HEBREW ISRAELITES/BLACK JEWS:

A CASE STUDY IN THE FORMATION OF GROUP IDENTITY

by

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ABSTRACT


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Submitted to the Department of Political Science in August 1976 in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

This thesis is a comparative case study of the formation of group identity among some black Americans who are members of a religious cult called the Hebrew Israelites.

Hebrew Israelites gained public attention first in 1967 when 134 of them emigrated to Liberia. After residing in that African country for two years, the group moved to Israel where they began to claim that they were the true descendants of the biblical Hebrew tribes. Hebrew Israelites also predicted that a War of Armageddon was imminent after which they would emerge as God's representatives reigning over the entire world for a thousand years of perfect harmony: the millenium.

To better understand the phenomenon of the Hebrew Israelites the thesis addresses four substantive issues:

1. Who are the Hebrew Israelites and what are their beliefs?
2. The formation of group identity among the Hebrew Israelites
3. How do the Hebrew Israelites compare with the Nation of Islam (the Black Muslims), and the Black Jews of Harlem?
4. How do Hebrew Israelites and Israelis perceive each other?

The study concludes that membership in the Hebrew Israelite cult has been attractive to some black Americans because it rationalized a way out of the black American predicament and provides a new satisfying identity. This new identity emerges as a consequence of redefining four of the "set of identifications"salient to Hebrew Israelite identity: Name, Color, Origins and Nationality.

The study also concludes that some Israelis are able to feel some tolerance towards the Hebrew Israelites despite the latter's religious claims. Generally most favorable responses were expressed in the study, towards the Hebrew Israelites by "Sabras" and those "less observant" in religious orientation.
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Finally, I thank all those Hebrew Israelites who participated and cooperated with me during the field research. I have tried to describe their experience accurately and with sensitivity. What faults or errors there may be in this study are entirely mine.
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Introduction
This thesis is a comparative case study of the formation of group identity among some black Americans who are members of a religious cult called the Hebrew Israelites. Hebrew Israelites first gained public attention in December 1967 when Harlem's Amsterdam News reported that 134 Afro-Americans had gone to reside in Liberia. These black Americans described themselves as Black Hebrews or Hebrew Israelites, members of the Abeta Israel Hebrew Center from the South side of Chicago.\(^1\)

When interviewed, some of their number indicated that they had left the United States bitter over the racial discrimination they had experienced while some others noted that their emigration was the fulfillment of a divine prophecy.\(^2\)

After arrival, a small number of the group returned to the United States while some remained in Monrovia. The majority of the group settled on a 300 acre site near Gbatala, about 80 miles from the capital. Here they built houses and attempted to farm what they later discovered was unproductive soil. In an effort to obtain some income, the group opened a snack bar in Monrovia, and some members of the group who had had some experience as entertainers performed in various nightclubs.

The attitude of the Liberian government towards the group was mixed. The Amsterdam News indicated that they had been informed by government officials that the black immigrants were welcome;\(^3\) however, a later New York Times article indicated that some Liberian officials were fearful that if Hebrew Israelite immigration swelled to any large amounts, existing political balances would be upset.\(^4\) An interview with a Liberian official indicated to me that the group was initially welcomed, however their "unwillingness" to become Liberian citizens and assimilate into the Liberian
polity was considered unacceptable. At some point a deportation order for 75 of the Hebrew Israelites was issued but later rescinded.\(^5\)

In December of 1969, 39 Hebrew Israelites left Liberia for Israel where they asked for admission under the Law of Return.\(^6\) According to one of their leaders, Nasi Hashalom, they had never intended to remain in Liberia but only went there to prepare themselves for their eventual return to Israel.

The group was admitted by the Israeli authorities, pending an investigation regarding their claims of Jewishness.\(^7\) In the meantime, the group was settled in the Negev development town of Dimona, and given assistance in obtaining housing, employment and other supports offered to immigrants. Shortly after the arrival of the first group, the rest of the Hebrew Israelites from Liberia arrived in two separate clusters to join their brethren in Dimona.\(^8\)

In the beginning the integration of the Hebrew Israelites seemed to be proceeding without conflict. Dimona's mayor was quoted as saying "we've got jobs for 600 more, if we had housing for them."\(^9\) The residents of Dimona were impressed the Hebrew Israelites knowledge of the Bible, their manners, courtesy and diligence. Hebrew Israelites were said to want to know everything there was about Judaism, and this impressed their neighbors. However, relations between Hebrew Israelites and their Dimonan neighbors cooled when one of their leaders, Nasi Hashalom, who had not been among the first 39 immigrants, arrived in a later group.\(^10\) Nasi Hashalom prevented the conversion of Hebrew Israelites to Judaism. In addition, the Israeli government's prohibition against other Hebrew Israelites entering the country after the arrival of the second group elicited Hashalom's protest.\(^11\) According to the Jerusalem Post, in
retaliation, Hebrew Israelites began to accuse the Israeli authorities of racial discrimination and predicted that one day they would take over Israel.  

Many Hebrew Israelites entered Israel illegally, crowding into the small apartments already occupied by their co-religionists and relying upon the latter for support. As the crowding increased, relations between Dimonans and Hebrew Israelites worsened. The Dimonans were disturbed, for example, by the Hebrew Israelites' band which they said played late into the night. Also, a staged Hebrew Israelite protest in a supermarket where Hebrew Israelites filled their shopping carts with 3000 Lira worth of food and sought to leave the market without paying did not win the sympathy of Dimonans. Finally, Hebrew Israelites began to assert that only they were the authentic Hebrew people;

The people of this land now are mostly European converts who adopted the ways of the ancient Israelites. There is no link between these people and the biblical Israelites, who were black.

Hebrew Israelites predicted that a war of Armageddon would occur shortly in which most of their antagonists would be destroyed. Afterwards Hebrew Israelites would be in a position of power and leadership, reigning over all in a thousand years of perfect harmony: the millenium.

Although the rabbinical authorities have declared that the Hebrew Israelites are not Jews, and the Israeli Supreme Court has upheld the right of the Ministry of Interior to expel the cult, over 200 Hebrew Israelites still remain in Israel.

To better understand the phenomenon of the Hebrew Israelites, this thesis addresses four substantive issues:

1. Who are the Hebrew Israelites and what are their beliefs? Chapter I
explains the emergence of the Hebrew Israelites, provides a definition of Hebrew Israelites, discusses their history, leadership, eschatology/ideology, ritual, practices, Hebrew Israelite culture, recruitment, organization, finances, and population.

2. The formation of group identity among the Hebrew Israelites. Chapter II suggests a theory to explain the emergence and development of Hebrew Israelite identity.

3. How do the Hebrew Israelites compare with the Nation of Islam (the Black Muslims), and the Black Jews of Harlem? The comparisons will proceed along the following dimensions: genesis, eschatology/ideology, culture, recruitment, organization, ritual, practice and emigration. Chapter III deals with all of the foregoing matters.

4. How do Hebrew Israelites and Israelis perceive each other? In chapter IV an analysis of Hebrew Israelite interviews reflecting their opinions and attitudes towards Israelis is reported. Also, findings of a survey of sampled Israelis' opinions about Hebrew Israelites are analyzed along the dimensions of religious observance and cultural difference.

Finally, Chapter V provides summary answers and conclusions to the four substantive questions, discusses the potential for future religious and color conflict between Hebrew Israelites and Israelis, and speculates about the emergence of other black religious cults similar to the Hebrew Israelites in the United States.

Research Methods:

Date was obtained about the Hebrew Israelites over a period of one year of field research in Israel, from July of 1972 to the end of June 1973.
During this period, I lived for 7 months, October 1972 to April 1973, in the town of Dimona and for the balance of my stay in Israel, I resided in Jerusalem and commuted when necessary to Dimona.

A variety of methods were employed in the study of the group. These included participant observation, and both formal and informal discussions with the leadership and ordinary members of the Hebrew Israelites. I also kept a diary of my observations and discussions as well as compiling a file of newspaper and magazine articles about the group. Hebrew Israelites have written virtually little about themselves and their aspirations, but what they have written, I have collected.

Data were also obtained by interviewing other individuals who were concerned about the Hebrew Israelites. These included government officials, social workers, academics and students. In addition, an interview schedule was administered to the residents of the housing development in which Hebrew Israelites lived, in order to elicit the opinions and attitudes of these Démonans towards the Hebrew Israelites. An analysis and discussion of this survey is considered in detail in Chapter IV, "How do Hebrew Israelites and Israelis perceive each other?" Also, a sample of this schedule is included in the appendix.

Finally, I administered an open-ended, in-depth interview schedule to some of the ordinary members of the group, which was recorded on tape. A sample of the schedule is included in the appendix. The purpose of the schedule was to obtain data regarding the socio-economic status of the membership for e.g., age, education, former occupation. Table 1 in the appendix summarizes this data. The schedule was also designed to obtain
other substantive data, e.g., why people joined the Hebrew Israelites, their satisfactions and dissatisfactions with membership, the content of Hebrew Israelite beliefs, and their opinions and attitudes towards Israelis. Most of the data obtained in these open-ended interviews were not amenable to quantification. However, in the succeeding chapters these data are used to illustrate observations and conclusions that I have arrived at about Hebrew Israelites. They are also used to express typically representative opinions, attitudes and responses of Hebrew Israelites.

From January to March 1973, 29 Hebrew Israelites were interviewed. Of these 21 were men and 8 were women. All of the interviews except one with a leader, Nasi Shaliach, were completed in private, i.e., with only the author and person interviewed present. In deciding which Hebrew Israelites would have priority in being interviewed, I followed the following guidelines as much as possible: 1. In order to comply with Hebrew Israeli beliefs, I decided to complete the interviews with the men first, and then to interview Hebrew Israelite women. Early in my relationship with Hebrew Israelites, I learned that they are a male dominated group and women occupy inferior status in relationship to men. Women are expected to defer to men when in their presence and when, for example, non-members ask questions about the Hebrew Israelites. 2. To interview those who were most accessible. This meant interviewing those Hebrew Israelites who lived in Dimona and were usually unemployed during the day. After these, interviews would be completed with those who were employed during the day.

In practice it was not possible to strictly observe these guidelines. For example, some men who worked during the day postponed their evening
interviews because they were tired or busy. Rather than not interview anyone during these postponements, I began to interview Hebrew Israelite women. Some Hebrew Israelites lived in another town, Mitzpe Ramon, which is somewhat distant from Dimona, and I decided that it would be advantageous to interview all Hebrew Israelites in Dimona first as transportation was not always reliable to and from Mitzpe Ramon.

It had been my intention to interview, in-depth, the entire Hebrew Israelite adult population of approximately 55 women and 45 men. To do these interviews, I had had to obtain the permission of the Hebrew Israelite leadership, who were not enthusiastic about their membership being interviewed at length. Hebrew Israelites are very suspicious of non-members, and particularly are wary of anyone who wishes to write about them. They regard all that has been written about them as misinterpretations and distortions of their experience, and they also believe that the Israeli government, the American authorities and the "forces of evil" spy on them and conspire to bring about their destruction.

The Hebrew Israelite leadership deliberated over my request to do the in-depth interviews for nearly three months. During this time, October to December 1972, they permitted me to move freely in their midst and to participate freely in all of their activities. However, I was strictly admonished not to question or attempt to interview any of the membership. I was permitted to watch and observe and to respond to Hebrew Israelite questions. If I had specific questions to be answered, I was told to direct those questions to a Hebrew Israelite male member who had been specifically assigned by the leadership to help me. During this three month period, I scrupulously observed these rules, and in January 1973,
the leadership finally relented and consented to allow me to do the in-depth interviews. At this time, I was also permitted to move among the group without any restraints whatsoever, or any prohibitions on what questions I might ask the individual membership.

In the middle of March 1973, Nasi Shaliach told me to stop my interviewing. According to him, he had discovered that I was a spy, albeit an unwitting spy, for the enemies of the Hebrew Israelites. He told me that while Hebrew Israelites did not feel hostile or angry with me, it would be better if I ceased moving freely among the group and consulted solely with the leadership on matters pertaining to the group. Although I attempted to convince Nasi Shaliach that I was not a "spy", the effort was futile. I then of course stopped my interviewing of Hebrew Israelites.

**The Black Church and the Black-American**

Although Hebrew Israelites are an unusual phenomenon, they are not unique. Religious cults have frequently emerged and disappeared in the black ghettos of the United States. Often led by charismatic figures, the black cults have promised relief from most of the ills that have beset black Americans, including racial, economic and political exploitation. The cults have also provided tangible and intangible rewards to membership, including employment in businesses managed by the cult or the sense of satisfaction of being part of a group. Among cult leaders, there may have been some romantics and charlatans, but there were also those who believed sincerely in the worth of their efforts. To better understand the emergence of the cult of the Hebrew Israelites, it is necessary
to understand something of the black church and the black American, and the emergence of the black cults in the United States.

In all probability the first blacks brought to America as slaves were not Christian or Jews, and were denied the services of their own spiritual leaders. For ardent missionaries the numerous slaves seemed a fertile field for Christian proslytizing, however the equalitarian implications of Christianity were threatening initially to slavery, and missionary activity among the slaves was forbidden. But as slavery grew in economic and social significance in the South, its supporters found justification for its continuance within the doctrines of Christianity: according to the interpretations of pro-slavery advocates, slavery was not to be condemned or abolished since it had been practiced by Old Testament figures and not expressly repudiated by the Bible. It was argued further that it was the slave's duty to submit obediently to the will of his master in order to receive the full promise of redemption from sin and life after death. Slaves were allowed to worship as Christians but only under the watchful eye of a master or "trusted" slave minister to insure against insurrection and the transmission of rebellious ideas. The black slave was allowed conversion to Christianity not as a peer of the white congregationist, but as an inferior to whom the rewards of white civilization had been brought by benevolent white masters.

During slavery, even the free black who sought to worship with white co-religionists was discriminated against in the South and North as well. Many of these free blacks were relegated to segregated sections of white churches or denied an opportunity to worship altogether.
In addition the recruitment and support of a black clergy by the white church was considered unthinkable. In 1816, in protest against the embarrassment and humiliation exacted upon him and other blacks, Richard Allen, a free black, founded the African Methodist Episcopal Church. Also founded at this time was the African Protestant Episcopal Church under Absalom Jones, the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, and other independent black Presbyterian, Congregational and Baptist churches.

An earlier development but indicative of no less a desire for freedom of worship was the emergence of what Frazier called the "invisible institution" on the plantation. Here slaves met to worship in secret since they were forbidden to meet in groups even for religious purposes. They were led by black preachers who possessed no formal education, but were "called" to office and trusted by their fellows because they knew the Bible or were charismatic.

After emancipation the invisible institution was absorbed by the independent black churches so that by 1900 over 90% of black Christians belonged to the black churches. It was also during this time that the black church began to develop functions other than religious. W.E.B. Du Bois noted that some of these functions included the setting of moral standards, promotions of general intelligence, efforts at social betterment, social intercourse and amusements and the raising of the annual budget. More important, the black church was the only institution where the black man had total control and independence.

With the end of the Civil War, Shapiro notes that the black church
began to come under pressure from internal religious differences among progressives and conservatives. The conservatives expressed a preference for emotional and ecstatic worship in praise and thanksgiving to God, while the progressives favored a more intellectual experience, arguing also for an extensive role for human endeavor for alleviating the problems of the individual; the conservatives argued that the church should possess the total of man's attention while progressives argued that the church should be at the service of man; and finally, the conservatives moral inflexibility and church management also came under criticism.

The struggle between progressives and conservatives resulted in at least some implementation of the progressives ideas in the Negro Church. However, as the church began to expand its secular functions, and its clergy became more formally educated, the conservative members of the church found themselves more alienated from the church. The church minister, formerly a charismatic figure had to perform other more administrative functions, thus diluting the pastoral function that many of the conservatives had come to revere. It was during this turbulent period of the Negro Church that blacks began to migrate to the urban North.

Black Americans began to emigrate from the rural South to the urban North at the beginning of the 20th century. Only a trickle at first, the migration swelled as the First World War provided increased economic opportunities for blacks. Blacks also came to the cities to improve their social conditions, to escape the southern Jim Crow that Plessy vs. Ferguson had justified.
But the North did not prove to be the haven for blacks as they had hoped. They were crowded into impoverished ghettos, segregated by custom if not by law, denied employment and recreation because of the color of their skin. The 1919 Chicago race riot, for example, began when a black youth swam across an imaginary dividing line meant to separate the white and black beaches. The harsh impersonalness of the city bred isolation and anomie among the new black migrants. Many black families disintegrated under the pressures of urban poverty and racism. For many, religion became a refuge and a haven from the pressures of life. Often it was the cult that provided relief.

The Emergence of the Black Cults

The black religious cults strike some as being a bizarre and ineffective means of channeling frustration and dissent. These would argue that social and political action in conventional organizations like political parties or community organizations would achieve the black person more than "pie in the sky" utopian promises of a religious group reliant upon supernatural power. Some sadly argue that the congregations of the cults are being manipulated by opportunistic and venal leadership concerned only with duping the believers of what little wealth they possess. Perhaps also is the suspicion by some that the cults have accumulated a number of believers who have deceived themselves into believing the fantastic claims of the cult. While all of these evaluations of the cult may be the case in many instances, we argue that the religious cult may also act to provide positive benefits, real and intangible, to those formerly disaffected. Indeed it is the black cult's capacity to provide the
latter that has contributed to its emergence within black communities.

The black cults began to emerge in the urban black ghettos in the early part of the 20th century. Their numbers and variety increased in the 1920s and 1930s. Raymond Julius Jones has categorized the various cults as Faith Healing, Holiness, Islamic (nationalistic), Pentecostal and Spiritualist. Our concern are those that may be classified as nationalistic cults. For example, Black Muslims and Black Jews. Each of these cults may be understood primarily as proposing a nationalistic remedy, albeit a religious nationalism, to the identity, political, economic and social problems faced by black Americans. As a leitmotif, these cults also express a dissatisfaction with Christianity's lack of militant protest against the racial exploitation of black Americans. In this regard a noted analyst of black cult movements, Arthur H. Fauser, interviewed a black cultist:

H.R. was born in Louisiana. From the age of seven years he could not believe in Christianity. At a church meeting one day he saw his mother fall out. All about her they said, 'Loosen her corset!' He thought she was dying. But she recovered all right. A year or so later he asked her, 'What was the matter?' She said she was just happy, that's all. He hated the hypocrisy of the Christians. He wanted to be with his own and he never was satisfied until he became a Moslem. Then he learned there was no Negro, black or colored, and he's been happy ever since.

It is the thesis of this dissertation that membership in nationalistic black cults provides a new satisfying identity; that indeed it is the substance of these new religions, their ideology/eschatology, their rationale regarding nationality, origins, color and name that accomplish this.
What follows below is a brief history of two nationalistic cults that have relevance for this study. These groups are important because they are the most vivid contemporary examples of black cult nationalism, and they are a product of two different strains of black cult nationalism: Islam and Judaism.

**Black Muslims**

The Nation of Islam had its beginnings in the Moorish American Science Temple founded by Noble Drew Ali in Newark in 1913. Ali was known as Timothy Drew before becoming a 'prophet' of Islam. He was born in 1886 in North Carolina, and for a while worked as expressman in Newark, New Jersey. Before going to Chicago in 1925, Ali founded temples in Pittsburgh and Detroit. Although not formally educated, Ali learned something of Eastern philosophy and Islamic teaching, and became convinced that the only salvation to the black American lay in his acceptance of these religious teachings.

According to some legends, Ali visited North Africa and received a "commission" from the King of Morocco to teach Islam to America's blacks. Another legend asserts that an unidentified President of the United States gave Ali a "charter" to promote Islam among black Americans.

The teachings of Noble Drew Ali are collected in a secret volume titled the Holy Koran. Ali taught that the people called Negroes in the United States were really Asiatics or more specifically Moors who were the descendants of Moroccan forebearers. Ali insisted that for any
people to achieve any stature, it was necessary for them to have a name, nation and a land. Ali taught that North America was an extension of Africa, and therefore, the land of black Americans. Additionally, Ali insisted that black Americans must refuse to be called Negroes, black folk, colored people or Ethiopians. They must, he said, know their origins, and call themselves Asiatics, Moors or Moorish-Americans. Ali believed that before a people can have a God they must have a nationality, and the Moorish nation is Morocco. According to Ali, the word "Ethiopian" signifies division, colored signifies something that is painted. Ali asserted that the name means everything, and that by taking the Asiatic's name from him and calling him Negro, black, colored or Ethiopian, the European deprived the Moor of his power, authority, God, and all important possessions. According to Ali, Christianity was for the European (white), and Islam was for the Asiatic (olive skinned). Ali believed that there would be world peace when each group adopted their respective religions.

Ali's appeal met receptive ears on the South side of Chicago, and many blacks "flocked to the new teacher. Complete emancipation through a change of status from 'Negro' to 'Asiatic' promised an easy way to salvation." 38 After a person had obtained full membership in the cult, they were given a card which carried the following inscription:

This is your Nationality and Identification Card for the Moorish Science Temple of America and Birthrights for the Moorish Americans, etc... we honor all the Divine Prophets, Jesus, Mohammed, Buddha and Confucius. May the blessings of the God of our Father Allah, be upon you that carry this card. I do hereby declare that you are a Moslem under the Divine Laws of the Holy Koran of Mecca, Love, Truth, Peace, Freedom and Justice. 'I AM A CITIZEN OF THE U.S.A.' NOBLE DREW ALI, THE PROPHET, 3603 INDIANA AVENUE., CHICAGO, ILL.
Apparently after obtaining their new identity, many of the membership were emboldened to confronting whites on the streets of Chicago, showing them their membership cards unsolicited, and praising their leader Ali. A number of disturbances occurred as a result and Ali had to warn the membership to stop accosting whites.

Finally, in 1929, Ali's leadership was challenged by Sheik Claude Greene. However, the challenge came to end with the death of Greene, who was found shot and stabbed in his office. Ali was arrested and jailed for the murder but released shortly after bond. A few weeks later Ali died of mysterious circumstances. It was alleged by some that he died from the effects of a third degree administered by the police, while others believed that his death was the result of a severe beating by members of a rival faction.  

After Ali's death a W.D. Fard became the leader of the Moorish movement for a short while. Fard apparently claimed to be Ali reincarnated, however the movement permanently divided in 1930. One faction claimed to remain faithful to Noble Drew Ali, while the second faction led by Elijah Muhammed claimed allegiance to Fard.

According to Essien-Udom:

The rise of the Nation of Islam is inseparable from the leadership of Muhammad and the loyalty of a small group of followers who have worked patiently and persistently since 1932. With this small group, Muhammad is said to have founded the Detroit Temple in 1934, and later that year a temple in Chicago. In 1945 Muhammad founded two more temples, one in Milwaukee and one in Washington D.C.
At that time membership is thought to have declined from a high of 8,000 during the depression year of 1934, to 1,000 in 1945. However, after 1955 there was a dramatic increase in membership and the number of temples. Essien-Udom reports that there were fifty temples in 22 states and in the District of Columbia by 1959, and 5,000 to 15,000 registered followers, 50,000 believers and a large number of sympathizers. In 1975 there are an estimated "80 odd temples across the country," 30,000 Black Muslim members and assets estimated to exceed 80 million dollars.42

Black Muslim beliefs

The Nation believe that they are a "chosen people," that Muhammad was God's "messenger" through whom it would be revealed when the "son of man" would be present corporeally in the world.43 W.D. Fard is revered by the Nation who believe that God (Allah) came to them in the person of Fard. God is believed to be a black man.44 Muhammad claimed to be the messenger of Allah sent

To raise my people here (the so-called Negroes), and to help them into the knowledge of Self, and their God Allah (who is in Person among them) and the devils (their open enemy).

My objective: I am doing all I can to make the so-called Negroes see that the white race and their religion (Christianity) are their open enemies, and to prove to them that they will never be anything but the devil's slaves and finally to go to hell with them for believing and following them and their kind.45

Muhammad also claimed to be infallible.

Muhammad claimed that all people of African descent in North America, American Negroes, belong to the "Asian Black Nation," and specifically to
the ancient tribe of Shabazz. Abraham of the Old Testament is considered the patriarch of the Black Nation or the Asian Black Nation. The Black Nation is different from the Nation of Islam in that it includes all non-white people: brown, yellow and red people. The world is thus divided into the Black Nation and the white race. Muslims believe that the white race was "grafted" from the Black Nation. The Black Nation represents righteousness and the white race represents evil.

Black Muslims believe that from the genesis of time their progenitors were Muslim, and their national deity Allah. They also believe that the Nation of Islam has been chosen by their God to be the instrument of redemption of the world's Black Nation. According to them the present civilization is evil and doomed to destruction. Black Muslims believe that the end of the present "evil world" will result in the Black Nation being elevated to world leadership in a righteous government.

On February 25, 1975 Muhammad died and was succeeded to office by his son Wallace D. Muhammad, who has been given the title of Supreme Minister of the Nation of Islam. The accession to office was not accomplished without some internal conflict and debate. In addition, a new doctrinal stance which now permits whites to be members may have disintegrative impacts on the Nation. In Chapter III, we will discuss these points in more detail when we compare and contrast Black Muslims, Black Jews and Hebrew Israelites.

Black Jews

Shapiro notes that at the turn of the century there were some conspicuous individual examples of Black Americans identifying themselves as Jews.
In 1895 there were newspaper articles about a "self converted" Jew named William Ephraim of Philadelphia. In 1908 Samuel Johnson, a prisoner in a New Jersey jail, claimed to be a Jew named Klowsky. And in 1912, a prominent black lawyer named Rufus L. Perry converted to Judaism.

There is some controversy about the time of the emergence of the first Black Jewish congregations. Roi Ottley notes the genesis of a Black Jewish group in 1808, however Dobrin, rejecting that the group that Ottley describes were Jewish, asserts that Black Jews had their genesis in 1899 with the Moorish Zionist Temple. Ruth Landes provides the best account of an early, 1917, Black Jewish congregation. The group was known alternatively as the "Temple of the Gospel of the Kingdom," "Ever Live and Never Die," and "Black Jew." The congregation's leader was described as a southern vagrant with evangelistic experience named Roberson. Branches were established in some five different cities. Beliefs of the group included: "Believe in Jesus; believe that Roberson is the Messiah, the Christ (later he became God), then you are saved and will never die."

For a time, Roberson is said to have wielded considerable political influence in Harlem when his proslytizing efforts were successful. Roberson initiated some commercial enterprises also, the profits of which he controlled. Members of the group lived in houses owned by the group and worked in shops also owned by the group. Marriage was abolished by the group and women were supposed to be held in common. The pregnant women were sent to live on a "baby farm" in New Jersey. The sexual practices, high mortality of the baby farm, and the financial arrangements of the group attracted the attention of the Federal government. In 1922, Roberson was convicted of violation of the Mann Act and imprisoned in Atlanta. He died in
1932, having promised his group that he would be ressurected. The group survived for a time after his death but eventually disintegrated. In retrospect, it is easily seen that the group was only nominally Jewish at best, having no Jewish observance or practices, and had fundamentally a Christian orientation. Its claim to Judaism rested primarily in the syllogism, "We who are black worship Christ; Christ was a Jew; therefore, we are Black Jews." They also used stationary that born Jewish symbols on the letterhead, and frequently made appeals among Jews in Harlem for funds to support a non-existant Negro Jewish orphan asylum.

In 1921, the Moorish Zionist Temple was reorganized by Mordica Herman, a peddler of religious articles who professed Judaism, and spoke some Yiddish. Herman proposed a nationalistic solution to the problems of blacks in the United States. He favored the establishment of a Palestinian homeland for all Jews, including Black Jews. Although there is some controversy about when apparently Arnold Ford joined Herman in the leadership of the Temple, Ford had been a choirmaster in Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (U.N.I.A.) before some personal clashes with Garvey led to his expulsion.

Shortly after Ford joined Herman in the Moorish Zionist Temple, the group began to experience conflict between the two men. According to Shapiro, Ford insisted on being called Rabbi and touring with his choir, while Herman felt Ford took advantage of him, and was jealous of Ford's popularity. The group split in 1925 with Ford taking his choir and forming Beth B'naí Abraham.

Opinions differ as to what happened to the Moorish Zionist Temple after Ford left. Dobrin asserts that Herman left the group and joined
the Beth B'nai Abraham for a while but left after more conflict with Ford, finally disappearing in 1930. Dobrin also suggests that the Temple carried on for a while under the leadership of a white Jew until it disappeared in 1930. Landes suggests that Herman joined forces with a man named Sledge and the two collaborated as the leaders of the Temple. Apparently Sledge and Herman were able to obtain some monetary support from some white Jews who believed the Moorish Zionist claims to be Egyptian or Ethiopian Jews, and who accepted their practice of wearing skull caps (Yarmulkas), the circumcision of Herman's son, and the denouncement of the "so-called Negro" as proof of their Jewish identity.\textsuperscript{56}

According to Shapiro the formation of the Beth B'nai Abraham provided the opportunity for the systematic articulation of the idea that its membership were indeed blood Hebrews. Ford argued that blacks were born Hebrews because they were Africans, and to him Africans were traditionally Hebrew. He argued that fragments of their Hebrewisms had persisted, but were virtually destroyed by slavery. According to Ford, a correct reading of the Old Testament would prove that the true religion of blacks was that of the Hebrews, and that the old time black religion stressed the continuity of black tradition with that of the Hebrew. Ford rejected the use of "Jewish" to describe his followers. He insisted that they were Hebrews, saying that Jewish was only a term that referred to Western whites who had been converted to Judaism by blacks. Ford also had an antipathy towards whites and the "so-called Negro." As a result, he insisted that every one of his members had a Hebrew name which would be revealed to him in the Beth B'nai Abraham. Ford also suggested various
"evidence" to bolster his claim that Jews were of African origin. For example, he noted the persistence of elements of Hebrew culture in Africa: the motif of the shiek of David used in West Africa, and the facial markings on tribal Nigerians of the Ten Commandments.

Shapiro also notes that the Beth B'nai Abraham apparently received some monetary support from white Jews as well as frequent visits. Not unlike Garvey, Ford also sold stock in the Beth B'nai Abraham Corporation, or Progressive Corporation to further industry and commerce with West Africa. Apparently some members even went to West Africa as laborers as well as bought stock in the group. In relation to this nationalism, some of the members wore turbans, sung old Universal Negro Improvement Association songs, established classes in mechanics, mathematics, Arabic, Hebrew, and the Bible in preparation for emigration to Africa.

Internal tensions finally brought about the disintegration of the Beth B'nai Abraham, and it collapsed totally in 1930. It is thought that Ford left the United States, migrating to Africa but eventually disappearing from public view. According to Brotz, with the disappearance of Ford "the mantle has fallen and remains to the present day on the shoulders of Wentworth A. Matthew." Rabbi Matthew is the leader of Harlem's largest Black Jewish congregation, the Commandment Keepers Congregation of the Living God, the Black Jews of Harlem.

Brotz has identified the basic beliefs of the Black Jews:

They abstain from pork, worship on Saturday, use Hebrew in their services, wear skull caps and prayer shawls. But at root, what constitutes these sects is the belief that the so-called Negro race is mis-named, is not really a race but a nation which was robbed of its name, its religion and its culture by the slave owner who then imposed upon the slaves
an alien and false religion to weaken their morale, to make them feel that they own everything to him for redeeming them from pagan superstitions. The Black Jews, on the contrary, believe that the so-called Negroes are really the lost tribes of the House of Israel. As such they believe that they have recovered their identity and their religion — the law — which makes them simultaneously independent of and superior to the whites who enslave them. 58

Matthew considers himself the leader of Harlem's Black Jews. He has obtained considerable attention in the Jewish press, and as a consequence most observers make reference to his group when they know of Black Jews at all. 59 Rabbi Matthew's congregation consists of an estimated 200 people, and he has suggested that there are over 300,000 Black Jews in the United States. 60 Another source has estimated that the Black Jewish population, nationwide, may be closer to 10 - 15,000.

One Black Jewish cult deserves attention in this history of the Black Jewish tradition. Fauset describes a contemporary of Rabbi Matthew, Prophet F. S. Cherry of the Church of God, the members of which refer to themselves as Black Jews or Black Hebrews. Located in Philadelphia, Fauset indicates that the Church of God was founded "many years ago," presumably in the early 1930s. Its founder, Prophet Cherry, is described as being from the deep south (a place that he considered worse than Hell), who travelled widely in the world as a seaman, and all over the United States as a laborer and railway employee. Prophet Cherry was conversant in Yiddish and Hebrew. He claimed that once in his travels he had a vision in which God appointed him a prophet, and shortly afterwards he returned to the United States and Philadelphia, where he established the Church of God.

The beliefs of Prophet Cherry's congregation are a syncretism of
Judaism and Christianity. Some of these include: The members of the Church of God are the Jews of the Bible. They speak of themselves as Jews or Black Jews, and they consider white Jews frauds or interlopers. They believe in Jesus Christ and that Christ was black. Similarly, it is claimed that God is black, and that the original inhabitants of the earth were black; the millenium is believed will occur in the year 2000.

Some of the group's practices include an observance of the sabbath that begins with sundown Friday, and continues until sundown Saturday; and also an observance of baptism and Passover.

Beyond the congregations noted above, there are others in New York City as well as Chicago, Philadelphia and Washington. While these congregations may not be in touch with other groups like themselves, they are aware of the existence of other Black Jewish congregations. Nevertheless, these groups rarely act in concert. In large part, this absence of solidarity is due to rivalry among the leadership. Leaders are suspicious and wary lest their members fall victim to the blandishments of another more charismatic black Rabbi. Membership in most black temples is meagre at best, and the loss of a few adherents may mean the difference between the survival and extinction of a congregation.

A cult that emerged in the Black Jewish tradition in the early 1960s were the Hebrew Israelites. In the chapter that follows below we shall discuss in detail "Who are the Hebrew Israelites and what are their beliefs."
Footnotes


6. For an account of the Hebrew Israelite immigration to Israel see Devorah Wigoder, "America's Black Jews in Israel," Israel Magazine, March, 1970, pp. 34-43. Israel's Law of Return allows any Jew to immigrate to Israel, obtain citizenship and to settle there. The law does allow the right to be withheld from those who have a criminal record or who may be considered a threat to the public safety.

7. Judith Hubner, Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Interior noted: "We didn't know if the law applied to them and we didn't want to decide on the basis of color. If they proved to be non-Jews, then they couldn't claim the benefits. And if this was so, they could undergo conversion to Judaism." Miami News, April 4, 1972. Immigrating under the Law of Return provides immigrants with many benefits and assistance from various Israeli bureaucracies. Some of these benefits include assistance in obtaining housing, employment, social security, medical assistance, education and other social services.

8. According to Yitzhak Agassi, the Spokesman for the Ministry of the Interior: "Yes, there [were] three groups. The other groups came after a short time and they joined to the group [sic] of Dimona. In the second group were many relatives of the first group, so it wasn't in our mind not to let them come into the country. In the third group there were many people that came one by one ..., and then after they entered the country they joined their friends in Dimona." January 22, 1973.


10. Ibid., p. 43.


13. "Over the months, more blacks came -- an estimated 400 -- most of them crowding into Dimona. The later arrivals were not given housing, so they moved in with the old families, creating over-populated slums dubbed "Harlem" by the Jewish townspeople. Tensions mounted. Fights broke out between the young Black Israelites and the local Jewish kids; the blacks were accused of everything from thievery and vandalism to throwing garbage out their windows." Newsweek, October 18, 1971, p. 61.

14. In describing this incident to me, Hebrew Israelites have said that the protest was designed to dramatize their poverty and to pressure the Israeli government to provide them with assistance. Additionally, see Korn, "Dimona; A black misunderstanding," p. 6; and The Jerusalem Post, September 12, 1971.


27. Shapiro, Double Damnation, Double Salvation, p. 22.

28. Ibid., p. 23.

29. For a discussion of the unique role of the Black Minister see William H. Pipes, Say Amen, Brother! (Westport, Connecticut: Negro University Press, 1970). Henry Mitchell, "Two Steam of Tradition," in The Black Experience in Religion, ed. by C. Eric Lincoln, pp. 70-76. Mitchell notes that "Black preaching has always assumed that preaching must be an experience, not merely a clever idea. It involves the totality of a person and is, consciously or not, concerned to organize feeling tones around the text." p. 73.

31. Robert C. Weaver, The Negro Ghetto (New York: Russell and Russell, 1948), pp. 25-26. Weaver notes that "the rising educational level of Negroes in the south had made them more dissatisfied with their living conditions at the same time that it had enabled a larger number to appreciate the difference in desirability between living in the north and the south. Negro newspapers were important in spreading the word, painting in their weekly editions an alluring picture of life above the Mason and Dixon line. Early migrants wrote back home in glowing terms about the greater freedom, superior schools and higher wages in the north." See Also Weaver's vivid description of the phetooization of the black American, pp.25-76; and Eli Ginzberg and Alfred S. Eichner, The Troublesome Presence: American Democracy and the Negro (Toronto: Collier Macmillan, 1964), pp. 265-90.


33. For a vivid discussion of black families suffering the impacts of poverty and racism in the city, see St. Clair Drake and Horace R. Cayton, Black Metropolis, pp. 564-599.

34. Indeed, many blacks have long been critical and suspicious of the even more established black churches. See St. Clair Drake and Horace Cayton, Black Metropolis, pp. 418-420. "The major criticisms ran somewhat as follows: (1) Church is a 'racket,' (2) too many churches, (3) Churches are too emotional (4) There's no real religion among the members, (5) Churches are a waste of time and money, (6) Ministers don't practice what they preach, (7) Ministers don't preach against 'sin,' (8) Church places too much emphasis upon money, (9) Negroes are too religious," p. 419.


36. Ibid., p. 41.


38. Fauset, Black Gods of the Metropolis, p. 42.
39. Ibid.


41. Ibid., p. 76.


43. E. U. Essien-Udom, Black Nationalism, p. 142.

44. Ibid., p. 144

45. Ibid., p. 147.

46. For a discussion see Brashler, "Black on Black: The Deadly Struggle for Power."


52. Ibid.

53. In the past emigrationism has captured the imagination of other blacks seeking a remedy to the condition of the black in America. Notable among early emigrationist advocates were Martin Delaney, Paul Cuffee, Daniel Coker, Newport Gardner and John Russworm.

54. There does not appear to be any evidence that Ford had any relationship with the Marcus Garvey movement after his expulsion. Ford's nationalist's sentiments however do seem to have been subsumed in his new found membership in the Moorish Zionist Temple. For a discussion see Brotz, The Black Jews of Harlem, p. 11-12.


56. Ibid.

57. Brotz speculates that Ford and Fard, one of the founders of the Islamic cults may actually be the same person. Brotz, The Black Jews of Harlem, p. 12.


61. This total was suggested to me by the Executive Director on Synagogue Relations of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, Rabbi Isaac Trainin, in an interview concerning Jewish (white) relations with Black Jews. Rabbi Trainin's Committee was instrumental in founding an organization of black and white Jews, Hatzad Harishon.


63. Ibid., pp. 34-36.

64. Ibid., pp. 39-46.

65. The young assassin of Rev. Martin Luther King, Sr.'s wife claimed to be a black Jew: Marcus Wayne Chenault was from Dayton, Ohio. See the New York Times, July 8, 1974 and July 9, 1974. See also Bruce Felton, "Black Jews in New York," The Times of Israel, February, 1974, p. 53.
Chapter I

Who are the Hebrew Israelites and what are their beliefs?
Introduction

This chapter is a detailed description of Hebrew Israelite beliefs. It begins with a definition of an Hebrew Israelite and continues with a discussion of Hebrew Israelite history, eschatology/ideology, ritual and practice, culture, recruitment organization, finances, "Divine behavior," and education.

Definition of an Hebrew Israelite: According to the Hebrew Israelite faithful, an Hebrew Israelite is almost assuredly a black American of African descent and/or one who is "of the Spirit." As we will show below, there are unavoidable inconsistencies in this logic, however Hebrew Israelites find these critical details un compelling if not reassuring. For confronted with disconfirmatory evidence that refute their assertions, clinging to their belief is a virtual declaration and reaffirmation of faith to themselves and the members of their community.

Nasi M, a minister in the Hebrew Israelite Nation, told me:

The only thing that we are saying is that we are the descendants of the ancient Biblical Israelites. So that what we are saying is that we are reconnected with our history in order to fit again into the family of the world. People of the world have been divided, categorized, placed into being identified according to land, and we being a people of the world are identified the same way. Hebrew Israelites, descendants of the Biblical land Canaan, modernly called Israel. And we are the descendants of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaacs and Jacob. Isaac being the first Israelite, and Abraham being the first Hebrew. One is natural and one is spiritual. It is a combination of the two. So Hebrew Israelite is simply again the name of the people who populated this land after being the seen of Isaac: the Hebrew Israelites.

Hebrew Israelites also claim that only black people are Hebrew Israelites and that while many claim to be Jews and consequently the "chosen people," theirs is an error in history at best and most likely part of a world conspiracy to conceal the true knowledge of their
identity from Hebrew Israelites. Nasi M informed me:

Just to give you a little history. There are many Hebrews in the world and that is why we identify ourselves as Hebrew Israelites. You see Abraham was the first Hebrew, but only the descendants of Jacob were the Israelites. So as it was written, Abraham would be the father of many nations and that is why you will find many people saying that they are of the seed of Abraham through Ishmael which means that they are of Hebrew origin and through the seed of Ishmael. But we are of Hebrew origin through the seed of Jacob...

You must remember that the original Hebrews and original Israelites were black...

We prove it [that the original Hebrews were black] this way: We say that you prove that they were not black... History records the families of the world. Egypt is a black land. The whole world recognized the country of Egypt and the original inhabitants as being black people, what they called a highly advanced and civilized country of black people, Hamitic in origin, in terms of being descendants of Ham, Cush. The original chastisement upon the nation of Israel being 430 years of bondage spent in Egypt. If the Egyptians were black and seventy souls went down and dwelled in the midst of and in the land of Egypt, black people, for 430 years, they couldn't have possibly come out white people. So these are some simple factors to determine the origin and color of the people once they came out of bondage in Egypt. At that point they had to be completely black...

Noah, his three sons and their wives and Noah's wife, eight people, were people that were salvaged out of the destruction. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japath. From these three sons are the world's people now. Noah and his wife were both, we know, black. Therefore, we know that his three sons were black. The world historians have up to a few seasons ago accepted the fact that Ham and Shem were black, but then they wanted to inject themselves because they could not find themselves. I am speaking of the so-called white world now. Because they could not find themselves in history, they began to relate themselves to being the seed of Japath. But he can't do that because Japath looked just like his two brothers, Shem and Ham. There wasn't one white boy and two black boys. So that he can clarify himself he says that Japath were the people who peopled the European continent. This is true. When the so-called white man came down from the Icelandic regions, he came into Europe and found the seed of Japath who was there and was black. And so he began to transform history and put himself in the stead of Japath...
[In] the Book of Exodus where it was asked of Moses by the father to put his hand in his bosom and when he took it out his hand was leprous as snow, and when he put it back into his bosom it turned as his other flesh. Now if you were trying to prove or show to somebody in terms of a miracle or in terms of a greater understanding of profound shame, you surely would not change the color of a hand to the same color and when we now find that the hand was leprous, our understanding in modern times is that leprosy is a change of pigmentation of the skin which causes the skin to turn lighter, and it is very hard for a white or a Caucasian to become leprous. Leprosy is clearly identified with the black people of the continent of Africa. Black people in general have it: Leprosy. So that was one of the citations of the Scriptures. The other: Judges, when the prophet Elijah speaks about Nahmen being turned or being plagued with the same illness, the same sickness that the soldier had, that he and his seed would have that sickness and it would cleave to him and his seed forever and ever. It was the centurion soldier; the soldier was a leper and he was asked to go dip into the Jordan seven times and be cleansed of his illness. So these are just some, for a Biblical standpoint, examples relative to the Blackness of Israelites.

Important at this point is the Hebrew Israelite definition of black. One might infer from the statements made above that all of the world's non-white population would qualify as black. That does not seem to be true although Hebrew Israelites can be rather cautious and guarded on this point. More important than color is the matter of physical characteristics and geographic origins. Hebrew Israelites in defining black really mean people of Negroid physical characteristics from Sub-Saharan Africa. According to Nasi M:

Where we are sitting right now we are only twenty minutes by air away from Egypt. And Egypt (again they tried to cover up this history) was all black. They blew the noses off all the statues in Egypt, destroyed the images that were all Negro in structure so as to perpetuate again a lie as to the origin and structure of the people in this part of the world. So that as to say the highly civilized society that they speak about in Egypt turned white; it went from black to white. And so now all the intelligence in the world, all the spirit in the world, and all the Gods in the world are white; and all ignorance in the world remained black.
So you can see why they annexed the Holy Land from the continent. But it didn't work because the Suez Canal can't be a dividing line for a continent. A man-made dividing line, that's what they use: the Suez Canal to separate Africa...upper Sahara from lower Sahara... and it didn't work and it won't work...

No. Not any of these people could be the children of Israel. We said that the children of Israel came through Jacob. We got the Edomites that came through Essau, the Hittites, the Jebosites, all those people were Canaanites from Canaan. There were many tribes that made up Canaan's people. Israelites were another distinct group of people. All of those (other)people were black people, are people of color. But the Israelites were a distinct group from within the world of color. A people selected...

One way of rationalizing that many of the non-whites that Hebrew Israelites come in contact with are not Hebrew Israelites is their theory of the New World Trans-plant. Nasi M asserted:

Prior to the Crusades, in the 10th or 11th century, there were no Europeans, any great amounts living in this part of the world. But during the Crusades, Pope Urban organized the Crusades to "come free the Holy Land from the hands of the heathens and wrested for ourselves a land that floweth with milk and honey." He brought thousands upon thousands of Europeans to this part of the world that never returned back to Europe. They stayed on and dominated the land and intermingled with the people of the land, and that is why today you will see walking in this part of the world blond, blue-eyed people who call themselves Arabs, Saudi Arabians, or Egyptians, but they have no roots in this part of the world. For their roots are European so that when we speak of the New World Transplants, that's exactly who we're talking about. Those who were left over from the Crusades, and those who came to this part of the country and this part of the world to colonize it and to maintain it for the British Empire, the French Empire and the other colonial empires.

It is obvious from the above statements that Hebrew Israelites have no wide and inclusive definition of "black." Hebrew Israelites are not interested in promoting an identity in general that would appeal to all non-whites. Rather, they are concerned with establishing an identity for themselves as black Americans of African ancestry and to that end they argue that only others like themselves with the
racial heritage are Hebrew Israelites. At this point in time, Hebrew
Israelites in Israel feel that they represent an elite among Hebrew
Israelites since they have "come into the knowledge of their true
identity as Hebrew Israelites" in advance of the masses of black Americans
whose awareness of their heritage, Hebrew Israelites feel, is still
dormant. According to Nasi M:

The slaves that reached the final form of physical slavery
in American were truly the Hebrew Israelites. The others were
dropped in the isles of the sea, Haiti, Cuba, Jamaica.

The true Israelites were brought on to America to fulfill
a prophetic utterance of the sages of old so that it would be
beyond a shadow of a doubt that they were the people.
The prophecy that we speak about is in the book of
Deuteronomy, the 28th Chapter, where he alludes to the cursings
and blessings that would befall the nation of Israel if they did
not adhere to the divine laws of our father. And Moses was
writing the books of Deuteronomy, and he couldn't have been
speaking about captivity that came before, because Moses was
in that captivity. So he gave charge to the people and told
them that they would go into slavery again 'cause he knew they
weren't going to keep the laws, understanding the divine plan,
and he said this: thy sons and daughters would be taken to a far
land, and again you shall go into Egypt but this time by ships
and there you will be sold as bondsmen and bondswomen and now man
shall buy you.

And we also know of the prophecy in Genesis relative to the
400 years of chastisement, final chastisement upon the chosen
people where it came to our father Abraham in a dream where it
said know with surety that "thy seed shall be slave in a land that
is not theirs, and there they will serve strange Gods of wood
and stone, and there they will be afflicted for 400 years and
afterwards I will bring them out with great wealth." These pro-
phecies and the prophecies of Isaiah and Ezikiel relative to the
chastisement upon Israel are definite signs that the American
black man is the only nation of the people in the world that
fulfills them to the letter. There have been other people in
slavery; there have been other people in bondage, but there have
never been other people to fit to the letter the curses that would
fall upon the chosen people. You take each family of the world
and you go and check the records on them, and you'll find that
none of them fit the slavery that was prophesied that would fall
upon the nation of Israel. So these are just definite reasons
to understand that the American black man beyond a shadow of a doubt...
You see the Father couldn't confuse the world by having two people in slavery for 400 years, and two people with the same kind of problems. It wouldn't work. You couldn't have Africans, Liberians, Ghanaians, Nigerians mixed up with the chosen people because they would become inheritors of the promise. Some got caught up in my iniquities. That's just like a person riding in a car. If I'm drunk they just get caught up in if if I'm in an accident. They got caught up in my iniquities. It wasn't their doing. So there were many people of African descent other than the Israelite nation that was caught up in the slave trade.

The above statement seems inconsistent with our definition of an Hebrew Israelite: a black American of African descent. It is not, for what Hebrew Israelites argue somewhat laboriously, is that while there are many kinds of black Africans, only a "chosen few" are of the "seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob" and therefore Hebrew Israelites.

Having defined the Hebrew Israelites in the terms stated above, there would seem to be little room to include others who were racially different. Indeed, the racial exclusiveness and racism expressed by Hebrew Israelites would seem to allow membership to only those who could fulfill the qualifications of Hebrew Israelite definition. Hebrew Israelites too are confronted with membership and historical experience of a multi-ethnic heritage. There are some, a few among the Hebrew Israelites even now who could 'pass," go unnoticed among the melange of peoples in Israel. The necessity to explain the inclusion of those as Hebrew Israelites who do not possess obvious Negroid physical characteristics has resulted in a final determination of Hebrew Israelite membership: one must be "of the Spirit" to be truly an Hebrew Israelite. Hebrew Israelites believe that only others who are "of the Spirit" can recognize those "of the Spirit." This test is not a rational or reasoned test according to Hebrew Israelites, so that the significance and meaning
of "of the Spirit" cannot be explained: it can only be "known" by those of the spirit. Hebrew Israelite faith in this final qualification to Hebrew Israelite membership is absolute. For them it represents the ultimate test of kinship in the line of descent of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Hebrew Israelites: The people that we have come to know as Hebrew Israelites have had a very short existence. According to some Hebrew Israelites, in the early 1960s there were a number of black Jewish cult groups in Chicago advocating a form of Judaism blended with black nationalism. Among them were the nascent Hebrew Israelites who in addition to espousing a black nationalism, predicated upon a Jewish cult foundation, advocated a Black Zionism: Israel was the original homeland of the black man and it was essential for all black Hebrews to return to their country of origin to avoid consumation in the imminent Armaggeddon. There was also the complementary promise in Black Zionism of a restoration of a nation of black people who could be proud of their history and culture and who would reacquire the creed and land they felt had been stolen from them. Although Black Zionism was preached and promoted by many leaders of Black Jews, all except two who became leaders of the Hebrew Israelites stopped short of emigration. Louis Bryant and Gerson Parker were active proselytizers of Black Judaism and Zionism in Chicago. Initially they were ignorant of the existence of each other but were brought together by their common religious interest and were able to develop a working partnership as leaders of the group that became Hebrew Israelites.
Louis Bryant, now know among his followers as Nasi Shaliach Ben Yahuda, was born of poor parents in Central, Indiana in 1927. With some resentment, Nasi Shaliach recalls that he was only allowed to progress as far as the fifth grade by the school officials who kept him until that time in the "dumb room." Shaliach's religious training was as a Baptist and he recalls that his parents' moral influence was very strong: "They were from the old school, and we had certain rigid laws that we went by in the Louis Bryant's house." When Shaliach became 18 years of age, he joined the U.S. Navy for two years and served most of that time in Great Lakes, Illinois. He recalls that period with some amusement for in contrast to his academic achievement as a child, he did quite well in the Navy, qualifying for Boatswains Mate School and becoming a Coxswain's Mate. When he reentered civilian life, Shaliach worked for seven years as a postal clerk and postman, and later entered into business for himself as a printer and publisher. According to Shaliach, his Crown Bryant Publishing Company earned a million dollars but he was unimpressed with his material success for by then he was well aware of the "world conspiracy" to conceal the true identity of black people, and he had made up his mind to expose this deceit. Nasi Shaliach is a man of light complexion and impressive stature and manner. He is perhaps 6'2" in height, approximately 200 pounds, and when clothed in Hebrew Israelite dress, has the appearance of grave dignity. He speaks in a deep baritone voice that is accented with some influence of the American south. He has that peculiar ability of black American preachers to speak spontaneously and compellingly in moralistic terms utilizing references to the Bible to reassure his congregants. Although he is
not without a sense of humor, there is a large element of sternness and a "no nonsense" attitude about him. He is deeply respected and loved by the Hebrew Israelites. Nasi Shaliach is an intelligent, self-educated man with a deep distrust and contempt for schools.

Shaliach has said that it was in 1953 that he was inspired to begin to preach.

[It] was all done by the spirit. I don't have any knowledge of that at all. I just looked up one day and I was preaching the doctrine of Israel. The restoration of Israel... of the Israelites to the Land of Israel.

At this time Shaliach was a member of the Brotherhood of the Church of God in Christ; according to him this church was originally founded by Bishop C. H. Mason, one of the first to preach Black Judaism.

In 1957 Shaliach went to Chicago where he continued to preach that blacks were the original Hebrews, and where he established an organization called "One Incorporated." According to Shaliach, the charter of this organization read that

It was dedicated for the sole purpose of the restoration of the Children of Israel, or the people whom the divine scribes of Israel referred to as the Children of Israel, and the restoration to our faith in the culture of our forefathers.

It was not until 1964 approximately that Shaliach met Gerson Parker and they began to work together. According to Shaliach, his meeting with Parker occurred because

We were saying the same thing. One day he [Parker] walked into my printing shop because he [Parker] heard of this man [Shaliach]. That's all. That's all I can tell you. I didn't go out of my way to meet him and he didn't go out of his way to meet me. We just came together.

Gerson Parker: Hebrew Israelite leadership is inspired leadership. That is to say that men like Nasi Shaliach and Gerson Parker believe that
they have been divinely ordained to carry out their mission of leading their people. Hebrew Israelite leadership is also ecstatic leadership which is dependent on intense emotionalism as verification that one is possessed divinely for leadership. This kind of leadership, when it is genuine, cannot differentiate between real and unreal states. Nor can the public that is attracted to this leadership, and it is the former's support that raises this kind of leadership to charismatic proportions.

Gerson Parker is an Afro-American of light complexion, medium build and height. Like Shaliach, he is loved by his Hebrew Israelite followers, but seems to enjoy an additional measure of devotion symbolized by his title as the Prince of Peace (Nasi Hashalom), the Messiah.

Nasi Hashalom is the leader most familiar to non-believers since it is he who has acted as spokesman most often for the Hebrew Israelites. Although both Shaliach and Hashalom are able public speakers, it is Shalom who speaks to the Israeli public as he is fluent in Hebrew and Shaliach is not. Like Shaliach, Hashalom believes that he has been divinely ordained to carry out his mission. Indeed, part of his belief is that he has been reincarnated numerous times, accounting for his use of different names. His belief in his mystical past allows him to obfuscate his biography without qualm. According to Nasi Hashalom:

I was in many places doing many things, and yet I was everyplace and I was doing everything.

There was a young man, for example, by the name of Gerson Parker; normal child, raised in the ghettos of America. Normal ghetto family. Relief and all the other non-benefits of the uncivilized civilized society. Raised up on the near North Side; grade school at Edward Jenner; high school at Washburn Trade School. Always had, it seems, a strange thing about him that he always wanted to share things. Things always seemed so unbalanced to him.
And he always wanted to share. Always said that if he ever got anything that he would really do something about the situation in the world...

One day he was standing by a water faucet and a man came up to him and said, 'have you ever heard of any Black Israelites?' Strange thing, he'd heard about Black Israelites, but he had been waiting. A certain voice let him know about a certain time. So when he listened to this man he went and he sat down and he began to listen to the words of this man. This man's name was Eliyahu. He gave him words of wisdom. Gerson was really listening to him, but he wasn't sitting and listening to him to be taught by him. He was listening to him in order to see if this was the signs of the time. So he listened to this man well and became very closely attached to him, and he began to move into some of the circles of some of the organizations of Israelites, looking to see if there was any light, if the people were ready for the journey back home...

But this was just words because they didn't have any strength to leave America, but it was another sign, the spirit of the times. So from in the midst of these men came Abeita. And when they set Abeita in motion, from hearing these men then he knew that it was time to move. He wouldn't be able to allow them to lay the groundwork for an organization and to make Abeita an organization. So he put forth the spirit and with the going forth of this spirit all those that were of him were caught and bound in his spirit. They had no choice in the matter as to what they would do because he bound them by the spirit and he wouldn't let them go because he knew he had to set the exodus in motion. So people began to move, they began to come, and this little place began to grow and it began to be the most powerful Israelite group of people in America. They were coming from everywhere for one purpose: the exodus. And little did they know that as they would come and they would hear him, that he was binding them. He had to have a certain amount of people to carry out a certain mission. So they came and they listened and they got involved in time.

I was thinking about him that they called him by many names. I was thinking about Gerson - Gerson Parker, and I was thinking about the spirit of Dan Carter, and I was thinking about the spirit of Ben Ami, and I was thinking about the spirit of Niflah, and I was thinking about the spirit of Nasi Hashalom. I was thinking about all those different things, all these different names. But you don't know him by name. Gerson Parker did many things.
He was born of the spirit, has no mother like other mothers - yet he had a mother. He had a woman that he called mother. But it's not like that. So you take all of those and you put them together, and maybe you would find somewhere there, according to the spirit, you may find me. A man who bound people for a mission. Strange even at this time. I was thinking about when he got into the wilderness of Liberia certain of them had to go back to fulfill the prophecy. So they got bound. Certain had to stay, coming on to Israel. They got bound. And they were chose of Aba. They had nothing to do with it... It's Aba's way and we are bound in the time and the spirit of the Almighty Creator of the heaven adn the earth. So somewhere through that analysis of the young man on the job, the military, and his (wanderings?) you could find a personality, but only according to the spirit.

Hashalom appears to be in his early 40's, and despite the bizarre content of his statements, he seems to be intelligent and sincere. As we mentioned above, Hashalom enjoys a special devotion from his followers which may be due to his genuine warmth and affection, and also his ability to develop compelling theological interpretations.

The meeting of Shaliach and Hashalom in 1964 was the beginning of an association that eventually led to their convincing a band of followers to accompany them in emigration from the United States. To prepare for the departure and to discuss ritual and doctrinal issues, the adherents of Shaliach and Hashalom met at the Abeita (Hebrew) Culture Center in Chicago on 47th and Cottage Grove. According to Hashalom, Abeita really didn't have a founder like that. We just came together and it was a name that one of the young Israelites used to always use all the time. "A", Aleph which is one; and "Beita" is her house, meaning her one house, or the Nation of Israel. It just kind of stuck and we began to say "Abeita." It was different and unique, and no one of the strangers knew what it meant in reference to having any Hebrew connections because of the oddity of it.

When the group left for Liberia in 1967, Abeita ceased to exist.

According to both leaders, their plans had always included returning to Israel after a brief sojourn in Liberia. Hebrew Israelites have
said that as part of the "prophecy" of Hebrew Israelite return to Israel, it was necessary for them to retrace the routes of exodus, which meant West Africa. Also Hebrew Israelite leadership asserted that it was necessary for their adherents to be strengthened morally and spiritually by a period of time "in the wilderness" and Liberia could serve that purpose well. An important part of the stay in Liberia seems to have been to inculcate new behaviors that would counter the negative stereotypes Hebew Israelites had internalized about themselves as black Americans. Nasi Hashalom noted that:

Our goal was always to go to the Promised Land. After we got in Liberia, and after that time was accomplished in the wilderness - that we had spent our proper time there to shake off the shackles of Negrotism...

According to the Hebrew Israelites, their goals were accomplished in Liberia. They admit, however, to being confronted with grave difficulties, of having to learn to farm when none of them were farmers, combating infestation of insects and snakes. Moreover, there was the difficulty of the Liberian bureaucracy which to the Hebrew Israelites seemed to move slowly and with some degree of corruption. Perhaps most difficult of all, according to the Hebrew Israelites was the Liberian demand that they assume Liberian citizenship. Nasi Shaliach has said that:

They wanted us to assimilate into the Liberian society so that we wouldn't be grouped up as one group set aside. They called it a group and to them it was a group and we were set aside - a separate force. They just wanted us to become Liberian citizens.

But Liberian citizenship was inconsistent with their reasons for emigrating from the U.S. Hebrew Israelites assert that their identity as Hebrew Israelites is their nationality and Israel is their country.
The dispute between the Liberian authorities and the Hebrew Israelites concerning assimilation and citizenship resulted in a deportation order being issued and later rescinded. According to Shaliach, the quashing of the deportation order was the work of President Tubman who maintained an affection for the Hebrew Israelites despite the conflict Hebrew Israelites had with the Liberian government.

More than 170 Hebrew Israelites have been reported to have resided in Liberia from June of 1967 to December of 1968. In September of 1969, the first group of Hebrew Israelites, 39 in number, arrived in Israel at Lod Airport and asked for admission under the Law of Return.

The move to Israel was undertaken after what seems to have been considerable planning. One of the Hebrew Israelites, Brother H, had left Liberia 18 or 19 months prior to the arrival of the Hebrew Israelites at Lod, to live and work on a kibbutz. According to Nasi Shaliach, Brother H learned to speak Hebrew fluently and also was able to send back reports describing Israel:

He learned the language fluently; he learned the ways and customs of the people that are living in the land presently. He learned a lot about agriculture, about the foods that were available for our diets; just a general scouting he had done. How we could live, the best places for us to live climate wise. He did all these things because he had travelled all the way to the Golan Heights, all the way back to Sinai.

Much of what the Hebrew Israelite scout seems to have learned was used to inspire the Hebrew Israelites in Liberia to continue their quest to return to Israel. There seems to have been no premeditated plan to settle anywhere other than where the Israeli authorities would provide.

As to the matter of their being Jews and asking for entry to Israel
under the Law of Return, there is still some confusion. Hebrew Israelites suggest that they were being very clever in asking for admission under the special law when they arrived in December of 1969 and early in 1970: that they were not claiming to be Jews and if the Israeli authorities did not understand that, it was the latter's error. According to Nasi Shaliach:

Under the Law of Return we are saying that anyone that's a Hebrew, that can prove he's a Hebrew, by nationality, by birth-right, that he don't have to come here and say that he is a Jew. When you refer to Jew you are referring actually to Hebrew.

While the above informant is probably sincere in his interpretation, there is still the question of whether Hebrew Israelites at the time of their arrival in Israel did not still think of themselves as Black Jews, and only since their arrival have developed the definition of Hebrew Israelites. Some Hebrew Israelites, during the first months of their arrival in Israel even began to study for the purpose of undergoing conversion which might suggest that the Hebrew Israelite doctrines were not firmly established. Conversion under Halachic auspices would of course satisfy the question of Jewishness under the Law of Return. However, before conversion took place, the Hebrew Israelite leadership, who had not accompanied the first group to Israel, arrived and rejected becoming Jews.

Since the arrival of the first group of Hebrew Israelites, nearly 200 have come to reside in Israel with all but the initial group illegally living in the country. The presence of these aliens has caused the Israeli authorities considerable concern. Initially considering the black Americans as claimants to the Jewish faith, there was sympathy
for their admission and the decision to admit them provisionally with privileges of immigrants until the religious authorities could settle the question of their Jewishness. Moreover, there was awareness that as black Americans, they had been the target of discrimination and perhaps their color had compounded their problems of being Jewish in an intolerant country. But some sympathy for the Hebrew Israelites began to erode with their expression of their millenarian beliefs, and their charges that Hebrew Israelites and not Jews are the authentic Hebrew people. Relations between Hebrew Israelites and Israelis also deteriorated in Dimona, where most Hebrew Israelites lived, because of cultural and social conflicts. Hebrew Israelites were said to have been noisy neighbors, playing their radios and musical instruments well into the night, disturbing their Israeli neighbors. An altercation between a number of Hebrew Israelites that led to the death of one of their members also discouraged many Israelis who were formerly sympathetic. Lastly, a number of staged demonstrations calculated by the Hebrew Israelites to obtain permission to work and other social/economic benefits were interpreted by many Israelis as Hebrew Israelite efforts to obtain "handouts." In a developing country like Israel, the work ethic is esteemed no less highly than in the U.S., and behaviors on the part of some that are interpreted as "wanting something for nothing" or of obtaining more than their fair share are condemned. Therefore, when Hebrew Israelites filled their shopping carts to the brim in a supermarket, and refused to pay for the food in order to dramatize their need for jobs and income, few Israelis were sympathetic and interpreted the actions of the Hebrew Israelites as attempted theft.
At the time of this writing, Hebrew Israelites continue to remain in Israel buoyed by their return to the holy land. Although seemingly beleaguered as a small minority with few resources, Hebrew Israelites are able to convert adversity into organizational cohesiveness and consequently view their problems, economic and social, as verification of their ideology and identity.

**Ideology/Eschatology:** It seems certain that the ideology/eschatology of the Hebrew Israelites is subject to continuing development. When the two leaders first met they were apparently agreed on wanting to leave the U.S. for Israel. Whether they were Black Jews or Hebrew Israelites seems only to have emerged later. Shaliach recalls that prior to leaving for Liberia, he considered himself and the others as Black Jews.\(^8\) It must be added that others among the Hebrew Israelites considered themselves Black Jews even having arrived in Israel.\(^9\) Hashalom conversely asserts that he has always been aware of his Hebrew Israelite identity. We think that the inconsistency in these statements is resolved by understanding Hebrew Israelite ideology/eschatology as undergoing continuing development and the membership being gradually persuaded.

Hebrew Israelites argue that the "world conspiracy" to conceal from the true Hebrews the knowledge of their identity is the cause of the seeming changes in direction of their beliefs. As they obtain more knowledge of their true selves, all of the pieces of the puzzle will fall into place (Hebrew Israelites assert) and the coherence of their ideology/eschatology will be apparent. Black Judaism, for example, is understood by Hebrew Israelites as a stage of development necessary to experience before becoming aware of their true identity as Hebrew
Israelites. The world would have liked to have deceived Hebrew Israelites into believing that they were Jews but that deceit was discovered, say Hebrew Israelites. And it was necessary to undergo that "deceit," Hebrew Israelites argue, to obtain the awareness of their Hebrew Israelite identity. Black Judaism is to be rejected now because it is only a religion. Hebrew Israelite is a nationality.

Hebrew Israelites argue that they are a nation (not a religion) whose identity, culture, history, language has been stolen by others who were jealous of their special relationship with God as his "chosen people." Those who stole their identity have adopted the name Jews, and have had the collaboration of the rest of the world in a conspiracy to conceal the identity of the true Hebrew people. According to Nasi M:

Racist history began right after the dark ages. Everything that was good turned white, and everything that was bad turned black. And this didn't happen by accident. We may look at it and say it is very trite; angel food is white, devil's food is black. If you have had a hard time it has been a black day. If somebody is doing something wrong, it is blackmail. And so on and on and on. So there was a conspiracy by the world powers to make black negative, and once black became a negative factor in the world, that meant that God had to go from black to white also. For you see, that even in this day and time there are black madonnas in the European cities; Poland, France, representing the true image of the messiah and the mother of the messiah. But why did he turn black to white in the last few hundred years? In order that the white world, that the European powers may dominate completely. They had to change the God to fit their needs, to suit their needs to make them comfortable. So they had to make everything above the Sahara white, or Middle East or Asia Minor, and everything below the Sahara black and dirty. And that way they could always maintain that Jesus, their Christ, their Messiah, was not black but he came from a white kind of background, a white kind of structure. Now by doing that, it put the European world, the Eastern and Western powers in a position of complete authority over the complete black world by saying that God, the one we're going to make you serve, is a white man; and that you must be completely submissive to all white men because God comes out
of the midst of us. And it worked up until this day. So you see that the whole world bows down to the images of a blond blue eyed Jesus in America, to project the image of whiteness.

Hebrew Israelites explain that their adversaries were able to gain dominance over them because their Hebrew Israelite forefathers did not keep "the law," and for violation of his law, God allowed the diaspora that scattered Hebrews all over the world and subjected them to the gentile (non-Hebrew Israelite) conspiracy that included loss of identity and slavery. Nasi M explained the law:

The Law is this: 'Hear O Israel thy God is one, and thou shall love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and soul, and thy neighbor as thyself.' This is the law what we speak about. The laws that are written in the books: thy shall not steal, thy shall not commit adultery; these are built in factors of our spirit. We don't adhere to righteousness because it is written. We adhere to righteousness because it must be; and so when we speak about the law, I am speaking about the two things that I just mentioned. Now understanding that in the nation there are other aspects of the law. What you should or should not do that governs the nation, but we are not bound by those laws that Jewish people say that they adhere to and are written in the first five books of the law. We are bound by the Spirit of those Laws, but not by the letter of those laws, because if the laws were taken off the books, I still would not steal from you.

Nasi Shaliach has said:

Ancient Israel fell because of non-adherence to written law. See, all these written laws, I don't know how many there are, some say 600, some say 700, all that don't make any difference, but whatever amount of laws there were, the downfall of Israel was because she did not adhere to the written laws. For this goes back to inner man again, the spirit that we are referring to. You can keep the written law there all you want... but if we take the written law from you what will you demonstrate then... are you keeping the written law because it is written 'thou shall not steal', or are you keeping it because in your heart you just don't want to steal. This is the fact that we are dwelling on.

As a nation, the preaching has always been here. But we couldn't come together as a nation because the curse was upon us. At the end of the final chatisement in 1863, but the bondage
really stopped in 1845, that was the end of the 400 year period ... 1445. That was when the first slaves were taken from the continent of Africa into Portugal, and Frederick Douglass was the sign of the end of the captivity as he began to preach completely against slavery. Lincoln only physically broke the bondage, but the bonds had been broke with Frederick Douglass.

Right after that Israel began to nationalize itself again and want to come together as a nation. You had all kinds of movements.

You couldn't do anything with these chosen people. The Colonization Society established Liberia for the sole purpose of freeing the so-called slave. It didn't work. Delaney and Campbell started an exposition, the Niagara movement, other movements down in South America to move the ex-slaves down there. None of these worked. Why? Because a Divine Spirit had been placed upon these people to fulfill certain things in history. And it could not be fulfilled no other place but in America, which would become the richest and greatest country that the world, modern world produced. And if America had to become number one, that meant its black people had to be number one black people in the world, for bar no people in the world, we are the smartest black people in the world, and now we are the smartest people in the world.

**Question:** Why the connection between the United States and its technological progress and the Hebrew Israelites?

In order for the chosen people never to be duped, taken in by idolatry or follow false doctrines or gods again, they had to be in the place where every imaginable form of idolatry would be practiced and the highest technological society would be practiced, the highest intelligence would be produced so that they would know all things. You see our brothers on the continent of Africa are still being duped by Europeans; they are still convinced that modern technology is the salvation for their people, where we know that cigarette smoking, whiskey drinking, still-producing plants, plastics, "corning ware," all these so-called modern trinkets are the things that are killing man. We know that, but they don't know that yet. That's why we had to be placed in America so that we could never be taken in again by the trinkets that once deceived us before, by the thirty pieces of silver. You see money has no value to us. We come out of a place where money was supposed to be the greatest; but we recognized it for what it was and saw it for what it really is, so now we are not concerned about money.

However, Hebrew Israelites say that their God promised them redemption, i.e., that the Hebrew Israelites would regain the knowledge
of their identity, be restored their nation, language and culture after an apocalyptic war of Armageddon that will destroy evil and restore Hebrew Israelites to God's favor and world leadership. Nasi Hashalom asserts that the Hebrew Israelites are the children of Israel. Accepting us as the overseers of the coming world will only happen after direct intervention through the Almighty God's people, and plagues --- it will be a battle. But you see, in reading in scriptures about the coming battle between good and bad, right and wrong, God and the devil; it means that that is talking about people. The devil is represented upon this earth by wickedness and wicked people who follow after wicked principles. The Almighty God is represented by people who follow righteous principles. So when the great battle comes it will be that the devil manifests himself through his wicked interventions, airplanes, tanks and what-nots, and the Almighty God fighting back the devil through his great manifestations and through his power, divine power. This is going to happen in the very near future. What is happening is that the great battle, sometimes called Armageddon is shaping up. After this great battle, finally Gentiles are going to see that we are the people of the almighty God. But they're not going to do it just like that. But great manifestations and great plagues are ahead in the coming days, weeks and months upon this present world system beginning very soon now.

So it's going to be a war like a war that has never been, and never shall be again between Almighty God and satan. And at that time you will see the people of the Almighty God wielding the power, the divine power of the most high, because He will land, he will come down in his power and manifest himself on his people.

The year of the millenium, what the Hebrew Israelites term the year of the Kingdom of God, is calculated to be 1977. About the events that will precede the catastrophes, pestilence, famine, and the final Armageddon -- Hebrew Israelites are, for the most part, definitive in description. But the social, political, economic organization that will emerge after the fulfillment of the "prophecy" receives vague treatment. Here Hebrew Israelites find relief and satisfaction
by affirming that the new period will be a "divine" or heavenly period devoid of strife.

To prepare the way for the cataclysmic event of 1977, Hebrew Israelites say that they have returned to Israel to establish the Kingdom of God. The difference between the Kingdom now and the future will be that then the Kingdom will be in its glory, and Hebrew Israelites will be acknowledged as the chosen people by the world. According to Nasi Hashalom:

1977 is the date when the Kingdom of God will be in its glory at Jerusalem. But the Kingdom of God has already come. Salvation has come to man, and it has come through the Kingdom of God being established in Israel. Now the Kingdom of God is about the business of moving on into its glory. See. the Kingdom of God is not in its glory at this time, and the Kingdom of God is suffering violence at this time. But it is moving on now toward its glory, and 1977 is the climax when it will be in glory and be at Jerusalem, recognized by the governments of the world, known to the governments of the world that it is here in its glory.

In other words, where it will be accepted. The Kingdom of God is here now, but the world has a tendency where they can get around this. But through the great manifestations which will come between now and 1977, and plagues, and what—not, the manifestation of Almighty God upon his kingdom and upon his people – then the world will have to acknowledge these are the people of Almighty God, this is His government or His Kingdom. And then, when this is acknowledged, then the Father will be able to have His glory and His people will be able to share in the glory of the Almighty God. At this time, the world has not acknowledged that we are the people; the world has not acknowledged the Almighty God; and they have not acknowledged that they are going to have to worship and accept Hebrew Israelite Kingdom that is at Jerusalem. At that time they will acknowledge that.

But to repeat, Hebrew Israelites have an unbounded faith that the details of world organizational management will be easily accomplished after the advent of the Kingdom. No problems need ever surface as such with God on their side.
Rituals and Practices: Hebrew Israelites argue that religious rituals and practices are unimportant in their worship. More significant, they say, is an inner devotion which is more appropriate than "Letter compliance" with religious law to satisfy the demands of their God.\textsuperscript{10} It is what the Hebrew Israelites term "by the Spirit." It is the same Spirit, Hebrew Israelites argue, that determines who is an Hebrew Israelite and who is not. The purpose of this assertion is to counter the criticisms of their disclaimants who argue that Hebrew Israelite ritual and practices do not support Hebrew Israelite claims and at best Hebrew Israelite ritual is a dilution of Jewish practices. Also, the Hebrew Israelites' assertion provides its own membership with a rationale for the primacy of its claims.

Hebrew Israelites have few religious rituals and practices, and those they do observe have Judeo-Christian elements. 1. They do not keep kosher; however, they are vegetarians. According to Nasi Shaliach:

We're often asked about are we kosher. I think kosher means clean. Right? Clean foods, or whatever it may be. It's clean clothing, etc. Going back to the religious doctrine of Judaism again. Just eating kosher food won't save you now, or being a vegetarian won't save you. One of the famous vegetarians in America, Mr. Bragg - I think he's out in California - a man up in his early 90's, introduced many Americans to become vegetarians. But it's not saving them because you eat vegetables. If you don't eat it according to the Spirit. People have been trying to become vegetarians and gain eternal life or eternal youth for thousands of years, but they haven't gained it. So just to become a vegetarian, Kosher, that don't do anything for you. If you're not born by the Spirit you're dead anyway. So just being vegetarians, that not enough. Kosher -- there you're talking about draining the blood from meat. We're talking about eating vegetables all day and fruits. That still won't save you. This will create within you a better mind for thinking, and a clean mind will help you do clean things, and a clean mind can allow a clean spirit to dwell within oneself. But it's all according to the Spirit; if you
don't think right, if you're not right, then I don't care how you eat, it won't save you none. So you have to eat according to the Spirit. So kosher or vegetarian or what have you. But we are vegetarians. We recommend one to abstain from meats because you are taking one's life. You kill a chicken, you kill a swine, you kill a cow or whatever have you. Everything has a right to live. The fish in the sea have a right to multiply in the sea, and reproduce himself. The whole world, the whole planet is water. So there's not enough fish. You can just keep on having fish. We recommend that all creation live and go free. I don't want to take anything's life because I don't want to take your life, and don't want anyone to take my life, and I don't want to take the life of anything else -- birds, chickens or whatever have you.

2. There is no ceremony to recognize the passing of a male or female child into adulthood; i.e., no Bar Mitzvah or Bat Mitzvah. The only acknowledgement according to Nasi Shaliach is a

... spiritual understanding. Yes. Let's use some of the boys you are familiar with here in Dimona. Let's use Natan Katan. And let's use Mikeal. You always see them together. Mikeal is much older than Natan Katan. But in the age as far as 17 years, 18 years, etc. as far as the age of an individual. But in the Spirit Mikeal is a boy compared to Natan Katan. So, we recognize Natan Katan by his Spirit. And we recognize Mikeal by his Spirit also. So that goes to show us that age doesn't mean anything. So let's say if Bar Mitzvah is 13 years old, 12 or 13 years old, or something around that age bracket when he becomes into another category age-wise, then if it would be like that, then what would we do with Mikeal? And this is world-wide.

3. Men and women are informally segregated during ritual worship and generally in community activities. Nasi Shaliach said this is done because it helps bring about respect. Going back to the feelings again, I just don't feel to be around Schmoor's isha, and Nasi Gabriel Gadol's isha, and my isha when they are sitting knitting, playing cards, playing pakino. I don't feel to be there. Even if Schmoor and I, yourself were there I still wouldn't feel to be there, except it was another type of social gathering. If we were sitting sipping yayin, talking about some event or events, someone reading from a book, or someone had something interesting in the paper, this would be a different thing. But to sit around women and watch them play games, we just don't feel to be around them like that. But as far as taking some of the Sisters for a walk on Shabbat out
to the mountains or in the park, I'll do that, we'll do that. We go up to Jerusalem, Tel Aviv. There's nothing wrong with that. Take them out to vegetarian restaurants.

This goes back to that feeling again. Not that a man is barred from sitting at the Shabbat service with a woman, but this just comes automatically. There is no restrictions, other than Spirit, the convictions of one's own conscience.

4. Holy days, e.g., Pesach, Sukkot, Shavuot and Yom Kippur are not obliged to be observed by Hebrew Israelites, and they assert that the holy days are memorials, of less importance for devotional acts for Hebrew Israelites than for Jews.

5. Male children are circumcized.

6. Polygyny is practiced.

7. Hebrew Israelite men wear a hat at all times.

Shabbat ritual: For Hebrew Israelites, Shabbat, Saturday and the seventh day, is a day of rest and an opportunity to replenish and re-suscitate the body after six days of work. The stress here is on rest and many activities considered recreational and non-work by non-Hebrew Israelites (e.g., children's games, athletic activities, excursions) may not be enjoyed by Hebrew Israelites because they are considered too strenuous. Perhaps more important to Hebrew Israelites is the requirement to keep the Sabbath a holy day and if some activities may reasonably be considered non-work and not too strenuous, their performance, however, on the Sabbath day may be considered to defile the holy day. As a rule Hebrew Israelites remain in their houses on the Sabbath, unless they attend the Shabbat service. In their homes, they fast from sundown of the sixth day until sundown of the seventh, making sure also not to perform any tasks that may be interpreted as work.
The Shabbat service was regularly attended by 50 or more men, women and children. Apparently there is little formal pressure for attendance at these services. The Sabbath being the activity-less day that it is perhaps prompts some to attend the service as a recreational outlet. Even so, the atmosphere at this service is subdued, quiet, and not overly charged with emotion. Hebrew Israelites are restrained in their expression of religious devotion and even the spontaneous exclamations of "Amen," interspersed with an occasional KEN have an aura of reserve.

After filing into the basement room of an apartment house used by the Hebrew Israelites for many different kinds of community and educational programs, men and women segregate themselves and sit on the rough hewn benches made by an Hebrew Israelite carpenter. The narrow room is arranged like a theater, with two rows of benches and only a narrow aisle in the middle to allow passage from the back to the front of the room. At the front of the room behind a make-shift podium, one of the Hebrew Israelites will lead the service. Any Hebrew Israelite man may lead a service and all are asked at some point to do so. However, leading a service is not obligatory nor a specific honor, and one may decline the opportunity. Usually an Hebrew Israelite man is given advance notice of an appointed Shabbat he will conduct, but it is not irregular for a man to be asked to lead the service on the same day.

Although there is no codified ritual for the Shabbat service, a ritual form has emerged over time which Hebrew Israelites more or less observe in their worship. In the subdued quiet mentioned above, one has the impression of an informal meeting. The service begins with
a prayer in Hebrew spoken by the leader and the members of the congregation standing with their heads bowed. The prayer is familiar to the congregation and many who do not speak Hebrew have memorized the words and speak in unison with the service leader. At the conclusion of the prayer the congregation is seated and the sermon's topic is announced and begun. Some typical topics for sermons included an appeal to Hebrew Israelites to close ranks for more solidarity, and, a scathing criticism of those Hebrew Israelites who are unable to break their ties with the U.S., entitled "Where are You?"

In delivering the sermon, the service leader is usually aided by another Hebrew Israelite man who reads aloud selected passages from the Old Testament, while the service leader interprets and comments interpretatively on the passage read, and relates the Biblical material to the day's topic. As we mentioned above, it is not uncommon for the congregation to comment with "Amens" or "Kens", but in a reserved manner.

At one service we observed the leader departing from the form mentioned above, reading a long Biblical passage in Hebrew aloud. When he finished he mildly scolded the congregation who had not understood and urged them to devote themselves more to the study of "their" language - Hebrew.

Sometimes the sermon is interrupted for a hymn to be sung (in English) in chorus or individually. At the conclusion of the sermon, the congregants are offered an opportunity for individual self-expression. Here one or more of the congregants may rise to amplify or support the sermon given that day or before. It is also not unusual for one or
more of the members to sing either a hymn or popular song deemed relevant to the Hebrew Israelite experience. For example, "Wade in the Water," "Lucky Ole Sun," "Joshua Fit De Battle," and "Taste of Honey." Interestingly, many of the spirituals sung have been translated into Hebrew. During this latter portion of the service, both adults and children participate, the latter in particular, in the singing.

While singing was sometimes unaccompanied by musical instruments, normally a guitar and/or bass was used for support. This portion of the service signaled the end of the service. There may be a few announcements of community interests, meetings of committees or changes of school schedules for example, and then a concluding prayer "Sh'ma Israel" said with the hands and arms outstretched above the head and facing towards Jerusalem.

The service lasts ninety minutes or so, hardly ever two hours. While Hebrew Israelites are conscious of punctuality, Shabbat services rarely begin on the appointed hour, around 2 or 3 p.m. At the conclusion of services, the congregants usually file out to their homes in anticipation of sundown and the breaking of the fast.

Not unusually, Saturday evening is celebrated with a party. Here there is often some fund raising activity with a small price charged for food and drink, and the proceeds going to the Hebrew Israelite schools. Hebrew Israelites may not drink hard liquor, but wines in moderation are not prohibited. Entertainment is usually offered, and since some of the Hebrew Israelites were formerly entertainers, their singing and dancing is always appreciated. Otherwise, Hebrew
Israelites enjoy themselves dancing or in mutual conversation.

**Culture: language and dress.** Hebrew Israelites explain that their clothing is calculated to make them readily identifiable but does not represent an effort to revive a period of their past. (Women too, keep their heads covered with wrapping or turban-like hats that seem to reflect the influence of the Hebrew Israelite stay in Africa.) Hebrew Israelites also say that there is no ritual law that mandates the wearing of clothing for worship.

Hebrew Israelites are conspicuous by their dress. Both men and women wear bright, gay colored clothing. The men are usually seen in a dashiki-like shirt worn over colored trousers, with their heads covered with a pill-box hat, turban or wool stocking-like cap pulled severely down to the ears. Sometimes the dashiki garment extends to below the knees and resembles a djelabbah.

Women similarly wear their heads covered with a wrapping of a fashion that resembles a tall cone and sometimes a turban. Dresses always extend to the ankles and are modestly fastened at the neck.

Hebrew Israelites explain they have designed their clothing to distinguish them as a people and not to comply with any ritual law:

According to Nasi A:

We are concerned that we don't look like everybody else right now. It is very important that they know the difference between an American Negro or black man and Hebrew Israelite in this land. So if we dressed like everybody else we would be lost in the midst of that. It is very important that they know and see the people of "the land" and so by dressing in a certain manner it gets them acclimated to seeing who the people are and what the people are all about. That way they don't make any mistakes about the things they say to you and do to you.
So that is why we are strict in terms of the dress. But it has nothing to do with "the Law." I want to say that so that you'll understand that as we return back to ourselves in terms of our own culture and our own nation, we create those institutions that are possible for us.

Hebrew Israelites explain that their dress, like other cultural elements they have assumed -- greeting one another for example -- are an effort to strip themselves of an alien culture, and to adopt those more representative of their identity as Hebrew Israelites. Nasi M has said that Hebrew Israelite culture is

...an outgrowth of a feeling again, a combination of the free spirit, and this is how it develops. Our greeting is a traditional greeting in Africa, of black men greeting each other in a warm and friendly manner. What you find in this greeting is that you feel people. American makes it very cold and impersonal grabbing a hand and keeping at a distance. But there is something about embracing people that makes you humble. What we try to do at all times is to extend love, so that our greeting is an extension of an inner feeling.

Our dress is a creation of our own minds. No one sat down and said that you have to wear a long dress or that kind of shirt; because we told our women, our designers, we want our own clothes; if it looks like the clothes of the world we want you to design it and put one more button hole in it, or one more button on the sleeve, but I want your mind to create all the things that are pleasurable to you.

We are going about controlling our own destiny and our own lives and our own culture relative to our expression. The same thing with our music. Once a black entertainer becomes popular in the U.S. he has to sing for white people, he can't sing for black people. He has to sing Broadway tunes, he can't sing B.B. King... I'm saying that everything is put back into our hands relative to our whole culture and lives... We are about the business of creating a new something... a new creation altogether.

According to Hebrew Israelites, Hebrew is their national language. Nevertheless, few Hebrew Israelites speak or read Hebrew fluently. In part the lack of fluency is due to the insularity of the group. They are a "closed group" have few dealings with Hebrew speaking Israelis
and can consequently rely on English for most of their daily intercourse with each other. The necessity of speaking Hebrew is rarely encountered by most Hebrew Israeliite women. They are housewives, and aside from commercial interaction with shop keepers, do not come in contact with Israelis or count them among their associates and friends. Hebrew Israeliite men are similar, except that since they must work for income they do come into contact with Israelis more often, and are more fluent in the language. Hebrew Israeliite children as a group are more fluent than their parents in Hebrew. They are taught in the Hebrew Israeliite school in the language and have had to cope with Hebrew also as a value that Hebrew Israeliite society reveres. Even within the "closed society" of the Hebrew Israeliites, it is not uncommon to hear the children in conversation in Hebrew.

Some Hebrew Israeliites, a very small few, were familiar with Hebrew before they arrived in Israel. Perhaps this entire group would assert they used many familiar Hebrew phrases such as shalom, aba, ken, and so on, before they arrived in Israel. Nevertheless, most Hebrew Israeliites had their first sustained language training in Hebrew in Israel, but because of the conflict in their residence status, have also had difficulty in attending classes. Two of Dimona's language training Ulpanas are residence Ulpanas for Jewish immigrants and students are assigned to them by immigration authorities. Since most Hebrew Israeliites reside in Israel illegally and have not been processed through the immigration bureaucracy, the Dimona Ulpanas will not accept them, claiming they are unauthorized to do so.
Recruitment: Hebrew Israelites have no active organized program of recruitment. Hebrew Israelites do not seek or solicit new recruits to the Nation as a part of a conscious deliberate effort to increase Hebrew Israelite membership. However, new recruits have been obtained in the U.S. through the informal efforts of each of the Nation's members. Every Hebrew Israelite interviewed revealed that he had heard of the Nation first through a friend or a relative, and after questioning this associate had had either access to Hebrew Israelite leadership directly or attended a meeting where Hebrew Israelite beliefs were discussed. Four Hebrew Israelites said:

Sister E:
At that time I was dating my husband... and he told me about the Hebrew Israelites.

Sister C:
My uncle ... was the first one of the family to become affiliated with the Hebrew Israelites.

Sister D:
A friend of mine that I had known a lot of years, she went to visit my sister in California and she came back to Chicago and talked with me. When I called here, I called her to find out about her trip to California. But when I talked to her, she was telling me about Hebrew Israelites.

Brother I:
I was going with _____ and one day she told me, "I'm going to Israel." She dared me to come down and check out the meetings. So I finally came down and met Nasi.

As Hebrew Israelites describe how they were introduced to the Nation, they express a sense of confidence and reassurance because their introduction was due to face-to-face interaction with a friend or relative, and not as a result of a recruitment organizational drive. Hebrew Israelites are quick to say that their membership in the Nation is unlike organizational membership, i.e., they did not enlist or join the Nation. Similarly, they insist that their membership cannot
be understood as their having recently acquired new citizenship.

They were and always have been Hebrew Israelites, they assert.

The knowledge of their identity was withheld from them by their oppressors, but now they have discovered the truth. In this regard, two Hebrew Israelites remarked:

*Sister G:*

The question - "When did you join the Nation?" I didn't like the question...because it is not a matter of joining the Nation. I was born what I am, and I came into the knowledge of it about ten years ago.

*Nasi M:*

You don't become a Hebrew Israelite, you just recognize the fact that Hebrew Israelites are black people in America who are called Afro-Americans, Negroes and such... it's something that you are. A Chinese-American if he never recognized his Chinese origin is not important, but the fact that he is Chinese is always going to hang on him. Now he can practice Americanism to it a degree, but he's still a Chinese. That is the same thing with black Americans. We are Hebrew Israelites, whether we even practice or recognize its fact, our culture and identity.

Hebrew Israelites believe that there is a growing awareness, a "consciousness raising" taking place among black Americans that is revealing to them that they are Hebrew Israelites. Those black Americans who become aware of their Hebrew Israelite identity will want to return to Israel, Hebrew Israelites feel. Hebrew Israelites also think that in the "consciousness awakening" some may not grasp the full meaning of the "signs" and indeed may misinterpret them. So, for example, when Hebrew Israelites learn that there are any black Americans in Israel they try to visit and speak with them, hoping to help "those who need help in understanding the signs, and hoping also that these will have regained their "true identity" and have come to be with the Hebrew Israelites in Israel. Hebrew Israelites also reason that some of the black
visitors to Israel have an imperfect understanding of "the signs" and may believe that they are only tourists in Israel, when actually they are being exposed by the Hebrew Israelite God to the knowledge of their true identity. Here Hebrew Israelites hope that their contact with black American visitors will aid the latter in interpreting accurately who they are. "My sheep will hear my voice," reasons Hashalom and other Hebrew Israelites when they are unsuccessful in convincing the black Americans met in Israel. That is, either the person was not a true Hebrew Israelite or he was not ready to leave Babylon (U.S.A.) because his consciousness awakening was not complete.

There is a sense of elitism among Hebrew Israelites in Israel. They are as self-defined, the nucleus of the Kingdom of God that will come into being in 1977. And they have come to this awareness despite their adversaries and long before the masses of Hebrew Israelite Afro-Americans in the United States. Hebrew Israelites imply that those black visitors to Israel that reject their overtures were never meant to be the governors of the prophesied kingdom. Also, those among their ranks who leave Israel and return to the U.S., Hebrew Israelites say, leave the Nation a Stronger and more unified group: having "weeded the chaff from the wheat."

Hebrew Israelites take pride on what they feel is the heterogeneity of their membership. Indeed, their supposed variety is another of the proofs to Hebrew Israelites that they are the Hebrew people: according to Hebrew Israelites their membership represents no single stratum of the black American population. They are, Hebrew Israelites understand,
of various economic, social and occupational backgrounds. Moreover, in discussions of their past Hebrew Israelites present an image of themselves as having been integrated within the economic mainstream of American society. Many boast of their former worldly possessions - automobiles, color televisions, homes, bank accounts, and assert that they had "made it in America." When speaking in this manner, Hebrew Israelites are with pride, stating another of their proofs regarding their faith: Why would they sacrifice their long sought for material wealth if they were not the "true Hebrew people."

The findings and observations reported here indicate that Hebrew Israelites are the heterogeneous and diverse population they believe, do obtain about them. For example, many Hebrew Israelites are the sons and daughters of parents who emigrated from southern states to settle in Chicago. The Socio-economic data chart in the Appendix indicates that among those whom we interviewed, fourteen were born in southern states:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birth Place</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thirteen were born in eastern or mid-western states:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Birth Place</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Jersey</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>13</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two Hebrew Israelites did not disclose their birthplaces. From my observation and discussion with other Hebrew Israelites who did not complete the in-depth interview, their birth places were patterned similarly as those above.

Hebrew Israelites described their parents, for the most part, as employed at different times in a variety of working class occupations. Some fathers had worked as laborers, factory workers, mill workers, construction workers, mailmen and meatpackers; others had been farmers and share croppers. Only two Hebrew Israelites reported that their fathers had owned their own businesses: one had been a caterer and another had owned a grocery store. One Hebrew Israelite described his family circumstances as middle class: Brother G's father had been a building inspector and his mother a school teacher. The mothers of Hebrew Israelites were described by them in our interviews as dividing their time between two occupations: working primarily as domestic servants and occasionally being housewives. Only one mother, noted above, was reported as having a professional occupation. In my observations and discussions with those Hebrew Israelites not interviewed
in depth, the pattern of employment of Hebrew Israelite parents noted above also seem to obtain.

As children, Hebrew Israelites noted that the church, usually a Baptist church was a focus for family social, recreational and spiritual activity. Sister G said for example:

We were always crazy about the church. I was a Baptist and I went to church every Sunday and during the week. We were crazy about religious singers... we were just crazy about the church, due to the fact that we sang in the choir and we were just brought up this way.

Hebrew Israelites recall attending and having membership in a variety of religious denominations at different times in their lives. Many had been Baptist, Methodists, Lutherans and some had been Roman Catholics. Table I in the Appendix notes in detail the various religious affiliations formerly held by those Hebrew Israelites who were interviewed.

Many Hebrew Israelites affirm that while the church played an important role in their earlier lives, their religious and moral training had not been severe or rigid. Indeed, some Hebrew Israelites expressed considerable mistrust and undisguised contempt for the Church and their earlier religious experiences. For example, Sister G noted:

The churches don't contribute anything to black people. They just keep their eyes closed mostly.

And Sister E noted:

I knew religion wasn't the right thing for me because it didn't fulfill the needs that I had; it didn't answer the questions that I needed to know. So religion was inadequate for me. [I had questions] about the role of the church in modern society... I never received the answers that I needed to receive...

Rather than galvanizing black Americans into a revolutionary effort for emmancipation, the Church is understood by many Hebrew Israelites as
having seduced blacks into passivity by accommodation, preaching
other worldly solutions to the black man's material problems and worse,
having concealed the true identity of black Americans.

Six Hebrew Israelites claimed to have graduated from college with
Bachelor of Arts degrees and one claimed to have a degree in engineering.
According to these Hebrew Israelites, they obtained their degrees at
the following schools?

Sister E Indiana University
Brother G University of Nebraska
Brother E Valpariso University
Brother L West Illinois University
Brother M De Paul University
Brother Z The City College of New York

I observed that many, if not most Hebrew Israelites have completed high
school and some of these have obtained further education in community
colleges and technical schools. The Appendix provides data of
the educational experience of each Hebrew Israelite interviewed. The
chart below summarizes the educational experience of those who were
interviewed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew Israelite Educational Experience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hebrew Israelite</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 29

Hebrew Israelites are ambivalent in their attitudes towards formal
education and intellectual activity. They will often boast of the
academic achievements of Hebrew Israelites who are college graduates.
On other occasions they will be emphatic in their rejection of formal
education as a means or instrument of knowledge. In these latter instances, Hebrew Israelites assert three points: education has not assured the social, economic or political success of black people because racism is an ever present determinant. Intellectual activity, theory and abstraction are of little worth because it doesn't provide immediate social benefit. (Some of the Hebrew Israelites who have had formal academic experience complain that they have been handicapped in not being trained in more pragmatic mechanical or technical skills that they could have utilized in Liberia.) More more important, they feel that education is a serious impediment to acceptance of their ideology.

Hebrew Israelites informed me that they had worked at many different occupations at different times in their lives. This assertion was usually proudly said since it indicated that the Hebrew Israelite felt that he or she possessed more than one marketable job skill. Among those occupations named by those who were interviewed were included musician, printer, and air traffic controller among the men; and teacher, office clerk and nurse's aid among the women. The Socio-economic data chart in the Appendix lists all the former occupations of those Hebrew Israelites interviewed.

By their own assessment many Hebrew Israelites have had rather stable and uninterrupted job experience as well as sufficient income for their needs. In this respect Hebrew Israelites have been unlike the vast number of black underclass in American cities who have been less fortunate. This does not mean, however, that Hebrew Israelites have not been subject to discrimination. On the contrary, Hebrew Israelites as black men
and women in America have faced both subtle and overt discrimination and are particularly emphatic in describing those experiences. Indeed, much of their material success is described by Hebrew Israelites as tokenism or the workings of American society that has forced a more insidious and malevolent way of suppressing its black minority.

The rewards for Hebrew Israelite membership stated above seem to be mostly along a psychological rather than real dimensions. That is to say, that the benefits that accrue to the Hebrew Israelite individual are subjectively determined. Certainly, Hebrew Israelites receive some psychic and emotional rewards for their membership in the Nation. For example, most Hebrew Israelites have commented at length at their felt satisfaction in shedding their "slave name" for their Hebrew name.

Brother 0 noted:

I feel it's a Gentile name former American name. My parents when they gave it to me weren't aware, so its just a Gentile name. I feel better with my name Hebrew Israelite name, because that's me, that's the real me.

Moreover, Hebrew Israelites have commented also on their felt satisfaction of Hebrew Israelite solidarity and sense of community, an element they felt was lacking among themselves as black Americans.

Along this same psychological dimension it might also be argued that membership in the Nation primarily offers an opportunity for "catharsis" for those who otherwise would have no other outlet. This view understands members of groups like the Hebrew Israelites as having been denied access to other legitimate forms of social protest and finding refuge in "alternative" organizations like cult groups. These
offer an opportunity to express and "act out" frustrations.

Simultaneously, alternative organizations usually provide opportunities for social mobility otherwise denied membership. For Hebrew Israelites the alternative view only partially obtains. Hebrew Israelites, for example, deliberately avoid the emotive or expressive in the practice of their beliefs and worship. In sharp contrast to revivalists, the Hebrew Israelites are subdued. Also, the modest material wealth and limited opportunity for achieved leadership in a setting where charisma is preferred is not a powerful inducement to membership, at least not in the present arrangement.

But there are real and tangible rewards that have accrued to the Hebrew Israelites as a result of membership in the Nation. For example, most have expressed their satisfaction in emigrating from the black ghetto in Chicago to the small development town of Dimona in Israel. No longer, they comment, are they and their families targets for criminal and other social deviants' acts.

More important to Hebrew Israelites, however, is the consequence of the millenial event that is expected in 1977 for it will be at that time when the full material benefits are expected. Hebrew Israelites believe that a major world conflagration, or Armageddon, will bring about chaos and destruction of the world. But out of this destruction will emerge the state of Israel under the direction and leadership of Hebrew Israelites who will be entrusted the task by their God of bringing order out of the confusion. Then Hebrew Israelites believe, as ministers in the "Kingdom of God" they will receive honors, rewards and deference as they go about their work of restoring the world.
In their view of the future, Hebrew Israelites are uncompromising about their material aspirations. They expect to be fully recompensed by their God especially in view of their present limited means and their pietistic and ascetic practices. Of course, the Hebrew Israelite hope of achieving material rewards in the future are inconsistent with Hebrew Israelite ideals of simplicity, sharing, and avoidance of accumulation of wealth. And it is not always apparent that Hebrew Israelites are aware of the inconsistencies or if they were, whether their aspirations would be altered.

**Organization:** Hebrew Israelites have a minimum of organizational structure. Indeed, they are highly distrustful of organization and assert that a paucity of structure is another "proof" of their claims. Hebrew Israelites ask: how else but through divine support could a people without resources or organization emigrate from the U.S. to Liberia to Israel and endure hardships. To the Hebrew Israelite, the answer is obvious. In their distrust of organization, Hebrew Israelites particularly point the finger of blame at social welfare, private and voluntary, as well as civil rights groups and political parties asserting that these were always agencies for personal aggrandizement and at best assisted a small few blacks in overcoming adversity.

There are 12 Nasim that make up a Council of Elders, including Nasi Shalom and Shaliach. According to the Hebrew Israelites, each of the Nasim symbolically represent one of the twelve Hebrew tribes. Each of the Nasim has been chosen by Nasi Hashalom. The Council of Elders is concerned with all matters that pertain to Hebrew Israelites and
decisions are to be arrived at through consensus rather than a majority. According to Hebrew Israelites theirs is a theocracy, one that will be sufficient in 1977 to rule the earth. According to Nasi Hashalom:

...And that scripture might be fulfilled there are princes sitting in judgment over the Nation. And as it is written they are called Nasim, but one time they were called Talmidin, or students. At one time they were called Shlichim, or messengers. And for this period of time they are called Nasim. What I am saying is that as it is written it says that "and when the son of man comes in the regeneration of the son of man you twelve shall sit at my side, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." So there are twelve Nasim. You see, what you have here is that you're sitting in the midst of the Bible; living in the midst of the Bible in this land, amidst these people. Your're living right now during the same period of time which is recorded in history 2,000 years ago, when the Children of Israel were in the land, under foreign captivity, under bondage of foreign rulership.

Some taks have been identified and authority delegated to "other brothers" by the Council members. Since the Hebrew Israelites consider themselves a Nation, the delegated responsibilities are seen as portfolios or ministries. For example, there exist ministries of Education and Foreign Affairs. Other lesser responsibilities include transportation and music.

We noted that the Council that acts as the governing body for Hebrew Israelites was appointed by Nasi Hashalom. That this body is not democratically elected is of no concern to Hebrew Israelites since they consider the appointments divinely inspired. As for the matter of the Council arriving at consensus to settle the Nation's business, we have no substantive evidence to the contrary, for we were not allowed to observe this group. However, understanding the charismatic nature of the leadership of the Nation, it is plausible to assume that the Council
is subservient to the wishes of Nasi Hashalom and Shaliach.

The Nation's Finances: The Nation has access to limited financial resources. These include contributions made by friends and relatives from the U.S., a tithe levied against all the Nation's members who are working; and income obtained from concerts, weddings and other social engagements where the Hebrew Israelite band and dance group perform. From time to time other income is obtained by the efforts of Hebrew Israelites working individually or in collaboration, selling handicrafts or cake and food sales.

The absence of abundant financial resources does not seem to seriously dampen the activities or morale of Hebrew Israelites. We noted above that there is little organizational structure and consequently few expenses are needed for organization operation. Too, the Hebrew Israelites often act to raise money on an "as needed" basis: when the occasion demanded, Hebrew Israelite resources were marshalled, the membership solicited and small fund-raising activities initiated. The result is to produce the monies needed. For example, at the beginning of the 1973 school year, the Hebrew Israelite school needed writing supplies for the children (notebooks, paper, pen and pencils). The monies for these needs were obtained when an education committee of Hebrew Israelite women held a party and charged the faithful for attendance, food and drink.

Moreover, there is the explicit and implicit pressure to share all resources as a people impoverished. Communal sharing of assets allows Hebrew Israelites to cope with the economic problems collectively.
During the period of field research, we estimated that more than 150 people were sharing twelve small apartments in Dimona. Crowding of the rest of the Hebrew Israelites who lived in Mitzpeh Ramon was also as severe. Because they have little income, they cannot afford to purchase or rent additional dwellings, and since Hebrew Israelites are not "immigrants" they are not entitled to the benefits (e.g. housing or special loans) afforded to newcomers to Israel. Sharing of resources functions to reinforce the group against economic difficulties, social and religious disputes with Israelis. It allows Hebrew Israelites, in short to assert themselves in terms of their identity against a common enemy.

The total income of the Nation form the above sources is not known. It appears that the Hebrew Israelites do not keep records or accounts and generally raise money on an "as needed basis." According to Nash Hashalom:

We keep telling them the truth and they are absolutely right, it's funded by a mysterious source. But the truth is so simple until the complicated world can't understand it. We keep telling them all the time we don't have any money. All the time we go and make telephone calls and we tell them that they are collect calls. Check the bills. Those mothers and uncles, they are paying those bills. We don't pay for any calls. But that's too simple for them to believe and any time that we buy anything, if its something that we have to buy, we take up a collection. We take up an offering and we buy [it]. We keep saying we don't have any money. But they are absolutely right, and this is what we're trying to get them to understand what they're saying, and it is funded by a mysterious source.

The Nation like to think of itself as poor, and indeed from our observations, that is true. For example, most of the Hebrew Israelite men who worked during the period of this reserach performed unskilled
labor on construction sites surrounding Dimona. According to them they earned 20 to 25 Lira for an eight hour day, approximately $5 to $6. These Hebrew Israelite workers were hired on a daily basis and illegally, since most of them did not possess resident's or working permits. As a result, according to the Hebrew Israelite workers, they earned less than Israelis working in the same job - but more than the Arab workers. In addition, no social or welfare benefits were accrued and day-to-day hirings meant no job security, erratic employment and consequently, low income.

That they are poor has been used by Hebrew Israelites in attempts to acquire more benefits, housing especially, from the Israeli authorities. Again, their lack of material wealth does not seem to dampen the morale of the Hebrew Israelites. Indeed, their poverty provides them with emotional satisfaction for it is consistent with the Hebrew Israelite self-image of an oppressed exploited people, poor in wealth and "rich in spiritual grace."

Sometimes, despite the Hebrew Israelite protestations of poverty, they hint that there are secret contributions from wealthy black American benefactors who either are sympathetic to the Hebrew Israelite cause but unwilling to "expose" themselves for the moment, or who are working "behind the scenes now" and will reveal themselves later. We were never able to learn the identities of these alleged wealthy contributors.

Population: It is difficult to obtain a candid declaration of the size of the Hebrew Israelite population from the Nation for they are not only aware of the political impacts of that kind of statement, but they are also genuinely constricted by their ideological beliefs.
One of the more compelling questions confronting the Israeli government concerning the Hebrew Israelites is whether other Hebrew Israelites will want to join their brethren in Israel. Indeed, since the arrival of the first two hundred Hebrew Israelites in 1970, other small groups of them from the U.S. have sought to join the Nation in Israel. These, by and large, have not been allowed entrance into the country since the Israeli government takes the position that Hebrew Israelites do not have the rights under the Law of Return, and that the majority of those Hebrew Israelites currently residing in Israel are there illegally, and, at best, at the sufferance of the Israeli people. Although Hebrew Israelites have no declared strategy to deal with their "immigration" situation, they are aware of the pressure of a hinted inundation of Hebrew Israelites into Israel, and when they count their population, the numbers are usually large. Israel then is constrained to consider what action is to be taken if only a fraction of the professed Hebrew Israelite number are in existence and want to immigrate to Israel. The prospect of having to deal with this issue of Hebrew Israelite numbers who may wish to immigrate to Israel is complicated further by Hebrew Israelites being black Americans. Israel is concerned lest her behavior towards Hebrew Israelites, who are black, be interpreted as racist.

We have noted above that the Nation believes that black Americans are Hebrew Israelites, albeit unaware of their "true" identity. For the Hebrew Israelites in Israel, that means there are twenty million others like themselves "awaken" to their identity in 1977. While that belief to non-Hebrew Israelites may seem bizarre and unfounded, it,
nevertheless, is a genuine belief of Hebrew Israelites in Israel.

The number of Hebrew Israelites in Israel hardly number more than 200 persons. Of this total, approximately 100 are children, 18 years old and under, and 100 are adults, among whom slightly more than one half are women. During the period of this research, Hebrew Israelites lived in Dimona and Mitzpeh Ramon; approximately 150 in the former city and 50 in the latter city.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrew Israelite Population</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male    Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45      55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 years and under</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 200

The numbers of Hebrew Israelites outside of Israel is open to speculation despite the Nation's assertion that most black Americans are Hebrew Israelites. Based on our discussion with Black Jews, and Hebrew Israelites, it is our estimation that the numbers of Hebrew Israelites outside of Israel is small and perhaps scarcely as large as the total in Israel.

**Divine Behavior:** We have noted above that Hebrew Israelites have no ritualized act to mark the formal induction of a recruit into the Nation. Nevertheless, Hebrew Israelites feel that their assumption of their Hebrew Israelite identity signifies a dramatic change in themselves, one which they characterize as "spiritual." They are at a loss for words when asked to explain spiritual; but generally the term infers a person at peace with himself, aware of his/her identity.
Spiritual also implies that an Hebrew Israelite has few material needs and, importantly, is compliant implicitly and explicitly with the "laws" of the Nation. According to Hebrew Israelites, to be compliant to the "Law of Israel" is ideally to exhibit "Divine Behavior."

Divine Behavior as an Hebrew Israelite concept signals the new Hebrew Israelite man and woman, and establishes standards by which they may conduct their lives. Divine Behavior also serves other functions, chief among those being an instrument of control. Hebrew Israelite leadership is confronted with having to maintain organizational discipline, i.e., to elicit conformity to Hebrew Israelite ideology. Divine Behavior establishes limits by which to measure deviance or compliance.

Divine Behavior acts as a standard by which individual Hebrew Israelite men and women may judge the appropriateness of their conduct in Hebrew Israelite terms. A clear and explicit Hebrew Israelite standard is necessary also to counter the negative self-image internalized by many Hebrew Israelites before their inclusion into the Nation. For example, Hebrew Israelites have codified courtship to such a degree that no extended or intimate relations between a single man and woman are permissible, except those leading to marriage; i.e., Hebrew Israelites are relieved of the stereotype of the black unwed mother with children of multiple fathers in this way.

Divine Behavior also serves to rationalize some behavior practiced by Hebrew Israelites before their inclusion in the Nation, and to legitimizing other behaviors recently initiated. For example, we observed that some Hebrew Israelites argue that the incidence of extra-marital
relations and multiple liaisons is high among blacks because Western culture that esteems monogamy is alien and foreign to them. Hebrew Israelites argue that polygyny is part of Eastern culture, as they are, and that is why they have returned to polygyny as Hebrew Israelites. Extra-marital relations and multiple liaisons are explained away by Hebrew Israelites as residual cultural artifacts that have persisted among black people despite Western cultural efforts to supplant it.

Hebrew Israelite children are also expected to comply with the standards of Divine Behavior, and indeed, classes are conducted on the subject by respected Hebrew Israelite men and women.

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Indeed, the group's support is essential for the maintenance of Hebrew Israelite commitment to their ideology. There are, for example, frequent informal discussions and analyses of current events. These discussions serve to re-enforce Hebrew Israelite beliefs for there are opportunities for individual Hebrew Israelites to express solidarity with the Nation and to learn solutions to questions they were in doubt about. The threat, albeit explicit, of withholding material and emotional support from a recalcitrant Hebrew Israelite is usually enough to elicit compliance to Divine Behavior. In one instance
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learned by this observer, a number of Hebrew Israelites refused to conform to Divine Behavior standards, and were temporarily expelled from the Hebrew Israelite community. These expelled Hebrew Israelites were being disciplined for having physically abused their wives, being boisterous and disturbing their Israeli neighbors late into the night.

Hebrew Israelite children are also confronted with similar group pressure from their peers, as well as their parents, to conform to Divine Behavioral standards. Parents are concerned lest other Hebrew Israelites think that they are unable to control their children, and they usually act quickly to chastise an unruly child. In the event a parent is unable to scold a recalcitrant child, Hebrew Israelites feel, and expect, that any Hebrew Israelite adult present may act as a surrogate and carry out the parent's "correcting" function. Children are expected and encouraged to report violations of Divine Behavior of their friends to adult Hebrew Israelites. And to insure the socialization of the group into Divine Behavior, classes are conducted on the subject by Hebrew Israelites who have acquired reputations notable for Divine Behavior. In terms of children, those behaviors most admired are obedience to authority (especially parental authority), sexual modesty and concern for Hebrew Israelite religious practice.

**Education:** For the most part, Hebrew Israelites hold rather negative opinions towards education, except in so far as it is consistent with their ideology. They argue, for example, that the millenium is imminent and since they are the chosen people destined to rule the new "Kingdom of God at Jerusalem" no education is necessary. All depends
on whether one is an Hebrew Israelite or not. Indeed, Hebrew Israelites argue that education may distract an Hebrew Israelite away from his true identity, and deceive him into believing he may integrate into the larger world.

The anti-intellectualism expressed above is also founded in part on the negative experiences of Hebrew Israelites as black men and women in the U.S. For example, those Hebrew Israelites who obtained college diplomas speak of their having been used as "tokens" by employers and schools anxious to hide racist sentiments. Other Hebrew Israelites speak of having finished high school in the U.S., being unequipped with a marketable skill for employment, no resources for higher education, and in some instances, being hardly more than functionally literate.

There are also those Hebrew Israelites who were denied access to employment opportunities and training because they did not have the educational pre-requisites. And many of those were forced to leave school early to help support their families in economic distress.

Finally, Hebrew Israelites argue that education has been of little worth to black people in America because being the "man's" instrument, education distorted history, and was used to conceal the true identity of Hebrew Israelites. In Israel, Hebrew Israelites assert, their children have not been allowed to attend Israeli schools, and almost fortuitously, Hebrew Israelites imply the Nation has been compelled to establish its own "Kingdom School in Holiness."

During the period of this research, the Kingdom School had been in operation less than a year, so that its administration and management had not been routinized and its curriculum was in flux. Many other
problems plagued the Kingdom School despite the Nation's commitment to it. For example, because the Nation had little income, the Kingdom School was compelled to raise its own funds through socials and cake sales, almost solely attended by Hebrew Israelites. The "volunteer" teaching staff of approximately 16 Hebrew Israelite men and women were uncompensated for their work, and occasionally were forced to forego their teaching obligations to carry out household tasks, or to go to work for income. Having no income to rent space, the Kingdom School used the apartments of the membership, and the sub-basement of buildings which they resided in for class rooms. Books and other teaching materials were in short supply, and mainly obtained from the contributions of relatives and friends in the U.S. or made (benches and tables) by Hebrew Israelite craftsmen. Despite these organizational and resource difficulties, the Kingdom School did function.

According to the Nation, 50 children attend school in Mitzpeh Ramon, and 100 in Dimona. The Nation's Minister of Education, who said he has a B.A. from West Illinois University, told us that 4 of the Kingdom School's teachers were college graduates, and have some teaching and/or professional experience in the U.S. These were responsible for supervising the other inexperienced staff.

The children are divided into "age modules" in the Kingdom School: 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-13, 13-15 and 15-18. We observed some instruction conducted in Hebrew and English, but by and large English was the language of instruction.

The curriculum of the Kingdom School consists in the main of courses designed to socialize Hebrew Israelite children into the Nation's
beliefs. These include courses entitled Hebrew History, Political Science, Beginning World History and Divine Behavior. Since the Old Testament is considered by the Hebrew Israelites to be an accurate record of their history, it often served as a text. Current events are reviewed in relation to the courses mentioned above, and their relevance to Hebrew Israelite ideology and beliefs is examined.

Other courses not deliberately designed to socialize Hebrew Israelite children into the prevailing Hebrew Israelite beliefs do serve the same purpose however. These include sewing, typing, home economics, bookkeeping - in the main studied by young Hebrew Israelite girls. Here female children are presented with the skills possessed by the ideal Hebrew Israelite woman. Young Hebrew Israelite boys learn in physical education that athletic prowess is reserved for men. Leather crafts also seem to be preferred for young men. These skill courses also the anti-intellectual bias of Hebrew Israelites, and their preference for practical education that imparts manual and mechanical skills. Often for example, Hebrew Israelites in reflecting on their Liberian experience, asserted they were handicapped by an education that had taught social science but not how to farm, hunt and carpentry.

Hebrew Israelites are concerned about the performances of their children in school, and although they lack verification, they feel assured that their children are achieving much higher academically than when they attended school in the U.S. According to Hebrew Israelites, this higher achievement is due to smaller classes and the devoted attention of teacher. But Hebrew Israelites often confuse education achievement with compliant behavior. Hebrew Israelite children are
not discipline problems in the Nation's school. Truancy, disobedience, poor preparation, negative attitudes or disfunctional behavior of any sort is not tolerated in the Kingdom School. The parents of children with problems in school are informed as a last resort if a teacher's admonitions are not enough. Usually it is enough for a teacher to warn a child, express disapproval and subtly treat exposure of recalcitrant behavior, to acquire compliance. Corporal punishment is not employed to achieve compliance in Kingdom School as a rule; however, corporal punishment is approved by Hebrew Israelites and used by parents to punish their children. Since some parents are employed in the Kingdom School, they will sometimes use this method to chastise an unruly child.

Hebrew Israelites also assert that their children fare better academically in the Kingdom School because of its lack of "permissiveness." Permissiveness is considered part of "white culture" by Hebrew Israelites, and rejected. According to the Nation it is inconceivable that a child should not be under the explicit guidance and direction of an adult and be held accountable for any deviance. In this the Nation holds that it has returned to Hebrew Israelite culture.

While Hebrew Israelites hold that the academic performance of the Nation's children in the Kingdom School is superior to that which they might have achieved outside of the Kingdom School, they also assert this issue is irrelevant since they are not preparing their children to go into the outside world. According to Brother F:

We're not preparing our children for the world outside. We're preparing them for the new world, to help bring in the new order of things...we're not preparing them for that outside world that we know now...American could train them quicker for that world than we could.
The above comments betray some perceptions that the Kingdom School may not be equal to other educational institutions; however, there is also the very clear assertion of satisfaction with the performance of the Kingdom School for providing the Hebrew Israelite young with the substance of Hebrew Israelite identity.
Footnotes


10. In an interview Nasi Shaliach characterized the difference in religious observance between Hebrew Israelites and non-Hebrew Israelites. "He’s still keeping the law of circumcision talking
about that has to do with the flesh; we're talking about it has something to do with the Spirit. He's yet caught up on the flesh; we're talking about the transformation of men's minds. This is why the Gentiles have lost the forces, spiritual forces that govern people." February 2, 1973.

11. Of the 29 Hebrew Israelites interviewed, 5 held high school diplomas, 10 had completed 1 to 3 years of college. 9 of those interviewed had less than a high school diploma, completing 5-11 years of school. The remaining 5 were college graduates.

12. See Arthur H. Fausâ.t, Black Gods of the Metropolis, pp. 79-80; 87-95.

13. The rate of exchange at this time, 1972, was L4.20 = 1$. 
Chapter II

The Formation of Group Identity among the Hebrew Israelites
Introduction:

There is a voluminous literature concerned with black American identity, some of this the work of creative writers who have vividly described the predicament of blacks as a faceless, nameless invisible multitude. Even more systematic social analysts have noted the difficulty of the Negro being heard:

It is difficult to let others see the full psychological meaning of caste segregation. It is as though one, looking out from a dark cave in a side of an impending mountain, sees the world passing and speaks to it; speaks courteously and persuasively, showing them how these entombed souls are hindered in their natural movement, expression, and development; and how their loosening from prison would be a matter not simply of courtesy, sympathy, and help to them but aid to all the world. One talks on evenly and logically in this way but notices that the passing throng does not even turn its head, or if it does, glances curiously and walks on. It gradually penetrates the minds of the prisoners that the people passing do not hear; that some thick sheet of invisible but horribly tangible plate glass is between them and the rest of the world.

Characteristically, these writings also identify the negative impacts of identity conflicts and crises on blacks. Erikson, for example, has discussed the significance of the black's identity quest in terms of identity lost or surrendered, and negative identity; Isaacs has noted the consequences of the black's yearning after whiteness; and Essien-Udom has analyzed the emergence of the Black Muslims who seek to erase the history of an inglorious past in the formation of a more satisfying group identity.

This chapter seeks to explain the emergence of the new group identity of the Hebrew Israelites. The chapter begins with a general discussion of group identity, then focuses attention upon the millenarian cult as an instrument of identity formation. Three factors leading to the
emergence of the millenarian cults as well as five positive functions which the cults serve are examined and their relevance to Hebrew Israelites discussed. The chapter then argues that the new Hebrew Israelite group identity has been attractive to some black Americans because it literally rationalized "a way out" of their predicament in America. More importantly, it is argued that the Hebrew Israelite group identity is the result of the redefinition of four of the "set of identifications" central to their identity: name, color, origins and nationality.

Throughout the chapter representative quotations obtained from interviews with Hebrew Israelites will be employed to illustrate my observations and opinions.

**Group Identity:** Isaacs perceptively identifies those centralities about which identity groups coalesce. He terms these the set of identifications

...which every individual shares with others from the moment of his birth, his ethnic being, his family and group name, his color and physical characteristics, the history and origins of the group into which he is born, its whole culture past providing him with, among other things, his language, religion, arts, modes and styles of life, and inherited value system. It lays upon him his nationality or whatever other condition of national self-awareness is in his group. He is endowed, finally, with the total structure of his family through which he enters upon life, the geography, politics, and economics of the country of his birth, and all the impinging circumstances of his time.  

Clifford Geertz has noted the strength of the bond of these same centralities which he terms primordial attachments:

By primordial attachments is meant one that stems from the "givens" - or more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed "givens" - of social existence: immediate antiquity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them
the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom and so on, are seen to have ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves. One is bound to one's kinsmen, one's neighbor, one's fellow believer, ipso facto; as the result not merely of personal affection, practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself.5

Primordial sentiments and the set of identifications provide the stuff and content of group identity. About these centralities of race and physical characteristics, speech and custom, language and religion to name only a few, individuals cluster into identity groups. It is the function of these groups to provide individuals with a sense of uniqueness and pride, a measure of self-acceptance, self-esteem and self-worth.6

Conversely, it has also been noted that a problem or even a crisis of identity may occur when group identity fails to provide an individual with a sense of prideful association with others or forces one into a pattern of self-rejection.7 In this regard, it is argued that a group identity's success or failure is conditioned and influenced by many different factors, but chief among these being the political condition of power or powerlessness of the group.8

A variety of means are available to a group to increase or maximize their power in order to obtain the satisfactions inherent in their group identity, among these being social and political activism.

Millenarian cults: Five functions performed by the cults9 are a direct response to the identity needs noted above: Cults seek to be power communities, act as instruments of sacred nationalism, provide
alternative opportunity; act as revitalization movements; and promise retributive justice.

**The cults as power communities:** The cults have sought to be power communities, i.e., to link the cultist who feels powerless with an omnipotent supernatural deity who will intervene on the cultist's behalf. The cultist has an interest to overcome all distress and feels that personal and humanly means cannot contend with the adversity. Where modern medicine cannot heal and where disadvantaged identity groups are despairing of improving their conditions of life, the cult offers a way out and a way to power for a few.

**The cults and nationalism:** The cults have served not only as agencies of worship but also as agencies of nationalism. Conspicuously, some cults have functioned to promote the interest of a particular identity group, arguing for their uniqueness or "chosen-ness, and providing the membership with a raison d'être and heightened sense of self-esteem.

**Alternative opportunity:** That the cults provided opportunities for leadership roles to those usually denied access to these status positions is apparent. Cult leadership has not been dependent upon long years of education, training and credentialing. Cult leaders have usually emerged from obscure origins claiming inspiration from some divine deity. American society has long barred access to leadership status to black Americans, sometimes rationalized in terms of the latter's low level of educational achievement of job experience, but really based on white racism. The cults have rejected credentials, reversed color discrimination and accepted blackness as a preferred sign for leadership. Depending
upon the organizational complexity of the cult, there has usually been a surfeit of leadership roles to be parceled out to the faithful. Some cults for example, have initiated numerous economic enterprises, providing both managerial and employment opportunities for the faithful.¹⁴

The variation and differentiation of roles available to cult members in cult economic enterprises often represent opportunities for higher status and achievement unavailable to the cultist outside of the cult. Indeed, the popularity of the cults is in some measure due to the purported successes of these economic investments as well as their operation by a black staff.

*The cults as revitalization movements:* The cults have provided their membership with a more satisfying culture.¹⁵ In practice this has meant an ideology that provides answers to questions of group origins, history, record of achievements and goals. In addition, cults have acknowledged certain behaviors, norms, and values to which members must subscribe and practice.¹⁶ By so doing the cult seeks to counter the negative opinions and allegations of outsiders, and raises the level of self-esteem of the membership.

*Retributive Justice:* One other function that the cults may serve is to act as movements of retributive justice. In this capacity the cults obtain or promise to obtain compensation and punishment for those aggrieved members of the cult. Compensation may accrue in real or symbolic terms in the present or near future.

This obvious feature of the cults is often obscured by the eschatological oratory that promises redemption and salvation, and deflects the attention of the observer to the emotional and ecstatic state of the
cult participant. The cultist, however, is not only distressed by his predicament but feels wronged by the "evil" that surrounds and constrains. The ideology of the cult, particularly the millenarian, promises not only to set the cultist free but to punish the evil wrongdoer.

The functions noted above explain in part some of the subtle and explicit inducements to membership in the cults. However, three causal factors seem critical in the emergence of millenarian groups: deprivation; attachment or association with religious orientations that lend themselves to millenarian interpretation; and the availability of persons with messianic or salvationist fantasies who succeed in establishing charismatic leadership over the group. All of these factors need to be present for the emergence of the millenarian group.

Hebrew Israelites are millenarians and as such the causal factors noted above were important in their genesis.

Deprivation: While absolute deprivation has been an important causal factor in recruiting membership to millenarian movements, both the most deprived and the not so deprived segments of society have also joined such groups. Some analysts have explained that relative deprivation, e.g., a feeling or sense of being deprived, rather than some absolute or objective measure of deprivation is an inducement to millenarian membership. Relative deprivation would explain the heterogeneity of economic classes among millenarian groups. Certainly among Hebrew Israelites this has been so. For example, none of the Hebrew Israelites observed claimed to have been economically poor in America. Indeed they were rather boastfully proud of the occupational and economic achievements of some of their group. Among them were former musicians,
white collar clerical workers, factory workers, professional basketball players, salesmen and small shop keepers. One among their number claimed to have earned a million dollars as a book publisher for 13 years, another to have given up a $25,000 a year salesman's position to come to Israel to be an Hebrew Israelite. But despite these successes Hebrew Israelites were unanimous in voicing their feeling that they as black Americans were an exploited and deprived minority. The book publisher noted above stated that despite his success, he was discriminatorily dealt with by lending establishments, and he implies that his experience is common to other blacks:

And I was successful, not according to his [a white man's] standards, because when their loans came out for anti-poverty they turned me down...because he thought I was dumb again evidently. But I stayed in business 13 years. And I made a million dollars...

(Nasi Shaliach)

The former salesman described his feelings about his personal achievements:

I felt disenfranchised the whole time. Thought I was just a rich slave to use another cliche...I looked at myself as the house nigger. I was looking at the misery around me. The fact that I was just inside the big house sweeping up the floor so that when it rained I could always go to the basement of the big house and stay dry. There was always something leftover from the table for me to eat that wasn't garbage, but I always saw myself as second class, never first class. Never, never, never, did I feel comfortable...

(Nasi M)

Another Hebrew Israelite asserts:

Our people were always the victims of exploitation, always; economically, socially, politically; we were always an exploited people in that society...in every way in my life I was discriminated against. Every phase of my life; housing, employment, education, every way, I was discriminated against in Babylon [the United States]. I was held down...I gained an education, but it was only to perpetuate his system.

(Sister E)
And another Hebrew Israelite noted:

I learned about America. I learned about the way black people are treated, the way poor people in general are treated. I learned that a black man can go so far, he can only go as far as the society wants him to go. For instance, say that all these civil rights and everything... the society was to the point that they knew eventually black people were going to start revolting and demanding civil rights, so they had years before to plan what they were going to allow the black man to do. They were going to allow him to do so much in so much amount of time... America is made up of black reservations; Chicago is a reservation, Detroit, Harlem, Los Angeles, San Francisco. These are cities where the black man is allowed to live, and he is allowed to live in certain sections of America. There are highways, you can get into you car and you can go from one reservation to the next reservation. If you stop inbetween, make sure it is a temporary stop and you keep going to your next reservation. Because if you stop in the middle of Wyoming, where there are no black people, and say I'm going to live there, you are dead. They couldn't care less about losing one little black body, or however many it is. We are controlled. We are controlled by social security cards.

(Sister D)

The above responses are typical of Hebrew Israelite accounts of personal discrimination and deprivation, and they were understandably used by Hebrew Israelites as evidence of generalized black American deprivation.

Attachment or association with religious orientations that lend themselves to millenarian orientations: All of those interviewed admitted to having had some extended relationship with Christianity in the past, usually in the form of regular Sunday School attendance as children, church membership or church attendance as adults.

O yes, I belonged to churches. A little old church by Oak Park Road. Sometimes I'd go pretty faithfully... My family had that kind of spirit. My mother would talk about her mother, that this is the way they did. Not necessarily when they go to church. Singing songs do things to people. Like 'Gimme that Old Time Religion,' that kind of religion - you can't find it at a nightclub, so if you were the kind that went searching for old time
religion, the closest place you could find it would be in the church.

(Nasi R)

Another Hebrew Israelite noted:

My grandmothers told me that I was a Protestant. When I was young I'd maybe go to church, but I didn't go as though I was interested in going. I went because I had to go.

(Brother P)

And another Hebrew Israelite responded:

We went to different Baptist churches. But it wasn't like my mother stressed going to church but not to the point of you go to church or you get a beating; and stay in church all day. We weren't to that point. We just went to church. Sometimes when we weren't affiliated with a church we didn't go. But... I think I must have been 9 or 10 when the family became members of the Unity Church.

(Sister D)

Another Hebrew Israelite response:

(My parents) weren't extremists, but they were religious. My family all attended church. I went to church ever since I was a little girl. I was raised up in the church.

(Sister H)

And finally:

As a youngster, I went through quite a few churches checking them out. I didn't know at the time, but the Spirit was leading me through these to give me a good basic foundation on what my parents had already experienced. So I went through Sanctified, Baptist, Methodist. I had even gone through the Apostolic faith, the Jehovah Witnesses, and Lutheran. I even went to the Mennonite Church.

(Brother T)

The overwhelming majority of Hebrew Israelites claimed to have been Baptists and Methodists, and a few were Lutherans and Roman Catholics. We observed however, that most Hebrew Israelites claimed that prior to their joining the Nation that they had not been particularly committed to religious worship and were hardly more than nominal adherents to the
churches to which they belonged. A few Hebrew Israelites remark that religious friends and relatives had been influential in their moral development, and many of these were quick to identify what they felt were moral inconsistencies in modern society.

Before we used to love people. Education didn't corrupt us, it was economics. They told us that whatever you do, get you some money. Stealing was legitimate; selling dope became legitimate; prostitutes became legitimate in our minds because it meant getting some money. Prostitutes were respected members of the black community. Socially she's very well accepted. It's a known fact she'll be sitting in the midst. What does she do? She's a high price whore. Nobody gets uptight about it. What's he do? He deal dope. And there are doctors and lawyers in the same kind of setting. They know what they're doing. He's a policy maker; he's a bookie. And money made you lose all your morals and when you loose your morals people weren't people. They represented dollars to you. That's what happened to us. People went from people to money. If a nigger ain't no money value to you, he ain't worth nothing. The reason I sell dope is because somebody is going to sell it. You ain't got to take dope. That's the rationale. So we left from people to dollars.

Another comment by a Hebrew Israelite noted below indicated that Justice (i.e., right) was indivisible:

It can only be one decision. It can't be like the Supreme Court: five agree and four disagree. That means that somebody is wrong. It can't be right. How can four of you say that I ought to go to jail and five of you say that I shouldn't? See that's that old crazy justice in America again. My life is hanging by a thread and four of you say I ought to live and five of you say I ought to die. So I die. That's a lie. My blood is going to be on somebody's hand... where the four or the five are going to have to pay for that opinion. It's got to be justice and righteousness. I can't say that he needs to go to jail and you say that he don't and both of us be right. One opinion! Ain't no more minority position. Just righteousness.

(Nasi M)

A concern for personal and societal morality consistent with religious doctrine is a constant among Hebrew Israelites. In particular, it is prominently reflected in Hebrew Israelite aspirations for their children. In no uncertain terms Hebrew Israelites responded that they
wished their children would grow into adults who were "righteous"

men and women. Usually phrasing their responses in biblical terms

Hebrew Israelites said:

The Kingdom of the heavenly God, and whatever the Father is
destining them to be, that's what I want them to be -- in
righteousness.

(Sister B)

Another Hebrew Israelite noted that he wished his children
to become workers for the kingdom of God. I can't choose
their lives. The only thing that I want them to do is that
whatever they do to serve the almighty God.

(Brother T)

And another Hebrew Israelite:

Mainly I'm just interested in my children learning the
divine way of life, pleasing the God of Israel by just being what
they are supposed to be as Hebrew Israelites...really adhering to
the laws and commandments and things that they are being
taught as children, and acceptance, everything that they must
accept to be a part of this kingdom.

(Sister G)

Another Hebrew Israelite remarked:

I would like my children to become men and women -- truthful
and righteous people, loving people.

(Brother U)

Our observations suggest that the prior association and attachment
of Hebrew Israelites to religious orientations was an important contribu-
tion to their eventual millenarian orientation. Even as nominal
religionists, Hebrew Israelites were aware of the eschatological and
moral imperatives of Christianity. Some of them had even been exposed
to black religious nationalist orientations as children:

As a child, you see, our father raised us that we were
Israelites, but he couldn't carry it further because he didn't
have the education.

(Brother J)
I recall that a long time ago my godfather, he tried to teach me and Nasi Ben David about being Israelites... I don't know where it came from but he had it up there a black Jesus, a staff in his hands, a black sheep in the background.

Although these latter were only a few among all Hebrew Israelites, they like all the rest had had the prior association and attachment to similar eschatological and moral imperatives that eventually assumed priority and precedence in their lives as Hebrew Israelites. In no small part the becoming of a Hebrew Israelite was due to the emergence of charismatic leadership that succeeded in convincing these black Americans that they were the true Hebrew people.

The availability of persons with messianic or salvationist fantasies who succeeded in establishing charismatic leadership over the group: We noted earlier, leadership among Hebrew Israelites is divided among two men who believe that they have been divinely ordained. Both have been able to convince their followers of their messianic mission. Nasi Hashalom (the prince of peace) believes that he is the messiah who will lead the faithful out of bondage and into the utopia of the millenium. Nasi Shaliach (the messenger) complements the former's role by believing that it is his task to purify all Hebrew Israelites, i.e., to obtain their full compliance with religious laws and obligations. Both men have succeeded in convincing the faithful that they have been reincarnated many times in their efforts to save the world.

Nasi Hashalom means prince of peace, but in past times I've been called by many names. One time it was Ben Ami; that meant 'the son of my people.' Who I am only can only be revealed according to the spirit of my Father who is in heaven. It can't be told into words, but if you search the scriptures and you have a willing heart you will know me by my words or by my deeds. In searching the scriptures in this day and time, there was to be
certain events taking place. There was to be some one raised up who was to carry out the fulfilling of the prophecies. I was raised up to establish my Father's kingdom which is at time past called the kingdom of God at Jerusalem. That's who I am. I am he whom the almighty God raised up to establish that righteous government in Jerusalem. That makes me in many languages, in many thoughts to be called many things; and at the present time in English i am called Prince of Peace, and in Hebrew, Nasi Hashalom. I've got a job to bring and end to this generation. In searching the scriptures that job belonged to a specific individual. Those who want to know, they have to search the scriptures, with an open heart and it will be revealed to them. But words won't reveal it, and flesh and blood won't reveal it. Only my father which is in heaven can reveal to any individual who I am.

(Nashi Hashalom)

Nasi Hashalom goes on to say further about his role as the messiah:

There will be a seed of David that will be raised up in the latter days it says, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, to establish it and to order it. That government being the Father's kingdom. And I'm going to establish it, at Jerusalem. Once again, my brother, if I told you I was the overseer, I was the spokesman, and even if I told you or asked you if you were sitting across at this time from the Messiah, how would you know it? Except that it would be revealed according to the Spirit. There have been many peoples in many lands that have said many things in reference to the Messiah, the Saviour, the Deliverer, but you can only know him by the Spirit. So my role in reference to this Nation is to establish and order the kingdom of my father, and to be a shepherd to all the sheep here and throughout the world that are seeking righteousness. I am the pathway, I am the truth and I am the light, and I am the door. And no man on this earth can pass into life except that he come by me. No man can pass unto the salvation of the almighty God, the God of Israel, the God of the universe except he come by the door. And I am that door.

In describing his early autobiography, Nasi Shaliach recalled:

My parents were from the old school, and we had certain rigid laws that we went by in (that) house. The character of Shaliach Ben Yehuda was born through the Holy Ghost. That's what motivated Shaliach Ben Yehuda to do all things. Now if you can define the Holy Ghost...I can't help you there.

[I] had no control over this. He was just born out of season and destiny has caught up with that character. And that character received this outpouring of the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost, like
I said, you have to define it yourself. I can't define it. The Holy Ghost endowed Shaliach Ben Yehuda with everything that he's endowed with today, and more. Prior to that, the character Louis Bryant was a dumb character. Louis Bryant didn't attend school according to the system that you know. The character of Louis Bryant went up to the fifth grade and from that point on he was placed in a "dumb" room for the dumb. You define that yourself. Louis Bryant was cut off, that character in the fifth grade of the educational institutions of the world system, of the institutions of America. From that point on I said that the Holy Ghost motivated the character of Shaliach Ben Yehuda and made him.

In their charismatic leadership, Nasi Shaliach and Nasi Hashalom have obtained the unquestioning loyalty and confidence of their followers. Many Hebrew Israelites note that while they were usually recruited to membership by a friend or relative, it was usually the persuasive oratory of Hashalom or Shaliach that convinced them of their Hebrew Israelite identity.

SpirituallY I always was in the Nation. But my physical contact with the National first came ... at Abeita at 47th Street. I came there and I heard Nasi Hashalom speak and that was it... Because I felt [that] when he spoke he awakened something within me that was dormant... He talked about the truth, about black people hiding, they don't want to do right and things like that... He was telling black people in America that we were Hebrew Israelites, that the man had distorted our history and all those different types of things like that. So really the thing was the feeling. The feeling was there. He could say anything. He could have said anything; he could have talked about baseball but I would have felt it.

(Brother O)

When we met the Nasi [Hashalom] he taught us. He gave us a lesson one day. I can't exactly recall what lesson but whatever it was it sounded good and really touched our hearts and our minds, because immediately we forgot all about what we had been about and we began to feel what he was talking about.

(Brother P)

I met Nasi Shaliach at his home with a group of black people who were professionals: principals, social workers, also students. It was my first time there. [I was invited] by one of his disciples, so to speak, who sort of felt that Nasi [Shaliach] was a
combination of many of the black leaders wrapped into one with additional information... so when he mentioned these things my mind being what it is, I accepted the invitation and went, listened and heard, and since that day I've been sort of bound by the spirit pursuing that course. [Nasi Shaliach] talked about black people being people of the bible; talked about prophecy relative to the restoration of black people at this time; talked about immediate events that were occurring and had occurred from a prophetic and natural standpoint; talked about the need now for us to let our inner man listen rather than our outer man and all these things began to trigger something inside of me...

(Nasi M)

We observed that the strength of control of Hebrew Israelite leadership over the Nation was reflected in the former's ability to maintain the solidarity of the membership by persuading the latter that any adversity they suffered was a divine test of their faith, or efforts of their enemies to divide the group.

Indeed it is apparent from all of the above data that the charismatic leadership of Hebrew Israelites that invented the group's ideology and has led them out of the United States to Israel has been critically instrumental in the group's genesis and development. The leadership regards itself and is regarded by the membership as divinely inspired. That the group was successful in emigrating is more convincing evidence to Hebrew Israelites of the verity of their ideology and they now are preparing and awaiting for the onset of the millenium.

Conclusion:

All of the foregoing suggests that millenarianism lends itself to those who feel deprived and powerless as an instrument of social change to be used to secure a more favorable reality. For some black Americans specifically Hebrew Israelites, millenarianism has been an instrument of nationalism particularly devoted to establishing their
new satisfying group identity. In the next section we will discuss
the fabrication of the Hebrew Israelite identity.

II

Certainly the three causal factors discussed earlier were critical
to the emergence of Hebrew Israelites as millenarians. However, that
all of the membership wanted to leave the United States was the
catalyst in the coalescence of the group. Some of these seem to have
possessed the idea of emigration prior to their contact with the Nation:

There was on my mind and on the other young brothers' minds a desire to come into an area of what we call thinking black. We always had a desire to go to Africa. We studied up on a lot of African cultures, our everyday dress was African, our everyday conversation was about Africa and black people... We felt we belonged in Africa.

(Brother P)

There were many things that happened to me during my life that made me realize that life in America had no hope, there was no future for me as a black person in America, and that my future was elsewhere. At the time I didn't know where my future was and I was seeking to find out where my future was, but I knew that it was not there. Just looking at the plight of the people there -- President Johnson, one of the richest persons in the United States financially, on his ranch -- there are pictures, like in Life and Look magazine, of people living in shacks about to fall over -- my people living in shacks about to fall over. He's up there talking about the Great Society, and I'm going to give you so many millions of dollars. The things could not possibly be getting better for us. It was just a big hoax, a big lie. Here on one hand, you can sit down in this restaurant and eat next to a Gentile -- what difference does that make where you can sit. When one the other hand you buy furniture and you pay more interest for the furniture just because you are black. We paid more interest; we paid more taxes on our property. Like the whites have loopholes in the taxes they can get around. And the poor people in Babylon pay more, even the poor whites were caught in the system. Do you understand what happened? In other words, the poor people there paid for everything and the rich escaped scott free, because they could write off this for taxes, write off that for taxes. The high rise projects, like in Chicago,
you can see them when you are travelling through Chicago -- they built the high rise and said, 'look here, we got you some houses!' But really it was a big lie, because when they decided to build those high rises they took rats and studied -- put rats, stacked them in boxes on top of each other to see if these conditions could be duplicated with human beings. And they discovered, ken, we can build high rise apartments because we're not going to give black people any land, so we can build these high rises if we keep them separate from one another; give them the minimum of food, and then keep them entertained. I look at all of those things and I say, how can I say things were better?

(Sister F)

Others were persuaded to emigrate by the oratory of the Hebrew Israelite leadership:

I met Nasi Gabriel Gadol and we were talking about [the Hebrew] language, and Nasi Hashalom came by my house. This was in October 1966. Nasi Hashalom asked me, 'What do you intend to do for your people?' Well, I had just won fourth place place [in a song writing contest], so to me that was an incentive to keep on striving. So when Nasi Hashalom asked me what was I going to do for my people I told him: I'm going to go on and make a lot of money singing, playing guitar and contribute heavily. And he said, 'Lo (no), that won't do.' I asked him what was I going to do [then]. He said, 'It's time to go to Africa.' This is what I had been prepared for all this time. When I heard it I knew what it was. So when he said that, I knew exactly, everything flashed back, all the way back to the times that I was preparing for this.

(Brother T)

It was in the early part of 1966. At first we went to the meeting just because he [Nasi Rachamin, my uncle] kept bugging us and what have you. Then after I began to go and I listened to what they were saying and it really became interesting and I started reading on my own and comparing things with the way our life was there; it began to fit a pattern. And I could see that maybe there was some truth to the fact that we were the Chosen People, and that it was meant for us to leave America, and return to our home.

(Sister C)

But for all, the ideology/eschatology provided a rationale for immigration, and the collective of Hebrew Israelites a supportive community for the initially less certain. Hebrew Israelite leadership
through the eschatology/ideology explained emigration as the fulfillment of a prophecy, and the initiation of their "exodus" began with the advent of certain signs.

But in the prophesies I connected them up with their history and with their source; showed them what got them into captivity. I said, what got you into captivity is that you were disobedient to the almighty God. But that was too simple, Morris, because, you see at this time the world is complicated. And they've got my people in a complicated frame of mind. So our people are looking for a complicated saviour... They are looking in a complicated manner and they can't see it. All I told them -- I said, do you know what got you into captivity? It was disrespect to the almighty God. But that's too simple. It's not complicated, and it's not in books and books and books and books. But you know, that's what will put them at the head of the nations again. And do you know what will put the Gentiles in trouble? Do you know why the Gentiles are all worried and shook up now? Because we have turned back to almighty God. And do you know why now he wants to cut us off and destroy us? Because he's in trouble. Because we found the source, and we found the cure, and we got out of captivity, and we're free in the spirit with our God.

(Nasi Hashalom)

There are certain signs for those that are to come back. A road map is not a road map unless you have somebody that can understand a road map. So when I speak about the signs they are signs because I'm interpreting them as signs because all things are now back into the possession of those of whom the Resurrection was made for. A definite sign, as I told you before, is the fact that I'm sitting here. I was entrenched in a middle class black community whose mores and values were that of America. That is to say, I was concerned about my black people in America there, but I was concerned never ever to leave America because America was the only place for me to ever stay... But now going back again, I told you that the signs are for the wise men and for the prognosticators of the world. In 1967 those who were calling themselves Black Jews, Black Hebrews, or had involved themselves in Hebrew Israelite culture were supposed to feel something when they read about Black Hebrew, Black Jews, 'had left America and went to Africa.' Follow me. A sign. But by not being in tune, all of them, it began to eliminate certain people. Another sign was that in 1969, blacks for the first time in over 2,000 years returned back to the Holy Land. A sign. Another definite sign: the prognosticators of the world were sitting waiting for the return of the people. Now these are definite signs. Another sign to assure those that they are watching us that we are not too early is that the
confrontation between God's mission, the God of the Heaven and Earth and the Israeli government is on. They're saying that we have no right to be here, and we're saying that we're not black Jews and that we're not going to convert...Because of our position, what we have done is that we have stood in the name of our Father and said that we defy all things pertaining to this land that is not righteous and righteous only. So our position is very clear in terms of sign. Another sign, a modern sign, is that certain things were to occur at the return of the people. If you look and read throughout the world today you'll find all the things that were prophesied that would occur in the latter days. I told you before that there would be a coalition of the ancient Roman Empire under ecclesiastical Rome and it's in the present form of the European Common Market. Another sign: America, described biblically as Babylon, the greatest nation, the city of gold, is being isolated in terms of world trade, in terms of finance, in terms that here's a country that's the greatest country in the world has ever produced and its money has no value outside of America. So another sign. The other sign is that black people are coming up out of America to Israel and saying this and preaching this throughout the streets of Israel. So these are modern signs to indicate that the Hebrew Israelites are here, are on time and in time.

(Nasi M)

Hebrew Israelite Identity and the Set of Identifications:

The Nation has been attractive to some black Americans not only because it rationalized a way out of America, literally, but also because it offered a satisfying new identity. This new identity is the result of redefining four of the "set of identifications" that are central to Hebrew Israelite identity: name, color, origins and nationality.

Name: Some analysts have noted the importance of individual names in the formation of identity. Aside from leaving the United States, we observed that taking a Hebrew Israelite name is the next most important step in coming into the Nation. The abandonment of their former "Gentile" names is one of the ways Hebrew Israelites choose to rid themselves of their former unsatisfying identity. Conversely, their adoption of a new Hebrew Israelite name represent, Hebrew Israelites
understand, the assumption of their new Hebrew Israelite identity. Non-
Hebrew Israelite names represented the last vestige of their connection
with their former identity, with what Hebrew Israelites considered to
be a shameful history of slavery, poverty, exploitation and negative
identity.

[My name is] Amram Ben Yisrael... it means 'Elevated people.'
It means like, spiritually elevated; it means that I would be
among like a group of people and I would also be one of those
people who are elevated...[It] was given to me by Nasi Shaliach
in America before I came here. We all were seeking new names
because due to the fact that we were trying to shake the shackles
of slavery and really rid ourselves of the slave names, so that was
one reason that we changed our names. [The name means] to me, a
brand new me. It means a new person. It means that when I
acquired that name the old person died. My life began, a new
life began when I acquired that particular name, because there were
certain things required of me in order to deserve that name.
So that's what it means to me; it means that I have a new life
and that my new life began when I acquired that name. For one
thing, I never did know the meaning of [my American name]. Another,
it was supposed to be Greek, from Greek origin. And another thing
just accepting Hebrew and accepting our way of life, I just wanted
everything that had to do with Hebrew. I didn't need an American
or an English name, any longer. And also, this would pertain to my
first name. The last name, you know what everybody has to say
about that; these were slave titles so naturally that would
have to go.

My old name? Well it wasn't my name. It was a name that
my parents had given to me and at the time I had no choice be-
cause I knew no other name, so I took this name. Because in the
beginning he [the white man] took away the names of my grandparents,
great grandparents; he took them away from them. So we had to
adopt his names. So it's not my name.

(Sister E)

According to Hebrew Israelites, names should symbolize a person's
group identity and provide some clue about character, personality or
individual skills. Indeed they often remarked that their Gentile
names lack this capacity.

[My name] Aquiazil Ben Yisrael and it means 'Brother to
help.' The name was given to me by one of the brothers who felt
that the name suited me. I try as much as I can to help as
many people as I can, because that's what I like to do...All
names have meaning. A name that doesn't have a meaning isn't
worthwhile. My Hebrew Israelite name has special meaning be-
cause it is associated with me. My [Gentile] name died with the
individual that was in the States. That name was just something
that someone else gave to me being just a selection that they
liked before they even saw my identification or association with
the name to the individual. They just felt that this was what
they wanted to name their baby, and I'm no baby anymore so there-
fore I don't need the name. I choose to take a name that I feel
is suitable to my character. This was the name that I had; that's
the name that I like, so that's the name that I take...The name
that I have at this time symbolizes the individual. Each of our
names has an association with the characteristics of the individuals
and other people around me feel that the name I have suits my
character... it [my Hebrew Israelite name] has importance as far
as being associated with the Nation, with the people, and being
that part of the people which is again going back to what they
feel I am, and they said that 'I am a brother to help,' so I'm
'a brother to help anyone' who is willing to do that which is right.

[My Hebrew name is] Elihu Ben Yehuda. I've had that name
about four or five years. Elihu means 'my God is' that he is the
son of Yehuda, that is the 'son of Jesus,' and then Yehuda means
'praise the Father.' (I feel the name is very much part of me),
yes I do. I really feel it because it means -- when you look at
the spiritual definition of it, it means he who is aware of the
spirit. That's the spiritual definition of the name, and I
really feel that way spiritually... my parents, when they gave
me [my Gentile name] weren't aware, so it's just a Gentile name.
I feel better with my name because that's me, that's the real me.

[I picked the name] Elkanah myself. I made it a point to
pick a name; this name suited my personality. It means God is
gracious and God gives graciously...I feel that I was awarded a
gift of graciousness. So I just picked that name. I just have a
lot of talents and when I explored them and found out all of the
different things that I can do, you see, so I found out that I
was given a great proportion in reference to myself. I'm a crafts-
man, I can sing, I can do anything that I see somebody else do —
I can do it. I can write if I want to. I'm a speaker. I can
just do anything that I want to do. And this is a gracious gift
from the Father.

Other Hebrew Israelites, while agreeing that their adoption of
a Hebrew Israelite name was in keeping with all of the opinions noted
above, asserted that they had always felt uncomfortable with their Gentile
names. These criticisms, however, betray a desire for a positive identity supplied by their membership in the Nation.

I just didn't like (my former Gentile name). It had no meaning. It could have meant anything. Didn't even like the sound of it. I don't understand where the name came from in the first place.

(Sister A)

I had a dislike of western culture so that the name connects me with the culture so with me getting rid of (my Gentile name) means I could dismiss (western) culture.

(Brother D)

Finally, one Hebrew Israelite candidly asserted that "names mean something. Names go with identity." And another Hebrew Israelite noted that the significance of her Hebrew Israelite name was that "I know who I am now and who I always was." But perhaps Nasi Shaliach summed up the discussion of names by saying:

So I'm saying [the white world] can't name us. We've got a right to name ourselves. We call ourselves what we want to call ourselves. We might not call paper paper anymore. We might not call grass, grass. We might not call a piece of fruit a piece of fruit. It might be something else. He named it when he had his day. Now it's our time and this is the new creation. And we are the people, citizens, of the new creation.

Color: Perhaps more than any other physical characteristic, color has provided an easy reference for the bigoted to single out the black American for opprobrium: black skin color made the Negro a highly visible target for discrimination. Additionally, social custom attributed negative significances, both real and symbolic, to blackness and associated it with, among other things, inferiority, ignorance, and extraordinary sexual prowess. Many blacks, in the absence of compelling counter assertions, internalized the negative opinions about blackness and acquired a sense of self-loathing and a loss of self-esteem. Some
of these blacks sought to escape from their blackness through "passing,"
 denial of black ancestry, or the use of cosmetics to whiten or bleach
their skin. Some other blacks, "favored" with lighter skin regarded
darker skin blacks with contempt and adopted "whiter than thou attitudes."
Blackness became for many blacks a stigma or a mark of shame.

Hebrew Ideology counters the negative assertions about blackness
by regarding "black" not as a stigma or mark of shame but as a badge
of honor! Black, Hebrew Israelites believe is the telling evidence
that blacks are the descendants of the ancient Hebrews, the chosen
people who made a covenant with God. "We know that the majority of
the black people in America are the descendants of the children of Israel."
Hebrew Israelite ideology ties the color black with a very special people
who have a unique and special relationship with an omnipotent and omniscient
diety. As the descendants of the ancient Hebrews, Hebrew Israelites believe
that they have a special leadership role to fulfill, which stands in
sharp contrast to the inferior roles, stereotypes, blacks have been cast in
in the past. About their role Nasi Hashalom said,

It won't be an easy task because everything good in past
times has been connected with white and everything bad connected
with black.

Hebrew Israelites believe that their role is to be a model nation for
all others to emmulate and they argue that blacks have in the past acted,
unacknowledged, in similar capacities.

Now this being a time of enlightenment, mental enlightenment,
which is a resurrection again because this is a general resurrection
of all people in the world, not just black people in America. But
when the black people in America began to awake, the whole world
awakened. Black people being of the House of Israel, and the
House of Israel are the former of all things. Black people in
America moved, the world moved. When Dr. King started th march,
the world started to march. When black people in America began to express "soul," Elvis Presley began to express some type of soul action. But when black people began to demonstrate on the college campuses the other people began to demonstrate on the college campuses. So Israel, black people being the former of all things, they set the pace for everything.

(Nasi M)

Hebrew Israelites also frequently reverse the symbolic significance of black and white, redefining the former as good and the latter as evil. For example, with Hebrew Israelite belief that a world conspiracy has been perpetrated to deny them as the authentic Hebrew people, white as the color of their conspirators has become synonymous among Hebrew Israelites with evil and black is defined as good. In other informal social interaction among Hebrew Israelites we observed a similar redefinition of black and white. For example the avid chess players among Hebrew Israelites have reversed the order of the initial move in the game: black moves first and white is relegated to the defensive role initially.

Associating blackness with the ancient Hebrews has elevated black skin color to a level of prestige and higher status among Hebrew Israelites. Additionally, other physical characteristics associated with blackness, thick lips, wide nostrils, kinky hair have achieved similar respectability among the Nation. The result of all of the Hebrew Israelite efforts to redefine the significance of blackness and physical characteristics has been to raise the level of self-esteem and to provide Hebrew Israelite with a new satisfying identity.

Origins: Hebrew Israelite leadership has developed a compelling ideology that identifies the origins of blacks ~ Hebrew Israelites and explains the historical development of the black Nation of Israel. For a
people in search of an identity, Hebrew Israelite ideology explains how the Nation moved from favor in the eyes of their God to oppression in this world. Most importantly, for a people in search of pride and self-esteem, Hebrew Israelite ideology promises redemption and salvation, i.e., that they as black people presently deprived and oppressed will rise again as a Nation and occupy positions of power and honor.

The Old Testament of the Bible is a written history of the black man in America. As the black people were brought into captivity and they were taught by the slave masters, they were always taught that the Old Testament has been fulfilled. And this was pounded into their heads until they were afraid to read the Old Testament. Why was it necessary to keep the black people from studying the Old Testament? Because they couldn't find their history except that they would read in the Old Testament. And in finding their history they would find their way out of captivity. In other words, our people have demonstrated, they've gotten educated, they've gotten all the things which they were told they could do to get out of captivity. But they are still slaves, just as much today...even worse today than they were hundreds of years ago. How has he been above to keep them bound like that? Let's go back. Historically, if you can keep a man from find the source or the cause, you can keep him from finding the cure. There is a prayer called 'The Lord's Prayer.' In the prayer it says: 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' Speaking to the Almighty God that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven. The black people in America have a history that is unparalleled to any other people under the sun... there are no other people under the sun that can even compare with what they have undergone. God being a just God, them undergoing conditions like that which is so out of the ordinary, that it had to be His will. They said, "Thy will be done." Then this condition that they underwent had to be the will of God. Accepting that this was the will of God and God being a just God, then they had to do something to deserve this condition. What did they do? If all of this is true, that it was the will of God, what did they do against God to deserve this? Then that's what they have to find out in order to get out of this condition. What did we do against God to deserve this condition? This is His will, we accept that. Now we want to know, God, what did we do against you? But the world guided him to every path except that path. The world guided him to education. You're brain is small, you can't excel and demonstrating and whatnot. But they still couldn't get out of captivity because they never found the source, what caused them to be in captivity.
They kept them out of the Old Testament, because in the Old Testament they would have found their history, and they would have found the cause, and in finding the cause they would have found the cure. And as it is written, He said if you turn even during your captivity... He said, if when you turn back unto me, He said I will bring you from the lands of your captivity and put you back into your own land. And there was something else that He said. The Father said, and then all of these plagues which have been upon you I am going to put down upon your enemies and those who have oppressed you. So what is that saying? If your enemy knows that when this happens, he is in trouble. When I get out of captivity my enemy is in trouble. The plagues are going to go upon him. So then my enemy has a job. He has to keep me from finding out how to get out of captivity. He kept me out of the Old Testament. He kept me from finding my history. He kept me from finding the cause. So I taught my people; I told them the cause of their captivity. Not because they are uneducated. Black people in America were educated from the days when they brought them there when they picked them up. And at this time they are the most educated people in the world, and he still just tells them 'you're uneducated.' You know, they believe that! They are the most educated people in the world. They ahve built and torn down more kingdoms than the Gentiles could ever even think of building. They built America with their knowledge. They built the kingdoms of West Africa with their knowledge. They built the kingdoms of North Africa with their knowledge. They have never been uneducated. Black people were born educated. But he told them that to psyche them and to make them feel that "you're nothing." But in the prophesies I connected them up with their history and with their source; showed them what got them into captivity. I said, what got you into captivity is that you were disobedient to the almighty God. But that was too simple, because you see at thim time the world is complicated. And they've got my people in a complicated fram of mind. So our people, are looking for a complicated saviour. So when things come in a simple manner they can't accept it. It says 'and it shall be so simple that a fool can't err.' And it says it won't be revealed unto the wise and the prudent -- it's going to be revealed unto simple people. They are looking in a complicated manner and they can't see it. All I told them -- I said, so you know what got you into captivity? It was disrespect to the almighty God. And you know what will get you out of captivity? Turn back to respecting the almighty God. But that's too simple. It's not complicated and it's not in books but you know, that's what will get them out of captivity. And do you know what will put them at the head of the nations again? And do you know why the Gentile are all worried and shook up now? Because we have turned back to the almighty God. And do you know why he wants to cut us off and destroy us? Because he's in trouble. Because we found the source, and we found the cure, and we got out of captivity, and we're free in the spirit with our God. And the Gentiles are in trouble.
They kept them out of the Old Testament, because in the Old Testament they would have found their history, and they would have found the cause, and in finding the cause they would have found the cure. And as it is written, He said if you turn even during your captivity... He said, if when you turn back unto me, He said I will bring you from the lands of your captivity and put you back into your own land. And there was something else that He said. The Father said, and then all of these plagues which have been upon you I am going to put down upon your enemies and those who have oppressed you. So what is that saying? If your enemy knows that when this happens, he is in trouble. When I get out of captivity my enemy is in trouble. The plagues are going to go upon him. So then my enemy has a job. He has to keep me from finding out how to get out of captivity. He kept me out of the Old Testament. He kept me from finding my history. He kept me from finding the cause. So I taught my people; I told them the cause of their captivity. Not because they are uneducated. Black people in America were educated from the days when they brought them there when they picked them up. And at this time they are the most educated people in the world, and he still just tells them 'you're uneducated.' You know, they believe that! They are the most educated people in the world. They have built and torn down more kingdoms than the Gentiles could ever even think of building. They built America with their knowledge. They built the kingdoms of West Africa with their knowledge. They built the kingdoms of North Africa with their knowledge. They have never been uneducated. Black people were born educated. But he told them that to psyche them and to make them feel that 'you're nothing.' But in the prophecies I connected them up with their history and with their source; showed them what got them into captivity. I said, what got you into captivity is that you were disobedient to the almighty God. But that was too simple, because you see at this time the world is complicated. And they've got my people in a complicated frame of mind. So our people, are looking for a complicated saviour. So when things come in a simple manner they can't accept it. It says 'and it shall be so simple that a fool can't err.' And it says it won't be revealed unto the wise and the prudent -- it's going to be revealed unto simple people. They are looking in a complicated manner and they can't see it. All I told them -- I said, so you know what got you into captivity? It was disrespect to the almighty God. And you know what will get you out of captivity? Turn back to respecting the almighty God. But that's too simple. It's not complicated and it's not in books but you know, that's what will get them out of captivity. And do you know what will put them at the head of the nations again? And do you know why the Gentile are all worried and shook up now? Because we have turned back to the almighty God. And do you know why he wants to cut us off and destroy us? Because he's in trouble. Because we found the source, and we found the cure, and we got out of captivity, and we're free in the spirit with our God. And the Gentiles are in trouble.
So I taught them from the prophecies. Once again people have been talking about the prophecies for a long time. But I taught them by the spirit, seeking my sheep. And when I was walking the streets of America, I taught them in such a manner. And I teach according to the spirit of the times and the spirit of the place. But all the time, only my sheep can hear my voice.

(Nasi Hashalom)

All of the above is a compelling new definition of the origin of the black man in America. Going beyond slavery and the recent experience with poverty and discrimination, Hebrew Israelite leadership has provided an extraordinary "history," mythical and opic in proportions, which provides the Hebrew Israelite membership with a rationalization for past black impotence but more importantly serves as a complementary component of their new satisfying identity.

Nationality: Finally, Hebrew Israelites assert that they are a nation and "not simply a religion."

[Hebrew Israelites], this is a nationality. Israelites are the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the seed of the promise; and Jews are just someone who adopts Judaism.

(Brother J)

As such Hebrew Israelites insist that their nationality is that of citizens in the Hebrew Israelite nation or as they name it, the Kingdom of God at Jerusalem. Hebrew Israelites further assert that they are not Americans, nor do they wish to become citizens of Israel. From time to time, Hebrew Israelites express their contempt and rejection of Israeli and American authority. For example, I observed a mass wedding of Hebrew Israelites performed without licenses and in which some of the participants were marrying second wives. Hebrew Israelite leadership granted permission for some of these participants to marry who had wives in the U.S. who had not accompanied them to Israel and who had not obtained a
a divorce. About their marriages, Hebrew Israelites expressed to us their recognition that they were probably in conflict with the laws in Israel and the U.S., but that they believed that they were no longer bound by these laws since they were now Hebrew Israelite citizens!

In their new nation Hebrew Israelites assert that there will be no social, economic or political inequities. Most important, social justice will exist in the form of a righteous government:

This kingdom that I'm talking about is a righteous government which is the term which the world would be using, a righteous government from which all men can be taught and learn the true worship of the creator of the heaven and earth, in past times called the God of Israel, but his is the creator or the God of all the universe. Jerusalem is a beginning only because He chose a people to be a light unto him, and that the Father would keep His word and allow establish, these people as the foundation of that kingdom. These people in past times were called Israelites because they were born of the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, according to the flesh and in coming times they will be called by a new name because they will be born in perfection according to the spirit. A righteous government, the kingdom of God where men will govern the world, and men will be governed by the almighty God and they will govern the world according to his will. Every issue, every consideration, every thought will be determined whether it's pleasing to the almighty God or not. Everything that we do, that we will be about in the kingdom of Aba, the principle will be if it will be pleasing to the almighty God or not. Men governing the world that is governed by God. And this is called the kingdom of God, or the government of almighty God, governed by his righteousness. And that's the kingdom to which I'm about the business of establishing at Jerusalem...

(Nasi Hashalom)

In the assertion that they are a nationality and not "simply a religion," Hebrew Israelites have provided themselves with a justification for revitalization, i.e., to form a new satisfying culture. As Hebrew Israelites they insist that they have a unique national culture. This culture consists of, among other things, a language (Hebrew), distinctive dress, religion, customs and behaviors. Hebrew Israelites are
particularly sanguine about Hebrew Israelite culture since it affords them an alternative to the American culture and the black American identity from which they wish release. One Hebrew Israelite woman noted, for example how much her life had improved once she left the American culture and assumed the Hebrew Israelite role of the "divine woman";

I'm not saying I'm completely a "divine woman;" I'm still working for that goal. I had started working along the lines but I hadn't come quite as far as I am now. I was still wavering between Babylon, in the States, and here [Israel]. I hadn't mentally released myself completely from Babylon. I had some of the hangups of still being independent. In Babylon they stress the matriarchal society and I was into this for quite a while... A divine woman is the most beautiful woman in the world. She is a complete mother; she is a complete wife. She is not competitive with her husband. She is content to be his wife and his helpmate, to help him in any way that she can, whether it is to bolster his ego, to wash his clothes, or just to raise his children. And being a divine woman you do a combination of all. You have your role in the Nation. For instance, I'm a teacher. I have a tutoring class after school. Also I'm a dance instructor. And to fit all of these jobs into your life, into your day, and still recognize your husband as the man he is, putting him first in his position, and respecting him, and loving him and raising his children and still doing all of your tasks smoothly, that is the divine woman; not complaining, being content in this role. You can do it and in your heart you don't feel 'well, I'm satisfied,' but if you can do this and say, 'well, I'm happy doing this and I wouldn't want to be anywhere else doing nothing else because this is my place,' then you are the divine woman. You also give that respect to the brothers. When a brother comes into your house you give him the respect of... you are not up in his conversation competing on a man to man level, unless you are called for that position. It's not that you feel rejected or you feel that you are being put aside. But you know that that is not a woman's place. A woman is not supposed to run a Nation or take care of Nation business. A woman has woman business to take care of and she is content to take care of her business. And if she does her job efficiently she, in turn, helps run the Nation smoothly because the Nation can't run without a woman. But she has her own place.

(Sister D)

For Hebrew Israelites, adopting Hebrew Israelite culture is a personal imperative as a way to express their Hebrew Israelite nationality. All
of those, for example, who did not speak Hebrew fluently were either
students in a language training class at the local community center, or
felt it necessary to explain to this observer that they were learning
Hebrew "on their own." Hebrew Israelite conversation in English is
sprinkled with Hebrew words. Children, for example refer to their
mothers and fathers with the Hebrew equivalent Ima and Aba. Adults
frequently say Lo or Ken instead of No or Yes. Also, social gatherings
and parties were held frequently and during these occasions new Hebrew
Israelite clothing and fashions were on display, vegetarian recipes
discussed, and Hebrew Israelite songs sung. These social gatherings
were always an opportunity for the faithful to discuss the "meaningful-
ness" of their Hebrew Israelite culture that Hebrew Israelites felt
was a product of their Hebrew Israelite nationality.

Finally, Hebrew Israelites are aware that all of their assertions,
including those of Hebrew Israelite nationality are unconvincing to
outsiders. However, Hebrew Israelites are convinced that their claims
will be borne out in the very near future.

The kingdom of God is here now, but the world has a tendency
where they can get around this. But through the great manifesta-
tions which will come between now and 1977, and plagues, and
what-not, the manifestation of almighty God upon his kingdom and
upon his people, then the world will have to acknowledge these are
the people of almighty God, this is his government or his king-
dom. And then, when this is acknowledged then the Father will
be able to have his glory and his people will be able to share
in the glory of the Almighty God. At this time, the world has
not acknowledged that we are the people; the world has not
acknowledged the almighty God, and they have not acknowledged that
they are going to have to worship and accept his kingdom that is
at Jerusalem. At that time they will acknowledge that.

(Num Hashalom)
Conclusion:

The new Hebrew Israelite identity has been founded upon the redefinition of four of the set of identifications: name, color, origin, and nationality. The new definitions provide the content for a more satisfying Hebrew Israelite identity. Adoption of Hebrew Israelite names allows the membership to shed their relationship with their felt negative identity; in concrete terms, black skin color has been transformed by Hebrew Israelite ideology into a badge of honor, a glorious and lengthy past has been offered in the Hebrew Israelite explanation of the origins of the Hebrew Israelite people, and finally, nationality in the Hebrew Israelite nation completes the formation of the new and more satisfying Hebrew Israelite identity.
Footnotes


7. Lucian Pye states "that in the process of political development, an identity crisis occurs when a community finds that what it had once unquestioningly accepted as the physical and psychological definitions of its collective self are no longer acceptable under new historic conditions." See Lucian Pye, "Identity and the Political Culture," in Crises and Sequences in Political Development ed. by Myron Weiner, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), pp. 110-111.


9. For a discussion, analysis and illustration of black cult behavior, see Arthur H. Fauset, Black Gods of the Metropolis (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944); Joseph R. Washington, Jr., Black Sects and Cults (New York: Doubleday, 1972); Raymond Jones, A Comparative Study of Religious Cult Behavior Among Negroes with Special Reference to Emotional Group Conditioning Factors (Washington, D.C. Graduate School for the Division of the Social Sciences, Howard University, 1939; Roy Wallis, "Ideology, Authority and the
development of Cultic Movements," Social Research, XLI (Summer, 1974), 298-327.


11. For a discussion of cults as agents of nationalism see Guenter Lewy, Religion and Revolution (New York: Oxford University, 1974).


18. Yonina Talmon has noted that "radical millenarism found support in all levels of society at one time or another but essentially it is a religion of the deprived groups -- oppressed peasant, the poorest of the poor in cities and towns, populations of colonial countries. The millenarian hope usually flares up as a reaction to particularly severe hardships and suffering." See "Pursuit of the Millenium: The Relation Between Religious and Social Change," 130-144.

19. Guenter Lewy has noted: "A subjective awareness of distress shared by a group or society is crucial in all of these different types of severe dissatisfaction. As student of mass movements have recognized for some time, it is not so much the severity of deprivation


23. Multiple leadership in millenarian cults is not an unusual phenomenon. For an analysis see Roy Wallis, "Ideology, Authority, and the Development of Cultic Movements," 298-327.


quest for an appropriate group name to describe black Americans.

26. For a discussion of black Americans and color, see H. R. Isaacs, The New World of Negro Americans, pp. 72-96.

27. For a vivid illustration of black self-hate see Eldridge Cleaver, Soul on Ice (New York, Dell, 1968), pp. 7-11, 155-175. Alex Haley, The Autobiography of Malcolm X (New York: Gove, 1964), pp. 52-55; Franz Fanon, Black Skin White Masks (New York, Grove, 1967). The precise beginnings of the loss of self-respect among blacks is still open to speculation. There are discussions which suggest that such a loss was in evidence among slaves who were divided into "house and field Negroes." The former contemptuously accused by the latter of imitating their master's manners, dress and values. "If the master got sick, the house Negro would say, 'what's the matter boss, we sick?"' See "Malcolm X, Definition of a Revolution" in Malcolm X: The Man and His Times, ed. by John Henrik Clarke (New York, Macmillan 1969), p. 277. Also see the discussion regarding the slaves commitment to the "Aristocratic ethos," in Eugene Genovese, Roll Jordan Roll: The World the Slaves Made (New York: Pantheon, 1974), pp. 113-123.

28. See the discussion of the definition of a Hebrew Israelite in Chapter I, pp.37-43. In relation to color, note particularly the quotations and the treatment of "black" as a mark of distinction.
Chapter III

Hebrew Israelites, Black Jews and Black Muslims:

Contrasts and Comparisons
Introduction:

There have been numerous nationalistic cults in the black ghettos of the United States. This chapter compares and contrasts two of the more prominent cults with the Hebrew Israelites: The Nation of Islam (The Black Muslims), and the Commandment Keepers of the Living God Congregation (The Black Jews).

In the introduction the Black Muslims are described, in comparison to Hebrew Israelites and Black Jews, as a group which is large, complex and possessing considerable resources. Other differences obtain between these groups, and it is the purpose of this chapter to illuminate and explain those differences. The chapter proceeds by comparing and contrasting Black Muslims, Hebrew Israelites and Black Jews in terms of their genesis, eschatology/ideology, culture, recruitment, organization, ritual, practice and emigration.

Genesis: Both the Black Muslims and the Black Jews had their beginnings in the early part of the 1930s. Hebrew Israelites are a more recent phenomenon within the Black Jewish cult tradition, emerging in the early 1960s.

Black Muslims emerged as the result of the "fissioning" of a black nationalist cult. After the disappearance of W.D.Fard, the honorable Elijah Muhammad assumed control of one faction of Moorish Americans contesting for leadership of the Moorish Science Temples. Muhammad's group remained unreconciled with the other contesting factions and we have come to know the former as the Nation of Islam or Black Muslims.

Hebrew Israelites and Black Jews have typically emerged as a result of leadership who have felt themselves divinely ordained to lead
"their Nations" into the millennium. As with the Nation of Islam and Muhammad, the genesis and development of Black Jews is inseparable from Rabbi Wentworth Matthew as is the genesis and development of the Hebrew Israelites inseparable from the leadership of Hashalom and Shaliach.

**Eschatology/Ideology:**

Eschatology/Ideology functions to provide the cultist not only with a rationale, i.e., a religious philosophy and doctrine, but also to counter the debilitating effects of racial exploitation. Most, if not all, of the membership have experienced discrimination and bigotry because they are black. Moreover, many of these same members have internalized negative sentiments about their blackness, suffering resulting a loss of self-esteem, self-acceptance and self-worth. This is a condition that we may term a loss of a positive sense of identity. For the cultist, the eschatology/ideology provides an explanation of how his group came to suffer their present predicament. It provides the cultist with a pridelful history and a plan for the future which is calculated to obtain power for the cultist's group and retribution against all of those guilty of exploiting the cult's members. Importantly, through the eschatology/ideology, the cultist acquires a nationality and a positive group identity.

Hebrew Israelites, Black Muslims and Black Jews all preach that they are a very special, a "chosen people." The mark or badge of that chosen-ness for each is their color: black. Brotz notes that the Black Jews are convinced that the Hebrews of the Old Testament from whom they claim descent were black. According to Rabbi Wentworth Matthew, the spiritual leader of the Black Jews, scriptual proof of
their claims revolves about two main points:

The first is that Jacob was black because he had smooth skin 'as the black man invariably has,' and hence the patriarchs were black. Solomon was also black, and Matthew contends that the Biblical phrase in the Song of Solomon 1:5, in which Solomon says, 'I am black but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,' should be correctly translated as black and comely. (Indeed, the Hebrew does permit either alternative.) The second point is that they are the descendants of the union between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba who founded a line of Ethiopian Hebrew Kings from Menelik I down to Haile Selassie, the Lion of Judah who is covertly a Hebrew...2

Through the above interpretation, Black Jews have converted the color black from a mark of shame and opprobrium to a badge of honor and pride by associating it with the revered patriarchs of the Old Testament who formed a convenant with their God. Black Muslims and Hebrew Israelites have similar interpretations that differ in some detail in their eschatology/ideology: Black Muslims believe that all persons of African descent in North America belong generically to the Asian Black Nation whose progenitor was black: Abraham of the Old Testament. Black Americans are understood by Black Muslims to have a special role in the Asian Black Nation, which encompassed all non-caucasian peoples. Black Muslims believe that they have been chosen by Allah to be the instrument of the destruction of the present "evil civilization," and the redemption and salvation of the Black Nation.3 But perhaps most important of all to Black Muslims is their belief that their God Allah is a black man, and that the first people to inhabit the earth were black.4 Finally, Hebrew Israelites also claim that the ancient patriarchs of the Old Testament were black,5 and that they also have a special mission to be the instrument of their God ushering in the millenium in 1977.6
All three cults have altered the normative implications of the colors black and white. White for Hebrew Israelites, Black Muslims and Black Jews is symbolic of evil, while black represents good. Through this value reversal the black cultist is provided additional support for acceptance of his/her skin color. Black Muslims assert that:

the white race was 'grafted' from the Black Nation. The Black Nation represents 'righteousness,' whereas the white race represents 'evil.' As we shall see, this conception of the world leads also to the view that the 'last shall be first and the first last,' or that 'Black becomes White and White, Black.'

We have observed Hebrew Israelite behavior which attempts to practice the value reversal of the color symbolism. Hebrew Israelite men, for example, are avid chess players. While they are observant of all of the rule of chess, they nevertheless have made one important innovation: Black moves first.

The eschatology/ideology of all three cults provides an explanation for the predicament of black people, but also more importantly, it suggests "a way out." In effect the content of the eschatology and ideology becomes a statement of the cultist's origins and a plan for the future. The cultist believes that his past and future is part of a divine plan in which his group plays a central role. According to the Black Muslims, the first people to inhabit the Earth were black people, members of the tribe called Shabazz. Black Muslims believe that the enslavement of their forebears and the continued oppression of blacks has been part of a divine plan in which their God Allah sought to test the mettle of the Black Nation. Eventually, the power of caucasians will be broken in a war of Armageddon and Black Muslims believe that they
will emerge with unparalleled power to reign forever over the entire earth under the tutelage and guadanc of their God Allah. Both Hebrew Israelites and Black Jews have similar eschatologies and ideologies. 8 Rabbi Matthew has explained that the "Gentile age" is coming to an end, and that an atomic war will begin with the "children of Israel" returning to Israel and God ruling the earth. 9 Hebrew Israelites believe also that a war of Armageddon will destroy the earth, but they like the Black Muslims believe that they will survive to rule with unparalleled power under the tutelage of their God.

Unlike the Black Muslims or Black Jews, the Hebrew Israelites are obsessed with the imminence of the war of Armageddon and millenium which is due in 1977. The Hebrew Israelite wishes to be certain that he/she is fully prepared for this grand event, i.e., in full compliance with whatever religious obligations Hebrew Israelites feel are necessary to satisfy their God. Much effort is spent in defining and redefining behaviors, values, beliefs and customs. We observed changes in eating practices and recreational activities for example, as Hebrew Israelites sought to "cleanse" themselves and become more righteous: Soya, a processed form of soy bean meal was declared unfit for Hebrew Israelite consumption joining the list of other food tabus; movies were forbidden when the leadership decided that their content of violence and sex excessive. 11 For the Hebrew Israelite, all of his/her attention is focused on 1977, and nothing is important save it serve to contribute to the Hebrew Israelites obtaining the millenium.

The remoteness of the future dates of the Armageddon and millenium predicted by the Black Muslims and Black Jews, have allowed these two groups to develop other concerns. They is not to say that these events
are not important, or are easily dismissed by the membership. They are important since it is through these events, it is believed, that their claims will be vindicated and retribution obtained.

Finally, the eschatology/ideology of each of these cults asserts that they are not merely a cult or a religion, but a nation. As such, Hebrew Israelites assert that they are not American citizens but are Hebrew Israelites of the Nation of Israel. In keeping with that claim, Hebrew Israelites have emigrated to Israel where they await the fulfillment of the prophecy they believe will usher in the millenium. Black Jews believe that they are really a nation of people who have been mistakenly named and categorized as a race called Negroes. Black Jews assert that they are really the descendants of the lost tribes of Israel.

Black Muslims assert that they are really Asiatics, members of the Asian Black Nation. Black Jews, unlike Hebrew Israelites, do not make any specific claims to existing territory, for a national homeland. Black Muslims have, however, demanded that the United States give up a territory to the Nation for the establishment of a Black Republic. Also, Muhammad did in the past make vague references about a "return to our nativeland" without identifying specifically where that land was. He probably had in mind the middle eastern Arab countries and some black African nations with sizeable Moslem populations. However, always conscious of the size of his following and not anxious to lose any of his membership, Muhammad discouraged emigration. Thus equipped with a new nationality, the cultist is also provided with a new satisfying group identity.
Culture:

All three cults have acted as revitalization movements, i.e., to provide their membership with a more satisfying culture. The cults have insisted that they are Nations and not simply religions. To the cultist this implies that his/her nation possesses a unique and distinctive culture. All three cults seek to counter the notion that its black membership is without a cultural heritage, or possesses one only linked to American history by a shameful slave past. Black Muslims assert that:

American Negroes are not only Asiatic black people; they have also been Muslims from the creation. In other words, their religion from the inception of time has been Islam and their national deity Allah. 14

Black Jews and Hebrew Israelites make similar claims, identifying the origins of their progenitors as being the ancient Hebrews whom the cultists assert were black.

The cult's cultures have different in content and form although the goals of each have often been similar: a model cult person. Each of the cults, for example, have been concerned with the socially deviant behavior of the public from whom it draws membership. The cults have seen a need to reform the hustlers, pimps, drug addicts, prostitutes and criminals, and the necessity to repair the broken families, eroded values, hopes and aspirations of those who fine the cults appealing. To overcome these kinds of dysfunctional behavior, Black Muslims are provided with a stringent code of private and social morality, ritual requirements and other moral injunctions to govern their lives. 15 The Black Muslim is expected to pray five times a day, to perform ritual washing, observe
certain food Tabus and avoid tobacco and alcohol. Sexual morality is defined in ultra-puritanical terms and is thought to be strictly enforced. Black Muslims are expected to attend temple services at least two times a week and sometimes more. Sanctions are exacted swiftly upon those who do not comply.16

Hebrew Israelites are similarly concerned about the conduct of its membership, and have through the concept of Divine Behavior imposed standards of conduct for Hebrew Israelites to follow.17 Black Jews also boast that their group is free of crime and juvenile delinquency.18 Hebrew Israelites and Black Jews do differ from Black Muslims on the enforcement of their standards of conduct. Voluntary compliance is expected by Hebrew Israelites, and at most peer and group pressure serves to encourage members to conform.

A simple admonishment for the non-observance of a food tabu, for example, has usually been sufficient to obtain compliance. In the number of instances that we observed in this regard, the guilty Hebrew Israelite claimed ignorance or surprise that the food they were eating was proscribed, but immediately ceased eating the food while acknowledging their acceptance of the criticism. Similarly Black Jews seem to rely more on the internalization of standards rather than the imposition of sanctions to obtain compliance from their membership.

The self imposition of food tabus are equally a restraint. And to turn to habits of department, there is a great sobriety in dress. Matthew and the older men dress almost entirely in black. It was interesting to notice among the new recruits the gradual disappearance of flamboyance, highly colored clothing, and the large brimmed hats for men that[were] so common in Harlem. And this is done without a word being said, for there is no explicit rule about it.19
There is a strong economic drive that has become central to the Black Muslim culture. Black Muslims believe that much of their problem as blacks in America is economic. Black Muslims feel that the white man's economic strength provides him with dominance over blacks. To counter the economic power of whites, Black Muslims have established businesses and subscribed to an economic morality. While Black Muslims have not become materialists and they abhor acquisitiveness and conspicuous consumption, they do hold industriousness and a sense of responsibility in high esteem. Thrift is encouraged and Black Muslim members are warned about the dangers of debts and wasting money. Ideally, Black Muslims would like to establish a separate Black Nation whose economy would be independent of white influence. In the interim, Black Muslims are encouraged to work at any job, including employment by whites, for all work is considered honorable. Black Muslims have also established businesses which provide employment and products for their membership.

Neither Hebrew Israelites or Black Jews have economics as a focal point of their new culture; Brotz explains that Black Jews are not large enough in numbers to entertain establishing businesses. If anything Hebrew Israelites find the economic concern of Black Muslims repugnant. To Hebrew Israelites, "this worldly" concern of Black Muslims is immoral and hedonistic. Hebrew Israelites like to think of themselves as a "spiritual people" not dependent upon material wants. In the Hebrew Israelite mind, economics are also irrelevant in view of the imminence of the millenium in 1977: at that time all needs will be fulfilled in the millenial utopia. In the meantime, Hebrew Israelites believe that
their legitimate wants will be satisfied by their God. Hebrew Israelites were fond of pointing out to this observer that they were successful in their emigration and immigration because of their God; additionally, that where they had material needs, they were usually satisfied, for example, by the arrival of a letter with money or the obtaining of a job unexpectedly by one of their numbers. On many occasions with this observer, Hebrew Israelites enjoyed describing how they felt they were free of economic pressures. For the most part this entailed a description of the cooperative arrangements enjoyed by members of the group: food, shelter, clothing and other essentials were shared by the group.

Hebrew Israelites were not always consistent in their rejection of economics. For example, one of their members enjoyed some reputation among the group because of his success in selling his handicrafts to tourists and Israelis. There also did seem to this observer a measure of begrudging admiration and/or jealousy that Hebrew Israelites felt when they spoke about Black Muslim successes in establishing businesses. That is, as a black achievement, in a white dominated world, it merited admiration on those terms alone.

All three cults may be understood to be a radical critique of the American culture. Hebrew Israelites, Black Muslims and Black Jews have been smarting over the subordinate status, class and "caste positions" that they and their forebears have suffered as black Americans. They find particularly repugnant the stereotypes and caricatures that have been promoted by whites about blacks. To counter and escape these ugly images, all three cults have adopted their "new cultures." In
addition to the economic behavior and "model cult person" noted above, Black Muslims, Hebrew Israelites and Black Jews have adopted other cultural externalities which serve as instrumentalities of their new cultures. All three groups have asserted that English is not their language, and have promoted other languages as their mother tongues. Indeed, Lincoln has noted a comment from the Black Muslim newspaper, Muhammad Speaks:

   English is a bastard language. This is the truth. English is a bastard language for it is made up of other languages. It is a dependent language, so we see here why it is necessary for us to have a new language.  

Black Muslims claim Arabic; Hebrew Israelites and Black Jews claim Hebrew.

   Hebrew, as the Black Jews content, is the Lord's language, the sacred language spoken by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, their language which was stolen from them during slavery. And they hold it in all the awe and reverence that they would grant to their most sacred possession.

All three groups have been concerned about the dress and comportment of their membership. Each has been disturbed about the flamboyance and/or impoverished appearance of ghetto blacks. They have also been concerned about what they consider to be the sexually provocative fashions of women. On more than one occasion, Hebrew Israelites expressed to this observer their criticism of women who wore mini-skirts, sheer "see-through" blouses, or what they considered to be immoral dress. Their criticisms of men's fashions were no less severe. They rejected men's high heeled platformed shoes, and particularly the "pimp style" clothing that included wide-brimmed hats and "feminine colors." In reaction, Black Muslims and Black Jews have encouraged their membership to adopt a more sober, sedate and quiet appearance. Black Jewish
and Black Muslim men usually wear suits in conservative patterns and colors with conventional shirts and ties. Hebrew Israelites and Black Muslims, unlike Black Jews, seem to be more sensitive to the significance of fashion although the latter as we have noted is also concerned. Black Muslims have eschewed the new Afro-hair styles, and Black Muslim women wear distinctive dresses which usually includes ankle length dresses, tops with full length sleeves closed to the neck, and a distinctive head dress. In sharp contrast to the Black Muslim men who usually wear their hair closely cropped in almost military fashion, Hebrew Israelite men wear their hair in the latest Afro-fashions including braiding in "corn rows." Both Hebrew Israelite men and women wear colorful clothing. The men may be seen in Dashikis or Arab like Djalabbas, wearing skull caps or turbans. Hebrew Israelite women usually dress similarly to Black Muslim women, except that the former characteristically use brighter colors.

Two of the cults have established schools and educational programs for their youth: Black Muslims and Hebrew Israelites provide primary and secondary education. Black Jews have only been able to offer an afternoon program of religious instruction. Because of their greater resources, Black Muslims have been able to develop a more extensive school system and education program. In 1972 the Muslims had 14 parochial schools in operation. The schools were staffed by Muslims and non-Muslims, and most of the school were accredited by local accrediting bodies. The school year for Black Muslim children extends over fifty weeks.
Hebrew Israelites had only one school in operation during the period of this research. The resources of the Hebrew Israelites are minimal, and consequently the educational program has limits. Classes were held in the apartments of the members and the basement of the apartment building where they lived. Teachers were all Hebrew Israelites, all unsalaried volunteers, and the school was not accredited. The school year for Hebrew Israelites was September through June.

For the Black Muslims, the Schools are a long range recruiting device. Linccln notes that many lower class black parents are impressed with the emphasis of the Black Muslim schools on black history and the black cultural heritage. Many of these same parents and others obtain some status value by sending their children to Black Muslim schools, which are in effect private school for low income families. The Hebrew Israelite school serves no other population save its membership and Hebrew Israelites are not interested in the school as a tool of recruitment.

Both Black Muslim and Hebrew Israelite education seeks to inculcate into their children their own particular view of the past. Both have been highly critical of the absence of the discussion of black contributions in the curricula of American schools, and more recent compensatory efforts to correct this deficiency have not satisfied the cultist. Both would also agree that the few blacks who have achieved educationally have done little for black people. Indeed, Black Muslims would argue that the educated black elite's education has not enabled them to feel responsible for other blacks. While Black Muslim education attempts to repair this latter deficit through the "re-education" of its membership,
Hebrew Israelites take another tact. Hebrew Israelites are interested in fostering mutual inter-dependence among its membership, but only in so far as it prepared them for the millenium in 1977. Indeed, Hebrew Israelite education is not concerned so much with providing its membership with skills and a heritage to confront future economic and social problems, as it is in heightening the consciousness and solidarity of its membership in preparing for the millenium.28

Another important aspect of Hebrew Israelite and Black Muslim education are the attempts to instill in their youth the socially approved roles, behaviors and values of their culture. Both groups, for example, seem to place a premium on child obedience and compliance with adult authority. As such, each group is quick to point to the disciplined behavior of the children in the cults' school.29 Moreover, while the training of both boys and girls is considered important, the education of young girls receives special attention by Black Muslims and Hebrew Israelites. Black Muslim girls must be taught their special roles as wives and mothers. Muslim Girls' Training classes serves this end; for Hebrew Israelite girls, classes in Divine Behavior are employed.

Recruitment

Black Muslims actively recruit new members to the Nation of Islam. Their efforts to obtain new recruits have been organized and systematic, utilizing pamphlets, movies, local black radio stations, the Black Muslim press and personal contact.30

Ministers go into jails and penitentiaries, pool halls and bars, barbershops and drugstores to talk about Islam. They invade the college campuses, the settlement houses, and the YMCS's. Young Muslim brothers hawk their newspapers along with
insistent invitations to attend lectures at the Muslim temples. They speak from street corners and in parks, and they distribute literature where ever large crowds of blacks may be gathered. Invariably, the proselytizers are young, personable, urbane, and well-dressed men of confidence and conviction. 31

Neither the Black Jews nor the Hebrew Israelites have an active recruitment program. In part this is ideological. Although Brotz does not comment directly on Black Jewish recruitment efforts they share the Hebrew Israelite conviction that one is either born to the faith or not. 32 If the latter, conversion is not possible, although, for blacks a "consciousness raising" that one is truly a Hebrew Israelite or Black Jew may occur and enable one to return to the fold. Hebrew Israelites and Black Jews therefore do not proselytize.

Neither Hebrew Israelites nor Black Jews have extensive resources so that they would be limited even if they wished to solicit conversions or new recruits. Also, as millenarians, Hebrew Israelites have added limitations since they believe that they are an elite vanguard whose task it is to usher in the millenium.

Hebrew Israelites, Black Muslims and Black Jews all draw from the lower class black population. Many of the membership of Hebrew Israelites and Black Muslims have been born in the South, and interestingly, among the Black Jews are numbers of members of West Indian descent. All three cults are composed mainly of black Americans of less than high school education, although both Hebrew Israelites and Black Muslims boast of a sprinkling of college graduates. 33 In the main, the membership of the cults work primarily in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations although all three cults also boast of their members with skilled occupations.
Some have become Black Muslims as a result of the latter's organized recruitment efforts. However, many more Black Muslims, like Hebrew Israelites and Black Jews, have joined their respective groups as a consequence of "face to face" discussions with trusted friends or relatives who were already members of the cults. In particular, Hebrew Israelites and Black Jews have usually recalled that it was some older relative who alerted them in their youth that they were Black Jews or Hebrew Israelites; however, it was only as an adult that the memory was revived, re-enforced and became a conviction.

Organization:

The organization of the Black Muslims is large and complex comprising over 80 temples and 30,000 members. Black Muslim assets have been estimated to be close to 80 million dollars. Authority in the Nation of Islam on matters of ideology, theology and policy resides solely in the Messenger of Allah. The Messenger also presides over a hierarchy of Black Muslim officers whose responsibilities include the leadership of the Black Muslim temples, organizations like the Fruit of Islam (F.O.I) for men, and the Muslim Girls' Training and General Civilization Class (M.G.T.G.C.C.), and the educational and economic establishments. These latter include farms, clothing stores, restaurants, barbershops, grocery stores and the Black Muslim Press.

In comparison to the Black Muslims, Hebrew Israelites and Black Jewish organization is not so complex. These latter two groups support only one temple each and have a total membership of approximately 200 for the Hebrew Israelites and 1,000 for Black Jews. The assets of
the Hebrew Israelites were a well kept secret, but our observations indicated that they were not affluent and had difficulty in meeting day-to-day expenses. Black Jews also as a group are not wealthy, and can in no way match the assets of Black Muslims. Brotz notes that Black Jews are, in contrast to Black Muslims, too small in number to sustain the kinds of economic enterprises the latter have established. 34

Authority among the Hebrew Israelites and Black Jews in matters of ideology, theology and policy resides, as with the Black Muslims, wholly in the leaders of the two groups: Rabbi Matthew among the Black Jews, and Nasi Hashalom and Shaliach among the Hebrew Israelites. Hebrew Israelites also have a Council of Elders composed of 12 Princes (Nasim) who are assigned various responsibilities by the Hebrew Israelite leadership. However, like the Black Muslim officers, the Council of Elders is clearly subordinate to the Hebrew Israelite leadership. Brotz does not indicate that a hierarchy of leadership exists among Black Jews. This suggests that others do carry out functions and responsibilities delegated by Rabbi Matthew and that the latter is probably the unchallenged leader.

Ritual and Practices:

Black Muslims and Hebrew Israelites are similar in that there is virtually no religious ceremony or ritual at their temple meetings. 35 Among Black Muslims, prayers are said at the beginning and closing of the meetings, sometimes interspersed with a reading from a passage from the Koran or Bible. 36 Meetings among Hebrew Israelites proceed similarly with perhaps more extended readings by the service leader. The
order of worship is simple among both groups and it has not been codified. In contrast, Black Jews follow somewhat more ceremony and ritual at temple meetings.

The service begins with a hymn sung by the adult choir. Then everyone rises, the men put on their Talesim (prayer shawls), and all sing the prayer Shema (Hear 0 Israel). The rabbi announces the page of Phillips Prayer Book on which the service begins, although most of the members know. The rabbi reads aloud, alternating between Hebrew and English of the bilingual text, up to the point where it is indicated that the scroll is to be removed from the ark. At this time, members who wish to do so 'pledge contributions to Torah' (a dollar) for the purchase of a new scroll. Then the rabbi removes the scroll from the ark, takes the covering off and drapes it over a qualified shepherd (one of the youngest), blesses the Torah, and the heart of the ceremony commences. 37

Neither Black Muslims, Black Jews or Hebrew Israelites worship in accordance with the prescribed traditions of Islam or Judaism. 38 Black Jews have, however, made some effort to emulate the rituals of the white Jewish community. Waitzkin notes that Matthew has introduced a significant amount of orthodox Jewish ritual into the Black Jewish sabbath services: 39

Matthew begins the service with prayers from the Phillips Prayer Book, which is used by many orthodox Jewish synagogues throughout the country. Most of the congregation repeat these initial prayers aloud. 40

When the Torah reading is completed, Matthew leads a procession of all the men around the entire sanctuary. Matthew carries a Torah... It is interesting to note that a similar procession occurs in the standard orthodox service of the sabbath. The cantor leads this procession. He carries a Torah... 41

But despite Matthew's use of orthodox Jewish ritual, Waitzkin points out that Black Jews remain a syncretic cult. 42

The sermons presented in the services of all thee cults generally focus on the black predicament, organization issues and doctrinal
prescriptions as a solution to black problems. Udom notes that:

The teaching on Sunday is usually long, the minister or the Messenger trying to cover every aspect of the doctrine. Much time is often devoted to the discussion of Negro problems, both contemporary and historical. 43

Waitzkin notes that the sermon he observed attacked Christianity because it was a 'passive religion of slavery,' and then Matthew suggested that Black Jews could be saved from their worldly problems by strict adherence to Jewish law.

Interestingly, all three cults have been concerned lest the conduct of their members during services become unrestrained and similar to the behavior of impassioned adherents at revival meetings. For Black Muslims:

There is no singing. Shouting and wailing is considered characteristic of Negro Christian preachers who want to arouse the emotions of their congregations in order to get money 'which is tied up in churches and Cadillacs.' In general all such emotionalism is discouraged. 44

Hebrew Israelites and Black Jews agree on this point:

Although some expression of enthusiasm is permitted, what is so markedly characteristic of their worship... is its restraint and sobriety. There is no swooning, shrieking, screaming, running up and down the room in a state of 'possession' -- all of which Matthew regards as 'niggeritions.' 45

All three cults observe some food tabus. Hebrew Israelites are vegetarians; Black Jews are "strictly kosher," and Black Muslims have an extensive list of foods which they do not eat, including pork, spinach and tomatoes. 46 All the cults segregate men and women during their ritual services.
Emigration:

Finally, Hebrew Israelites differed from Black Muslims and Black Jews by leaving the United States. Eventually, Hebrew Israelites believe, all Hebrew Israelites will come to Israel. Black Jews have mentioned emigration for blacks as a "way out" of their predicament, but leaving the United States has never been central to their belief system. Black Muslims have suggested emigration as an alternative also, but Lincoln notes that this option has never been emphasized since Black Muslims feel their strongest claim to a national homeland in America. This claim is founded on at least two propositions:

(1) The white man stole the country from the Indians, who are non-white peoples and brothers to the so-called Negroes, and (2) the so-called Negroes worked for three hundred years as "free slaves," thereby earning a share in the country. Yet, what share have they received?
Footnotes


4. Ibid., pp. 144-149.


11. Hebrew Israelite rejection of processed foods is related to their repugnance to modern technology which they understand as anti-theitical to life. They argue that modern technology pollutes and spoils the environment, and is at the service of profit hungry corporations. Ultimately, they understand modern technology as the instrument of evil, i.e., all those who are Hebrew Israelite enemies.


13. Ibid., p. 288.


16. Ibid., p. 84.

17. Chapter I, pp. 84-87.


19. Ibid., p. 44.


34. Brotz, *The Black Jews of Harlem*, p. 44.

35. Chapter I, pp. 61-66.


40. Ibid., p. 27.

41. Ibid., p. 30.

42. Ibid., p. 26.


44. Ibid., p. 240.


Chapter IV

How do Hebrew Israelites and Israelis perceive each other?
Introduction:

This chapter is concerned with the attitudes and opinions of Hebrew Israelites towards Israelis, and the attitudes and opinions of a sample of Dimonans towards Hebrew Israelites. The chapter begins with a discussion of the setting, the town of Dimona, in which the research was conducted. There follows next a discussion of Hebrew Israelites and the Law of Return; and then a description of the Research Methods used to obtain the data. Finally, there is a discussion and analysis of the data obtained from some representative questions of interviews of Hebrew Israelites and sampled Dimonans regarding their attitudes and opinions towards each other.

Dimona:

Dimona is a development town situated in the Negev desert about 32 kilometers southeast of the city of Beersheva. Upon seeing Dimona initially, this observer was struck by the artificial quality of the town as the many concrete, barracks-like housing projects seem to rest almost without foundation upon the desert floor. There is also the striking contrast between the natural desert hills and the modern buildings that are Dimona.

Since its inception over 20 years ago, Dimona's population has grown in excess of 20,000 people. Approximately 60% of the population are of Asian/African (Sephardic) descent; another 28% were born in Israel (Sabras), and 12% were of European/American origins (Ashkenazic). Indeed Dimona's national cultural mix is most striking and one can observe while standing in the town center dark-skinned Jews from Morocco and
India, others from Rumania and more recently Russia speaking the languages of the countries of their birth. Regularly, in one of the towns two cinemas, films from Turkey and India are featured. In the other cinema, films from America, Europe and Hong Kong have been the most popular. The restaurants, shops and synagogues also reflect the diverse ethnic character of Dimona. For those born in French speaking Arabic countries, there are menu items that reflect those cuisines as well as synagogues for the different national groups and grocery stores with ethnic foods.

During the period of this research there was much of a "boom town" quality to Dimona. Many large tracts of land were strewn with the materials of builders and the skeletons of partially completed housing complexes were silhouetted against the horizon. A large bus depot was also in a state of construction. The movement of workers leaving and entering the town as they went to and from work contributed to the boom town quality. There were very few automobiles in Dimona so that most transportation was by autobus, and in the mornings and evenings as the workers left and returned from work the town center was alive with activity.

Situated around Dimona are a number of textile mills and a nuclear reactor where many of the townspeople work. Work was also obtained on the many construction sites within Dimona and other surrounding towns. Some Dimonans also worked in Beersheva, Arad and Yeruham in the phosphate plants and chemical complexes.

There is a contrast in "Israeli" perceptions about Dimona. It was not infrequent for me to hear unkind and negative evaluations of Dimona.
from non-Dimonans most of whom were of Ashkenazic background. These comments were reminiscent of a W.C. Fields joke. The famous comedian is purported to have said posthumously: "I'd rather be here than in Philadelphia." Some Israelis regarded me with amazement when I told them that I was living in Dimona, remarking that "Dimona is at the end of the world." The most critical comments suggested that Dimona was without culture, community or charm. Some were insultingly critical of the people of Dimona, calling them primitive and uneducated. That Dimona possessed all the physical facilities and essential resources necessary for a city was unconvincing and did not deter its detractors. In sharp contrast, Dimonans I observed, were satisfied with their town and enjoyed their residence in it.

In principle the Israeli Law of Return provides that any Jew may obtain citizenship through immigration to Israel.\(^3\) The immigration officials at the airport assumed that the first group of Hebrew Israelites who arrived in Israel were claiming to be Jews especially when they asked permission to enter the country under the Law of Return. Because the status of the Hebrew Israelites' claim to Jewishness could not be immediately established they were admitted to Israel with many of the privileges of immigrants until the question of their Jewishness could be settled by the rabbinical authorities. The privileges that the Hebrew Israelites obtained included assistance in finding housing and employment in Dimona where the Israeli authorities placed them. There some Hebrew Israelites entered language training classes to learn Hebrew and the children began to attend school.\(^4\)

Interestingly, neither of the two Hebrew Israelite leaders had
accompanied the first group to Israel. According to them, they were assisting the other members of the group in their preparations to leave Liberia. Also, both leaders assert that they had cleverly calculated to have their membership reply ambiguously to the questions of the immigration authorities regarding their Jewishness. That in short, they never explicitly claimed to be Jewish and that when they as Hebrew Israelites referred to the Law of Return, they were referring to a prophecy that had been made to "our forefathers" that "we would return to Israel." According to the Hebrew Israelite leaders, if the Israeli authorities "misunderstood" the Hebrew Israelite understanding of the Israeli Law of Return and thought that they were claiming to be Jews, that was an Israeli problem.

When Nasi Hashalom did join the first group in Dimona what had seemed to have been amicable relations between the Hebrew Israelites and Israelis began to deteriorate. Some Hebrew Israelites who had been amenable to "conversion" to Judaism rejected this alternative and as a group Hebrew Israelites began to be outspoken about their authenticity as Hebrews. They also began to accuse the Israeli authorities of racism when others of their group were barred from entering Israel and when they could not obtain additional housing for their numbers who had arrived in the country and remained illegally. These latter lived in overcrowded apartments with other Hebrew Israelites and found it difficult to obtain employment with proper credentials.

Their conviction that they are the "authentic Hebrew people" mitigates against Hebrew Israelites attempting to satisfy the Israeli authorities
that they are indeed Jews. However, Hebrew Israelites can be pragmatic when necessary, so that on one occasion to prevent the imminent expulsion of some Hebrew Israelites from Israel a lawyer was hired and a suit was initiated in the Israeli courts. The case eventually went as high as the Israeli Supreme Court. The court seemed primarily concerned with establishing whether or not the Hebrew Israelites were Jews, the application of the Law of Return, and if the Ministry of Interior had acted legally in seeking to expel the Hebrew Israelites. In court the Hebrew Israelites did not claim that they were "Jews" and the court decided that indeed they were not Jews and therefore could not avail themselves of the rights under the Law of Return. The courts also acknowledged that the Ministry of the Interior had acted legally and within its rights to expel the Hebrew Israelites who resided in Israel illegally. However importantly the courts recommended that all those Hebrew Israelites who were already residing in Israel be allowed to remain in Israel. In a discussion with a spokesman for the Ministry of Interior I was told that while the Ministry was inclined to allow the recommendation of the courts to stand, they felt that they were not legally obligated to do so. However, during the period of this research, July 1972 to July 1973, not one Hebrew Israelite was expelled, and according to the Hebrew Israelites none of their numbers has ever been expelled although many have been barred from entering the country initially. Hebrew Israelites have also often managed to evade Israeli efforts to bar them from Israel. These Hebrew Israelites generally have entered Israel as tourists and then joined their compatriots in Dimona. Few Hebrew Israelites have sought to renew their tourist visa, anticipating
that the Ministry would refuse to extend their stay. The Israeli Supreme Court decision on the application of the Law of Return to the Hebrew Israelites bars conclusively the admission of Hebrew Israelites under this statute. And at present, July 1975, Hebrew Israelites remain in Israel subject to the decision of the Ministry of Interior.

Research Methods:

In the Introduction I noted in detail the methods utilized to obtain data about the Hebrew Israelites. These methods obtained here in eliciting from the group what their attitudes and opinions were about Israelis. The methods included my observations, formal and informal discussions with individual members and leaders of the group, and an in depth open-ended interview. Five questions pertinent to Hebrew Israelites' attitudes and opinions about Israelis were included:

1. How are things working out in Israel?

2. Can you explain the difference between Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews?

3. Do Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews relate differently towards Hebrew Israelites?

4. How do you feel about Israelis?

5. Will all Hebrew Israelites want to come to Israel?

The answers to these questions provide a reply to the question "what are Hebrew Israelites' opinions and attitudes about Israelis?"

The data regarding Dimonan attitudes and opinions towards Hebrew Israelites was obtained by means of a close-ended questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered over a period of six weeks, from May
through June 1973, to the residents of a housing development, Shikunat Nitzachon (SN) in which Hebrew Israelites lived.

The questionnaire was designed to obtain socio-economic data about the respondents, e.g., age, education, cultural and religious orientation. Importantly, substantive questions were also asked regarding, for example, Dimona opinions of how well Hebrew Israelites were getting along with their neighbors, whether Hebrew Israelites should be allowed to remain in Israel, and whether Hebrew Israelites found it difficult to find acceptance in Israel because they are black. Additionally, two dimensions of the Dimona sample were of concern to us: how those of differing cultural and religious orientations reacted towards the Hebrew Israelites. Three major cultural orientations have been identified in Israel: Ashkenazic, Sephardic and Sabra. For the purposes of this study, Ashkenazic refers to those born in Europe/America; Sephardic refers to those born in Asia/Africa; and Sabra refers to those born in Israel. Also, we have devised four categories to analyze the religious dimension of the Dimona sample. These include those who observe the religious traditions: 1. Definitely, and in all of its details; 2. to a Great Extent; 3. a Little; 4. Don't observe at all. For the purposes of simplicity in the presentation and analysis of our feelings, we have found it convenient to combine categories 1 and 2 into "observant" and categories 3 and 4 into "less observant."

My interest with the attitudes and opinions of differing cultural and religious orientations of Dimonans was to obtain some idea of the level of tolerance felt and expressed by these representative groupings towards the Hebrew Israelites. We hypothesized that Hebrew Israelites
would find more tolerance among Sephardics who could perhaps more easily identify with the Hebrew Israelite experience of color and economic discrimination in the United States. Similarly, we hypothesized that along the religious dimension, those who were "less observant" would be more tolerant of the Hebrew Israelites than those who were "observant."

My intention was to interview one female or male family head, husband or wife, in each apartment. The housing development consisted of sixteen buildings arranged in four contiguous squares. One building was an absorption center with a frequent turnover of tenants. These were recent immigrants to Israel who received temporary housing, language training, and employment counseling at the absorption center. Because they were recent immigrants to Israel and unfamiliar with Hebrew Israelites, none of the absorption center's residents were interviewed for the survey questionnaire. There were then approximately 449 apartments eligible for interviews. Interviews were completed with 240 (53.4%) family heads. Among the residents of Shikunat Nitzachon, 33 (7.3%) family heads refused to be interviewed, and 176 (39.2%) were never found at home by the interviewers.

The interviews were administered by Dimonans who were employed by me as interviewers. During my residence in Dimona I observed that many Dimonans did not speak English and I did not speak Hebrew well enough to administer the questionnaire, so it was necessary to employ interviewers who spoke Hebrew fluently. Also, since I too, am a black American, I feared that my attempts to administer the questionnaire might threaten or inhibit Dimonan resident responses about the Hebrew Israelites. Initially, it seemed desirable to employ interviewers
who were unbiased towards Hebrew Israelites and disinterested in promoting the interests of Dimonans. This suggested employing interviewers who were not Dimonans and who had some experience in administering questionnaires. Also I was interested in obtaining some interviewers of Sephardic descent since approximately 60% of Dimona's population is Sephardic. My search to obtain interviewers with those qualifications was wholly without success. Travel costs to and from Dimona from other Israeli towns and cities was relatively expensive by public transportation. Also, commuting to Dimona by public transport was inconvenient since bus service was not frequent or extensive. Importantly, my resources were not extensive so that I could not offer large incentives to attract persons for interviewers. Consequently, it was necessary to find Dimonans to administer the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was administered by five Dimonan residents, all of whom were born in Israel. Three of the interviewers were women and two were men. One man and one woman were social workers while all of the remaining were secondary school teachers. All of the interviews were conducted in Hebrew. Interviewers introduced themselves to the respondents by saying that they were doing a survey about Dimona for a student doing a doctoral dissertation, and they asked for the cooperation of one of the family heads in filling out the questionnaire. Interviewers were instructed to try to obtain an equal proportion of men and women.

I have noted above the extensive suspicion that Hebrew Israelites feel towards those who are not of their group, and also their conviction that they are continually being spied upon. During the administering
of the questionnaire to Dimonans, I was concerned that Hebrew Israelites would discover that their neighbors were being questioned about them. To avoid this occurrence, the interviewers were instructed to begin their interviews with Dimonans in buildings in which Hebrew Israelites did not live. Only in the last two weeks of the survey were the Dimonan residents of the three buildings in which Hebrew Israelites lived interviewed.

The discussion and analysis of the Dimonan questionnaire begins with a socio-economic profile of the residents of the housing development. Next, various questions from the questionnaire are analyzed to illustrate the nature of the contacts between Hebrew Israelites and Dimonans. And finally, the opinions and attitudes of the various cultural and religious orientation of sampled Dimonans towards Hebrew Israelites are discussed and analyzed.

Hebrew Israeliite Attitudes and Opinions about Israel and Israelis:

In the in-depth interviews administered to the Hebrew Israelites, several questions sought to obtain the group's attitudes and opinions about Israel and Israelis. In the discussion which follows below, I will discuss some of these questions in detail, and through the use of selected quotations from the Hebrew Israeliite interviews and my observations of the group, provide an analysis and interpretation of Hebrew Israeliite opinions and attitudes towards Israel and Israelis. The questions which will be discussed include:

1. How are things working out in Israel?

2. Can you explain the difference between Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews?
3. Do Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews relate differently towards Hebrew Israelites?

4. How do you feel about Israelis?

5. Will all Hebrew Israelites want to come to Israel?

1. How are things working out in Israel?

Contrary to what might have been expected, no Hebrew Israelite expressed any reservation or criticism about the Hebrew Israelite decision to immigrate to Israel or the manner in which the group was coping with problems with which they were confronted. "Things were proceeding as planned," or "things were working out according to prophecy" was the way in which Hebrew Israelites most often expressed this opinion. Hebrew Israelites pointed out that they were aware in advance that there would necessarily be conflict between the Israeli authorities and themselves because of the differences in their beliefs. Also, Hebrew Israelites added that it came as no shock that there would be economic problems and that they would be forced to make individual sacrifices. Hebrew Israelites primarily see their economic hardships as caused by the Israeli government, harassing them in an effort to force them to leave the country. Hebrew Israelites argue that the reason they continue to live crowded into twelve apartment in Dimona is that the Israeli authorities refuse to aid them when it is obvious that Hebrew Israelites need assistance in expanding their housing supply. As Hebrew Israelites point out, their incomes are small because most of their group do not possess the proper credentials that would allow them to work and consequently when they do work they must do so surreptitiously.10 And in this arrangement, they never earn as much as they might if they were
authorized to work. By not working as legitimate laborers in the work force, Hebrew Israelites do not have access to other fringe benefits like health insurance, unemployment compensation or the use of a labor exchange. They are also more subject to the capriciousness of an employer. During the period of this research, July 1972 to July 1973, Hebrew Israelites claimed that they were always payed more than Arab labor for unskilled construction work but always less than Israeli workers for the same work.

Material hardship did not seem to lessen Hebrew Israelite zeal or enthusiasm to the Nation and indeed seemed to serve as a solidifier of the group. Hebrew Israelite leadership was quick to interpret any material misfortune as the work of an Israeli adversary who sought Hebrew Israelite dismemberment. To close ranks when threatened was the Hebrew Israelite response. Acting as a group, Hebrew Israelites were able to share misfortune so that the individual impacts of a negative event were minimized. For example, the loss of a job by a Hebrew Israelite did not mean that he and his family were without resources. Sharing food, shelter, clothing and other necessities with an out-of-work Hebrew Israelite and his family was an obligation felt and practiced by all Hebrew Israelites. Only by doing so could the group survive since they cannot count on sustained employment for any of their membership.

That "things are working out as planned" is also an indirect response to the many assertions made by observers that Hebrew Israelites may not have always planned to immigrate to Israel and that that decision was a more recent one. Hebrew Israelites are offended that some should think their arrival in Israel was due to other, and perhaps, opportunistic
motives. To counter this kind of opinion, Hebrew Israelites attempt
to assure all who will listen that they always planned to come to Israel,
and indeed, that that decision was part of a larger more mystical and
divine plan.

I told you before that the world runs in a definite order and it's all a part of the Master Plan of the Creator of the Heaven and Earth...At this point 69 weeks have been fulfilled relative to the restoration of the Holy City, and an end coming to sin in the world, and Israel being put back into its proper place...All the events relative to Daniel's vision have been fulfilled to the letter except for the final week, which represents a seven year period. This time started again when Israel, true Israel, Hebrew Israelites from America, came back to Israel.

(Nasi M)

Perhaps if it is understood that the Hebrew Israelites hold the land of Israel in high regard and that for them it has mystical import related to their religious beliefs, then one can understand the excitement Hebrew Israelites exude in being there. It was not uncommon, for example, that one of the group might be seen walking on the edge of Dimona with the intention of taking a constitutional in the barren hills surrounding that city. Whenever I questioned such a walker about his/her exercise, I was told by them of how much their walks reminded them of the wandering in the desert of biblical figures, and how happy they were to be able to walk the same "holy earth" as had the Hebrew people of the Old Testament. On another occasion, for example, I encountered a Hebrew Israelite walker who had been prescribed a daily walk in the surrounding countryside by the Hebrew Israelite "doctor" who felt there were beneficial effects that a sick Hebrew Israelite could obtain simply by walking in the "holy land."

But besides the religious and mystical importance of Israel to the Hebrew Israelites, they could also be sanguine about their preferences
for it in terms of the quality of life one could enjoy there in contrast to the United States. Often specifically contrasting life in Dimona with ghetto life in Chicago, Hebrew Israelites were ardent in their preference for the former city. In Dimona, Hebrew Israelites said that they were not victims of the negative social statistics that plague black residents of Chicago. Hebrew Israelites said that they enjoyed living in a community where they did not have to lock their doors or worry about assault, rape, drug pushers and drug addicts. It was a relief, Hebrew Israelites said, not to live in rat infested buildings that might burst into flames because they were poorly ventilated and heated. Another Hebrew Israelite who had owned a small variety store in Philadelphia described his life in that American city:

I was never at peace. I didn't have a peaceful day, no matter how much money I made in Babylon. I didn't have a peaceful day. I worked all day with a pistol in my pocket. My wife had her pistol. I got the permit there and everything with her picture and all. I would go out of the shop and I would never know whether when I come back if someone had held her up or shot her. The children were right there in the store. All those dope addicts were around the store, thieves, winos hanging around. Everytime I'd drive off to go shopping, I was worried and nervous. I'd almost have an accident rushing to get to the supply house and rushing to get back. She would run the store while I was gone.

(Brother J)

Life in Dimona was also without the fierce competition many Hebrew Israelites felt they faced as citizens in urban United States. As black men and women in the highly competitive United States, they were additionally burdened because their color could be a dubious asset and more often a liability. Some Hebrew Israelites, for example, had obtained jobs in the United States as a result of compensatory hiring, a practice which discriminated in favor of the employment of minority
groups. But these same workers often felt that they were token blacks or at least were not sure, and consequently felt their new employment contemptible. Some of these same Hebrew Israelites expressed dismay and even some guilt that their new compensatory jobs had actually allowed them a measure of social mobility that they enjoyed while simultaneously imposing a status distance between themselves and other blacks less fortunate. Having worked so hard to achieve such a position, Hebrew Israelites said, and then to find that one had serious questions about that success was demoralizing. Moreover, there was the continual pressure to work on, to do more, so that one could at least obtain all the material advantages of the "American Dream": a bigger and better automobile, color television set and other creature comforts. In speaking about black Americans who have remained "in the system" trying to increase their material wealth, one Hebrew Israelite said:

They will perish one way or another...if they don't die, perish in the ghettos, they will perish through the system of working themselves to death, trying to maintain and hold what they got. The higher they move up, the higher they want to move up into the system to be recognized. That's why the ones that dope and alcohol and thievery and stuff is not consuming, they're dying of heart attacks and high blood pressure and so forth trying to make it into the system because their taxes are so high, they're trying to send their children to college; they're moonlighting on two jobs. The man is working two jobs. The wife is working a job and a half. She's going on a job then she's got to raise the children, so you might as well say she's got two jobs too, trying to raise the children, keeping the house. Every school teacher I know, his wife is a school teacher. Every accountant and all those people -- their wives are working in the office as a clerk or something blowing their minds. (Brother J)

Lastly and importantly, it is my impression that Hebrew Israelites did not feel encumbered by the level of color discrimination in Israel. Many Hebrew Israelites could, for example, report of some experience
where they had been discriminated against because they were black. However, Hebrew Israelites seemed to be aware that all of these experiences of discrimination contained elements of religious conflict between themselves and Jewish Israelis. In short, Hebrew Israelites were cognizant that the differences of religious orientations were of greater significance than that of color, and it was our impression that Hebrew Israelites occasionally attempted to reverse these factors hoping to obtain a priority of concern and benefits from the Israeli authorities. For example, we observed the Hebrew Israeliite leadership making a presentation to a group of Israeli school teachers. The latter were primarily concerned about the religious orientations of Hebrew Israelites (their origins, rituals, beliefs, proofs of their religious claims), but the Hebrew Israeliite leadership was concerned about raising the level of color consciousness of the audience and spoke explicitly about the racist attitudes of the Israeli government towards the Hebrew Israelites. The audience, during a question and answer period, expressed bewilderment about the claims of the Hebrew Israelites regarding the racist attitudes of the Israeli authorities. Hebrew Israelites on the other hand interpreted the Israelis' bewilderment as "denial" and not unlike the attitudes of many Americans who refuse to admit racism exists in the United States. They also remembered that it was only through the willingness of black to expose covert and overt racism, were benefits obtained and changes made in the United States. This ability to manipulate the environment, particularly about racial matters, provides the Hebrew Israelites with a sense of satisfaction and security about their stay in Dimona that they did not have in the United States.
2. **Can you explain the difference between Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews?**

I was interested whether Hebrew Israelites differentiated between Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews, i.e., whether Hebrew Israelites felt more sympathetic towards darker skinned Sephardic Jewry than they did towards white European Jewry. Many Hebrew Israelites indicated that they did not understand the difference between the two Jewrys. Indeed we noted that such differences among Israeli Jewry were of little interest among Hebrew Israelites mainly due to the chiliasm of Hebrew Israelite ideology which does not encourage differentiation of the mass of "others" who are not Hebrew Israelites and are the enemy. Some Israelis may have darker skins but Hebrew Israelites are less impressed by the skin color of the darker Israelis than that those Israelis are not Hebrew Israelites. It is quite consistent with Hebrew Israelite belief and practice that for example, a Hebrew Israelite should say that "to me, a Jew is a Jew despite his color." Other Hebrew Israelites have responded similarly:

To tell the truth, I don't see any difference because they're all the same. They're different from us. The Sephardic Jew is only an Eastern Jew. Now there's people calling them Ashkenazi... they're the same because European Jews come here from Russia and Sephardic Jews come here from India. They're the same people. They convert to the system so what's the difference? Is there a difference? That's self-explanatory. There's no difference. The only difference which we try to show them: we make the difference. But between the Sephardic and the Ashkenazi there's no difference.

(Brother J)

They're the same people. They just have a different title.

(Brother O)

I really don't know all about that: Orthodox Jews, Ashkenazic and Sephardic, and things like that. If you say you are a Jew, you are a Jew. You follow Judaism. I'm just saying that I'm an upright man and this is my father's land and I'm here to do his bidding.

(Brother F)
Some Hebrew Israelites quite appropriately distinguished between
Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jewry citing cultural and geographic distinctions
in ancestry. Other Hebrew Israelites noted the disparity in political
and economic power between the two groups in Israel. One Hebrew Israelite
noted for example that

The Ashkenazim control the country at this time. The
Sephardim, they make up the peasantry of the land because there are
not positions for them. They are just 20th century slaves to the
society, and they are not making any advancements.

(Brother T)

3. Do Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews relate differently towards Hebrew
Israelites?

As a corollary to the question of whether Hebrew Israelites could
explain the difference between Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews, Hebrew
Israelites were also asked whether these different Jewries seemed to
relate differently to Hebrew Israelites? The question similarly
anticipates that there might be some mutual sympathy between black
Hebrew Israelites and Sephardic Jews based on the premise that many of
the latter are dark skinned people. Our data indicate that some Hebrew
Israelites perceive little or no difference in the behavior of Ashkenazics
and Sephardics that would particularly incline them to either group.

As some Hebrew Israelites commented:

There's no difference. The Sephardic and Ashkenazic,
they treat us the same. O.K. I'll put it more simple.
If I walk out there and I talk to a Hodu [a Jew from India],
he acts toward me the same as the Israelis. They're the same.
The Hodu is Sephardic. Sephardic is East and Ashkenazic is
European.

(Brother J)

Other Hebrew Israelites indicated that Ashkenazic Jews were more
problematic for Hebrew Israelites than Sephardics:
Ashkenazic Jews are the group from Europe and they carry carry the same prejudice that any Ashkenazic or Anglo-saxon carries.

(Brother Q)

The Ashkenazim try to make you feel that they are doing something for you. Or I'll put it this way, they hand you a package, a big old package like they've given you a gift, but when you open it up there's nothing in there but air. So they give you promises, endless promises that will never be fulfilled. [For example] we sent the brother to get some assistance. They would say well that this is the wrong office. This is in Beersheva, but you've got to get to Jerusalem to so and so office, and this is the place you'll get immediate satisfaction. You go there and he says: Oh No, this not the place. It's a mistake, you must go to Tel Aviv, this is the place. Then when you go to Tel Aviv they say no. It's in Beersheva. And the same old run about thing. So they've given you empty promises, making you feel that when I've reached this goal everything is going to be taken care of. But until this day we never got an answer yes or no is they are going to help us or not. Just empty promises. They say, well you'll get satisfaction there but there is no satisfaction.

(Brother T)

But despite the criticism of Ashkenazic Jewry in particular noted above, Hebrew Israelites did not suggest any preference for relations with Sephardics. Indeed, on many occasions Hebrew Israelites spoke negatively about Sephardics often echoing the negative evaluations of other Israelis. Most of the Sephardics that Hebrew Israelites had contact with were of Moroccan origin and it was these that the Hebrew Israelites often termed primitive, illiterate or uneducated. It should be noted that Hebrew Israelites as other immigrants to Israel found themselves in culture conflict with local inhabitants. 11 Socially appropriate behaviors particularly in public are different in Israel than what most Hebrew Israelites had experienced in the United States. 12 For example, many Israelis from the North African countries are apparently not used to queing up for the payment of purchases or often stare indiscriminately at strangers. Hebrew Israelites often interpreted this behavior as
poor training or due to inadequate or incomplete socialization. The response of most Hebrew Israelites to this kind of cultural conflict was to silently resolve that after the millenium "that ignorant and rude persons" would be reeducated into all the socially appropriate behaviors and graces.

4. How do you feel about Israelis?

This is a difficult question for most Hebrew Israelites to respond to. As we have noted earlier, their millenarian ideology makes all outsiders suspect and consequently impedes any positive attachments or sentiments Hebrew Israelites might have with non-Hebrew Israelites. Also, Israelis are members of a religion and a nation that Hebrew Israelites accuse of "stealing" the Hebrew Israelite identity and masquerading as Hebrew Israelites. Finally, a seemingly tangential but in fact an important point, is that the victimization of Hebrew Israelites as black people in America by whites has made Hebrew Israelites suspicious of all whites. And for most Hebrew Israelites, Israelis are white people despite their middle eastern and north African origins.13

One Hebrew Israelite noted that Israelis

...are white people and I try to stay away from them because I don't like being around them. So if you don't like being around somebody you try to stay away from them.

(Sister C)

Many Hebrew Israelites feel superior to Israelis. For the most part this is due to Hebrew Israelite beliefs which assert that Hebrew Israelites are a very special and select people and that all others are inferior in comparison. This belief is re-enforced by the Hebrew Israelite experience of having lived in the technologically most advanced country
in the world, the United States. Hebrew Israelites believe that this was no accident and indeed part of a larger divine plan to equip them with the education and skills necessary to be "rulers and masters of the world" after the onset of the millenium. Out of this conviction, Hebrew Israelites often assumed that their relationship with Israelis should be that of teacher and student, especially when Hebrew Israelites considered some moment of conflict, usually cultural conflict, they experienced with Israelis. One Hebrew Israelite said that he felt that Israelis

...need[ed] help. They are just like children and they just have to be taught. A lot of things they don't know, [for example], manners. Just to begin, a simple thing like that which for us was something that came naturally. But to them, they don't even know about that.

(Brother T)

Despite the distrust of the Israeli as an "outsider," robber of Hebrew Israelite identity and being white, some Hebrew Israelites expressed a guarded sympathy towards them. These Israelis were described primarily as people of low socio-economic status victimized by the rest of Israeli society:

In general the Israelis are nice people. They just don't know. They're misled. They follow the system. They are people. We don't have any trouble with the people. They want to help. They're friendly.

(Brother J)

I think that Israelis are striving for a better way of life. I think they are a people that want the same thing that everybody else wants. Really in their hearts they want peace, justice, truth and the privilege to live a decent life. And the certain type of society that we're living in, unrighteous society, the majority of the people are the people we might say are of the lower income or less income or deprived that are being affected. The Israelis are people in this particular category and deep in their hearts they want a better way of life. If they had any idea of that the Bible was talking about people coming back to Israel
looking for a type of metropolis or a type of paradise and when they come here it's far from that. They are being caught up in the same thing we were caught up in in the western world, bills, material things, to keep them in a certain category.

(Brother I)

It's like a lot of Israeli people are really to be pitied because they are victims of circumstances and about all the people in the streets that I've seen basically are good people and they are kind people but they've been an abused people.

(Brother S)

But even for those Israelis for whom Hebrew Israelites feel sympathetic, there is the suggestion that they are not to be fully trusted and indeed need to be reeducated about their place in the world, and the "true identity of the Hebrew Israelites."

Myself, I never actually come in contact with certain Israelis that know the majority of things about us or that have studied our history and that actually know who we are and what our plight here is, but I more or less come in contact with just, you can call them laymen, the smaller people. I just feel that they are people that just don't understand. They don't know nothing. I just feel that they are people that need to be taught, because the higher people, the Israelis that sit in the higher places, that they kept them blind and mislead them all of this time that now they don't know anything about us being Israelites. They know that we say we're Israelites. They don't know anything about when we say something is going to happen that it happens. They don't know nothing about that.

(Brother P)

From the above it may easily be understood that during the period of this research I observed not one adult Israeli with more than a casual or commercial relationship with Hebrew Israelites. And similarly Hebrew Israelite children were restricted by their parents in their relationships to other Hebrew Israelite children. The withdrawal of Hebrew Israelite children from Israeli schools and the pietistic fervor of the Hebrew Israelites in preparing for the millenium have provided the group with the opportunity to structure and enforce the segregation
of Hebrew Israelite children from Israelis. Classes were held for Hebrew Israelite children where they were indoctrinated into the group's beliefs and also instructed how to behave in the presence of outsiders. I observed, for example, one class in "divine behavior" where the emphasis that day was on how to answer the questions of curious non-members. Through role playing and peer pressure, the Hebrew Israelite teenager were provided the appropriate responses to be given to outsiders. Interestingly, the questions of non-Hebrew Israelites were often understood as challenges, efforts of non-believers to entrap the Hebrew Israelite in some error of faith, and even perhaps to dissuade the Hebrew Israelite of his/her convictions. Children and youth, therefore, were urged to be courteous and polite, but not intimate or informal with non-members.

5. **Will all Hebrew Israelites want to come to Israel?**

To Hebrew Israelites it is not a question of will all Hebrew Israelites want to come to Israel but a matter of when. It is central to Hebrew Israelite belief that all Hebrew Israelites will return to their "homeland" and nation: Israel. "Eventually and at the appointed time, all Hebrew Israelites will want to come to Israel" is how this opinion is expressed. The lack of awareness by black Americans that they are Hebrew Israelites is one of the factors Hebrew Israelites say impedes more immigration to Israel presently. Other Hebrew Israelites point out that many Black Americans are aware that they are Hebrew Israelites but for the moment are so enthralled by materialism that they refuse to leave the United States. Many Hebrew Israelites assert that the onset of the Armageddon
or some "consciousness raising" prior to that apocalyptic even may motivate many to "return" to Israel in the imminent future.

Israeli authorities bar from Israel those black Americans that they can identify as Hebrew Israelites. The New York Times reported that twenty-one Hebrew Israelites had been refused entry into Israel in October 7, 1971, and a Spokesman for the Ministry of the Interior answered in reply to my question, "Will you (Israel) allow other Hebrew Israelites to come to Israel?"

No. If you are asking someone (sic) and he says he wants to join his friends in Dimona, we shall not let him come into the country." 14

But this is of little significance to Hebrew Israelites. This is due to their beliefs that they can depend on divine intervention if necessary and to practical realities: The Hebrew Israelites know how easy it is to circumvent the Israeli authorities by simply pretending to be tourists. And finally, Hebrew Israelite leadership may even be able to rationalize why some of the group have been actually barred from entering Israel by explaining that "it simply was not time for them to come." In short, what is suggested is that the practicalities of immigration relating to the reaction of the Israeli authorities is of little significance to Hebrew Israelite. Hebrew Israelites believe that with the coming of the millenium all Hebrew Israelites will want to return and will return to Israel.

Attitudes and Opinions about Hebrew Israelites: Israeli Residents of Shikunat Nitzachon

This section discusses some of the findings of the questionnaire related to the attitudes and opinions of residents of Shikunat Nitzachon
about their Hebrew Israelite neighbors. These questions are examined because their findings are representative and illustrative of the attitudes and opinions of the sampled Shikunat Nitzachon residents.

The questions include:

Question 12. Are you able to have a conversation in English on everyday matters?

27. In Shikunat Nitzachon there are some Hebrew Israelite families. How well do you feel they got along with their neighbors?

28. How well would you say that you know the Hebrew Israelites in this Shikun?

29. Do your children have friends among the Hebrew Israelite children?

31. How do you feel about having the Hebrew Israelites as neighbors?

36. Recently, the government has been barring the entry of other Hebrew Israelites into Israel. How do you feel about this?

37. Should the Hebrew Israelites who are already in Israel be allowed to remain?

38. Do you think that the Hebrew Israelites are Jews?

39. Let us assume that the Hebrew Israelites are Jews. Do you feel that they would have difficulty finding acceptance in Israel?

40. Do you feel that the Hebrew Israelites find it difficult to find acceptance because they are black?

This section will present first some socio-economic data of Shikunat Nitzachon residents, then the findings of the questions noted above, and finally an interpretation and analysis of these questions.
Socio-economic data: The sample is composed of 240 family heads, 37 per cent of whom were males and 63 per cent females. The median age of the group was 28. In terms of education the median years of education completed was 12; and in terms of income, the median family income was 136- Lira, 16 per month.

Question 12: Are you able to have a conversation in English on everyday matters?

In response to this question, 25 per cent of the residents responded "yes easily" and 30 per cent replied "yes with difficulty," and 44 per cent replied "No."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes Easily</th>
<th>Yes with Difficulty</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

N = 240

Question 27: In Shikunat Nitzachon there are some Hebrew Israelite families. How well do you feel they get along with their neighbors?

In response to this question, 30 per cent said "well" and 20 per cent replied "not well." However, 45 per cent indicated "don't know" to the question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>30%</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>5%</td>
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N = 240

Question 28: How well would you say that you know the Hebrew Israelites in this Shikun?

In response to this question 82 per cent of the residents indicated "not well" and 15 per cent indicated "well."

*All percentages for all the ensuing discussions have been rounded off to the nearest number.
Well  Not Well  Don't Know  No Response
15%  82%  2%  1%  N = 240

Question 29: Do your children have friends among the Hebrew Israelite children:

In response to this question, parents with children old enough to have friends replied: 20 per cent answered "some" and 68 per cent answered "none at all."

Some  None at All  Don't Know  No Response
30%  68%  1%  1%  N = 157

Question 31: How do you feel about having the Hebrew Israelites as neighbors?

In response to this question, 62 per cent of the residents indicated "satisfied" and 15 per cent indicated "not satisfied."

Satisfied  Not Satisfied  Don't Know  No Response
62%  15%  20%  3%  N = 240

Question 36: Recently, the government has been barring the entry of other Hebrew Israelites into Israel. How do you feel about this?

In response to this question, 64 per cent of the residents indicated "agree" and 25 per cent indicated "disagree."

Agree  Disagree  Don't Know  No Response
64%  25%  4%  7%  N = 240
Question 37: Should the Hebrew Israelites who are already in Israel be allowed to remain?

In response to this question, 74 per cent said "yes" and 18 per cent said "No."

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<tr>
<td>74%</td>
<td>18%</td>
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<td>4%</td>
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Question 38: Do you think that the Hebrew Israelites are Jews?

In response to this question, 62 per cent of the residents responded "No" and 13 per cent replied "yes."

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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<td>N = 240</td>
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Question 39: Let us assume that the Hebrew Israelites are Jews. Do you feel that they would have difficulty finding acceptance in Israel?

In response to this question 47 per cent indicated "difficult" and 45 per cent indicated "not difficult."

<table>
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<th>Difficult</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45%</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>N = 240</td>
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Question 40: Do you feel that the Hebrew Israelites find it difficult to find acceptance because they are black?

In response to this question, 64 per cent of the residents indicated "Not much or not at all," and 33 per cent indicated "yes."

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Not Much or Not at All</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>No Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>33%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<td>N = 240</td>
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</table>
Interpretation and analyses: Responses to questions 27, 28 and 29 suggest that the sampled residents of Shikunat Nitzachon are either reluctant to express their attitudes and opinions about the Hebrew Israelites, or are truly uninformed about their black American neighbors. When asked for example, "How well do you feel they get along with their neighbors," 45 per cent of the sample replied "don't know." Similarly, when asked "How well would you say that you know the Hebrew Israelites in this Shikun," 82 per cent of the residents indicated "not well."

I have noted earlier that Hebrew Israelites are suspicious of non-members and resultingly have "withdrawn" from contact with Israelis. Hebrew Israelite "withdrawal" contributes to the poverty of relationship that the residents of Shikunat Nitzachon have with their black American neighbors: 82 per cent reported that they knew Hebrew Israelites "not well." Indeed when parents of Shikunat Nitzachon children were asked, Do your children have friends among the Hebrew Israelite children," 68 per cent replied "none at all."

I wondered whether Shikunat Nitzachon problems with English might contribute to the poverty of contact between them and the Hebrew Israelites. (Few Hebrew Israelites spoke Hebrew fluently.) However, when Shikunat Nitzachon residents were asked "Are you able to have a conversation in English on everyday matters," 25 per cent replied "yes easily," and 30 per cent replied "yes with difficulty." This suggest that language may have been somewhat of an obstacle, a barrier to interaction and communication, between the groups but not the most serious. Indeed, since each group, I observed, had minimal competence in the other's language, it is plausible to have expected that communication and
interaction between the groups could be facilitated. I suggest that rather than serving as primary obstacle or barrier between Hebrew Israelites and Shikunat Nitzachon residents, language acts to reinforce and supplement other conflicts that exist between the two groups.

Sampled Shikunat Nitzachon residents express some attitudes and opinions which clearly favor Hebrew Israelites already in Israel: 74 per cent replied "yes" to the question, "Should the Hebrew Israelites already in Israel be allowed to remain"; and 62 per cent are "satisfied" with Hebrew Israelites as neighbors. These responses are given although 62 per cent of Shikunat Nitzachon residents replied "no" to the question, "Do you think that the Hebrew Israelites are Jews," and 64 per cent replied "agree" to the question, "Recently, the government has been barring the entry of other Hebrew Israelites into Israel. How do you feel about this?" The responses to the latter two question may seem inconsistent with the favorable responses noted above. I think not. I suspect that some Shikunat Nitzachon residents are sympathetic towards Hebrew Israelites as black Americans who have suffered discrimination and bigotry. Also as Jews, Shikunat Nitzachon residents may identify with the "marginality" of Hebrew Israelites who clearly have been "outside" wherever they have resided.

On the matter of color discrimination in Israel against Hebrew Israelites, Shikunat Nitzachon residents offer conflicting responses. In reply to the question, "Do you feel that the Hebrew Israelites find it difficult to find acceptance because they are black," 64 per cent replied "not much or not at all" and 33 per cent replied "yes." In terms of the manifest and expressed problems of Hebrew Israelites gaining
permission to remain in Israel as Jews the replies of Shikunat Nitzachon residents are consistent with the conflict: Hebrew Israelites have been embroiled in a religious conflict, attempting to establish their rights as part of the Jewish people. However, if Hebrew Israelites were assumed or accepted as Jews, would other factors, color for example, intrude to impede their acceptance? When asked the question "Let us assume that the Hebrew Israelites are Jews. Do you feel that they would have difficulty finding acceptance in Israel," 47 per cent answered "difficult" and 45 per cent replied "not difficult." As is readily apparent there is no substantive difference in these replies. And the sample is almost evenly divided. Although this question does not explicitly refer to color as a "difficulty" impeding Hebrew Israelite acceptance, it is a plausible but not demonstrated consideration here. The evidence suggest that only 33 per cent of the Shikunat Nitzachon sample "feel that Hebrew Israelites find it difficult to find acceptance because they are black."

The above discussion was concerned with the Shikunat Nitzachon residents as an undifferentiated population. In the discussion which follows I will examine the responses of Shikunat Nitzachon residents to the questionnaire as members of different cultural and religious orientations.

Cultural and Religious Orientations: This section is concerned with the attitudes and opinions of sampled Dimonans, the residents of Shikunat Nitzachon, as members of different cultural and religious orientations. Cultural orientations have been identified generally in Israel, and for this study, as Ashkenazic, Sephardic and Sabra.
Two religious orientations are also identified for analysis here: observant and less observant.\textsuperscript{18}

My interest with the attitudes and opinions of differing cultural and religious orientations of Israelis was to obtain some idea of the level of tolerance felt and expressed by these representative groupings in Shikunat Nitzachon towards the Hebrew Israelites. We hypothesized that Hebrew Israelites would probably find far more tolerance among Sephardics who could perhaps identify with the Hebrew Israelite experience of color and economic discrimination in the United States.\textsuperscript{19} Similarly, we hypothesized that less religiously observant Jewry would be more willing to accept the unusual Hebrew Israelite cult in their midst.

This section will present first some selected socio-economic data of the various cultural and religious orientations observed, then the findings of the questions described in the preceding section in terms of cultural and religious orientations, and then an analysis and interpretation of these questions will follow.

\textbf{Socio-economic data:} The sample was composed of 240 family heads of whom 40 per cent were Sephardics, 18 per cent were Ashkenazics and 41 per cent were Sabras. In terms of religious observance, 23 per cent were observant, 7\% per cent were less observant, and 1 per cent did not identify their religious orientation.

The median age of the Sephardics was 29, Ashkenazics 30, and Sabras 27. The median age of the observant and less observant was 28 years old. In terms of education, the median years of education completed
among Sephardics was 10, and among Ashkenazics and Sabras 12. Median years of education completed among the observant was 11 and among the less observant it was 12.

The median income of Sephardics was 1312 Lira per month, 1604 Lira per month among Ashkenazics, and 1350 Lira per month among Sabras. Among the observant, the median income was 1147 Lira per month and 1422 Lira per month among the less observant.

Question: In Shikunat Nitzachon there are some Hebrew Israeliite families. How well do you feel they get along with their neighbors?

In response to this question, 45 per cent of the entire sample sample answered that they did not know! Considering the various cultural categories, 52 per cent of Ashkenazics, 44 per cent of Sephardics, and 42 per cent of Sabras answered that they did not know how well Hebrew Israelites got along with their neighbors.

Among those who felt that they knew about Hebrew Israeliite relations with their neighbors, 34 per cent of Sephardics, 31 per cent of Sabras, and 20 per cent of Ashkenazics indicated that they felt Hebrew Israelites got along "well" with their neighbors.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Well</th>
<th>Not Well</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>No Response</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sephardics</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>44%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashkenazics</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabras</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>4%</td>
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</table>

N = 240

When this same question was examined in terms of the religious observance of Shikunat Nitzachon residents, 45 per cent of the less
observant and 43 per cent of the observant answered that they did not know how well Hebrew Israelites got along with their neighbors! However, 37 per cent of the observant and 28 per cent of the less observant felt Hebrew Israelites got along "well" with their neighbors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Well</th>
<th>Not Well</th>
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<th>No Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observant</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Observant</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

N = 240

The data above suggests that Sephardics and the observant had more favorable opinions about Hebrew Israelite relations with their neighbors, i.e., felt that Hebrew Israelites got along well with their neighbors, than the other categories in their respective cultural and religious orientations.

Question 28: How well would you say that you know the Hebrew Israelites in this Shikun?

In response to this question, 82 per cent of the sample answered "not well." In terms of cultural orientation, 79 per cent of Sabras, 84 per cent of Sephardics and Ashkenazics answered "not well."

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<td>Sephardics</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashkenazics</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>84%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sabras</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</table>

N = 240

Considering this question in terms of religious orientation, 82 per cent of the less observant and 80 per cent of the observant answered
that they knew the Hebrew Israelites "not well."

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<tr>
<td>Observant</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Less Observant</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
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</table>

\[N = 240\]

The data above suggests that Hebrew Israelites were "not well" known by the residents of Shikunat Nitzachon. Indeed, the less observant, Sephardics and Ashkenazics equally indicated that they knew Hebrew Israelites less well than any of the other categories in their respective cultural and religious orientations.

**Question 29:** Do your children have friends among the Hebrew Israelite children?

Among those families of sampled Shikunat Nitzachon residents who had children with friends, 68 per cent of the parents answered "none at all" in reply to the question. In terms of cultural orientation, 76 per cent of Ashkenazic parents, 74 per cent of Sabra parents, and 59 per cent of Sephardic parents answered "none at all."

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Ashkenazic</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabra</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>2%</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[N = 157\]

When the same question is considered in terms of religious orientation, 67% of the less observant and 73 per cent of the observant parents indicated "none at all" when asked whether their
children had friends among the Hebrew Israelite children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observant</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Observant</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 157

The data indicates that few parents could report that their children had friends among Hebrew Israelite children. Indeed, more than the other categories in their respective orientations, Ashkenazic and the less observant parents answered that their children had "none at all" as friends among the Hebrew Israelite children.

Question 31: How do you feel about having the Hebrew Israelite as neighbors?

In response to this question, 70 per cent of the Sabras, 58 per cent of the Sephardics and 54 per cent of Ashkenazics answered that they were "satisfied" with Hebrew Israelites as neighbors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Not Satisfied</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sephardics</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashkenazics</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabra</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 240

When this same question was examined in terms of religious observance, 64 per cent of the less observant and 55 per cent of the observant indicated that they were "satisfied" with Hebrew Israelites as neighbors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Not Satisfied</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observant</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Observant</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 240

The data obtained in this question suggests that Sabras and those less observant were more satisfied with Hebrew Israelites as neighbors than the other categories in their respective cultural and religious orientations.

Question 36: Recently, the government has been barring the entry of other Hebrew Israelites into Israel. How do you feel about this?

In response to this question, 70 per cent of the Ashkenazics, 64 per cent of the Sephardics and 61 per cent of Sabras indicated that they "agree" to the government's barring entry to Israel to other Hebrew Israelites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sephardics</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashkenazics</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabras</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 240

Considering this question in terms of religious observance, 69 per cent of the less observant and 46 per cent of the observant answered that they "agree" to the barring of entry of other Hebrew Israelites into Israel.
More than the other categories in their respective cultural and religious orientations, Ashkenazics and the less observant indicated that they "agree" to the Israeli government's barring entry of other Hebrew Israelites into Israel.

Question 37: Should the Hebrew Israelites who are already in Israel be allowed to remain?

In response to this question 80 per cent of Sabras, 71 per cent of Sephardics and 66 per cent of Ashkenazics answered "yes."

In terms of religious observance, 76 per cent of the less observant and 64 per cent of the observant answered "yes" to this question.
In response to the question "Should the Hebrew Israelites who are already in Israel be allowed to remain, the data indicate that Sabras and the less observant answered "yes" more often than the other categories in their respective cultural and religious orientations.

Question 38: Do you think that the Hebrew Israelites are Jews?

In response to the question, "Do you think that the Hebrew Israelites are Jews," 65 per cent of Sephardics, 64 per cent of Ashkenazics and 60 per cent of Sabras replied "No."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sephardics</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashkenazics</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabras</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 240

In terms of religious observance, 63 per cent of the less observant and 61 per cent of the observant indicated "No" to the question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observant</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Observant</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 240

The data indicates that the less observant and Sephardics answered "No" more often than the other categories in their respective cultural and religious orientations.
Question 39: Let us assume that the Hebrew Israelites are Jews. Do you feel that they would have difficulty finding acceptance in Israel?

In response to this question, 55 per cent of Sephardics, 41 per cent of Ashkenazics and 36 per cent of Sabras answered "not difficult."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Difficult</th>
<th>Not Difficult</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sephardics</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashkenazics</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabras</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 240

In religious observance, 52 per cent of the observant and 42 per cent of the less observant replied "not difficult."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Difficult</th>
<th>Not Difficult</th>
<th>No Response</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Observant</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less Observant</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 240

This data suggests that in response to this question, the Sephardics and less observant answered "not difficult" more often than other categories in their respective cultural and religious orientations.

Question 40: Do you feel that the Hebrew Israelites find it difficult to find acceptance because they are black?

In response to this question, 77 per cent of Ashkenazics, 62 per cent of Sephardics and Sabras replied "not much or not at all."
In terms of religious observance, 68 per cent of the less observant and 55 per cent of the observant indicated "not so much or not at all."

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Not so Much or</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sephardics</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashkenazics</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabras</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N = 240

The data indicates that in response to this question, Ashkenazics and the less observant replied "not so much or not at all" more often than other categories in their respective cultural and religious orientations.

Interpretation and Analysis

In terms of cultural orientation, the data indicated that sampled residents of Shikunat Nitzachon, viewed as Sephardics, Ashkenazics and Sabras, were either reluctant to reveal their attitudes and opinions, or uninformed about their black American neighbors: For example, 52 per cent of Ashkenazics, 44 per cent of Sephardics, and 42 per cent of Sabras replied "don't know" when asked "how well you think Hebrew
Israelites get along with their neighbors?" When this same question is considered in terms of religious observance, 46 per cent of the less observant and 43 per cent of the observant replied "don't know."

Further evidence of reluctance or ignorance is demonstrated in the replies of Shikunat Nitzachon residents to the question, "How well do you know the Hebrew Israeliites in this Shikun." 84 per cent of Sephardics and Ashkenazics and 79 per cent of Sabras answered "not well." In terms of religious observance, 82 per cent of the less observant and 80 per cent of the observant indicated "not well" to this question.

There appear also to be a poverty of contact among the children of Shikunat Nitzachon and Hebrew Israeliite children too. According to the parents of Shikunat Nitzachon residents few of their children had friends among the Hebrew Israeliite children. When asked "do your children have friends among the Hebrew Israeliite children," 76 per cent of Ashkenazic, 74 per cent of Sabra, and 59 per cent of Sephardic parents indicated "none at all." In terms of religious observance, 76 per cent of "observant parents and 67 per cent of less observant parents indicated "none at all."

These findings, however, are somewhat inconsistent with my observations, i.e., Shikunat Nitzachon parents seem to underestimate how few friends their children had among Hebrew Israeliite children. During the course of field research I rarely encountered any Hebrew Israeliite children with any Israelis at all! As I noted in chapter II Hebrew Israeliite children attend the Hebrew Israeliite Kingdom School and their daily activities (education and recreational, formal and inform) take
place almost solely among other Hebrew Israelite children and adults. Consequently, I suggest that the children of Shikunat Nitzachon residents have even fewer friends among the Hebrew Israelities than their parents estimate.

I was concerned whether the absence of a common language between Shikunat Nitzachon residents and Hebrew Israelites may have impeded their racial interaction. As I noted earlier few Hebrew Israelites spoke Hebrew fluently or well. When the residents of Shikunat Nitzachon were asked "Are you able to have a conversation in English on everyday matters," 70 per cent of Sabras, 59 per cent of Ashkenazics and 40 per cent of Sephardics replied "yes easily" or "yes, with difficulty."

In terms of religious observance, 60 per cent of the less observant and 41 per cent of the observant replied "yes easily" or "yes with difficulty."

The data suggests that English was particularly problematic for Sephardics and the observant.

These observations and findings do not suggest that the minimal language skills in English and Hebrew possessed by Shikunat Nitzachon residents and Hebrew Israelites are the cause of the poverty of interaction and contact between the groups. Indeed when Hebrew Israelites first arrived in Dimona, and when few of them spoke Hebrew, relations were described among Hebrew Israelites and Dimonans as going well. What language problems that do exist between the groups serve rather to supplement and reinforce Hebrew Israelite withdrawal, and Shikunat Nitzachon reluctance and/or ignorance about Hebrew Israelites.

I noted previously that sampled Shikunat Nitzachon residents express some attitudes and opinions which clearly favor Hebrew Israelites in
In terms of cultural orientation, 80 per cent of Sabras, 71 per cent of Sephardics, and 66 per cent of Ashkenazics replied "yes" in response to the question: "Should the Hebrew Israelites who are already in Israel be allowed to remain." In terms of religious observance, 76 per cent of the less observant and 64 per cent of the observant replied "yes" to the question.

Many Israelis find the thought and action of expulsion of any people from Israel repugnant. Some of these Israelis make an association between the historical Jewish experience of expulsion from so many European countries, the efforts of post World War II stateless Jewish refugees that attempted to pierce the British blockade to enter Palestine, with the plight of Hebrew Israelites who make the claim that Israel is their homeland. Some of these Israelis, I have observed, assert a "live and let live" attitude and say that it can do no real harm to allow those Hebrew Israelites who were admitted through the government's "error" to remain. To expel them now would only compound that error and perhaps imply that Jews have forgotten their experience with expulsion.

More favorable responses were offered by the Shikunat Nitzachon sample when asked "how do you feel about Hebrew Israelites as neighbors." 70 per cent of Sabras, 58 per cent of Sephardics and 54 per cent of Ashkenazic replied "satisfied." In terms of religious orientation, 64 per cent of the less observant and 55 per cent of the observant replied that they were "satisfied." It should be noted that these favorable responses, particularly of Sabras and the less observant, are expressed even though there is substantial agreement among these
groups that Hebrew Israelites are not Jews. When asked, "do you think that the Hebrew Israelites are Jews," 65 per cent of Sephardics, 64 per cent of Ashkenazics, and 60 per cent of Sabras replied, "No."

In terms of religious orientation, 63 per cent of the less observant and 61 per cent of the observant replied, "No."

When asked "do you feel that the Hebrew Israelites find it difficult to find acceptance because they are black," 77 per cent of Ashkenazics and 62 per cent of Sephardics and Sabras replied "not so much or not at all." In terms of religious orientation, 68 per cent of the observant and 55 per cent of the observant replied "not so much or not so all." These findings are surprising, particularly the data obtained from Sephardics. Many Sephardics have argued that their social and economic position in Israel is like that of the black in America, and that their share of the nation's wealth and power is disproportionate to their numbers.

In recent years an Israeli Black Panther movement has emerged advocating a redistribution of resources, and attributing the disadvantaged position of Sephardics to color and cultural discrimination.

As a group, Sephardics are least well educated, have lower incomes and occupy fewer posts of authority than Ashkenazics or Sabras. These arguments do not suggest that color is the most salient cleavage in Israeli society, nor that color discrimination may be understood as a mirror image of the American phenomenon. However, it is an Israeli problem too.

Complicating the color issue is the matter of religion. When asked, "Let us assume that the Hebrew Israelites are Jews. Do you feel that they would have difficulty finding acceptance in Israel,"
54 per cent of Sabras, 45 per cent of Ashkenazics, and 39 per cent of Sephardics indicated "difficult." These findings suggest that another factor or factors influence the acceptance of Hebrew Israelites, and not just religion. Indeed, color may be an impediment to their acceptance, but so may the culture or national origin of the Hebrew Israelites.

Altogether the questionnaire posed fourteen questions which directly examined the attitudes and opinions of the residents of Shikunat Nitzachon towards their Hebrew Israelite neighbors: The data obtained from these questions not only indicated the reluctance and/or ignorance of Shikunat Nitzachon residents to express attitudes and opinions about Hebrew Israelites, but when the sample did reply, there were differential responses indicating favorable or unfavorable attitudes and opinions. When the questions are examined in terms of cultural orientation, Sabras, and then in rank order Sephardics and Ashkenazics, expressed more favorable attitudes towards Hebrew Israelites. In ten questions Sabras more than Sephardics or Ashkenazics replied that they:

Question 28. felt they knew Hebrew Israelites well.
31. felt satisfied with Hebrew Israelites as neighbors.
32. had invited Hebrew Israelites to their homes.
33. had Hebrew Israelites accept the invitation and come to their (Sabra) homes.
34. had been invited to the homes of Hebrew Israelites.
35. had gone to Hebrew Israelite homes when invited.
36. disagreed with the Israeli government's barring entry to other Hebrew Israelites.
37. felt that Hebrew Israelites already in Israel should be allowed to remain.
38. thought that Hebrew Israelites were Jews.
39. felt that, assuming Hebrew Israelites were Jews, they would not have a difficult time finding acceptance in Israel.

See appendix for a chart that provides an illustration of the questions on which Sabras gave more favorable responses about their Hebrew Israelite
neighbors than did Sephardics or Ashkenazics.

In terms of religious observance, the less observant gave more replies favorable to the Hebrew Israelites than the observant. In nine questions the less observant more than the observant replied that:

Question 29. their children had friends among the Hebrew Israelite children
30. their children played with the Hebrew Israelite children.
31. they felt satisfied with the Hebrew Israelites as neighbors.
32. they invited Hebrew Israelites to their homes.
33. they had Hebrew Israelites accept an invitation and come to their homes.
34. they had been invited to Hebrew Israelite homes.
37. they felt that Hebrew Israelites already in Israel should be allowed to remain.
38. they thought Hebrew Israelites were Jews.
39. they felt Hebrew Israelites would not find it difficult to find acceptance in Israel because they are black.

See appendix for a chart that provides an illustration of the questions on which the less observant gave more favorable responses about their Hebrew Israelite neighbors than did the observant.

Conclusion:

It does not come as a surprise that the less observant respond more favorably on more questions about the Hebrew Israelites than do the observant. Hebrew Israelites are not Jews and many Israelis, among them many who are religiously observant, have felt keenly that Israel should be a country primarily for Jews. When asked the question, "how do you feel about the proposition that Israeli citizenship should only be granted to Jews," 59 per cent of the observant and 56 per cent of the less observant indicated that they "agreed." However, I had anticipated that those whom I had defined as Sephardics would have responded more
favorably towards the Hebrew Israelites than Sabras or Ashkenazics. It is apparent now that the questionnaire did not allow for differences in the cultural origins of those who were defined as Sabras. Many of these may be the sons and daughters of Sephardics, Ashkenazic or Sabra parents. While they may be Sabras their cultural orientations may reflect those of their parents. Any future survey of the Shikunat Nitzachon population should carefully distinguish between these populations.
Footnotes


2. "The young people of Arad are generally of a much higher culture and social standards than the Dimonans, reflecting accurately the national differences between 'western Jews' and 'eastern Jews'--eastern, in this sense, meaning originating from the Arab lands of the Middle East or North Africa. Dimonans told us that Aradians looked down on them, were snobs, and felt they were better than anyone else. Aradians did not hide their own pride at their higher cultural levels and tended to 'put down' Dimona when we praised it and cited its successes." David Schoenbrun, Robert Szekely and Lucy Szekely, The New Israelis (New York: Atheneum, 1973), p. 31.


5. Ibid.


7. The New York Times, October 8, 1971, reported the barring of a number of Hebrew Israelites from entry into Israel and also printed the photographs of two of those barred. Both of these Hebrew Israelites were in Israel when I arrived and they remained in Dimona with the rest of their group after I left in July of 1973.

8. See the Appendix for an example of the Hebrew Israeli Questionnaire.

9. See the Appendix for an example of the Dimonan questionnaire.

10. The Ministry of Interior is aware that Hebrew Israelites are working, albeit without "official authorization." In an interview with the spokesman for Ministry of Interior, Yitzhak Agassi, I was told: "After the Six Day War...because we have not enough manpower [in the south of Israel]... and we know that they [Hebrew Israelites] have a problem of money and how to assist (Sig), feed themselves; so we just give unofficial orders to our man in Dimona and Beersheba that they have permission to work...to allow them to work." January 22, 1973.
11. For a discussion of Israeli immigrants and cultural conflict see particularly Judith T. Shuval, Immigrants on the Threshold (New York: Atherton, 1967), pp. 117-138. She notes that "entry into Israeli society involves acculturation on the part of the immigrant. He must gradually become acquainted with and adopt the norms, values and salient reference groups of the new society." See also Alex Weingrod, Israel, Group Relations in a New Society (New York: Praeger, 1965).

12. A number of social analysts have noted that different nationalities use public space differently. "Arabs make Frenchmen look like introverts. In public places the noise level, the crowding, and the smells overwhelm a westerner. People seem to make a point of breathing in your face. Your position in a public place means nothing to the Arab, because to him public is public and it is entirely within his rights to push in front of you or shove you out of the way if he can." Ladd Wheeler, Robert Goodale, James Deese, General Psychology (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1975), p. 565. On the same point see E. T. Hall, The Hidden Dimension (New York: Doubleday, 1966), passim.


15. See the Appendix for the complete data of questions chosen as representative and illustrative of sampled Shikunat Nitzachon residents.


18. For a discussion of the varieties of Jewish religious observance in Israel and its political impacts see Alice Eckardt and Roy Eckardt, Encounter with Israel: A Challenge to Conscience


20. The spokesman for the Ministry of Interior noted: "I remember when they [Hebrew Israelites] came here and started to claim the right as original Jews, there was a meeting of the late Minister Shapiro in the Parliament and he always used to be in charge of the refugees, saying 'we are a state of refugees. Jews were in the diaspora over 2,000 years. We cannot say no to blacks who came here just to improve their standard of life." January 22, 1973.

21. Most discussion of discrimination in Israel are concerned with cultural and economic differences. Color discrimination, while implied, does not seem to have obtained the central attention of Israelis and social scientists. However: "there can be no doubt that some Europeans are indeed prejudiced; terms such as shechorim, the 'blacks,' or frankim are popular expressions of biased attitudes. These new immigrants, some of whom are dark skinned, and most of whom possess different traditions are disliked and feared by some. For their part, too Middle Easterners speak of the disliked vus vus - the European chattering in an incomprehensible Yiddish. There is no accurate survey of how widespread these feelings may be, or among which groups they are strongest." Weingrod, Israel: Group Relations in a New Society, p. 40.

22. Some analysts deny that there is any similarity in the situation of the Sephardics and the black American. They point out that Sephardics are a majority not a minority, that they are not black, nor did they come as slaves to Israel. See Henry Toledano, "Time to Stir the Melting Pot," in Israel: Social Structure and Change, ed. by Michael Curtis and Mordecai Chertoff, p. 333.


Chapter V

Summary and Conclusions
In the preceding pages I have suggested that membership in the Hebrew Israelites provides some black Americans with a more satisfying group identity. Four substantive issues were raised to understand the emergence of the Hebrew Israelites. This chapter provides a summary of the responses to these four issues: 1. Who are the Hebrew Israelites and what are their beliefs? 2. The formation of Hebrew Israelite group identity. 3. How do Hebrew Israelites compare with Black Muslims and Black Jews in terms of their genesis, eschatology/ideology, culture, recruitment, organization, ritual, practice and emigration? 4. And, how do the Hebrew Israelites and Israelis perceive each other? This chapter also discusses the potential for religious and color conflict among Hebrew Israelites and Israelis and the emergence of other similar black cults in the United States.

I

Who are the Hebrew Israelites and what are their beliefs?

Religious nationalism among black Americans has been an important part of the black religious cult experience, centered primarily among those cults which I have termed nationalistic cults. There have been two kinds of nationalistic cults: one based on Islam and the other based on Judaism. Hebrew Israelites are one of the more recent black religious nationalistic cults of the Judaistic variety.

Black Judaism has its genesis and emergence around the turn of the 20th century in the black urban ghettos of the United States. Since that time, there have been numerous other Black Jewish cults including more recently the Hebrew Israelites. Hebrew Israelites had their genesis
in the early 1960s when their two leaders, Nasi Hashalom and Nasi Shaliach, met and later were able to convince a small following that black Americans were the descendants of the biblical Hebrew tribes. Hebrew Israelite leadership developed an ideology/eschatology which asserted that a world conspiracy has sought to conceal the true identity of black. Hebrew Israelites believe that, some time in the distant past, their progenitors "broke the law" of their God, and that consequently the Hebrews were punished with diaspora, slavery, exploitation and subjugation. But Hebrew Israelites also believe in their redemption; that they are a Nation and as such that one day soon they will be restored to ascendant status among nations. This will occur, Hebrew Israelites believe, after a war of Armageddon has destroyed their enemies. After this apocalyptic war, Hebrew Israelites assert that the long awaited millenium will follow: a thousand years of utopia and a world free of strife or conflict. For Hebrew Israelites, 1977 is the year of the millenium. Hebrew Israelites assert that it has been necessary for them to leave their homes in Chicago and to immigrate to Israel to satisfy the requirements of the divine prophecy of their redemption. Indeed, Hebrew Israelites expect that all Hebrew Israelites everywhere in America will want to "return" to Israel in expectation of the millenium.

The Formation of Hebrew Israelite Group Identity

Hebrew Israelites are millenarians. Indeed, their concern with the onset of the predicted millenium dominates their present lives. For example, Hebrew Israelites have focussed their attention upon preparing for Armageddon and the millenial utopia. In large part this means
concern about the normative and value dimensions of Hebrew Israelite behavior. For example, during the period of this research, Hebrew Israelites increased the number of food tabus and behavioral restrictions which they observed to insure that their membership were in compliance with "God's law." As we have shown in Chapter IV, Hebrew Israelites have reduced their contact with "non-believers" to avoid what they feel is the risk of being wooed away from their beliefs.

Three factors are important in the genesis of millenarian groups: 1) deprivation, absolute or relative; 2) attachment or association with religious orientations that lend themselves to millenarian interpretation; and 3) the availability of persons with salvationist fantasies who succeed in establishing charismatic leadership over the group. All of these factors were present and instrumental in the Hebrew Israelite genesis. A fourth factor, the desire of many of the membership to emigrate from the United States, acted as a catalyst in the coalescence of the group.

Membership in the Hebrew Israelite group has been attractive to some black Americans because it rationalized a way out of the black American predicament (both figuratively and literally), and because it provided a new satisfying identity. This new identity emerges as the consequence of redefining four of the "set of identifications" that are central and salient to Hebrew Israelite identity: name, color, origins and nationality. The adoption of a Hebrew Israelite name and the relinquishing of a former "Gentile name" is both a real and symbolic expression of the assumption of the new satisfying Hebrew
Israelite identity is assisted by Hebrew Israelite ideology that interprets black skin color as a badge of honor, provides a glorious and lengthy past which identifies the origins of Hebrew Israelite people, and asserts that the Hebrew Israelites are a nation whose homesland is Israel.

How do the Hebrew Israelites compare with the Nation of Islam (Black Muslims) and the Black Jews of Harlem?

The Black Muslims and the Black Jews emerged in the early part of the 1930s. Hebrew Israelites are a more recent cult phenomenon, having their genesis in the early 1960s. Black Muslims are a product of the Islamic mainstream that began with Noble Drew Ali's Moorish Science Temples of America. Black Jews and Hebrew Israelites emerge out of the mainstream of Black Judaism.

The eschatology/ideology of each cult is similar in general although different in detail: according to Judaistic and Islamic orientations and the inventiveness of the founders. The eschatology/ideology of each provides the cultist with a religious philosophy and doctrine, and also serves to counter the debilitating effects of the cultist's experience with racial exploitation. In the main, the eschatology/ideology of each group explains the origins of the group, how the group came to suffer all of their attendant ills, and the way out of their present predicament. The eschatology/ideology usually preaches that the cultist is the member of a black nation which has a special relationship with their God. Either to test the mettle of that nation or because the latter has sinned, the cultists believe that their God has allowed their subsequent exploitation by white people. Over time
the cultists believe that these white people have sought to conceal the true identity of black people. However, a war of Armageddon will ultimately destroy their white enemies, after which there will ensue a thousand years of peace for those survivors of the debacle. Black Muslims and Black Jews believe the war of Armageddon and the millenium will occur in the year 2000, while Hebrew Israelites look forward to the year 1977.

Each of the cults serves to provide its membership with a new satisfying identity. In this regard, each have subjected the "set of identification" of name, color, origins and nationality to redefinition. In addition, each cult has served as a "revitalization movement" providing its membership with a more satisfying culture.

Black Muslims, unlike Black Jews or Hebrew Israelites, have stressed economic enterprise and have invested in businesses extensively. Black Muslims are greater in numbers than Black Jews or Hebrew Israelites and have been able to use this advantage of numbers to increase their material assets. Black Muslims have also been able to use their economic advantages as a lure for recruitment of other blacks. Neither Hebrew Israelites nor Black Jews recruit extensively.

The organization of the Black Muslims is large and complex in contrast to Black Jews and Hebrew Israelites. Black Muslims have 80 temples and an estimated 80 million dollars in assets, while Black Jews and Hebrew Israelites have only one temple and are poor in assets.

Finally, Hebrew Israelites differ from Black Muslims and Black Jews in the intensity of their concern about the onset of the millenium. In this interest, they have emigrated from the United States to Israel.
to await the utopia. While both black Muslims and Black Jews have millenial concerns, these do not dominate their lives. Also, while Black Muslims have raised the matter of a homeland for discussion, they have expressed that they feel that their strongest claim to a homeland is one on the North American continent. Neither emigration nor a national homeland have been salient issues among Black Jews.

How to Hebrew Israelites and Israelis perceive each other?

Hebrew Israelite attitudes and opinions about Israelis are a product of Hebrew Israelite ideology. Hebrew Israelite ideology declares that Hebrew Israelites are the only true descendants of the Hebrew tribes, and that all others who profess such descent are imposters or at best misguided. This ideological assertion precludes Hebrew Israelite/Israeli interaction on a personal and information level. Moreover, the Hebrew Israelite belief that they are an elite or vaguard who will usher in the millenium in 1977 also inhibits their interaction with Israelis, for the former fear that the latter may cleverly woo them away from their beliefs.

In spite of the religious claims and "withdrawal" of Hebrew Israelites from contact with Israelis, those Israelis whom we sampled expressed some tolerance towards the Hebrew Israelites. For example, while the majority of those sampled agreed with their government's position of barring further immigration of other Hebrew Israelites to Israel, the majority also agreed that those Hebrew Israelites already in Israel should be allowed to remain in Israel. Generally, when there were differential responses to the various items on the questionnaire
along the cultural and religious dimensions, most favorable responses were given most often by Sabras, and then Sephardic and Ashkenazic Israelis.

On ten questions, Sabras more than Sephardic or Ashkenazic Israelis replied that they:

Question 28. felt they knew Hebrew Israelites well
31. felt satisfied with Hebrew Israelites as neighbors
32. had invited Hebrew Israelites to their homes
33. had Hebrew Israelites accept the invitation and come to their homes
34. had been invited to the homes of Hebrew Israelites
35. had gone to Hebrew Israelite homes when invited
36. disagreed with the Israeli government's barring entry to other Hebrew Israelites
37. felt that Hebrew Israelites already in Israel should be allowed to remain
38. thought that Hebrew Israelites were Jews
39. felt that, assuming Hebrew Israelites were Jews, they would not have a difficult time finding acceptance in Israel

In terms of religious orientation, more favorable responses to more questions about the Hebrew Israelites were given by those who were less observant than those who were observant. On nine questions, the less observant more than the observant replied that:

Question 29. their children had friends among the Hebrew Israelite children
30. their children played with the Hebrew Israelite children
31. they felt satisfied with the Hebrew Israelites as neighbors
32. they invited Hebrew Israelites to their homes
33. they had Hebrew Israelites accept an invitation and come to their homes
34. they had been invited to Hebrew Israelite homes
37. they felt that Hebrew Israelites already in Israel should be allowed to remain
38. they thought Hebrew Israelites were Jews
39. they felt Hebrew Israelites would not find it difficult to find acceptance in Israel because they are black
Conflict between Hebrew Israelites and Israelis

The potential for conflict between Hebrew Israelites and Israelis is considerable given the adversary nature of Hebrew Israelite ideology vis-a-vis Jews particularly. Hebrew Israelites assert that they are the only authentic Hebrew, that all other claimants (particularly white Jews) are imposters, frauds or usurpers. At best, Hebrew Israelites believe that some Jews may be misguided in their religious beliefs. Recent disclosures to the Israeli public of these Hebrew Israelite opinions have dissipated much sympathy many Israelis felt toward Hebrew Israelites.²

Much of the conflict between Hebrew Israelites and Israelis is dominated by religious considerations. We have noted earlier that Hebrew Israelites as millenarians are extremely suspicious of outsiders, concerned that their membership may be wooed away or seduced back to Babylon (the United States) by the forces of evil. To shield themselves from this contingency, Hebrew Israelites have withdrawn from all but essential contacts with non-believers. The result is not to facilitate communication between Israelis and Hebrew Israelites, and possibly to encourage the antagonisms that both groups harbor about each other.

Additionally, there is the question, of Who is a Jew? which has beset Israel almost from its inception.³ This is a major domestic issue which has often been shielded from the attention of non-Israelis and those not familiar with Israeli politics by the Arab/Israeli conflict. Religious and non-religious factions have engaged in considerable
debate and conflict over this issue. In general, the former have argued for a more orthodox legal definition to determine whether one is a Jew or not. Recently, for example, converts under American Reformed Jewish auspices have had their "Jewishness" questioned by the more religiously observant authorities in Israel. The latter have been concerned that the conversion rituals of the Reformed community deviate from Jewish religious law. The observant rabbinical authorities in Israel have rejected the Hebrew Israelites as co-religionists as the latter have rejected Jews. The immediate consequences of the rejection of Hebrew Israelites as Jews is to reject the Hebrew Israelite application for admission to Israel under the Law of Return. But more important are the other effects of Hebrew Israelites being declared not Jews. For one, many Hebrew Israelites may now be expelled since they are not automatically eligible, as Jews are, to residence and citizenship in Israel. To remain, Hebrew Israelites may be asked to satisfy immigration requirements that apply to all other categories of persons who are not Jews and who wish to reside in Israel. Also as non-Jews in Israel, Hebrew Israelites would be subject to some considerable limits on their personal relations with Jews. Marriage, for example, may only legally be concluded under religious auspices. Non-Jews may also not be buried in Jewish cemeteries. The consequence of the rabbinical declaration that Hebrew Israelites are not Jews is to complement the Hebrew Israelite "withdrawal" from contact with Israelis, and to further the distance between the two communities.

Beyond religious differences which tend to divide Hebrew Israelites and Israelis, there is the matter of color which may further the cleavage
between the two groups. Even before Hebrew Israelites arrived in Israel, a number of commentators had noted the emergence of color conflict there. Darker members of the Sephardic community claimed that they were discriminated against also because of their color. An organization of Black Panthers came into being in Israel promoting the cause of Sephardics and provoking comparisons between the Israeli group and their black American name-sakes. Neither Hebrew Israelites nor Israelis have been insensitive to the matter of Color. Our interviews with Israeli officials indicated that they were concerned less their decisions affecting Hebrew Israelites be regarded as racist.

[We] don't want to make bad propaganda about this problem if it means we will have to expel a black from Israel. We don't want it. On the other hand, Hebrew Israelites have accused the Israel authorities of discriminating against them because they are black and not because they are not Jews. Hebrew Israelites argue that this is the reason that they have not received more housing or other needed social assistance. Hebrew Israelites are also aware of the Falashim, a community of Ethiopian Jews who have not immigrated to Israel in any large numbers. Hebrew Israelites argue that the Falashim have not been encouraged or enabled to immigrate to Israel as other "white Jews" (Hebrew Israelites cite the recent Russian immigrants as an example) because of Israeli racism.

Because Hebrew Israelites are readily identifiable in Israel because of their color, physical characteristics and dress, it is not implausible that existing color prejudice orientations among some Israeli may subject Hebrew Israelites to discrimination, especially since the latter may be excused in terms of religious differences.
Hebrew Israelites are not free of racism either. We noted earlier that Hebrew Israelite ideology asserts that Hebrew Israelites are a chosen people, and Hebrew Israelites infer from this that they are a very special, superior people. During our research, Hebrew Israelites often referred to themselves as without parallel in any activities in which they participated, and they considered non-Hebrew Israelite efforts, particularly Israeli efforts, as inferior in comparison. For example, some Hebrew Israelites participated in an Israeli basketball league during their initial years in Dimona. At some point they were not allowed to play as a team, Hebrew Israelites say, because they were so far superior to the Israelis, although Hebrew Israelites explained that they were told by the league officials that their team entry had been disapproved because they were not legal immigrants. The prejudice that both Hebrew Israelites and Israelis harbor may continue to maintain the gulf that separates the two groups.

In addition to religious and color differences that may be a source of conflict between Hebrew Israelites and Israelis, a worsening of the Israeli economic and political situation may have a negative impact on the relations between the two groups. We have already noted that Hebrew Israelites have minimal resources, and survive mainly through living cooperatively, sharing food, shelter and clothing. In the past they have made demands on the government to increase their housing supply and opportunities for work. These demands were made during years of relative prosperity and were denied. During an economic "pinch" one could expect that the government would be less inclined to share fewer
resources with those who are not part of the "Jewish community," and indeed who serve as the latter's detractors.

During our research few if any Hebrew Israelite men held permanent positions of employment. Most if not all were low payed, casual laborers, employed on a day-to-day basis. As such, no Hebrew Israelite man could look forward to the benefits of uninterrupted work: sustained income, job stability, health, welfare, unemployment and retirement insurances. Also, during the period of this research, Hebrew Israelite women were not working even in the "domestic" positions Dimonan informants told us they had formerly occupied in the past. Although some income was obtained by Hebrew Israelites in the performances given by their band, the Soul Messengers, at weddings, cafes and concerts, it was my opinion that Hebrew Israelite income from all of these sources (plus gifts from relatives and sympathizers in the United States) was barely adequate to meet their needs. In my estimation, any unforeseen contingency and normal increase in their numbers (births) will necessitate an increase in their income.

Presently Israelis have to pay a higher price now than in the past for the necessities of life due to the continuing conflict between Israel and the surrounding Arab states. Both Israeli income taxes and inflation are among the highest levels in the world, a consequence of having to support a vast military for defense. In the present climate of increasing costs, Israel can plausibly be expected to be less willing to share that nation's limited resources with those who do not identify with it. However, rising Israeli inflation and taxes may be difficult for the
Hebrew Israelites whose incomes are marginal already, and the latter may discover that they need to petition the Israeli government for support just when the latter and the Israeli people are less inclined and less able to help, thus worsening the already strained relations between the two groups.

III

All of the above clearly suggests that the potential for conflict between Hebrew Israelites and Israelis remains high. There are, however, some factors which may work to reduce conflict between the two communities. By suggesting these factors does not imply that conflict will be completely eroded between Hebrew Israelites and Israelis, rather that the existence of each of these factors separately or collectively in any number may afford a climate in which the two communities may co-exist with a minimum of enmity. These factors include: conversion of Hebrew Israelites to Judaism, disintegration of the Hebrew Israelite group, and increased Israeli tolerance.

Certainly conversion of Hebrew Israelites to Judaism, from the Israeli perspective, would afford an easy "solution" to the conflict between Hebrew Israelites and Israelis. There is no reason to believe however that any large number of Hebrew Israelites can be persuaded to change their identity orientation. One effort, at least, has already been attempted at Hebrew Israelite conversion and failed. It is important to recognize here that conversion to Judaism would not satisfy the identity demands of Hebrew Israelites. The latter are black Americans who became Hebrew Israelites because their primordial attachments
to the set of identifications of name, color, origins and nationality were satisfied by Hebrew Israelite ideology/eschatology. Judaism for these black Americans, we suggest, would not satisfy their more parochial interests which primarily focuses upon Hebrew Israelites as black people.

It is not inconceivable that some few Hebrew Israelites, particularly the children, may be attracted to Judaism in the future. But even these may be less inclined to conversion if they anticipate alienation from their families and other Hebrew Israelites, as well as less than full acceptance from the Israeli community. For those Hebrew Israelites who may convert, their integration within Jewish society may facilitate accommodation and acceptance of Hebrew Israelites if the converts act to moderate conflict between the two groups and Jews are sympathetic.

One possible impact on Hebrew Israelites if their predictions regarding the millenium do not occur is disintegration of the group and the eventual emigration of the membership from Israel. Of course this would ideally deal with the problem between hebrew Israelites and Israelis from the latter's point of view. However there is evidence to suggest that millenarian groups may continue to exist despite a disconfirmation of their millenial predictions. It therefore would not be unreasonable to speculate that even if some Hebrew Israelites were disaffected by the non-occurrence of the millenium in 1977, others would remain committed and continue to want to remain in Israel. Moreover, we have already noted that Hebrew Israelites regard the quality of life in Israel superior to that which they experienced in the black ghettos of the United States, so that many of the "fallen away" might be expected to want to continue
to live in Israel.

The above suggests that it is unrealistic to expect that a high proportion of Hebrew Israelites will convert to Judaism, nor will the non-occurrence of the millenium cause the complete disintegration, dispersal and emigration of the group. To minimize the conflict between the two communities, greater reliance may have to be placed on Israeli tolerance, i.e., the acceptance by Israelis that Hebrew Israelites will continue to reside in their midst for an indefinite period of time. Indeed, this suggestion can find support in the data obtained in the Dimonan questionnaire: 74 per cent of those interviewed indicated that they felt that those Hebrew Israelites already in Israel should be allowed to remain.

Providing Hebrew Israelites with the status of permanent residence would permit them to legitimately obtain employment, more housing for their members, and to acquire some economic stability in their new homeland. The source of some of the friction between Hebrew Israelites and the Israeli authorities stems from the former's need for more employment, housing and income. Providing Hebrew Israelites with legitimate status as residents would be a humanitarian gesture, which would allow the group to improve its meagre resources and reduce its economic marginality.

While the granting of permanent resident status would contribute much to the reduction of conflict between the two communities, some areas of conflict would still remain. 63.7% of our sampled Dimonans indicated that they agreed with their government's policy of barring further Hebrew Israelite immigration. Hebrew Israelites assert that
other Hebrew Israelites will want to come to Israel and they are angered by the barring of their compatriots by the Israelis. It should be expected that conflict may emerge between the two groups if this Israeli policy continues, particularly if the barring prevents families from being united.

The Israeli authorities may appropriately be concerned about the immigration of any person or groups to Israel, to insure the Jewish character of the state or that labor force needs may be met. Currently, it is my estimate that there are no more than 200 persons who identify themselves as Hebrew Israelites living in the United States. Should these attempt to immigrate to Israel, their numbers are such that they could hardly alter the demographic and religious aspirations of Israel. Considering this reality, the Israeli authorities would be well advised to review their policies regarding Hebrew Israelite immigration in their efforts to minimize the conflict between these two groups. Now all Hebrew Israelites are barred from entering the country. A new policy would suggest that Israelis be more flexible and pragmatic, permitting entry, for example, to Hebrew Israelites who wished to be reunited with their families or those who had marketable occupational skills.

Finally, we are concerned about the emergence of other such groups like the Hebrew Israelites in the United States. We noted earlier the factors which influenced the emergence of millenarian groups, and suggest now that millenarianism may continue to be an option for some few if these factors obtain. But the emphasis here is on some few. Many others who may have been attracted to the cults in earlier years are probably
less inclined now due to education and increased economic and political opportunities. For these, other worldly solutions to contemporary reality problems have no allure.

Presently, some of the leadership of established black churches seek material goals while mobilizing their religious constituency towards political and economic goals. The Rev. Jesse Jackson places considerable emphasis on black capitalism and "this worldly benefits." Indeed it would seem essential for the black church, in order to maintain its appeal, to transform its spiritual concerns into practical applications. Blacks know that "all God's chillun have shoes" in heaven; what they want is shoes for their children on earth.

All of the above suggests that only a few cults like the Hebrew Israelites may emerge in the near future. In addition to the three factors noted earlier which influence the emergence of millenarian groups, some of these may be encouraged by the successes of the Black Muslims. Some others may be motivated additionally because they simply believe that black Americans ought to be a separate nation. Hans Kohn has noted:

Nationalism is a state of mind in which the supreme loyalty of the individual is felt to be due the nation state...although objective factors are of great importance for the formation of nationalities, the most essential element is a living and active corporate will. It is this will which we call nationalism, a state of mind inspiring the large majority of a people and claiming to inspire all its members. It asserts that the nation state is the ideal and the only legitimate form of political organization and that the nationality is the source of all cultural creative energy and economic well being.

Some may even be impressed with Hebrew Israelites and their settlement in Israel. However, I do not expect that black nationalism, even
black religious nationalism, will stress emigration. Few blacks have expressed a desire to leave the United States. Indeed it could be better argued - as the Nation of Islam has argued, that some portion of the United States is due black Americans in return for the latter's contributions to America's growth and development. On this point it is interesting to note that Hebrew Israelites have hardly commanded the attention of black America. In my estimation, black cults like the Hebrew Israelites will continue to be peripheral groups whose existence will not deflect the attention of the majority of blacks from developing reality strategies to deal with contemporary political and social problems.
Footnotes

1. On this point, Guenter Lewy has noted that three factors account for the emergence of millenarian movements: "1. situations of distress or dis-orientation the roots of which are not clearly understood or which are seen as not solvable by ordinary and available remedies, 2. when a society or group is deeply attached to religious ways of thinking about the world and when the religion of that society attaches importance to millenarian ideas, 3. when a man (or men) obsessed with salvationist phantasies succeeds in establishing his charismatic leadership over a social movement." Religion and Revolution, p. 246.

2. The Jerusalem Post, December 21, 1971 noted: "We may understand, intellectually, that some U.S. blacks seek to turn away from a Christianity they feel failed them, to become militant Black Muslims and Black Hebrew, but while Algeria will offer a refuge to Eldridge Cleaver, we cannot give a haven here to fight a global battle against the white world. Whether they Jews themselves are white or not white is unimportant in this connection. Algeria welcomes a challenge to the Western world. We are generally in sympathy with it and will not be involved against our will in a battle that is not of our making." See also the New York Times, August 31, 1971. The Times notes that the Israeli immigration authorities began taking a "harder line" against Hebrew Israeliite immigration when Nasi Shshalom began stressing "that his people were Israelis and not Jews, and in questioning the right of Jews from Europe and the Middle East to live here."

3. For an interesting discussion on this point see Amos Elon, The Israelis, Founders and Sons (New York: Bantam, 1972), p. 428. Elon notes that "the possible effects of ethnocentricity upon the quality of Israeli life must not be underestimated. It comes to a head in the problem of religion. Since Israel is officially defined as a 'Jewish state,' the issue revolves around the crucial question 'Who is a Jew?' No other issue has divided Israelis so sharply, and the controversy is still far from resolved." See also S. N. Eisenstadt, Israeli Society (New York: Basic Books, 1967), pp. 311-15, 320; Erwin Birnbaum, The Politics of Compromise, State and Religion (New Jersey: Associated University Press, 1970), pp. 178-189.

4. In the U.S. the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations has engaged in considerable debate as to whether to continue to participate in the Synagogue Council of America along with the Reformed and Conservative branches of Judaism. The Orthodox's concern is a consequence of their larger criticism of the observance of ritual by the Reformed and Conservative Rabbinate, especially in regard to conversions. See the New York Times for a discussion of this
controversy which relates directly to the domestic issue of "Who is a Jew?" in Israel. The New York Times, March 18, 1974; March 21, 1974; April 23, 1974; June 25, 1974; July 21, 1974; December 1, 1974.


7. Similar accusations of racial discrimination have been made by white Jews regarding Israel's concern with the Falashim. In a newspaper interview, Graenum Berger, founder of the American Association for Ethiopian Jews, indicated that not all Jews have been ready to accept the Falashim as co-religionists, and that he wonders whether some of the resistance to the acceptance of the Falashim "might not be racist." The New York Times, November 2, 1975.

8. "Finance Minister Yehoshua Rabinowitz, who introduced the budget in Parliament in Jerusalem, said that already, 56% of the national income went to the national treasury through taxes, and compulsory loans. If cities taxes and social security are included, he said the amount is 64%.

These figures, an aide to the minister said, make Israelis the most heavily taxed people in the world." The New York Times, February 25, 1975.


10. Elon notes that Israel is officially designated as a "Jewish state." Elon, The Israelis, Founders and Sons, p. 428.

11. Some black church leaders have also become more nationalistic in their efforts to counter the racism of Christianity and build black self-esteem. These leaders have promoted a black theology. See for example Gayraud Wilmore, Jr., "The Case for a New Black Church Style" in The Black Experience in Religion, ed. by C. Eric Lincoln (New York: Doubleday, 1974), pp. 29-34; Albert B. Cleage, Jr. The Black Messiah (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1971).

Bibliography


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Appendix
Dimonan Questionnaire
5-15-73

1. Sex
   1. Male
   2. Female

2. Age
   1. 20-24
   2. 25-29
   3. 30-34
   4. 35-39
   5. 40-44
   6. 45-49
   7. 50-54
   8. 55-64
   9. 65 and over

3. In what country were you born?
   1. Respondent born in Israel
   2. Respondent born in Asia/Africa
   3. Respondent born in Europe/America

4. How many years did you learn in school?
   1. Not at all
   2. Up to and including 4 years
   3. 5 to 8 years
   4. 9 to 10 years
   5. 11 years
   6. 12 years
   7. Higher education or part University without a degree
   8. Completed University degree

5. What is your family situation?
   1. Married
   2. Single
   3. Divorced
   4. Widowed

6. What are the ages of the children who live in the apartment with you? (Write down all the ages and mark afterwards.)
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

1. All children are up to and including 6
2. Some are under 6 and some are 7 but less than 15
3. All the children are between 7 and less than 15
4. Some are 7 to less than 15, and some are 15 and above
5. All children are 15 and above
6. Some are up to 6, some between 7 and less than 15, and some are 15 and above
7. Some are less than 6 and some are 15 and above
8. No children

7. How long have you lived in Dimona?

1. one year or less
2. 2 years
3. 3 years
4. 4 years
5. 5 years
6. 6 years
7. 7 years
8. 8 years
9. 9 years or more

8. Where did you live before Dimona?

1. Jerusalem
2. Tel Aviv
3. Haifa
4. Beersheva
5. Another development town (Yeruham, Kiryat Gat, etc.)
6. Another city (e.g., Natanya, Ramat Gan)
7. Moshav
8. Kibbutz
9. Not in Israel

9. When did you immigrate to Israel?

1. Born in Israel
2. Before 1930
3. 1931-1940
4. 1941-1947
5. 1948-1954
6. 1955–1959
7. 1960–1965
8. 1966–1971
9. 1972 and after

10. From among the following income levels which level matches your gross family income (in Lira)

1. 0–199
2. 200–399
3. 400–599
4. 600–799
5. 800–999
6. 1000–1249
7. 1250–1499
8. 1500–1749
9. 1750 or more

11. Do you usually observe the religious traditions?

1. Definitely, and in all of its details
2. To a great extent
3. A little
4. I don't observe at all

12. Are you able to have a conversation in English on everyday matters?

1. Yes, easily
2. Yes, with difficulty
3. No

13. How long have you lived in this apartment?

1. Less than a year
2. 1–2 years
3. 3–4 years
4. 5–6 years
5. 7–8 years
6. 9 years or more
14. How would you compare your present flat with your last flat?

1. much better
2. better
3. the same
4. not as good

15. How do you like living in your present neighborhood?

1. very happy
2. happy
3. unhappy
4. very unhappy

16. How long have you lived in the neighborhood?

1. less than a year
2. 1-2 years
3. 3-4 years
4. 5-6 years
5. 7-8 years
6. 9 years or more

17. How do you like living in Dimona?

1. very happy
2. happy
3. unhappy
4. very unhappy

Why? ____________________________________________

18. In comparison with other Shikunim in Dimona, how would you describe Shikunat Nitzachon?

1. much better than most
2. better than most
3. the same as most
4. worst than most
5. very much worst than most

Why? ____________________________________________
19. How would you describe your relations with most of your neighbors?
   1. very good
   2. good
   3. not so good
   4. not at all good
   Why?

20. Do you have any plans to move from your present flat within the next year?
   1. Yes, I definitely plan to move
   2. Thinking about moving but no definite plans
   3. Not thinking about moving at all
   Why (if 1 or 2)?

21. Do you have friends among your present neighbors?
   1. very many
   2. many
   3. not so many
   4. none at all
   (if 3 or 4)?

22. How would you describe this Shikun as a place to raise your children?
   1. very good
   2. good
   3. not so good
   4. not good at all
   Why?

23. Do you and your neighbors exchange visits?
   1. often
   2. sometimes
   3. rarely
   4. never
24. How would you compare your relations with your neighbors in the last place that you lived with your present relations.

1. much better in the former place
2. better in the former place
3. better here
4. much better here

Why? __________________________________________

25. Are you satisfied with the friends of your children in Shikunat Nitzachon?

1. very happy
2. happy
3. not so happy
4. not happy at all

26. How many friends would you say your children have in Shikunat Nitzachon?

1. very many
2. many
3. not so many
4. none at all

Why? __________________________________________

27. In Shikunat Nitzachon, there are some Black Hebrew families. How well do you feel they get along with their neighbors in the Shikun?

1. very well
2. fairly well
3. not so well
4. not at all

Why? __________________________________________

28. How well would you say you know the Black Hebrews who live in this Shikun? *

1. very well
2. as well as anyone
3. not so well
4. not well at all

Why? __________________________________________

*Israelis refer to Hebrew Israelites as Black Hebrews
29. Do your children have friends among the Black Hebrew children?
   1. very many
   2. many
   3. not so many
   4. none at all
   Why?

30. Do your children play with the Black Hebrew children?
   1. very much
   2. much
   3. not so much
   4. not al all

31. How do you feel about having the Black Hebrews as neighbors?
   1. I am very satisfied
   2. satisfied
   3. not so satisfied
   4. not satisfied at all
   Why?

32. Have you ever invited any among the Black Hebrews to your home?
   1. more than once
   2. once
   3. not at all

33. Did they come?
   1. Everytime they were invited
   2. More than once
   3. Never
   If Never, why?

34. Have you ever been invited to the home of a Black Hebrew?
   1. more than once
   2. once
   3. never
35. Did you go?
   1. Everytime I was invited
   2. more than once
   3. Never
   If never, why?  

36. Recently, the government has been barring the entry of other Black Hebrews into Israel. How do you feel about this?
   1. Definitely agree, and think they should be barred
   2. Agree
   3. Disagree
   4. Definitely disagree, and think they should not be barred
   Why?  

37. Should the Black Hebrews who are already in Israel be allowed to remain?
   1. Definitely, they should be allowed to remain if they wish
   2. They should be allowed to remain if they wish
   3. They should not be allowed to remain
   4. Definitely, they should not be allowed to remain
   Why?  

38. Do you think that the Black Hebrew are Jews?
   1. Yes, I definitely think they are Jews
   2. Yes, I think they are Jews
   3. No, I don't think they are Jews
   4. No, they are definitely not Jews
   Why?  

39. Let us assume that the Black Hebrew are Jews, do you feel they would have difficulty finding acceptance in Israel?
   1. Very difficult
   2. difficult
   3. Not so difficult
   4. Not difficult at all
   Why?  

40. Do you feel that the Black Hebrews find it difficult to find acceptance in Israel because they are black?

1. Yes, definitely
2. Yes
3. Not so much
4. Not at all

41. How do you feel about the proposition that Israeli citizenship should only be granted to Jews?

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Disagree
4. Strongly disagree

Why? ____________________________________________________________

Thank you
Revised Hebrew Israelite Questions
February 24, 1973

Name: (How did you choose your Hebrew Israelite name?)

Date of Birth: Age:

Place of Birth:

Marital Status: Single ___ Married (# of wives) ___ Divorced ___ Widowed ___

Number of Children (dependents):

Education: Highest Level achieved:

Occupation:

Last city of residence in the U.S.?

Former Church Membership:

Former Organizations Membership:

Military Service:

* * * * * * * * * * * * * * * *

1. When did you join the Nation?

2. Why did you join the Nation? (probe: had you considered other alternatives like the Nation of Islam, for example?)

3. Did your friends and relatives support your decision to join the Nation, and to leave the U.S.?

4. How has your life changed since joining the nation?

5. What are the most important things that you have learned since joining the Nation?

6. How do you feel about white Jews and Black Jews?

7. Who is a Hebrew Israelite?

8. How are Hebrew Israelites different from Black Jews?

* Hebrew Israelites often refer to themselves as the Nation.
9. Tell me about your experiences in Liberia.
   a. Why did the Nation decide to go to Liberia?
   b. How did you get along with the Liberians?
   c. What happened in your efforts to get settled in Liberia?
   d. Why did the Nation decide to leave Liberia?
   e. Tell me about the decision to go to Israel?
   f. Compare your Liberian experience with your Israeli experience.

10. How are things working out in Israel?
    a. How do you feel about Israelis?
    b. How do you understand the difference between Sephardic and Ashkenazic Jews?
    c. Do Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews relate different to the Nation?

11. What would you like your children to become?

12. What is your idea of a good (righteous) man/woman?

13. Will all Hebrew Israelites want to come to Israel?

14. What will the outcome be for the nation in 1977?

15. Suppose that doesn't occur, what will it mean to you?

16. What is your role in the nation?
Cultural Orientations Charts:

Ashkenazic, Sephardic, and Sabra
Question 12:

Are you able to have a conversation in English on everyday matters?

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Question 27:

In Shikunat Nitzachon there are some Hebrew Israelite families. How well do you feel that get along with their neighbors in the shikun?

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Legend:

1. For the sake of simplicity in presentation four columns have been reorganized:
   "very well" and "fairly well" = "well"
   "not so well" and "not at all" = "not well"
Question 28:
How well would you say that you know the Hebrew Israelites in this Shikun?

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Legend:
1. For the sake of simplicity in presentation in the text, four columns have been reorganized:
   "very well" and "as well as anyone" = "well"
   "not so well" and "not well at all" = "not well"
**Question 29:**

Do your children have friends among the Hebrew Israelite children?

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**Legend:**

1. For the sake of simplicity in the presentation in the text, three columns have been reorganized: "very many, many and not so many" = "some"

2. "Not applicable" refers to those families without children, or with infants too young to have friends.

3. In order to obtain a more accurate description, the respondents in the Not Applicable category have been subtracted from the sample in the text. A new total, N = 157, is the basis for the findings in the text.
Question 31:
How do you feel about having Hebrew Israelites as neighbors?

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Legend:
1. For the sake of simplicity in presentation in the text, four columns have been reorganized:
   "very satisfied" and "satisfied" = "satisfied"
   "not so satisfied" and "not satisfied at all" = "not satisfied"
Question 36: Recently the government has been barring the entry of other Hebrew Israelites into Israel. How do you feel about this?

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Legend:

1. For the sake of simplicity in the presentation in the text, four columns have been reorganized:

"definitely agree" and "agree" = "agree"

"definitely disagree" and "disagree" = "disagree"
Question 37:

Should the Hebrew Israelites who are already in Israel be allowed to remain?

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Legend:

1. For the sake of simplicity in the presentation in the text, four columns have been reorganized:
   "definitely yes" and "if they wish" = "yes"
   "Should not" and "definitely should not" = "no"
Question 38:
Do you think that the Hebrew Israelites are Jews?

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Legend:
1. For the sake of simplicity in the presentation in the text, four columns have been reorganized:
   "yes definitely" and "yes, I think" = "yes"
   "No, I don't think" and "no definitely" = "no"
Question 39:

Let us assume that the Hebrew Israelites are Jews. Do you feel that they would have difficulty finding acceptance in Israel?

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Legend:

For the sake of simplicity in the presentation in the text, four columns have been reorganized:

"very difficult" and "difficult" = "difficult"

"not so difficult" and "not difficult at all" = "not difficult"
Question 40:
Do you feel that the Hebrew Israelites find it difficult to find acceptance because they are black?

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Legend:
For the sake of simplicity in the presentation in the text, four column have been reorganized:
"yes definitely" and "yes" = "yes"
"not so much" and "not at all" = "not so much or not at all"
Religious Orientations Charts:

Observant and Less Observant
Question 12:

Are you able to have a conversation in English on everyday matters?

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Legend:
For the sake of simplicity in presentation in the text, some rows have been reorganized: "Definitely and in all details" and "to a great extent" = observant "A little" and "don't observe" = less observant
Question 27:
In Shikunat Nitzachon there are some Hebrew Israelite families. How well do you feel they get along with their neighbors in the Shikun?

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<th>Not So Well</th>
<th>Not At All</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>No Response</th>
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Legend:
For the sake of simplicity in presentation, some columns and rows have been reorganized:
"very well" and "fairly well" = "well"
"not so well" and "not at all" = "not well"
"Definitely and in all details" and "a great extent" = observant
"A little" and "don't observe at all" = less observant
Question 28:
How well would you say that you know the Hebrew Israelites who live in this Shikun?

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<th>Not So Well</th>
<th>Not Well At All</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>No Response</th>
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DEFINITELY

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A GREAT EXTENT

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A LITTLE

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DONT'OBSERVE AT ALL

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NO RESPONSE

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N = 240

Legend:
For the sake of simplicity in presentation, some columns and rows have been reorganized:

"very well" and "as well as anyone" = "well"
"not so well" and "not well at all" = "not well"
"Definitely and in all details" plus "a great extent" = observant
"A little" plus "don't observe at all" = less observant
Question 29: Do your children have friends among the Hebrew Israelite children?

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Legend: 1. For the sake of simplicity in the presentation of the text, some rows and columns have been reorganized: "Definitely and in all details" plus "A great extent" = observant "A little" plus "don't observe at all" = less observant "very many, many and not so many" = "some"

2. Not Applicable refers to those families without children, or with infants too young for friends.

3. In order to obtain a more accurate description, the respondents in the Not Applicable category have been subtracted from the sample in the text. A new total, N = 157 is the basis for the findings in the text.
Question 31: How do you feel about having the Hebrew Israelites as neighbors?

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<th>Not so Satisfied</th>
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Legend: 1. For the sake of simplicity in presentation in the text, some rows and columns have been reorganized: "definitely and in all details" plus "a great extent" = observant  "a little" plus "don't observe at all" = less observant  "very satisfied" and "satisfied" = "satisfied"  "not so satisfied" and "not satisfied at all" = "not satisfied"
Question 36:
Recently the government has been barring the entry of other Hebrew Israelites into Israel. How do you feel about this?

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Legend:
For the sake of simplicity in presentation in the text, some rows and columns have been reorganized:
"Definitely and in all details" plus "a great extent" = observant
"A little" plus "don't observe at all" = less observant
"Definitely agree" plus "agree" = "agree"
"Defintely disagree" and "disagree" = "disagree"
Question 37: Should the Hebrew Israelites who are already in Israel be allowed to remain?

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Legend: For the sake of simplicity in presentation in the text, some rows and columns have been reorganized. "Definitely and in all details" plus "a great extent" = observant "A little" plus "don't observe at all" = less observant "Definitely yes" and "if they wish" = "yes" "Should not" and "definitely should not" = "no"
### Question 38:

Do you think that the Hebrew Israelites are Jews?

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Legend:

For the sake of simplicity in presentation in the text, some rows and columns have been reorganized:

"Definitely and in all details" plus "A great extent" = observant
"A little" plus "don't observe at all" = less observant
"Yes definitely" and "yes, I think" = "yes"
"No, I don't think" and "no definitely" = "no"
Question 39:

Let us assume that the Hebrew Israelites are Jews. Do you feel that they would have difficulty finding acceptance in Israel?

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Legend:
For the sake of simplicity in presentation in the text, some rows and columns have been reorganized.
"Definitely and in all details" plus "A great extent" = observant
"A little" plus "don't observe at all" = less observant
"Very difficult" and "difficult" = "difficult"
"Not so difficult" and "not difficult at all" = "not difficult"
Question 40: Do you feel that the Hebrew Israelites find it difficult to find acceptance because they are black?

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Legend:
For the sake of simplicity in presentation in the text, some rows and columns have been reorganized:
"Definitely and in all details" plus "A great extent" = observant
"A little" plus "don't observe at all" = less observant
"Yes definitely" and "yes" = "yes"
"Not so much" and "not at all" = "not so much or not at all"
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<th>FORMER OCCUPATION</th>
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<th>YEARS</th>
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<td>5th Grade</td>
<td>Printer</td>
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</tbody>
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Biographical Information

Morris Lounds Jr., born in Atlanta, Georgia in 1934 was educated at City College of New York (B.A., International Relations, 1959), University of Connecticut (M. A. International Relations, 1961), Columbia University (M. S., Social Work, 1965), and at M.I.T. from 1969 - 76 (Ph. D., Political Science, 1976).

He has been a member of the faculty of the Department of Politics, University of Massachusetts (Boston) since 1973.