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## EVOLUTIONARY ASPECTS OF THE TANAKH

And ye shall not walk in the customs of the nation, which I am casting out before you; for they did all these things, and therefore I abhorred them. . . . I am the LORD your God, who have set you apart from the peoples. (Lev. 20:23-24)

There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of thy kingdom; their laws are diverse from those of every people; neither keep they the king's laws; therefore it profiteth not the king to suffer them. (Esther 3:8)

This chapter has three purposes. The first is to show that the Tanakh (the Jewish term for what Christians refer to as the Old Testament) shows a strong concern for reproductive success and control of resources. The second purpose is to show that there is also a pronounced tendency toward idealizing endogamy and racial purity in these writings. Finally, it is argued that the ideology of Judaism as an evolutionary strategy for maintaining genetic and cultural segregation in a diaspora context is apparent in these writings.

### **THE GENERAL IMPORTANCE OF REPRODUCTIVE SUCCESS AND THE CONTROL OF RESOURCES IN THE TANAKH**

I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore. (Gen. 22:17)

The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender. (Prov. 22:7)

Baron (1952a) notes that Judaism is often referred to as a “this-worldly” religion. While there is very little concern with an afterlife, “[b]oth early and later Judaism . . . continuously emphasized a firm belief in the survival of the group and in the ‘eternal’ life of the Jewish people down to, and beyond, the messianic age” (Baron 1952a, 9). Throughout the long history of Jewish writings, there is a strong emphasis on “the duty of marriage and the increase of family” (p. 12) and “a religious inclination toward aggrandizement of family and nation” (p. 31), as seen, for example, by numerous Biblical injunctions to “be fruitful and multiply” and injunctions to the effect that one will obtain reproductive success by following the precepts of Judaism.

The descriptions of the patriarchs return “over and over again to accounts of theophanies associated with blessings and promises of territorial possession and descendants” (Fohrer 1968, 123). For example, God says to Abraham: “‘Look now toward heaven, and count the stars, if thou be able to count them.’ and He said unto him: ‘So shall thy seed be.’ And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:5-6). Conversely, the result of not following God’s word is to have diminished reproductive success: A portion of the extended curse directed at deserters in Deuteronomy states, “And ye shall be left few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou didst not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God. And it shall come to pass, that as the LORD rejoiced over you to do you good, and to multiply you; so the LORD will rejoice over you to cause you to perish, and to destroy you” (Deut. 28:62-63).

This concern with reproductive success became a central aspect of historical Judaism. Baron (1952b, 210), writing of later antiquity, notes the “rabbis’ vigorous insistence upon procreation as the first commandment mentioned in the Bible . . . and their vehement injunctions against any waste of human semen.” Neuman (1969, II:53) makes a similar comment regarding Jews in pre-expulsion Spain, and Zborowski and Herzog (1952, 291) note the absolute obligation to marry and have children among the Ashkenazim in traditional Eastern European society, again based on the recognition that procreation is the first commandment of the Torah. “To be an old maid or a bachelor is not only a shame, but also a sin against the will of God, who has commanded every Jew to marry and beget offspring.” Having many children was viewed as a great blessing, while a woman with only two children viewed herself as childless.

All of the Talmudic regulations regarding sexual behavior were aimed at maximizing the probability of conception (Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 312). Intercourse was prohibited during the woman’s menstrual period and for one week thereafter so that it would occur during the woman’s fertile period and at a time when the man had a high sperm count because of his abstinence. Friday evening was thought to be the most auspicious time because people were relaxed and festive during the Sabbath celebration.

Moreover, “the main stream of the Law sanctified daily pursuits performed in a spirit of service to the family or nation . . . approval, and not mere tolerance of economic activity, finds numerous formulations in the teachings of the rabbis”

(Baron 1952a, 9; see also Baron 1952b, 256ff). Similarly, Johnson (1987, 248) notes the equation of economic success and moral worth in the Tanakh, the Apocrypha, and the Talmuds. He also points out that the Talmuds contain detailed discussions of business problems, so that Jewish education combined practical economic and legal education with what is more commonly viewed as religious.

Besides these general pronouncements regarding the importance of reproductive success and obtaining resources, there is good evidence for the importance of polygyny and sexual competition among males in the Tanakh.<sup>1</sup> Evolutionary anthropologists (e.g., Betzig 1986; Dickemann 1979) have noted a strong tendency for wealthy males in stratified societies to accumulate large numbers of wives and concubines and to have large numbers of offspring, while males with lesser wealth were restricted to one wife or none at all. Such behavior conforms to the theoretical optimum for individually adaptive male behavior.

On the basis of the presumptions of the law and the behavior of the leading personalities of the Tanakh, Epstein (1942) argues that polygyny is the primitive marriage form among the Israelites. Polygyny is assumed throughout the Tanakh (e.g., Exod. 21:10) and appears repeatedly in the behavior of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For example, Jacob fathers 12 sons by four different women—two wives and two concubines.

While the early patriarchs engaged in the low-level polygyny made possible by their pastoral, nomadic life style, the settled agricultural society of Israel allowed for much greater differences in access to females and in reproductive success. Gideon is said to have had 70 sons, Jair the Gileadite 30 sons, Ibzan of Bethlehem 30 sons and 30 daughters, and Abdon 40 sons. King David clearly had a large number of wives and concubines, and at least 16 children, although it is difficult to determine their numbers. At 2 Samuel 15:16 he is said to have left 10 of his concubines in Jerusalem, with no implication that this was the total number.

King Solomon is the extreme example of this tendency for the wealthy and powerful to have large numbers of wives and children: “And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines” (1 Kings 11:3). Solomon’s descendants also had very high reproductive success: Rehoboam is said to have had 18 wives, 60 concubines, 28 sons, and 60 daughters. Moreover, after the division of the kingdom, Rehoboam “dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his sons throughout all the lands of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fortified city; and he . . . sought for them many wives” (2 Chron. 11:23). Abijah, Rehoboam’s son, is said to have had 14 wives, 22 sons, and 16 daughters (2 Chron. 13:21).

Reflecting the reproductive value of females, wives were considered legitimate spoils of war: Thus, King David obtains Saul’s wives after his victory (2 Sam. 12:8), and the Syrian king Benhadad states his demands as follows: “Thy silver and thy gold is mine; thy wives and thy children, even the goodliest, are mine” (1 Kings 20:3).

Competition among the wives in a polygynous household is expected and found. Elkanah has two wives—Peninnah and Hannah, but only Peninnah had children. As a result, Hannah received a lesser sacrifice during religious observances “and her rival vexed her sore, to make her fret, because the LORD had shut up her womb” (1 Sam. 1:6). The key to status and happiness for a woman in a polygynous household was to have children.

### **The Importance of Consanguinity and Endogamy in the Tanakh**

And it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the alien mixture. (Neh. 13:3)

There is an extremely strong concern for endogamy (i.e., marriage within the group) throughout the Tanakh. From an evolutionary perspective, endogamous marriage results in a relatively high average degree of genetic relatedness within the group as a whole, with implications for the expected degree of within-group cooperation and altruism (see Chapter 6). To the extent that a group prevents gene flow from outside the group, the fitness of individuals becomes increasingly correlated with the success of the entire group, and this is especially the case if the group has a high level of inbreeding to begin with. At the extreme, consanguineous marriage (i.e., marriage with biological relatives) results in the offspring being closely related to parents and each other, again with theoretical implications for familial and within-group solidarity. It is an extremely important thesis of this volume that Judaism has, at least until very recently,<sup>2</sup> been immensely concerned with endogamy—what is often referred to as racial purity; moreover, Judaism has shown relatively pronounced tendencies toward consanguinity, especially in comparison with Western societies (see Chapter 8).

Powerful tendencies toward consanguinity can be seen in the behavior of the patriarchs. Thus Abraham marries his half-sister (Gen. 20:12), and his brother Nahor marries his niece (Gen. 11:29).<sup>3</sup> Amram, the father of Moses and Aaron, married his aunt (Num. 26:59). Moreover, Abraham sires Ishmael by the Egyptian slave Hagar, but he makes his covenant with Isaac, the son of his half-sister Sarah, clearly a far closer genetic relationship than with Ishmael. When Sarah wants to cast out Hagar and Ishmael, Abraham is distressed, but God tells Abraham that Sarah is right and that he should indeed favor Isaac over Ishmael.

From an evolutionary perspective, God and Sarah are correct. It is in Abraham’s interest to favor Isaac because Isaac shares more genes with him than does Ishmael. Later, it is stated that Abraham had six children by another woman, Keturah, and it is stated that “Abraham gave all he had unto Isaac. But unto the sons of the concubines, that Abraham had, Abraham gave gifts; and he sent them away from Isaac his son, while he yet lived, eastward, unto the east

country” (Gen. 25:5-6). Thus, Abraham practiced the optimal evolutionary strategy of unigeniture, while favoring a child with a closer genetic relationship to one more distantly related. Clearly, his best strategy was to concentrate his resources in Isaac, who will then have sufficient resources to be polygynous himself, while allowing his other children to descend economically and hope for the best.

Similarly, Isaac is given an Egyptian slave as a wife in his youth, but his heirs are his children by Rebekah, the daughter of his first-cousin Bethuel (whose mother, Milcah, had married her uncle, Nahor [Gen. 11:29]).<sup>4</sup> Abraham makes very clear his desire not to have Isaac marry a woman of the Canaanites, whom he was presently dwelling with, but rather to return “unto my country, and to my kindred, and take a wife for my son, even for Isaac” (Gen. 24:4).

Esau, the elder son of Isaac, offends his parents by marrying two Hittite women: “And they were a bitterness of spirit unto Isaac and to Rebekah” (Gen. 26:35). Later, realizing that Isaac and Rebekah disapprove of his marriages, Esau makes a consanguineous marriage by taking Mahalath, the daughter of Abraham’s son Ishmael,<sup>5</sup> as an additional wife (Gen. 28:9). Rebekah clearly abhors the thought of Jacob also marrying a local woman and sends him to her relatives with the advice of marrying a first cousin “of the daughters of Laban thy mother’s brother” (Gen. 28:2). Jacob ends up marrying two of his first cousins, Rebekah and Leah. Although Esau was quite successful, the chronicler of Genesis ignores him to concentrate on the more consanguineous line of Jacob.<sup>6</sup>

The split between Esau and Jacob is theoretically significant. Because Jacob is denied any inheritance, he comes to marry his cousins without any bridewealth—quite unlike the situation where Abraham provided enormous bridewealth to the same group of kin in payment for Rebekah. As a result, Jacob must work many years and his relationship with his uncle Laban is filled with deception on both sides. When Jacob finally absconds with his family, Laban chases them, and they agree to remain separate.<sup>7</sup> After this point, there are no further marriages with Laban’s branch of the family, and all of Jacob’s sons have no choice but to marry foreign women. The consanguineous link with the other branch of Abraham’s family is ended, and instead of concentrating the family within one highly inbred stem, Jacob’s 12 sons become the founders of the 12 tribes of Israel.<sup>8</sup>

The importance of endogamy, at least from the standpoint of later redactors, can be seen in the treatment of the conquered peoples whom the Israelites displace after the Exodus (see also Hartung 1992, n.d.). The policy described in the Books of Numbers, Deuteronomy, and Joshua is to commit genocide rather than permitting intermarriage with the conquered peoples in the zone of settlement. The chronicler of Deuteronomy states as a general policy regarding the displaced peoples that the Israelites “shalt utterly destroy them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them; neither shalt thou make marriages with them: thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son” (Deut. 7:3).

As recorded in the Book of Joshua, this policy is then scrupulously followed when the Israelites cross the Jordan and eradicate the peoples there. Moreover, the emphasis on the need to exterminate other peoples in order to avoid intermarriage is repeated: “Else if ye do in any wise go back, and cleave unto the remnant of these nations, even these that remain among you, and make marriages with them, and go in unto them, and they to you; know for a certainty that the LORD your God will no more drive these nations from out of your sight; but they shall be a snare and a trap unto you, and a scourge in your sides, and pricks in your eyes, until ye perish from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you” (Josh. 23:12-13). These instructions are carried out: “So Joshua smote all the land, the hill-country, and the South, and the Lowland, and the slopes, and all their kings; he left none remaining; but he utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD, the God of Israel, commanded” (Josh. 10:40).

For peoples living outside the zone of settlement, the policy proposed in Deuteronomy is to kill only the males and to keep the women and children as spoils of war. However, although captured women can become wives, they have fewer rights than other wives: “[I]f thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will” (Deut. 21:14). Moses is said to have commanded the Israelites to kill not only every male Midianite (including children), but also all non-virgin females. In light of a previous passage in which Moses condemns marriage between Israelites and Midianites (Num. 25:6), there is the suggestion that the captured females will be slaves and/or concubines for the Israelite males. Their children would presumably have lower status than the offspring of regular marriages, and, as pointed out by Patai and Patai (1989, 122), there is no mention of converting female slaves in the Tanakh.

There are two post-settlement instances in the Tanakh where children of foreign concubines rise to positions of power within the Israelite community. Both of these instances are instructive in showing the generally low status of such individuals. In the Abimelech story, the mother is from Shechem, and Abimelech succeeds to his father’s inheritance only by killing his father’s 70 legitimate children with the help of his mother’s kinsmen, who are reminded of their blood relationship to Abimelech (“remember also that I am your bone and flesh” [Judg. 9:2]).

In the Jephthah story, a very salient fact is that he is expelled from the household by his half-brothers because he is viewed as having no inheritance (presumably also the fate of Abimelech, had he not taken matters into his own hands). As a result Jephthah is forced to live with a group of “vain fellows” (Judg. 11:3) with whom he eventually achieved military success. Moreover, it is not even clear that Jephthah’s mother was a foreigner, since she is described only as a harlot. These stories hardly support the idea that the offspring of foreign concubines were readily absorbed into Israelite society.

Further indication of the low status of the offspring of foreigners comes from the very negative attitudes toward Solomon’s many foreign wives. Solomon is cursed with the fragmentation of his kingdom after his death as a result of this practice (1 Kings 11:11; see also Neh. 13:26). Epstein (1942) notes that the

offspring of Solomon's foreign wives had a separate status within Israelite society below the pure Israelite stock even into rabbinic times.<sup>9</sup>

Sexual relationships with the women of the surrounding peoples are invoked as a major source of evil within Israelite society. Thus, Moses orders the execution of Israelite men who consort with Moabite women (Num. 25:1-13). The men are executed and God also sends a plague because of the offense. Later, the Israelites are said to be living among a variety of peoples, "and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods" (Judg. 3:6). As a result of these practices, the Israelites were said to be dominated by the Mesopotamians for eight years.<sup>10</sup>

The origination of the Samaritans as a separate Jewish sect was also the result of a general abhorrence of exogamy. When the northern kingdom fell to the Assyrians and its elite were taken away, the remnant intermarried with the new settlers, creating a "mixed race" (Schürer [1885] 1979, 17). The intermarriage with aliens meant that "the Samaritans were not *ethnically* what they claimed to be" (Purvis 1989, 590), the Pharisees going so far as to refer to them as *kūṭīm* (i.e., colonists from Mesopotamia). Their racial impurity was then "used to deny the Samaritans their original Israelite heritage. From that point onwards, their claim to be part of the chosen people . . . was never again acknowledged by the Jews" (Johnson 1987, 71).<sup>11</sup> The returning exiles rejected the offer of the Samaritans to help in rebuilding the Temple (Ezra 4:1-5), and intermarriage with the Samaritans was regarded with horror. Thus, Nehemiah comments on the marriage of the son of the high priest Eliashib to the daughter of the Samaritan Sanballat: "Therefore I chased him from me" (Neh. 13:28).

The apotheosis of the abhorrence of exogamy appears in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah which recount events and attitudes in the early post-exilic period. The officials are said to complain that "'the people of Israel, and the priests and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, doing according to their abominations. . . . For they have taken of their daughters for themselves and for their sons; so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the peoples of the lands'" (Ezra 9:2).

The use of the phrase "holy seed" is particularly striking—a rather unvarnished statement of the religious significance of genetic material and the religious obligation to keep that genetic material pure and untainted. The result was a vigorous campaign of what Purvis (1989, 595) refers to as "ethnic purification." Nehemiah states, "In those days also I saw the Jews who had married women of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab; and their children spoke half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God: 'Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons, or for yourselves'" (Neh. 13:23-25).

All who have intermarried are urged to confess their guilt and give up their foreign wives and children. Ezra provides a list of 107 men who renounced their foreign wives and their children by these women.<sup>12</sup> These books also refer to

genealogies that were used to deny access to the priesthood to some of the returnees from the Babylonian exile because there was a question regarding the racial purity of their marriages. The result was a hierarchy of purity of blood, at the top of which were those who could prove their status by providing genealogical records. This group married into priestly families, and its members were politically and socially dominant within the Jewish community. If doubt remained after genealogical investigation, the person could remain an Israelite, but was removed from the priesthood and no pure-blooded Israelite would intermarry with him. People with definitely impaired genealogies (including the offspring of mixed marriages) formed a third category. They married among themselves “and felt themselves fortunate if admitted to marriage with a Jewish family of doubtful record” (Epstein 1942, 164).<sup>13</sup>

The clear concern regarding intermarriage after the return from Babylon so evident in Ezra and Nehemiah may well be due to the fact that the returnees were forced to live among foreigners to a much greater degree than when they had political power. Prior to the exile, the issue of separation from neighbors could be treated relatively casually, since there were natural political and geographical barriers to intermarriage and the offspring of foreign concubines could be easily relegated to a low status. However, after the exile, the maintenance of genetic and cultural separatism created enormous problems, since the Israelites could not have complete political control over their area of settlement in Palestine. “Prohibitions against intermarriage, occasionally recorded and apparently fairly well enforced before the Exile . . . became an urgent necessity for the preservation of the Jewish people in Exile” (Baron 1952a, 147). The apex of concern for family purity among the Jews occurred in the Babylonian captivity and thereafter: “Purity of family was valued in Babylonia as never in Palestine before or after. For centuries the Babylonian Jews kept careful records of all significant family events so that they might be able to prove at any time pure descent from priestly or other distinguished stock. As late as the Talmudic age genealogical accounts . . . are frequently referred to. They must have been composed on the basis of records often covering a whole millennium” (Baron 1952a, 125). Thus, the data are compatible with the hypothesis that the almost obsessive concern with endogamy really coincides with the difficulty of maintaining genetic barriers within an exilic (diaspora) context.

Finally, as Neusner (1987, 37-38) emphasizes, it is important to note that Ezra was attempting to prevent intermarriage not only with foreign tribes like the Ammonites and Moabites, but even with the Israelites who had been left behind during the Babylonian exile. Although one can interpret this exclusion in purely ideological terms as a matter of the “cultic impurity” of these people who had been cut off from the aristocratic elite who had been exiled,<sup>14</sup> an evolutionary perspective suggests that it was the intermarriage of these settlers with surrounding peoples that was really the issue that determined their exclusion. As Purvis (1989, 597-598) notes regarding the Samaritans, some at least had undoubtedly retained a high level of cultic purity. The problem was



that the ethnic purity of the Samaritans and the other *'am ha-ares* (“people of the land”) was at best doubtful.<sup>15</sup>

After all, if doubts about religious practice had been the sole issue, it would have been easy to accept any individuals from any tribe (certainly including the non-exiled Israelites) into the cult if only they agreed to participate appropriately in the cult. One wonders why Ezra was so intent on forcing Israelites to abandon their alien wives and racially impure children if the only blemish on these individuals was cultic. Participation in cultic rituals without ethnic commonality is the basis for the ideology that conversion to Judaism would be possible at any stage in history. From the data described in Chapter 2, however, we know that Judaism has always retained its ethnic core, and we shall see in Chapter 4 that conversion to Judaism has always been problematic. In this sense, Ezra and Nehemiah are indeed the lawgivers to subsequent Judaism, and in fact Ezra has often been viewed by the Jews as “a virtual second Moses” (McCullough 1975, 49; see also Ackroyd 1984, 147).<sup>16</sup>

## **THE EVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGY OF THE TANAKH**

For Thou didst set them apart from among all the peoples of the earth. (1 Kings 8:53)

For thou art a holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be His own treasure, out of all peoples that are upon the face of the earth. (Deut. 7:6; 14:2)

The root of Judaism—and of anti-Semitism—is in the very essence of the Ten Commandments [“I am the Lord your God”; “You shall have no other gods before me”]. (Arthur Hertzberg 1993b, 69).

### **Israelite Monotheism as an Ideology of Separatism**

The ideology of the separateness of the Jews is apparent throughout the Tanakh. Many of the statements encouraging separatism were inserted into the earlier passages by redactors during and after the Babylonian exile, and, indeed, recent scholars have emphasized that the entire Pentateuch<sup>17</sup> must be seen as a statement of the priestly group writing during the Babylonian exile (e.g., Neusner 1987, 35). The importance of circumcision and the Sabbath as signs of separateness were contributions of the Priestly (P) source stratum from the exilic or the post-exilic period, and the entire Book of Leviticus, which describes elaborate rituals that separate Jews from others, derives from this stratum (Ackroyd 1968; Fohrer 1968; Schmidt 1984). Schmidt (1984) also notes that the

P stratum emphasizes the importance of reproductive success by the repeated use of the phrase “Be fruitful and multiply” and also shows a strong concern with genealogies. (After the exile, genealogies were used to determine who could be a member of the community and a candidate for the priesthood. See above and Chapters 4 and 8.)

Moreover, the P stratum is responsible for the exclusive covenant between God and Abraham’s descendants (Gen. 17), complete with the mark of circumcision. There is thus an indication of an increased emphasis on the importance of practicing endogamy, maintaining separateness, and tracing purity of descent during and after the Babylonian exile. “The net effect of the Pentateuchal vision of Israel . . . was to lay stress on the separateness and the holiness of Israel while pointing to the pollution of the outsider” (Neusner 1987, 36). Neusner (1987) emphasizes that the elaborate regulations for holiness in the Pentateuch, and especially Leviticus 19:1-18, are really to be understood as means of separation from surrounding peoples. “Holiness meant separateness. Separateness meant life” (p. 43). Judaism had become an ideology of minority separatism.<sup>18</sup>

The nature of the Israelite God is also a mark of separateness and is closely linked with an abhorrence of exogamy and with aggression against foreigners.<sup>19</sup> The following passage from the P stratum links the jealousy of the Jewish god not only with aggression toward other gods, but also with cultural separatism and fear of exogamy:

Take heed to thyself, lest thou make covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest they be for a snare in the midst of thee. But ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and ye shall cut down their Asherim. For thou shalt bow down to no other god; for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God; lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go astray after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and they call thee, and thou eat of their sacrifice; and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go astray after their gods, and make thy sons go astray after their gods (Exod. 34:12-16; see also Deut. 7:3-8).

The function of promoting separateness can also be viewed as an aspect of monotheism. The groups that surrounded Israel appear to have been polytheistic and the different gods served different human purposes (Johnson 1987; see also Baron 1952a, 47). Indeed, at the time of the writing of the Tanakh, the religion of Israel was the only monotheistic religion (Goitein 1974).

For the Israelites, there was really only one purpose for God—to represent the idea of kinship, ingroup membership, and separateness from others. Supporting this view of Israelite monotheism, there is evidence that monotheism became more important in the exilic period—precisely the period in which barriers between Jews and gentiles were being created and enhanced. McCullough (1975, 14), discussing the writings of Deutero-Isaiah (i.e., Isa. 40-55) during the exilic period, states that “unqualified monotheism was to be a

basic feature of Hebrew thought from this time on.” Similarly, Soggin (1980, 317) finds that “it is not that Israel had not known monotheism before this period, but rather that only with Deutero-Isaiah was the faith changed to certainty,” and there began for the first time to be a polemical attitude against polytheism. Schmidt (1984, 133) sums it up by stating that “the oneness of the people corresponds to the oneness of God . . . Yahweh Israel’s God, Israel Yahweh’s people.” Or as a well-known rabbinic saying has it: “God, Israel, and the Torah are one” (see Baron 1973, 191).

Significantly, Ezra, whose abhorrence of intermarriage was a major influence on subsequent generations and who was revered among the Israelites as “a virtual second Moses” (McCullough 1975, 49), views intermarriage as a “great sin against Israel’s God” (McCullough 1975, 48), a comment indicating the close connection between ethnic purity and the Israelite concept of God. In a very real sense, one may say that the Jewish god is really neither more nor less than Ezra’s “holy seed”—the genetic material of the upper-class Israelites who were exiled to Babylon.

Unlike the gods of the Greeks and Romans, a major function for Israelite theology was not to interpret the workings of nature or to bring good fortune in various endeavors, but rather to represent the kinship group through historical time—clearly a unitary concept at least as an ideal, and especially so in a diaspora context. Israelite theology is intimately bound up with Israelite history. Moses “linked God with the fate of Israel in history in an inseparable way” (Baron 1952a, 47). There is a general lack of interest in cosmogony and anthropogony, but “the history of man serves as a background for the still more significant history of Israel” (p. 47; see also Johnson 1987, 92-93). It is not Creation that is the most important event in early Hebrew history, but rather the Exodus, in which the Israelites successfully flee from Egypt after a successful sojourn as a minority in a foreign land.<sup>20</sup>

Finally, there are several allegories that stress the idea that separatist behavior resulting from worshiping the Israelite god may result in persecution, but there will eventually be rewards. In the Book of Daniel, Daniel and his three co-religionists remain faithful to the dietary laws, thus separating themselves from the other servants in the Babylonian court, and are rewarded by God with wisdom and understanding. Later, there are two incidents in which Jews are accused of not worshiping the gods of the Babylonians and the Persians. The Jews acknowledge these practices, but God saves them from punishment and improves their status so that, like Joseph and Nehemiah, they can use their status and power to help their co-religionists during their sojourn among the gentiles. As in the case of the Esther allegory, these stories clearly emphasize the idea that keeping the faith and remaining separate will eventually be rewarded. As Fohrer (1968, 479) notes, “the book seeks to strengthen the patience and courage of the devout who are suffering persecution, to give them new hope, and to exhort them, like Daniel, to remain loyal to their faith to the point of martyrdom.”

### **The Indestructibility of God as an Aspect of Diaspora Ideology**

When the Israelites conquer other peoples (as recounted in the Books of Numbers and Joshua), they destroy the people and the representations of their gods. But Israel's enemies can never destroy representations of God because such images are forbidden. Israel's God is thus spiritual and can be understood as a representation of the continuation of the kinship group, even in the face of the destruction of all religious artifacts. Therefore, the destruction of the Temple does not destroy God. This aspect of religious ideology is thus ideal for sojourners with a precarious existence: The writers of Deuteronomy clearly anticipated that the Israelites would be subjected to oppression by others (e.g., Deut. 30:3, 31:21), but these oppressors could never destroy the Israelite God. Only the destruction of the Israelites themselves could accomplish that. Johnson (1987, 77) notes that Jeremiah emphasizes that the Israelite God is indestructible and intangible, and can thus survive defeat. Jeremiah "was trying to teach them how to become Jews: to submit to conquering power and accommodate themselves to it, to make the best of adversity, and to cherish the long-term certainty of God's justice in their hearts."

Related to this is the idea that there is no fixed abode for God. God is portable and resides in the Ark of the Covenant or inside a tent and can be moved from place to place. Fohrer (1968; see also Schmidt 1984, 183) notes that the idea of a transcendent god connected to a tent sanctuary is a product of the post-exilic P stratum of the Pentateuch. God is no longer to be associated with a specific site in the Temple—an assumption which presupposes a permanent settlement.<sup>21</sup>

The god of the diaspora had been created. Johnson (1987) notes that the concept of a movable, indestructible God easily accommodated to the period after the fall of the Temple and "reflects the extraordinary adaptability of the people, a great skill in putting down roots quickly, pulling them up and re-establishing them elsewhere" (p. 42).

### **Understanding Evil: The Consequences of Straying**

One of the unique aspects of Judaism long noticed by scholars has been the emphasis throughout much of the Tanakh on the idea that all of Israel's misfortunes come from rejecting God. The result is that being conquered or oppressed by another people with different gods is not viewed as a vindication of another god, but only as a sign that the Jews have been unfaithful to theirs. The Books of Deuteronomy, Judges, 1 Samuel, Joshua, Kings 1 and 2, and Chronicles 1 and 2, although they are clearly historical, also have a moral that is endlessly repeated: Worshiping other gods and straying from strict religious observance will lead eventually to destruction. For example, lack of strict

adherence to religious orthodoxy is blamed for the destruction of the northern kingdom of Israel and for the Babylonian capture of Jerusalem. Fohrer (1968, 213) describes a “cycle of apostasy, punishment, conversion, and deliverance” imposed on the Book of Judges by the Deuteronomistic writers during the exile. “The whole pattern of history is seen portrayed in rebellion and forgiveness” (Ackroyd 1968, 75). “If Israel kept the Torah, God would bless his people, and if not . . . God would exact punishment for violation of the covenant” (Neusner 1987, 21; see also Ackroyd 1968, *passim*; Moore 1927, I:222; Schmidt 1984, 143).<sup>22</sup>

Reflecting the obsession with reproductive success characteristic of the writers of the Tanakh, the punishment for those who stray will ultimately be a lowered reproductive success: According to Hosea, “they shall commit harlotry [i.e., worship other gods], and shall not increase” (Hos. 4:10). Moreover, there is an implicit association between worshipping other gods and the crime of exogamy. When the returning exiles commit the crime of exogamy by intermarrying with the local people, Ezra states, “Since the days of our fathers we have been exceeding guilty unto this day; and for our iniquities have we, our kings, and our priests, been delivered into the hand of the kings of the lands, to the sword, to captivity, and to spoiling, and to confusion of face, as it is this day” (Ezra 9:7). Exogamy is a crime against God—a belief that makes sense if indeed, as argued above, God simply is another way of denoting an endogamous, unitary ethnic group—the holy seed of Israel.

Also reflecting the idea that exogamy is a crime against God, a particularly revealing and very common analogy for worshipping other gods is to “play the harlot.” In Ezekiel 23, Jerusalem is compared to a harlot who has Assyrians, Babylonians, and Egyptians as lovers. In Egypt, she “doted upon concubinage with them, whose flesh is as the flesh of asses, and whose issue is the issue of horses” (Ezek. 23:20). Not only are the offspring of these alien lovers grotesque monsters, but also God out of jealousy turns the lovers against the Israelites, who then ultimately pay for their crime with lowered reproductive success: “[T]hey shall deal with thee in fury; they shall take away thy nose and thine ears, and thy residue shall fall by the sword” (Ezek. 23:25). “These things shall be done unto thee, for that thou hast gone astray after the nations, and because thou art polluted with their idols” (Ezek. 23:30).<sup>23</sup> Worshipping other gods is like having sexual relations with an alien—a point of view that makes excellent sense on the assumption that the Israelite god represents the racially pure Israelite gene pool.

The ideology attempts to increase group solidarity in the face of group failure. Recent psychological research on group identifications has indicated that group members may actually identify with the group even more strongly following group failure under circumstances in which there is a strong prior commitment to the group. But if prior commitment is weak, there is a tendency to identify with the group more strongly after success than after failure (Turner et al. 1984).

Given the virtual universality of anti-Semitism and the commonness of persecutions and expulsions in Jewish history, Judaism as a group strategy clearly requires a very strong prior commitment from group members. Interestingly, anti-Semitism is clearly anticipated in the Tanakh (e.g., Deut. 28: 64-67; see below). The ideology may be said therefore to be an attempt to rally group loyalties even in the face of the repeated disasters that were anticipated as a consequence of the strategy.

The expected outcome of the defeat of a group with very intense group identification is stronger group identification. In fact, defeat and persecution have not tended to result in Jews defecting from the group strategy. It has often been noted that the Jewish response to persecution has been increases in religious fundamentalism, mysticism, and messianism. "Judaism's response to historical events of a cataclysmic character normally takes two forms, first, renewed messianic speculation, and second, a renewed search in Scripture for relevant ideas, attitudes and historical paradigms" (Neusner 1986c, 26; see also Johnson 1987, 260, 267).

Thus, the rabbinic interpretation of the destruction of the Second Temple was that it was punishment for the sins of Israel (Alon 1989, 536), and Avi-Yonah (1984, 255) notes that the Jews regarded their persecution under the Byzantine Christians as a sign that the Messiah was coming. This was also the pattern in Yemen where persecution was particularly prolonged and intense. Following an expulsion in 1679, Ahroni (1986, 133; see also Nini 1991) comments, "As in all disasters, the Jews of Yemen responded to the Mauza calamity with an outpouring of self-flagellation. They saw in their sufferings trials imposed by God as a result of their sins. The note of Jeremiah's proclamation, 'Your ways and your doings have brought these [disasters] upon you' (5:18) rings through their poems, which call for penitence and repentance." The persecutions were followed by beliefs that the coming of the Messiah was imminent as well as by a powerful attraction to the mystical writings of the Kabbala.

Fischel (1937, 124-125)) notes that following the persecutions in Mongolian Iraq in the 13th century, "as so frequently happened in Jewish history, the destruction of political and economic influence led to a spiritual revival and to a period of internal growth. The birth of Hebrew-Persian literature falls in that gloomy political period . . . ." Kabbalistic writings, characterized by Johnson (1987) as "xenophobic, nationalist and inflammatory" (p. 195), became more common during the period of the persecutions of the 15th century (Johnson 1987; Neuman 1969, II:144).<sup>24</sup>

This phenomenon can also be seen in the modern world. For example, Meyer (1988, 338) notes that the response of liberal Reform Jews to the increased anti-Semitism of the Hitler years in Germany was increased identification with Judaism, increased synagogue attendance, a return to more traditional observance (including a reintroduction of Hebrew), and acceptance of Zionism. Following World War II, there were upsurges of religious observance and/or ethnic identification among American Jews in response to the Nazi holocaust

and as a reaction to crises in Israel. The response to persecution is therefore a tendency to stress a unique Jewish identity, rather than to assimilate.

Throughout history, Jews who were less committed to the group undoubtedly had a tendency to worship the gods of their more powerful conquerors, neighbors, and persecutors. Indeed, Ackroyd (1968) emphasizes that the diatribes against idolatry in Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah are directed against Israelites who have begun to worship Babylonian gods during the exile, and Bickerman (1984) notes that some of the exiles had indeed begun the assimilation process. The ideology of the Tanakh can be seen as an attempt to lessen the normal tendency for such individuals to defect under these circumstances by blaming all sufferings on the fact that Jews have not adhered rigorously to the group strategy.

The ideology is non-falsifiable (and thus self-perpetuating) because it explains both success and failure in terms that imply continued allegiance to the group. Moreover, since adversity is always attributed to failure to obey religious practices, blame is always internalized. The result is to prevent a rational appraisal of the reasons for the adversity by examining the Israelites' behavior *vis-à-vis* their neighbors. Again, the typical response of Jewish populations to persecution has been a renewed intensity of religious fervor, often with strong overtones of mysticism.

### **The Future Rewards of Faith: Judaism as a This-Worldly Messianic Religion**

Unlike the Christian conception of an afterlife of happiness, the Tanakh makes clear that the rewards of keeping the faith and obeying religious regulations will be a high level of reproductive success, a return to power and prosperity in Israel, and the destruction and/or enslavement of Israel's enemies. (Recall Baron's [1952a, 9] discussion of Judaism as a this-worldly religion; see above.) As Neusner (1987, 41) states, the Torah presented the loss and recovery of land and political sovereignty as "normative and recurrent." "[T]he nation lived out its life in the history of this world, coveting the very same land as other peoples within the politics of empires" (p. 46). In the centuries following the Biblical period and the failed rebellions during the Roman era, the belief developed that "only by the immediate intervention of Almighty God could the might of the heathen kingdom be annihilated and the world made ready for the coming undivided and undisputed reign of God, or, in its national expression, the worldwide and eternal dominion of the holy people of the Most High" (Moore 1927, II:331; see also Schürer ([1885] 1979, 514ff).

A return to power in Jerusalem after being scattered is a prominent theme throughout the writings of the ancient period.<sup>25</sup> Often the enslavement or destruction of enemies is envisioned. "And the peoples shall take them, and bring them to their place; and the house of Israel shall possess them in the land

of the LORD for servants and for handmaids; and they shall take them captive, whose captives they were; and they shall rule over their oppressors” (Isa. 14:2). Fohrer (1968, 384) states that Deutero-Isaiah “contains questionable nationalistic and materialistic traits.” The relationship between Israel and foreigners is often one of domination: For example, “They shall go after thee, in chains they shall come over; And they shall fall down unto thee, They shall make supplication unto thee” (Isa. 45:14); “They shall bow down to thee with their face to the earth, And lick the dust of thy feet” (49:23). Similar sentiments appear in Trito-Isaiah (60:14, 61:5-6), Ezekiel (e.g., 39:10), and Ecclesiasticus (36:9).

Perhaps the epitome of worldly messianic expectations can be seen in the Book of Jubilees, where world domination and great reproductive success are promised to the seed of Abraham:

‘I am the God who created heaven and earth. I shall increase you, and multiply you exceedingly; and kings shall come from you and shall rule wherever the foot of the sons of man has trodden. I shall give to your seed all the earth which is under heaven, and they shall rule over all the nations according to their desire; and afterwards they shall draw the whole earth to themselves and shall inherit it for ever’ (Jub. 32:18-19).

Reflecting these messianic expectations, around 100 A.D. the *Shemoneh ‘Esreh* prayer, said three times a day by traditional Jews in the following centuries, was finalized (see Schürer [1885] 1979, 456ff). It asks for a gathering of the dispersed in Jerusalem and the reestablishment of national authority.

### **The Assumption of a Diaspora in the Tanakh**

There are numerous references in the Tanakh to the scattering of the Israelites throughout the world. We have noted that the final form of the Pentateuch emerged during and in the period after the Babylonian exile. A prominent goal of these writings is to emphasize Israel’s history as a sojourning people and those aspects of a religion that fit well with a sojourning life style while remaining separate from the host peoples (see also Chapter 8).

The Priestly (P) stratum, composed in exilic and post-exilic times, essentially prescribes a set of religious practices with no role for a state (Fohrer 1968). “P contains a program for the divinely willed reconstruction of the community after the Exile or for a reformation of the community in the postexilic period. This program is retrojected into the past in order to legitimize it and give it authority” (p. 184). In this new community, the priests become substitutes for earthly rulers: Schmidt (1984) notes that “anointing and other symbols of royalty now become distinguishing marks of priesthood (Exod 28f)” (p. 98).<sup>26</sup>

There are also a great many specific instances in the early history of the Israelites that involve sojourning among foreign peoples, most obviously the



long sojourn in Egypt. In each case, the sojourn ends with the patriarchs or Israelites leaving the host society with great wealth and increased numbers.<sup>27</sup> There are also many sections in which there are positive attitudes toward living among strangers. Leviticus 25:23 states that the Israelites are sojourners with God. The land is God's and the Israelites are only sojourners. King David says, "For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as all our fathers were" (1 Chron. 29:15), and the phrase is repeated in Psalms 39:13. Deuteronomy repeatedly states that God loves the sojourner and that the Israelites are expected to be kind to the sojourner, as they should be toward widows and orphans (e.g., Deut. 27:19).<sup>28</sup>

There is some indication that the authors of Deuteronomy did not believe that living among foreigners was ideal. Part of the curse on those who stray from the word of God is that they would be among foreigners, "[a]nd among these nations shalt thou have no repose, and there shall be no rest for the sole of thy foot" (Deut. 28:65). Nevertheless, provision is made for Israelites who are sojourning: By following the word of God, God will "return and gather thee from all the peoples whither the LORD thy God hath scattered thee" (Deut. 30:3). Indeed, Deuteronomy 31:18ff, written in the exilic period (Fohrer 1968) implies that disasters will happen to the sojourning Israelites because they fail to follow the word of God. Later, Nehemiah cites this passage, noting that God had told Moses that "[i]f ye deal treacherously, I will scatter you abroad among the peoples; but if ye return unto Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though your dispersed were in the uppermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to cause My name to dwell there" (Neh. 1:8-9).

The reality of scattering (as well as the prediction of eventual reunification in a powerful state) is also assumed by the prophets. Isaiah speaks of recovering the remnant and gathering "the scattered of Judah From the four corners of the earth" (Isa. 11:12). "I will bring thy seed from the east, And gather thee from the west; I will say to the north: 'Give up,' And to the south: 'Keep not back, Bring My sons from far, And my daughters from the end of the earth'" (Isa. 43:5-6).<sup>29</sup> Indeed, Baron (1952a, 107) cites this passage and notes that "[s]o many and so specific are the references to a really world-wide Diaspora, that they cannot be explained away as lavish interpolations. . . . Such utterances were no mere propaganda or eschatological wish dreams. They must have had some relation to actual facts. Even the 'back to Palestine' movement . . . could not check this steady, inevitable growth of the Diaspora." Moreover, the texts often use the plural, indicating that the authors suppose that the Israelites will eventually be scattered among many countries, not just Babylon.<sup>30</sup>

Finally, as described more fully in Chapter 8, a strong current of "Exodus ideology" in the exilic writings views the Babylonian Exile as analogous to the original sojourn in Egypt, with the expectation that God will provide for them in the end as He had done before. For example, Jeremiah writes, "Therefore, behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that they shall no more say: 'As the LORD liveth, that brought up the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt'; but:

‘As the LORD liveth, that brought up and that led the seed of the house of Israel out of the north country, and from all the countries whither I had driven them’; and they shall dwell in their own land” (Jer. 23:7-8).

Indeed, Ackroyd (1968, 234) finds that during the Exile there was a general reworking of older materials so that all of Israel’s previous history was seen from the standpoint of the Exile. The Exile was accepted as the result of turning away from God’s ways and was viewed as part of a larger purpose. This larger purpose necessitated the establishment of elaborate legal codes, which separated Jews from gentiles, and the purification of the community: “[W]e are shown the community being purified, undertaking the response which testifies to the need for purity, purity of race, freedom from contamination with alien influence, so attesting its real nature as the people of God” (Ackroyd 1968, 236-237).

## CONCLUSION

The ideology of the Tanakh is a blueprint for an experiment in living in the sense utilized in Chapter 1. It was obsessed with the history of the Jewish people because one of its essential functions was to rationalize that history and provide a hope for a successful future. The religion of the Tanakh was greatly concerned with reproductive success, endogamy, and cultural separation from surrounding peoples within a diaspora context. It was a religion with powerful sanctions on individuals who worship other gods or stray from group goals, and one in which lowered reproductive success is the result of deviation from life within the confines of the kinship group, while those who continued in the kinship group would be rewarded with great reproductive success and eventual revenge and domination.

From an evolutionary perspective, the purpose of this ideology is to ensure the continuity of the kinship group, even within a diaspora context in which there are enormous pressures for assimilation and gradual loss of contact with other members of the group. The results have been extraordinarily effective: As indicated in Chapter 2, Jews have maintained a significant genetic distance between themselves and their host societies for centuries. Indeed, they are the only group that has successfully maintained genetic and cultural segregation while living in the midst of other peoples over an extremely long period of time. Johnson (1987, 3) calls them “the most tenacious people in history.”

## NOTES

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1. Evolutionists have also stressed the importance of paternity confidence and conflicts between kinship groups. Regarding the former, the Book of Numbers (5:11-31) describes a ritual used to induce a miscarriage in a woman suspected (but not known) to have committed adultery. If the woman is innocent, the potion will bring on the menstrual period; if guilty, the potion will “make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to fall away” (Num. 5:22). Thus, the ritual will in any case ensure that the woman will not bear another man’s child. Conflict and cooperation between kinship groups in Israelite society depending on genetic distance are discussed in Chapter 8.

2. Recent data on Jewish intermarriage and their implications are discussed in *SAID* (ch. 10).

3. See Goodman (1979, 2) for a diagram of the genealogy of the patriarchs from Terach to Jacob.

4. As described in Chapter 4, uncle-niece marriage came to be idealized in the Talmud and was extensively practiced by devout Jews in the ancient world.

5. Because Ishmael is only a half-brother to Isaac, Mahalath is only a “half-first cousin” (the coefficient of genetic relatedness  $r = 1/16$ ) to Esau. Even if Esau made his covenant with the son of Mahalath, the line would be much less endogamous than the line of Jacob, who married his first cousin from a family that was already highly endogamous (including uncle-niece marriages).

6. The discrimination of others depending on the degree of genetic relatedness can be seen by the discussion of affective relationships. While the authors give no sign that Abraham mourns the deaths of his concubines, he is said to mourn the death of Sarah, his kinsman and principal wife. Similarly, while there is no mention that Isaac loves his Egyptian concubine, when his relative Rebekah becomes his wife, “he loved her” (Gen. 24:67). Jacob, too, loves Rachel (Gen. 29:20), but there is no mention of Esau loving his Hittite wife, and, indeed, this relationship is not approved by Isaac and Rebekah.

7. Johnson (1987), on the basis of recent archeological evidence, suggests that Jacob was adopted by Laban because he had no sons of his own and that when he later had sons, he attempted to go back on the arrangement. This accounts for the incident in which Rachel steals Laban’s gods, since the household gods represent a symbolic title deed, which Laban had broken.

8. After the Exodus, kinship remains important. The Israelites are divided into 12 tribes, and at Numbers 26:52, the land is divided among the tribes according to their numbers, thus in effect rewarding the most prolific kinship groups. The importance of kinship can also be seen in that the tribes are expected to remain descent groups in which all land remains within the tribe. Thus, Moses rules that if a man has no sons, his daughters can inherit, but if so, they must marry within their tribe. Moreover, in the particular case recounted, the heiresses marry their first cousins, thus keeping the property not only within the tribe, but also within the immediate descent group (Num. 36:11). There are also several prescriptions in Deuteronomy enjoining cooperation within the kinship group and very different treatment of outsiders. This type of discrimination depending on group membership is a recurrent theme of historical Judaism and is a major theme of Chapter 6.

9. The tainted offspring of Solomon continued to provide a cautionary tale about the evils of exogamy long past rabbinic times. In the 15th century, Rabbi Moses Arragel stated that Solomon’s foreign wives caused the woes of Israel, including the captivity.

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Solomon's poor example is then used to illustrate the general principle that Jews should not marry gentiles; see Castro 1971, 69.

10. Interestingly, Hartung (n.d.) emphasizes the idea that a major purpose of the Midrashic and Talmudic commentaries was to alter these stories in a manner that emphasized the idea that the Israelites had been seduced by the heathen women into betraying their religion. Despite the complete lack of evidence in the Biblical sources, Moabite women are depicted as engaging in deception and bribery in order to develop relationships with the Israelite men, who are depicted as innocent victims of these machinations. The moral is that gentile women are to be avoided at all costs, and Hartung notes that this conceptualization of the wily, immoral gentile woman intent on seducing Jewish men away from their families and religion has survived into modern times in the concept of the *shiksa*.

11. Schürer ([1885] 1979, 19) makes it clear that the issue between the Israelites and the Samaritans is the doubtful ancestry of the latter, not religious practice. They are "treated not simply as foreigners, but as a race of uncertain derivation. Their Israelite extraction cannot be taken as proved, but neither can it be a priori excluded. Their affiliation to the congregation of Israel is accordingly not denied but merely considered doubtful." When mainstream Pharisaic Judaism gradually triumphed, the religion of the Samaritans became increasingly different from that of the Israelites.

12. Without providing evidence for the claim, Fohrer (1968) states that the list is artificial, but, even so, at the very least the list is a powerful indication of negative attitudes toward exogamy.

13. Epstein (1942, 166) notes that Ezra's racialist motivation can be seen by his greater concern with Israelite men marrying foreign women because the children of such unions would be brought up in the Israelite community. The children of an Israelite female marrying a foreigner would be lost to the community. This suggests that the motivation for the tradition of tracing Jewish descent through the female line is the preservation of racial purity. A common pattern in the diaspora was for wealthy Jews to marry their daughters into the gentile nobility in return for a dowry payment (see *SAID*, ch. 3). This practice had no effect on the racial purity of the Jewish population.

14. The cultic uncleanness of the people remaining in Israel during the Babylonian captivity is a theme of the Book of Haggai. "So is this people [unclean], and so is this nation before Me, saith the Lord; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer . . . is unclean . . ." (Hag. 2:14). Haggai rejects the help of the non-Israelite settlers of the region in rebuilding the Temple because of their cultic impurity, "thereby inaugurating the sequestration that was to be typical of later Judaism" (Fohrer 1968, 460). Fohrer refers to rejection of help by foreigners "the birthday of Judaism" (p. 460)—an entirely appropriate designation from an evolutionary perspective in light of the importance of separatism for such a theory.

15. This exclusion of the people of the land also had a eugenic effect on the Jewish gene pool, since the Babylonians had exiled predominantly the wealthy aristocratic and priestly elements of Israel. In later periods down to contemporary times, the word '*am ha-ares*' was a term of abuse, indicating an unlettered, ritually suspect individual. See Chapter 7.

16. There is wide agreement that the exclusivism promulgated by Ezra is fundamental to later Judaism. Thus, Schürer ([1885] 1973, 142) traces a continuous development of Judaism over six centuries from Ezra to its completion with the compilation of the Mishnah in 200 A.D. Schürer emphasizes the development of religious ritual during this

period as central, and it is this body of ritual that effectively separated Jews from gentiles (see Chapter 4).

17. The Pentateuch is the first five books of the Tanakh.

18. McCullough (1975, 13) sums up these ideas by noting that “[i]t may be inferred, mostly from data found in Ezekiel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and the P document of the Pentateuch, that the exiles, to protect themselves against absorption by their environment, emphasized certain distinctive practices that could be followed in an alien land and would discourage assimilation, such as dietary habits, Sabbath observance, circumcision, marriage customs. These group mores seem to have acquired a new importance in the exilic community, and when, at a later date, some exiled Jews ‘returned’ to the homeland, they could be counted on to advocate such practices in Judah, as the careers of both Nehemiah and Ezra illustrate.”

19. Ironically, the exclusivist nature of God as an expression of ethnic unity may have had long-term negative implications for diaspora Jews after the establishment of Christianity and Islam as official state religions whose monotheism derived directly from Judaism. The exclusivism of monotheism was retained in these religions, but it was a religious (and sometimes political and economic) exclusivism, rather than an ethnic exclusivism. Many historians have commented that the exclusivist nature of these religions tended to result in intolerance of other religions, and in particular Judaism. For example, Avi-Yonah (1984, 262) contrasts the relative tolerance of the Persian Empire, which was not based on religion, with the relative intolerance of Byzantine Christianity, and in Chapter 8, the exclusionary effects of Islam and medieval Christianity on Jews are discussed. In *SAID* (ch. 3) it is argued that Christianity in the late Roman Empire developed as an anti-Semitic movement which was a mirror image of several critical aspects of Judaism as a group evolutionary strategy, including monotheistic exclusivism.

20. Indeed, Hartung (n.d.) argues that the stated view of the Pentateuch and the Talmud is that non-Israelites are not fully human. In the Pentateuch, the term *adam* is often used to refer to humans in general, without regard to sex. However, Hartung argues that the term really refers only to Israelites because only the Israelites were created in God’s image and are thus truly human, while contemporaries living in the land of Nod were not. While typically the Israelites are referred to with the term *adam*, the scriptures use other words to refer to non-Israelites. Similarly, in the Talmud, this term is specifically asserted to refer only to Israelites, and heathens are viewed as non-men: “*And ye My sheep of My pasture, are men; you are called men# but the idolators are not called men.*” The footnote states that “#. . . only an Israelite who, as a worshipper of the true God, can be said to have been like Adam created in the image of God. Idol worshippers, having marred the Divine image forfeit all claim to this appellation” (b. Yeb. 61a).

21. The prophet Ezekiel is important in this regard, since he advocated the separation of God from the Temple and Jerusalem, making him the “father of Judaism” in the eyes of some scholars (see Fohrer 1968). “It is no longer true that in one’s native land encounter with God and real life are possible, while dwelling in a foreign land is like death; now life and death together lie in man’s inward and outward conduct, wherever he may dwell and in whatever circumstances he lives” (p. 417). Schmidt (1984) notes that with Ezekiel “God’s throne, which since the time of David and Solomon had been firmly fixed on Zion, becomes mobile, having wheels, as it were . . . and makes its appearance in a distant unclean land” (p. 253).

22. This ideology of the role of deviation from God’s law in producing ill fortune was elaborated in the Talmud by the idea that the Messiah would come and restore Israel’s

fortunes as soon as Israel exactly obeyed the rabbinic laws to become a staple of later Judaism (Neusner 1987, 131). For example, “If Israel would keep a single Sabbath in the proper way, forthwith the son of David will come” (y. Taanit 1:1, quoted in Neusner 1987, 130).

23. It is very difficult to determine whether those aristocratic exiles in Babylon would have ultimately had a greater reproductive success if they had assimilated than if they had remained separate. Their reproductive success would necessarily have to be conceptualized as individual reproductive success because the endogamous, racially pure group would have disappeared. The assimilated groups in that part of the world were repeatedly conquered and reproductively exploited in later ages, often by alien ruling elites with their large harems (e.g., the Arab Moslems and the Mongols). Given this pattern, it may well be the case that the Israelite contribution to the gene pool of the Near East would have progressively diminished. The diaspora strategy was the only available opportunity to expand their numbers, while maintaining racial purity.

24. However, if mysticism is associated with failure, the response may be an even more rigorous legalism. Zborowski and Herzog (1952, 182) note that in the period following the collapse of hope in the false messiah Sabbetai Zevi in the 17th century (whose rise followed the Cossack persecutions), there was a trend for the rabbis to make an even greater number of regulations. Belief in the false messiah was attributed to irrational, emotional beliefs, and the rabbis reacted to the collapse of the movement by increasing their control via the further elaboration of the rules of appropriate behavior.

25. See the Books of Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel, Haggai, Amos, Nahum, Obadiah, Zephaniah, Zechariah, and the apocryphal Books of Ecclesiasticus (36:1-17), Baruch (4:5-5:9), the Psalms of Solomon (8:34, 9:1-2, 11:1-9), Jubilees (23-32), 2 Esdras (13:39-50), and 4 Esdras (11:1-12). See also the discussion of restoration themes in the Book of Jeremiah in Ackroyd 1968, 58-61; and Sanders 1992, 290ff.

26. In Chapter 8, the unique role of priests in Israelite and early Jewish history will be emphasized as crucial in understanding the development of Judaism as an evolutionary strategy.

27. These examples are discussed extensively in Chapter 8.

28. However, strangers were expected to keep their lower status in Israelite society. In the prolonged curse upon Israelites who stray from the word of God (Deut. 28:15-68) there is the curse that “the stranger that is in the midst of thee shall mount up above thee higher and higher; and thou shalt come down lower and lower” (Deut. 28:43).

29. These passages come from both Isaiah and Deutero-Isaiah.

30. See Deut. 30:3; Isa. 43:5; Jer. 29:6, 29:14, 32:37, 23:3; Ezek. 11:16-17, 17:6, 20:34, 20:41, 36:19, 36:24, 37:21; Zech. 10:9.)