gen. 49:16-17, Deut. 33:22). Other accepted symbols of Dan were a pair of scales (because Dan means, “to judge”), an eagle, and a dragon (Related to the snake). Many members of Dan settled in Denmark, in Ireland, in Wales, England, and the U.S.A. where 40-50 million people have Irish ancestry. The symbol of a snake was once worshipped in Ireland; a lion represents Denmark and England, Wales has a dragon on its flag, and the U.S.A. has an eagle.”

The Tribe of Naphtali and the Igbo

Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words. – Gen. 49:21
And of Naphtali he said, O Naphtali, satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the LORD: possess thou the west and the south. – Deut. 33:23

Shavei.org is one of many who claim the Igbo also have affiliation with the Tribe of Naphtali, along with Gad, Dan and Asher.

Naphtali is prophesied to produce the most beautiful women in all of Israel and the Igbo claim their women are the most beautiful in all of Africa and I dare say they may be right. So many Igbo women enter and win beauty pageants and find success as actresses and models in Nollywood and Hollywood.

Naphtali was born of Zilpah the handmaid and children of the handmaids Zilpah and Bilhah tend to gravitate to one another because they were not physically born of Rachel or Leah. The handmaids were said by some to be Egyptian women and or half-sisters of Rachel and Leah. So it stands to reason that Naphtali may have traveled with Eri’s entourage and made their way to Nigeria to be with their relatives who more closely resembled them ethnically during one of the many waves of Israelites who came to Africa.

Naphtali, if you read Collins and Davidiy’s books explain that a portion of Naphtali became the White Huns.

“...Ephthalite,” or “Nephthalies” Huns. They were also called “White Huns,” as they were a fair-skinned, Caucasian or Semitic race. The striking similarity between the Israelite “Naphtalites” and the Asian “Ephthalites” is obvious.”
Another part of Naphtali became the Norwegins and Swedes.

Naphtali is a hind let loose: he giveth goodly words. – Gen. 49:21

“Wind let loose” speaks of a female deer in heat and the Scandinavian societies are known for its loose and “liberated” attitude toward sex and sexuality. Also, many Scandinavian women have become models and actresses and their Nordic blonde hair, blue eyes and long legs have become the Hollywood standard for sex appeal.

“Goodly words” may hint of Beautiful speeches which are declared from Sweden during the annual Nobel Prizes.

The Tribe of Benjamin and the Igbo

Benjamin shall ravin as a wolf: in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil. – Gen. 49:27

And of Benjamin he said, The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by him; and the LORD shall cover him all the day long, and he shall dwell between his shoulders. –Deut. 33:12
Benjamin, the baby of all the Tribes held tight to two tribes; full brother Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) and big half-brother Judah. The Southern Kingdom of Judah consisted of Judah, Levi and a smattering of Benjamin and their tribal territory in the allotment within the Promised Land under Joshua was smack dab between Judah, Dan, Ephraim, Manasseh as well as Gad and Reuben. So when Assyria took away the 10 tribes into captivity, part of Benjamin went with them while others were able to escape and take refuge into the Southern Kingdom of Judah, that is until the Babylonians came and took away Judah and Levi into captivity and the Benjamites who escaped the Assyrians were nabbed by the Babylonians.

Seeing as Judah likely resides among the Igbo as well as Manasseh and seeing as Benjamin had a close relationship with these tribes it is conceivable to find Benjamin among the Igbo.

In Scripture Benjamin was known as a small yet fiercely tenacious Tribe (Judges 19-21) of warriors. Their Tribal symbol is the Wolf who hunts in small packs. Based on the clues of the Jacobic and Mosaic prophetic blessings concerning Benjamin and the uncanny similarities in people and culture, some believe many of Benjamin who were not scattered among other Israelite Tribes, ended up in Norway and became part of the Vikings.

IGBO HEBREW ROOTS

HEBREW IGBO

1. ADAH Female name, the daughter of Elon: Gen. 36:2 The name of a first daughter in Igbo

2. UDUTo certify or attest· Fame or popularity· Clay pot· Pot-like musical instrument

3. ANIEverlasting or unending· land or ground, the earth

4. USII· Name of a town· Name of a male· Name of towns in Owerri and Ideato
· Name of a male

5. ADDAR A Town in Judah: Joshua 15:3 A town in northwest Arochukwu

6. ASA A Hebrew king. The son of Abijah and father of Jehoshaphat. The name of a beautiful female. The name of a town near Aba and Port Harcourt

7. EZER The chief leader of war generals who the Gadites sent to support King David at the battle of Ziklag against Saul which is the last record of the activities of the three Gadite brothers—ERI, ARODI and ARELI. (1 Chron 12: 8). Eze is the general Igbo word for kings and leaders.

8. EWE Goat but pronounced as Ewu or Eghu

9. AM The people of or a place of AMA refers to a place or square

10. OL Servitude or Slavery Olu means labor or work

11. MAAZ The name of a male in Israel Maazi is also a male name or title.

12. IKKAR Tiller of Ground Iko-ugbo means to till the ground or to farm

The Awakening & In-Gathering of the Ibos

Ibo landing - From a Hebrew Perspective!
On Friday and Saturday, August 30th and 31st of 2002 a historic event took place on the small island of St. Simons, Georgia which is located about seventy miles south of Savannah. A Chicago based group of Nigerians, who are from the Ibo tribe, called together Nigerians and all others from Canada to Haiti and all points in between, to come to the place on St. Simons Island known as Ibo Landing.

The Chicago based group of Nigerian, Ibo have an organization called "Ekwe Nche", which is in the Ibo tongue "A Clarion Call" organized this historic event on St. Simons Island, the event was called to mark the sanctification of the place where thirteen Ibo men cast themselves into the sea rather than live as slaves. It is said that these thirteen men locked arms together and jumped into the sea, to the great surprise and dismay of their captors.

The Ibo Landing event was held to acknowledge the heroism of these thirteen brave men and to give their spirits a proper and fitting memorial through an ecumenical service that was attended by several religious groups. Among the groups represented were, Okpala Eze Nri Chukwuemeka I. Onyesoh, who represented the High Priest and ultimate spiritual leader in Ibo Land. Okechukwu Ikejiani, M.D., a retired physician and professor from Canada, Mr. Bruce Dan Carey from Gary, Indiana and his wife Chief Dele Jane Asawe, who is of the Ibo tribe, Moreh Elisha Israel from Cincinnati, Ohio and Rabbi Capers C. Funnye, Jr. spiritual leader of Beth Shalom B'nai Zaken Ethiopian Hebrew Congregation, in Chicago, Illinois.

On Friday morning all guest attended an opening ceremony, which was the breaking of the Kola Nut, an event by which all Ibo functions are begun which represents the cultural unity of the Ibo people. A tribal elder offered prayer, and everyone present washed their hands, then partook in eating the Kola nut, which was dipped in a mixture of peanut butter, honey and red pepper grounded into a powder. Dr. Justine Akujieze, of Chicago gave the welcome address and explained the purpose of the event.
The speech by elder statesman, Okechukwu Ikejiani, M. D., who is 85 years old, was very moving and insightful. Dr. Ikejiani was moved to tears as he appealed to the Ibos and African Americans present to unite and develop the organizations necessary to work to better the lives of the Ibos who are still in Nigeria. Dr. Ikejiani has traveled extensively and he promotes Ibo culture, history and heritage in his lectures.

At 3:30 p.m. Mr. Bruce Dan Judah Carey, presented a paper on the history of the Ibo, Ndi Igbo and the Hebrew people. Bruce's paper was both insightful and scholarly as he showed the connection between the Ibo people and their ancient Hebrew ancestors. Bruce detailed the various customs of the Ibo that are strikingly similar to the customs of the ancient Hebrews. Which include circumcision of their males on the eighth day after birth, abstention from pork and shellfish, the concept of rest from labor on the seventh day and observance of a day called Yomora Kippura, which comes in early fall, among the Ibo people and Yomora Kippura has all of the customs attached to it that a Jew finds in the laws concerning Yom Kippur.

Okpala Eze Nri Chukwuemeka I. Onyesoh, who represented the High Priest of Ibo Land, gave a powerful lecture on the conditions of the Ibo people under the current government of Nigeria, and he also spoke on the significance of the Kola Nut, in Ibo culture. Eze Nri Onyesoh, wore a red kipah with an eagle feather and a tallith, with 613 fringes, which is the garment worn by all Ibo priest when they officiate at a cultural ceremony. I found the attire of Eze Nri striking, because, I was wearing a Kipah and I wore my tallith, the only difference was that the Eze Nri wore his tallith, vertically, while we Jews wear our tallith horizontally.

Moreh Elisha Israel, spoke about the differences that he saw between the Hebrews and the customs of the Ibo people. Moreh Israel did not understand that the customs of the Ibo people were actually Hebraic in their content and structure.
I was invited to speak and I could only compare what I was witnessing to a true awakening of Ibo people to their Hebraic cultural roots. As I thought about why we were in St. Simons Island, Georgia, my mind returned to an episode in Jewish history concerning the Jews at Massadah, who in 73 a.c.e. cast themselves from the walls of their fortress rather come under the control of the Roman Empire. I was inspired by the history of the thirteen Ibo men, who were led by a chief of the Ibo nation, to revolt and become martyrs rather than slaves. My mind and spirit were led to the song by James Weldon Johnson "Lift Every Voice and Sing", in which the writer says in the last verse "Let us be true to our God, and true to our native land".

These thirteen men were in fact true to their God and true to their native land, and they followed one of their chiefs into martyrdom, when they refused to bow to their captors and become slaves.

Saturday August 31, 2002 was a momentous and awe stirring event, after the breaking of the Kola Nut and prayer, we all proceeded to the site of the IBO Landing. The owners of the property have maintained the actual site of the Ibo Landing for nearly 200 years. I was awe struck as the elderly white woman invited the group of 150 to come onto her property and conduct our services.

The "Ruach Kodesh" (holy spirit) overwhelmed me, as several of our group went out onto the actual landing site, and we prayed in the Ibo tongue and in the Hebrew tongue, for the spirits of those men that gave their lives for freedom. The pier has been preserved in its original condition; everything in that space was as it was nearly 200 years ago. It is a local legend that fishermen refuse to approach the site of the Ibo Landing, because it is said that you can hear the voices of those brave souls that became martyrs for freedom. The event was powerful, spiritual, awe inspiring and uplifting as we connected in a way that words cannot express with the souls of the departed.

The final part of our services was the sharing of the Kola Nut. An Ibo elder led us in prayer for the departed souls that engulfed the entire group with a singular thought. We became one people, with one God, one aim and one destiny.
The Ibo group Ekwe Nche has made a commitment to find other Ibo Landing sites up and down the east coast and to reclaim and redeem the souls of our lost brothers and sisters. The Ibo people are connected to the Gullah speaking people of Haiti, the Caribbean and Florida. The Ibo people are also found among the Geeche speaking people of South Carolina, North Carolina, and Mississippi. I am from South Carolina, I am a Geeche, I am an Ibo, and I am a Jew. Kol Israel Haraybim! (All Israel is responsible for each other).

The Yorubas and other Canaanite/Israelites of Nigeria

Yorubas and the neighbouring nationalities located in Nigeria have this oral tradition of an origin extraneous to West Africa.

Hugh Clapperton in 1820s reported a work by Sultan Bello, the Caliph of the Sokoto Caliphate, where he asserted that the Yorubas were descended from Canaanite tribe from Palestine.

Around the 1880s Samuel Johnson a Yoruba christian also wrote a book that made similar claims for Yoruba origins as Sultan Bello‘s. In 1880, Johnson naively sent this work to the Church Missionary Society in England for review and publication.
The Church Missionary Society suppressed the manuscript upon realizing the explosive information it contained. The Society declared the book lost. It was not until 1923 that Johnson’s brother was able to publish an edited copy of this work. Johnson’s thesis was that the Yorubas were descended from Lamurudu (Nimrod) the first King of Mesopotamia. Johnson died in 1901.
1955 S.O. Obiaku, a Nigerian historian and scholar claimed a Meroite origin (Sudan/ancient Ethiopia-Kush) for the Yorubas. Emmanuel Uguhulu another respected Nigerian scholar claimed a Hebrew origin for the Esan tribe. Esan is part of the greater Edo nation, which is related to the Yoruba nation of Nigeria.

Efik traditions claim that the Efiks originated in Palestine, crossed the Sahara and arrived Nigeria via Sudan. The Efiks are located in the south-eastern corner of Nigeria.

Iberian Jews of Yoruba Nationality

The Bnai Ephraim ("Children of Ephraim") from Nigeria, live among the Yoruba nationalities. Their oral history tells that the Bnai Ephraim people came from Morocco after the Jews were banished from the Iberian Peninsula sometime after 1492.

They speak a dialect that is a mixture of Moroccan Arabic, Yoruba, and Aramaic. They are known by the Yoruba people as the “Emo Yo Quaim”, or “strange people”. Unlike other African Israelite communities in Nigeria, the Bnai Ephraim have the Torah, portions of which they keep in their sanctuaries.

The name Lagos borne by the former capital of Nigeria is a Portuguese/Iberian name meaning the lake. Lagos is an Island carved up by lagoons, swamps and lakes. Its traditional Nigerian name is Eko.
Thousands of black refugee Jews of Iberia re-settled in the environs of Lagos and Porto Novo (as well as in Cape Verde, Guinea Buissa, and in Sao Tome either as slaves or outlaws). Some groups eventually made it deeper inland and became assimilated into one nationality or the other.

The Bnai Ephraim provides a living and irrefutable proof of this barely known history of mass Jewish re-settlement in West Africa, between 1492 and 1692, a 200 year non-stop return of Jews to Africa. This set of Moorish refugees are not to be confused with more ancient Hebrew and Canaanite tribes that had been living in Nigeria and other African countries for thousands of years. The Black Jew series on Rasta Livewire deals with the relatively more ancient Hebrews of Africa.
The Bnai Ephraim did not settle with the Yorubas by accident or chance. They recalled that a body of their people had depart Canaan in the ancient times and had settled in the present day Yoruba areas of Nigeria, just like their own group – Bnai Ephraim – had settled in Iberia (Spain and Portugal).

So, when it happened they had to leave Iberia in a hurry to protect their lives and freedom, those Moorish Iberian Jews sailed on their network of ships to Nigeria Africa, near Lagos amongst the Yorubas, their relation by blood, their greater nationality.

The Tribe of Judah and the Igbo

Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise: thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp: from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion; who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes: His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. – Gen. 49:8-12

And this is the blessing of Judah: and he said, Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be sufficient for him; and be thou an help to him from his enemies. – Deut. 33:7

Just as Jews have made their home in exile in virtually every country of the world so too will you find the Igbo. Because of this trait and phenomena the Igbo have often been called, “The Jews of Africa” or “The Jews of Nigeria.”
Jews are made up of the Ancient Southern Kingdom of Israel which was comprised of the Tribes of Judah, Levi and a small portion of Benjamin. They were taken off into Babylonian captivity which eventually ended and some of them decided to stay in Babylon but the majority of them returned to the Land of Israel to rebuild Jerusalem, its walls and the Temple. The descendants of these Jews are who we recognize as the Jewish People today, who now reside on virtually every continent of the world.

Judah and Levi are one of these Tribes that traveled far and wide and can be found wherever Hebrews and or Israelites can be found. It is almost certain Judah can be found among the Igbo People. They likely traveled with Gad’s sons Eri, Areli and Arodi with Levi and Zebulon and others such as the Egyptians and Babylonians who made their way to Nigeria.

Even when the Northern Kingdom of Israel was steeped deep in paganism and idolatry Judah fared not much better, but were nonetheless known as the keepers of custom, culture and traditions of the Hebrew People and even today the Jewish Faith is named after their Tribe.

Because the traditions and customs (Omeana) of the Igbo People parallel that of Judaism in most every way, testifies to the fact that Judah is most certainly among and a part of the Igbo. The Uda clan of Enugu state say they are from the Tribe of Judah.

Another way that Judah ended up in Nigeria is that the student of Babylonian Jewish Rabbi, Abba ben Ibo due to persecution fled to Africa via the Sahara, Nuba and eventually settled in Nigeria.
Some who claim the Ebonites were a faction or splinter group of the Essenes (some being students of descendants of the students of Rabbi Ibo) fled to Africa after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 A.D.

Furthermore it is believed by some that Rabbi Ibo and even the Ebonites were black and that the word Ebony comes from the Ebo in Ebonite; Ebo meaning poor in monetarily and implied in a spiritual sense of being wealthy. Many ancient cultures revere the color black and the black man as a symbol of great wisdom and prophetic insight. But were some Jews Black?

It is believed that the handmaids Zilpah and Bilah were Canaanite or half Canaanite, thus from Noah’s son Ham and therefore black women. Thus the tribes of Israel they bore would have been darker than the Tribes Rachel and Leah birthed. Rachel and Leah, like Jacob came from Noah’s son Shem, the father of the Hebrew and Arab peoples and is believed to be dark, but lighter than Ham.

Also not that Judah had children by Tamar (Gen. 38) who was a Canaanite woman and therefore, black. King Solomon of Judah whose mother was from Sheba was a black woman and Solomon is rumored to have had a son by the Queen of Sheba. Song of Solomon reveals that Solomon definitely had at least one (albeit more) black wife. Also recall that Moses married a Cushite woman. Cush coming from Ham and his son Canaan, therefore black and thus establishing black Levites such as is found among the Mozambican Lemba Tribe whose DNA tests prove them to be descendants of Levi, possibly sent back with Queen Sheba and the son her and Solomon was said to have with her.

Finally recall Abraham who married Hagar also believed to be a black Egyptian woman. All Egyptians were black people prior to the Hyksos. Thus the door is blown open wide for there to be plenty of black Jews and Hebrews. In fact, the White Jews and Hebrews may very well be in the minority considering all the Lost Tribes. Not to mention the exiles of Judah and Israel and them having children by peoples of the lands where they had been exiled, some of which were black. The Jews and Hebrews who found themselves in Nigeria intermarried with the indigenous people already occupying Nigeria when Gad’s son Eri and the others from Israel came. And so it is entirely plausible and almost certain that there are Jews of Judah among the Igbo.
“The Ibo towns and villages are Jewish Item, to start with, is from the Jewish name “Etam” (pronounced as it is written in Hebrew) from the family of Zorathites of the tribe of Judah (see I Chronicles 4:3). There is a counterpart Item town, Itam near Utyo in Akwa Ibom, also pronounced as the original Etam. Our immediate neighbors are also of the same tribe of Judah. Examples. Alayi (see “Alayi” of the tribe of Judah I Chron. 2:31); Ugwueke (of “Eker” of the tribe of Judah – I Chron. 2:27); Edda of “Eldad” (See Numbers 11:27). Akaeze (“Eker Ezer”), and so on. Jewish family names that are still prevalent in Tem include Amaeke (of “Eker), Amukabi (or Umuakabies as written in other parts of Iboland) – of “Abia” I Chron. 3:10); Abieye from ‘Prohet Abiye’, one of the minor Prophets of Israel, Ete from “Ether” – Joshua 15:34), Amabo Okoko (“Akan” I Chron. 1:34). Eleke (“Helek”, - Numbers 6:30); Erinma (of “Eri” – Gen. 46:16); Eke (“Eker”, I Chron. 2:27) Eze (“Ezer”, Neh, 3:19); Offia (“Ophra”, I Chron. 4:13); Ubani (“Uban”, Ezra 2:10) Alaezi (“Eliezer”, Exd. 18:14). Onam or Unam (“Onam” I Chr. 1:40) Iheaka (“El Iheaka”, one of the attributed names of God); Usa (name of person in Okoko Item) from the Hebrew name, Joshua pronounced as Yoshua. ‘I’ is pronounced ‘y’ in Hebrew. We also have Isi or Isi (See “Ishi”, I Chron. 4:20). Examples. Isiosu, Amabo, Okok Item, Umuisi in Igbere, Ishiagu, Isiokpo, Ishi Nnewi, Amichi, Umuichi, etc…”

The Tribe of Issachar and the Igbo

Issachar is a strong ass couching down between two burdens: And he saw that rest was good, and the land that it was pleasant; and bowed his shoulder to bear, and became a servant unto tribute. – Gen. 49:14-15

And of Zebulun he said, Rejoice, Zebulun, in thy going out; and, Issachar, in thy tents. – Deut. 33:18

If Talmudic legends tell us Zebulun financed Issachar’s studies, could we then say wherever Zebulon went, Issachar would follow or at least not be too far behind? If this has any truth to it at all we can say Issachar may be among the Igbo.
And of the children of Issachar, which were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment. – I Chron. 12:32

Finland is said to be the remnants of the people of Issachar caught between the “burden” of two great powers; Russian and Sweden and at times paying tribute to both, have taken a very politically neutral stance, but knew the times and they lived in and what they had to do to survive.

Seeing as one of Issachar’s sons was Igal (Num. 13:7). There is a tribe related to the Yoruba (who traveled with Eri son of Gad and made it to Nigeria) called Igala. It is also worth noting that Eri is said to have had a son named Atta who had a son named Igala. So the Igala may be of Gad or Issachar or purely Yoruba. More research must be done to determine the facts.

The Tribe of Simeon and the Igbo

Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their selfwill they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. – Gen. 49:5-7

Due to the combined efforts of Levi and Simeon to avenge the dishonor of their sister Dinah, Jacob (Israel) links their people together and said that they would be scattered among the Tribes of Israel.
Because of the Igbo priests (Nri and Arochukwu) who operate in the same function as the Levitical priests, we are assured Levi can be found among the Igbo. Thus it stands to reason that since Simeon like Levi was destined to be scattered among Israel and Simeon had a reputation of being warriors or mercenaries for hire, the possibility exists that Simeon can be found among the Igbo, especially seeing as there were many waves of Israelites made their way to Nigeria prior to the Exodus, after the Exodus, after Babylon and during the Assyrian captivity and before and after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

Some of Simeon who were not scattered along with Levi and other various Israeli tribes actually became the Spartans who the Levitical Maccabean warriors called BROTHERS, and they did not just throw that intimate family term around lightly and they never called Gentiles, Non-Hebraic nations their “Brothers.”

And this is the copy of the letters which Jonathan wrote to the Lacedemonians (Spartans): Jonathan the high priest, and the elders of the nation, and the priests, and the other of the Jews, unto the Lacedemonians their brethren send greeting: There were letters sent in times past unto Onias the high priest from Darius, who reigned then among you, to signify that ye are our brethren, as the copy here underwritten doth specify. At which time Onias entertained the ambassador that was sent honourably, and received the letters, wherein declaration was made of the league and friendship. Therefore we also, albeit we need none of these things, that we have the holy books of scripture in our hands to comfort us, Have nevertheless attempted to send unto you for the renewing of brotherhood and friendship, lest we should become strangers unto you altogether: for there is a long time passed since ye sent unto us. We therefore at all times without ceasing, both in our feasts, and other convenient days, do remember you in the sacrifices which we offer, and in our prayers, as reason is, and as it becometh us to think upon our brethren: And we are right glad of your honour. As for ourselves, we have had great troubles and wars on every side, forsomuch as the kings that are round about us have fought against us. Howbeit we would not be troublesome unto you, nor to others of our confederates and friends, in these wars: For we have help from heaven that succoureth us, so as we are delivered from our enemies, and our enemies are brought under foot. For this cause we chose Numenius the son of Antiochus, and Antipater he son of Jason, and sent them unto the Romans, to renew the amity that we had with them, and the former league. We commanded them also to go unto you, and to salute and to deliver you our letters concerning the renewing of our brotherhood. Wherefore now ye shall do well to give us an answer thereto. And this is the copy of the letters which Oniares sent. Areus king of the Lacedemonians to Onias the high priest, greeting: It is found in writing, that the Lacedemonians and Jews are brethren, and that they are of the stock of Abraham: Now therefore, since this is come to our knowledge, ye shall do well to write unto us of your prosperity. We do write back again to you, that your cattle and goods
are our’s, and our’s are your’s We do command therefore our ambassadors to make report unto you on this wise. – 1 Mac. 12:5-23

The Tribe of Levi and the Igbo

Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor be not thou united: for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel: I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel. – Gen. 49:5-7

And of Levi he said, Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy one, whom thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; Who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed thy word, and kept thy covenant. They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon thine altar. Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands; smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again. – Deut. 33:8-11

Knowing that the Tribe of Levi has been dispersed and scattered amongst all the 12 tribes during the Babylonian and Assyrian Captivities one may wonder, “Are there Levites amongst the Igbo or Gad?” That is a very good and valid question; one we can only speculate on because if Gad did leave prior to the Exodus of Moses, the Levites may not have known or operated in their priestly capacity prior to Adonai’s revelation to them at Sinai, therefore a portion of Levi may not have left with Gad’s son Eri, his brothers and their other companions. If Eri and the others left after the Exodus of Moses it is likely some from Levi did go with them. Either way it is speculated that some of Levi did travel with Gad’s sons because there is a priestly cast among the Igbo that preformed sacrifices and ministered among the people. But this question will remain unresolved until officials come and test for the Cohen Gene in the DNA of the priestly caste of the Igbo. To date I am unaware of any test such as this being performed. But it wouldn’t surprise me at all if the Cohen Gene is found among the Igbo.
Levites not having an inheritance in the Land (Num. 18:21, Deut. 10:8, 18:1, Josh. 13:14, 33) was a Tribe without home except in the Tabernacle/Temple. Thus Levi lived amidst every Tribe of Israel and we see were coveted as personal and household priests (Judges 17). So it is entirely possible for Levites to have traveled with Eri or other Gadites during other Gadite and Israelite migrations throughout history to be found in Nigeria among the Igbo. Perhaps some felt their journey would be blessed if they have a son of Levi with them.

The Nri Priesthood functions in much the same way as the Levitical Priesthood but it is questionable whether the Nri are Levites, seeing as the Nri come from Eri’s son (a Gadite) Menri, that is unless his mother was a Levite, but then again this would not show up in a DNA test because the Cohen Gene is passed down by the father. Perhaps it was Levites that Instructed Mneri and the Nri clan in the Levitical ways. Regardless of Nri being Gadites or Levites, for them to function as Levites it would not surprise me to find Levitical blood somewhere among the Igbo.

Israelites from Eboland

It’s noteworthy that the Ohuhu Clan of the Eboes is said that went in the past to a “promised land”.

Three categories of Ibos are preparing for the Pesach: The Hebrewists, whose only reason for doing it is, “our fathers did it”; the Sabbatherians, who number over 2 million, practice Judaism, but infuse 5% Christianity in it, I guess to guard against persecution from the Christian majority; lastly those in Rabbinical Judaism.

It's interesting that the Igbo are considered to be similar to the Japanese & the Cherokee Indians, two peoples identified by many scholars as Israelites. nSuKa, in Igboland, bears the consonants of iSaaK & SuKkot. eSsaKa, also in Igboland bears the same ancestor's name. The making of pyramids by the Igbos reminds one of the Israelites living in egypt & the great influence that they received from Egypt. It's
noteworthy that Chukwu, the only Igbo god, translates as the Great Spirit as in the case of the Amerindians.

Igbos, who are highly respected as entrepreneurial merchants, have often been called "the Jews of Africa" for their business acumen.

In Nigeria it is said that there are Igbos everywhere & that if you don't find one Igbo in one place, then that place is inhabitable.

An obi is an Igbo synagogue & the perpetual burning wood inside is like the light of the synagogue & the burning bush that Moses encountered. The Igbos, like other Israelites worship in groves (almost as the Qiang worship trees), as Abraham their ancestor did. nSuKa, town in Igboland bears the name of Isaac or the Sukkot.

The DoNgoTono or donGoTona

The DoNgoTono receive their name from the neighboring mountains, but they have the consonants TN & DN of DaN. They might also be GaDites: donGoTono. The fact that one of their main town, iSoKe, has the SK consonants of iSaaK may reinforce their Israelite origin.

There is & there was in Sudan & South Sudan a Jihad from the Arab Muslims against Black Africans depicted as Christians & Animists. Many of the Animists in reality were practicing the Israelite religion. In a great degree both Black African religious groups were of Israelite origin, therefore this war was one of the uncountable antisemitic persecutions against the people of Israel.

Are the Tutsis, the Himas & the Toubous Israelites?
KaRisimbi & kiGaLi, are toponyms found in Rwanda, a country considered to have Israelite DaNites. The KL GL sounds bear the consonants of Gola GaLut (diaspora in Hebrew), pointing at an Israelite diaspora in this country. I'm aware that the current meaning of these & other toponyms might be outright different in the local current languages.

Tutsi Jews of Rwanda

The Tutsi or sometimes called Watusi tribe of Rwandan and Burundi believe themselves to be Jews/Hebrews who came from (Kush/Cush) Ethiopia. Before the Hutu-Tutsi war which was a genocide of the Tutsi’s which was akin to the Holocaust; the Tutsi’s were a wealthy entrepreneurial people, like Jewish business men of the West. Some early Europeans who had made contact with them concluded due to their physical features, that they had Caucasian or European ancestry.

The Tutsi, like the Falasha and Lemba claim to share the story of their beginnings in which King Solomon had a liaison with the Queen of Sheba who converted to Judaism and was sent her back with their child, Levitical priests, Jewish and Hebrew servants as well as an exact copy of the Ark of the Covenant thus making the Tutsi; Jews, Levites and Danites.

The "Bantu" paradigm has appeared to be the most irrational but succesful forgery of the 20th century. Serious scientists in America have established the irrelevance of the "Bantu" concept in Social Sciences as applying to African studies. The reason is that the "Bantu" paradigm has appeared to be the most irrational but succesful forgery of the 20th century, only second to the infamous "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" which were popularized almost at the same time (1920). It was segado we’d & satanized by the "Pan-African" ideology which a a coded version of "African Communism". It was a cover-up that few African leaders understood clearly (one of them being Emperor Haile Selasie in person who was both Founding Father of the most powerful Pan-Africanist club in 1963 and was to be the most unexpected victim of the "African Communism" that he had supported with his imperial world prestige.1974). The "Bantu" as a language or as a population is a myth and a fiction. Here is the story. The “Bantu” concept was made up the first time by pastor Wilhelm Bleek as a poorly articulated linguistic hypothesis (1850).
The 3 Jewish Kingdoms (Juda, Israel and Kush) as codified in the “3 Maggen David” displayed on the national flag of modern Burundi. An official implementation of the top-agreements between King Mwambutsa of Burundi and David Ben Gourion, Prime Minister of modern Israel, sometime in 1958.
It was emphasized later as a Myth through a publication by Jesuit J. Torrend, Chamites et Bantous" (1891). The Myth was transplanted in Africa by a colonial officer of Protestant Church background, Rev. Paul Salkin in his book "Etudes Africaines", 1920. It was smuggled into politics by Georges van der Kerken: "Les Sociétés Bantoues du Congo Belge et les problèmes de la politiquè indigène". "Etude de la Politique coloniale adoptée au Congo Belge et de ses problèmes dans l'ordre sociologique, politique et économique", 1920. Belgian Franciscan Monk Ploacide Tempels expanded the Bantu mythology into a pseudo-philosophical crafting called "bantu philosophy". It was based on the concept of "Vital Force" (a popular Nazi concept of the time).
His book "La Philosophy Bantoue" was published in 1945 and translated in English in 1959 (Bantu Philosophy). The Bantu Myth was set as an international institution the first time through an organization called "Bantu Welfare Trust" founded in South Africa by the retired Colonel James Donaldson in 1936. He was interested in providing the "backward Negroes" of South Africa with the basic education they need to access the benefits of the "Civilization Mission". The scale model was the so succesful Black American NAACP "National Association for the Advancement of Colored People" and the famous "Tuskegee Institute" by Booker T. Washington. Later on, in 1983, the Bantu Myth was transformed in an international diplomatic body through the organization called CICIBA (International Center for Bantu Civilization), founded in Libreville/Gabon under the auspices of Sheikh Omar Bongo, President of the Republic of Gabon. Burundi under Tutsi Jewish leadership has never been part of the CICIBA.

What happened since 2005 is another story. A successful myth, a delirious fiction which led to the de-legitimization of the Tutsi Jews, the denial of their basic rights on their ancestral land estates, their expulsion from their homeland, and their annihilation as a people and as Jews. The whole program was implemented with the help of the so-called Bantu nations, including the post-Apartheid South Africa, Gabon, Cameroun, Zaire, and Tanzania. The money came from the Islamic countries like Sudan, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Palestinian organization providing with military training and intelligence networking. Some European organizations and nations under Christian influence provided with the diplomatic and logistic assistance to the political accreditation of the “Bantu” Myth at the international level. The outcome was the Holocaust we know which is still ongoing. See KIm Byham: "Anglican Complicity in the Genocide in Rwanda...".

Hema people

The Hema, or Hima, are an ethnic group with about 160,000 members located in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, in particular the Ituri region and Orientale Province, as well as parts of Uganda and Rwanda. The Hema are pastoralists and the preferential treatment given to them by Ugandan officials is blamed for igniting the recent Ituri conflict.
The northern Hema speak Lendu, the language of the neighbouring Lendu people. The southern Hema still speak Hema, a Bantu language, and the closely related Hima dialect of Nyankore of western Uganda, which are also related are such languages as Luganda and Lusoga. Most Hema are Christians

The Wahuma/Tutsi, have a great physical likeness to the Fulani

The Wahuma/Tutsi, who have a great physical likeness to the Fulani, are often strikingly handsome and extremely intelligent. That the Wahuma should have descended upon East Africa from the Valley of the Nile is not surprising. Of both races, Fulani and Wahuma alike, it can at least be said that they so far support the theory of a common origin in the Hyksos, as to have maintained through all their history, in the diverse countries in which they are to be found, the ancient position of Shepherd Kings“
The Hima People of Eastern Africa

The Hima (Hema) name is associated with various peoples and political entities in the Great Lakes region of Eastern Africa. In recent history the name Hima indicates a sub-group of the Tutsi, originally a Cushite group from the Ethiopian highlands, who entered the area perhaps in the 1300s.

There was a king of Rwanda (a Tutsi Kingdom) named Gahima (1500).

Some writers think the name Hima is also associated with a Nilotic people who came down from the Sudan along the Nile through Uganda. They conquered the Bantu people in what is now southwest Uganda and the neighboring portion of Zaire.

They were absorbed by the Bantu people and took up the local Bantu language. Their name in the language is the primary identification of their origin.

One tribe (or social group) of people in Ankole, Uganda, are called Hima (Bahima). The Hima speech is classified in the Ethnologue as a dialect of Nyankore (Nkore/Nkole). The Ethnologue notes, however, that this speech form "may be a separate language."
The relationship of those speaking Hima and other varieties of Nyankore would likely be the same as with the dialects of the Cushite Tutsis and Bantu Hutus speaking Rundi/Rwanda.

There is no listing for the Hima in Tanzania. It appears the Hima are limited fairly much to their original settlement area.

Hima and Tutsi

The general view of the Tutsi is that they have come from a Cushite background in northeastern Africa. Some scholars have seen connections with Nilotes. Over the centuries the similarities in the situations of the Nilotic and Cushite upper class possibly led them to be more closely associated.

One Somali correspondent had some thoughts to contribute on this connection.

"I am Somali who has a limited knowledge about Hima people in central Africa. There is a Somali clan of Gaaljecel, whom others call Xima or Hima or Xiimaay Hima. This clan is very nomadic and traditional people. I bet the name is same origin [Abdir, Fort Mcmurray, AB Canada]."

In modern times, the Tutsi-Hima appear to be so closely associated that they can be considered one general class across the variety of speech in the various political divisions of the Lakes Region. Their Bantu speech forms are very similar.
President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda is a member of the Hima group of Uganda. He has even been the target of charges that he is part of a broad Tutsi-Hima plot to conquer the region. In current discussions of this matter, the Hima are commonly considered a sub-group of the Tutsi. In Uganda, a comparable tribe, or social group, to the Hutu are the Iru (Bairu).

Check this link for more on the Hima-Tutsi connection

Language References

I find no listing for a language or dialect of Hima or Kiga in Tanzania, but Holoholo is related, and stated in the Ethnologue to be also in Zaire, but interestingly enough, not in Rwanda or Uganda!

Nyankore and the speech of the Hima is related to Kiga (also spelled Kyiga, Chiga, pronounced Chiga), a language group of Southern Uganda related to Kinyarwanda. I note in the Ethnologue that one dialect of Rwanda is called Tshiga. This would be the same language group.

The degree of lexical similarity of Nyankore to Kiga is in the range of the Ethnologue’s classification for one language (normally 90-95%). I note in the listing for Kiga ("Chiga") (Uganda), however, that mutual intelligibility is shown as only 72%, which would be low.

Speech and Politics
Note that what are classified as "dialects" are often political designations. Thus speakers of the Tshiga dialect are most likely simply members of the same language/ethnic group called Kiga in Uganda who just were on the wrong side of the border when the Germans and English drew it!

This is a problem we must watch for all over Africa, even being aware that when we say, for instance, the "Zambia Tonga" and the "Zimbabwe Tonga," etc., that we are probably indicating political distinctions, not true people group distinctions.

One factor that complicates the matter, however, is that ethnicities change, and when two divisions of a people get separated by flood, war, empire boundaries, etc, they can in fact grow different and become different peoples. That is one way that ethnicities develop.

The Tutsis and the Toubous

The Tutsi and the Toubous share the same origins as their cousins, the Jews of Ethiopia, tracing their common ancestry from King Solomon and Queen of Sheba. Israeli Chief Rabbis Avraham Ytzchak Kook and Ovadia Yosef, and US Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof, would have included the Tutsi and the Toubous as descendents of Dan, following the 1500s responsum of a renowned Orthodox Rabbi, Rbadaz, Rabbi David ibn Zimrah. In fact, numerous branches of the Tutsi elite belong to the Judah lineage. The Tutsi Jewishness was obstructed by the Christian Inquisition that took place since the 1920s, and was never addressed until the late 20th Century. At that time, Havila Institute in Brussels dedicated huge efforts to enhance the re-connection of the Tutsi people to their Jewish heritage, and helped raise awareness among concerned Jewish institutions.

The Toubous face a similar but more ancient case of obstruction. They were forcibly converted to Islam centuries ago by the successive Jihads that took place in Northern Africa from the Arabian Peninsula, but they kept the remembrance of their Israelite origins.
Today, Tutsis in increasing numbers are seeking t’shuvah, return. Like the Western Jews, they envision ge’ulah, redemption. They deserve pro-active support and monitoring from concerned Jewish organizations and networks. Like the Western Jewish Diaspora, the Tutsi Jews, some parts of which have been forcibly converted to Christianity and forbidden to practice the ways of Y’H, are People of Israel, no less than the Falasha Mura of Ethiopia.

The Tutsi Jews of Burundi and the Great Lakes profess strictly mosaic faith

Burundi is known by the ancients as a shorthand for “the land of milk and honey” or in the Judeo-Kushitic national tongue: “Igihugu c’Amata n’Ubuki”. Travelers, merchants and military conquerors refer to the country as an unconquerable ‘Eagle Nest’, where highly skilled patriarchal tribes called ‘Watutsi’ or ‘Tutsi’ dwell, in the midst of their unbelievable herds of militarized cattle and sheep.
The Tutsi Jews of Burundi and the Great Lakes profess strictly mosaic faith from fathers to sons since the very remote biblical times. After several cuts in size throughout history of wars won and lost, the country, originally part of a gigantic empire called KUSH in the Bible, is now a portion of land equating the size of the modern Israel. The word ‘Burundi’ means literally ‘the land without border’, thus referring to the status of the people the land belongs to as a world-connected people (or ‘Diaspora’: Is 11:11-12). The Tutsi Jews, owners of the land, are actually one of the many groups of Jews scattered on
the planet since the destruction of the Temple and even before. With the shape of a heart, Burundi seems to stand in the geometrical center of the African continent encompassing the southern sources of the biblical Pishon (Nile). Places, people, and species still bear the names they were given since remote times. For example: the country is protected by the imposing volcanoes which include the majestic Mkeno (Malkenou), the master mountain Nyamuragira (an acronym for ‘nih yeh am regel’...as a remembrance of the ‘Alyah le Regel’...), and the biblically renamed mountain of blessings Karisimbi (Gerizim). The Mountains of the Moon are a critical landmark where the most ancient origins of the Maths on the Simliki River are found, at this very place visited several times by Rabbi Marinus of Tyre, the master of the Greek geographer Ptolemy.

Burundi holds a key position on the course of the ‘Rift Valley’ corridor that connects the Jordan River on the Northern top to the Limpopo River on the Southern bottom of the geo-tectonic entity, through the Tanganyika Lake that makes the country a precious shore on the course of a natural corridor of rivers and lakes that run from the Mediterranean Sea to the Nyassa Lake. The Tanganyika Lake is the most gigantic water depth on the planet only second to the Baikal Lake. The land of Burundi and the surrounding area is called the ‘Great Lakes’, or Havila (Treasury of Midrashim. Second Story. Book of Eldad Hadani). It has been inherited since about 3,500 years by a fraction of the most ancient Jewish nation of Africa tracing its ancestry back to the classic time of the Temple up to earlier period of the Sinai revelation (with Moshe Rabenou) and even much earlier, to the Patriarchal era epitomized by Joseph and his brethren, when the Tribes were masters of the 18th Dynasty of Egypt and enjoyed the cattle and sheep grazing land of Goshen (Gisha/Gishora). One understands easily that there can’t be any beginning of reliable claim that could deprive the Tutsi Jews from the rights of ownership over that grazing and militarized land which names, peopling, civilization and faith is inscribed in the sacred collection of books called the ‘Torah’ and the ‘Tanakh’. The Great Lakes (Havila) are definitely the land of the Tutsi Jews and their Cattle (in the local Judeo-Kushitic idiom: ‘Imiyonga y’Inka’).
Burundi was clearly renowned as the southern part of the tactically renamed “Kingdom of Priest John” in replacement of its genuine status as the Jewish Kingdom that was described in colorful details by the Tutsi scholar, Eldad Hadani in 883 AD.

The annual Background Note on Burundi issued by the Department of States on February 10, 2011 says something that confirms the characteristics of the country that Jewish scholars of the past and the present already looked at as the genuine King Solomon’s Mines, the Biblical land of “Havila”.
According to numerous biblical and rabbinical records, along with local tutsi traditions, the Tutsi Jewish kingdoms became the realms of the tribesmen of Juda descent in straight line, living in harmony with descendants of the tribe of Shimon, Levy and Dan. Elda ha Dani, the Tutsi scholar of the 9th century AD, is one among many Tutsi scholars who carries evidence of the Tutsi regular update conferences with brethren of the diaspora in Kairouan and in Babylonia when the routes of interconnection were still available.

‘Uvira’ is the name of a city on the western bank of the Tanganyika Lake that kept the same name from biblical time up to this day. “Ophir” is described as the land where King Solomon’s fleets were sent to bring back tons of gold for the Temple. Peters stated that ‘Ophir’ was actually located in the area extending between the current Victoria Lake and the Limpopo (1Kings 7:28; 1Kings22:49). As a result the ‘Kivu’ (with “Uvira”/ “Ophir” as capital city), along with Burundi, Rwanda, Ankole, Toro, Bushi, Buha, Shaba and Kasai, are known as the world “GEOLOGICAL SCANDALS” ever. Until the 1910 French-British deals, these entities were still under Tutsi Israelite overall control. Neither the Berlin Conference, nor the Treaty of Heligoland (1890) succeeded to physically deprive the Jews from the control of their Western realms around the Mikeno/Melkanu Volcanoe’s landmark (The King Solomon’s Volcanoes).

The Tutsi Jews are the guardians of this huge South-Western border country of the ‘Great Israel’ (from the Nile to the Euphrates); they were never confused about their prophetic mission. The reason they hardly allowed unclean or idol worshiping people to settle safely in the land. A goy could hardly access the proselyte status (‘Ger Tsdek’); only the status of ‘Ger Toshav’ (resident under the condition to submit to the ‘Noachid laws’) was tolerated. The Tutsi Jews kept fighting against all historical world raw powers, including Persia, Rome, then the Islamic Jihad, and finally against the Church Crusaders instead of submitting to conversion or assimilation. And they did well. After a costly endless confrontation, a branch of them survived all these assaults, the one that is found in the last autonomous realm of Burundi, Rwanda, Mulenge, Ankole and Toro kingdoms; most of them were dismantled in the mid-1960s. Even then, the Tutsi sections of Burundi kept resisting, on the model of the courageous Hasmoneans. The latest figure of a resistant is a leader called BAGAZA (meaning “and GAZA”), who is still alive. When everything was falling apart under Church assaults, he decided to desperately confront the besieging garrisons of Rome in the late 1980s.

The geographical location of Burundi, in the center of the mineral and natural resources and wealth of the unconquerable highlands of Great Lakes, is a golden gift to the geostrategic interests of the Vatican
proxy that is Iran, with regards to the program of ultra-islamicisation of the whole Africa. Everybody remembers the very simple equation expressed by the then Prime Minister of China, Chu En Lai, while visiting Burundi in 1965: “Whoever controls Burundi controls the East-Congo, and whoever controls the East-Congo controls the whole Africa”.

Prior to his escape for the ultimate exile following several attempts by the Church and proxies to kill him, the Tutsi Jewish King of Burundi, Mwambutsa IV, was very committed to join the vibrant ceremonies marking the 10th anniversary of the State of Israel in 1958.
The world Jewish press reported that the King was the first Royal Head of State to put his foot on the Promised Land, and that He was welcomed as a special “Citizen of Israel”. King Mwambutsa IV met with top- Zionist leaders of the time and pledged to dedicate his authority and his wisdom for the highest safety and welfare of the State of Israel that was seen by the Tutsi Jewish nationals as their miraculous “Reshit tsemihat g’ulatenu”.

• TUTSI JEWISH KING MWAMBUTSA IV: ‘A CITIZEN OF ISRAEL - HALUTZ’?
Later on, the King made a second visit in 1963 with the aim to try completing the formal bringing together of the 2 Jewish states in one virtual entity, the next steps being, as Prime Minister Ariel Sharon put it once, addressing the issue of “territory discontinuity” of the Great Israel. The King was not enough lucky to enjoy the opportunity of moving further towards that prophetic vision; yet he managed to launch specific deals that he intended to put the huge mineral potentials and wealth of Burundi in the hands of the smartest Jewish teams of industrials and bankers that the Ben Gourion cabinet could consider to be fitting the challenge. He seems also to have returned home with a virtual passport of a “citizen of Israel” as the Canadian Jewish Chronicles put it. The current design of the flag of Burundi displaying the 3 Maggen David was discussed in Israel at that time. According to records provided by the King’s cabinet, the 3 stars of David on the Tutsi Burundian flag represent the 3 Jewish Kingdoms that came to existence after the shattering of the Kingdom of Israel that followed Shlomo ha Meleh’s death.

According to Wikipedia in French under the title “Star of David”: “The flag of Burundi has in its center three stars of David symbolizing the Jewish ancestry of the Tutsi people and the three Jewish kingdoms which existed following the death of Solomon (The Kingdom of Israel, the Kingdom of Judea and the Kingdom of Kush)”. Thus, the concept of the 2 blue lines on the current Israeli flag would bear their full meaning: the symbols of the borders of biblical Israel, extending from the Nile to the Euphrates (Gen 15:18). For those who didn’t learn the fact, the southern sources of the Nile (Pishon) are exactly located in Burundi, at the
It’s worth recalling that the children of Israel in Burundi and in the Great Lakes are experiencing the worst period of their existence ever: massively killed, burned alive, regularly kidnapped and sold, massively deported, rounded up and tortured, systematically put to shame and humiliated, taken in captivity for all kinds of evil businesses, etc. It is true also that as the Church-controlled government of Burundi prepares to inaugurate the new nuclear era, hands in hands with the jihadist Iran, the 3 Maggen David on the flag are more endangered than ever. Every day, a bishop, a fighting monk or an angry mullah stare at the stars with gnashing of teeth. Several attempts to outlaw the Tutsi Jewish flag have been implemented since 1993. A recent article in the Church press points its finger on the Tutsi Jewish stars as “institutional traumatizing symbols”

The Hutu see the Burundi flag as a permanent questioning item that needs to be removed from the public areas. More than once a Tutsi Jewish organization that cares at Zionist symbols in Burundi has raised its voice, after threatening attempts were made by the Church proxies to ultimately remove these Jewish reminders of Zion. An imminent revision of the Constitution is scheduled to deal with such ‘traumatizing issue’ once for all. Electronic records show out that the protests from Tutsi Zionist organizations were heard in high pleas, at such an extent that Israel itself took the lead towards the mitzvah of securing the 3 Tutsi Maggen David of Burundi that strongly testify not only for a permanent Jewish heritage, but also for the hope of the highly expected renaissance of a Jewish nation in the southern border country of the biblical Israel in Africa.
Drapeau en 1962

Le Tambour du Burundi
La Fleur de Sorgho

Drapeau en novembre 1966

Le Royaume millénaire des Bahutu Barundi.

Plus de Tambour
Drapeau en juin 1967

Plus de Fleur de Sorgho
Les 3 étoiles du Dictateur Micombero
(Lieutenant-Général)

République des Bahima Burundais

Burundi@2012
It's interesting to notice that the Three Stars of David of the Tutsi Jewish flag of Burundi were added to the flag the same year Jerusalem was controlled by the Jewish State of Israel: 1967.

As far as genetics goes the Jews are Northern Semites. The Jews' closest relatives are the Kurds, followed by the Turks and I think the Iraqis. This is true for Ashkenazim, Sephardim, and Mizrahim. Check the Kulanu website under genetics. Linguistically, (Hebrew) we are closest to the Arabs. It should be noted that genetically the Pashtuns are closely related to the Kurds and hence to us. This is also why the Khazar conversion does not show up in the Jewish gene pool because as Turkic people they would be closely related to the Jews anyway.
I would like to offer my own explanation about the Judaic link of the Tutsi. There is a Midrash that says, that when the Jews left Egypt there was a group of Jews that refused to leave and stayed behind in Egypt. When we pray for the final redemption on major holidays, we pray for the return of those lost in Assyria and those cast out in Egypt. So we have a historical awareness of such a group. What if one group of Jews left and went on to Israel and another group stayed and later moved down to Africa? There is also a legend that the Tutsi are descendents of the guards of King Solomon’s mines. The following may sound strange, but it’s possible. I have friends in the Yemenite community and most of them are fine boned and short. However, there are also some that are very tall. Maybe there is a genetic connection between the tall Yemenites and the Tutsi?

Furthermore, maybe it’s a sign of the final redemption that all these groups are waking up and discovering their Jewish roots. The Jewish view of Messianic times is different than that of Christians. Most Jews view it as a historical process that until the end (the rising of the dead) will follow natural laws. There is also a legend among Sephardim that the Messiah will come from the direction of Yemen or North Africa.

During the Gulf war one of the Chabad rabbis in Paris said that we are living in miraculous times but because we see it on TV and read it in the papers we are not aware of their miraculous nature. Maybe the Jewish awaking in Africa is miraculous.

Empire of Kitara

The Empire of Kitara (Rwanda) (also known as Bachwezi, Bacwezi, or Chwezi empire) is a strong part of oral tradition in the area of the Great Lakes of Africa, including the modern countries of Uganda, northern Tanzania, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi.
In the oral tradition, Kitara (Rwanda) was a kingdom which, at the height of its power in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, included much of Uganda, northern Tanzania and eastern Congo (DRC), ruled by a dynasty known as the Bachwezi (or Chwezi) who were the successors of the Batembuzi Dynasty.

According to the story, the Kitara Empire (Rwanda) lasted until the 16th century, when it was invaded by Luo people, who came from the present-day South Sudan and established the kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara. However, this hypothesis has been questioned by scholars on whether the invasion really took place. There is no historical record that confirms this theory, and to be sure, there is no linguistic connection of the modern day Banyoro, Baganda, Banyankole and Batusi with any of the Luo dialects but relics of the Chwezi empire exists in parts of central Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi. The Chwezi were purportedly a pastoral (nomadic) people, implying that some of the dense forested area of central Uganda would have not been conducive to their lifestyle also part of the reason why they may have left so soon to other areas in the south of the rift valley.

Batembuzi and Bachwezi dynasties

The Empire of Kitara (Rwanda) was founded by the Batembuzi Dynasty, who were succeeded by Bachwezi Dynasty. Little is known about the Batembuzi and Bachwezi, or when they established Kitara. Much of what is known is based on mythology and oral tradition. A number of current Great Lakes kingdoms claim inheritance from the ancient Kitara empire, ruled by a dynasty known as the Bachwezi. The reign of the Bachwezi is shrouded in mystery and legend, so much so that many traditional gods in Toro, Bunyoro and Buganda have names associated with the Bachwezi kings.

Archaeological discoveries made at Bigo bya Mugenyi, the capital of the empire, and Ntusi located in present day Mubende District of Uganda, reveal rich deposits of an urban centre which represented a highly organized society. They are thought to have arrived in the western parts of Uganda, around 500 B.C., from the North planting seeds of leaders and introducing a more organised Kingdoms in the great lakes region of East Africa. They took over Bunyoro Kitara from the Batembuzi and later their bloodlines
went on to form kingdoms of Buganda, Ankole, Toro, Rwanda, Karagwe, Burundi and the lost kingdoms of Zanj.

Babiito dynasty

The Kitara Empire (Rwanda) finally broke up during the 16th century with the advent of the invading Luo people from the north (Nilotic expansion). A people known as the Biito, led by a Chief called Labongo, invaded Bunyoro, the northernmost province of Kitara, from where the empire was ruled and would later settle large areas of northern Uganda, and around the north-eastern shores of Lake Victoria. Labongo established his rule in what was now Bunyoro-Kitara, becoming Isingoma Mpuga Rukidi, the first in line of the Babiito kings which provided the dynasties that also ruled in the kingdoms of Toro, Kooki, and some chiefdoms of Busoga.

For almost a century, from the advent of direct European contact in the later 19th century to the latter 20th century, much of scholarship treated the tales as a representation of historical fact, but more recently the scholarship, led by University of Paris scholar Jean-Pierre Chrétien, has cast doubt on the historical reliability of the stories, interpreting them as a myth.

The Tutsi Jews and the Pan-Kush Hebrew Diaspora

Ninety years ago, my ancestors, the renowned Pastoralist Watutsi/Tutsi Israelites of Kush — in Burundi, Rwanda, Eastern Congo, Uganda, Northern Tanzania — wore tzitzit and head tefillin. Today the survivors wear fear, humiliation, and despair. Millions of Tutsi have been killed and the ongoing Holocaust is an endless tragedy of “Again and Again.”
The Tutsi and the Toubous share the same origins as their cousins, the Jews of Ethiopia, tracing their common ancestry from King Solomon and Queen of Sheba. Israeli Chief Rabbis Avraham Ytzchak Kook and Ovadia Yosef, and US Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof, would have included the Tutsi and the Toubous as descendents of Dan, following the 1500s responsum of a renowned Orthodox Rabbi, Rbadaz, Rabbi David ibn Zimrah. In fact, numerous branches of the Tutsi elite belong to the Judah lineage. The Tutsi Jewishness was obstructed by the Christian Inquisition that took place since the 1920s, and was never addressed until the late 20th Century. At that time, Havila Institute in Brussels dedicated huge efforts to enhance the re-connection of the Tutsi people to their Jewish heritage, and helped raise awareness among concerned Jewish institutions.

The Toubous face a similar but more ancient case of obstruction. They were forcibly converted to Islam centuries ago by the successive Jihads that took place in Northern Africa from the Arabian Peninsula, but they kept the remembrance of their Israelite origins.

Like the Western Jewish Diaspora, the Tutsi Jews, some parts of which have been forcibly converted to Christianity and forbidden to practice the ways of Y”H, are People of Israel, no less than the Falasha Mura of Ethiopia.

The Maa languages and its peoples

The Maa languages are a group of closely related Eastern Nilotic languages (or from a linguistic perspective, dialects, as they appear to be mutually intelligible) spoken in parts of Kenya and Tanzania by more than a million speakers altogether. They are subdivided into North and South Maa. The Maa languages are related to the Lotuko languages spoken in South Sudan.

In the past, several peoples have abandoned their language in favor of a Maa language, usually following a period of intensive cultural and economic contact. Among peoples that have assimilated to Maa
peoples are the Aasáx (Asa) and the Elmolo, former hunter-gatherers who spoke Cushitic languages, and the Mukogodo-Maasai (Yaaku), former bee-keepers and hunter-gatherers (Eastern Cushitic). The Akiek of northern Tanzania, speakers of a Southern Nilotic Kalenjin tongue, are under heavy influence from Maasai.
Northern Maa
Samburu (spoken by the Samburu people)

Camus (or il-Chamus, the preferred autonym; sometimes considered a dialect of Samburu) The Ilchamus are a Maa people living south and southeast of Lake Baringo, Kenya. They are 35,000 people.

Southern Maa

Maasai (spoken by the Maasai peoples)

Ngasa or Ongamo (extinct or at least endangered; most speakers have shifted to Chaga)

Another Kenyan Maa variety once existed, Kore. After being defeated by the Purko Maasai in the 1870s, the Kore fled to north-eastern Kenya where they were taken captive by Somali people. After functioning for years as clients or slaves in Somali households, they were set free by British imperial forces around the end of the 19th century. They have lost their own language and speak Somali. Loss of cattle brought them to Lamu island in the second half of the 20th century, where they live nowadays.

The Ngasa are an ethnic and linguistic group based on the eastern slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro in Kilimanjaro Region, Tanzania. In 2000 the ethnic Ngasa population was estimated to number 4,285.
The Ariaal are northern Kenyan pastoralists. They claim descent from cattle-owning Samburu who captured significant herds of camels and learned how to manage them from their eastern neighbours, the Rendille. This led them to adopt the Rendille culture, language, and other Rendille practices, such as monogamy. Before Kenya independence, the separation between the cattle and camel economies was vividly reflected in the division between an Ariaal elder’s senior wife, whose family would be reared as Ariaal, and his junior wives who lived with his cattle as Samburu. In effect, such elders continued to straddle the boundary between monogamous camel-owning Ariaal and polygynous cattle-owning Samburu, speaking both languages and participating in both cultures.

The majority of the Oromo are Muslim & Christian; however, their traditional religion is still practiced by a minority of the population. These ethnic religionists worship a supreme being named Waqa.

The so-called KAMATUSA is an acronym for Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu tribes.

The Samburu are monotheistic.

Are the KaLenjin (GaLenjin) part of the Israelite diaspora (GaLut)?

It is said that tartans originated in the Caucasus Mountains of Southern Russia, and migrated through Europe and central Asia. These are people who worship a volcano, live in constant fear of evil spirits, throw milk at the sky to thank the spirit God, make animal sacrifices at the base of a fig tree.

The Maasai must be Israelites
Historically and spiritually, the Maasai have long considered themselves one of the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, or Israelites. In fact the name Maasai already appears in Chronicles I Chapter 9 verse 12 : " Adaiah son of Jeroham, the son of Pashhur, the son of Malkijah; and Maasai son of Adiel, the son of Jahzerah, the son of Meshullam, the son of Meshillemith, the son of Immer." The Maasai themselves say in their oral histories that they came from a crater or deep valley somewhere to the north, at a place called Endikir-e-Kerio (the scarp of Kerio). Whatever the exact location of this mythical crater/valley, their migration southward is beyond doubt, and occurred after a dry spell.
They reached their present-day territories in Kenya and Tanzania around the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. The Maasai believe in one god, whom they call Ngai (also spelled 'Ngai, En-kai, Enkai, Engai, Eng-ai). Ngai is neither male nor female, but seems to have several different aspects. For instance, there is the saying Naamoni aiyai, which means "The She to whom I pray". There are two main manifestations of Ngai: Ngai Narok which is good and benevolent and is black; and Ngai Na-nyokie, which is angry and red (like the British). Ngai is the creator of everything. In the beginning, Ngai (which also means sky) was one with the earth, and owned all the cattle that lived on it. But one day the earth and sky separated, so that Ngai was no longer among men. The cattle, though, needed the material sustenance of grass from the earth, so to prevent them dying Ngai sent down the cattle to the Maasai by means of the aerial roots of the sacred wild fig tree, and told them to look after them. This they do to this day, quite literally taking the story as an excuse to relieve neighbouring tribes of their own livestock.

One of the items and customs that the Jews and Maasai seem to share in common is the use of the Shofar. The Shofar, usually made of a Ram's horn is blown on special occasions, mainly celebrations, wars and yes, Jubilees. The Massai also do not mix milk and meat. Neither do they eat the sciatic nerve per the commandment prescribed in Genesis 32, 26-33.
Though now Christians, mostly pentecostal, Israel is always in the Maasai's daily prayers. They bless Israel at every service and at any opportunity. Always.

On one of my visits to their communities, I spent the night in the same room with two elderly Maasai ladies. At the break of dawn, I was awakened by their soft, sweet voices of their melodious prayers. I do not speak Maasai but three words that I heard over and over again clearly explained to me the nature of their utterances: Yesu, Israel, Maasai. They were praying to their messiah asking him to keep Israel and the Maasai safe and strong.
Dembiya (Ge’ez ደምቢያ dembiyā; also transliterated Dembea, Dambya, Dembya, Dambiya, etc.) is a historic region of Ethiopia, intimately linked with Lake Tana. According to the account of Manuel de Almeida, Dembiya was "bounded on East by Begemder, on South by Gojjam, on West by Agaws of Achefer and Tangha. Lake Tsana, formerly called Dambaya, is in this region." Alexander Murray, in his preface to the third volume of Bruce's account, further describes it as "on the east it includes Foggora, Dara, and Alata; on the north-east Gondar, the metropolis, and the rich district beneath it; on the southwest, the district of Bed (the plain barren country) and, on the west, the lands around Waindaga and Dingleber."

Children studying in Dembia woreda & Lake Tana (Hayk' T'ana).

Dembiya was incorporated into the Begemder province (which previously only included lands to the east of Lake Tana) during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, and in 1996 became a woreda of the Amhara Region. Dembiya is one of the woredas in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia. It is named for the former province of Dembiya, which was located roughly in the same location. Part of the Semien Gondar Zone, Dembiya is bordered on the south by Lake Tana, on the southwest by Takusa, on the west by Chilga, on
the north by Lay Armachiho, and on the east by Gondar Zuria. Towns in Dembiya include Aymiba, Chuahit, Gorgora and Koladiba.

Dembia is considered to host Israelite peoples, but without specifying their ethnicity's name. Judging from the area where Dembia is placed, the Israelites must be the Qemant & the other ethnic group of Israelite origin: the Beta Israel & Falashmuras. Nowadays the Falashmuras name themselves Beta Abraham.

Eritrean Israelites: People from Serai (also known as Serae & Seraye), Eritrea

 Apparently the people from the former Serai (also known as Serae & Seraye) province in Eritrea have Israelite origin. Nowadays this province doesn't exist & it's part of the Debub (or Southern) region. The main ethnic groups are the Tigrinya & the Saho or Soho. The majority of the Tigrinya-speaking population in Seraye, claims descent from the two brother-ancestors of Adkeme and Melega, and the rest from a third ancestor called Tesfa, all of whom would come from king Meroni, who comes from the tribe of Benjamin.

Meroni is believed to have founded the provinces of Hamsien, Serai and Akeluguzay. The name of this former province of Eritrea may have been a corruption of Sarai (or Sarah), wife of Abraham & therefore one of the matriarchs of the People of Israel. One of the districts of this former region was called Kohain, the very name of the Jewish priest. Liban is also found there & is synonym with Lebanon" which is derived from a root "Leban" meaning "white". It's also the name of the country bordering Israel.
It's interesting also that there's a Keren not far from Seray area, the area of the Eritrean Israelites. Keren is horn in Hebrew & it's found as a toponym in Britain & as related to the Karens & Karennis, Burman Israelites.

Myth of Origin: Hamasien, Akele-Guzay, and Seraye

Rural, highland Eritreans claim descent from the Amhara regions of Gonder and Wello during the fourteenth century

From the book Mai Weini, A Highland Village in Eritrea by Kjetil Tronvoll (1998) "It is commonly believed among the villagers of Mai Weini that they - that is the Tigrinya speaking people in Akele-Guzai and Hamasien - trace their descent to a common mythical ancestor called King Meroni. The myth claims that
he was originally from Dembea in Gonder, the region of Amhara, before he settled down in Hamasien. Longrigg, who believes that Meroni may in part be historical, notes that this event might have taken place about the year 1350."

"Meroni had three sons - Chaluk, Maluk, and Faluk - to whom most of the present kebessa population trace their origin. Faluk is the ancestor of Hamasien, and Maluk's descendants are to be found in the district of Mereta Sebene in Segeneiti sub-province. The majority of the Tigrinya-speaking population in Seraye, on the other hand, claims descent from the two brother-ancestors of Adkeme and Melega, and the rest from a third ancestor called Tesfa. They all originate from the ancient Ethiopian kingdom of Lasta." (Lasta is located in Wello province and inhabited by Amharic-speakers)

"The myth of origin in Akele-Guzai names two descendants of Chaluk, Akele and Guzai, as the ancestors of the greater part of the population in the land now bearing their name. Some claim they were brothers, others believe that they were uncle and nephew. The firm opinion of the shimagles in Mai Weini today is that Guzai was the son of Saile, Akele's brother. His descendants occupy the Maisera area in the southern part of the province, whereas the descendants of Akele live in the central part."

"It is believed that Akele had three sons: Tsenai, Digna, and Hadgai. Tesenai is the founding father of Tsenadegle district (woreda), Digna of Dekki Digna, and Hadgai is the ancestor of the people belonging to Hadegti district."

It seems that Meroni is a descendant of the hebrew tribe called Biniam which is one of the 12 tribes of Israel, and that his ancestor was the command in chief of the troops of Menelik I the son of queen of Sheba and king Solomon.

Tutsi conspiracies like Jewish conspiracies?, no way!
The Tutsis are too proud, too wealthy, too self-centered, and too unwilling to marry centered, and too unwilling to marry those outside of their culture and religious traditions. The Tutsis own too much land in a country that has too little. The Tutsis are powerful but evil, even sharing the power of the evil eye with their Falasha kindred hundreds of miles down the course of the Nile River.

I stress our responsibility especially because we as Jews have sworn never to forget. I stress our responsibility not only because the Tutsis of Burundi share in our heritage as people of Israel but because they are, like all human beings everywhere, children of God. I belabor our responsibility because Havila, an organization of Tutsis in exile in Europe that seeks the return and redemption and above all the survival of the Tutsi people, wants to know what genocide of Tutsis in Burundi means to Western Jews.

Bilad al-Sudan

Jews of the Bilad al-Sudan (בּרְאוּד אל-סּוּדָן, Judeo-Arabic) describes West African Jewish communities who were connected to known Jewish communities from the Middle East, North Africa, or Spain and Portugal. Various historical records attest to their presence at one time in the Ghana, Mali, and Songhai empires, then called the Bilad as-Sudan from the Arabic meaning Land of the Blacks.
According to most accounts, the earliest Jewish settlements in Africa were in places such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco. Jews had settled along the Upper Nile at Elephantine in Egypt. These communities were augmented by subsequent arrivals of Jews after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE, when 30,000 Jewish slaves were settled throughout Carthage by the Roman emperor Titus.

Africa is identified in various Jewish sources in connection with Tarshish and Ophir. The Septuagint, and Jerome, who was taught by Jews, and very often the Aramaic Targum on the Prophets, identify the Biblical Tarshish with Carthage, which was the birthplace of a number of rabbis mentioned in the Talmud. Africa, in the broader sense, is clearly indicated where mention is made of the Ten Tribes having been driven into exile by the Assyrians and having journeyed into Africa. Connected with this is the idea that the river Sambation is
As early as Roman times, Moroccan Jews had begun to travel inland to trade with groups of Berbers, most of whom were nomads who dwelt in remote areas of the Atlas Mountains. Jews lived side by side with Berbers, forging both economic and cultural ties; some Berbers even began to practice Judaism. In response, Berber spirituality transformed Jewish ritual, painting it with a belief in the power of demons and saints.

In the 10th century, as the social and political environment in Baghdad became increasingly hostile to Jews, many Jewish traders there left for the Maghreb, Tunisia in particular. Over the following two to three centuries, a distinctive social group of traders throughout the Mediterranean world became known as the Maghrebi, passing on this identification from father to son.

According to certain local Malian legends a mention in the Tarikh al-Sudan may have recorded the first Jewish presence in West Africa with the arrival of the first Zuwa ruler of Koukiya and his brother, located near the Niger River. He was known only as Za/Zuwa Alayman (meaning "He comes from Yemen"). Some local legends state that Zuwa Alayman was a member of one of the Jewish communities that were either transported or voluntarily moved from Yemen by the Ethiopians in the 6th century C.E. after the defeat of Dhu Nuwas. The Tarikh al-Sudan, states that there were 14 Zuwa rulers of Kukiya after Zuwa Alyaman before the rise of Islam in the region.

Manuscript C of the Tarikh al-fattash describes a community called the Bani Israel that in 1402 CE existed in Tirdirma, possessed 333 wells, and had seven leaders: Jabroot bin-Hashim, Thoelyaman bin-Abdel Hakim, Zeor bin-Salam, Abdel-latif bin-Solayman, Malik bin-Ayoob, Fadil bin-Mzar & Shaleb bin-Yousef. It is also stated that they had an army of 1500 men.

There seems to be little doubt that Jewish have largely been mixed with Berbers living in the Moroccan and Algerian Sahara. It is believed that some Berber clans may have been at one time Jews and according to another tradition they are descended from the Philistines driven out of Canaan. There is a tradition that Moses was buried in Tlemçen, and the presence of a large number of Jews in that part of Africa is attested to, not only by the many sacred places and shrines bearing Biblical names which are holy to Muslims as well as to Jews, but also by the presence there of a large number of Jewish sagas. L. Rinn says: "Certain Berber tribes were for a long time of the Jewish religion, especially in Amès; and today, even, we see among the Hanensha of Sukahras (Algeria) a semi-nomad tribe of Israelites devoted entirely to agriculture".

Rabbi Mordechai Abi Serour, with his brother Yitzhaq, came from Morocco in 1859 to be a trader in Timbuktu. At the time of Rabbi Serour's bold enterprise, direct trade relations with the interior of west Africa (then known to them as Sudan) were monopolized by Muslim merchants. Non-Muslims were
precluded from this trade because Arab merchants were determined to forestall encroachments upon their lucrative business. As a man of cosmopolitan experience, he was well suited to be a merchant in that time and place. He was clever, shrewd, articulate, audacious, and most important he knew Koranic law as well as most learned Muslims. Throughout his travels to Timbuktu Rabbi Serour preferred to have most of his merchandise transported across the Sahara by bejaoui. The term, bejaoui, refers to single or small groups of camels that carried travelers sometimes without merchandise or baggage, and were accompanied by indigenous guides.

As a Jew, he couldn't set up his trading business, so he appealed to the regional ruler, who at that time was a Fulani Emir, and negotiated dhimmi, or protected people status. Between 1860 to 1862 Rabbi Serour and his brother Yitzhaq were able to become successful and they became well known in the area. After earning a small fortune, Rabbi Serour returned to Morocco in 1863. He gave his father a large sum of money and talked his other brothers into joining him on his next venture to Timbuktu. In 1864, the Jewish colony in Timbuktu had reason to rejoice since by the end of the year they had eleven adult male Jews in residence. This was significant since it meant that they could form a minyan and establish a synagogue.

Records of the Jewish history of Mali can still be found in the Kati Andalusi library. Ismael Diadie Haidara, a historian from Timbuktu, possesses old Arabic and Hebrew texts among the city's historical records. He has also researched his own past and discovered that he is descended from the Moroccan Jewish traders of the Abana family. Recently there has come to light the personal library of the first Mahmoud Kati, which was handed down through his descendants and added to through at least the mid-17th century. This extraordinary "discovery" was made by a young Malian historian, Ismaël Diadié Haidara, a member of the Kati clan, and author of several books. The trading documents referred to three families in particular: the Kehath family (Ka'ti) that came from southern Morocco and converted with the rest of the population in 1492; the Cohen family descended from the Moroccan Jewish trader al-Hajj Abd al-Salam al Kuhin, who arrived in the Timbuktu area in the 18th century; and the Abana family, which came in the first half of the 19th century.

The Lemba/varemba/Mwenye

The Lemba/varemba/Mwenye have a sacred prayer language which is a mixture of Hebrew and Arabic, pointing to their roots in Israel and Yemen. In Zimbabwe and South Africa, the people prefer the name Mwenye. The name "Lemba" may originate in chilemba, a Swahili word for turbans worn by East Africans, or lembi, a Bantu word meaning "non-African" or "respected foreigner". Magdel le Roux says
that the name BaRemba may be translated as "the people who refuse" – probably in the context of "not eating with others".

THE 12 LEMBA CLANS: Tovakare, Bubha, Seleman, Tsadik, Sarif, Hamis, Bakar, Mani, Usingarimi, Hadji, Ngavi. Location: In Mozambique (Bordering areas with South Africa & Zimbabwe). In South Africa (in northern Transvaal, although they're found disseminated from Soweto, in the South to Messina, in the north of the country. In Zimbabwe: In the South eastern area of the country, along the border with South Africa.

Our greatest fear is assimilation, the fear of being gobbled up by the larger ethnic groups in Zimbabwe and to be lost forever as a distinct people. To guard against this threat, Lembas Elders long ago forbade intermarriage. They prescribed that Lembas must marry fellow Lembas. In total there are 12 Lemba clans in Zimbabwe, and a Lemba was permitted to marry into any one of them. Marriage outside this circle was forbidden.

Long ago it was taboo for Lemba-Jewish daughters to marry non-Lembas. The punishment for marrying a non-Lemba man was excommunication. A great aunt of mine was disowned by my great grandfather because she married a non-Lemba. For 40 years, my great aunt was not able to set foot in our village, not even to attend her mother’s funeral. She was allowed to return to the village only after the death of my great grandfather. It was only then that my grandfather relented and readmitted her into the community. But not her children. Such was the severity of the punishment.

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.

Igbo Jews (Nigeria)
Rabbi Brant Rosen visited the Igbo with the help of the Kulanu organization and posted his thoughts and reactions here. “Are the Igbo, in fact, descended from the Lost Tribes of Israel?” he asks. “I don’t know that there will ever be any way to prove this conclusively one way or the other...but as I see it, whether or not they are actually lost Israelites is relatively moot in the face of the fact that the Igbo absolutely believe it to be true.”

The Times of Israel recently published a good piece on the community, as did the Israeli newspaper Haaretz, which reviewed the book “Jews of Nigeria: An Afro-Judaic Odyssey” by William F.S. Miles.

Modern Igbo outside Siyahh Yisrael Synagogue
The Igbo Jews of Nigeria, who call themselves the “Benei-Yisrael,” are part of the larger Igbo ethnic group. Most of the Igbo Jews live in an area which straddles the River Niger, near the Anambra states. The Igbo Jews are said to have migrated from Syria, Portugal, and Libya into West Africa around 740 C.E. It is claimed that the initial immigrants were from the biblical tribes of Gad, Asher, Dan, and Naphtali. Later, they were joined by more Jewish immigrants from Portugal and Libya in 1484 and 1667 respectively. Some of the Igbo Jews claim that the river Sambation (beyond which the ten lost tribes were dispersed by the Assyrians) is in Africa. In a paper distributed by the “Igbo Benei-Yisrael Association of Nigeria,” three possible migration routes of Jews into Africa are proposed: Through migrations west from the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, and the Sudan. Through trade and travel of North African Jews within the West African Kingdoms of Mali, Songhai, and Kanem-Bornu. According to accounts from explorers of the region, several of the rulers of the Songhai Empire were said to be of Jewish origin. Through Jews traveling with Kel Tamasheq (Tuareg) trade caravans from various parts of Northeast Africa into West Africa.

Possible Migration Routes of Jews into Africa
Another possibility described by a 9th century Jewish traveler named Eldad ben-Mahli (also known as Eldad the Danite) is that his tribe, Dan, migrated from the land of Israel so as not to take part in the civil war at the time of Yeroboam’s secession, and were residing in the land of Havilah beyond the rivers of Ethiopia. According to Eldad, three other tribes in addition to Dan – Naphtali, Gad and Asher, as mentioned above – were with them; these had joined in the times of Sennacherib.
Eldad wrote that the Igbo Jews in Africa had an entire body of scriptures except for the books of Esther and Lamentations. They knew nothing of the Mishna nor the Talmud; but they had a “Talmud” of their own in which all the laws were cited in the name of the biblical Joshua. Eldad described a specific law dealing with the rules pertaining to the killing of animals for food.

Jewish communities throughout Muslim controlled lands suffered greatly and in many cases were destroyed. The Igbo Bene-Yisrael lost whatever written documents and other written traditions that may have existed. The communities strived to maintain at the least a knowledge of their Israeli origin and to practice certain traditions in secret.

An early statement on the history of the Igbo Jews was published in the autobiography of an Igbo man, Olaudah Equiano, a Christian-educated freed slave who remarked in 1789 on “the strong analogy which... appears to prevail in the manners and customs of my countrymen and those of the Jews, before they reached the Land of Promise, and particularly the patriarchs while they were yet in that pastoral state which is described in Genesis — an analogy, which alone would induce me to think that the one people had sprung from the other.”

Even with the loss of written records, many religious practices of the Igbo Jews correspond with mainstream Jewish practices. These include:

- Circumcision eight days after the birth of a male child.
- Observance of some kosher dietary laws.
- Separation of men and women during menstruation.
- The celebration of holidays such as Yom Kippur, Rosh Hashanah, Sukkot and Passover.

In recent times, the communities have also adopted holidays such as Hanukkah and Purim, which were instituted only after the tribes of Israel had already dispersed. Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin sent a team to Nigeria between in 1995 to search for the “Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

Western rabbis and educators have since sent books, computers, and religious articles to Nigeria. However, the State of Israel has, to date, not officially recognized the Igbo as one of the Lost Tribes. Jews from outside Nigeria founded two synagogues in Nigeria, which are attended and maintained by Igbo Jews. Because no formal census has been taken in the region, the number of Igbos in Nigeria who identify as either Israelites or Jews is not known. There are currently 26 synagogues of various sizes. Some researchers estimate there may be as many as 30,000 Igbos practicing some form of Judaism. However most of these “Jews” are probably Messianic; only some 1,500 – 2,000 of them no longer believe in Christian doctrine, according Rabbi Howard Gorin, a rabbi affiliated with the
Conservative Jewish movement, who has visited the community. Gorin adds that he would only count a handful of the community as Jewish according to halacha (Jewish law). Because no formal census has been taken in the region, the number of Igbos in Nigeria who identify as either Israelites or Jews is not known. There are currently 26 synagogues of various sizes. Some researchers estimate there may be as many as 30,000 Igbos practicing some form of Judaism. However most of these “Jews” are probably Messianic; only some 1,500 – 2,000 of them no longer believe in Christian doctrine, according Rabbi Howard Gorin, a rabbi affiliated with the Conservative Jewish movement, who has visited the community. Gorin adds that he would only count a handful of the community as Jewish according to halacha (Jewish law). Daniel Lis, a Swiss-Israel “social anthropologist” also writes about his trip to visit the Igbo. He refers to Remy Ilona, an Igbo lawyer in Nigeria who has written a book with the title The Igbos: Jews in Africa? and accompanied Lis during his visit.

Igbo Benei-Yisrael clan

In part, Havila arises from a refusal from the Tutsi Jewish leadership to die as an anonymous population
According to various sources from both common and scholarly records, including Wikipedia, as well as Havila Institute multi-faceted expertise, and the so documented. In addition to the facts mentioned above, the regular conscription of the youth, males and females alike in the political, judiciary, theological and military academies (following the leading military traditions brought ahead by Devorah), make it clearer that the Tutsi Jews perpetuated the way of life of the Patriarchs in the biblical land of Goshen. See: Lactose intolerance (Reference to Prof. Sarah Tishkoff’ master studies in Genetics based on the Lactase Tolerance/Intolerance in the world, the Tutsi being second in rank after the Swedish), in Citizendum, the Citizens' Compendium. This is a miraculous result of the efforts of the Havila Institute (l’Institut de Havila) and its founder and director Yochanan Bwejeri, originally from Burundi and now, like many Tutsis, living in exile. In part, Havila arises from a refusal from the Tutsi Jewish leadership to die as an anonymous population, and at least from a basically ancestors’ claim to stand as a people with a specific mission in the world, and in part it is, simply, the awakening of the Jewish soul in Central Africa. Under the leadership of Prof. Yochanan Bwejeri working with highly committed Tutsi leaders and scholars, more and more Batutsi Jews seek a means for joining the best of the Jewish communities programs and visions for the future (t’shuva) and look forward to redemption (g’ulah), just like any Jewish community or nation among the diverse and colorful branches of the People of Israel, in their central-African Jewish biotope and worldwide.
A Tutsi Jewish Martial Art recalling the Israeli “Krav Maga”. A single strike of the rod is likely to kill an adult lion. There is a vital necessity for the shepherds (see Tutsi, Masai, Peuls) to develop combat strategies and tactics in order to protect the herds of cattle and sheep from looting by warring nations or from wild animals’ assaults.

The scientist Rabbi shared his factual report along with the poetic name “Mountains of the Moon” with his student, Ptolemy, the famous Greek Astronomer and Geographer of the 2nd Century, who later had the finding popularized and “patented” under his name.
The 2 typical profiles of people in the contemporary Great Lakes. Semitic & non-Semitic (the non-Semitic African Negroes are improperly called “BANTU”)
Above: The 2 typical profiles of people in the contemporary Great Lakes. Semitic & non-Semitic (the non-Semitic Africans are improperly called “BANTU” to impose the impious suggestion that the “Bantu” are the natives and that the Tutsi are the strangers, the invaders, the thieves.)

Above: Left: King Mwambutsa of Burundi is greeting his cousin, President Yitzhak ben Tzvi, before to leave Israel after a memorable visit in December 1962; Right: Late Prince Ndizeye and Prince of Nkoronko, “Resh Galuta”. Below: David Ben Gourion. He met with King Mwambutsa several times and signed many agreements with the Tutsi Jewish King, including the current design of the Burundi national flag, which displays 3 Maggen David as a visible sign of common past and future as “am Israel".
The Biblical Triangle of Africa [BTA] comprises a large entity that extends from the sources of the Nile up to the shores of the Jordan (see: The borders of the Promised land which is to extend from the brooks of the Nile to Euphrates 15:18: “Unto our seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates”).
Geographically, this is the natural corridor of the Rift that connects the heights of the Golan in Israel to the Limpopo river, through the Malawi Lake and most of all, the depths of the marking waters of the Tanganyika Lake in Burundi, and then the majestic Nile River of biblical fame (B’reshis 2:10-13). Interestingly, the Tanganyika Lake is only second to the Baikal Lake in terms of depths on the Earth.

The biblical saga of the patriarchs is primarily a saga of the Nile (Pishon). As a matter of facts, the written saga we know from the five books of Moses and the Prophets is about deadly cycles of abundances and famines, enslavements and freedom, p opl’ cohesion and revolts, astounding revelations and promises, pathetic weakness and stubbornness.
"And David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was girded with a linen ephod. So David did and all the house of Israel... (II Samuel VI:14)

“Michal daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the Lord” (II Samuel VI:14)
The Tutsi Jews, named after the Hebrew syntagm ḫמ נו “telse” [those who will go forth], are a renowned nomadic and semi-nomadic agro-pastoralist people of Eastern and Central Africa, also called the Great Lakes or Kingdoms of the Mountains of the Moon. From the local Judeo-kushite Hebrew denomination “B’Sḥ-(em)-oez” or “BaCwezi”, (Those who originated from the strength of the Name) the name “Mountains of the Moon” was given to the Tutsi Jewish Kingdoms by the Geographer, Mathematician and Astronomer, Rabbi Marinus of Tyre, one among many Talmudic scholars who used to visit the Tutsi Jewish Kingdoms of the Great Lakes and to learn as much as they could from the scientists and the Torah scholars of that long established Jewish nation (See: Lettre d’Aristée A Philocrate, 1213, Traduction et Notes, index complet des mots grecs par André Pelletier, ed. Du Cerf, Paris, 1962)
Claims of a historic presence of Jewish communities in certain regions of Africa, notably West and Southern Africa, seem esoteric when first mentioned. This presence goes back not just centuries, but even to biblical times.
Of course in two areas such a communal presence on the African continent remains a firmly acknowledged part of Jewish history and experience (North Africa and Egypt/Ethiopia). A Jewish presence in Egypt and the former Kingdom of Kush are described in the Book of Exodus. Yet even after their exodus from Egypt and their settlement in the land of Israel, the Jewish tribes retained certain nomadic characteristics which are reflected throughout their history.

For example, in the 10th and 9th centuries B.C.E. Kings David and Solomon sought to expand Jewish influence and trade throughout the Mediterranean, including North Africa, Egypt, the Arab Peninsula and the Horn of Africa, as well as Persia. Often such trade promotion and colonizing drives were arranged in cooperation with the Cananites and the neighboring Kingdom of Tyre.

These kingdoms often lent their military backing to these colonizing efforts, which led to the establishment of numerous settlements by Jewish artisans and traders throughout these regions. But the subsequent scattering of a Jewish presence and influence teaching deep into the African continent is less widely acknowledged. Pressed under sweeping regional conflicts, Jews settled as traders and warriors in Yemen, the Horn of Africa, Egypt, the Kingdom of Kush and Nubia, North African Punic settlements (Carthage and Velubilis), and areas now covered by Mauritania.

More emigrants followed these early Jewish settlers to Northern Africa following the Assyrian conquest of the Israelites in the 8th century B.C.E., and again 200 years later, when Jerusalem was conquered by the Babylonians, leading to the destruction of the First Temple.

This catastrophic event not only drove many Jews into exile in Babylon, but also led to the establishment of exile communities around the Mediterranean, including North Africa. Then, with Israel coming under Greek, Persian and later Roman rule and dependence, renewed waves of Jewish traders and artisans began to set up communities in Egypt, Cyrenaica, Nubia and the Punic Empire, notably in Carthage, whence they began to scatter into various newly emerging communities south of the Atlas mountains. Several Jewish nomadic groups also started to come across the Sahara from Nubia and the ancient kingdom of Kush.
The Jewish presence in Africa began to expand significantly in the second and third centuries of the Christian era, extending not only into the Sahara desert, but also reaching down along the West African coast, and possibly also to some Bantu tribes of Southern Africa (where some 40,000 members of the Lemba tribe still claim Jewish roots). The names of old Jewish communities south of the Atlas mountains, many of which existed well into Renaissance times, can be found in documents in synagogue archives in Cairo.

In addition, Jewish, Arab and Christian accounts cite the existence of Jewish rulers of certain tribal groups and clans identifying themselves as Jewish scattered throughout Mauritania, Senegal, the Western Sudan, Nigeria, and Ghana. Among notable Arab historians referring to their existence are Ibn Khaldun, who lived in the 13th century, a respected authority on Berber history; the famous geographer al-Idrisi, born in Ceuta, Spain in the 12th century, who wrote about Jewish Negroes in the western Sudan; and the 16th century historian and traveler Leon Africanus, a Moslem from Spain who was raised by a Jewish woman working in his family's household, who is said to have taught him Hebrew and emigrated with the family to Morocco in 1492. A related story about surviving memories of Jewish roots in West Africa was told to me around 1976 by former Israeli prime minister Shimon Peres. He had just returned from a meeting of the Socialist International, during which he had met with then president Leopold Senghor of Senegal. In the course of their discussion about the possibility of normalizing Senegalese-Israeli relations, Senghor had told him that he too had Jewish ancestors. At that time we both smiled somewhat incredulously.

Yet, indeed, 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".

Jewish presence is said to have been introduced into Senegal, Mauritania and numerous other West African countries south of the Sahara in part through the migration of Jewish Berber groups and later through some exiles who had been expelled from Spain, had first settled in North Africa, and had then crossed the Atlas mountains. Other even earlier arrivals are said to have come from Cyrenaica (now part of Libya, Egypt, the Sudan and Ethiopia), having crossed the Sahara to West Africa and eventually also moved further south. 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.
Some of these transmigrants established communities in such still renowned places as Gao, Timbuktu (where UNESCO still maintains notable archives containing records of its old Jewish community), Bamako, Agadez, Kano and Ibadan. A notable number of Berber and African nomad tribal groups joined up with the Jewish communal groups trying to resist aggressivqe Arab Islamic efforts or as bulwark against Christian proselytizing, sometimes going so far as to convert to Judaism. Notable among these were some Tuareg, Peul and Ibadiya groups. To this day it is said that the Ashanti words for numbers relate to those in Parsi, the language of Persia. Under the impact of this Jewish influence a number of ruling families in Ghana converted to Judaism, and for nearly 200 years the Kingdom of Ghana, which extended at that time far north into western Sudan, was ruled by Jewish kings. Because of their skills, abilities, and multilingual knowledge, Jews became important intermediaries in regional trade relations and as artisans grouping together as craft guilds. They 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.

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.

Reviewing the various Jewish and non-Jewish sources on the origins of these Jewish communities involves complicated and at times seemingly contradictory stories about tribal and religious wars and resultant alliances and transformations. These originated with the Roman and Byzantine persecutions of Jews and the promotion of Christianity beginning under the emperors Diocletian and Constantine.

There was also a wave of Jewish proselytizing and conversions of nations and tribal groups to Judaism. For instance, the people of Yemen converted to Judaism in the fifth century under King Du-Nuas, as did a major Berber tribal group under their Queen Kahina in the seventh century. These were followed by additional forced conversions of Jewish communities to Christianity and later to Islam, but with some Jewish consciousness and traditions surviving.
These conflicting references to biblical sources by Jewish, Muslim, Berber and Christian sources survive not only to legitimize their respective spiritual claims but also as indicators of their transitions through a common past.

There has been a historical Jewish ambivalence about legitimizing mass conversions to Judaism and to look askance at those who do not "look Jewish". In part such attitudes are reinforced by the fact that certain Jewish communities, for historical reasons or due to prolonged isolation, had evolved ritual and ceremonial standards linked to older sources and traditions, thus becoming somewhat differentiated from those authorized by the dominant rabbinical authorities. These differences may involve such questions as acceptance of talmudic interpretation. This had placed into question at times even the authority of so prominent a Jewish sage as Moses Maimonides.

Even before Maimonides these issues had led to the by now virtually forgotten split by the Karaites, who rejected the Talmud as divine law as well as the hierarchical authority of the rabbinate. Yet, despite their current obscurity, the Karaites played a significant historical role in the expansion of Judaism and also as advocates of a greater religious role for women. Karaite influence extended to Judeo-Berber communities and West African tribal communities such as the Malinke, Peul, Foulani, Mossi, Fanti, Songhay, Yoruba and Hausa.

Hebrews became a mixed people

The bible doesn't say anything bout shem and Japheth mixing, but history does. assur mixed with Aryans in Assyria, and the Chaldeans mixed with aryans in Babylon.

The Hebrews were a mixed Shemite/Hamite people, who clustered racially and culturally with hamites; smoke a hamitic language, lived among hamites, and worshipped Hamitic gods.
We have the most common y-haplogroups among 'Jews'; J (Shem), and E (Ham or African).

It does make sense...Hebrew scripture clearly tells us who the hebrews were - semi-hamites.

Kotoko people

The Kotoko people, also called Mser, Moria, Bara and Makari, are an ethnic group located in northern Cameroon, Chad and Nigeria. The Kotoko population is composed of 49,071 people, the majority of which, 40,904 people live in Cameroon. The Kotoko form part of the Chadic people. The mother tongue is Lagwan - (kot). Most of Kotoko are Muslims, forming sects like Ibadhi, Ahmadi, Alevi, Yazidi, Druze and Khariji. Only slightly more than 10% of the population is Evangelical. They founded the Kotoko kingdom in the 15th century.

North Africa/Maghreb

The largest influx of Jews to Africa came after the Spanish Inquisition after the Fall of Granada and the end of Islamic Spain. The mass exodus and expulsion of the Iberian Jews began in 1492, Sicilian Jews were affected soon afterwards. Many of these Sephardic Jews settled in North Africa under Muslim and Ottoman patronage. Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Egypt became home to significant Jewish communities. These communities were later incorporated into the Ottoman millet system as Africanized Ottoman Jews, bound by the laws of the Talmud and Torah but with allegiance to the Caliph of Constantinople.

Modern communities of European descent
South Africa has a substantial, mostly Ashkenazim Jewish community. They and their ancestors arrived mostly from Lithuania prior to World War II, although some immigrated from Britain, Germany, and Eastern Europe. To a lesser extent, Sephardic Jews, primarily originating from the Island of Rhodes, also settled in sub-Saharan Africa, in territories such as the Belgian Congo. Subsequently, members of these Jewish communities migrated to South Africa.

Small European Jewish communities developed historically during the colonial years in Namibia (South West Africa), Zimbabwe (Southern Rhodesia), Lesotho (Basutoland), Swaziland, Botswana (Bechuanaland), Zaire (Belgian Congo, mostly Sephardim), Kenya, Malawi (Nyasaland), and Zambia (Northern Rhodesia). The communities, usually based in the capitals of these countries, established synagogues and often formal Jewish schools.

There was a Jewish community in Maputo, Mozambique but, after the independence of the country, most left. The government has officially returned the Maputo synagogue to the Jewish community, but "little or no Jewish community remains to reclaim it."

Hebrew Tribes of Africa

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 comeout 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.

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.

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 of his people.

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).

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, Eritrea, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Southern Africa.
These settlements were intermittently 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.

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 Nabuchadonezer, 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

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 heritage backed by solid genetic evidence i.e. the prevalence of the so-called Cohen modal J haplogroup.

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.
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.

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 a` Timbouctou”, Recueil de sources relatives au commerce juif a Timbouctou au XIXe siecle, 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 discrittione 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 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 Timbouctou. 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

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.

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)

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.

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.” It is found in moderate amounts in all Jewish populations, from Ashkenazi, Sephardic, Kurdish, Yemen, Samaritan and even among Djerba Jewish groups. 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 (previously known as HG9 or Eu9/Eu10) is a Y-chromosome DNA haplogroup 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 Tigrinya, Amhara, and Oromiya.

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.

A descendant of one of the priestly Jewish families of North Africa, Kahina led the nationalist resistance against the muslim invasion until her defeat at the hands of Hassan Ibn Numan. See Margolis, “History of Jewish people”, 1927 pages 278-279.

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 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.”
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?

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 Ephraimitic community in Morocco. Is there any connection between the Ephraimites of Ondo and those of Imo? The Hebrew word for israelite woman “Baara” may be seen in the old Igbo word for woman “Agbara”.

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.

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 Igala (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 Igala 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).

Musings in Nigeria

I read a write-up by some Igbo scholars that the Igbos should have a say in the resolution of the Middle East conflict. I wondered why? But people who are more knowledgeable than I am have said that Arabs bombed and strafed Igbos during the Biafran war, and I’ve read that Igbos were enslaved by Arabs during the trans-Saharan slave trade. Perhaps our historians should start researching into all this with the objective of including them among the oppressive acts that Arabs have meted out to Am Israel, so that the oppressors will stop pretending that they are victims.
Igbos Seek Jewish Link

An Eastern Nigerian tribe - with more than 40 million members scattered throughout the world - is seeking to forge a unique friendship with the Boston Jewish community.

After making a pilgrimage to the Hub for their 12th World Igbo Congress Annual Convention at the Copley Marriott, a handful of Igbo leaders also met with officials at the American Jewish Committee last Friday to discuss forming an alliance. Igbos are not recognized as Jews within the Jewish community.

Many Igbos, who dub themselves as the "Jews of Africa," feel a spiritual bond with the Jewish population, as legends passed down by their ancient ancestors claim that they are one of the lost tribes of Israel.

"The Igbo have not been able to trace their origin back to anywhere else other than Israel," said Peter Opara, a Boston Igbo and communications consultant. "We want to join and walk together with the Jews. Whenever Israel suffers in any possible way, the Igbos feel it."

Within Igbo lore is a prominent figure named Eri, a man with supernatural powers whose beginnings cannot be traced, said Plantation, Fla., Rabbi Gavriel Ogugua, who is Igbo and traveled to Boston for the
conference. Eri was able to conquer and develop a lot of lands, one of which became the place where this Nigerian ethnic group still thrives today.

Chapter 46, verse 16 in Bereshit of the Torah states that Gad - the sixth child of Jacob and one of the leaders of the lost tribes of Israel - had a son named Eri, who Igbos have come to believe is the man mentioned in their legends, Ogugua said.

"Many Igbos know that we are related to Jews but have not come to accept the heritage for which they are," Ogugua added, noting that scores of the tribes' members are Christian because of colonialism.

Igbos believe that they not only share Biblical ties with Jews, but also feel they have also been prime targets of hate. More than a million Igbos were starved to death or killed by the Nigerian state authorities between 1966 and 1970 during a civil war, according to world reports and data from the Center for World Indigenous Studies in Washington.

Now, members from the African tribe from all over the world are looking to share their resources - such as oil, gas and fertile lands - and to also support each other in the face of danger, Opara added.

"The Jews have a lot to offer Igbos, and Igbos have a lot to offer Jews," he said. "I hope we can share resources, economics, political security and trade. The Igbo land is open to Israelis to come and invest."

Larry Lowenthal, executive director of the American Jewish Committee in Boston, said even though he "has never heard of (Igbo Jews) before," Israel needs "all of the friends it can get."
"This is amazing," Lowenthal said. "I am just beginning to explore this. The question is: how can we unite Israel and the Jewish community to help the well being of Igbos, who in turn wants to support Israel. This has to be a healthy relationship."

Lowenthal said he now plans to speak further with the executive director of the World Igbo Congress and to also reach out to Rabbi Mark Sokoll, the president and chief executive officer of the Jewish Community Centers of Greater Boston.

Sokoll, who spoke about the Jewish experience at the Igbos' conference, said he is excited about this new friendship endeavor.

"Part of our mission as Jews is to heal and help fix the world," Sokoll said. "I am open to kind or relationships that will develop in the future."

Lies of the Elders?

It has been proposed by some that the Igbo Elders are either lying about Igbos being Hebrews or that they're hiding something, or they have been influenced by white men to say Igbos are Hebrews.
First of all, what would the elders have to gain by perpetuating a lie in which they would never live to benefit from, and what would be such a benefit, from what I can tell because of such claims by the Igbo they have been shunned and persecuted by others.

Second, this belief was held long before white men ever met the Igbo and those that did, observed how like ancient Israel they were and the missionaries would not voice this fact to them for fear of losing converts. And what benefit would white men gain by getting the Igbos to promote their Hebrew origins.

To propose the elders have themselves conspired to perpetuate a lie to the Igbo people is preposterous and holds no water.
Does this mean that the elders do not keep secrets, of course they do. They keep certain knowledge hidden as all elders in all cultures do until there are those worthy to be initiated into the eldership so as to pass such information along.

Why is certain knowledge withheld? For safety sake, for certain knowledge in the wrong hands can be deadly. For example, fire has many benefits but can also be a destructive force. One would not allow an infant to play with matches, no; an elder withholds the knowledge of how to produce fire until the child is of a responsible age so as to handle such knowledge with great respect and care. Similarly, elders withhold certain information until there are those who come along that are worthy and responsible to receive it. This does not mean the elder lie and are responsible of perpetuating a conspiracy against their own people.

Another example is in Judaism, the knowledge of esoteric matters, mysticism; kabbalah is withheld from one who has been raised in the Jewish tradition until 40 years of age. Because only a ripe and mature mind can handle such knowledge. A story goes that 4 men studied kabbalah and only one out of the four became a righteous man. The others either, went insane, became a blasphemer or an apostate. So one can see the reason that certain knowledge is kept under lock and key by the elders, but to say that knowledge is harmful and conspiratorial is ludicrous and offensive.

It is also important to note that unlike the game of telephone, what the elders have said has for the most part been consistent from the beginning with little variation and such variation which may be found in regards to the overall picture of what the elders have said has no effect or contradiction. Bottom line, they have said from the beginning Igbos are Hebrews.

GENETIC EVIDENCE TO LINK THE IGBO TO ISRAEL?
The E3b haplogroup is found in all Jewish groups all over the world. It is the second most prevalent haplogroup in Jewish populations.

Genetic studies agree that E-M35 is the second highest in prevalence next to J, when establishing Jewish linages. This is found in moderate amounts among all Jewish populations that are from the Ashkenazi, Sephardic, Kurdish, Yemenite, Samaritan and Djerba Jewish groups.

Most Geneticists say that the haplogroup E3b (M35) seems to have come from East Africa but from there was carried to the Near East, then to North Africa and Europe. Today it is commonly found in such places as East and North Africa, and the Near East around the areas of the Mediterranean.

The haplogroup J also known as HG9 or Eu9/Eu10 is a Y-chromosome DNA haplogroup. It is subdivided into two subclades: J2, defined by the M172 marker and J1 defined by the M267 marker.
Genetic mapping shows that the J haplogroup 1 and 2 are both common in Southern and Central Europe as well as in the Mediterranean and Africa. The J haplogroup is thought to be the telltale sign of Jewish ancestry, as well as what is known as the Cohen gene which the Lemba tribe of Zimbabwe has which make them Levites and permitted to make Aliyah (return) to Israel as Children of Levi.

J1 (M267) has the higher concentration in the Middle East, North Africa and Ethiopia. J2 is found in parts of Africa among Semitic speaking peoples of Tigriniya, Amhara and Oromiya.
The Nri clan among the Igbo function as the Levitical priests among Israel and plans are in the works to examine the DNA from the Igbo in an attempt to find the Genetic markers that would point to Jewish or Levitical origins, thus further solidifying the Igbo’s place among Israel.

In the article “Population Genetics Reveal Shared Ancestry: DNA Links Modern Europeans, Middle Easterners to Sub-Saharan Africans” on Science Daily May 14, 2011. This article springs from HMS Associate Professor of Genetics, David Reich and his paper entitled, “The History of African Gene Flow Into Southern European, Levantines and Jews,” published by PLoS Genetics. Genetic data from 40 populations across Africa, Asia and the Middle East assisted by doctoral student Prya Moorjani and Assistant Professor Alkes Prices used the genetic roll off method to find Sub-Saharan African ancestry with West Eurasian DNA approximately 1,600 years ago. In this online article it says, “A diverse array of Jewish populations can date their Sub-Saharan African ancestry back roughly 72 generations, on average, accounting for 3 to 5 percent of their genetic makeup today.” Also stated that African and Jewish populations mixed during the Jewish diaspora in the 6th to 8th century B.C.

ARCHEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE TO INDICATE AN ISRAELITE ORIGIN

A good researcher must also be able to read symbols which they may find and know where such symbols originated from. This aids the detective in discovering the truth about a victim or suspect. Sometimes they even have to analyze symbols in order to break a code in order to gain valuable information in their case.

For example, a picture or drawing a snake in one culture may be a symbol of wisdom or eternal life and in another culture it may mean evil, danger or death.
Paleo-Hebrew Script has been found in various places in the Igbo Territories of Nigeria.

Drawings like unto the Mogen David, Star of David have been found in various places of Igboland prior to missionary arrival to Nigeria.

“One scholar who visited Iboland, saw a swastika there and questioned how the Ebos/Hebrews could have this symbol and be Jewish. Sar Amariel answered the question stating, 'This is an ancient Hebrew
symbol that represents the sun...’” – Document: Tabernacle Congregation Prayer Yeshiva to HRM A.E. Chukwuemeka-Eri (Ezerora 34th and KAK Ji Ofor Igbo) King of the Igbos

And indeed swastikas have been found on the reliefs of ancient synagogues in Israel. No wonder the Nazis adopted this symbol to imply they were like the sun and greater that the Star of David.

Equally and obviously cold, hard, tangibly, physical evidence is required to come to solid conclusions in any case a detective may take on.

It has already been mentioned earlier regarding the Stone Throne at Obu-Gad with the Paleo-Hebrew Inscription at the foot of the throne as well as the onyx stone. It is interesting to note that the stone representing Gad (as well as the other Tribes) in the Priestly shoulder stones was made of onyx, which is black (Ex. 39:6-7). In December 1997 a onyx stone found at the palace of Obu-Gad, the traditional site where Gad’s son Eri settled was found an onyx stone that bore the Paleo-Hebrew inscription “GAD” upon it which the King Solomon Sephardic Federation confirmed the authenticity of the inscription.

This stone throne is reminiscent of Gad’s memorial altar in Joshua chapter 22 in which they did not sacrifice upon but ...

In time to come your children might speak unto our children, saying, What have ye to do with the Lord God of Israel? For the Lord hath made Jordan a border between us and you, ye children of Reuben and children of Gad; ye have no part in the Lord: so shall your children make our children cease from fearing the Lord. Therefore we said, Let us now prepare to build us an altar, not for burnt offering, nor for sacrifice: But that it may be a witness between us, and you, and our generations after us, that we might do the service of the Lord before him with our burnt offerings, and with our sacrifices, and with our
peace offerings; that your children may not say to our children in time to come, Ye have no part in the Lord. Therefore said we, that it shall be, when they should so say to us or to our generations in time to come, that we may say again, Behold the pattern of the altar of the Lord, which our fathers made, not for burnt offerings, nor for sacrifices; but it is a witness between us and you. – Josh. 22:24b-28

In 1917 the British discovered, about 500 feet below the soil on the palace grounds a solid bronze Star of David indicating the Igbo people may have migrated from the ancient city of David. To commemorate this event, Nigerian kobo coins were minted with a Star of David on it.

While attending the Ovala Festival at Obu-Gad in Aguleri at the River Niger where Eri was said to have crossed there is a 12 stone altar built by Eri in the middle of the river that can be seen during the dry seasons when the water is low. This too recalls us to a Biblical passage of striking similarities specifically involving the Tribe of Gad.

And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan, that the Lord spake unto Joshua, saying, Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan, out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night. Then Joshua called the twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man: And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God into the midst of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, What mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever. And the children of Israel did so as Joshua commanded, and took up twelve stones out of the midst of Jordan, as the Lord spake unto Joshua, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel, and carried them over with them unto the place where they lodged, and laid them down there. And Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests which bare the ark of the covenant stood: and they are there unto this day. For the priests which bare the ark stood in the midst of Jordan, until everything was finished that the Lord commanded Joshua to speak unto the people, according to all that Moses commanded Joshua: and the people hasted and passed over. And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over, that the ark
of the Lord passed over, and the priests, in the presence of the people. And the children of Reuben, and the children of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, passed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses spake unto them: About forty thousand prepared for war passed over before the Lord unto battle, to the plains of Jericho. On that day the Lord magnified Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they feared Moses, all the days of his life. – Joshua 4:1-14

Between 1938-1959 Archeologists led by Thurston Shaw at an Igbo-Ukwu excavation near Oaeri town unearthed what is believed to be a mask portraying an Igbo face. Also unearthed were bronze items, pots, bowls, etc., including a pot believed to be used in the coronation of Igbo Kings. Also found were bronze intricate beads that reflected wealth and artistic skill as well as attests to international trade by ancient Igbos. Some archeological dating tests suggest Igbos have occupied Nigeria as early as 3,000 BCE. Radio carbon dating of the objects suggests that Igbos occupied Nigeria before 800 CE. Much of the items found in this excavation seem to have a modified Egyptian design and or influence which would make since seeing as the first Igbo are said to have come from Egypt in the Pre-Exodus-Exodus.

To be sure there are new discoveries here of late that have yet to be studied and analyzed. Also, we must ask, how much archeological evidence has been destroyed due to the Biafra War and Land Development? So further archeological evidences are bound to become more numerous in the near future.

Ohafia Igbos

Ohafia is a Clan and local government area in Abia State, Nigeria. It is an Igbo speaking region. The ancestral capital of Ohafia is the centrally located village of Elu (any relation with Eloha/Elohim?). But the Administrative Headquarters of the then Arochukwu/Ohafia and now Ohafia Local Government Area is EBEM OHAFIA. Other clans comprising the Ohafia LGA include Abiriba and Nkporo.
The ancestors of the Ohafia people were renowned as mighty warriors. This aspect of the Ohafia peoples history remains fundamental to the Ohafia people's sense of identity. The warrior's cap or "leopard cap" (Igbo: Okpu agu) is well known and is an associated product of Ohafia. The Ohafia warrior tradition is embodied in the performance of Iri agha.

Ohafia is home to the third largest military base in Nigeria, named Goodluck Jonathan Barracks. It houses the headquarters of the newly established 14 Brigade and 145 Battalion office complex.

The Tribe of Manasseh and Ephraim and the Igbo

And she called his name Joseph; and said, The LORD shall add to me another son. – Gen. 30:24

And Joseph called the name of the firstborn Manasseh: For God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. – Gen. 41:51

And unto Joseph in the land of Egypt were born Manasseh and Ephraim, which Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On bare unto him. –Gen 46:20

And now thy two sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, which were born unto thee in the land of Egypt before I came unto thee into Egypt, are mine; as Reuben and Simeon, they shall be mine. – Gen. 48:5

And he blessed them that day, saying, In thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and as Manasseh: and he set Ephraim before Manasseh. – Gen. 48:20
Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) is a fruitful bough, even a fruitful bough by a well; whose branches run over the wall: The archers have sorely grieved him, and shot at him, and hated him: But his bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob; (from thence is the shepherd, the stone of Israel:) Even by the God of thy father, who shall help thee; and by the Almighty, who shall bless thee with blessings of heaven above, blessings of the deep that lieth under, blessings of the breasts, and of the womb: The blessings of thy father have prevailed above the blessings of my progenitors unto the utmost bound of the everlasting hills: they shall be on the head of Joseph, and on the crown of the head of him that was separate from his brethren. - Gen. 49:22-26 – italics mine

And of Joseph (Ephraim and Manasseh) he said, Blessed of the LORD be his land, for the precious things of heaven, for the dew, and for the deep that coucheth beneath, And for the precious fruits [brought forth] by the sun, and for the precious things put forth by the moon, And for the chief things of the ancient mountains, and for the precious things of the lasting hills, And for the precious things of the earth and fulness thereof, and for the good will of him that dwelt in the bush: let the blessing come upon the head of Joseph, and upon the top of the head of him that was separated from his brethren. His glory is like the firstling of his bullock, and his horns are like the horns of unicorns: with them he shall push the people together to the ends of the earth: and they are the ten thousands of Ephraim, and they are the thousands of Manasseh. -Deut. 33:13-17 – italics mine

Of the tribe of Manasses were sealed twelve thousand.... tribe of Joseph (Ephraim) were sealed twelve thousand. – Rev. 7:6, 8 – italics mine

Manasseh is the son of Joseph, and he and his brother Ephraim were adopted as sons of Jacob/Israel in order to make the tribes 12, because, Levi, although a son of Jacob/Israel, had no inheritance in the Land of Promise, but the service of the priesthood unto GOD was to be their inheritance.
Ephraim, being made greater, was sometimes used to indicate all of 10 tribes of Israel’s Northern Kingdom. So, could Manasseh, being Ephraim’s brother also be used to indicate the 10 tribes or is the name Manasseh strictly used to only refer to the tribe. This has been a cause for much speculation and debate. Even the Book of Revelation seems to indicate Joseph is Ephraim and Manasseh is a separate tribe. Although I have heard that some argue that Manasseh in this passage was really Dan as they are mysteriously missing from the list of sealed tribes.

The Igbo’s of the West African country of Nigeria have claimed to be remnants of the lost tribes of dominantly of Gad, Zebulon, and Manasseh:

It has also been suggested that the Jewish Ibo people originated from a migration of Israelites who fled to West Africa.

The Igbo Jews traditionally claim descent from three particular Israelite tribes: Gad, Zevulun, and Menashe. The Jews of Manipur and Mizoram, the Bnei Menashe, also claim descent from the tribe of Menashe. It is thought that these Jews fled to Africa after the destruction of the biblical Temples in Jerusalem and established communities all across the African continent.

Yet evidence, either hard or circumstantial to firmly establish this belief is hard to come by. I have no problem believing Manasseh to be among the Igbo, but if so, they have likely been swallowed up by Gad, the dominate Hebraic tribe among the Igbo. I can understand the possibility that Manasseh may be used as the name Ephraim sometimes has been, in a generic term to denote Israelites from all 10 tribes that have migrated to be with their brethren in Nigeria. Or it could literally mean the tribe of Manasseh, because Manasseh, being black, or at least darker than some of his Semitic Hebrew brethren, finding himself in Assyrian exile and captivity and escaping, would find themselves migrating to countries that more closely resemble their visual ethnos so as to blend in to the peoples around them, skirting certain types of persecution, while at the same being able to practice their faith without trouble.
However, there is a linguistic connection the Igbo clans have to Manasseh. Igbo clans who have the word “Ichi” or “chi” in their names believe they are from Manasseh. In Nnewi there is the Ichi-da and Ichi sub clan. In Anambra State there is the Ichi clan. In Enugu State we have the Ame-chi Awkunan clan, all of which have traces of Manasseh’s name within them.

Manasseh in India?

The Israeli authorities have officially recognized and gave allowance of aliyah (immigration) status (with the understanding that they have to officially convert) to the Kuki-Chin-Mizo people of Northeast India, also known as Bnei Menashe, in 2005 by the Sephardic Chief Rabbi of Israel.

The Indian connection to Manasseh has also been confirmed by the Jewish Canadian Archeologist Simcha Jacobovici in his A&E documentary “Quest for the Lost Tribes” This documentary also reveals that a portion of all 12 tribes the Afghan Pathan’s who are now Muslim, carry the names and some of the traditional traits and practices of the 12 tribes of Israel. This documentary also tells of the Jews of Kaifeng China who believe they are from Manasseh.

Manasseh and Ephraim who were prophesied to become very large, and like Simeon and Levi were to be scattered among all the tribes. So I think it is a likely possibility that Manasseh and even Ephraim could be among the Igbos. But just the same, I am sure we can find them among many other people groups of the world.

Manasseh in Europe?
British Israelite Scholars such as Steven M. Collins and Yair Davidiy have written extensive volumes on the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh alone that is too complex to get into here, but suffice it to say the main gist of their research and belief point to Britain having absorbed much of the Ephraimites and the United States absorbing much of Manasseh.

Igbo Worship and its Paraphernalia

Ofo

The Ofo is a staff of authority carried by Heads of family and clans as well as elders, leaders and or ruling authorities in Igboland, which is likened to Moses’ staff which was used to render judgment upon the people or call down curses upon Israel’s enemies.

Prayer

The formulation of Jewish prayer and the prayers of the Igbo are strikingly similar. In Judaism a standard opening for prayer, especially in the prayers called the “Amidah” is; “Blessed are you Oh Lord our God, God of our Forefathers, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob…” In Igboland it is common to open certain prayers with, “Chukwu, Chi nke nna nna anyi ha…” which translates to, “Great God, God of our forefathers…”

It should also be a note of interest that Igbos prayed with their heads covered as does the Jews, prior to the coming of the white man and the advent of Christianity. As in Israel, So in Igboland.
Special Times, Holy Days and Festivals

I will be brief and general in my description of these events as all Igbos have such festivals but they are called by slightly different names and have slightly differing traditions accompanying them in various parts of Igboland.

Leviticus 23 gives us a rundown of the High Holydays of Israel and as one shall see. The Igbos also have their version of these Holy Days and festivals.
Igbo’s have an 8 day weekly cycle which “Eke Ukwu” is the rest day. Some have speculated that the 8 day cycle came from Jeroboam's decrees which would mean Igbo’s are more Israelite than Judean, seeing as Jeroboam rules the 10 Tribes of the Northern Kingdom.
Before the white man came, the Igbo day as the Jewish day is from sunset to sunset.

As in Israel, so in Igboland.

New Moon

Num. 10:10, 28:11, I Sam. 20:5, II Kings 4:22-23, Psalm 81:3, Ezek. 46:1, Isa. 66.23, Col. 2:16

Igbos have kept a Lunar Calendar much like that of Israel with set days for feasts and celebrations which mirror one another as the reader will soon see. However, due to the Influence of the Christian West observing the Lunar Calendar is not practiced as it once was.

Exd. 12:1, 16:1, 19:1

Along with the New moon is the sanctification of the new month as well. Just as pre-Babylonian Jews had no names for the months, so too Igbos count and not name their months. This testifies to the fact that a wave of Israelites came to Nigeria prior to the Babylonian and Assyrian captivities.
As in Israel, so in Igboland.

Passover

And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. – Exd. 12:8

The Olite Festival in Igboland is very similar to Passover among the Jews. Animals are slaughtered and eaten with bitter leaves and yam. This too shows that despite there being a Pre-Exodus-Exodus of Gadites that settled Igboland, many Israelites came Post Egyptian Exodus to be with their brothers and carried the tradition of Passover with them.

The Oriri Achicha festival in Igboland is celebrated by eating unleavened dried bread made from cocoyam and is the same as the Jewish Feast of Unleavened Bread. Like Passover this feast takes place in the evening, a long walk takes place in the bush with priests and elders taking the lead, this is like a re-enactment of the Exodus from Egypt.

As in Israel, so in Igboland.

First Fruits
The New Yam Festival (Emume Iri Ji) is also much like the Festival of First Fruits (Exd. 23:16) which one is not to appear empty handed before the YHWH/Chukwu respectively. In Igboland the best of the first fruits is dug up and presented and after which a blood sacrifice is made (usually a chicken) and then the feasting can begin.

Also no one is permitted to eat the first fruits in Igboland until after the Iwaji, ifejioku festival which is similar to the harvest festival and sacrificial rituals as seen in Leviticus 23.

As in Israel, so in Igboland.

Blowing the Ram’s Horn (Shofar)

Exd. 19:16, Lev. 23:24, 25:9, Num. 10:1-9, Josh. 6:4, Hos. 5:8-9, Isa. 27:13, Psa. 81:3-4, I Cor. 15:52

Igbos use a ram’s horn that the Jews call a Shofar, or even an elephant tusk (usually only Igbo Rulers) to call the village together for various kinds of meetings.

There is a festival in parts of Igboland known as Ilo Mmuo (Reconciling with God) is similar to the Biblical festival of Yom Teruah (Feast of Trumpets) more popularly known as Rosh HaShannah.
As in Israel, so in Igboland.

Atonement

Lev. 16:6, 23:26-33, Deut. 21:6-8

As in Israel, so in Igboland; a blood sacrifice is required for atonement.

Lev. 16:7-10, 21-22, 26

Israelites and Igbos also share the concept and custom of the scapegoat as seen in the passages above. In many parts of Igboland the sins of the clan are pronounced over a he-goat after which it is let loose.

In Igbo land the Festival of Iba Nzu, Isu Osisi and Ikwa Akuto is like Rosh HaShannah (New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonements). Iba Nzu is a six day festival, the first three days, elders cover themselves in white chalk and seclude themselves in their homes for three days with no contact with anyone and the last three days they come out and are seen about the community and on the seventh day is Isu Osisi and at the end of this day the elder men and women go to the home of the chief priest for a feast. Next comes Ikwa Akuto where the women of the community gather at dawn and call down death curses upon the evil doers of the community and petition Chukwu Abiama to forgive the community of their
sins. After which broken vessels are thrown into the forest, the women go home and take a ritual bath, this constitutes the end of the Igbo year.

In Jewish practice there are ten days, five of which a person reconciles with God, the other five days a person reconciles with his fellow man. It is also traditional to wear garments of white during this time. This corresponds to the three days of seclusion and the three days of being seen in public. The covering of white chalk is like the Jewish wearing of white clothes during this time.

In Judaism one last meal is eaten before the fast of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonements), the next day, one takes a mikvah (ritual bath) and is a day of confession of sins and a call for justice with the tearing of garments before the day ends, when it is considered that the books of judgement are closed for the year in heaven and everyone’s fate is sealed till next year. This is very much like the Igbo Ikwa Akuto ceremony. One can obviously see the striking parallels.

Also pertinent to the concept of atonement is that of purification which in Igboland is called Ikpu Aru Na Ana Igbo. This takes place when odd happenings, great misfortunes and strange unexplained negative occurrences such as crop failures, untimely deaths, miscarriages, plagues, etc., happen that causes the Igbo elders to take notice and declare that some “Aru” (abomination) has brought such things about. The abomination is made known through consultation of Chukwu by the Nri priests and then a purification and or atoning ritual takes place.

As in Israel, so in Igboland.

Feast of Tabernacles – Sukkot
This festival is called in Igboland, “Ima ntu” or “Ima Igu” in Aguleri and it is called by other names in other parts of Igboland, but the festivals are all essentially the same. During this festival the Igbos reside in a tent or temporary shelter (usually of palm fronds, branches and other indigenous foliage) for 7-8 days, sometimes longer.

The Ijele is a type of booth or shrine made in Igboland which to me resembles a Sukkah/Booth. It has “images” surrounding it which as stated earlier we know to be representory of ancestors and not idols. This is especially pertinent because during Sukkot it is traditional to invite the Patriarchs and one's deceased ancestors into the Sukkah to participate in the festivities.

As in Israel, so in Igboland.

7th Year

Exd. 23:10-11

The Sabbatical or Shmita year as it is known in Judaism the Igbos practice as well. They farm the land for six years and let it lay fallow the 7th year. Some places in Igboland cultivate for 4 years and allows the land to rest on the 5th year.
As in Israel, so in Igboland.

50th Year - Jubilee

Lev. 25:8-10

This 50 year celebration is still observed all over Igboland and is called by various names in different parts of Igboland, but the celebration is essentially the same everywhere you go.

Closely tied with Jubilee is the redemption of land found in Lev. 25:23-28 and Igbos too do this as did the ancient Israelites. Igbos also practices the concept of land which is not redeemable as if found in Lev. 25:30.

As in Israel, so in Igboland.

Priesthood and Sacrifices

High/Chief Priests and Priests
Leviticus 8:12-13; 21:1

The Levites filled this role in Israel; the Nri priests do so in Igboland and are thought to have a Levitical linage.

As In Israel, so in Igboland.

Prophet

In Judaism Prophets are called Nevi’im and prophesying among the Igbo is called Ibu Amuma. Like in Judaism a man or a woman can be a prophet in Igboland. Chukwu can speak to an Igbo in a vision or dream. A Prophet will go about the clan announcing that Chukwu has revealed something to him/her and in the evening the clan leaders go to the shrine of Chukwu in which the Prophet operates from and it is there that the Prophet reveals the prophecy to the people. Depending upon the nature of the prophecy, the leaders will decide on how to act upon what was said, such as if a communal sacrifice may be in order. This is why the Pentecostal and or Charismatic Christianity tend to thrive among the Igbos.

Earthen Altar

Exodus 20:24
In the Torah we read of the Patriarchs building altars of earth and natural stone to sacrifice unto YHWH. Such altars in Igboland are common and are called “Okwu Ani.” They are maintained by hand and no tool is permitted to be used on them. Most other altars in pagan religious use hew stone whereas Jews and Igbos use natural uncut earth and stone to construct their altars.

A 12 stone altar exists in the middle of the Niger River in Aguleri where Eri, son of Gad is said to have crossed and it can be seen during the dry season when the water levels are lowest. Recall in Joshua 4 where a 12 stone memorial altar was erected in the middle of the Jordan.

Leviticus goes into great detail regarding various offerings, drink offerings, peace offerings, sin offerings, all of which are practiced to some degree among the Igbo.

As in Israel, so in Igboland.

Removal of Morning Ashes

Leviticus 6:4

Though this deals with the responsibilities of the Levitical priesthood, Israel was considered a nation of priests and so common Israelites voluntarily took upon themselves priestly rituals in daily living. This is an example of but one of them that the Igbo practices as well.
Igbo’s consider it an obligation, mandatory to remove ashes from the previous days fire before one kindles a new one. If not, the holiness or purity of whatever is cooked on the old ashes is thrown into question.

As In Israel, so in Igboland.

Defilement

Leviticus 18:24-30  “Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things: for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you: And the land is defiled: therefore I do visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: (For all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled;) That the land spue not you out also, when ye defile it, as it spued out the nations that were before you. For whosoever shall commit any of these abominations, even the souls that commit them shall be cut off from among their people. Therefore shall ye keep mine ordinance, that ye commit not any one of these abominable customs, which were committed before you, and that ye defile not yourselves therein: I am the Lord your God.”

Such commands as stated above, the Igbo observe just as Israel held their land as holy and sacred and would not do anything considered an abomination to defile it, as In Israel, so in Igboland.

The Land to Israel and Igbo alike is so holy, it is said of both that upon death in a foreign land and in the resurrection, the body too will make its way back to the Land, even if it has to roll underground to get there!

Just as Israel has various offerings, sacrifices and libations, some of which are used in purification ceremonies of the Land, so too in Igboland for the Igbo.

Holy Ground Exd. 3:5, Josh. 5:15

When I entered the Shrine at Obu-Gad in Aguleri which contains the stone throne with paleo-Hebrew inscription at the foot of it in cowry shells that reveals that the throne is dedicated to Eri’s father Gad. I had to remove my shoes before entering. There are many other places in Igboland such as this.

Tithe Lev. 27:30-32, Num. 18:24, Deut. 14:22-29

Caliben I.O. Michael in his book “Our Roots: Igbo Israel Heritage” p. 43 says,

“This is an old Igbo practice that is seldom done now... When Igbos were practicing these in line with the commandment they had no beggars among them but with the neglect of this commandment there is now insurgence of beggars in Igboland...”
Igbos tithe from their livestock and fields, and those who acted as priests take a portion of the tithe brought to Chukwu Abiama and distributed among the less fortunate in the community.

It has been noted that Igbos who follow and respect Omenana believe it so closely resembles Torah, Judaism that Igbos have one of the lowest rates of poverty and crime among the surrounding peoples in Nigeria.

Castrated animals Lev. 22:24

It is an abomination to offer up such an animal in Igboland, for it will not be accepted by the priests for sacrifice, EVER!

Igbo of the Islands

It must be recognized that Igbo’s thus Gadites and other Israelites inhabit the U.S., West Indies and Caribbean Islands due to the slave trade.

It is believed that over 60% of Igbos has ended up in various parts of the world and that approximately 25% of all African Americans are Igbo as well as a good number who occupy the West Indies and Caribbean Islands such as and especially Jamaica and Haiti. This is because there were some Igbo slaves either too sick, on the verge of death, to rebellious and unruly to travel to the U.S. were dumped off on
these Island and some Igbo were simply sold to Island plantations and thus the Igbo were spread throughout these Islands.

Haiti still has a proverb that says, “The Igbo has hung himself,” meaning one would rather die than to be forced to do something. They also have a folk song called, “Ibu Lele.” Anything in Haiti that has value is referred to as “Ibu.” They also have a place in Haiti called, Ibo Beach.

In Jamaica they have a place called “Ibu Town.” As well as a section of Belize City which carries this same name (Eboe Town).

It is said that Jamaican Igbos are known for the reddish hue to their brown skin and are called “Red Ibos.” Interestingly enough, the soil of Nigeria where Igbos lives is red. Adam, the first man, his name means “red.”

“Red Ibos” are also a common phrase in Barbados.

Ebo Landing in St. Simons Georgia (1850’s) is known as a slave ship landing area and on one occasion the Igbo slaves refused to disembark in order to be sold and instead jumped overboard and drowned; believing their souls would return to Igboland. Could this event be spiritual DNA or spiritual residual memory come into play; recalling slavery in Egypt or Assyrian captivities or the Masada Revolt and Thus the Igbo would rather die than to allow history to repeat itself?
Some believe the Jamaican Maroons and the Jamaican Patois and Rastafarians are of Igbo descent because certain Igbo words still exist in their tongue as well as their draw, affinity and practice of Judaism or Black Hebrewism.

Islamicized African Hebraic Tribes

There are many other African Tribes and countries who once were Jewish, came from a Hebrew/Israelite lineage or had Jewish populations, but after the Muslim religious invasions of such places since the 2nd World War many of these tribes have converted to Islam, two such tribes that has been recently brought to my attention that may have Hebraic roots is the Maasai tribe from Tanzania who reside near Mount Kilimanjaro and the Kurya tribe who practice circumcision.

David Saks writes on this phenomenon:

“As the bare statistics amply demonstrate, the story of Jewish life on the African continent since the last World War has been one of steady decline, to the point that many once active communities are now defunct, or at best operating on a significantly scaled down level. There are fewer than fifty Jews left in Zambia, once home to a community of between 1000-1200 in the mid-1950s with a viable presence in eight different centres. Namibia, at its peak numbering over 400 souls, has likewise dwindled to a few dozen. Organised Jewish life in Mozambique, such as it was, all but disappeared following the demise of Portuguese rule and the onset of a ruinous civil war in the early 1970s. A trickle of individuals have since made their way back to the country, but there is some way to go before establishing a Jewish community on any formal, organised basis will be possible. About a hundred remain in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, down from over two thousand in the days of Belgian colonial rule, and the Jewish community in Kenya, while still reasonably viable is, at around 260 souls, only half the size it was at its height.
The story of the rise and rapid decline of the Sub-Saharan African Jewish communities, as one would expect, mirrors the rise and decline of European settlement in these countries in the post-independence era. Jews arrived with the European settlers – in the case of Southern and Northern Rhodesia (today’s Zimbabwe and Zambia) they were amongst the very first such settlers – and by and large departed with them. Taken as a whole, and leaving aside South Africa for the time being, the historical verdict on Jewish settlement in Southern Africa would seem to be that it was both a comparatively recent, and a temporary phenomenon, lasting less than a century. This verdict may change in the event of their being a renewed wave of Jewish immigration to the countries concerned, but this is certainly not on the cards in the short term.

Even swifter was the demise of the vastly more numerous and far longer-established North African Jewish communities, the combined result of the desire to make aliya and the wave of persecution that followed the establishment of Israel in 1948 and also (especially in the case of Algeria) political instability. In all, close to 600 000 Jews emigrated during the first two decades after World War II, about two-thirds of these to Israel and most of the balance to France. Just prior to this Morocco (300 000) and Algeria (140 000) both had Jewish communities well in excess of South Africa’s at the time while Tunisia’s, at 110 000, was at least as large. Outright persecution was primarily behind the swift demise of the Jewish communities of Libya (38 000) and Egypt (75 000) Today Morocco, with 5600 Jews in 2001, is home to the continent’s second largest Jewish community while Tunisia, with 1500, is the only other African country whose Jewish population exceeds a thousand.

Ethiopia, too, has at most only a few hundred remaining Jews, but the demise of this particular community, one of the oldest in Africa, took place under far more inspiring circumstances. In 1991, in the famed ‘Operation Solomon’ initiative, virtually the entire Ethiopian Jewish population of 20 000 was airlifted to Israel. Over the next decade, another 20 000 Ethiopians came to Israel, the majority of them being non-Jewish relatives seeking reunification with their Jewish families...

...even South African Jewry, estimated at 75 000, having declined by more than a third since 1980...”
Thus there are many African tribes who may be a part of the 10 lost tribes of Israel, but due to war, persecution and Islamic conversion, they have dwindled to and are becoming harder to find.

The Century old Abayudaya community

This increasingly famous community (the Abayudayas) of more than 800 people has been practicing Judaism for 90 years in rural Uganda. In 2002, more than 300 members of the community formally affirmed their Judaism under a beit din of Conservative rabbis. In addition, one of the Abayudaya leaders, Rabbi Gershom Sizomu, this year became the first African rabbi ordained by a liberal American rabbinical school.

The Abayudaya's Rabbi Sizomu envisions the creation of an African Judaism. There are certain values and experiences that unify Africans and that should find expression in a way of being Jewish which is a better fit for Africans than any Western Jewish movement. This is what is most promising about Alex learning with the Abayudaya: the teachers and the student will have so much in common. Like the Ghanaian Jews, the Abayudaya know the feeling of relying on farming to make a living. They live in large extended families. They rely less on Western technology. They are used to negotiating relations with practitioners of Christianity and traditional African religions.

Israelites all over Africa

Many books talk about the presence of the Israelites in this region before the arrival of the Islam. The most important of these books is entitled L'Arabie avant Islam (1994). This book justifies the presence of Jewish names that are found in this region.
Let us begin with certain names in Ancient Arabia that give an indication of a link with Israel.

MECCA is the great pilgrimage destination of Muslims that is located in Saudi Arabia. The name MECCA is derived from MAACA, a Portuguese word that is used to refer to the holy city or the ancient Jewish holy city before the Islamic domination that turned this city into what it is today. MECCA in Hebrew is Ma’akah (mah-ak-aw’) or Ma’akath (mah-ak-awth’)(Joshua 13:13), hkem, or tkem Ù which means the city where King Solomon stationed his son Deker as his steward (1Kings 4: 7-9). It is also the name of Solomon’s mother (2 Samuel 3: 3).

KABA is a place of pilgrimage for the Jews in Arabia before Islam. It became a place of pilgrimage for Muslims. This was discovered under the name Kamba among the priests who belong to the order that worships the only God; a Bantu religion that combines Judaism of ancient times and the Christianity of the very early centuries called Kimbaguism.

MEDINA: This is a city that used to be called YATHRIB before the arrival of Islam in Arabia. It was bordered in the north by the Kingdom of Shaba and in the south by the city of Mecca (cf. Arabia before Islam) YATHRIB Ù YARIB in the Hebrew language means byry "God fights or intercedes". In Israel, the word was used as JARIB to refer to:

1. Son of Simon (1 Chronicles 4:24);

2. Sacrificer (Ezra 10:18)
DJEDDA was a commercial port in Arabia, situated on the Red Sea opposite Sudan. It's real name was JUDA which corresponds to the Hebrew name Yahuwdah (yeh-hoo-daw'), hdwhy, a name that was used for this region before the Christian era. In one of the reports written by the Portuguese in the 15th century AD this name was mentioned as the same name in southern Sudan during the medieval era. (Cf. Figures 4 and 4B).

YEMEN comes from the Hebrew word YIMNA, Yimna (yim-naw') enmy (God will withhold). This name in Israel, YIMNA, was also used to refer to the descendants of Aser, one of the sons of Helem (1 Chronicles 7:35).

SANAA is a city of Yemen. The name is derived from the Hebrew word SAN-SANNA (keer-yath' san-naw') or Qiryath Cepher (keer-yath' say-fer) hno tyrq or rpo tyrq and which means the city of Judah (Joshua 15:31).

MAKAL is derived from the Hebrew word Ma'akah (mah-ak-aw') or Ma'akath. (Mah-ak-awth'), Joshua 13:13 hkm ou tkem or MAQUELOTH (Assembly). This means an encampment of the Israelites in the desert. This same name exists in Yemen as Makalla, in Sudan as Makala, in Angola as Makela and in Zaire as Makala.

MARIB comes from the Hebrew word MERIBA Mariybah (mer-ee-baw') byry (Exodus 17, Joshua 14:6-7, Numbers 20:3, Ezechiel 47:19). Marib was a water dam of the Jews in Yemen before the fall of Himyar to the Sabeans. This word was in Zaire (Maribu, Malebo, Mari'b, meaning a village).
HIMYAR (people and kingdom)

HIMYAR originates from the Hebrew word HIMYAR (God resists), Yimrah (yim-raw'), and hrmy. A descendant of Aser, son of Tsophah (1 Chronicles 7:36-37). The Sabeans overthrew this Jewish kingdom in the 7th century AD; it was the birth of Hima-Tutsi that was founded by the Sabeans and of Himana that was founded by the Bantus. Himana (God) is Rwanda, Zaire, Central African Republic and in Congo Brazzaville. However, the division between these two Himas is so obvious in Rwanda and Burundi between the HUTUS and TUTSIS.

Considering the fact that we are aware that the Jews left Jerusalem because of the assaults from the north and the east and that, at this time, Solomon had ships at Ethion on the Red Sea, all these probabilities should not leave us in a state of indifference. A very heavy Jewish presence therefore had to supervise this navigation. The fall of this empire gave rise to a wave of migration from the peninsula towards Ethiopia and Sudan.

Nyamey or Niamey comes from the Hebrew word YAMAI or YAHMAI, Yachmay (yakh-mah'-ee) ymxy , prince of Isaac, from the family of Tola (1 Chronicles 7:2). It is doubtful that this word could be related to Yabnéel (the Eternal One constructs). To the North of Congo (Zaire), it is pronounced Nyambé or Nyamé ; in the South and the East, it is Njambé, Nzambé, Njabné(invisible God).

Tahoua originates from the Hebrew word TAPPOUAH, Tappuwach (tap-poo'-akh) xwpt , full of Judah (Jos.15:34), Ephraim's town (Jos. 16:8; 17:7-8), son of Hebron (1Chr. 2:43). The same name is found in Congo, North of Katanga in the tribe of BATATOUBAS (Ben Taboua).

Agade is coined from the Hebrew word GAD (gawd) dg (Genesis 33:10; 49:19).
Difa is derived from the Hebrew word DIPHAT or Riyphath (ree-fath') or (probably by a spelling mistake) Diyphath (dee-fath') tpyr or tpyd (1Chr. 1:6).

Maradi comes from the Hebrew words MARA+RADI, Mara (water of) or Marah (maw-raw') hrm (Exo. 15:23, 25; No b. 33:8-9). Nehemiah's nickname (Ruth 1:20). RADI originates from RADDAI, son of Isaachar, brother of David Radday (rad-dah'-ee) ydr (1Chr. 2:14).

Dosso is derived from the Hebrew words DOE+SO: Do'eg (do-ayg') or (complete) Dow'eg (do-ayg' gad or gwd), sacerdotal locality where Saul massacred the people and the animals (1 Sam.22:7-23).

CHAD

The name Chad comes from the Hebrew word TSADO or TSADOQT, sadowq (tsaw-doke') qwdu, which means "fair", "upright". Eliezer, son of Aaron (1 Chr. 24:3); son of Ahitoub (2 Sam 8:17). This name means "the only God".

N'Djamena (Capital of Chad) is coined from the Hebrew word YAMINA or YAMIN, Yamiyn (yaw-meen') Nymy; right hand, son of Simon, founder of a clan (Gen.46:10; Exo. 6:15; Nob. 26:12). It also means man of Judah from the family of YERAHMEEL (1 Chro. 2:27).

Massenya originates from the Hebrew word MARSENA or Marc@na,'(mar-sen-aw'), anorm, meaning one of the seven princes of Persia who had the permission to see the king (Ezra 1:14).
Guer is derived from the Hebrew word GUERA, Gera'(gay-raw') arg grandson of Benjamin (Gen. 46:21; 1 Chr. 8:3; Ju. 3:15).

Salamat comes from the Hebrew word SALMA or SALA, Salma'(sal-maw') amlv, father of BOOZ or BOAZ, the husband of Ruth the Moabite, of the tribe of Judah (Rut.4:18-21). Descendant of Caleb (1 Chr. 2:51).

UGANDA

The word UGANDA is derived from the Hebrew word HOR – GUIDGD or GOUĐGANDA, dgdgh rx,(encampment) in the Bambala language in RDC. Gouganda also means encampment, to enclose or to pile up. The Bantus call Nganda their place of encampment. GOUĐGANDA stands for the encampment of Israel in the desert (Numbers 33:32; Deuteronomy 10:6-7).

Kampala is derived from the Hebrew word PALAL, Palal (paw-lawl) llp meaning 'God has judged'. This was the name of the son of Ouzai who contributed to the reconstruction of the city walls of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 3:25).

Ishasha, South-western town, as the case is in KINSHASA.

People:
AGANDA is derived from the Hebrew word GOUGANDA. This word was used in Germany to refer to the Jews and was attributed to Hitler's concentration camp and that of Stalin in Kazakhst: KAR-AGANDA (ref. Déportées à Ravensbruck, Seuil, Paris VII

RWANDA

RWANDA is derived from the Hebrew word YOADDAR, meaning "God has adorned and revealed" or "God be praised". Juda also bears the same name (as Luanda in Angola), son of Saul (1 Chronicles 8:36; Daniel 9:42).

KIGALI comes from the Hebrew word Gilgal (ghil-gawl) Igglg, meaning the act of rolling as illustrated in Joshua 4:19. In Rwanda Gilgal or Kigali was a city of Hutu priests who belonged to the kingdom of Buzi Houra. In Jewish history, Gilgal was the place of the first encampment after crossing the river Jordan. It was also the general community of the Israelites during the conquest of Canaan. Twelve (12) stones that were taken from the bed of River Jordan were erected at Gilgal (Joshua 4:19-24)

Using a play on words, the word Guigal (roll, remove) calls to mind the removal of shame in Egypt, as a result of circumcision (Joshua 5:7-9). The camp was set up between Jordan and Jericho. Later, a town developed in this area towards the northern banks of the Jordan (15:7). It is not clear whether the community of Samuel, the judge, encompassed this Gilgal or another place that bore this name (1 Samuel 7:16). Apparently, this was where the royal proclamation and confirmation of Saul took place (11:15).

It was at Gilgal, in the valley of Jordan that the Israelites assembled to resist the Philistines, their oppressors. Saul could not restrain his men who became impatient because of the delay of Samuel to
offer sacrifices and so he decided to offer the sacrifices himself (13:4-15). As a result of this disobedience, Saul could not have the privilege of founding a dynasty (v. 13-14). It was also in Gilgal that the king, Saul, having contravened divine instruction and chosen to spare Agag, was stripped of his kingship; it was over there, in Gilgal, that the spirit of God left him (15:20-23; 16:14)

It was also at Gilgal that the representatives of the tribe of Juda came to welcome David, after the death of Absalom (2 Samuel 19:16,41). Under the monarchs that succeeded Jeroboam, Gilgal became, as other sacred places, a home of idol worship and so the prophets stigmatized it (Ho 4:15; 9:15; 12:12); (Am 4:4; 5:5). Beth-Gilgal (or the home of Gilgal) which was mentioned after the captivity was also probably the same place (Ne. 12:29). The location of Khirbet al' Athlah, 2 kilometers to the East of Jericho, corresponds to the Biblical data and to the tradition of J. Mulenberg who proposes another site to the Northeastern side of Jericho, very near to Khirbet el Mefjir, two (2) villages from which Eli and Elise descended to Bethel (Deuteronomy11.30; 2 Kings 2:1-4; probably 4:38 also ). Probably it is possible to place it where Djildjilia is currently located, more than 11 km to the North of Bethel. The town is mentioned alongside Dor and Tirsta in Joshua 12.23 . Djildjulieh is a bit to the North of the torrent of Kanah which is 8 kilometers to the North-East of Antipatris at the fringes of the plain of Saron (ref. Bible Dictionary)

It is also a place of illicit worship and an abode for the prophets, at the Northern part of Israel , about 7 kilometers from Shiloh and Bethel . These Hutu priests were exterminated by the right wing German militants during the 19 th century and probably with the help of the Catholic church which together with the Tutsis (the Hamite nomads), at the time, had to put an end to any Judaistic practice on the hill.

GISENI comes from the Hebrew word GUÉCHAN, Geyshan (gay-shawn) Nvyg which means heavy, massive, mass; man of Judah, son of Yahdai (1 Chronicles 2:47)

NZADI is derived from the Hebrew word 'ZABDI'– ydbz which, in Hebrew, means : God has given or the gift of God.
Man of Judah from the family of Zerach, founder of a patriarchal family (Joshua 7:1)

Man of Shepham, proposed under King David for the management of the wine reserves in the vineyards.

Kinshasa the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo is a city that was set up by a colony of Levites who came from Zimbabwe (the Lemba people). The real name of this sacerdotal town is Banza-Lemba, which still exists at the foot of the hill on which the University of Kinshasa was built (eg. Université Lovanium).

Just as with other Jewish sacerdotal towns, the legend of Kinshasa is in consonance with what the Biblical Dictionary says about Kuschaja (the pronunciation in the local language): a Levite of great stature.

This name, Kinshasa,(the capital of Congo) was used in Uganda as Ishasa. It is derived from KUSCHAJA which was a Levite of the family of Merari:(1 Chronicles 15:17).

This town is also called MALEBO which comes from MERIBA or Marib. It is a city that is made up of twenty-four municipalities or communes, each of which has a Jewish name. These names could also be found in the communities and avenues of this town.

From the East to the West of the city of Kinshasa
MALUKU – MALUK or MELIKU – Kwlm ou ykwlm : Levite: leader of the sacrificial squad that came back with ZEROBABEL (Ne. 12:2; Esd. 10:29-32).

One of the priests who put their seal on the pact (Nehemiah 10:5 and 29).

NSELE – TSELE – qlu meaning a crack, one of the heroes of King David (2 Samuel 23:37; 1 Chronicles 11:39).

KINKOLE – KOHELETH or KEL KOHELETH (head of the assembly of the wise), according to the historians. QOHELETH appears to be the author of the book entitled Ecclesiastes (ref. Bible Dictionary).

MASINA – MARSENA anorm , One of the seven princes of Persia who had the permission to see the king. (Est. 1:14)

The name MASINA started in Yemen through Mali, Ivory Coast, the two Congos up to the frontiers of South Africa and Zimbabwe.

KIMBANSEKE – BESEK or KELBEZEK, qzb The place where Saul reviewed the troops of Judah (1 Samuel 11:8). The name exists today as Benseke to the West of the city.
MATETE – MATITIA or MATITI – hyttm ou whyttm which means 'gift from the eternal one'. The Levite that King David at the 14th position of the cantors. (1 Chr. 25:3; Esd. 10:43; Ne. 8:4)

LEMBA – LEHEM – Mxl .. which means peace (1 Chr. 4:22). This name also stands for peace in some of the Bantu native languages of Congo. A case in point is Luba.

SELEMBAO – SELEMIA or CHELEMIAOU – hymlv ou whymlv, which means that the Eternal One has rewarded. A porter in the Temple during the reign of King David: (1 Chr. 26:14; Jeremiah 26:14; Jeremiah 36:26; Nehemiah 3:30; Esd. 10:39-41).

YOLO – YALO – Nwly, son of Esdras of the tribe of Judah (1 Chr. 4:17)

LIMETE – LEMEHE – METEJ. LEHEM. This means peace and METEJ, which stands for restraint in the capital, refers to a town that David took from the Philistines (2 Samuel 8:1).

KAZAVUBU – ZAVOUB – dwbz – The son of Nathan, the first minister under Solomon (1 Kings 4:5).

NGAFULA – AFULA – a town to the North of Jerusalem.
NGIRI – NGIRI – KIR – rym, a place where the Assyrians deported the inhabitants of Damascus to (2 Kings 16:9; Am. 1:5; Es. 22:6)

MAKALA – MAKHELOTH or MAKELA – thqm, meaning assembly. This was the camp of Israel in the desert (Numbers 33:25-26). This word exists in Yemen, in Sudan, in the two Congos and in Angola.

LINGWALA – GUELE – lawag, which means God's majesty, a spy in the tribe of Gad (Numbers 13:15). The root of this word, GUELE, is found in LING-WALA and NGAGUELE (NGAN-GUELE), a fishing port along River Congo.

NGALIEMA – GALIM Or GAL-LEEM – Mylg, which means a heap. This is the name of a village near GUIBEA, where Saul hailed from (1 Samuel 25:44; 2 Samuel 4:13-16; Joshua 15:59).

MBESEKE – BEZEK (1 Samuel 11:8).

NGABA – GABA, ybg, tax collector, the Benjamite who agreed to settle in Jerusalem after the captivity (Ne. 11:8).

ZABA – ZABAD – ybg, dbz meaning God has given (1 Chr. 7:21).
GOMBE – GOB or GOBE – bg or bwg, which means well or water tank. It refers to the place where, during the reign of David, the Israelites fought with the Philistines (2 Samuel 21:18-19).

BARUMBU – BAHOURIM, ref. BURUNDI

b. Application of prefixes to names of provinces, towns and people

The province of Bandundu in DRC

BANDUNDU is also the name of a tribe:

BENUNU – BENINU – wnynb, means our son, one of the Levites who gave their blessing to the covenant with The Eternal One (Ne. 10:14).

KUTU = KOUTH, a town in Babylon where some of the inhabitants were sent to Samaria after the deportation of the ten tribes of Israel.

MUSHIE = MOUCHI – yvwm.. A Levite son of Merari, who was the founder of a clan (Ex. 6:19; Numbers 3:20; 1 Chr. 6:4).
KWAMOUTH = YARMOUTH – twmry, which means height. This refers to a territory given to Judah (Joshua 10:3-27; 15:35; Ne. 11:29).

YAASA = YAASSAI – wvey; This means the Eternal One accomplishes (Esd. 10:37)

NKANA = KANA – hṅ, which means a torrent from Ephraim and Manasseh (Joshua 16:8; 17:9). In Zaire, NKANA means torrent as well.

Some ethnic groups in Bandundu

The names of some ethnic groups in Bandundu are preceded by the prefix BA, which is derived from BEN.

BAYAKA = BEN YAAQAN or (ben-ay' yah-ak-awn)– Nqey-ynb’, ancestors beside whom the Israelites encamped after they left MOSEROTH (Numbers 33:31-32; Deuteronomy 10:6; 1 Chronicles 1:42)

BAMBALA = BEN BAALA, BAALA – hleb, meaning mountain of Judah (Joshua 15:11). It is a town at the southern side of Judah.
BASUKU = BEN SOUKKOTH – twko or tko, the first camp of the Israelites after that of RAMSES (Exodus 12:37; 13:20; Numbers 33:5-6).

BAYANSHI = BEN YAN SCHEN – Nvy, meaning sleeping, refers to one of the valiant men of King David (2 Samuel 23:32).

BA TSINI or BATENDE = BENTSINI – Nu or Nyu, which means dwarf palm tree (Numbers 20:1; 27:14; Deuteronomy 32:51).

BANUNU REF. BANDUNDU

BATEKE = BEN TEKO A –[tek-o-ee] yewqt or yeqt, meaning town of Juda (1 Chronicles 2:24). It was not far from EN-NGUEDI (2 Chronicles 20:20)

Judah Ben Levi
Seattle, WA

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israelites in Central Africa cont.

People of Kivu
REGA = ROHEGA – hghwr, a descendant of Aser, from the family of Beira (1 Chronicles 7:34).

BASHI (plural form of MUSHI)– MOUCHI – , yvwm or yvm Levite and son of MERIRA, founder of a clan (Exodus 6:19; Numbers 3:20; 1 Chronicles 6:4).

ZIMBA = ZIMA – hmz, Zimmah [zim-maw], Levite grandson of YAHATH (1 Chronicles 6:5; 2 Chronicles 29:12).

Shaba and Katanga provinces in DRC

SHABA (a South-eastern region)– Name of the Pharaoh of SO or SEWE (SHABA or SHABAKA, SHABA-KABAKATA). The one whose help the prophet Hosea sought to fight the Assyrians.

Towns of the Shaba province

PANDA = PADDAN or PADEN — Ndp, ransom or redemption. The family of Nethinien that came back with Esdras (Esdras 2:44; Nehemiah 7:47). The word 'Panda' stands for redemption in Bambala and Hebrew. There is also a word 'Lupanda' among the Luba people.

Ethnic groups in the Shaba province

LUNAS = LOUD — dwl; a people classified among the Semites (Genesis 10:22). These people are related to the Egyptians (Genesis 10:13).

LUBAS — ref. Kasai.

HEMBA— ref. Lemba, Jerusalem.

LAMBA — ref. Lemba.

The province of Kasai in DRC

KASAI (the central province) — SAI, SO. In the delta area of Egypt and in Sudan, SAI has taken other forms such as MISAI, MANZASAI and has even retained its original form, SAI or SO in other countries.
Towns in the province of Kasai


MBUJI-MAYI – ref. Abuzi Équateur.

Mayi – Mayie, is water in Hebrew, Lingala and Tsiluba (2 languages spoken in Congo).

KABINDA = ABIDAN – Ndyba, Abiydan [ab-ee-dawn], meaning judge, leader or chief of the tribe of Benjamin. In the desert, the name of his father was Guideon (Numbers 1:11; 2:22; 7:60-65; 10:24).

Tribes of the Kasai province in DRC

LUBA = LUBBAN; The Lubas of Congo are custodians of the tradition. They constitute a community where Biblical laws are practiced as it is the case among the Ballas. It is the name of the community between Jerusalem and Sichem about five (5) kilometers to the North of Silo (ref. Bible Dictionary).

BA SAMBALA (Batela) SAMBALA ref. SANBALLAT – [san-bal-at] jlbno (Nehemiah 2:10).
MUTETELA = METUCHELA – xlwtm. The vowels are however not featured in Hebrew so the word is 'Mutetela'(Genesis 5:21-27).

BA KUBA = KUBA – bwk, Kuwb. A people related to the Louds; Pouth and Ethiopia (Ezekiel 30:5).

Geographically, in Zaire, the Loumas, Ba Kubas and Ba Mpoutus are close to each other in many ways.

Names of people of Kasai

KABASALE = KABSEEL – laubq Qabtsa'el [kab-tseh-ale], God will take care, a town at the extreme South of Judah (Joshua 15:21). One of the heroes of David (2 Samuel 23:20; 1 Chronicles 11:22).

NDAYA = DAYAN, DAHAN.

NZEBA = ZEBEH – baz [zeh-abe], sacrifice, a Midianite king that Gideon killed (Judges 8:4-28; Psalm 83:12).

NZEBELE = ZEBEDE – ydbz the Eternal One has given, father of James (Matthew 4:21-22).
MOUTSHI-PAYI – MOUSHI, ref. BASHI (Kivu).

PAYI = PAHI – wep or yep, nicely (1 Chronicles 1:50)

GABON

The name is derived from the Hebrew word GABAON, Gib'own (ghib-ohn') Nwebg which means 'hill city'. This was the name of a land given to the Benjamites (Joshua 18:25)

Ogoue (name given to a province and to a river); the name is coined from a Hebrew word GOUEL, lawag which means "God's majesty". This was the name of the spy from the tribe of Gad (Numbers 13:15).

N'them (the name of a province in the country); the name is derived from a Hebrew word TEMAH, xmt, the founder of a family of NETINIENS some of whose members returned with Zerubabel to the state of Judah (Ezra 2:53; Nehemiah 7:55).

BA TEKE is coined from a Hebrew word BEN TEKOA, Taqow'iy (tek-o-ee') or Taqo'iy (tek-o-ee'), yewqt or yeqt It is the name of the tribe of President Bongo (see Batake in Zaire).
SENEGAL

The name Senegal is coined of the Hebrew word Negev (Negev) Negev (neh'-gheb) bgn. It is the name that was used for this land known for its commerce in ancient times. The prefix "Se" is pronounced [so] in all the names of the region, meaning "land" (cf. prefix).

Negev is a non-political geographical term used to refer to the territories located to the South of Palestine. It stretches to the South of the Gaza-Beér-Chéba road which generally moves in the direction of the Isohyets line where rainfall measures as much as 200 mm per year, as far as the level of the Sinai peninsula, although, currently, the Southern political frontier is to the South of Wadi-el-Arich. Biblical references to Negev are mainly limited up to the exile. The Amalekites among others lived there at the time of the invasion of Israel (No. 13:29). It was an important area in terms of its strategic location and economic importance."The Chour highway", a commercial road, went from the center of the Sinai up to Judea. The patriarchs used this road (Genesis 24:62 et 26:22). The land is rich in copper and Saul's military campaigns against the Amalekites and the Edomites were probably for the purpose of controlling the copper industry and commerce (1 Sa 14:47). The word "Senegal" is also used for the curve of the Nile near Neat 3rd Cataract, written as Sædenga (cf. Nubia Corridor to Africa. P. 302). The same name is found in Cameroon as Sanaga.

Dakar (Capital of Senegal) is derived from the Hebrew word DEKER, Ben-Deqer (ben-deh'-ker) rqd, father of one of the stewards of Solomon (1 Kings 4:9).

Casamence is coined from the Hebrew words CASA+MENCE, de GAZA and MAASS.

Gaza: Azzah (az-zaw') hze, means anger, strong place. The name of the Philistine town, which was given to the tribe of Judah by Joshua (Joshua 15:47).
Maass: Ma'azyah (mah-az-yaw') or Ma'azyahuw (mah-az-yaw'-hoo) hyzem or whyzem. This means trial or temptation. Moses gave this name to an Israeli camp in the desert where water was scarce (Ex. 17:7, Deut 6:16, Ps 95:8-9).

Sine-Saloum originates from the Hebrew words SINE+SALOU. SINE, Ciyn (seen) Nyo, the desert that the Israelites crossed during the exodus (Exo. 16:1;17:1), SALOU,(sal-loo') or Caluw (sal-loo'); or Callay (sal-lah'-ee) wlo or alwo or ylo, elevated, exalted, or again Simeonite, the father of Zimri whom Phinehas killed (Numbers 25:14).

Wade: derived from Ohad (o'-had) dha meaning "powerful","who unites","who links". The name belonged to the son of Simon and grandson of Jacob (Genesis 46:10. Exodus 6:15)

GUINEA is coined from the Hebrew word GUINATH, Giynath (ghee-nath'), tnyg, meaning protection. It is also the name of the father of Tibni (1 Kings 16:22).

Bissau (Capital) originates from the Hebrew word BESAÏ, Bacay,(bes-ah'-ee) yob, a Nétinien Jew who founded a tribe that bears his name (Ezra 2:49; Ne. 5:22).

EQUITORIAL GUINEA (see above)

Conakry (capital) coined from the Hebrew words KONANIA + QUIR.
KONANIA or Kownanyahuw (ko-nan-yaw'-hoo), wyynnwk, meaning the Eternal One has established or a Levite charged with the collection of tithes at the time of Ezechias (2 Chr. 31:12-13; 2 Chr. 35:9).

QUIR, Qiyr (keer), ryq ,(wall) in the Bantu language, meaning the other bank of the river. Quir refers to a place where the Assyrians deported the inhabitants of Damascus to (2 Kings 16:9; Amos 1:5).

BURKINA FASSO is derived from the Hebrew words BUKI+ NAPHICH.

BUKI, Buqqiy (book-kee') yqb, was the prince of the tribe of Dan, a member of the allotment commission (Numbers 34:22). Or a descendant of Aaron, in the sacerdotal lineage of Phinehas (1 Chr. 5:31; 6: 36; Ezra 7:4).

NAPHICH, Naphiysh (naw-feesh'), vynp refreshment or son of Ishmael, who gave his name to his clan (Gen.25:15; 1Chr.1:31). His clan fought battles with the Israelites at the East of Jordan.

Yaka, a town located in the center of Burkina Faso. This name originates from the Hebrew word YAEKAN, Ya'kan (yah-kawn'), Nkey; meaning descendant of Gad, head of a patriarchal home (1 Chronicles 5:13).
Abidjan (Capital). This name was derived from a Hebrew word ABIJA or ABIYA Abiyah (ab-ee-yaw’) or in full, Abiyahuw (ab-ee-yaw’-hoo), hyba which means the Eternal One is a father. Man of Judah (Chronicles 2:24). Descendant of Aaron, whom king David placed at the 8th position of the twenty four (24) of the priests (1 Chr. 24:1, 6 and 10).

Yamoussoukro, the second city of the country, located in the center, is coined from the Hebrew word YANOUM-SOUKKOT or YANOUM (Jos.15: 53). SOUKKOT or Cukkowth (sook-kohth’) or Cukkoth (sook-kohth’), twko or tko cabin or hut, a place to the East of Jordan (Judges 8:4-5). A place where Jacob constructed cabins for his flock (Genesis 32:23). It was the first encampment of the Israelites after that of Ramses (Exodus 12:37; 13:20; Numbers 33:5).

Names of personalities:

Houphouet Boigny, the late president of Côte d'Ivoire, was in power for almost forty years. This name was derived from OUPHAZ + BOHAN. OUPHAZ Uwphaz (oo-fawz’), zpwa means island of gold (Jer. 10:9; Dan. 10:5).

BOHAN Nhb means the thumb or landmark of Judah and Benjamin, not of Jordan (Jos. 15:26). Son of Ruben (Jos. 18; 17).

Houphout Boigny was of the Akan tribe. This name comes from AKAN, the son of Zimri, from the family of Zerah, in the tribe of Judah (Jos. 7:1, 26; 22:20; 1 Chr. 2:7).
Bedie, the successor of Houphouet Boigny. This name is coined from the Hebrew word BEDIA Bed@yeah (bay-de-yaw’) hydb (servant of the Eternal One) son of BANI, Ezra persuaded him to send his wife away, after their return from Babylon for she was a foreigner (Ezra 10:35).

Guei, third president of the country. This name was derived from GUEYA, Geba’(gheh'-bah) ebg , a Benjamite town (Jos. 18:24; 1 Chr. 8:6) given to the priests (Levites)(Jos. 21:17; 2 Kings 23:8; Zec. 14:10). It was from the YAKUBA tribe. The name of this tribe comes from the Hebrew word YACHOUB, Yashuwb (yaw-shoob’) ou Yashiyb (yaw sheeb’), bwvy or byvy meaning "he returns". Yachoub was one of the sons of Isaac, the founder of a clan (Numbers 26:24; 1 Chr. 7:1). This name was borne by another son of BANI whom Ezra persuaded to send his foreign wife away (Ezra 10:29). GUEI is a native of a village, called AMAKIEN, a name coined from the Hebrew word AMATIEN, meaning an inhabitant of HAMAT (Gen. 10:18). It was also a city of Naphtali, which was given to the Levites (Jos.21:32).

Tribe:

Bete comes from the warlike tribe of Judah, which fought the Babylonian conquest. The real word is Betsay (bay-tsah'-ee), yub that, in Hebrew, means "conqueror". The name belonged to a chief of the exiles who returned during the time of Ezra (Ezra 2:17; Nehemiah 7:23; Nehemiah 10:18)

GHANA

This name originates from the Hebrew word QANA or Qanah (kaw-naw’) hnoq , which means "tie the reeds", a torrent, which constituted the limit between Manasseh and Ephraim (Jos. 16:8; 17:9).
Accra (Capital of Ghana), this name comes from the Hebrew word AKHRAKH, Achrah,(akh-rakh'), and xrxα , that means son of Benjamin. He founded a patriarchal family (1Chr. 8:1).

Kumasi is derived from the Hebrew word MAAS or MASSI ; Ma'ats (mah'-ats), Uem which means “anger" or a descendant of Judah by YEAHEMEEEL (1 Chronicles 2:27) in Hebrew.

Ahafo originates from the Hebrew word APHIA, Aphiach,(af-ee'-akh), and xypa meaning refreshed or invigorated in Hebrew. It also refers to the ancestor of King Saul (1 Sam. 9:1).

Annan is derived from the Hebrew word HANAN or Chanan (khaw-nawn'), Nnx XXX which means "God is merciful". This was also the name of one of the valiant men of David (1 Chr. 11:43); the son of Chachaq, the Benjamite also bore this name (1 Chronicles 8:23).

TOGO

This name came from the Hebrew word TEQOA or TEGOA with the variant TAGU , T@qow‘iy,(tek-o-ee') or T@qo‘iy (tek-o-ee'), yewqt or yeqt , which refer to a village that is located nine kilometers from Bethlehem, a village of Judah (1 Chronicles 2:24; 4:5; 2 Chronicles 20:20; Amos 1:1).

Lome is coined from the Hebrew word LEMOUEL or LOMOEL, L@muw'el,(lem-oo-ale') or L@mow'el (lem-o-ale'), lawml that means "dedicated to God".
Dadja is derived from the Hebrew word DAN-JAAN, Dan Ya'an (dawn yah'-an), Ney Nd meaning "judgment for a reason". It is a place located between Galad and Sidon (2 Sam. 24:6)

Nuatja originates from the Hebrew word NOADJA, Now'adyah (no-ad-yaw'), hydewn, meaning "meeting with the Eternal One", son of Bani, one of the Levites who were in charge of the gold and silver ornaments that Ezra and the Jews brought from Babylon (Ezra 8:33). Also a prophetess whose false predictions were aimed at intimidating Nehemiah (Ne. 6:14).

CAMEROON

Yaounde (capital of the country) is coined from a Hebrew word YEHOUTI, Y@huwdiy (yeh-hoo-dee') ydwhy means a native of Judah, a messenger that king YEHOYAQUIM sent to Baruch to ask for the scroll bearing the prophecies of Jeremy. YEHOUDI must have read that to the king who, furious on hearing these predictions, cut the scroll with a knife and threw it into the fire (Jer. 36:14-23).

Mouchi (province in the North), the name is derived from a Hebrew word MOUCHI, Muwshiy (moo-shee') or Mushshiy (mush-shee') yvwm or yvm which means "Levite", son of Merari, the founder of a clan (Exodus 6:19; Numbers 3:20).

Bamoun, (one the provinces) is coined from a Hebrew word HAMMON, Chammown (kham-mone') Nwxm which means "brilliant or "hot". A village at the Aser border (Joshua 19:28).
Bamileket is derived from a Hebrew word HAMMOLEKET or MOLEKET, Moleketh (mo-leh'-keth) tklm. The name of the Queen; sister of Galaad (1 Chronicles 7:18). She is the mother of many clans of Manasseh (BA comes from BEN: see prefix).

Basa (the name of a tribe in Nigeria), the name is coined from a Hebrew word BA'SHA '(bah-shaw') hveb which means "wicked". This was the name of the son of Ahiya from the tribe of Isaac (1 Kings 16:7; 1 Kings 15:25)

Report from Southern Africa

Recently the African Jewish Congress met in Windhoek—about 15 representatives from all the recognized Jewish communities south of the Sahara (combined population, about 100,000). "Recognized" is the key word here—the so-called Lost-Jews, Maybe-Jews, and Wanna-be-Jews of Africa were not included. Taken together, this second category could comprise as many as 10 or 20 million additional souls, depending on who you read and what interpretations you want to believe. While not usually halachically correct (i.e. not in accordance with Jewish law), including the latter group would have made for a much more interesting conference, of that I'm sure.

Unfortunately, most of the conversation at the African Jewish Congress was gloom-and-doom—diminishing numbers, lack of leadership, uneasy politics, and rising anti-Semitism (from segments of the South African Moslem community, not from Blacks or old-time Afrikaaners). Sadly, the opportunity for study and celebration together, or for input from women or the younger generation, was almost entirely ignored. All this made me wonder how much the mood at the conference would have changed if members of the Abayudaya community in Uganda could have joined us, for example. This community of 500 black subsistence farmers—which our family visited twice in the past—has been practicing Judaism since 1919 under some of the world’s harshest conditions. Their faith and joy is incredible, and absolutely contagious... guaranteed to inspire the most jaded of old-timers.
At least I was not completely alone in my speculation. The following story comes from the representative from Swaziland, a black businessman and one of only a few upbeat people present. He told of his recent visit to a kosher butcher in Johannesburg where he asked to buy some meat. “Why do you want kosher meat?” the saleslady asked him. “It’s so much more expensive here than at the supermarket.” The man hesitated, and then looked at the woman, “Are you Jewish?” he asked. “No,” she replied. “Then no wonder you are asking such a meshugga (crazy) question!” the man retorted and walked out—his kippah propped neatly on his head.

Hebraic Traditions of the Batutsi

I have been told of Kulanu’s heavy interest in Hebraic techouvah of dispersed tribes of Israel. So I am very proud to have your direct confirmation of such a prophetic purpose.

Our own organization, Havila, develops a similar program on a restrictive area: We focus our efforts on the Hebraic remnants of pre-talmudic tribes of Israel, isolated on the “other side of the rivers of Ethiopia,” according to Zephaniah, 3,10.

The historical and geographical land pointed out by the Zephanian prophecy has been identified by the prestigious talmudist Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzhak) as the White Nile basin. The biblical name of that land is Havila, according to Genesis 2,11. One of the Hebraic tribes isolated in the sacred land of Havila is called Tutsi or Batutsi.

During these last 40 years, the Batutsi have almost been exterminated, and until now they are being hunted because of their Hebraic identity and their Solomonic legacy. According to their Solomonic and Samsonic memory and legacy, they claim to be the descendants of two Israelite Tribes — Judah and Dan. Those who perpetuated the Solomonic Kingdom of Zagwe in the land of Havila (South of Ethiopia,
particularly Burundi, Rwanda, Kivu, Masisi, and Shaba) claim to be the sons of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

Some clans among Batutsi are contemporary with the time of Moses, people who moved from Egypt, judging by the exact knowledge they display about the laws of Moses. Others joined their brothers after the different misfortunes that affected the Israelite people, such as the destruction of the Holy Temple of Jerusalem. The Batutsi Halakhah has kept encoded references to these events, such as the annual Festival of Sukkot, called Umuganuro (literally “the festival of return”).

The cultural and religious references of Batutsi allude to either the pharaonic monotheism of the 18th Dynasty of Egypt or Moses’s laws in the Hebraic Torah.

The Havila Institute has concentrated its efforts on the description and analysis of the biblical culture as carried by the ancient Batutsi. The parallelism of pharaonic practices and symbols with the Batutsi standards refers to the culture of the 18th Dynasty of Egypt and explains the Mosaic faith of the Batutsi. The antiquity of Batutsi monotheism has always been astonishing to the European witnesses, including those who reached the land of Havila in the early 19th century.

The political organization of the Batutsi kingdoms (from the Kush Kingdom until post-Zaagwe Kingdoms — 1270-1960) are strictly related to the Solomonic system. The Hebraic kashrut under the Levitic law is the staple of Batutsi feeding. The Batutsi system of law is the exact copy of the Deuteronomic Code, and none can attest that such a system is of recent import.

Among the numerous witnesses of the Batutsi Hebraicity, we point out the famous 9th century traveler, Eldad HaDani. He has confirmed the authenticity and the anteriority of the Mosaic civilization of the Hebraic Tribes settled around the River Pishon (White Nile) in the biblical land of Havila. The geographical localization of the land of Havila and the River Pishon around the lower Nile, part of
Ethiopia, has been attested to in a precious document that has been transmitted from generations to generations of scholars. We are referring to the famous Letter addressed by Eldad HaDani to the Jews of Spain, in 883.

“This was my going forth from the other side of the rivers of Ethiopia,” he said.

And then he relates the local memory of the four tribes which crossed from Israel to Ethiopia, after the death of Sennacherib, king of Assyria:

And these tribes, being Dan, Naphtali, Gad, and Asher, dwell in the ancient Havilah, where gold is, and they trusted in their Maker, and the Lord helped them.

Eldad notes strict observance of kashrut:

No unclean thing is to be found with them, no unclean fowl, no unclean beast, no unclean cattle, no flies, no fleas, no lice, no fox, no scorpions, no serpents, and no dogs. All these were in the idolatrous land, where they had been in servitude. They have only sheep, oxen, and fowls, and their sheep bring forth twice a year.

Batutsi means literally “Those whose permanent occupation is to lead cattle to the pasture,” Eldad confirms this:
These four tribes have gold and silver and precious stones, and much sheep and cattle and camels and asses, and they sow and they reap, and they dwell in tents, and, when they will, they journey and encamp in tents, from border to border, two days by two days’ journey, and in the place they encamp there is no place where the foot of man enters.

Eldad testifies to the Mosaic faith of the Batutsi:

They are of perfect faith and their Talmu [i.e., ancient Halakha] is all in Hebrew, and thus they learn ... But they know no Rabbis, for these were of the Second Temple and they did not reach them.

Indeed, Havila Institute has already pointed out numerous linguistic roots which support the Batutsi lexical system. These linguistic particles are common in Hebrew and Batutsi idiom.

Now, everyone can remember the bitter debates that followed the Eldad testament through the centuries, until now. Thanks to the constant efforts of scholars, working in the Havila framework, under my supervision, it is now possible to give precious and systematic indications on that wonderful phenomenon of encoding Hebraic memory. The ancient material civilization of Batutsi, their language, their mythology, their religion, their political legacy and their general way of life, all those matters can be described exactly as related by Eldad HaDani.

The crossing of Kulanu and Havila paths is certainly written in the Highest’s wills. I am now confident that many things will change very soon, in the destiny of all the peoples concerned by our common preoccupations.
The Black Israelitish of Africa

By “Black Jews” scholars usually mean the followers of a number of movements born in the United States at the end of the 19th century around the claim that African Americans descend from the Lost Tribes of Israel, and should return to the practice of Judaism. The oldest U.S. Black Jew movement was established by William Saunders Crowdy (1847-1908) in 1896; the largest trace their origins to Frank S. Cherry (1870-1965) and Warren Robertson (1880-1931). In Israel, although some American “Black Jews” – from Ben Ami Carter’s Original Hebrew Israelite Nation of Chicago – have emigrated there, the name more usually designates the Falasha, i.e. the Ethiopian Jews who became citizens of the Jewish state under the Law of Return. The two movements are connected: the great promoter of the Falasha cause, Jacques Faitlovitch (1881-1955), took an interest in the American Black Jews and in turn influenced several American groups now claiming some sort of ethnic relationship with the Falashas.

Bruder observes that it is more probable that families with Jewish traditions in Cape Verde in fact descend from Moroccan Jews who relocated there in the 19th century. A similar movement exists in Angola.

In South Africa, Jewish ancestors are claimed by the members of several “Zionist” African-initiated churches who are, however, Christian. Some regard themselves as Jewish, including The Israelites (163 of which died in the Bulhoek Tragedy of 1921 in a skirmish with the white police) and the Black Philadelphia Church of Soweto, which now has some 1,000 members. The origins of these South African Black Jews go back to the influence of the American movement of William Saunders Crowdy, and the same is true for the 5,000-member Jewish community of Rusape, Zimbabwe, whose current leader is a former Rastafarian.

Bruder devotes several pages to theories about Jewish origins of the population of Madagascar. They were taken seriously by French colonial administrators, and today there is a movement, the Descendants of David, based on these claims.
Bruder quotes the Beit Avraham community in Kachene, Ethiopia (not a part of the Falashas), Rabbi Yisrael Oriel’s group in Cameroon, and an emergent community in Laikipia, Kenya.

KuNama, having the root KN is a language & people that might have the roots of of Kanaan. This language is spoken by 190,000 people between Eritrea & Ethiopia. One of its dialects is called Aimara, the very name of one Amerindian language. The total number of speakers is 251, 401. They’re pastoralists & live in what's called the breadbasket of Eritrea. Is this a blessing from the God of Israel?

History of the 700000 Lembas

As told by my father, and his father's father, and his father’s, father’s father, and many more before them: Approximately 2,500 years ago, a group of Jews left Judea and settled in Yemen. The tribe was led by the house of Buba and we are told that this move was to facilitate trade. In Yemen they settled in a place and built a city called Senna 1. They were then known as the BaSenna (the people from Senna). When conditions became unfavorable (and not being a historian, I can not give you exact details of what went wrong; but let’s just say they could no longer call Yemen home), the House of Hamisi took over the leadership and led the people across into Africa.

Once in Africa, the tribe split into two sections: One group setled in Ethiopia and the other group went further south along the East Coast. They settled in what today is known as Tanzania/ Kenya and built Senna 2. Here they prospered and increased in numbers. I'm afraid the travel bug bit once again and they were on the move. A small group went and settled in Malawi and Kenya. Their descendants are still residing in these countries up to today and are generally known as BaMwenye (lords of the land).
The remaining group, under the leadership of the house of Bakali, moved on and settled in Mozambique. Here they built Senna 3. Even today, the BaSenna are found in Mozambique.

After many years, part of the tribe, now under the leadership of Seremane (which is the house I belong to), moved further south to settle in Chiramba in what is known today as Zimbabwe. They were known as the Ba-Lemba. Our people still live there up to today. Some of the tribe moved south again and eventually settled in South Africa (Venda, Louis Trichadt, Pietersburg and Tzaneen).

This story has been told to all Lemba children from the time they are able to comprehend. It is told so that we know where we come from, who we are and how we live. It is told and shall continue to be told/written so that future generations are not lost, never to be found again. There are about 700,000 of us in Southern Africa.

Igbo, Lemba, Sena and Ethiopians and DNA

The Lemba in Zimbabwe have genetic links as well as cultural links to Jews. They do not eat pork and circumcise in addition to wearing skull caps. They also worship a drum that supposedly is a remnant of the ark and are descended from 11 brothers. They carry a levite gene found in priestly families.
Today, because of the Diaspora the seed of Abraham has founds its way into all the people groups of the earth and now we have Jews of every color and ethnicity. Lemba are in many african state check them by this popular surnames Sadiki, Salefu, Hadji, Seremane, most of this you can find in arab state but it because of migration and their languages dilluted due to thst their few and intermarriage.
I put Igbo, Lemba and Ethiopians together because what I have found out after doing my dna research is that the Lemba and Igbos started out in Ethiopia but migrated north. As both groups migrated out of Ethiopia they eventually broke away from one another. The Lemba went their own way and the Igbo went theirs. It has been found through DNA testing that the Lemba, the Igbo and Many Ethiopians are the same Mtdna or Mitochondrial dna (this is dna passed from the mother only).

So I believe you all have a point and ancestry testing is telling the migration story as plain as day. My dna test traces me to the Igbo and the Oromo tribes in Ethiopia. both groups have the same story and are Highly persocuted. There is also a place in kenya called Aba, in fact the group need to be created and i have to make sure that I connected all of this people in the group, so that they will also tell their own history,and all of them knows that they are Hebrew Israelites. With the evidence I found out and with evidence I am still finding out, the history have made it self, bantu people is early people lives in Africa, no doubt, and we are second people to join them because of war,all this wars mention in old testerment, did not happend in heavèn but from middle east down to africa,though then all the land
was one, we live with our mothers names then, so when this war is going on, we have to seek for refuge in the bantu land, as the war goes on, our race is falling, a home is not more a home, many children have to be born, in the bantuland, and we have to learn bantu languages, centuries upon century, our language is gone, we have to speak the language of each land that we migrated, but we still all have something shows that we live there but we are not from there, culture is still maintained, some kind of mark have been given to differentiate bantus and hebrews, of which you can find it in me, in igboukwu, in most part of africa, Lemba are Levites, and Levites are among the Igbo, likely within the Nri clan. So in that way Lemba and Igbo are brothers. Three routes of migrations - 1. through the desert. 2. Via Ethiopia. 3. By sea. King Solomon had a formidable merchant fleet.

African Communities with Kulanu Connection

(1) Ethiopia
   Beta Israel & Beta Avraham

(2) Zimbabwe
   Lemba

(3) Ghana
   Sefwi Wiawso

(4) Nigeria
   Igbo (Ibo)

(5) Cameroon
   Beth Yeshourun

(6) Uganda
   Abayudaya

(7) Kenya

A Visit to the Zimbabwe Lemba
The Ngoma Lungundu, a wooden object that the Lemba and Venda believe is sacred to their tradition and which has clear parallels with the Ark of the Covenant.

The object itself was fascinating. Lemba tradition taught that the ngoma had been carried with them on their migration from the Middle East to Africa at some point in the remote past. The central theme of their oral thesis, recounted to me many times, was that the Lemba had come from a place called Sena, that they had crossed Pusela, and had come to Africa, where they rebuilt Sena, one or two times. The oral tradition also maintained that when they got to Africa, the precious object which they brought with them went up in smoke, flames and a dreadful noise. Using a plug from the original object, a new ngoma was built by the priests.

Gone to Ghana

Unbeknownst to the rest of the world, the Sefwi people of West Africa have diligently practiced the same religion for countless centuries. Characteristics of the religion include belief in one God, circumcision of males eight days after birth, separation between husband and wife during the woman’s menstrual period, strict observance of the Jewish dietary laws, and observance of a Sabbath every seventh day. Amazingly, the scene depicted above is the one that existed in every Sefwi village and town as far back as 2,000 years ago. Their name for the religion is “Sefwi,” but you undoubtedly recognize it as Judaism.

For close to two millennia, the Sefwis have resided in Africa, living a life of subsistence and demonstrating tremendous dedication to their religion. Although there was occasional persecution during their long history, it was not until the 20th century that adverse conditions caused big changes within the group. In an attempt to eschew diversity, a high government official declared that no Sefwi (or any other member of a minorethnic group within Ghana) could practice his/her native religion; rather, all people in Ghana must be either Christian or Muslim.
For understandable reasons, many of the Sefwis refrained from practicing their religion – at least in public. After all, they could ill afford to alienate the government, lest they starve. Yet, in 1977 a Sefwi man named Aaron experienced what he called a “vision” that directed him to return to the “true” religion of his ancestors. Like most “prophets,” Aaron was at first taken as mad; later, his message was heeded. With biblical zeal, this man picked up the fragmented Sefwi religion and rebuilt it. When Aaron passed away in 1991, the leaderless community collapsed. Many of the Sefwis even attended church during this period, since they were afraid of being further persecuted. In 1993, a man named David Ahenkorah experienced his own life-changing vision and re-founded the community. David has been leading the community and fostering its growth. Currently, the center of Sefwi/Jewish religious life is Sefwi Wiawso, a village of 4,000, where there is a new synagogue and a core group of around 800 people practicing Judaism.

Investigating the Origin of the Ancient Jewish Community at Elephantine: A Review

Elephantine is an island in the Nile River, to the west of Aswan (on the eastern bank of the Nile). In ancient times, the island has been the southern-most city of Egypt. South of Elephantine, for a distance of approximately 223 km, extends the Nubian Desert where even the Nile banks are inhospitable. Beyond this distance lie the lands of Sudan, homeland of the Nubian civilization, which to ancient Egypt represented a prominent military threat. Trade relations between Egypt and Nubia continued active throughout history and Elephantine was the point where trade routes from Nubia met. Hence, to the ancient Egyptians, the city represented the ‘door to the South’.

The name Elephantine is Greek meaning 'elephant' and this expresses the city's function as a gate to the South, since elephants were brought from the south towards Nubia. Another name for the city by ancient Egyptians is 'Yebo', which also meant 'elephant'.

A Jewish garrison community that was already settled in the island by the fifth century B.C., played an essential role in the interaction between Nubia and Egypt. Some historians and archeologists directed attention and research towards this Jewish community for it provides a wide range of evidence for the earliest Diaspora Jewish settlement.
The task of the Jewish garrison in Elephantine was to protect the Egyptian border with Nubia (Kush). However, the garrison was also associated with insuring the safe passage of products coming from/to Nubia. Adjacent to the Jewish settlement in Elephantine was the Aramean garrison at Syene (Aswan), on the eastern bank of the Nile. While less evidence was available for the Aramean garrison at Syene, extensive records documented life within the Jewish garrison at Elephantine. In Elephantine the Jews built a temple for 'Yahweh', which resembled the Salomon's temple in Jerusalem. During the fifth century B.C., contemporary with the Persian rule of Egypt, the temple was destroyed by Egyptian rebels and at which time the Jewish settlement mysteriously vanished.

Most scholars support the suggestion that the Jews settled in Elephantine during the reign of Psammetichus I. Out of three succeeding Judean kings, contemporary with Psammetichus I, Manasseh is thought most likely to have been the Judean king who dispatched the Jewish troops that settled at Elephantine. It must be noted that Psammetichus I was the first Egyptian ruler after the periods of Assyrian and Nubian rule. Psammetichus I and the Nubian king Taharqa were allies at a time when Assyria represented a common enemy. After Assyria was expelled from Egypt, Psammetichus I was cautious to secure his position on the throne of Egypt. His most dangerous threat were certainly his former allies, the Nubians. Contemporary with this Egyptian king it was recorded Egyptian soldiers from Elephantine left Egypt and departed to Nubia for a better life. Psammetichus I would have needed troops to fill in the positions of the Egyptian soldiers who departed. Hence, Manasseh may have aided the Egyptian king by sending him soldiers.

Information related to the campaign of Psammetichus II campaign into Nubia is found inscribed on the colossi of Ramses II at Abu Simbel. As indicated on the inscription, the Nubian campaign of the Egyptian pharaoh started from Elephantine. The Pharaoh's military was composed of Egyptian as well as foreign troops. The later included Phonecians, Carians, Ionians, and Rhodians.

Egypt has always been a source of refuge for the people of Judea starting from the Great Biblical Patriarch of the Bible, Abraham. After the Diaspora, Jews flooded into Egypt and established the largest
Jewish communities there; perhaps, since the time of Moses. During the Persian period they were Jewish garrisons posted at Tahpanhes and Migdol.

During the sixth century B.C., 'First Isaiah' prophesized return of the Jews "from Assyria, from Lower Egypt, from Upper Egypt, from Kush [Nubia], from Elam, from Babylonia, from Hamath and from the islands of the sea."(Isaiah 11:11)

As indicated in the passage, Isaiah probably knew about Jews residing in Nubia at the time. 'Deutero-Isaiah' (second Isaiah), who supposedly lived during the exile in the fourth century B.C., prophesized the restoration of Israel. On one passage he mentions the return of Jews from the region of Aswan as follows: "See, they will come from afar, some from the north, some from the west, some from the region of Aswan [Syene]." -Isaiah 49:12

Note the statement, "some from the region of Aswan." clearly indicates that the prophet was well aware of Jewish presence in the region of Aswan or Syene. In any case Elephantine is and was certainly not excluded from the region of Syene.

Evidence for the Jewish temple at Elephantine comes from the local archives of the settlement. As quoted before, it is mentioned that the Jews of Elephantine in the third century B.C. wrote that when "Cambyses came into Egypt he found this Temple [Jewish Temple at Elephantine] built."(C 30: 13f). The Jews of this community regarded their temple as no less holier than the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, and their settlement as no less blessed than the land of Israel. For example, reference was made in one of the archives to "Yahweh the God who dwells in the fortress of Elephantine."-K 12:2. Holocausts, meal offering, and most of the other traditional sacrificial ceremonies performed at the Temple of Solomon were performed at the temple of Elephantine alike.
The site of the temple at Elephantine has not been located yet; however, geometric calculations based on houses that are known to have neighbored the temple, indicate that the dimensions of the temple resembled that of the Solomon Temple in Jerusalem. Also descriptions of the temple as known from the archives prove the later as true.
As known, Jewish religion prohibits the building of temples outside of Israel; rather, the building of Synagogues is sanctioned. This law stems from the Jewish devotion to the land of Israel; that the sacredness and holiness of it's soil is unmatched anywhere else on earth. Hence, in accordance to the Jewish laws and traditions, erecting a Temple on foreign soil; such as that of Elephantine, should have been considered unlawful and contradictory to the Jewish cause.

Excavations at Elephantine
The fact that the Jews of Elephantine were devoted the land of their settlement, almost, the same way the other Jews were devoted to Israel, is particularly unique in the history of the Jewish nation.

408 BCE. Yedoniah's copy of his letter to Bagoas, Governor of Samaria and Judah, requesting the order to be given to rebuild the Temple of Yahweh in Elephantine
From Ethiopia to the Great Lakes region there are several peoples that claim Israelite ancestry

Mount Elgon or Mount Masaba is a place of worship for the Masaba people (or Bamasaba, or Gisu or Bagisu) who are an Ugandan people that practice the typical Jewish male circumcision.

The Bukusu tribe (or Luhyia tribe) is closely related to them. One member of the Luhyia tribe founded a religious group that mixed Judaism with ancestry worshipping & it's known as Dini Ya Msambwa. Their place of worshipping is the Masaba mountain.
Is their any connection between their Judaizing practices & Mount Masaba? Masaba has name similar to Masada, the huge mountain-fortress of the Jews against their enemies. Another name for Masaba could be Saba which is the supposed ancestor of Ethiopian Jews.

From Ethiopia to the Great Lakes region there are several peoples of claiming Israelite ancestry.
On the Igbo, Teshuvah, and the Resiliency of the Jewish Spirit

By Rabbi Brant Rosen

This past summer, I received a profound lesson in the resilience of the Jewish spirit — and how it invariably manages to take root even in the most unexpected of places.

After participating in a congregational delegation to Africa this past spring, I had a profound desire to spend a longer period of time there on my summer sabbatical. As I searched for the best possible way to serve as a volunteer rabbi, I found my way to Kulanu, who informed that they had long been interested in sending a volunteer rabbi to Nigeria. Upon further conversation, I received an extensive education on the Igbo tribe — a large Nigerian tribe of 40 million whose clans trace their lineage to the lost tribes of Israel. For many years both Igbo and Western scholars have noted the striking similarities between native Igbo customs and Israelite tradition. Today, the Igbo are almost entirely Christian, having been thoroughly missionized, by the British — but they nonetheless retain a strong sense of kinship with the Jewish People.

Over the last decade or so, an astonishing phenomenon has developed: a Jewish “rebirth” of sorts occurring throughout the Igbo community. Synagogues have been forming spontaneously throughout Nigeria, along with the tentative growth of Hebrew and Torah study. Kulanu explained to me that they had developed a relationship with the Igbo Judaic communities, who were especially eager for a visit from a rabbi for an extended period of time.
After I said I would consider a visit to Nigeria, Kulanu put me in touch with their field representative there, an Igbo lawyer and scholar named Remy Ilona who would quickly become my dear friend and my new Igbo brother. Remy has done extensive research on the Israelite heritage of the Igbo and over the past few years he has become an important resource person for their new Judaic communities. As I corresponded with Remy, I was immediately taken by his intense passion and commitment to his heritage, to his people and to what he called the Igbo teshuvah — their “return” to reclaim their original birthright.

It is not an exaggeration to say that after just a few initial e-mail conversations, his passion and excitement won me over. And so, with Remy as my host, I spent an amazing month of July in Nigeria with the Igbo. I spent two weeks in the capital city of Abuja, and traveled for ten days throughout the Igbo state of Anambra, one of the many states in the south of Nigeria known as Igboland. During my stay, I met and dialogued with Igbo leaders, taught Torah study classes in Judaic Igbo communities, led Shabbat services in Igbo synagogues, joined in their communal meetings and celebrations, and was made an honorary member of various Igbo clans.

My first undeniable impression of the Igbo’s Judaic communities was their deep and palpable thirst for Jewish study and Jewish life. In truth, I cannot recall ever teaching students with such a profound yearning for Jewish learning and knowledge. Over the course of my visit, I came to realize that their thirst was a manifestation of a deeply felt desire to reconnect. To reclaim a heritage that has been denied them for so long.

We do not yet know enough about how many of these new Judaic Igbo communities exist in Nigeria. While much more research needs to be done, I think it is safe to say that the number of Igbo seeking to create a Jewish life in Nigeria is significant and growing. As I traveled throughout this country so far removed from my own home, I was repeatedly received as a brother, as a member of the tribe, as it were. Even among the larger population of Igbo that does not practice Judaism, I sensed an almost universal feeling of affinity to the Jewish people.
During the period I spent in Igboland, I had the opportunity to meet and address large gatherings of various Igbo clans. Invariably, I would receive the strongest, loudest and most emotional reaction whenever I mentioned that meeting them was like discovering long lost family members that I didn’t know I had. I was truly unprepared for the depth of their reaction to me, and I realized in large part they were reacting to what I represented to them: an authentic relationship to the outside Jewish world. I have no doubt that their feelings of connection to the Jewish people are real and heartfelt — and that it has been kept alive and nurtured by the Igbo people for centuries.

Are the Igbo, in fact, descended from the Lost Tribes of Israel? I don’t know that there will ever be any way to prove this conclusively one way or the other. My good friend Remy has been researching this issue extensively, and I do believe there is a compelling case to be made in this regard. But as I see it, whether or not they are actually lost Israelites is relatively moot in the face of the fact that the Igbo absolutely believe it to be true. And at the end of the day, can any Jew directly trace his/her lineage back to Biblical Israel? It seems to me that the true power of Jewish identity and survival lies not in the veracity of our historical claims, but in the survival of our spirit — in the unique staying power of our collective neshamah.

In the end, I returned from my sojourn in Nigeria with a renewed Jewish optimism. I use the word “renewed,” because it is impossible in the Western Jewish community these days to avoid the profound angst about the future of our people. The official Jewish community commissions study after study invariably informing us that our numbers are shrinking, that assimilation is on the rise, that Jewish affiliation is on the decline. Doom and gloom prognosticating has become such a hallmark of our communal life that it is a major Jewish industry in its own right. But my experiences with the Igbo of Nigeria have helped me to understand that perhaps the rumors of our demise have been greatly exaggerated. Perhaps the resilience of the Jewish spirit is greater than we generally give it credit. Maybe we’re just looking in the wrong places.

In the end, I believe our attitudes about our Jewish future are intimately tied up with our vision of who we are. As I am coming to realize, much of the traditional Jewish self-image has been marked by a decidedly white, Euro-centric bias. In truth, however, from the very beginning of our existence, we Jews have always been an ethnically diverse people. In the book of Exodus, we are told that an erev rav — a mixed multitude of Israelites — went up out of Egypt. Since that time, Jews have lived amidst widely ranging cultures and nationalities, and our communities have always reflected this diversity.
The reality of these dispersed Jewish communities, however, sheds a profound new light on our status as a global people. As important organizations such as Kulanu help to demonstrate, it may well be that our global diversity transcends boundaries to a greater extent than we have ever imagined.

What should we make of this? Perhaps it means we should spend less time and money prognosticating our decline and refocus our energies and resources creatively toward new areas of Jewish potential. This might well include globally dispersed communities such as the Igbo: passionate, committed neshamas who seek greater connection with Jewish life and the Jewish world.

I have every expectation that embracing our diversity will present its own set of challenges. Among other things, diversity challenges our very notion of who is a Jew, of our communal boundaries, of what kinds of Jewish behaviors and beliefs are considered “acceptable” and what are “beyond the pale.” I realize, for instance, that the Igbo would not be considered Jewish according to traditional halachic standards, but on the other hand, I can personally attest to their Jewish passion, their sense of Jewish belonging, their innate Jewish spirit.

While I realize these categories are not exactly quantifiable, I do believe we dismiss them at our peril. A community that chronically bemoans its shrinking numbers should, at the very least, take note of a tribe of 40 million individuals that feels such a powerful sense of affinity with the Jewish People and Jewish life. It would also behoove us to forge greater connections with the numerous other lost Jewish communities around the world who crave a greater connection with their Jewish brothers and sisters. We have only to challenge our biases and rethink our assumptions to see that there may well be potential for Jewish rebirth in the most unexpected of places.

This is not only a global issue — it has ramifications for us right here in America as well. Currently, the number of Jews of color in our country is growing considerably, due to increasing intermarriage, conversion and adoption in the Jewish community. This is certainly the case in our own congregation as
well. I am proud indeed that my congregation, JRC, increasingly includes members who are African-American, Hispanic, Asian, and mixed race.

But I would also suggest we could and should be doing more to encourage diversity in our community. According to the Institute for Jewish and Community Research, at least 20 percent of the American Jewish population is racially and ethnically diverse. Their research also shows, however, while Jews of color often feel a strong affinity for Judaism and the Jewish people, they generally feel alienated from Jewish institutions.

Given the conventional Jewish community wisdom that Jewish = White, I have little difficulty understanding why this is so. But if to be American ultimately means to embrace diversity as a source of strength, and if we truly believe that Jewish life has always been enriched by the cultures in which Jews happen to live, then encouraging the diversity of our Jewish community may well be the key to our Jewish future.

Being Jewish has always defied easy definitions. The experience of being Jewish transcends ethnicity, race, nationality, behavior and belief. As complicated as all that sounds, the reality is rather straightforward: we are, quite simply, a people. As I often like to put it, to be Jewish means to be part of an extended family — a diverse, often cantankerous family, but family nonetheless. To be a family does not mean that we look alike, behave the same way, or believe the same things — but it does mean that we are bound together by the common experience of belonging to the group.

My experiences in Africa gave me a new faith in the power of belonging. In a rural Ugandan village, so far away from home, we discovered a home after all. During my sojourn in Nigeria, I rediscovered long lost family members I didn’t even know I had. It is, perhaps, the most quintessential of Jewish experiences. To quote from one of my favorite movies: “No matter where you go, there you are.”
And so I return to my original lesson: the profound resilience of the neshama — and how it invariably manages to take root even in the most unexpected of places. This is, in the end, a profoundly Jewish lesson. Though we Jews tend to have chronic angst about the prospects of our survival, we would do well to remind ourselves that our spirit is often much deeper and stronger than we realize. We would do well to remind ourselves that despite the myriad of challenges we have faced from time immemorial, we continue to affirm Am Yisrael Chai — the People Israel yet live.

Where do all African Jews in Africa really come from?

Africa was the main stay of Hebrew Israelites during the time they were in Egypt for 400 years or more. Moses married a Kushite (Ethiopian). I'm sure he had a great effect on some of the people and they converted.
Hebrews were scattered far and wide. The Pushtun claim to be descended from Hebrews, for example. Falasha in Ethiopia, Hebrew DNA markers among the Lemba... they were absorbed in many cases and nowhere retained clearly their identity.

Those who retained identity are in many cases moving back to Israel.

The majority of the Israelite tribes resided under the authority of the House of Joseph which in turn was ruled by the Tribe of Ephraim. Just prior to the expulsion of the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 B.C.E many Ephraimites of the House of Joseph fled to Arabia where they became known as the Bani Qainuqa Tribe, while others settled in the Horn of Africa and became known as the Afar (Ephraim). Some members of the Afar were more specifically referred to as the DaNakil meaning of the Israelite tribe of Dan.

Many of the Ephraimites (Afar) continued to move westward ultimately settling in Morocco (Murakush), Mauratinia and Mali. In North Africa they became known as the Banu Ifran meaning the Children or Tribe of Ephraim, while their tribal lands were known as the Land of the Afri (Ephraimites). It is from this etymology that the Roman name Africa derived. There were many variants for the name Ifran (Ephraim) such as Afar, Efri, Ifri, Ifrinidi, Ieforen, Fren, Wafren, Yefren Yafren or Yafran.

A Moorish Ephraimitite Queen called the Kahina is well remembered for her resistance to the Arab invasion of North Africa during the early part of the 8th Century C.E., while Abraham Ha-Ephrati is remembered as the first Ephraimitite King of Ifran (Oufrane).
In Mauritania and Mali the Moorish Ephraimites became known as the Bafar or Bafour. This classification included the Mande tribes of which the most prominent are the Mandingo who were also known as the Malinke and Soninke.

In 1311 Abubaker II the Emperor of Mali set sail across the Atlantic with a 1,000 vessel fleet and thus began the settlement of the House of Joseph in the Americas. The voyage is recorded by the Egyptian historian Ibn Fadlullah Al-Umari. The Malian Ephraimites (Bafar/Bafour) joined members of the Dene Tribes (Danite) such as the Navajo and Apachee in populating the Western Lands which were promised to the Children of Israel.

In the Americas the Ephraimite Mandingo Moors divided into several tribes which included the Mandan, Natick and Nanticoke. In this regard a Moravian missionary visited the Nanticoke Nation on Maryland’s Eastern shore to compile a vocabulary of their language and found they were speaking pure African Mandingo.

Crispus Attucks a Moorish Natick was the first to be killed during the Boston Massacre. The Ephraimite Moors were also known as the Original Black Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek and Seminole Indians. Is the Seminole people a Semitic people? The word Seminole, or its beginning, is very similar to the word Semite. The belief of many people, Mormons & non Mormons, for which the American Indians would be Lost Israelites has a base according to many different scholars.

Some members of the Bafour/Bafar Ephraimite Moors migrated from Mali and ultimately settled in Nigeria where they became known as the Biafrans. The Moorish Ephraimite Biafrans became the leaders of the Igbo Israelite Nation which was symbolized by the wearing of the traditional Red Fez which is customarily worn by Igbo Chiefs.
In 1993 an Igbo by the name of Chima from the Emo State in Nigeria petitioned the Israeli Rabbinate for recognition of the Igbo as members of the tribe of Ephraim. Rudolph Windsor the author of From Babylon to Timbuktu writes about the Ephraimites of Mali and Morocco settling in the Yorubaland where they became known to their neighbors as Emo Yo Quaim meaning the Strange People. However they refer to themselves as The Bene-Ephraim.

The majority of captives taken to the Americas during the Trans Atlantic Slave Trade were descended from the Greater Igbo Nation of Biafara and therefore were under the authority of the Tribe of Ephraim and the House of Joseph. Both the descendants of the Ephraimite Moors who arrived in the Americas Before Columbus and those who came during the Slave Trade are the inheritors of the Western Lands promised to the Children of Israel."

The Ashanti and related Akan tribes are heavily represented among West Indians and also in North America. If you look at my Avatar its a pic iof a Ashanti Priest on the Gold Coast dressed in strict Levitical garb including a 12 tribe of Israel Jeweled Ephod. If what John Williams is saying is true Levites brought there customs with them and Settled in the Old Ancient Ghana Empire (further North of modern Ghana). Before migrating deeper into the forest. The begining of the End of the Ancient Ghana empire was at the hands of Almoravid Muslims into West Africa, who mandated that all Jews convert or leave the region. The Muslim sword was fierce and for that reason many Mande and Mandinka tribes of the Mali and Songhay Empires converted to Islam and are Muslim countries to this day. I believe there is a connection between the religion practiced among the Haitians and Jamaicans as well as New Orleans Negros known to the world as voodoo. There ancestry is of these Ephod wearing west Africans. Somewhere along the way there Levitical rituals became corrupted and sacrifices were made to Idols and Evil magic.

Often throughout scriptures. Israelites and Hamaitic nations intermarried producing offspring who also intermarried. Israelite men and African women. After a while how could you tell a Hamite from a Israelite? Let's remember the promised land includes the Nile Valley populated by some of the Blackest Africans in the world.
The fact that certain inscriptions in Carthage indicate origin in the Israelite tribes of Asher & Zebulun gives further weight to the conclusions affirming the Israelite origin of many, if not most, of the colonists of Phoenician & Cartagenean empires.
The Berbers and the Jews

Berbers and Jews, a Unique Relationship; The Historical Background

The Berbers were Northwest African tribes inhabiting an area known as the Barbary Coast. The former Barbary States now comprise the modern states of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. The Berbers spoke variations of a Hamitic language, mainly Tuareg and Kabyle. The Tuaregs were nomadic Berber tribes ensconced along the trade routes across the Sahara desert. Other tribes settled near the coast.

Judaic presence in the continent of Africa can be said to go back to the Biblical sojourn of Abraham in the lush Nile Delta (Goshen), where Abraham, together with his entourage and herds of cattle awaited the passage of a drought in Canaan. It is also related in the Bible that the vizier to the Pharaoh, Joseph, summoned his family to join him in Egypt. Many Israelites followed, at first as settlers, and then as slaves captured in Canaan by the aptly characterized "Warrior Pharaohs."

After the states of Israel and Judah came into existence, Judaic traders traveled westward along the African coast with the voyagers of Tyre and Sidon, the Canaanite sea-farers referred to by the Greeks as the "Phoenicians." Jews composed a significant proportion of the major North African Canaanite settlement at Carthage (Kart Hadash, or "New City"), and Jewish presence has been well documented elsewhere along the coast during the Pre-Roman period. The Romans termed the Canaanite settlers the Peonicus Carthagenians, which in turn has been transcribed into the "Punic Peoples."

The Canaanite city-states of Utica and Carthage were ruled by a Soffut, akin to the Israelite shoffet, or judge. In Jews and Photography, George Gilbert notes that "in the Mellahs (the Jewish quarters) of Morocco it has long been legend that Jews settled in Northwest Africa even before the destruction of the second temple (586 BCE). In support of this belief one sees Hebrew inscriptions on tombstones in the Roman town of Volubilis (west of modern Fez)."1

Under the Ptolemaic Greeks (323-31 BCE), the Jews brought their technological, industrial and commercial expertise to Alexandria, one of the largest and economically important cities of antiquity. Judaic artisans, merchants and scholars composed some 40% of the population. They were organized into guilds with reserved sections in the synagogues. The tannaic scholar, Rabbi Judah, visited Alexandria and reported: "... they were seated there not in mixed order, but goldsmiths apart, silversmiths apart, and weavers apart, blacksmiths apart, coppersmiths apart, and weavers apart. So that when a poor
[artisan] entered there, he recognized the members of his own craft and turned to them to find means for the maintenance of himself and his family."

Joseph ben Sirach (Ecclesiastus) writing during the Greek period at the end of the third century, describes the activity of Judaic artisans of his time in vivid poetry:

The maker of carving and cunning device, Who by night as by day has no rest, Who engraveth signet rings, and whose art is to make the likeness true, And his anxiety to compleyte the work, So also the smith that sitteth by the furnace, And regardeth his weighty vessels; The flame of the fire cracketh his flesh, And with the heat of his furnace he gloweth; To the hammer’s sound he inclineth his ear, And to the vessel’s pattern he directeth his eyes.

The Judaic artisans proudly wore distinctive badges of their particular trade. The tannaic scholar of the first century CE, Eleazer ben Azariah, said of the wearing of these badges, "There is something grand about artisanship; every artisan boasts of his trade, carrying boldly his badge on the street."

Judaic artisans continued to practice their trades in North Africa under the Romans. The Romans considered the manual trades base and inappropriate for themselves. It was none other than Emperor Hadrian Augustus who inadvertently complimented the industrious Jews of Alexandria in a report to his consul, Servianus; in placing them among the proletariat of the city he inadvertently credited them with being the skilled craftsmen of the city, and with the revolutionary process of glassblowing:

"[The Jews in Alexandria are] prosperous, rich and fruitful, and in it no one is idle. Some are blowers of glass, others makers of paper, all are at least weavers of linen or seem to belong to one craft or another; the lame have their occupations, the wounded have theirs, the blind have theirs, and not even those whose hands are crippled are idle."

Alexandria was, outside of Asia, the most populous Jewish center in the Diaspora. Philo estimated the number of Jews in Egypt to have reached the one million mark; Josephus had likewise numbered the population of Egypt as eight million, of which one million were Jews.

During the Ptolemaic period Judaic settlements spread across North Africa. In the Roman period they were a considerable part of the population of the large cities of Said and Memphis, east and south of
Alexandria. They were likewise concentrated in seventeen cities west of Alexandria, a region called Cyrenaica, extending from modern-day Tobruk to Bengazi and Tripoli on the Libyan coast. The major towns of that region, Chersonesus, Cyrene, Ptolemais, Arsinoe, and Berenice had large contingents of Jews. This coastal region was vital to the round-the-Mediterranean voyagers of that era; it continued to be so for the next two thousand years. In the first century of the Common Era the total North African Jewish population approached two million in number.

The Judaic community of Cyrene was second only to Alexandria in importance. It had been settled by Alexander the Great with 40,000 Judaic soldiers and their families, and continued to expand in military and commercial importance as a Judaic garrison under the Romans. The second book of Maccabees was written by Jason of Cyrene; it served as an inspiration for many of the Jews of that city to join in the great Judaic rebellion of 66 C. E.

Judaic Rebellions in Africa

In the year 115 a race riot against the Jews took place by the Pagans and Greeks of the city of Cyrene. Usually, the Romans intervened to prevent the Jews from putting up a stiff defense. However, the Roman armies were then preoccupied with the resistance of the Jews in Babylonia (Parthia) to Emperor Trajan’s ambitious drive to place all of Mesopotamia under Roman rule. Almost no Roman soldiers were available in Cyrenaica to contain the riots or restrain the Jews, the regular army having been sent to Trajan’s aid. "Consequently, the Jews were able to fight back and to carry the battle into the places where the pagans resided. What is more, the Jews of the island of Cyprus, and those of Egypt joined in the fighting."

The island of Cyprus enters the Judaic/African saga with the significant part the Cypriot Jews played in the succession of rebellions and resistance of the Jews against the Romans. Jews had been present in Cyprus far back into antiquity as traders accompanying the Sidonian and Tyrian seafarers. Then, "about 100 BCE, Jewish fishermen from the Judaic coast settled the island. Cyprus received many more Jews after the first Zealot rebellion, as thousands were sent by the Romans to slave in the copper mines.

A Cypriot Jew, Barnabus, organized a rebellion against their Roman masters. He succeeded in arming the copper workers, Jews and Canaanites, "and secretly prepare them for insurrection. It was the Sabbath and the Jewish workers were given their customary day of rest. All was peaceful in the coastal towns, and the Jewish men were gathered in the synagogues for prayer as usual. Just as the sun went down on that Saturday night of June 19th, 117, the ram’s horn was blown. This was not a ritual observance, but the signal for a sudden and terrible civil war."
The Jews wreaked revenge upon their oppressors in Cyrenaica. What had started as a race riot became a war. "The Jews of the three districts involved organized regular armies and took bloody revenge for all they observe to bear during the half century before. Trajan hurriedly sent Turbo, one of his generals, to restore order. Turbo’s soldiers were joined by the pagan population of the affected districts. They attacked the Jews, both the fighters and the peaceful population, more mercilessly than the Jews had attacked them. In the island of Cyprus every single Jew was killed, the total running into the thousands. A law was adopted never to permit a Jew to set foot on the island even if he were shipwrecked nearby. In Egypt and Cyrene the Jewish population was treated with almost equal ferocity. Thereafter the once flourishing Jewish community of Alexandria was definitely on the downgrade."

The ignominy of having a rebellion almost succeed in destroying the Roman Empire led a Roman historian, Deo Cassius [LXVII, 32], 50 years after the event, to write a bitter, self-serving account of the Judaic victories. It was a rabid mixture of fact and fiction; intended to justify the atrocities wreaked upon the Jews for daring to challenge the rule of the Roman Emperor. The account included calumnies which lived on to haunt the Jews for centuries to come throughout Christendom.

"The Jews of the region of Cyrene," wrote Deo Cassius, "had put one Andreas at their head and were destroying both the Romans and the Greeks. They would cook their flesh, make belts for themselves of their entrails, and wear their skins for clothing. Many they sawed in two from their heads downwards. Others they would give to wild beasts and force still others to fight as gladiators."

"In all, consequently, two hundred and twenty thousand perished. In Egypt also they performed many similar deeds and in Cyprus under the leadership of Artemio. There likewise two hundred and forty thousand perished. For that reason no Jew may set foot in that land, but even if one of them is driven upon that island by force of the wind he is put to death. Various persons took part in subduing these Jews, one being Lusius, who was sent by Trajan."

Thus, setting aside the obvious calumnies, we see that Cassius inadvertently documented the size of the Judaic community and the strength of the Judaic forces. The ferocity ascribed to the Jews was in fact practiced by the Romans, albeit cannibalism was not part of their extermination drive. In addition to the decimation of hundreds of thousands of Jews in Cyrenaica and Cyprus, the Jews of Egypt fell under the vindictive swords of the Romans.
"The aggadah, [Babylonian Talmud, Gittin, 57b] in its usual vivid fashion describes the greatness of the Egyptian Jewish community and the extent of the slaughter after the revolt: "[Hadrian, successor to Trajan] slaughtered in Egypt six hundred thousand and again six hundred thousand, twice as many as had gone forth from Egypt [at the time of the exodus]... so that the blood ran in the sea as far as Cyprus."

Jews Move West

Blocked from escape to the east, many Jews found refuge to the west. The westward movement of the Jews from Egypt and Cyrenaica to the Barbary states was once again swelled by the expulsion of the Jews from Alexandria by Bishop Cyril in 414, and by recurrent Byzantine expulsions through the next few centuries.

The effect of each of the expulsions was short-lived. The Jews, uniquely the technologically advanced, literate, and commercially savvy element among the backward indigenous populations, remained crucial for the conduct of African industry and commerce. Economic difficulties resulting from successive expulsions led recurrently to liberalized policies and a new influx of Judaic artisans and traders. That the persecutions proved ineffective in obliterating Judaic presence is evidenced by the account of the subsequent conquering Arab general, ‘Amir ibn al-As, who reported that he found 40,000 tax-paying Jews resident in Alexandria alone, inferring the existence of a total Judaic population of several times that figure. The Arab general, stemming from a backward desert society, was likewise staggered to find 4000 "palaces," 4000 baths [!] and other visible evidence of a prosperous community within the city.

Albeit the figures appear somewhat inflated, two facts are manifest from the Arab general’s report: The numbers of the Jewish community, and the high level of civilization encountered by the astonished Arab general. The confrontation of the primitive Arabs with the advanced science and technology of the Alexandrian Jews was repeated as the Arab armies crossed North Africa. Entering the arena as barbaric warriors, they eventually absorbed the attributes of an advanced civilization from the Jews.

Moroccan Muslim traditions relate that as the Arabs advanced, the Greeks evacuated the towns and cities. The Jews, however, stayed on, and their numbers were swelled by an influx of Jews from Syria and Egypt into the vacuum left by the Greeks.
As a result of the Emperor Justinian’s intolerant policies in the sixth century, Jews were driven inland, and again found refuge among the hinterland Berber tribesmen. The Berbers not only welcomed the Jews, but eight of the tribes, impressed with the erudition and technological acumen of the Jews, disavowed their shamanistic, pagan concepts and adopted Judaism.

Judaic/Berber Alliance under Queen Kahena

Thus, in the year 694, when the rampaging Arab armies drove relentlessly westward along the Barbary Coast, the Jews found themselves allied with the Berbers against the invasion. The confederacy of Jewish Berber tribes rallied around the Jewish/Berber priestess Kahena. The Berbers crowned Kahena as queen, and accepted her as their military leader.
The story of Dehiyya al-Kahina malkat Afriqah (Queen of Africa) is told by Ibn Khaldun, in a literary biography in Hebrew by N. Sloush. Khaldun’s rendition leans heavily on legendary sources, but Salo Baron notes that “Nevertheless this account is essentially confirmed and amplified in many significant details in the more recently published chronicle of an older Arab writer, ʿUbaud ibn Salih ibn ʿAbd al-Halim.”
Khaldun’s chronicles about "this medieval version of the prophetess Deborah" hold that the priestess lived 127 years, and governed the tribe of Jeraua with the aid of her three sons for 65 years. Clearly an expansion of the truth, the historical kernel of the legends remains a classic of women's participation in the resistance to tyranny, "as women sooth-sayers and tribal leaders in war and peace had long been known and poetically extolled even among the pre-Islamic Arabs."

Monroe Rosenthal and Isaac Mozeson paid tribute to many noteworthy women warriors in their book, Wars of the Jews, and report about Kahena that "The Berbers of the Aures mountains retain legends of her bravery. She was said to have been born to a poor Jewish family of cave-dwellers. A chieftain of a Judeo-Berber tribe terrorized her Aures mountain settlement and demanded Kahena as a wife. When she rejected him he slaughtered people of her village. She then gave herself to him, but, like the Biblical heroine, slew him with a nail to the skull on the wedding night."

The Arab armies enriched themselves as they rampaged across Persia, Afghanistan and northern India to the east, and then in Egypt and Libya to the west. "The march of Islam had barely missed a step when, in 694, the Arab forces drove into Africa Minor. Expecting an easy sweep, the Moslems met fierce resistance in Barbary."

The Berbers rallied around their queen, the Jewess, Kahena, swearing to follow her into battle against the invaders. The Judeo/Berber army was swelled by soldiers of the pagan Berber tribes after their king Kocilla was killed by the Arabs. Queen Kahena became truly the queen and military commander of all the Berbers!

"Lions of Africa and Judah," the queen would shout to her Berber troops, "show these Arabs that we will never be enslaved by Islam. Our beloved Africa will remain free. Let our slogan be the cry of the Zealots of old: Freedom or death."

Under their valiant queen, Northwest Africa was cleansed of Arab mercenaries. Commander Ukba, who had at one point broken through all the way to the Atlantic Ocean, was killed in a Berber ambush. His armies were pushed back in retreat to Kairwan, the new Moslem base in central Tunisia. "The arrogant Ukba had tried to intimidate the proud Berbers with force instead of patiently trying to convert them to Islam with face-saving diplomacy." Queen Kahena's skills were again tested in the second, more massive Arab invasion. A new Arab general, Hassan, had driven across North Africa with a fresh army of 40,000 horseman, and had taken Carthage from the Byzantine Greeks. Queen Kahena did not confront this massive force, but outflanked it by taking the city of Bagia from its Byzantine garrison. She roused the
Christian population to join her forces in resistance to the Islamic invaders. When the Arab army laid siege to liberated Bagia, Kahena and her army streamed out of the city by secret passageways. They circled around to assault the enemy from behind a rocky prominence at Wadmini. The queen's cavalries spent the night in the saddle, forcing the Arab horsemen to do likewise. The relentless pressure through the night took a toll on the on the travel-weary Arabs, who were not in their native environment and were disadvantaged by an ignorance of the terrain.

With the break of dawn, "the Berber cavalry attacked - spurred on by their fiery queen. The townspeople of Bagia, Greeks, Copts and Phoenicians, united and inspired by Queen Kahena, simultaneously marched out on foot at the Arabs' rear. The Berbers charged with their rugged mountain ponies, while the Moslems countered with their swifter but more nervous Arabian stallions. A thousand Berber lances clashed with slashing Arab scimitars, as the impassioned Judeo-Berbers threw themselves at the fanatic Moslem Ishmaelites. The Arabs were completely routed. The main body of the army retreated as far as Gabes, while stragglers were driven into the wilderness where they perished."

Under their triumphant queen's command, the Berber armies liberated Carthage, and swept on across North Africa to free it from both the Byzantines and the Arabs. The local Christians hailed the queen as liberator from the Arabs, and the Judaic communities, who had suffered dreadfully under heavy Roman and Byzantine taxation, hailed her as their deliverer. Kahena's armies swelled with Jewish volunteers from the numerous hill communities that dotted the ridges of the mountains. The Bishop of Bula Regia had flowers strewn along her path.

For the next five years, the coalition of the diverse local elements held firm, and the region enjoyed a peaceful period of freedom from foreign domination.

The wily Arab commander, Hassan Ibn Numan, learned through bitter experience that the dedicated armies under queen Kahena's command were a formidable force. He set out on a classic "divide and conquer" diplomatic maneuver in preparation for another invasion. Noting Christian antipathy toward the Jews, he sent emissaries to the Christians, offering a carrot of proposed tolerance while playing on the latent fear and hostility toward the Jews.

The North African Christians were fearful of Visigothan conquest. They were susceptible to Hassan's deceptive promises of autonomy, and their latent anti-Semitism proved more powerful than the peace and freedom they enjoyed under Judeo/Berber hegemony.
At the time, the Spanish Jews were suffering under Visigothan rule in Spain. The Visigoth kings instituted an antisemitic regimen at a succession of ecclesiastical councils at Toledo. They decreed forcible baptism, forbade circumcision and the observance of the Sabbath, festivals and rites. "Jews were flogged, executed and their property confiscated, were subjected to ruinous taxes, forbidden to trade, and, at times, dragged to the baptismal font."

Hassan cunningly played upon the Judaic concern for their co-religionists suffering Visigothan oppression. He held out an olive branch to the Jews and proposed a joint Iberian invasion to rescue the Sephardic Jewish community from Visigothan tyranny. "Hassan’s seductive offer was actually first proposed by the Spanish Jews themselves. It was they who requested that the Arabs and the forces of Queen Kahena join to conquer the Iberian peninsula. The Spanish Jews were desperate for help in light of harsh new decrees that appropriated all their property, forbade them from all navigation and trade with Africa, prohibited all business with Christians, and required all converted Jews to eat non-kosher food in the presence of supervising clergy."

The Judeo/Berbers were lulled into failing to mobilize for defense against the Arab army. Hassan ‘s new, fresh army of 60,000 troops, swept swiftly across the continent, this time unresisted and even sustained by the Christian communities in their path.

It soon became clear that Hassan had no intention of halting at Barbary’s borders. Unprepared, the Berber army was thrown into retreat. The queen, learning too late of the Arab perfidy, hastily mounted a counter-offensive. In desperation, the queen launched a scorched earth campaign in the path of the thundering Arab troops, burning fields, cutting down trees, and destroying dwellings to deny sustenance and booty to the invaders.

The queen's plans were also frustrated by an enemy within her ranks. "Just as King Saul lost his kingdom upon sparing the Amelekite king, Queen Kahena lost hers when she spared the brave and handsome Khalid Ibn Yessid El Kaisi, a strikingly aristocratic youth among the captives."

Khalid feigned to have become a loyal adopted member of Kahena’s own family. Secretly remaining a devoted Muslim, Khalid passed critical information to general Hassan about planned surprise attacks and ambushes. Thus armed, Hassan was able to prevail. Finally, probably concerned that his perfidy was about to be exposed, the trusted spy slipped out of the Berber camp, and was rewarded by Hassan with
the position of deputy commander. Khalid’s intimate knowledge of Berber encampments, haunts and hideouts was a major factor in sealing the queen’s doom.

Unable to evade confrontation with the far more numerous forces under Hassan, "the two armies clashed head-on in a decisive battle at the ancient [Roman] amphitheater at Thysdrus, the modern town of El Jern. In the shadow of Rome’s former African glory, the fate of Barbary was decided. Arab historian Ibn Nuvairi records that the Berbers and the Jews fought like furies, and only the will of Allah allowed the Moslems to triumph. The remnants of the Berber force fled to the Aures mountains, with the queen’s guard at the rear. Her men begged her to flee to the safety of the Moroccan hinterlands, but Kahena preferred to remain with a handful of men holding a mountain pass against the onrushing Arabs. Like a true Zealot, she died with sword in hand.

The ignoble Hassan had her decapitated head sent back to the Arab Caliph, Abd el-Malik."

The Jews and Berbers were given a choice: convert to Islam or die. Some 50,000 refused to convert and were massacred. The others opted for conversion.

Judaic/Berber Participation in the Islamic Conquest of Southern Iberia.

The converted Jews and Berbers became a significant part of the Arab forces which invaded Iberia. The commander of the joint Berber/Arab army which crossed the strait between Africa and Europe to conquer Spain in 711 CE was a Judeo/Berber convert said to have been one of the sons of Queen Kahena. His Arab name, Jibral-an-Tarik, became transcribed into the name of the fortress, Gibraltar, and the rock is referred to as Tarik’s rock.

Many African Jews entered conversion pragmatically, secretly continuing their faith as did the Marranos of a later period. The Iberian Jews consequently collaborated fully with the invaders. The pragmatism of the converted Jews proved advantageous to both the Arabs and the Iberian Jews. The Arabs were dependant on both the Berber convertees and the Iberian Jews for a successful invasion and thereafter for maintaining their hegemony over the conquered region of Iberia.

Arab chroniclers record that the conquerors entrusted the garrisoning of such important cities as Elvira, Seville, and Cordoba to the Jews while the invaders pressed on in hot pursuit of the fleeing Christian
forces. One chronicler informs us that Malaga, which had no Jews, could not be garrisoned because no Jews resided in the city and the Christians had all fled!

The gates to the strategic city of Toledo were opened by Jews on a Palm Sunday when the Christians were attending church services. The imminence of the Arab attack had been anticipated, for the Visigothan grandees had already fled the city, and the archbishop had made tracks all the way to Rome.

"The Berber/Arab successes in Iberia were made possible only by the assistance and collaboration of both the Sephardim and the formerly Berber Jews. Once empowered, the primitive Berbers and Arabs, dependant on the industrial and commercial sagacity of the Jews for the continuation and growth of their societies and economies, instituted a period of tolerance. The Arabs absorbed the scholarly attributes of an advanced civilization. Many of the "Arab" philosophers, poets, mathematicians and scientists were converted Jews, or descendants of converted Jews. A new enlightened era for both Arabs and Jews was born.

Jews regained the right to practice their faith and the Jewish populations of North African towns soon burgeoned with new, vibrant Jewish communities.

"In Kairuwan and the province of Ifriqiya, the famous heir of the ancient Carthageniens-Semitic civilization, the Jews, reinforced by numerous arrivals from Egypt and Palestine, had a fully developed life at the time of the Fatimid rise to power (909). In fact... the enemies of the new dynasty asserted that it had much Jewish blood in its veins... During the tenth century the city of Kairuwan, glorified by the Arabs as one of the four gates to Paradise, embraced a large and prosperous Jewish community. The latter soon felt strong enough to throw off the tutelage of the eastern academies.... Fez.... became from its inception (808) a major center of Jewish culture."

Likewise, the liberal policies of the new Berber rulers of Spain laid the foundation for "The Golden Age" of Sephardic Judaism.

Ancient Black African Relations
Judaic Presence in Darkest Africa

Mr. George E Lichtblau, while on duty as labor attache and political officer at the American Embassy in Tel Aviv, came across intriguing references to the Judaic presence in ancient Black Africa. Piqued by titillating allusions to an undocumented aspect of Judaic history, Lichtblau gathered information about this hidden history while carrying out assignments as a Foreign Service Officer for the U. S. Department of State to francophone West Africa. During his travels and meetings with African dignitaries privy to surviving evidence and credible folk-lore of the region, he gathered much information, lectured on the subject, and submitted the information he had gathered to the HHF.

Albeit the tribal memories Lichtblau culled from a variety of sources are not definitive, they are consistent enough to manifest that a significant Judaic involvement took place in Black Africa at a time when Europeans were ignorant of the vast continent beyond the Mediterranean shore. Documentation of Judaic pioneering in the "Dark Continent" is sparse but supportive of the existence of substantial intercourse.

Mr. Lichtblau refers first to the two northern African areas where a Judaic communal presence on the continent is acknowledged as part of Judaic history and experience. He refers to the relatively well-known history in the Maghreb extending from Mauritania, Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria to Libya past Cyrenaica, Namibia, Egypt, the Kingdom of Kush as well as in the Horn of Africa and Ethiopia (Discussed in Fact Paper 19-1).

There are biblical references to Judaic sojourns in Egypt and in the Kingdom of Kush in the Book of Exodus. Also, as far back as the 10th century BCE, in alliance with the sea-faring Canaanites of Tyre and Sidon, kings David and Solomon sought to expand Judaic trade throughout the Mediterranean including North Africa, Egypt, the Arab Peninsula and the Horn of Africa as well as Persia.

The Judaic association with the Toureg tribes who dominated the trade routes across the Sahara, led to contacts with black tribes to the south and down the West African coast. Documentation of this penetration is found in Judaic, Arab, and Christian accounts. They describe Jewish rulers of certain tribal groups and clans who identify themselves as Jews scattered throughout Mauritania, Senegal, the Western Soudan, Nigeria and Ghana.

Evidence of Judaic presence extends as far as an association with the Bantu tribes of southern Africa. Mr. Lichtblau found that some 40,000 members of the Lemba tribe still claim Judaic roots! The
association of Jews with such tribes is evident from the names of old Judaic communities south of the Atlas mountains in documents recovered from the Geniza of the Ben Ezra Synagogue of Fustat (Cairo). The names of many of these ancient Judaic communities survived through the Renaissance.

Four members of the Ganda tribe of Uganda, a typical central African musical company. Some African instruments evidence the peaceful penetration deep into Africa by Judaic tradesmen and artisans long before the European invasion. The first musician plays a kihembe ngoma, a percussion instrument common to all cultures. The third musician is playing a kisar, a plucked lyre (Hebrew kinnor - King David's instrument). The lyre was introduced into Africa from the Near East. The bowed lyres, tube fiddles, played by the second and fourth musicians are also of Near Eastern origin. Trumpets made of animal horns are likewise African instruments reminiscent of the Judaic shofar, used in Judaic religious rites.
There are other Judaic, Arab and Christian accounts citing the existence of Judaic rulers of certain tribal groups identifying themselves as Jews scattered throughout Mauritania, Senegal and Western Soudan.

For example, among the notable Arab chroniclers citing the existence of these Judaic communities is the 12th century geographer al-Idrisi. Born in Ceuta, Spain, he wrote about Jewish Negroes in the western Sudan.

There was also the 13th century Ibn Khaldun, a respected historian of the Berber tribes. He refers to the Judaic association with the Touregs for trade beyond the Sahara, a commerce facilitated by the Touregs.

Then there was the early 16th century historian and traveler Leon Africanus, a Moslem from Spain, who was raised by a Jewish woman working in his father's household. She taught him Hebrew, and migrated with the family to Marakesh, Morocco, in 1492. Africanus thereafter converted to Catholicism, but remained interested in and reported on the Judaic communities he encountered throughout his travels in West Africa.

Mr. Lichtblau met Bubu Hama while performing his job as an American Foreign Service Officer. Mr. Hama, then president of the national assembly in Niger, was also a prolific writer on African history. Hama affirmed that the Touregs had a Jewish queen in early medieval times; he was undoubtedly referring to Kahena, queen and military commander of the Berbers, tribes that converted to Judaism in the seventh century.

Hama stated that some Judaic Toureg groups preserved their adherence to their faith in defiance of both Islamic and Christian pressures until the 18th century. A fascinating facet of his account is that the Touregs claim to have originated in Yemen, and that the Judaic communities among them likewise originated from the Arabian peninsula. The genealogies of Jewish Toureg rulers, as well as those of the Hausa kingdom, are cited in several of Mr. Hama's books.

In 1976 or 1977, Shimon Peres, leader of the Israeli Labor party and a former Prime Minister, told Mr. Lichtblau about surviving memories of Jewish roots in Black Africa. Peres had just returned from a meeting of the Socialist International during which he met with President Leopold Senghor of Senegal about the normalization of relations between the two countries, Senghor told him that he too had Jewish ancestors!
Indeed, Mr. Lichtblau found records of small Senegalese Judaic kingdoms and tribal groups known as the Beni Israel. They were part of the Wolof and Mandige communities of Senegal until forced to convert to Islam in the 18th century. Members of these groups claim to have been descendants of the tribe of Dan, i.e., the tribe of artisans in gold and other metals. They were still carrying on that ancient, traditionally Judaic occupation. Curiously, the sophisticated jewelry produced by Beni Israel artisans strikingly resemble the exquisite Yemenite products.

Ethiopian Jews likewise trace their ancestry to the tribe of Dan. Some of these transmigrants established communities in such renowned places as Gao, Timbuktu, where UNESCO maintains notable archives. They contain records of the city's ancient Judaic community as well as of the Jews in Banako, Agades, and Ibadan, "a few" commented Lichtblau, of numerous villages and towns throughout the area which retain some record of Judaic presence. Notable also among the tribes converting to Judaism were not only the Toureg, but tribes from the Peuhl and Ibadya groups. It can be assumed that the metalworking arts were transmitted south and west by the Jewish artisan/traders from Ethiopia as well as by those who had traversed North Africa from Arabia and Judah.
Gold also figures in historical accounts that report that Jewish travelers from Persia had organized exchanges of silk fabrics for gold in the kingdom of Ghana. The tradition of the production of "Kenti" cloth by the Ashantis of Ghana appears to trace back to this intercourse. "To this day," comments Lichtblau, "it is said that the Ashanti words for numbers relate to those in Farsi, a language employed by the Judaic/Persian traders."

"Kenti" cloth designs have much in common with the Persian/Chinese designs on silk. The information garnered by Lichtblau dovetails with the observation made by HHF member Lois Rose Rose of Los Angeles. She reported on the curious use of the "Seal of Solomon" as a standard pattern in ancient fabrics woven in West Africa.
The impact of Judaic influence led to the conversion to Judaism by a number of ruling families in Ghana, notably among the Peuhl, Foulani, Mossi, Fanti and Soughay tribes. Similar conversions had taken place among several Nigerian Yoruba and Hausa groups. No studies of these conversions are extant, yet it is a matter of record that the kingdom of Ghana was ruled by Judaic kings for nearly two hundred years!

Senegalese goldsmiths, jewelers and smiths likewise carry on in a powerful tradition introduced by Judaic artisans. The name of an old Senegalese province is still "Juddala." The Judaic seminal influence on Black Africa is confirmed by surviving accounts of Portuguese and other European visitors who first came to the area in the 14th and 15th centuries; they found that Judaic merchants and artisans had long preceded them. These accounts confirm what was reported centuries earlier by North African and Arab historical records.

"Most of these communities disappeared," notes Lichtblau. "Having existed largely in isolation there was a good deal of intermarriage which for a while reinforced their influence.... As a result they were increasingly viewed as a threat by Muslim rulers... [they] were either forced to convert to Islam or were massacred, with those remaining fleeing to North Africa, Egypt or the Sudan and a few also to Cameroon and even Southern Africa."

A significant factor in the spread of Judaism is the influence of Karaite Jews. A substantial community of Karaites settled in Egypt, and some of their precepts appear to have filtered through Africa. The Karaites rejected adherence to the rulings of the hierarchical orthodox authorities. They played a significant role in the expansion of Judaism and as advocates of a greater religious role for women, factors that became evident in surviving religious customs of the Judeo-Berber communities and among the West African tribes who still claim some ties to Judaism.

The first maps which included large segments of Black Africa were made by Abraham Cresques of Majorca in the 13th century. The Cresque family derived their information from Jewish traders visiting the strategically placed Mediterranean island. These maps, and the tales filtering down from the traders themselves spurred the Portuguese, Spanish, and other European regimes to search for new countries to plunder and enslave in Black Africa.

Mr. Lichtblau came upon intriguing references to "glassmakers in Niger who claim Jewish ancestry and trace their roots back to Hebron." In fact, such craftsmen were found by Rene Gardi, and reported on in

The book contains dramatic color photographs of an African boy selling necklaces composed of varicolored beads and bracelets executed in fairly sophisticated patterns by his father. "One does not usually expect to read about glassmakers in conjunction with Africa," the author notes, "but in the Nigerian city of Bida the art of transforming miserable beer or medicine bottles into brightly colored bracelets and beads is still practiced."

Bida is the capital of the old kingdom of the Nupe, now a Muslim people. The author visited the glassmakers in an outlying quarter of the city, where "live a few families bound together in a strict guild, that of the glassmakers, who even now know how to guard their trade secrets well... [They] say that they come from the East and are not Nupe. Way-stations in their wanderings were the Bornuland in Chad, and lastly Kano, before they settled down with the Nupe in Bida... The glassmakers are regarded as strangers among the Nupe."
Gardi refers to the research of Leo Frobenius, a German ethnologist, who visited the Bida glassmakers in 1911, an earlier period in which the community's traditions were less distorted by the Islamic and Christian prejudices of more recent times. Frobenius found the glassmakers originally of the Jewish religion. The author also refers to an article by Manfred Korfman, who observed that the workers of a Hebron glass factory (no longer in existence), "produce their bracelets in the same fashion as the people of Bida."
The glassmakers were formed into an autonomous commune. About twelve "huts" [families] were still in operation. When Gardi was there, the chief was named Daniyalu, "a man who commanded enormous respect." Note that the name appears to be a combination of Daniel and Yahu, transcribed into Yalu. It is a peculiarly Judaic name and construction!

The titillating references to a dimly apparent, symbiotic relationship of Jews with black African tribes indicate that a rich mine of both Judaic and African history remains to be researched.

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 then 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.

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 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 Mzab, 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.

AFRICA: The history of the Jews in the various subdivisions of the African continent is treated under separate headings. Here only a general survey of that history is presented.

After Ethiopia, Egypt and Libya are the two most important lands of Africa. The Hebrew name for Egypt is (compare the Phenician Muẓra, for which read Musra in Stephanus Byzantinus under the word Αἴγυπτος; Babylonian, Muẓri, Miẓir—as (Schrader, "K. A. T.," 2d ed., p. 89; ancient Persian, Mudraja; Septuaginta, Mestrem; South Arabian, Miẓr; Arabic Maẓr). The Hebrew term has not been sufficiently explained, but it certainly shows a dual form which can best be interpreted as referring to the upper and lower districts.

Egypt, according to the testimony of Philo, was inhabited, as far as the borders of Libya and Ethiopia, by Jews whose numbers were estimated at a million. The great mercantile city of Alexandria was the intellectual and commercial center of African Jewish life. Alexander the Great had conferred upon the Jews full rights of citizenship, and they guarded these rights jealously.

While in the Latin districts they not only founded communities, but built synagogues, some of which were very beautiful. According to Jerome, the Jews dwelt in a continuous chain of settlements, from Mauretania eastward, throughout the province of Africa, and in Palestine, reaching as far as India.
Only in Egypt, particularly in Alexandria, where the path to Christianity had been smoothed by Jewish Hellenism, undoubtedly great masses of Jews went over to Christianity; but even there they continued to exist until the beginning of the fifth century, when Bishop Cyril expelled them from that city, which had been their home for many centuries.

Rabbinical sources show much familiarity with, and great interest in, this part of the world. The Biblical names of Hamitic peoples are explained in the Talmud and Midrash from the standpoint of Greco-Roman geography.

The undeniable relationship of the Ethiopian language (Geez) to other Semitic dialects stamps the Ethiopians as a Semitic tribe, an assumption that is confirmed by their physical appearance. The nomadic Zalans, who live apart from the state church, also consider themselves Israelites.

From the eighth to the tenth century the Maghreb was, after Babylonia, the most important country for the Jews.

The persecutions of the Almohades forced Moses Maimonides to leave Spain, and, after remaining for a short time in Fez, he took up his abode in Fostat, near Cairo, Egypt. Thus, through this great philosopher, the center of African Judaism became, for a time, transferred to Egypt. Egypt had become, as it were, a second holy land for Judaism.

In 1521 an anonymous Italian pilgrim reported that all classes of Jews were to be found in Jerusalem, there being among them Mostarbino, or Moriscos, and Maghrebim from the Barbary states "Shibe Yerushalaim," p. 21). Jews took a prominent part in the Portuguese conquests and discoveries in and around Africa. The Jews of Saffee and Arzilla also distinguished themselves by their bravery.

Meshullam Volterra, about 1490, found in Alexandria only sixty Jewish families (Luncz, "Jerusalem Jahrbuch," 1881, i. 176), yet the Jews there remembered the time when 4,000 families had dwelt within the city. Meshullam found neither Samaritans nor Karaites there. Jacob Safir ("Eben Sappir," Lyck, 1866) found no Jews in Upper Egypt or the Fayum, but 30,000 were reported to be in Syene (Assouan). South of Egypt, in Abyssinia, live the Falashas with a population variously estimated between 80,000 and
200,000 souls. If that was the cypher back then there shouldn't surprise us that today there be hundreds of thousands or even a few millions of Ethiopians (& from surroundings) of Hebrew origins.


Loeb, in the article "Juifs" in "Dictionnaire Universel de Géographie" of Vivien Saint-Martin, p. 28 of the reprint, Paris, 1884, gives the following numbers for Jews in Africa: Egypt, 8,000; Abyssinia (Falashas), 200,000; Tripoli, 60,000; Tunis, 55,000; Algeria and Sahara, 43,500; Morocco, 100,000; Cape Colony, 1,500; total, 468,000. Of these, the estimate for the Falashas is probably double the reality, while the numbers at the Cape have been largely increased—probably to 25,000.

Israel has allowed an ingathering of nearly all the Jews expelled from eleven Arab countries and now constituting more than half the Jewish population of Israel. Most were driven out by the Muslim conquests from Saudi Arabia to Persia and across North Africa to Spain. Many Muslims insist today that both Spain and Israel are Arab lands.

The Words of Africa

Decolonization has in many ways remained superficial with regard to the peoples of Africa, within that compact landmass that was physically carved out – from what subsequently became Eurasia – by the very enslaved Egyptian forced labor that dug the Suez Canal.

Most present African states are colonial inventions literally imposed on the peoples of Africa without regard for the geographic distribution of peoples and idioms. Indeed, more often than not, international borders in Africa cut through communities, peoples, idioms and nations with insensitive map lines drawn in Europe without regard for the very people whom these borders affected indeed very negatively and continue to adversely affect.
The post-colonial political and economic systems in Africa have worked rather poorly, precisely because these systems were imposed by European Christian imperialists without understanding that African cultures emerged through ecological adaptation of the plural human species and the many human subspecies of that continent. One can surely take for granted that failure would ensue, were Sotho or Yoruba traditional structures of power to be imposed on genetic Europeans by African conquerors and subsequently by “post-colonial” local administrators using only African idioms in places such as Paris and Helsinki.

Yet, what is generally known as so called “anti-racism” is merely the latest cultural incarnation of European supremacism in the sense that “anti-racism” as it is generally articulated is based on an idealized racial, White European, cognitive genetic norm to which members of all other human species and human subspecies are expected to uncompromisingly adjust to through externally imposed normalization and especially so through cognitive White-norm systems of education and White racial idealization imperially “extended” to other species and subspecies of the Homo genus. This is in addition to mass Anti-Jewish propaganda and legitimization of Anti-Jewish prejudice in Durban I, Durban II and now Durban III and the systemic, paradigmatic exclusion from legal personhood of persons with emotions belonging to taxa external to the Homo genus.

Eurasian colonial idioms with great prestige – the dead Arabic, English, French and the Portuguese literary dialect of Roman – have remained the official idioms in most African states. While this world era experiences a Cold War with Islamism, Africa is made to choose between distinctly Muslim patterns of imperialism and distinctly Christian patterns of imperialism as a culmination of an historical cultural implosion whereby most Africans have converted to either of these two imperialist religious civilizations and increasingly so at the expense of pre-colonial, indigenous African cosmologies & cultures.

African idioms are far too often not valued and thus considered secondary in relation to the four great, Eurasian colonial idioms in Africa. As far as possible in the people’s own local idioms. Hence, political borders in Africa need to be redrawn in accordance with the distribution of appropriately standardized national heritage idioms. Indeed, the vast majority of Africans speak a national heritage idiom of theirs that have at least one million speakers each. Yet, for participatory political systems to work in Africa, the political geography of this landmass needs to be redrawn through establishment of federations of idiomatic states within the present borders of African countries and later independence for idiomatic nations, including as parts of unions of idiomatic micro-states in regions where large numbers of small and very small idioms fortunately remain spoken. Indeed, the realms of most small African idioms are located in such regions of very rich idiomatic heritage. Yet, the peoples of Africa need to first become literate in their own national heritage idioms, not those of past Eurasian colonialists, colonial idioms that constitute indeed very significant political obstacles between rulers and ruled.
The idiomatic situation in the Atlantic region and in the Indian Ocean is even more absurd where dialects of regional national heritage idioms that emerged as pidgin contact idioms and later became natively spoken national heritage idioms (as so called “creoles”) are considered mere “dialect” subsets of French, of English as well as of the Portuguese literary dialect of Roman. Haiti is an important exception and indeed a political model for the African world generally in nurturing and affording official prestige to its own national heritage idiom of Haitian that merely happens to be historically related to French. Ethiopia is of course another political model for the African world to emulate in having long since established its own federation of idiomatic states.

While the former British colonies in Africa tend to be in better shape than former French colonies in Africa, which in turn tend to be in better shape than former Portuguese colonies in Africa; development of participatory political systems must begin with retaining and integrating what is good in traditional, pre-colonial structures of power. Imposing wholesale societal models of genetic Europeans in African contexts, including genetically European theories of economics and genetically European theories of governance, obviously does not work and does tend to create far more problems than what it resolves. The key is thus to do like the Japanese and retain what is valuable and important in one’s own culture, while fusing it with what is valuable and important in cultures of others. The fact that there are significant genetic differences, both cognitive and somatic within, but also among the various human species and human subspecies is only problematic if genetically European economic and political norms are imposed wholesale on other human taxa without regard for existing human genetic diversity, both somatic and cognitive.

Eurasian forms of economics & politics are no longer arbitrarily imposed by default. While relatively free markets and participatory political systems are no doubt important and indeed crucial, the modern nation state needs to be thoroughly deconstructed, considering that participatory political systems and relatively free markets could potentially and quite possibly indeed be organized in many different ways and not merely the way current systems historically evolved in Europe.

However, inclusive idiomatic statehood will necessarily need to be the first step in this direction in genetically diverse Africa. Yet, both left and right cling to distinctly unhelp elements of what is known as “the nation state,” which is certainly a misleading term when applied to most contemporary African countries. Simply because State Marxism is generally bad, does not automatically mean that State Liberalism (in its many incarnations from social democracy to libertarianism) should be accepted wholesale without comprehensive deconstruction to weed out what is distinctly unhelpful and prejudicial from what is indeed ethical and helpful in European political and economic thought. One
primary duty of political responsibility is therefore, as Leo Strauss would say: to strive for the best regime possible.

While the national achievement of Israel’s restored Jewish independence in 1948 constituted historical liberation from Christian imperialism, Israel is still fighting the battle of liberation from Muslim imperialism. Israel could indeed have become African had the digging of the Suez Canal taken a route to the east of Sinai. Yet, Hebrew is an idiom that belongs to the Afro-Asiatic family of idioms which is of course really an African family of idioms; most idioms of which are indeed of course spoken almost exclusively in Africa. Yet, being caught between Asian Muslim imperialism and European Christian imperialism is not only a Jewish and Israeli condition but an African condition as well – that is severely detrimental to African societies and indeed for the wellbeing of Africa’s people.

Yet, imperialist attempts at drawing lines from afar that divide peoples from within is not merely an imperialist practice of systemic injustice, it should be unacceptable in our time and age. Bearing this in mind, I consequently call on Israel’s many friends among the governments and peoples of Africa to be courageous in opposing this campaign of attempted Asian imperialist injustice from being further attempted, considering that the sovereign, indigenous Jewish nation of Israel no less than African nations deserve unity in self-determination independent of imperialist impositions from afar. Africa knows the truth better than most others in this regard, that arbitrary, anachronistic borders serve no good: rather the opposite is true since these are serious obstacles to the realization of unity in self-determination for every idiomatic nation.

This is the time to do the right thing and move beyond the clichés of the predominant political dichotomy between culturally Christian religious/ideological imperialism on the one hand and culturally Muslim religious/ideological imperialism on the other and indeed embrace unity in self-determination for every idiomatic nation as part of an ethical agenda of universal emancipation adjusted to local conditions. Let us move beyond not only Christian imperialism, but Muslim imperialism as well and indeed make the appropriate ethical decisions in New York City by casting our votes in ways that does not repeat the historical evils of imperialist lines that divide the people from within. Let us therefore join together to turn down this anachronistic, imperialist paperhood provocation on the part of the imperialist Islamist nexus in favor of unity in self-determination for the Amian nation, for the Jewish nation and indeed for every other idiomatic nation in Africa and beyond.

Are people from Giyon (Ethiopia), people from Zion?
In Rabbi Eliyahu's book "The Tribes of Israel" he affirms that the people from Giyon/Gihon/Gayon (Ethiopia) also called Waliso have Israelite origin. Does the name of their location prove that these Ethiopians have Israelite origin in Zion (Tsayon)?

I say that because the "Gion" festival in Kyoto started with the wish that no pestilence would occur among people. This is similar to what King Solomon started, in the wish that no pestilence would occur
in the country, the feast which continued for 8 days (including the last meeting day) from the 15th of the seventh month (2 Chronicles 7:8-10). Over 120 years ago, a business man from Scotland, N. Mcleod, came to Japan and investigated the customs of Japan. He wrote a book titled "Epitome of Japanese Ancient History." In the book, he wrote that the "Gion" festival in Kyoto resembled Jewish festivals very much. Rabbi Tokayer made a similar comment. He said that the name "Gion" reminds him of "Zion" which is another name used for Jerusalem. In fact, Kyoto used to be called "Heian-kyo" which means "peace". Jerusalem in Hebrew also means "peace". "Heian-kyo" might be Japanese for "Jerusalem."

That this city is in the Oromia region is interesting because some people have considered Oromos a Hebrews because of their monotheistic believes etc... From the Oromos (or Gallas) the Boranas are the ones that more oftten are considered Israelites.

FROM AFRICA TO THE TRANS-ATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

The African Jews, as all other Romanized-African of this era, were caught in a rebellion in Cyrene (Cyrenaica) during 115 C.E. against Roman imperialism and colonialism. This rebellion also marked the beginning of a mass Jewish migration southward into Soudan (Sudan or West Africa) along the way of the city Aer (Air) and into the countries of Futa Jalon and Senegal (Sene-Gambia) which lie below the curve of the Niger River's most northern reaches, where the City of Tumbut (Timbuktu, Timbuctoo, etc.), Melle (Mali) presently stands." ("African Origins of the Major Western Religions," 1970, p. 76).

Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade
Dr. Ben goes on to relate that Israelite immigrants from northern and eastern Africa merged with indigenous groups in western Africa to become the Fulani of Futa Jalon, Bornu, Kamen, and Lake Chad. They also formed the parent-stock of groups such as the Ashanti, the Hausa, the B'nai Ephraim (mentioned in earlier posts), and the Bavumbu (Mavumbu or Ma-yomba, descendents of the famous Loango Jewish kingdom). All of these groups suffered tremendous population decreases during the years the Atlantic slave trade was in operation, others were completely eliminated. Thus, every so-called African American has Israelite ancestry in their family tree whether he or she knows it or not. Even in the very crucible of slavery the descendants of West African Hebrew captives in America struggled to keep their heritages from being obliterated by forced assimilation and acculturation. Their distinctive traditions became submerged in Christianity but always remained a part of the oral tradition via the so-called Negro Spirituals which praise the memory of ancestors and kinsmen like Moshe (Moses), Dawid (David), Yehoshua (Joshua), and Dahnniel (Daniel).
The Kushim Jews are the Jews of Kushitic mixture (Beta Israel, Beta Avraham, Agaw, Qemant, Tutsi, Hema, Banyamulenge, Maasai, Lemba, Sena)

Abyssinia comes from Habesa & Habesa is considered to come from the Semitic words ha (the), be (ben, son in Hebrew) & sa (Sam or Shem). The stories-legends & historical accounts of the peoples of the Horn of Africa trace their origin in Semites mingled with local negro peoples. The DNA also confirms this origin. The question is which Semites are their ancestors?: Hebrews, Arabs...? Several black African peoples claim to have Arab origin, some Hebrew origin... In Saharan white Africa & deeper into Negro Africa there are other claims of Semitic (Hebrew, Arab...) & other Middle Eastern origin?: Yibir Israelites, Ashanti Israelites, Falashmura Israelites, Masai Israelites, Banyamulenge Israelites, Hima Israelites, Ibo Israelites, Tutsi Israelites, Lemba Israelites, Sena Israelites, Gadangme Israelites, Dan Israelites, Ma'di Israelites, Ishaq Arabs, Yoruba Assyrians, Iberogen Iddaosahak Israelites... Some of the ethnic groups with Arab origin had roots in Jewish tribes living in Arabia, therefore they also have Israelite origin. Ancient accounts tell of Jews among several black African ethnic groups like the Mandingos, Yorubas... They aren't considered to be Israelites like the Ibos or the Ashantis, but rather to have Israelite population pockets among them. As British & Scandinavians are white Israelites Ibos, Lembas ... are black Israelites. As Eastern Germans, Poles... are white Assyrians, Yorubas are black Assyrians. The word Yoruba is considered to come from Jerobam, the name of one of the kings of Israel. This & several Hebrew traditions would prove the Israelite element within the Yorubas. Even the name manDiNgo may include the name of DaN in it, a tribe that is very widespread all over Africa as I said before.

In Genesis 46:16 we read "The sons of Gad: Zephon, Haggi, Shuni, Ezbon, Eri, Arodi and Areli." Do the Aari people of Ethiopia have anything to do with Arodi or Areli & therefore with some Igbo clans?

The Beta Avraham are only a part of the Falashmuras, the Ethiopian Jews that were forced to be Christians in the 1800s. The Falashmuras are trying to go back to the religion of their ancestors & were once part of the Beta Israelites.
Among the Ethiopian monarchs there were tons with Israelite first or last names, even if they didn't practised Judaism anymore: Kaleb, Siyon, Ishak, Za'ra, Ya'kob... After all Menelik is considered the son of King Solomon. Minas, King of the Falashas only, may have taken his name from Menasseh, if we consider the Hebrew vowelization.

It's believed that in the area south from Egypt, current Sudan & even further south there are Danites. It's noteworthy that the Ethiopian Israelites, or part of them, are attributed to be Danites. suDaN means blacks Bilad al-Sudan country of the blacks in Arabic, but it also has the name of DaN in it. According to proffesor Bwejeri Eldad HaDani was a Tutsi, therefore Danites went as far as current Rwanda & Burundi. The tribe of Dan is widespread among the Tutsis as well as the tribes of Judah & Levi.

It's noteworthy that the few really tall peoples in the world are considered to be Israelites: Watusis, Dutchmen, Pashtuns... This doesn't mean that all Israelites are tall though. It's the same with many war areas, in them you find Israelis often: Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir, Mizoram, Great Lakes of Africa... According to the archaeologist & historian Simcha Jacobovici the different scenarios of war might training areas for the future war of Armaggedon in which all the nations will wage war against Israel. Will the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel join Judah in a future widened Greater Israel that would encompass the lands between the rivers Nile & Euphrates?

The Jewish Kingdoms of the South Kush (commonly called the African Great Lakes) and the Jewish Kingdoms of West Africa. The Tutsi (or Batutsi/Watutsi/Abatutsi/Tutsi/Watusi/Wahuma) are the traditional keepers of the South Kush Jewish Kingdoms. In West Africa, the Toubous are the traditional keepers of the West Africa Jewish Kingdoms.

The Tutsis (at least some clans) claim the Zagwe Ethiopian monarchy to be their origin. Apparently the Zagwes have origin in Zage, son of Solomon & the lady escort of the Queen of Sheba.
The Judeo-Ethiopian Zagwe dynasty received its name from the Agaw people. The number of Jews in Ethiopia was counted (many centuries ago) at least in one million, but now, between the ones left & the ones in Israel there only about 200,000. The Agaws must be added as Jewish group since Beta Israel speak (and are related to them) the same language & one of the Jewish monarchies came from them, the mentioned Zagwe monarchy. The Qemants are the other ethnic group, with the Beta Israel, that follows Jewish laws & is part of the Agews. The Agaw or Agew people sum one million & lived next to the Beta Israel & Qemant. In fact Beta Israel & Qemant are considered part of the Agaws. Some toponyms of the area recall Israelite names: Tana, Soqoto, Dangila... The t & d have similar sounds & are close linguistically. If I add that in Hebrew vowels are not important then TaNa can render as DaN. So the lake Tana found in a Hebrew area of Ethiopia would be a lake called after Dan. Dan is the main tribe from which these Israelites claim to come. Soqoto has the consonants in "SoQoto". According to Yair Davidy "Keren" has a Hebrew origin & it’s the very name of one Ethiopian town in the mentioned Agaw area. Dangila has the name of Dan inside. Melka, a toponym found in different parts of Ethiopia is very similar to Hebrew word for queen (Malka). Shewa, also a place in Ethiopia, could come from Sheba or Saba.
The Tutsi and the Toubous share the same origins as their cousins, the Jews of Ethiopia, tracing their common ancestry from King Solomon and Queen of Sheba. Israeli Chief Rabbis Avraham Ytzchak Kook and Ovadia Yosef, and US Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof, would have included the Tutsi and the Toubous as descendents of Dan, following the 1500s responsum of a renowned Orthodox Rabbi, Rbadaz, Rabbi David ibn Zimrah. In fact, numerous branches of the Tutsi elite belong to the Judah lineage. The Tutsi Jewishness was obstructed by the Christian Inquisition that took place since the 1920s, and was never addressed until the late 20th Century. At that time, Havila Institute in Brussels dedicated huge efforts to enhance the re-connection of the Tutsi people to their Jewish heritage, and helped raise awareness among concerned Jewish institutions.

The Toubous face a similar but more ancient case of obstruction. They were forcibly converted to Islam centuries ago by the successive Jihads that took place in Northern Africa from the Arabian Peninsula, but they kept the remembrance of their Israelite origins.
Today, Tutsis in increasing numbers are seeking t’shuvah, return. Like the Western Jews, they envision ge’ulah, redemption. They deserve pro-active support and monitoring from concerned Jewish organizations and networks. Like the Western Jewish Diaspora, the Tutsi Jews, some parts of which have been forcibly converted to Christianity and forbidden to practice the ways of Y”H, are People of Israel, no less than the Falasha Mura of Ethiopia.
Beta Abraham: The size of the community is estimated to be somewhere upwards of 150,000 in number.

Qemant people

The Kemant claim to be Jews who arrived to Ethiopia during the time of the Avraham. They maintain the same tradition as of the time of Avraham. They worship in the woods just as the pagan Israelites did.

The Qemant (Ge'ez: ከማንት) are a small ethnic group in Ethiopia, who, despite their close historical and ethnic relationship, should not be confused with the Beta Israel. The ethnicity's population is roughly 172,000, according to the 1994 national census. Adherence to the traditional religion has dropped substantially, as most of the population has converted to Christianity.

The Qemant live along an axis stretching from Ayikel in Chilga woreda to Kirakir north to Lake Tana in the woredas of Lay Armachiho, Qwara, Dembiya, Metemma and Wogera; most remaining speakers of the language are near Ayikel, about 40 miles west of Gondar. They are mainly farmers.

The Qemant are divided into two patrilineal moieties, the Keber and the Yetanti; the Keber is higher in rank. A traditional Qemant can only marry a member of the other moiety, so, while the moieties are exogamous, Qemant society as a whole is endogamous.

The Qemant traditionally practiced a religion which is often described as "Pagan-Hebraic," combining elements from both Judaism and paganism. According to the American scholar Frederic C. Gamst, their "Hebraism is an ancient form and unaffected by Hebraic change of the past two millennia". A recent
sociolinguistic survey notes that the Qemant religion is in a very precarious situation since very few people still adhere to it. According to this study, the ratio of those who follow the Qemant religion vs. those who are baptized and converted to Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity is about 1% vs. 99%.

Their religious observances include a literal reading of the 11th chapter of Leviticus (see Kashrut). As with mainstream Judaism, even permitted animals can only be consumed if they are properly slaughtered (see Shechita). Their practices include animal sacrifices, and the tending of sacred groves (called degegna). Worship is conducted outdoors, usually at a site near a sacred tree (called qole), wrapped in variously-colored strips of cloth. This appears to be a survival of a biblical tradition: Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba, and called there the name of God (Genesis 21:33). ...where the women wove hangings for the grove (II Kings 23:7).

However, due to their dislike to being observed by the increasingly pervasive Christians, they have latterly constructed a prayer-hall at Chelga. The Sabbath is observed on Saturday, when it is forbidden to light a fire. The extent to which other prohibitions, as are found in Judaism, are observed, is unclear.

The Qemant call the Deity Adara (God) or Yeadara (My God) or Mezgana which seems to be his proper name. He is described as omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient, and anthropomorphic. He is approachable directly or through qedus which are angels or culture heroes.

The highest political and religious leader among the Qemant is their High Priest, called the Wember (also transliterated Womber and Wambar), an Amharic term meaning "seat." There were formerly two superior wambars, at Karkar and at Chelga, with the first being senior, and a varying number of subordinate wambars in other parts of Qemantland. All wambars are chosen from certain lineages in the Keber moiety. The last wambar of Karkar died in 1955, and since then the only wambar has been Mulunah Marsha, Wambar of Chelga (born 1935). Each wambar chose (from the Keber moiety) one or more delegates with the title of afaliq to represent him in judicial matters. These men traveled the countryside, settling disputes, seeing that the laws were obeyed, and punishing wrongdoing, usually with a fine. Each wambar also chose two stewards with different titles, one from each moiety, who served different elements of the sacred meals.
There are two orders of priesthood, the kamazana, the higher, of the Keber moiety, and the abayegariya, the lower, of the Yetanti moiety. Each Qemant locality has at least one of each; they must work together to conduct the traditional sacrifices and other religious ceremonies. When offering a sacrifice, the abayegariya holds the legs of the victim and the kamazana wields the knife. The priests also have a subordinate judicial function. The Qemant don't consider themselves as Jews.

The origins of the Qemant are unknown, for they lack a written history. According to oral tradition, the founder of the Qemant was a man called Anayer, who is said to have been a grandson of Canaan, son of Ham, son of Noah. After seven years of famine in his own country, he is said to have come to the area of Lake Tana, in Ethiopia. As he traveled with his wife and children, he met the founder of the Beta Israel, who tradition states were traveling in the same direction. According to Wember Muluna Marsha, they were from the same country (which they called Canaan). As Anayer traveled on the journey with his wife and children, he met the founder of the Beta Israel, also traveling on the same journey with his wife and children. A marriage alliance was discussed between the two groups, but it did not succeed.

—Muluna Marsha, The Sign and the Seal, interview by Graham Hancock, Aykel 1990

According to the early 19th century missionary Samuel Gobat, their Amharic-speaking neighbors considered the Qemant boudas, or sorcerers, along with "the Falashas or Jews (Beta Israel), most Mussulamns (Muslims), and some Christians." Gobat knew little more about this "small Pagan people inhabiting the mountains in the vicinity of Gondar."

According to traditional Amharic-speaking historians, the Qemant were descended from Canaan through his son Arwadi ('the Arvadite') and grandson Ayner. Ayner and his wife Entela are said to have crossed from Asia into Ethiopia in 2101 BC, as one of three Canaanite groups to immigrate when Ethiopia was ruled by Cushites — the other two groups being the Shanqella (Nilo-Saharan) descended from Sini ('the Sinite'), and the Weyto descended from Samri (the 'Zemarite').
Beta Yisrael: A Historical Analysis

At first glance one might incorrectly assume that the only thing Ethiopian Jews, who call themselves Beta Yisrael (The House of Israel), have in common with black Jews in other parts of the world is that their ancestors once lived on the same continent. While not entirely true, this small fact is significant because Africa whether we acknowledge it or not is a crucial link that historically unites all Jews. Those whose African connection is more obvious because of race share this, too, as a bond for better or worse.

Actually, our similarities are more than skin deep. The direct connections between the Beta Israel and my community of black Jews in the United States antedates the recent public fascination with the African tribe by at least sixty years. The existence of all of our communities raise important questions about the ancient history, current composition, and future of Judaism. This essay covers the ancient history, culture and tradition of the Beta Yisrael. My analysis of their current status in Israel is covered on a separate page devoted to black Jews in Israel today.

History

The Beta Yisrael are perhaps the best known black Jewish sect in the world. Despite their ancient and well-documented history, they, like all black communities, have had their historical connections to Judaism challenged, the validity of their religious practice scrutinized, and their acceptance within the white Jewish world hindered. When the Ethiopians left the cultural isolation of their remote villages, they entered a world prefigured by race. They soon learned that their Jewish heritage was not the only thing that made them Falasha, (outsiders). For the black Jews of America, the existence of Ethiopian Jews was living proof that black people have a connection to Judaism that is as old as any claimed by Europeans.

They called themselves Beta Yisrael because for centuries they believed that they were the last remnant of the ancient Israelites. In fact, in the nineteenth century when a French linguist named Joseph Halevy reached one of their villages on a mission from the Alliance Israelite Universelle, they did not believe that he, the European, could be a Jew. As Halevy described it, the Ethiopians said What! You a Falasha! A white Falasha! You are laughing at us. Are there any white Falashas? Imagine the irony of that moment: black Jews questioning the Jewishness of white Jews; and the white Jew trying to convince them of his authenticity. The levity of that scene is surpassed by a far more serious point: when different Jewish communities come together, one will usually occupy the superior position; the one of dominance,
authority, and control. Not surprisingly, the dominant group is in a position to judge the subordinate. That is an exercise of power, and power underlies all of these relationships.

Dominance or power in this context is established by a combination of any or all of these factors: (1) numeric superiority, (2) access to wealth, (3) primo-occupancy; i.e. the act of being there first, (4) higher social status (this could be based on a privilege afforded one Jewish group by a Christian or Muslim authority that is more powerful than either Jewish group (5) racial or ethnic superiority (this would be true in racialized societies of the West and was evident in the interaction of Ashkenazim and Sephardim in Europe and Israel).

The Beta Israel maintain that their ancestors were descended from King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. That union produced a child called Menileck (in Hebrew Mem Meleck literally means from king). This child was then trained by the wise men of Solomon’s court. They further assert that when Menileck left Jerusalem with a large retinue of Israelite nobles for Ethiopia they took with them the Ark of the Covenant that God gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai. The Ethiopian claim is based on oral history that has been passed down from generation to generation by their elders, scholars called Dabtaras, and their priests, called Kahens (an Amharic word linguistically similar to the Hebrew word for priest, Kohen). The written account of ancient Ethiopian history is known as the Kebra Nagast and it corroborates in even greater detail what the Beta Israel have always affirmed. Moreover, the Biblical record tends to substantiate their claim. It vividly describes the Queen of Sheba arriving in Jerusalem with a large entourage shortly after the completion of the temple. She is granted an audience with the king, they engage in a colloquy in which the queen is impressed with his Solomonic wisdom to the point where there was no more spirit left in her. And King Solomon gave the queen of Sheba all she desired, whatever she asked, in addition to all that he gave her of his royal bounty.
Notice how the 15th century painter whose work is shown on the left depicted King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba as being white, archetypal Europeans. The Israeli artist whose work is shown on the right presents a more realistic depiction showing Makeda as the African queen that she was. These conflicting images reflect the old presumption of whiteness that was traditionally applied to all Biblical characters and the new multicultural realism that acknowledges the Eastern and African origins of Biblical figures respectively. Such realism is to be embraced and celebrated rather than denied and discouraged.

Rudolph R. Windsor examined the validity of this claim in his book From Babylon to Timbuktu. There he argued that the queen who visited King Solomon in 1012 B.C. was indeed an Ethiopian queen known variously as Makeda or Bilkis. Her dominion at that time included a province on the Arabian peninsula called Sheba; hence the title Queen of Sheba. That area would be in the region of Yemen today. Geographically, the Arabian peninsula is a peninsula of the African continent. [Judaism could be thought of as an African religion or at least, a religion with deep African roots.] Yemen and the ancient boundaries of Ethiopia are adjacent points, separated only by a very thin isthmus. Further, the renowned Jewish historian Flavius Josephus identified the ruler of Sheba as a queen of Egypt and Ethiopia. Not only does this comport with the view that Sheba was a vassal state of Ethiopia, but as
Windsor contends, lends credence to the view that the people of this region were black since Upper Egypt, the area once ruled by Ethiopia, is today called the Sudan and the indigenous people there are very dark. [Windsor also takes the controversial position that the Arabs who occupy these areas today are much lighter in complexion because of centuries of intermarriage with Europeans.]

If the Beta Israel are the product of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, then they have been in Ethiopia since the 10th Century B.C. That is twelve centuries before the writing of the Mishnah and sixteen centuries before the codification of the Talmud. Eldad Ha-Dani did not stumble into their village until the 9th Century A.D. Eldad Ha-Dani (which in Hebrew means Eldad of the tribe of Dan). He reported that he discovered Israelites in the mountains of northern Abyssinia. Moreover, he believed that these Israelites were also of the tribe of Dan. He saw that they were Jews and assumed that they had to be of the tribe of Dan, like him, because of the tradition among Sephardic Jews that members of that tribe had emigrated when the Kingdom of Solomon split after his death, and they did not want to be ruled by Jeroboam in the northern sector known as Israel. Other travelers were Benjamin of Tudela, Solomon of Vienna (the first Ashkenazi Jew to reach them in 1626), and the apostate James Bruce in the 18th Century. Their intermittent logs created the lore about black Jews in Ethiopia that the aforementioned Joseph Ha Levy came to investigate.
And when the Queen of Sheba heard of the fame of Solomon concerning the Name of the Lord, she came to prove him with hard questions. She communed with him of all that was in her heart. And Solomon answered her all her questions: there was not any thing hid from the King, which he told her not. I Kings 10:1-3

Beliefs and Practices

How Jewish were the Beta Israel? Dr. Wolf Leslau spent ten months in 1947 living among the Beta Israel. He primarily studied the most urban of their isolated villages in Gondar, which is near Lake Tana and the Blue Nile. The influential book he published from his journals, Falasha Anthology, has become the source of much of the secondary literature on this subject. He observed that every Friday all work in the village stopped early in the afternoon so that the cooking, cleaning, and baking needed for the Sabbath could be completed before sunset. Their synagogues were humble, austere structures having at best a Star of David on display. Inside, the rooms were divided into two sections: the outer chamber for laymen who faced east toward Jerusalem while saying their prayers and the inner chamber representing the holy of holies of the Mosaic Tabernacle into which only the priests could enter.
Priests of the Beta Israel pray seven time a day. Like the Levitical Priest of old, they sacrificed kosher animals on small altars built in front of their synagogues. Unlike the Levites, however, their positions were not hereditary; aspiring clerics had to study, apprentice, and live exemplary lives in order to be selected for the office. Once initiated, the priests wore a white cotton headdress that distinguished them from other Ethiopians. Their Torah, written in the Ge'ez language on parchment, contained all the books of the Old Testament and some from the Apocrypha, but none of the New Testament and no references to Jesus at all. Some devotees have attempted to lead lives of solitude and quiet contemplation as nuns and monks.

Judaism for them was not just an act of faith, it was a way of life governing almost every activity. All marriages were arranged by parents and elders. Individuals who married outside the group and women who were not virgins at the time of marriage could be banished. Their diet prohibited the eating of foods deemed unclean including beef slaughtered by non-Jews or beef that has not had the sinew removed. They used a solar calendar for secular activities and a lunar calendar to calculate all Biblical festivals such as Passover, Shavuot, and the Day of Atonement. For example, the Feast of Tabernacle was celebrated in the seventh month with palm branches and weeping willows.

Circumcision was performed on male children eight days after birth as the Torah proscribed. However, some have adopted the practice of female circumcision from their neighbors.[Although female circumcision is admittedly not Jewish in origin, the fact that they practice it just proves that despite their isolation their culture has not been impervious to outside influences, no Jewish community has.] Burials were performed on the same day of death, if possible. Special blessings were said before and after eating and performing other rituals. In fact, the Beta Israel went to such great lengths to avoid spiritual defilement that local gentiles referred to them as the people who smell of water because of their frequent baths and the touch-me-nots because of their aversion to physical contact with non-Jews.

In his book, Acts of Faith: A Journey to the Fringes of Jewish Identity, Dan Ross described how the Beta Israel literally applied purity laws by building blood huts as temporary housing for women during menstruation:[Although the separation of women during menstruation may seem quite severe, it is actually based on Leviticus 12. Orthodox Jews have a set of laws called Niddah that govern the activities of Jewish women during menstruation as well. Theirs is a modification of Biblical practices.]

Like Samaritans, Falashas do not touch women during menstruation or after childbirth. But unlike Samaritans, Falasha women spend their menstrual periods in separate huts. Circles of stones mark a perimeter around those tukuls beyond which men may not pass. Additional huts are built for women to live in during their forty or eighty days of impurity after childbirth; these are burned afterwards.
Dr. Leslau described the Judaism of the Beta Israel as being primitive because these people were not aware of all the rabbinic changes that have taken place since the redaction of the Talmud in the sixth century. From his perspective in the twentieth century, the menstrual huts and animal sacrifices must seem barbaric and a sure sign of ignorance. What he fails to recognize or perhaps is ashamed to acknowledge is that the customs of the Beta Israel today are a reflection of what the ancient Israelite must have looked like when they offered burnt offerings, incense, and libation to the same God that we as Jews worship today. Perhaps on some level this is unsettling. It is not often that a people can be confronted with their past in the present. Or, because Judaism outside of Ethiopia has changed so much over the centuries, those without the proper historical reference may not recognize their roots when they see them. Primitive, after all, is something associated with those uncivilized black tribes of Africa. Well, if that is true, then that is who, where, and how our Judaism evolved. I argue that rather than accept these possibilities, many scholars have blinded their eyes to these implications and have attempted to distance and disassociate themselves from the Beta Israel by discrediting their culture.

Despite all the evidence that has been adduced about the history and origins of the Beta Israel, there has been a profound, and often irrational, reluctance to accept that their claim is plausible. Scholars who are quite adept at understanding that the Bible may not always state the literal and unbiased truth of events, may yet remain an important tool in understanding how a people explained and preserved their culture. Nonetheless, many of these scholars seem incapable or unwilling to apply the same standards to their examination of the Beta Israel. Dr. Leslau asserted that from all historical evidence it would seem that the Falasha never have been a Hebrew-speaking people. Yet, before his eyes and throughout his text Hebrew words and names of months frequently appear. The fact that only a few Hebrew words have survived over the millennia does not mean they never had a working knowledge of the language. After all, Hebrew had ceased to be the lingua franca of Israel long before the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. Would a traveler in the Holy Land at that time be correct in assuming that those Greek-speaking Jews never spoke Hebrew? Subsequent scholars have looked at words such as masia (messiah), mizvat (charity), Sanbat (Sabbath), Saitan (Satan), which bear remarkable similarity to Hebrew words but could derive from Amharic, another Semitic language and the official language of Ethiopia. However, the following words only appear in Falasha texts: safur (shofar), gadol (great), El Shaddai (Almighty God), goyyim (gentile) and Torah. It seems perfectly logical that if one finds Hebrew words among people who claim to be descended from Hebrews, then the Hebrews are a likely source for how the words got there. It also does not require a great leap of faith to assume that if they know these words now, then they probably knew more words in the past since the tendency is for words to be lost over generations.

Falashas are descendants of Moses’s followers who turned right out of Egypt instead of left, ending up in Ethiopia instead of Palestine, or they are descendants of the lost tribe of Dan (as Israel’s chief rabbis
claim), or of Jewish soldiers posted in upper Egypt by the Persian emperors (as President Ben-Zvi believed), or of refugees from the destruction of one Jerusalem Temple or the other. Most historians now believe that the ancestors of Falashas were Ethiopians, who adopted their Judaism long ago. What they are less sure of is when, and how." If these so-called scholars neither know when nor how, then how can they be so sure of their conclusions. And, how can they be so brazen as to make such an assertion and then admit that they lack the evidence to substantiate it?

It is extremely instructive for scholars looking anew at the Beta Israel to comprehend what Dr. Leslau admitted. Despite all the information he had in his possession, in the end, the Beta Israel did not look ethnically Jewish and because of that he and his colleagues were never able to overcome their doubt. Therefore, they concluded that the Beta Israel must have been converted even though historical evidence is lacking to support such a position. What effrontery. To dismiss a body of evidence that points in one direction in favor of another position for which there is no evidence.

Dr. Yosef Ben-Jochanan took issue with Dr. Leslau dubious reference to ethnic Jews. For Professor Leslau to have reached the conclusion that the Falashas are not ethnically Jews, he must have produced for public scrutiny at least one of his own ethnic Jews from any part of the European and European-American communities where they still allegedly exist.

What exactly is an ethnic Jew? This is the question that Dr. Ben-Jochanan and others have raised. Those who use this term assume that we know what it is. They can spot one when they see one and they know who looks Jewish and who does not. However, we need to examine more closely what is meant by these terms and how they are used. Naomi Zack defined and clarified terms such as this in her recent book, Thinking About Race. She argues that race and ethnicity are nebulous concepts into which and out of which a host of meanings can be put in order to socially construct an identity. As such, neither of these constitutes a fixed, universal, or objective reality; i.e. they mean whatever the society that uses them wants them to mean at the time. She points out that what masquerades today as the building blocks of ethnic identity (language, common origin, shared culture, etc.) are the same things that social scientists used prior to about 1920 when Jews, Poles, Italians, Germans, and others were classified as races. What has changed since that time particularly in this era of political correctness is that the word ethnicity is often used as a euphemism for race when speakers want to refer to race without causing offense to diverse listeners or readers.

Karen Brodkin has chronicled this process in her book, How Jews Became White Folks. Although she focused on explaining this phenomenon within the United States, I argue that how one defines American Jews, who are essentially European Jews transplanted, is to a large extent the standard
against which all other Jews will be judged since Americans Jews are the largest, wealthiest, and most influential group of Jews in the world. And these American Jews have, despite rigorous resistance, become white folks. Like Dr. Zack, Dr. Brodkin recognizes this racial dimension to how Jews are perceived and how they often perceive themselves. She actually prefers the term ethnoracial, but uses it inconsistently. Nonetheless, her works help us to decode the hidden racial messages embedded in terms like ethnicity.

In the 1930s, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan advocated another way of thinking about Judaism. His movement led to a new denomination of Judaism in the United States called Reconstructionist Jews. One basic tenet of Reconstructionism is that Judaism is not necessarily a race, religion, or an ethnic group, but can be experienced as part of a civilization. Here the emphasis is on Jewish culture rather than any particular Jewish practices or beliefs. If Judaism is a culture, as Reconstructionist hold, does that culture have any bearing on race?

Beta Israel, and black Jews in other areas, are discovering that neither who they are nor what they do guarantees their membership or acceptance within a racial context.

European Contact with Beth Yisrael

In 1904, Dr. Jacques Faitlovitch (1880-1955) was given a grant by Baron Edmond de Rothschild and the blessings of the Chief Rabbi of Paris, Zadok Kahn, to go to Africa and investigate persistent rumors of there being black Jews in Ethiopia. He returned to France the following year to report that the people he saw are really Jews. By 1906, Dr. Faitlovitch was trying to convince the rabbis of Europe that the black Jews of Ethiopia were our flesh and blood. [Faitlovitch had, in fact, been a young, energetic student of Professor Halevy.] This announcement by a prominent Jewish scholar was soon followed by photographs, articles, and speaking engagements. Unlike his predecessors, Dr. Faitlovitch was steadfastly committed to winning recognition for the Beta Israel. For the rest of his life he worked tirelessly on three continents and through two world wars to remedy the plight of black Jews in Ethiopia. Although his methods and actions are open to scrutiny, his sincerity and dedication are not.

The first major victory that Faitlovitch won for the Beta Israel came in 1906. He persuaded forty-four eminent rabbis to sign a letter addressed to the Beta Israel that referred to them as our brethren, sons of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob our flesh and blood. The signers included: Herman Adler (Chief Rabbi of London), Raphael Meir Panigel (Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem / Palestine) and Jacob Reines of Russia (head of the Mizrachi movement) and others. For a moment, it looked as if the world Jewish community was going to come to the immediate and unconditional aide of their fellow Jews in Ethiopia.
But, the following year a Turkish rabbi named Haim Nahoum made his own journey to Ethiopia and upon his return he reported that it does not seem to me desirable that anything should be done.

Thus would begin a cruel pattern of expressions of enthusiastic support and solidarity followed by long periods of inactivity and indifference. Because the Beta Israel were frequently forgotten, they have been repeatedly rediscovered most recently during the dramatic airlift of fifty thousand Ethiopians to Israel in the 1980s. However, individuals like Faitlovitch consistently tried to keep the Ethiopian issue on the agendas of major Jewish organizations. In March of 1914, just prior to the outbreak of World War One, Faitlovitch established the Pro-Falasha Committee as a lobbying group solely dedicated to this cause. They had officers in several European countries and one in New York City. The Alliance Israelite Universelle, which had been an early sponsor, thought the best way to help the Ethiopians was through vocational training.

Dr. Faitlovitch fervently fought for the advancement of Ethiopian Jews, but he defined progress by his ability to make Ethiopian Jews more like European Jews. Tragically, his program began to resemble a Jewish version of the White Mans Burden; i.e. it was the moral duty of European Jews to save and civilize the Jews of Africa.

He was determined to rescue the Falashas and to bring them into rabbinic Judaism, the pattern known in Western Europe as Torah im Derkh-Eretz (lit. Bible together with the Way of the Land), which signified strict religious Orthodoxy together with modern behavior in manner, clothing, shelter, fine arts and careers.[In his youth Dr. Faitlovitch pursued secular studies at the Sorbonne, but he became a very devout Orthodox Jew who practiced a religious Zionism. Rabbinic law is often referred to Halakha, which literally means the way. For Faitlovitch it was the only way.]

When the first of Faitlovitch s students, Getye Jeremias, returned to his Ethiopian village dressed in a European jacket and high leather riding boots, he was an envied model of what others should become. His next student, who would become the well-known Professor Taamrat Emmanuel and have an important interaction with the black Jews of Harlem, was literally rescued from a Chrisitan mission that had already converted his parents.

There was a hope and optimism of creating a new Ethiopia and a new Africa. The significance of Haile Selassie s rise to power in 1930 and the struggle for Ethiopian independence against Italian aggression, profoundly affected black people all over the world particularly black people in America and the Caribbean.
Though well intentioned, Faitlovitch and those that followed him made what has become a classic liberal mistake: they set out to remake those they helped in their own image. This often has the consequence of saving the people, but destroying their culture. Complete cultural assimilation unintentionally leads to the cultural annihilation of the dependent group. The Nobel laureate, Chinua Achebe, described in his fictional novel, Things Fall Apart, how the stable social fabric of a pre-colonial Nigerian village began to unravel before the juggernaut of Western conformity. In this context, European Jewry is the juggernaut that black Jewish communities fear, admire, resent, and need.

In December of 1930, Taamrat ignored the urging of his handlers at the Pro-Falasha Committee in New York and journeyed uptown to Harlem were he met with Chief Rabbi Matthew and addressed the Commandment Keepers Congregation. Shortly thereafter, dozens of black Jews left the United States to establish a colony in Ethiopia that lasted until the Italian invasion and the death of Rabbi Arnold Ford in 1935. During the years that followed, individuals from both communities would seek each other out whenever possible, but neither has been in a position to significantly help the other. Yet, the cry of Ethiopia continues to loom large in the hearts of black Jews all over the world for we share a common struggle.

Emperor Haile Selassie greeting Rabbi Hailu Paris, an Ethiopian-born leader and teacher in our community at a gathering in New York City in which he and Chief Rabbi W. A. Matthew went to meet the Lion of Judah, a direct descendent of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.
The Kechene Jews of Ethiopia

Background and early history

The Jewish presence in Ethiopia was known to the world hundreds of years ago. Many travelers gave witness to their existence and Jewish emissaries tried to reach the community. The Jewish population during those centuries was clustered primarily in the northern part of the country, mostly in the vicinity of Gondar. Today, these Jews are known as Beta Israel (House of Israel, sometimes called Falasha). Over the last 30 years, the majority of them have emigrated to Eretz Yisrael.

The main purpose of this paper is to introduce a little-known Jewish community, which was once part of Beta Israel. These Jews migrated South nearly 300 years ago and settled in the central part of the region known as North Shewa. Members of this community have been known as Baliij, Teyib, Moreti (named for Moret, the area of North Shewa where they originally settled), Beit Avraham, or, most commonly, as Kechene Jews, named for the area of Addis Ababa where they live now.

The Kechene Jews share ancestral origins with the Beta Israel and observe pre-Talmudic Jewish practices. There are several views as to the ancestry of the fathers of today’s Kechene Jews. One group claims to be descended from the lost tribe of Dan. A second group claims descent from the Israelites who accompanied Menelik I, the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, on his journey from Israel to Ethiopia. Others, particularly from the Q’uara region, believe they are descended from the Levites who brought the Ark of the Covenant to Ethiopia for safe keeping when Jerusalem was ruled by a pagan King around 500 BC. And still others claim ancestry from those Israelites who fled Jerusalem when Babylon destroyed the city.
Separation of the Kechene Jews form the Beta Israel, however, began at the time Kassa of Q'uara crowned himself Emperor Tewodros II of Ethiopia in 1855. As was the custom at that time, the new Emperor captured and detained all potential rivals to prevent internal power struggle. One of his prisoners was the young Shewan prince Menelik.

Emperor Tewodros believed in a united and independent Ethiopia. To further this goal he established an arms factory near Debre Tabor. The arms factory employed a large number of Beta Israelis, many of whom also served in his army. However, because of his brutal rule, and his policy of redistributing fallow land owned by the Orthodox Christian Church, there was wide spread rebellion against his rule.

When the young Shewan prince Menilik noticed that Emperor Tewodros was weakened, he arranged for his escape. He convinced many of the Emperor’s crafts men and soldiers to follow him to Shewa with the promise of good positions in his government. That is how the fathers of the Kechene Jews left Dembeya (Gondar) to Moret (in the North Shewa region) in 1865. These Beta Israelis served the young prince and later when he became Emperor Menilik II, they built his palaces and also served in his army. When Emperor Menilik II decided to move his capital from Ankober, they followed him to Entoto and Addis Ababa and settled in Kechene.

The total population of Kechene Jews is estimated currently to be more than 150,000. They are skilled craftsmen, involved in the production of ploughshares, metal agricultural implements, knives, blades, iron spears, swords, pottery, and traditional clothing.

Later history of Kechene Jews
Beginning in the 18th century, the governor of the region of Moret had a positive attitude towards the Jewish community, and their products were in demand. They played a major role in the expansion and settlement of Shewa and a pivotal role in the establishment of the capital, Addis Ababa, providing crafts and manual labor. But despite their economic importance, they were regarded with distrust, fear, and at times, even hatred because of their Jewish faith. Faced with extreme persecution from their Christian neighbors, who called them anti-Christ, they lived as strangers in the region and were denied basic rights such as the ownership of land, which was granted only to those who accepted the Christian faith and underwent baptism.

The majority Christian community used pejorative terms when speaking and interacting with the Jews in their midst, resulting in the segregation of the Jews from their neighbors. As a result, the Jewish community lived, for the most part, in complete isolation from the rest of the country, as one of the poorest segments of society.

In the early years of the settlement in Moret, Jewish community members observed our fathers’ traditions publicly. But their Christian neighbors were outraged to see Judaism practiced in their land. This led to two major bloodbaths. Thousands of people who lived in a mountainous area of the region were slaughtered while they were celebrating a Jewish festival. Another brutal attack took place when a mob of neighboring Christians entered the houses of community members and killed those who could not escape, hanging the bodies of three spiritual leaders in a public square for all to see. To this day, we honor, in our prayers, people who died because of their faith.

To ensure the survival of the community and its continuity to the next generation, and to minimize persecution and gain access to burial grounds from the church, the elders instructed the community to abide by the following rules:

Members of the community were encouraged to adapt outwardly to the environment in which they lived, including going to church. Judaic practices would continue secretly, led by monastery monks. (The monastic system was not new at that point and was common among the Beta Israeli community.) The mode of religious practice was changed from open to secret. Access was denied to outsiders in their
quest to learn about the community. Providing information about the community was strictly prohibited. Our fathers’ religious wisdom had to be passed orally from generation to generation. It was strictly forbidden to produce any written document until “The Day” — when God favors the community and their true identity and their religious practice can be made public without persecution. Evidence of secret Jewish practice

In 1843, German missionary Johann Krapf wrote that he had encountered a strange village in Moret a few years before. According to his account, the people in the community did not mix with the larger population. He observed that:

The surrounding Christian populations were in fear of them, considering them sorcerers. Christians did not enter their houses or eat with them. The village was outwardly Christian. Krapf strongly suspected that the villagers were Jews, writing:

They told me that if I had come on Saturday, they wouldn’t have received me, as on that day they neither go out of their houses nor kindle fires.

Another European visitor to North Shewa was Jacques Faitlovitch (1881-1955), a Jewish anthropologist and activist who had studied at the Sorbonne in France. Devoted to the exposure, study, and development of Ethiopia’s Jews, he remains a major figure in Ethiopian Jewish history. As David Francis Kessler discussed in his book, The Falashas (1996), Faitlovitch went to Ankober to learn about the community. The residents were not cooperative.
He (Faitlovitch) found the members of this community deeply suspicious and reluctant to answer his questions. He concluded, however, that they were a breakaway sect who had become completely separated from the Falashas of Dembeya.

He was able to discover that the community had retained a number of Beta Israel customs, including observance of Sabbath, ritual purification, and circumcision on the eighth day after birth.
Views of the surrounding population

Kechene Jews who live throughout the region have never been considered part of the mainstream. Two cases in the more recent past are illustrative.

Twelve years ago, a young Kechene boy on his own initiative tried to sign up for priestly service in the Ethiopian Orthodox church. The church declined the request because he belonged to the community. It is common knowledge that although Ethiopian Jews outwardly engage in activities of the Coptic Christian church, they are not allowed to give service in the church. Balambaras (Commander) Tsegaye Mengistu, an elder of the community, told us that fifty years ago the court made a decision regarding land ownership. A piece of land had been given by a Jew to one of the monasteries. The owner of land surrounding the monastery went to court claiming that the land was rightfully his. His argument was based upon the law as stated in the Kibre Negast (Glory of Kings) that Jews, who crucified Jesus, are prohibited from land ownership. The court ruled in his favor. (The decision was later reversed when the spiritual leaders of the monastery appealed to the governor of the region.)

Beta Israel’s attempt to re-establish contact

Ten years ago, community elder Ato Gebryohanes Wolde shared his memory that an emissary from the Beta Israel had come to Kechene requesting a meeting with the elders. The emissary informed them that he had good news for the community. The elders argued on the subject, concluding that, as they did not know this person or his mission, he might have a hidden agenda to uncover their internal affairs. So they decided to tell him that they were a totally Christian community and were not interested in working with non-Christians. After that, the Beta Israel never made another attempt to contact them.

This incident shows the dominant suspicion within the community, resulting in measures meant to protect the community and its identity. This strategy enabled the Kechene community:
To survive as a minority among hostile neighbors. To keep our fathers’ tradition — Judaic practices. To prevent assimilation. But there are disadvantages, too.

Kechene Jews are not part of the country’s development activities. Kechene Jews never sought religious freedom because it was not a subject for public discussion. Kechene Jews were cut away from the rest of world Jewry. Judaic traditions were passed from generation to generation only through word-of-mouth. Therefore, the community is in danger of extinction. Kechene Jews have little civic organization and live in extreme poverty. It should be emphasized that some practices of the Jewish faith are strictly adhered to by the Kechene community. These are practices in their original form that were recognized before the Second Temple, some of which have become obsolete in normative Judaism. These include isolation of menstruating women for seven days in separate huts, separation of women after childbirth — for seven days if the child is male and fourteen days if female, and circumcision of male children on the eighth day after birth. After the death of a community member, the body is washed according to our fathers’ tradition, wrapped in a shroud (not placed in a coffin), and buried within twenty-four hours. Sabbath is observed by community elders in a secret synagogue on Saturday mornings; they have no contact with Gentiles. Craftsmen and craftswomen stop work early on Friday evening and do not work on the Sabbath.
History of the Zionist movement among Kechene Jews
Throughout the years, there have been attempts to address social and economic issues of poverty, education, and markets for products. However, issues of religious identity were rarely raised. In 1992, one of our community members, Mr. Shiferaw Gullie, brought up the topic for discussion for the first time. He told small circles of his compatriots that while on business in Asia he had met a Jew and exchanged ideas about our community as one of the lost tribes of Israel. Discussion continued among various groups.

From those discussions, it became clear that we lacked adequate knowledge about our history and religion. Younger community members tried to learn more from elders and visited remote secret synagogues to have a clearer picture about the religion. It was noticeable, however, that the elders were reluctant to discuss these things, fearing that information would get back to hostile Christian neighbors.

After two years of information-gathering and sharing, the Zionist movement was established to: promote public Jewish observance fill the knowledge gap regarding our history and religion in order to teach the younger generation establish a synagogue openly secure ground for a Jewish cemetery. In order to achieve these goals, the Zionist movement was legally instituted as the North Shewa Zionist Organization, named for the region where the community settled 300 years ago. The organization has opened a synagogue in Kechene, Addis Ababa called Beth-Selam, which means House of Peace.

Rabbinical Assembly Resolution on Ethiopian Jewry

After assessing the political situation in Ethiopia, the Rabbinical Assembly (the international association of Masorti rabbis) passed a resolution in February, 2002 regarding Ethiopian Jews. They believed that the political climate allowed the creation of public institutions that would help to protect the Jewish heritage of Ethiopia. The resolution stated, “Therefore, be it resolved that the Rabbinical Assembly support Ethiopian Jews with encouragement, literature, advice, visitors and financial support.”
Another 2002 Rabbinical Assembly resolution on helping the poor recalled biblical teachings: “Open your hand [to the poor person] and provide sufficient for the needy” (Deut. 15:8), and “Just as God clothed the naked...so too you must supply clothes for the naked [poor]” (Talmud B. Sotah 14a).

Based on Jewish tradition to help the poor, the Rabbinical Assembly’s 2002 resolutions, and the current poverty of Ethiopia’s neglected and isolated Jewish Kechene community, the leadership beseeches the Assembly to set up a system for meeting the community’s diverse needs.

The Kechene community wants and needs to end the isolation that was originally adopted for security reasons. The Kechene Jewish leadership respects the government of Ethiopia and feels that there is no longer a good reason to hide.

Jewish law requires that Jews must welcome visitors and see to their well-being. Many Jewish tourists — Israelis and Ethiopian Israelis — come to Ethiopia and have had no place to observe Shabbat in Addis Ababa or to meet with the community. Hence, supporting and expanding the newly established Jewish synagogue in Kechene is vital. Meeting other Jews face-to-face is a prerequisite for acceptance by world Jewry.

Conclusion

Reintegration of the Kechene Jewish community with fellow Jews must take into account the historical and traditional values of the community. We cannot be oblivious to the fears of the community. Historically, “foreigners,” both visitors from outside Ethiopia and Ethiopians who are not members of the Kechene community, are viewed with a watchful eye. Recently, however, many members of the community have graduated from institutions of higher learning in Ethiopia and abroad, and have obtained degrees in many fields. Education of the younger generation has built trust among the older generation, who seem more secure about the stands taken by their sons and daughters concerning
community issues. However, efforts to help the community will bear fruit only if community members are consulted and if they are directed and administered by community members with a minimum of “foreign intervention.”

Following is an assessment of the needs of the Kechene community. They are discussed in order of precedence, from pressing to more long-term. Some pertain to religious needs, while others concern general economic conditions.

Beta Israel, Maasai & Lemba

Masai in Bible 1 chronicles 9 Cushitic peoples: Afar people, Oromo people, Somali people, Semitic peoples, Amhara people, Arab people, Assyrian people, Druze people, Harari people, Jewish people, Iranian Arab people, Syriac-Aramaic people & Tigray-Tigrinya people.

Web on African peoples:

http://www.afrikanistik-online.de/afrikanistik-online-1/view?set_language=en
Cohaniem travelling South. The Queen of Sheba in Ethiopian and Lemba tradition. Similar to oral traditions, written histories may exist in more than one version. The biblical story of the Queen of Sheba’s visit to King Solomon has undergone an extensive elaboration in different literary traditions. Compared to the Jewish and Muslim legends, a fundamental change of atmosphere can be discerned in the Ethiopian version (Kebra Nagast). The story as recorded in the Kebra Nagast might have had an influence on the traditions of other African peoples. The Lemba in Southern Africa are a very specific group with unique traditions regarding Israelite origins. Their oral traditions provide more information than any written sources. The reciprocity between orality and inscripturation of traditions yields
valuable information regarding the possible development of traditions in ancient Israel. It shows how the Lemba and Ethiopians have constructed their own iconography and set of beliefs around Biblical stories.

Ngoma lungundu: An African Ark of the Covenant. The Lemba in Southern Africa are a specific group with unique traditions regarding Israelite origins. Their oral traditions also contain significant information on the leading role their priestly family played on their journey from the North into the Arabian Peninsula and eventually into Africa. They blazed their trail southwards into Africa as traders, with the ngoma lungundu ("the drum which thunders") playing a very similar role to that of the Ark of the Covenant. Striking parallels between the two traditions as well as a possible link between these two narratives are scrutinised. Their oral culture constitutes their world-view and self-understanding or identity. It incorporates the role of oral traditions, history and historiography. One could draw parallels between orality in early Israelite and African religions. The reciprocity between orality and inscripturation of traditions yields valuable information regarding the possible development of traditions in the Old Testament.
The Havila Institute

Havila aims to preserve their right to live as Jews, and simply to be alive, in the Great Lakes region of central Africa at the source of the White Nile (the biblical River Pishon), which encompasses Burundi, Rwanda, and parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda and Tanzania. This is their historic Homeland, that part of the Kush Empire extending from Ethiopia and identified as Havila in Genesis 2:11 and as the area beyond the rivers of Kush in Zephania 3:10.
The Batutsi are our Hebraic brothers and sisters, and have been since the time of Moses. Under culturally genocidal pressures from the colonial powers and the Church, many Batutsi found it necessary to embrace Christianity, so that Burundi and Rwanda are the most Catholic countries in Africa. Of course, that did not save the upwards of a million Tutsis who, in 1994, perished through physical genocide at the hands of their neighbors in Rwanda, nor the hundreds of thousands who perished in Burundi in 1993, nor is it likely to save others who continue to die or live under the threat of death in Burundi, Rwanda, and eastern Congo.

The men wore their kippot proudly, though half of them, Yochanan estimated, probably still considered themselves Catholics, knowing also that they were Jews but not yet knowing what that meant.

Agaw people

The Agaw (Ge'ez አገው Agaw, modern Agew) are an ethnic group in Ethiopia and neighboring Eritrea.

The Agaw are perhaps first mentioned in the 3rd-century AD Aksumite inscription recorded by Cosmas Indicopleustes in the 6th century. The inscription refers to a people called "Athagaus" (or Athagaous), perhaps from ʿAd Agaw, meaning "sons of Agaw." The Athagaous first turn up as one of the peoples conquered by the unknown king who inscribed the Monumentum Adulitanum. The Agaw are later mentioned in an inscription of the 4th-century Aksumite King Ezana and 6th-century King Kaleb. Based on this evidence, a number of experts embrace a theory first stated by Edward Ullendorff and Carlo Conti-Rossini that they are the original inhabitants of much of the northern Ethiopian highlands, and were either forced out of their original settlements or assimilated by Semitic-speaking Tigray-Tigrinya and Amhara peoples. Cosmas Indicopleustes also noted in his Christian Topography that a major gold trade route passed through the region "Agau". The area referred to seems to be an area east of the Tekezé River and just south of the Semien Mountains, perhaps around Lake Tana.

They currently exist in a number of scattered enclaves, which include the Bilen in and around Keren in Eritrea; the Qemant and the Qwara, who live around Gondar in the Semien Gondar Zone of the Amhara Region, west of the Tekezé River and north of Lake Tana; a number of Agaw live south of Lake Tana, around Dangila in the Agew Awi Zone of the Amhara Region; and another group live around Sokota in the former province of Wollo, now part of the Amhara Region, along its border with the Tigray Region.
The Cushitic speaking Agaw people ruled during the Zagwe dynasty of Ethiopia from about 900 to 1270. The name of the dynasty itself comes from the Ge'ez phrase Ze-Agaw (meaning "of Agaw"), and refers to the Agaw people.
The Agaw speak Agaw languages, which are a part of the Cushitic branch of the Afro-Asiatic language family. Many also speak Amharic, Tigrinya and/or Tigre, which are also Afro-Asiatic languages but of the Semitic branch.

Subgroups

The Northern Agaw are known as Bilen, capital Keren

The Western Agaw are known as Qemant, capital Gondar

The Eastern Agaw are known as Xamta, capital Soqota

The Southern Agaw are known as Awi, capital Injibara

Also included in this ethnic grouping are the Beta Israel, who formerly lived in the northern Amhara region with the Qemant and Qwara, but in the late 1990s nearly all of this group had emigrated to Israel.

The Black Jews
The ancient Castle of Fasiledes, Gondar City, northern Ethiopia. Ancient Gondar roughly north of Lake Tana & south of Tekezé River

Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me, O children of Israel, saith the Lord. Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, And the Philistines from Caphtor, And Aram (Syria) from Kir.

Those Jewish communities, Beta 'Esra'el and the Ayhud dwelt in the area of Aksumite and Ethiopian Empires (Habesh or Abyssinia), principally in North and North-Western Ethiopia, in more than 500 small villages spread over a wide territory, among Muslim and predominantly Christian populations. Most of them were concentrated in the area around Lake Tana and north of it, in the Tigray Region, among the Wolqayit, Shire and Tselemt] and Amhara Region of Gonder regions, among the Semien Province, Dembia, Segelt, Quara, and Belesa.
Origins of Abyssinian Jews

The early days of the Beta 'Esra'el (House of Israel) community in Abyssinia remain a mystery. There is no doubt that the roots of Judaism were influential in this part of Africa at a very early date -- perhaps even as far back as the First Temple period. Since there are no factual data from those times, and given the Ethiopian Jews' racial resemblance to native Ethiopians, various theories have been proposed concerning the origins of the community, based on superficial research of their traditions, customs and roots.

Many aspects of Ethiopian culture still show traces of Judaic influence. The Abyssinian Church is considered very close to ancient Judaism, with customs such as circumcision, a form of Sabbath observance, dietary laws similar to those found in the Tora, and other practices preserved in its doctrine. We know that before the spread of Christianity in the 4th century CE, the Mosaic faith was practiced in Abyssinia, alongside the idol worship which still remains widespread.

According to Ethiopia national legend, the founder of the royal dynasty, whose last monarch was Negus (Emperor) Haile Selassie -- the symbolic and titular "Lion of Judah" -- was the son of the Queen of Sheba (Makida, according to the legend) and King Solomon.

The son, Menelik, as an educated adult, returned to his father in Jerusalem, and then resettled in Ethiopia together with many members of the Israelite tribes, including priests and Levites. He also smuggled the Ark of the Covenant and the Tablets of the Law out from Jerusalem, and brought them to Aksum, capital of ancient Abyssinia. The Jews of Ethiopia do not generally accept this legend, and take it to be mere fabrication. However, this old tradition only strengthens what we know from other sources -- that there was an early Jewish influence in Abyssinia.
A 9th-century tradition, based on the story of Eldad ha-Dani (the Danite), maintains that during the rift between Rehoboam, son of Solomon, and Jeroboam, son of Nebat --leaders of the Kingdoms of Judah and Israel respectively--the tribe of Dan chose not to be drawn into tribal disputes. To avoid the impending civil war they resettled in Egypt. Once there, the Danites continued southwards up the Nile to the historic Land of Cush (today in Sudan and Ethiopia) and found it to be rich in resources. Eldad ha-Dani himself was probably from this area. According to his report, members of the tribes of Naftali, Gad and Asher lived there together with the Danites, and he himself could trace his ancestry back to Dan, son of Jacob.

This tradition, which may have a certain Biblical basis, is also found in other medieval sources. Rabbi Obadiah of Bertinoro came across two Abyssinian Jewish prisoners of war in Egypt in the late 15th century and wrote that they claimed to be descended from the tribe of Dan. Rabbi David ben-Zimra (RaDBaZ) ruled in his 16th century responsa that the Jews of Ethiopia were unquestionably Danites who had settled in Abyssinia, possibly even before the Second Temple period. The tradition appears to have been widely held by the Jews of Abyssinia and the surrounding areas until recently, though this is no longer the case today.

At the time when the Ten Tribes were exiled to Assyria (during the reign of King Hosea, son of Elah of Israel, approximately one century before the First Temple was destroyed and Judah was exiled), the Prophet Isaiah prophesied the End of Days, when the dispersed people of Israel and Judah would be gathered in from their place of exile. Cush is one of the places mentioned.

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord will set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people, that shall remain from Assyria and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And He will set up an ensign for the nations, and will assemble the dispersed of Israel, and gather together the scattered of Judah from the four corners of the earth. (Isaiah 11:11-12)
The return of the people living "beyond the rivers of Abyssinia" to "the place of the name of the Lord of Hosts" is prophesied in detail in Isaiah 18:7 and Zephania 3:10. These sources are sufficient to demonstrate Jewish presence in Ethiopia towards the end of the First Temple period.

After the destruction of the First Temple, the Jewish community in Egypt expanded. Findings discovered at the beginning of this century in Yev (Elephantine) in southern Egypt on the Nile, near Aswan (the area of Biblical Pathros) indicate there were Jewish communities near the Sudanese border dating at least to the Return to Zion in the Persian period. The Jews of Yev, like those of Abyssinia, built a temple and performed sacrifices, but did not reject the sanctity of Jerusalem and its Temple. Similarly, Onias' Temple, in Lower Egypt, dates from the Second Temple period. Other similarities in traditions and special customs support the evidence of a link between the ancient Egyptian Jews and those of Ethiopia.

Other sources tell of many Jews who were brought as prisoners of war from Eretz Israel by Ptolemy I (322-285 B.C.E.) and also settled on the border of his kingdom with Nubia (Sudan). Even today, a people with Hebraic similarities has been found dwelling in the region south of Sudan, in Uganda.

It can therefore be assumed that the Jewish communities in Pathros were destroyed and that the Jews headed south in search of a new place to live along the most convenient route -- up the Nile via Sudan to its sources around Lake Tana in northwest Ethiopia. Ethiopian Jews live there to this day.
Another tradition handed down in the community from father to son asserts that they arrived either via the Quara district in western Ethiopia, or via the Guango River, where the Nile tributaries flow into Sudan. Some accounts even specify the route taken by the forefathers on their way upstream from Egypt.

These waves of exiles, each arriving in a different period, probably converted some of the native people, which could explain the physical resemblance between Ethiopian Jews and non-Jews. It should be made clear that Jewish sources do not regard external appearance and skin color as indicative of Jewishness in any way. Indeed, it is well known that Jews bear a resemblance to the Gentile populations of their various Diaspora surroundings.
Various scholars have provided other theories. Some view Beta 'Esra'el as descendants of the tribe of Agau, which converted to Judaism in ancient times. Others regard the community as descendants of converted Yemenite Arabs or of Yemenite Jews who were brought to Abyssinia during the Abyssinian rule of the Yemen and who intermarried with the Agau tribe in the early centuries of the Common Era. Some even consider Beta 'Esra'el a Gentile community with traces of Jewish tradition.

There are inconclusive theories, based chiefly on racial similarity and a superficial study of traditions, community customs and Hebrew sources.

In summary, it may be assumed that Jews reached Abyssinia as early as the last First Temple period, and that additional groups came after its destruction, and during the Second Temple period, via Egypt and the Nile. Converts, and perhaps even Jews from the Yemen, probably reinforced and increased the Jewish community, which was already established and exerting great influence in the regions surrounding Lake Tana.

One fact is clear from all the sources: The Falashas have always regarded themselves as Jews, believers in the Faith of Moses, exiled from Eretz Israel, and quite distinct from the native Gentiles. They were also regarded as such by the Christian, Muslim and idol-worshipping Ethiopian communities around them.

From the Historical Records of the Abyssinian Jewish Community

The history of Beta 'Esra'el (Beta Israel) in Ethiopia is fairly similar to that of other Jewish communities in the Diaspora. For many generations their foreignness made them targets for hostility, harsh legislation, forced conversion, persecution and even murder by their neighbors. The amazing fact that they survived so hostile an environment says much for the determination and will to exist which have empowered Jews everywhere to endure difficult times, through their devotion and praise of God's name.

This is what Beta Israel has in common with other Diaspora Jewish communities. However, there are two features which distinguish the history of Beta Israel from those of other exiles.

First of all, Beta Israel has been completely isolated from the rest of the Jewish people, including those in neighboring Yemen and Egypt, for about 24,00 years. This is extremely significant and illustrates the
uniqueness of the community. Of all Jewish communities which have survived to this day, Beta Israel is the one which most merits the description "lost" or "distant" tribe.

Secondly, the Jews of Ethiopia enjoyed a "golden" period of independence and rule. During the power struggles and wars of the Middle Ages, the Falashas were not an unfortunate minority persecuted by the rulers and native population. On the contrary, for centuries the Jews were a powerful force among the Abyssinian tribes. They apparently numbered in the hundreds of thousands; they fought and rebelled. They were even at times victorious and assumed power.

The Jews and their history in Abyssinia are first mentioned explicitly sometime around the 10th century. Around 960, the Falashas and the Agau tribes rebelled against the kings of Aksum (the dynasty of Menelik) and the dominant Christian religion. The uprising was led by a queen known as Judith or Esther, sometimes identified as "the Jewess", leader of the Falashas. Judith set out to eradicate Christianity from the land, burning churches and monasteries and slaughtering monks and priests. Following here, a new royal dynasty, called the Zagwe, rose to power and ruled Abyssinia for about 350 years. Apparently the Ethiopian Jews enjoyed great influence under this regime.

The Menelik Dynasty resumed control in the latter half of the 13th century and launched war almost incessantly against the Falashas. The result was the effective loss of Falasha independence, with the final downfall of the Jews of Ethiopia sometime in the early 17th century.

In 1332, Emperor Amda Siyon (1314-1344) sent his military commander, Tzaga Chrisus, to attack the Falashas, who had risen against him in northern and western Abyssinia, as he pursued a holy war against the Muslims in the south and east. He repressed the Falashas cruelly and pushed them back to their strongholds in the Semyen Mounts.

Amda Siyon's great-grandson, Negus Ishak (1414-1429), also fought the Falashas and built churches on the ruins of their synagogues. Twenty-four Abyssinian judges were dismissed for daring to protest against the evil done to the Jews.

Negus Za'ra Ya'kob (1434-1468) continued the persecutions and added the title "Exterminator of the Jews" to his name. His subjects were required to tie a strip of parchment to their foreheads bearing an inscription expressing their commitment to the Christian faith. Interestingly enough, however, Jewish influence grew during his reign. Contemporary Abyssinian chronicles tell of Jewish converts, including
the son of the Negus himself, Abba Tzaga, who became a well-known and influential Jewish hermit and friend of Abba Tzabra, one of the community's spiritual leaders.

The warfare and persecution continued, on and off, throughout the 15th and 16th centuries. Echoes of the wars spread far and wide. Jews in Mediterranean countries who heard of the battles or met Falasha prisoners of war offered for sale in slave markets, primarily in Egypt, believed that the strife might indicate the coming of the Messiah, since this event was supposed to be preceded by war between Jews and Christians.

During the reign of Negus Lebna Dengel (1508-1540) and his son Claudius (1540-1559), Muslim forces under Arab Emir Ehmed Garan, ruler of eastern Ethiopia and Somalia, conquered broad stretches of Ethiopia including Semyen and Dembia, where the Jews had settled. With the help of the Portuguese, who intervened in Abyssinia (at the time one of Portugal's New World discoveries en route to India), Negus Claudius liberated his land from the Muslims and took revenge on the Falashas and their king, Yoram, whom he executed for aiding the Muslim enemy. The new Falasha King, Radi, went to war with Negus Minas (1559-1563); upon defeat, however, he was taken prisoner by Minas' successor, Negus Sarsa-Dengel (1563-1597).

A detailed chronicle describes Sarsa-Dengel's brutal wars against the Falashas, under the leadership of Kaleb, Radai's brother, wherein the Jews were badly beaten. The Abyssinian chronicle describes Falasha acts of heroism at the very time when their downfall became increasingly clear.

Black Jew Praying
Some excerpts from this chronicle follow:

...The Falashas struck (Sarsa-Dengel's) armies which fought on that day, pursuing them as far as the slope, with not a single loss among them apart from one of the leaders ... The heart of the mighty king, Malakh Sagad, was sorely hurt by the shame of this, and he came to Semyen ... On that night, however, none of the Falashas had girded his strength to fight and trouble them; for the fear of the king had come upon them and the couriers of the city surrounding them ... The camp split into three factors on that
day. The Falashas rose against those taking the third route, knowing that the king was not there and had chosen a different route. Piktor, son of Penuel the Commissioner, defeated them, causing many deaths; he delivered the king twenty heads severed at the neck. This was our master's first triumph and the beginning of the Falashas' downfall. He spent the entire night sleepless, scheming and designing how to get down from the mountain on which he had taken shelter...

The war between the Falashas and the king's forces intensified. Kaleb's forces employed the device of rolling stones upon their enemies so they could not climb the mountain; the king's forces had to postpone their ascent accordingly. At the seventh hour, the king ordered them to fire cannon. The first volley felled Tzavarei Alama and a woman who had hidden under a tree. Kaleb and his men were fear-stricken at this, for it appeared to them that the thunder had fallen from the sky. Dob'a Siltan came down to them from the hill -- he had encamped there to guard the narrow passage -- the result being that the Falashas were encountered at once from left and right, from above and below ...

This time half the Falashas fell by point of sword and arrow, throwing their souls to the valley as they fled. The beasts -- bulls, camels, mules and donkeys -- were also killed; none remained alive ... For Abba Nevai it was complete annihilation; no man or woman either young or old, nor any animal was left standing.

A wondrous thing then occurred. A captive woman was being led by her captor, her hand tied to his. When she saw they were walking on the rim of a great abyss, she shouted "God help me!" and cast herself -- and, with her, the man who had bound her hand to his against her will -- into the abyss.

How wonderfully heroic this woman was, pledging her soul to death in exchange for one (soul) of the Christian community. Nor was she the only one who did so. Many other women did it, but she was the first whom I saw. Their deed resembles that of the forty men under Ben-Gurion who swore to go to their deaths together and who indeed did so, killing one another rather than giving themselves up to Rome. They all died on that day, apart from Yosef (Ben-Matityahu, i.e., Flavius Josephus) who alone was saved through his wisdom. In this respect it resembles the deaths of the earlier and later ones who preferred suicide to obeisance of men who are not of their faith, for the Jews do not consort with the Christians, even to the extent of a single word ... (J. Halevy, La Guerre de Sarsa-Dengel contre les Falashas, Paris, 1907.)
Another description from the same Abyssinian Christian source instructs us of the cruelty of the Christians, who viewed the Falashas as enemies of their faith:

Marcus the Commissioner, in Bagemder at the time, was eyewitness to the event and to the event and to the might of the kingdom in the days of Negus Ba'ada Maryam, when these Falashas lived of whose history we shall write:

Marcus, fighting them, sat for seven years at the foot of their mountain; then he vanquished them with great labor and cunning, capturing them and conquering all their cities. Afterwards he had the following thought: how can I forgive these accursed ones who ever angered the Holy Spirit with the evil of their deeds? I should better annihilate them than leave them alive. Speaking thus, he ordered his crier to make the following announcement: Every Falasha will report to the commander I have placed over him; I will destroy the house and seize the property of anyone who does not comply.

Once all the Falashas had assembled around Marcus the Commissioner --a great assembly, indeed--he ordered his men to sever their heads by sword point until their blood flowed and their corpses filled the fields. Then the ridicule which their forefathers had said on the day they crucified our Lord --may His blood be upon us and our children -- was fulfilled.

... With this we present the rout of Radai, who fell as disgracefully as had Sennacherib and was humiliated as the Devil was for his pride. He had renamed the mountains of his cities with names of the mountains of Israel, calling one Mount Sinai and another Mount Tabor; there were several others whose names we have not mentioned. How evil is this Jewish pride, which crowned the mountains with names of the mountains of Israel upon which the Lord descended ... (Ibid.)

In the early 17th century, during the reign of Negus Susenyes (1607-1632), the Falashas were still rebelling against the crown near the mountains of Semyen. Intent upon destroying the Falashas, the negus began to conquer their strongholds, slaughtering men, women and children as he proceeded. The Falasha King Gideon and large numbers of his supporters were massacred. The rebels were surrounded and faced laws requiring forced baptism. Many of them did convert to Christianity and were sold into slavery.
This period marked the end of the relative independence and self-government which the Jews of Abyssinia had enjoyed for many generations. They now faced years of suffering as a persecuted minority. They were no longer entitled to own land; their rights were taken away. They became despised, objects of scorn.

But even in those difficult times, the Jews of Abyssinia maintained Jewish tradition in their villages, and isolated themselves from Gentiles and Gentile customs.

They became progressively fewer in number, and were estimated at between 100,000 and 250,000 in the 19th century. Since they were poor and lacking in other resources, they had to make use of the holy writings of the Coptic Church.

European Christian missionaries first came to Ethiopia in the 17th century and attempted to convert the Jewish minority, whom they considered a suitable target for their activities, but it was only in the middle of the 19th century that Western European Protestant missionaries saw the fruits of these efforts. They invested a great deal of money and effort into renewing the campaign, and succeeded in converting many Ethiopian Jews to Christianity.

Form then on, with more European missionaries, travelers and researchers visiting Abyssinia, reports of the lost Jewish tribe began to reach Europe and world Jewry.

A sudden rage of Jewish Messianic fervor for Zion broke out among the Falashas, who were torn between the hostile regime of Negus Theodore (1855-1865) and Christian missionaries claiming that the Messiah (Jesus) had already brought the Gospel to the world. In 1862 six of the community's kesoch (priests) with Abba Mahari at their head, led thousands from their villages, with absolutely no preparation, northwards to the Red Sea and Jerusalem. They believed that God would perform a miracle and divide the waters as He had during the Exodus.

This "revival" came to a bitter end when the convoy stopped close to Aksum in the Tigre district of northern Ethiopia. Many of the pilgrims had died of hunger and epidemics; the rest returned to their villages, only to find they had been destroyed while they were away.
It was at this time that Ethiopian Jewry first began to have contact with Jews from the rest of the world. Joseph Halevy, the first Alliance Israelite Universelle emissary, reached the Falasha villages in 1867-8.

The situation of the Ethiopian Jews worsened towards the end of the 19th century. By the turn of the century, their numbers were estimated at only 60,000. Many died from epidemics and famine. An invasion of Muslim Dervishes from Sudan in 1889 devastated parts of western Ethiopia and seriously harmed the Falasha villages. And many were converted by missionaries.

It was only at the beginning of this century that the Ethiopian Jewish community began to raise their hopes. This was largely due to the efforts of Dr. Jacques Faitlovitch, who felt a responsibility to act on behalf of the Jewish People as the savior of Ethiopian Jews. Through him, Ethiopian Jews sent letters to other Jews throughout the world and received encouraging answers expressing identification with them, which bolstered their morale and helped them to stand up to the relentless efforts of the missionaries.

In 1923, Dr. Faitlovitch opened a school in Addis Ababa for young Ethiopian Jews. During the first half of the century, he enrolled some 40 young Falashas in Jewish religious schools in Italy, France, Switzerland, Germany and Jerusalem. Although they returned to Ethiopia, only a few of them helped the community to benefit from their newly expanded knowledge of Judaism and the world in general.

Italy's occupation of Ethiopia (1936-1941) brought Jewish activity to a halt, and the school in Addis Ababa was closed.

Since Ethiopian independence was restored, and in fact throughout most of this century, Ethiopian Jews have --at least according to the law --enjoyed equal rights. However, the native population has remained hostile to the community to the extent that even lives have been lost.

As progress spread through Ethiopia, young Jews began to move from the villages into the cities, in particular to Gondar and the surrounding area. Though younger members of the community moved away from their villages and thus from their tradition and began to assimilate, it must be emphasized that the Falashas in the villages have kept faithfully to their religious traditions.

The Jews of Ethiopia --estimated in 1983 at about 30,000 --have maintained their Jewish faith and religious love of Zion and the Holy Land. The birth of the State of Israel, and its subsequent contact with
them made them more determined to protect what was left of the Jewish population from total assimilation.

It may be said that if this community --which is settling "en masse" in Israel today--had not been saved, the rest of the Jewish People might never have known of this wonderful "lost" tribe. However, the promise God made through his prophets that the Jews of Cush would return to Zion and to Jerusalem has not been broken; it is taking place before our eyes.

The 2005 movie "Live and Become" explores the challenges of Ethiopian Jews (and African Jews generally) in the land of Israel. Having returned at long last and with high hopes to the land of Israel, they discover that for them, the land does not at once "flow with milk and honey." They confront discrimination, misunderstanding, and yes, prejudice from their fellow Jews. This is the movie that Ofra Haza embellishes with her beautiful love-song "My Ethiopian Boy." Reviewer Stephen Holden says "Live and Become" exerts a tidal pull. It makes you feel the weight of history, of populations on the move in a restless multicultural world. It makes you reconsider cultural assimilation, a process that may seem to be complete but whose underlying conflicts may never be fully resolved.

About the "Lost" Book of Enoch
What is the so-called Lost Book of Enoch? The "Book of Enoch" are the continuously preserved Ethiopian writings of the Old Testament predating Noah and Moses. These were rediscovered within the Dead Sea scrolls. The Book of Enoch was extant centuries before the birth of Christ and yet is considered by many to be more Christian in its theology than Jewish. It was considered scripture by many early pre-gentile Christians. The earliest literature of the so-called "Church Fathers" is filled with references to this mysterious book. For many centuries this book has been misunderstood, as it expounds on Genesis 6 concerning a race of fallen angels mating with women, the birth of their offspring (the giants, AKA the Nephelim), the origins of demons, and what we know today as UFO's & "aliens." The book further prophesied the coming of a messiah (Jesus) who will judge the wicked and save his elect at the end days. For the first time ever, the ancient mysteries are being unsealed. As it is written, in the last days, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." Now the book of secrets, the record of Enoch the black Semite has been opened and is now widely available to anyone who dares to rediscover the ancient truth found in this book which has been hidden from the ages.

Somalia's Outcast Yibir
According to Mohamed Abdi Mohamed (Mondes en Développement 1989, 68), the Yibir may have been the descendants of a Tzigane tribe who emigrated to the Somali coast. This author adds that Somalis of the Abgaal and Reer Shebeeli tribes were using names based on the word Yibir. Abdi Mohamed mentions that Somalis were afraid of members of the Yibir (or Yibro) (Ibid., 67). The Yibir are considered to be members of the Somali Jewish community. The Yibir are divided between the Madoobe Barsame Gaaljecel and Sooraante Gaaljecel clans or tribes (Ibid. 69).

In his book A Pastoral Democracy, I. M. Lewis makes a distinction between the Midgaan, the Tumaal, and the Yibir bondsmen of northern Somaliland "...who, though known collectively by the same name as that of the common ancestor of the Digil and Rahanwayn, are quite distinct from them" (1961, 14).

“Ethiopia” comes from the word “Cush” which designates the Hindu Kush Mountains.

It's interesting that the name of DaN is found in several important toponyms around Ethiopia & this fact gives more weight to the belief of being DaNites in & around Ethiopia: suDan, ogaDeN, DaNakil, aDeN, TaNa (Ethiopia), TaNa (Kenya), TaNganyika. SoCotra has the consonants of the name of iSaaC.

Do the Zaghawa people have any relation with the Zagwe dynasty? This dynasty is considered to have Jewish origin, therefore the Zaghawa would also have the same origin. The Zagwe were from Ethiopia & the Zaghawas live between Chad & Sudan, so not very far away from the area.

When the capital of ancient Israel, Samaria, fell to the Assyrians, II Kings 17:5-6 records that the last Israelite defenders were transplanted to the region of the Medes (now northern Iran). Samaria was in the territory of the Israelite tribe of Ephraim, and one would expect many of the last wave of Israelite captives from the tribe of Ephraim. Numbers 26:35-37 also records that the tribe of Ephraim was
subdivided into four clans, three of which were named the Bachrites, the Eranites and the Tahanites. In later centuries, three powerful tribes of the Scythian-Parthian alliance were the Bactrians, the Eranians and the Dahanites. Notice the striking similarity in the names of the Ephraimite clans and the Scythian-Parthian tribes. These tribes were all clans of the same Israelite tribe of Ephraim grown into exceedingly great numbers. The term “Eran” is an archaic one from which is derived the name of the modern nation of “Iran.” Interestingly, the nation of Iran (although it is now Persian, not Israelite) is still known by the name of a clan of the Israelite tribe of Ephraim which used to live in that region. “D” and “T” are related (and often interchangeable) consonants even as “P” and “B” were often interchangeable consonants in the ancient world, making the Dahanites and the Tahanites the same Ephraimite clan. Bactria was derived from the Ephraimite clan name of the “Bachrites.” I doubt you will ever see the Israelite origin of all these names in any history book. It would be the same with the lake TaNa in northern Ethiopia & the name of DaN.
The toponym Yaha, in Ethiopia, recalls the Jewish God Jehovah or Yaveh. Another toponym that recalls the Jewish & Christian God is "Yev" (Elefantine, island in the Egyptian Nile were there was a large Jewish community since ancient times, to the point that they even built a temple there to the Most Hi God) may have Jewish origin. In fact the Jewish influence in Egypt has been so old that, at least, they built two temples in Egypt: in Elefantine (Upper Nile, southern Egypt) & Leontopolis (Lower Egypt, northern Egypt), also known as Heliopolis, & nowadays known as Tell el-Yahuda because of its formerly large Jewish population. The area in which location was placed the temple was called Land of Onias (in the Delta) after Onias IV, a Kohen.
Are the Kissi the offspring of Kish or Kush? Kish was an Israelite, father of the first king of Israel & Kush a Hamite.

Kush in Hindu Kush & in Ethiopia

Nineteenth century, modern, and Arabic scholars have sought to identify the "land of Cush" with Hindu Kush, and Gihon with Amu Darya (Jihon/Jayhon of the Islamic texts). Amu Darya was known in the medieval Islamic writers as Jayhun or Ceyhun in Turkish. This was a derivative of Jihon, or Zhihon as it is still known by the Persians. Gihon has also been associated with the Araxes (modern Aras) river of Armenia. First-century Jewish historian Josephus associated the Gihon river with the Nile.
The word translated “Ethiopia” in verse 5 of some Bible versions actually comes from the word “Cush” which designates the region of the Hindu Kush Mountains which straddles Afghanistan and Pakistan and is the home of strong anti-American, pro-Taliban sentiment.
A Levite (1 Chronicles 23:21,22; 1 Chronicles 24:29)

A Levite (2 Chronicles 29:12)

A Benjamite (1 Chronicles 8:30; 1 Chronicles 9:36)

Father of Saul (1 Samuel 9:1-3; 1 Samuel 10:21; 2 Samuel 21:14)

Father of Saul » Called Cis (A. V.) in (Acts 13:21)

Great grandfather of Mordecai (Esther 2:5)
Habacuc 3:7 Reina-Valera Antigua (RVA) 7 He visto las tiendas de Cushán en aflicción; Las tiendas de la tierra de Madián temblaron.

ETIOPIA » Was called the land of Cush, mentioned in (Genesis 10:6; 1 Chronicles 1:9; Isaiah 11:11)

HAVILAH » Son of Cush (Genesis 10:7; 1 Chronicles 1:9)

NIMROD » Son of Cush

RAAMAH » Son of Cush (Genesis 10:7; 1 Chronicles 1:9)

SABTA » Son of Cush (Genesis 10:7; 1 Chronicles 1:9)

SABTECHA » Son of Cush (Genesis 10:7; 1 Chronicles 1:9)

SEBA » Son of Cush (Genesis 10:7; 1 Chronicles 1:9)
Jeremías 36:14

14 Entonces enviaron todos los príncipes a Jehudí hijo de Netanías, hijo de Selemías, hijo de Cusi, para que dijese a Baruc: Toma el rollo en el que leíste a oídos del pueblo, y ven. Y Baruc hijo de Nerías tomó el rollo en su mano y vino a ellos.

Sofonías 1:1

1 PALABRA de Jehová que fué á Sofonías hijo de Cushi, hijo de Gedalías, hijo de Amarias, hijo de Ezechías, en días de Josías hijo de Amón, rey de Judá.
"Cushi" o "Cusi", resulta ser en otras versiones "el etíope"

2 Samuel 18:32

32 El rey entonces dijo a Cusi: ¿El mozo Absalom tiene paz? Y Cusi respondió: Como aquel mozo sean los enemigos de mi señor el rey, y todos los que se levantan contra ti para mal.

2 Samuel 18:31

31 Y luego vino Cusi, y dijo: Reciba nueva mi señor el rey, que hoy Jehová ha defendido tu causa de la mano de todos los que se habían levantado contra ti.

2 Samuel 18:23

23 Mas él respondió: Sea lo que fuere, yo correré. Entonces le dijo: Corre. Corrió pues Ahimaas por el camino de la llanura, y pasó delante de Cusi.

2 Samuel 18:21

Y Joab dijo á Cusi: Ve tú, y di al rey lo que has visto. Y Cusí hizo reverencia á Joab, y corrió.
2 Samuel 18:22

22 Entonces Ahimaas hijo de Sadoc tornó á decir á Joab: Sea lo que fuere, yo correré ahora tras Cusi. Y Joab dijo: Hijo mío, ¿para qué has tú de correr, pues que no hallarás premio por las nuevas?
On Beta Israel, Sephardim & the Bible

Beta Israel: "Professor Yochanan (Jean) Bwejeri is a member of the Bene-Zagwei clan of the Tutsi people of Burundi. He claims that he is a Jew by birth. His ancestors and the ancestors of all Tutsi were all Jews by birth and not by conversion. Except where I write in the first person, I relate these claims and the facts and opinions upon which they are based as they were told to me by Professor Bwejeri — and as often as possible in his words." Notice the article quotes that Professor Yochanan (Jean) Bwejeri is a
member of the Bene-Zagwei (Sons of Zagwei) clan of the Tutsi? Are not these Zagwei as in Zagwe not the Bete Israel of the Zagwe dynasty who built the beautiful Churches in Lalibela, Ethiopia? Here are some interesting movies on the Tutsi Hebrews.

Why Ethiopians call themselves Habasa or Habesha? When you break the word Habasa down into the ancient Hebrew, you get Ha = the, ba = sons, and sa(m) = Shem. Shem (Hebrew: שֵׁם, Modern Shem Tiberian Šēm; Greek: Σημ Sēm; Arabic: سم Sām; Ge'ez: ሳም Sēm; “renown; prosperity; name”)

Notice that the ancient Hebrew word sa(m) = Shem from above is exactly the same pronunciation and word as the Arabic word for Shem = Sam and the Ge'ez word for Shem = Sem? What I teach you Bete Israel makes very much sense because Habasameans "The sons of Shem", and when you break down the modern version of it which is Habesha in modern Hebrew, you get Ha = the, be(ne) = sons, and sha = Shem, or basically said, "The sons of Shem". What I teach makes even more sense because the Basa Lemba as in Habasa Lemba as in Habesha Lemba of South Africa say that when the Assyrians came against the land of Canaan (Israel) in 721 BC, which in that time I am proud to say was a part of the 25th dynasty of Kemet aka the ancient Kushite Empire, that they first fled to Yemen (Saba), which may explain why Ge'ez inscriptions were found there; from Yemen (Saba) they fled into mother Ethiopia where many stayed while only a small portion of them went into Zimbabwe and built the country there.

The BasaLemba as in Habasa Lemba as in Habesha Lemba that settled in mother Ethiopiawe became known as the Bete Israel aka Falasha. We also know that the nation of Zimbabwe in which they built is known as "The Land of King Solomon's Mines". When you remove the "ha" in "Habasa" you get Basa, as in Basa or Basaa Lemba. Basa aka Basaa is a Bantu word. Also from this web link, "African Tribal Names", you will see that Basaa are a tribe found in Cameroon, Liberia, and Nigeria.==>

With that being said, if you Bete Israel were paying attention, the "we" pronunciation is found in Ethiopiawe, Zimbabwe, and Zagwei (Zagwe). Hebrew Israelites are extremely intelligent people, and us founding the first civilization is an example of this intelligence.
I heard that word Tutsi is a Oromo word. As dna testing is advancing, and it already is past the usual Y and mt tracing, checking the individual 23 chromosomes for segments leading to Jewish connections might turn up facts. They were being horribly mistreated in Ethiopia. This is why Israel was created for; the return of Jews, especially those under duress. Also, the end of times has prophesied the return of the Lost Ten Tribes to Israel. Those that have been accepted and have returned want to practice Judaism and some have been doing so as they understand it. Some show traces of practices of long ago Judaism.

The Ten Tribes: East Africa (Ethiopia)
In the 9th century CE, there was a man named Eldad ha-Dani who was a Jewish merchant and traveler and came and went to the Jewish communities of Babylonia, North Africa, and Spain. He left a record of his travels.

Eldad claimed that he was a merchant and scholar from an independent Jewish state that was situated in East Africa. He declared categorically that his country was the home of the Lost Tribes of Asher, Gad, Naphtali, and Dan, and that he himself was from the Tribe of Dan. His name ha-Dani means the Tribe of Dan in Hebrew.

Eldad mentions that in "Kush" of East Africa which is today's Ethiopia (although many scholars & maps agree that Ethiopia encompassed a huge amount of Africa, far bigger than current Ethiopia) live a lot of descendants of the tribe of Dan and other tribes of Israel.

It is interesting to note that still in the 20th century CE there live a Jewish group called Falashas (if we consider that Ethiopia included far more than today we could add the other Israelite communities of olden times & of present times: Tutsis, Banyamulenges, Himas, Tubus, Qemants... Even the celebrated Eldad the Danite is considered to be Tutsi) of Ethiopia. Their skin is black and they call themselves "Beta Israel" which means the House of Israel in Hebrew. They have been following the precepts of the Bible since ancient times in a loose fashion. The Falashas in Ethiopia speak Hebrew and keep the Sabbath. Tragically enough many of them were killed by a recent insurgency in Ethiopia, but the remnants emigrated to Israel. They were transported to Israel by the airplanes chartered by the government of Israel in 1983 and 1991. Over 90% of Beta Israel now live in Israel, accepted as Jews.

Eldad ha-Dani mentions also about Khazar kingdom which was located between Black Sea and Caspian Sea. He declares that several tribes from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel live in Khazar. In around 740 CE, the king and the people of Khazar all converted to Judaism. It was a national conversion and this is a well known history among the Jews.
According to Eldad, in Khazar lived three tribes from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. They were Reuben, Gad, and Half Manasseh. About 300 thousand of the people of Khazar were they. In the 9th century CE Joseph, the king of Khazar, wrote, "(the capital of Khazar consists of three towns and) in the second town live the Israelites (probably the Ten Lost Tribes), the descendants of Ishmael, Christians and the people who speak other languages." Thus, some of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel lived there.

Madi ethnic group

Regions with significant populations

Uganda 250,000
South Sudan 80,000
abroad 4,000

The Mà'dí people live in the Magwi County in South Sudan, and the districts of Adjumani and Moyo in Uganda. From south to north, the area runs from the from Nimule(at Sudan-Uganda border) to Nyolo River where the Ma’di mingle with Acholi, Bari and Lolubo. From the east to west, it runs from Parajok/Magwi to Uganda across the River Nile.

The speakers refer to themselves and are known Madi. In standard orthography this is Ma'di; the apostrophe indicates that d is implosive. The speakers refer to their language as madi ti, literally meaning Ma'di mouth. Among themselves, Ma'di refer to each other as belonging to a suru ("clan" or "tribe"), which may further be broken down to pa, "the descendants of," which in some cases overlap with suru. While a Madi can only marry someone from outside their clan, they must normally marry within the group that shares the Madi language.

Many neighboring speakers of Moru–Madi languages go by the name of Madi.
According to one popular folk tale, the name Madi came as an answer to a question by a white man to a Madi man. When the first white person in the area asked the question 'who are you?', the bemused response was madi, i.e. a person. This was taken to be the name of the people, which came to be corrupted to the present.

Another Ma'di narrative tries to account for the names of some of the Moru–Ma'di group members. When the progenitors of the Ma'di were pushed southwards, on reaching a strategic location they declared, Muro-Amadri, i.e., "Let's form a settle here". And so they formed a cluster to defend themselves. This group came to be known as the Moru. A group broke off in search of greener pastures in a more or less famished state, until they found an edible tree called lugba('desert dates' - ximenia aegyptiaca).

After they ate some of the fruits, they took some with them. When the time came to refill their stomachs again, a woman who lost her harvest was heard enquiring about the lugba ri 'the desert dates'. This group came to be known as logbara but the Ma'di still call them lugban. The final group on reaching fertile grounds resolved and declared ma di 'here I am (finally)'. And these came to be known as the Ma'di.

Ma’di oral history claims Nigeria as the cradle of Ma’di people – their place of origin. According to the one commonly told oral narrative, the Ma’di people left Nigeria, moved southward until they reached Amadi, a town in southwest Sudan, where they settled. The word Amadi in Ma’di language means here we are. It also means, at our place. From this storyline by then the Ma’di and Moru were still one ethnic group.

From Amadi, Ma’di people traveled eastward reaching River Nile. There they separated into two clusters – Moru and Ma’di. The Moru cluster went back – westward; the Ma’di cluster settled by the riverbank. It is believed the two clusters (groups) separated because of a squabble over a piece of groundnut. A Ma’di man found some groundnut, which he ate it alone. His Moru brother blamed him for being greedy and hence moved away from him.

However today Ma’di oral history (like the Jews) cannot specify the period during which Ma’di migrated from Nigeria to Sudan. Moreover, it cannot also bridge the missing historical link between the present-day Ma’di people and their assumed accentors – the Nigerians. None-Madi scholars who have written on Ma’di have different opinions about the origin of Ma’di. Though it has remained unclear where the
Ma’di people came from, most likely they arrived to southern Sudan region, around 1400-1700 A.D. This period coincided with the migration of the Nilotic people from north to south.

As several Ma’di groups moved southeast and southwest of Rajaf, one group crossed the Nile, and traveled south. That group settled at a place called Avori – the present-day Loa. In Avori, a man named Vuri, from Pavura family, became the first custodian of the land. Two groups from Avori moved northward and settled near Mount Remo. One group was called Paakori, the other was called Pafoki.

Years later in Avori, one group called itself Lukai. Ma’di oral history narrators believe the ancestor of Lukai came from Lolubo (Olubo). According one narrative, a man called Jukiri founded the Lukai group. It is believed that Jukiri and his brother Nyikwara were fugitives from Aru, driven away by Lolubo elders.

According to one narrative, in Aru, a group of people gathered under a tree for a meeting. Jukiri and Nyikware were among them. As the meeting went on, the shadow shifted towards the brothers, and Olubo elders were left on the sun. The elders asked the brothers to leave the shadow for them. They refused; so fight broke up. Consequently, the brothers were forced to leave Aru.

It is believed that several factors: drought, inter-clan fights and fights with the Turkish slave raiders (which the indigenous people called Tukutuku), forced Lukai to Mugali. They called Mugali, Agali – meaning, we refused conflicts. However, for their misfortune, conflicts followed them to Mugali. The Tukutuku did not leave them alone.

The people of the southern Sudan had almost no contacts with the northern Sudan, until the beginning of Egyptian rule(also known as Turkish Sudan or Turkiyah) in the north in the early 1820s and the subsequent expansion of the slave trade into the south.

According to an oral history, the Nilotic peoples — the Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, and others — had already established themselves in south Sudan by the time Turks invaded the region. In the nineteenth century, the Shilluk people had established a centralized monarchy which allowed them to conserve their tribal heritage in the face of external pressures in the years which followed the Turkish rule.
By the time the Nilotic peoples had established their dominium in the northern part of the southern Sudan (notably the Bahar El Ghazal region), the non-Nilotic Azande, Moru–Madi, etc., had established themselves in Equatoria region. The Azande people occupied the largest part of the region.

Geographical barriers sheltered the people of southern Sudan, and made it difficult for the Turks to invade the region. Moreover the people of the southern Sudan were hostile to any foreign adventure in their land. But the military might of the Turkish army prevailed in the battles to subdue south Sudan. Because of their proximity to north Sudan, the Nilotic peoples were the first to give in to the Turkyiah.

In April 1854, the relatively peaceful relationship between the Bari people and the foreigners came to an abrupt end, when a Turkish trader, without provocation, fired his guns into a crowd of Bari at Gondokoro. In anger the Bari mounted a counterattack, and the result was destructive to both sides. That incident made the Bari people to become more defensive and less friendly towards the traders (mostly Arabs and Turks) who used violent means to obtain ivory tusks, but also started taking people (young men and women) as slaves. Girls were raped, or taken as wives by force. Some of the foreign traders even built fortified warehouses near Gondokoro where people were kept waiting shipment down the White Nile to north Sudan.

In time the Turkish army was able gain complete control in Equatoria, with its trading headquarter now in Gondokoro. Next, the Turkish army then expanded its occupation further south. Consequently the Madi, Kuku, Lotuko, Acholi and others whose territories lie south of Gondokoro were to fall prey.

Around 1854, the Tukutuku who had already taken over Gondokoro (a Bari town, north of present-day Juba), had also established a camp in Kajo-Keji (a town in Kuku territory). They used the base to mount attacks on the Ma’di people across the Nile. The attacks of the Tukutuku were not limited on Lukai alone, but rather on the Madi people as a whole.

In eastern front, the Tukutuku had established a base in Obbo (a settlement, about a hundred miles southeast of Gondokoro). In mid-1860s, the chief of Obbo was a man called Katchiba. As the Tukutuku consolidated its base in Eastern Equatoria, they managed to pull some natives (Bari and Acholi) to their side. With the help of the natives, they waged successful battles on the Ma’di. For example in one battle, the Tukutuku colluded with the Acholi-Patiko and Acholi-Palabe. They then attacked Mugali, captured chief Bada and took him to Lebubu (Odrupele) and slain him.
Given the superior military power of the Tukutuku and the assistance they got from the natives (who joined them), it was only a matter of time, they defeated the Ma’di people. The Ma’di people were forced to disperse. Some went deeper into the forests; others went further south, to Uganda. Those who were less fortunate were captured, and taken away. Some of those captured were later conscripted into the Tukutuku army; others became laborers.

When the Tukutuku consolidated its base in the Sudan, some of them went further south, and built some bases in Uganda. In Uganda, a group of Tukutuku camped in Odrupele (Lebubu). Tukutuku commander called, Emin Pasha, made the Madi and other ethnic groups (he conscripted into his army), to build a forte. The forte, today known as Dufile Forte, was completed in 1879. The forte it is located on the Albert Nile, inside Uganda. Many of the laborers who built the forte were from Ma’di people. The Madi people mostly live in Moyo, Oodrupele now.

So by the late 1860s, several Ma’di groups from Sudan had migrated to Uganda, where they settled in different places. Some in the west side of the Nile, others on the east. The southern territory of Ma’di groups extended up to Faloro. Faloro was called Ma’di Country, by the English explorers John Hanning Speke and James Augustus Grant, who visited the area in 1863 A.D. Sir Samuel White Baker, who visited the place also a year later also called Faloro Ma’di Country.

Until 1986, to the Madi people the Second Sudanese Civil War, was a foreign story. It did not affect their daily life. Many of them only heard about the war from the radio or from hearsay. However as the SPLA insurgents started moving southward, at one stage they reached the territories inhabited by the Madi people. One of their first encounters with the Madi people was in Owingibul.

In 1985, insurgent group claiming to be SPLA, robbed and plundered the villages in Owinykibul. Some people who witness the incident in Owingibul run to Nimule, to ask the government for help. To their disappointment they did not get the help they needed. The failure of the government to help them, forced the Madi people in Owingibul and others elsewhere, to consider taking the issue of their security into their hands. The incident in Owingibul also caused the Madi people to form the most negative opinion on SPLA.

Further encounters of the Madi people with SPLA soldiers in 1985, only served to harden the position of the Madi people against SPLA. Example, the looting of the property late chief Sabasio Okumu in Loa, the killing of a Madi man called Kayo Mojadia in Loa, the looting of the villages in Moli, made the Madi people to look at SPLA as an enemy and not as a liberation army. And since most of the SPLA soldiers
who first came to Madiland were from the Acholi tribe, the Madi people started to look at the Acholi people as aggressors. Such a perception coupled with provocations on the Madi people by some elements in the Acholi tribe, was to breed an enmity between the two tribes, which led to conflicts resulting into dire consequences – for both sides.

Angered by what was happening to their people, and the inability the government to protect them, the Madi people decided to take things into their hand. So in March 1986, in Nimule, the council of Madi elders gathered to decide how to prepare to face further aggressions and plunders from SPLA in the Madiland. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Ruben Surur, then the chief of Lukai. The council unanimously selected Mr. Poliodoro Draru to lead the Madi people in the fight against the aggressors. The meeting was concluded by a traditional Madi ritual, during which Surur gave his ajugo (the biggest spear of a warrior) to Draru.

The choice of the council of elders who selected Draru as an ajugo, was not an accident of history. It was rather based on Draru's track-record in leadership. Moreover, both Surur and Draru came from the Lukai royal family. In fact Draru was the protégée of His Majesty Alimu Dengu. Draru was supposed to succeed Alimu Dengu, but for several reasons, he did not, so Alimu Dengu became the last King of the Madi people.

Now as fate had, Draru had to be in the frontline. To prepare for the future battles, Draru and his chief advisor, Jino Gama Agnasi consulted General Peter Cirilo (of the Sudanese Army, then the governor of Eastern Equatoria) about the situation in Madiland who then gave his blessing for the Madi people to defend themselves. Thus a Madi militia was formed, led by Draru.

As the Madi militia was being formed, in the meantime the geopolitical situation in the Sudan was changing so fast. The SPLA was becoming stronger as it captured more territories, not least, in Eastern Equatoria region. Moreover, some Madi people decided to join SPLA. Some of the Madi people who were first to join SPLA were Dr Anne Itto (who previously worked as a lecturer at the University of Juba), Mr. John Andruga, and Mr. Martin Teresio Kenyi. These people were later to hold high position in SPLA.

By joining SPLA, first Madi people in the movement thought to turn the SPLA from being the enemy of the people to the liberator of the people. But such as a tactical ploy was not bear the expected fruits. Instead, the Madi people became polarized. One group took side with Draru, the other group stood with SPLA. For example in Moli clan, two brothers (Mr. Tibi and Tombe Celestino) took opposite sides in the war. Whereas Tibi joined SPLA, Mr. Celestino went with Draru.
The polarization of the Madi society was to bring the Madi society to conflicts in which the Madi people paid so heavily; many with their own lives. Only within a matter of three years (between 1986–1988), the Madiland which was very peaceful, became a war zone – a place of great tragedies. For example in Moli area alone, very many innocent people were murdered at river Liro, in resulting battles led by the two brothers: Mr. Tibi and Mr. Celestino. Initially Acholi-Madi clan also took side with the SPLA.

In 1988, realizing that the Madi and Acholi-Madi people had been taken in by the calamity brought by the polarization in the society, in order to stop further tragedies, the Madi and Acholi elders decided that the warring parties reach out to each other.

Consequently Draru’s group met his counterpart. Talks and negotiations were then followed by some sort of agreement. However, it seemed that the agreement between the two groups did not change the dynamics of things very much. On a national scale, the SPLA continued to become stronger, as the Sudanese government and the militias it supported were losing ground. In 1988, SPLA captured several strategic towns in Eastern Equatoria: Magwi, Obbo, etc. When it finally captured Torit, the capital city of Eastern equatorial, it became apparent that it was only matter of weeks, it will also capture Nimule.

So early in 1989 (on 3 March 1989 at 3:00 pm), An army of SPLA soldiers made its way to Nimule. However two days before it arrived Nimule, General Peter Cirilo, sent an urgent message to Mr Draru. He wrote, "It is over, please don’t fight and destroy your people for the sake of Pyrrhic victory!" Draru listened to the senior General and didn’t risk the lives of his soldiers and many Madi people. So Nimule fell to SPLA – without a big battle.

With the fall of Nimule, the militia led by Draru and even the ordinary Madi people fearing revenge from the SPLA soldiers, escaped to Uganda. The fear of the people was not to be unfounded; upon their arrival in Nimule, some SPLA soldiers murdered several civilians in cold-blood. However, as the SPLA established itself in Nimule, it leadership started to appeal to the Madi people who escaped to Uganda and elsewhere to come back home. Some of the Madi people listened to the appeal and came back. Others waited until the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between the Sudanese government and SPLA was signed before repatriating. Yet many Madi people decided to remain in Uganda, even after the CPA. Thus the second civil war, diminished the population of the Madi people in Sudan very considerably.
Before the coming of Christianity and Islam to Madi, the predominant religion of Madi people was all about the belief in, and the worship of ancestors who were believed to survive death in form of spirits known as ori. It was believed that the ori could intervene directly in human affairs. Thus the Madi attribute every misfortune to the anger of a spirit and in the event of a misfortune or sickness, they would immediately consult an odzo or odzogo (spirit-medium, like wicked king Saul with the witch of Endor) to find out which ancestor was behind the ordeal. Sacrifices (like apostate Israel) were then offered to the particular spirit in order to avert its malign influence on the living. The powerful families among the Madi were believed to have powerful ancestral spirits to help them however with conversion of majority of Madi people to Christianity, and some to Islam, Rubanga - the Christian God and the Allah of Islam, took the places and roles which once belonged to the ori. Nonetheless, today in the age where most Madi people have converted to the foreign religions, still some believers in the traditional Madi religion try to build a bridge between Rubanga and Ori. Today some Madi people still keep miniature altars called Kidori, were sacrifices are offered to the ancestral spirits in both in good and bad times as a way to approach God. Often at harvest time, the first harvest must be offered to the spirits to thank them for successfully interceding to God on behalf of the living.

Besides the belief in ori, the Madi people also believe in creatures, which are not the spirits of the reincarnated ancestors, but they are deities in their own right. Some of these deities are sacred trees, hills, rivers, snakes, etc. For example among the Moli clan, Jomboloko (a tortoise who is believed to be living in a hill around Moli Tokuru hill), is well known deity. Lots of stories have been told about Jomoloko. Some Moli people still believe in Jomboloko. In the pre-Christian age, it was common practice for a group of people believe in more than one deity. In that sense, some Madi people were polytheistic in their belief. However today, belief in those creatures diminished considerably.

Christianity was first introduced to the Sudan, i.e. Nobatia (northern Sudan and part of Dongola), by a missionary sent by Byzantine empress Theodora in 540 AD. The second wave of Christianity to the Sudan came during the time of the European Colonialism. In 1892, the Belgian expediters took parts of southern Sudan that came to be named Lado Enclave (i.e. the western bank of Upper Nile region which is today the southeast Sudan and northwest Uganda). After the death of king Leopold II on 10 June 1910, the Lado Enclave, became the province of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, with its capital city at Rajaf. In 1912 the southern part of Lado Enclave become part of northern Uganda, which was also the British Colony. It was during that time the Madi people were divided into the Sudanese and Ugandan Madi. Christianity to the northern part of Lado Enclave was brought via Uganda at about the same time - as Colonialism always went hand in with Christianization

The notion God and the Madi word for it Rubanga, have very recent history. They came with Christianity. For example in the Roman Catholic Catechesis in Madi language, when asked Rubanga ido oluka adu nga (How old is God), we’re expected to answer Rubanga ido oluka ku (God has no beginning).
And when asked Adi obi nyi ni oba nyi vu dri ni (who has created you and put you on the Earth), you are expected to answer Rubanga obi mani obama vu dri ni (God has created me and put me on Earth). And we are also asked to believe ta Rubanga abi le ati ri anjeli (the first things God created were angels).

Moving away from the Christian paradigm, if you are to go back the in time, you reach beroniga. Before that there was nothing; the notions like time and space are void of meaning and content. Thus vu(space-time) came along with beronigo and all events and creation came after beroniga.

Now without the context of Christianity, in Madi cosmogony there is no say Rubanga obi vu ni. That cannot be the case since Rubanga came to Madi with Christianity, while vu (space-time) came about since beroniga. It is also erroneous to give the quality of godness to vu since it hasn't any. Vu has always been at the mercy of the ori (the spirit gods). The ori, both good and bad often have their manifestations in trees, snakes, rivers, hills or the souls of departed parents and relatives. While tree-god may die, river-god may dry up, the ori which gave those entities the qualities of godness, never die - they reincarnate! It was at the kidori (stone altars) the Madi people worship ori. In Madi worship is called kirodi di ka (or sometimes vu di ka). When the ori are happy with the people they bless vu, and vu becomes friendly to the inhabitants.

The majority of the Madi are now Christians, while some are Muslim. Most Christian Ma’di are Catholics with some Anglicans. However a plethora of new churches are springing up daily in the area.

There is also a sizeable Moslem community, mostly of Nubi (in Uganda), especially in trading areas like Adjumani, Dzaipi and Nimule. See Juma Oris and Moses Ali. However, even the so-called ‘people of the books’ often revert to traditional beliefs and practices at traumatic moments. In addition some modern people continue to believe in traditional African religions.

The social and political set-up of the Madi is closely interwoven with spirituality and this forms their attitudes and traditions. The society is organized in chiefdoms headed by a hereditary chief known as the Opi. The Opi exercised both political and religious powers. The rain-makers, land chiefs – vudipi (who exercises an important influence over the land) and the chiefs are believed to retain similar powers even after their deaths. There was a hierarchy of spirits corresponding exactly to the hierarchy of authority as it existed in the society. The Opi (Chief/ King) is the highest Authority in Madi (as the king of prophet in ancient Israel was followed in rank by the elders), he is followed in rank by the community of elders who are responsible for resolving disputes, in the clans/villages. Historically the office an opi has always been held by a man. There is no record of a female opi.
The main economic activity that the Ma'di have traditionally engaged in is agriculture. The prevalence of tsetse fly depleted the livestock population at the end of the nineteenth century. Almost the whole population live off the land planting and growing mostly seasonal food crops like sesame, groundnuts, cassava, sweet potatoes, maize, millet and sorghum. Most of these are for personal consumption; only the excess is sold for cash. The main cash crops grown are cotton in Uganda and tobacco in the Sudan.

Those who live close by the Nile do some fishing for commercial purposes. The main fishing grounds are Laropi (Uganda) and Nimule (South Sudan). Most of the fish caught in Nimule is smoke dried and transported to be sold in Juba, the capital of South Sudan. An important seasonal activity used to be hunting. This has dwindled in importance partly because of curbing of hunting by governments, and partly because Nimule is designated as a National Park, making it illegal to hunt in or around it. The hunting season used to be the dry season when most of the agricultural activities for the year have been completed and the grass is dry enough to be burned.

Blacksmiths (a former widespread profession among the Jews) have a particular significance in regard to the Ma'di. The Ma'di were at one time associated with the 'Ma'di hoc', which was once used as currency in marriages by both the Ma'di and the neighbouring tribes like the Acholi, who call it kweri ma'di 'Ma'di hoe. This was made by the blacksmiths (eremu). However, the Ma'di have low opinions of the blacksmiths, despite the important economic role they play in the society. They are thought to be a lazy lot who spend the whole day in the shed while the rest are toiling in the hot sun. They are also blamed for the fall of mankind from grace.

There are still 70,000 thousand Ethiopian Jews left in Ethiopia (20,000 Beta Israel & 50,000 Beth Avraham)

The Beta Israel of Ethiopia

There are three kinds of Ethiopians: 1)Christian 2)Muslims 3)Jews. The Beta Israel has been recognized by Israel as Jewish descendants. These people have kept the Mosaic laws over the centuries by a strict
observance of the Shabbath; keeping the holidays; circumcision on the 8th day; sacrificing the Passover lamb and eating unleavened bread; observing the dietary laws; distinguishing between the clean and unclean; and the laws of purity. In 1984 and 1991, the Israeli government airlifted about 22,000 of them. They left their homes in the mountains of northwestern Ethiopia with the hope of beginning a new life in their Homeland of Israel. Not all of them were airlifted and today, there still are about 20,000 members of Beta Israel remaining in camps in Addis Ababa and in remote northern villages.
The Beit Avraham of Ethiopia

Beit Avraham is the community that lived dispersed in many regions of Ethiopia. The Beit Avraham moved to Addis Ababa when the capital was moved there from Gondar. They seem to have been originally part of the Beta Israel and consider themselves as belonging to them even still. Originally the Beth Avraham might come from the northern part of Ethiopia and settled in Addis Ababa and the mountains of Gondar. Historically, because of the persecution these people encountered by other religion followers, they wandered from place to place to protect themselves from attacks. Today 50,000 Beit Avraham, remain. Most of them live in Kechene, a community in Addis Ababa and they still encounter persecution, oppression, and discrimination that is social, economic, and religious.
In the latter part of the twelfth century, a legend appeared which persisted for several centuries and reached Egypt, Palestine and Europe. According to this legend, a Christian priest named Prester John ruled as monarch over a vast and wealthy Christian Empire.
According to many traditions, Ethiopia was the land of the powerful Prester John's kingdom, as well as the home of the ten lost tribes. Persistent rumor had it that these African Israelite kingdoms were at constant war with Prester John, and that their armies were advancing on Rome.

Who are these African-Jewish tribesmen so central to the Prester John legend? These are the Ethiopian Jews known both as Falashas, the Amharic word for landless, wandering Jews, and as Beta Israel, the house of Israel. In Ethiopia, they engaged primarily in agriculture, but were known also for their exquisite crafts and jewelry.

Today, most of the Beta Israel live in the state of Israel. In the 1970's and 80's, the Israeli government airlifted thousands of Ethiopian Jews to Israel, rescuing them from political and economic distress.

According to one tradition, the Ethiopian Jews are the descendants of one of the ten tribes, as their religion is an ancient form of biblical Judaism. Their religious practices are prescribed by the Orit, the Torah translated into their Gez dialect. They possess none of the post-biblical laws.

The Tutsi Jewish genocide

Being Americans is an enormous burden and opportunity. Being American Jews is all the more so. In the short term and long term, an enhanced U.S. interest is critical. Our State Department has had great faith in the shaky and much-postponed “democratic process” that has been imposed upon Burundi. But can democracy provide the restraints that make human rights reliable in a country where human rights died under the stranglehold of Belgium colonialism? I doubt any American life insurance company would want to write policies on the Tutsi of Burundi any more than they would have wanted to sell life insurance to Jews in Germany after Hitler was elected amidst the noise of Nazi hate rallies. Unless, of course, they assumed that no survivors would arise to make claims. Many of us believe that there needs to be some kind of partition.
The Hutu Interahamwe killers seen in the movie remain organizationally intact and armed in the Congo and Tanzania. Remember the failure of the U.N. and the Burundian government to protect refugees from the fighting in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo this past summer, and the resultant slaughter of Congolese Tutsi in Gatumba, Burundi? Funds for the Hutu militias, once funneled into Burundi by the Catholic Church, are now dwarfed, according to my informants, by funds from Arab lands.

Among the hundreds of thousands of Hutus returning to Burundi from Tanzania, Congo, and the other countries to which they fled after the massacre of Tutsis in 1993, many, including a large percentage of those who have influence within the FDD, now have Islamic names (and will likely be able to vote in the coming national election under both their old names and their new ones). The Tutsi need to have a Tutsi state no less than European, North African, and Middle Eastern Jews needed the Jewish state of Israel. It is not a question of nationalism or pride but of dire necessity. They need a state in their Central African Homeland in which they can successfully defend not only their right to live as part of the heritage of Israel but also their very right to live. The Tutsi of Burundi are one of several Kush communities in the Great Lakes region.

There are large reservoirs of Kush in the eastern provinces of Congo, where the father of my friend King Kigeli lived when he was exiled by Belgium. They are also dehumanized and murdered, threatened no less than the Tutsis of Burundi, and they also look for common ground. The ground they occupy is bizarrely recognized as part of a nation state, which is the last thing that the Democratic Republic of the Congo could be called.

Questions About the Luba

My name is Tshibasu Bilomba and for the past three years I have been doing research on a group of people known as the Luba. This group is located in central Congo-Zaire. In my childhood, I used to hear stories about how these people originated from ancient Israel. Since the stories are still going on, I thought it would be interesting to verify it, especially after seeing the Lemba example. I thought it would be wise to share my findings with you in order to get a second opinion on their origins. I have references I am ready to share and questions I wish to ask you and answer to the best of my ability. I have a quote here that might interest you. It comes from Dugald Campbell, In the Heart of Bantu Land, Negro Universities Press: New York, 1969, p.266: "Northward [of Katanga] lives one of the greatest tribes of Central Africa, the Baluba, who are of undoubted Semitic origin. The name Baluba means 'the lost tribe,'
and their language and customs have many Hebrew affinities. Their name for, and idea of, God, with their word for water, and people, and many other words and ideas, show their Semitic strain."

This meaning makes sense to Luba people as shown in a reaction I received: "Here is what could be a possible explanation of this statement linguistically. The source is potentially correct if we take the verb kulubakana. Mwana mulubakana = a confused child, or a lost child. Muluba, shorter form of mulubakana, means a ‘lost person.’ Baluba, the plural, would thus be ‘lost people.’" Another quote is from Leo Africanus, The History and Description of Africa and of the Notable Things Therein Contained, Burt Franklin: New York, p 1004: "So that at this day also the Abassins affirm, that upon Nilus towards the west, there inhabiteth a most populous nation of the Jewish stock, under a mighty King. And some of our modern Cosmographers set down a province in those quarters, which they call The land of the Hebrews, placed as it were under the equinoccial, in certain unknown mountains, between the confines of Abassia, and Congo." So far archeological evidence and oral history point towards a North-Easternly direction of their current location for Luba origins. Could these be part of the same people Africanus mentions? I have someone with me (a Luba elder) who would be interested in discussing with you as well. He is very much knowledgeable on the Luba and can probably help more than I can. Any help you can give me through book references or people I can contact will greatly be appreciated. Our goal is to arrive at a final answer for a century-old Luba question: "How come we have the same customs as the Jews?"

Dan, the travelling man

The question of the whereabouts of the Lost Tribes is an important one in that as we have stated before, all the prophesies in the Bible apply not just to the tribe of Judah but to all the descendants of the Children of Israel.

One tribe above all others has been cited as showing its ubiquitous nature. The Tribe of Dan and the vast numbers of geographical names which include D-N has been used as evidence by some that this tribe passed that way. Thus the rivers Don and Danube, as well as the lesser known Danaper and Danaster. Denmark itself of course and the Welsh and Spanish connections with Don have all been used to prove that the Tribe passed that way in its wanderings even before their exile by the Assyrians.
Probably originally from southern Arabia, Eldad visited Mesopotamia, Egypt, North Africa, and Spain and caused a stir by his account of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel. He himself claimed to be a descendant of the Danites, who, together with the tribes of Naphtali, Asher, and Gad, were said to have established a Jewish kingdom in Cush (Kush), variously interpreted as Ethiopia or, roughly, present-day Sudan."

It is how and when the tribe of Dan got to Ethiopia which is fascinating for our chronology.

The account can be found in Louis Ginzberg’s monumental work.
Eldad recounts that at the time of Jeroboam after his return from Egypt and the breakup of the Kingdom into two parts (Judah and Benjamin under Rehoboam in the South and the rest of the tribes under Jeroboam in the North) the Northern King had a plan to attack Judah and once again have a United Kingdom. Jeroboam put that plan to the elders of the 10 tribes.

The elders suggested that the job of attacking the south should be placed in the hands of the Tribe of Dan who were referred to as "the most efficient of their warriors".
The tribe of Dan however refused the request to attack the South believing it a sin to attack and shed the blood of their fellow Children of Israel. They actually threatened to attack Jeroboam instead, according to Eldad.

This was averted only because "God prompted the Danites to leave the promised land"
....their destination, Egypt!

It should be a simple task to confirm this story therefore in the Egyptian records. Is there any historical document in Egypt that shows the tribe of Dan invading? Well under the conventional chronology this would have been at the end of the 21st dynasty and there is no such record...

However under the revised chronology we are in for a tremendous surprise.

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