

## THE ORIGINS OF JUDAISM AS A GROUP EVOLUTIONARY STRATEGY

An adequate theory of Judaism must ultimately attempt to develop a perspective on the origins of Judaism as a group evolutionary strategy. Clearly, one source of the fascination that Judaism has presented over the centuries to intellectuals has been the uniqueness of Judaism and its persistence in its uniqueness over very long periods of historical time. In attempting to develop a theoretical perspective on this question, it is important to remember the general theoretical perspective developed in Chapter 1.

The theoretical perspective developed there specifically allows for “cultural” influences on evolutionary strategies. Humans are viewed as “flexible strategizers” (Alexander 1987) who are able to develop ideologies and social systems that are intended to further evolutionary ends. These evolutionary goals are assumed to have a powerful genetic component, but the means by which one attains these evolutionary goals can utilize higher-level (“domain-general”) cognitive processes and be influenced by experience. In the same way that their cognitive capabilities enable humans to make inventions or learn new methods of warfare, the present perspective is highly compatible with the idea that an evolutionary strategy could be contrived on the basis of specific experiences or on the basis of a general understanding or theory of human nature.

However, in Chapter 1, it was mentioned that genetic and environmental variation in psychological mechanisms may also be important to the development of group evolutionary strategies. If indeed the type of group evolutionary strategy represented by Judaism “pulls” for certain psychological predispositions, then it is reasonable to suppose that there may be biological predispositions for engaging in the type of group evolutionary strategy represented by Judaism.

The theory eventually developed here considers three components, all of which involve cultural/environmental factors: (1) Jews are biologically predisposed to be high on psychological traits predisposing them toward collectivist social structure and ethnocentrism; (2) Jews originated as a people during the Egyptian sojourn and utilized this experience as a basis for interpreting their history and constructing their group evolutionary strategy; (3)

Judaism was profoundly influenced by the invention of a hereditary (tribal) priestly class with a powerful motivation to maintain the integrity of the group.

## **INDIVIDUALISM/COLLECTIVISM: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS OF ETHNOCENTRISM**

[Ethnocentrism is] a schismatic in-group/out-group differentiation, in which internal cohesion, relative peace, solidarity, loyalty and devotion to the in-group, and the glorification of the “sociocentric-sacred” (one’s own cosmology, ideology, social myth, or *Weltanschauung*; one’s own “god-given” social order) are correlated with a state of hostility or permanent quasi-war (*status hostilis*) towards out-groups, which are often perceived as inferior, sub-human, and/or the incorporation of evil. Ethnocentrism results in a dualistic, Manichean morality which evaluates violence within the in-group as negative, and violence against the out-group as positive, even desirable and heroic. (van der Dennen 1987, 1)

I believe that the area of psychological research most relevant to conceptualizing Judaism as a group evolutionary strategy is that of research on individualism/collectivism (see Triandis 1990, 1991 for reviews). Collectivist cultures (and Triandis [1990, 57] explicitly includes Judaism in this category) place a great emphasis on the goals and needs of the ingroup, rather than on individual rights and interests. Ingroup norms and the duty to cooperate and submerge individual goals to the needs of the group are paramount. Collectivist cultures develop an “unquestioned attachment” to the ingroup, including “the perception that ingroup norms are universally valid (a form of ethnocentrism), automatic obedience to ingroup authorities, and willingness to fight and die for the ingroup. These characteristics are usually associated with distrust of and unwillingness to cooperate with outgroups” (p. 55).

As indicated in Chapter 7, socialization in collectivist cultures stresses group harmony, conformity, obedient submission to hierarchical authority, the honoring of parents and elders. There is also a major stress on ingroup loyalty, as well as trust and cooperation within the ingroup. Each of the ingroup members is viewed as responsible for every other member. However, relations with outgroup members are “distant, distrustful, and even hostile” (Triandis 1991, 80). In collectivist cultures, morality is conceptualized as that which benefits the group, and aggression and exploitation of outgroups are acceptable (Triandis 1990, 90).

People in individualist cultures, on the other hand, show little emotional attachment to ingroups. Personal goals are paramount, and socialization emphasizes the importance of self-reliance, independence, individual responsibility, and “finding yourself” (Triandis 1991, 82). Individualists have more positive attitudes toward strangers and outgroup members and are more likely to behave in a pro-social, altruistic manner to strangers. People in

individualist cultures are less aware of ingroup/outgroup boundaries and thus do not have highly negative attitudes toward outgroup members (1991, 80). They often disagree with ingroup policy, show little emotional commitment or loyalty to ingroups, and do not have a sense of common fate with other ingroup members. Opposition to outgroups occurs in individualist societies, but the opposition is more “rational” in the sense that there is less of a tendency to suppose that all of the outgroup members are culpable. Individualists form mild attachments to many groups, while collectivists have an intense attachment and identification to a few ingroups (1990, 61).

The expectation is that individualists living in the presence of collectivist subcultures will tend to be less predisposed to outgroup hostility and more likely to view any offensive behavior by outgroup members as resulting from transgressions by individuals, rather than being stereotypically true of all outgroup members. On the other hand, collectivists living in an individualist society would be more likely to view ingroup/outgroup distinctions as extremely salient and to develop stereotypically negative views about outgroups.

### **“Hyper-collectivism” as a Characteristic of Jewish Groups**

As indicated above, Triandis regards Jews as a collectivist culture, and I would agree. This is indicated by the material in this volume on within-group altruism and cooperation (Chapter 6) and the data on socialization discussed in Chapter 7. However, the principle indicator of the Jewish tendency toward collectivism is the extensive material on Jewish cultural separatism among mainstream Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jewish groups discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. This cultural separatism implies a powerful sense of ingroup/outgroup barriers. Jews have retained an intense commitment to their ingroup over a very long period of historical time and despite very high levels of hostility directed at them by surrounding peoples.

In some ways, however, the data gathered in Chapters 3 and 4 represent only the tip of an immense iceberg. It is instructive to review data on just how very robust the tendency to ethnic separatism among the Jews really is. Johnson (1987, 3) calls the Jews “the most tenacious people in history,” but even this judgment seems inadequate. While the general trend over historical time has been the amalgamation and assimilation of ethnic groups into larger societies (see Chapter 4), Jewish diaspora groups are known from the eighth century B.C. (Baron 1952a), long before the Babylonian exile and the development of the Jewish canon. A particularly well-described example is the non-syncretistic, endogamous community of Jews who lived in Egypt for over a century beginning before 525 B.C.—quite possibly long before this date (see Porten 1984).

From the perspective of this volume, at least some of these groups are not considered to have adopted an evolutionary strategy in quite the same sense as mainstream diaspora Jewry, since there is no evidence that they developed the

eugenic practices and high-investment reproductive strategy emphasized here as essential to understanding mainstream diaspora Judaism as an evolutionary strategy. They are of interest, however, because they suggest that ethnic separatism among Jews is an extremely robust tendency, which was retained independently by several Jewish groups and which was not dependent on a large amount of the Jewish canon or on the activities of a hereditary priestly aristocracy.

The Samaritans are closely related to the Jews and are reputed to be the remnants of the tribes of northern Israel at the time of the Syrian conquest who intermarried with Syrian settlers. The schism from mainstream Judaism occurred when they were excluded from Israelite society during the Restoration era (fifth century B.C.). Despite accepting only the Pentateuch and part of the Book of Joshua, they have retained their brand of Judaism until the present time. Although the Samaritans began several diaspora communities, these never succeeded. Nevertheless, their desire to remain separate has been very strong: Avi-Yonah (1984, 241ff) describes their hopeless revolts against the Byzantine authorities in the fifth and sixth centuries. As an indication of the intense separatism of the Samaritans, Parkes (1934, 259) describes merchants in Samaria in the early Byzantine period as requiring gentiles to throw their money into water before being touched by the merchant in order to prevent pollution.

There are also several groups of Oriental Jews who claim descent from the Israelites deported to Syria in 722 B.C., including those of the Kurdistan, Persia, Bukhara, Afghanistan, Armenia, India, and China (see Mourant, Kopec, & Domaniewska-Sobczak 1978).<sup>1</sup> The Kurdish Jews lived for centuries without contact with mainstream Judaism and despite living as serfs under the Kurds. Although aware of the Tanakh and despite geographical propinquity to Babylon, they had little acquaintance with the Mishnah or the Talmuds. In all of these groups, separatism was retained despite persecutions (e.g., by the Zoroastrians in Persia) and through changes in the religion of the surrounding people (e.g., the shift to Islam).

The Jews of Yemen persisted in Judaism despite being completely cut off from the rest of the diaspora beginning in the early 17th century and despite being subjected to an extremely intense and persistent anti-Semitism and lacking a highly literate culture centered around traditional Jewish education (Ahroni 1986, 82). The Jews of India also existed for many centuries with no contacts with the outside world and little knowledge of Jewish practices (Patai 1971, 416).

Other groups that remained separated from the mainstream of Judaism, but nevertheless kept intact their own sect of Judaism include the Karaites (established in the eighth century; they reject the Mishnah and the Talmuds)<sup>2</sup> and the Falasha Jews of Africa. The Falasha Jews managed to remain separate for centuries without any contact with the rest of Judaism (Mourant et al., 211; see also Patai 1971, 423ff), and were not familiar with most of the Talmud and Midrash.

Finally, Mourant and colleagues (1978) provide evidence that, although North African Jews are predominantly of Sephardic descent, some of them may be descendants of Israelites who emigrated far earlier, even perhaps before the period of Nebuchadnezzar (seventh–sixth century B.C.). These groups tend to be geographically isolated, as in mountain regions or on the island of Djerba, but the point is that they have retained their ethnic separatism for many centuries despite being surrounded by other groups and despite isolation from mainstream Judaism. Johnson (1987, 360) also notes a group of “Mountain Jews” in the Caucasus who claim to be descendants of people expelled by Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C.<sup>3</sup>

The Israelites also showed a marked tendency toward re-establishing national identity after foreign conquest. After being conquered by the Babylonians, the Israelites rebelled against them (unsuccessfully; the result was a further exile) and then succeeded in restoring their community under the Persians. After control passed to the Greeks, they succeeded in re-establishing their national independence as a result of the Hasmonean uprising. The Jewish religion was unique in forcibly resisting Hellenizing influences during this period (Schürer [1885] 1973, 146).<sup>4</sup>

Later, during the Roman period, Jews alone of all the subject peoples in the Roman Empire engaged in prolonged, even suicidal wars against the government in order to attain national sovereignty. Baron (1952b) notes that Titus’s victory was the result of a very difficult campaign. Even after this, the Jews remained defiant and unassimilable, and there were two other rebellions: in Alexandria and other areas in Egypt, Cyprus, Cyrenaica, Libya, and possibly Mesopotamia and Judaea during the reign of Trajan (115–117 A.D.) and in Judaea during the reign of Hadrian (131–135 A.D.) under Simon Bar Kocheba. The latter held out for over three years against the best of Hadrian’s generals, with many dying as martyrs. There were also rebellions during Constantine’s reign in 326 and under Patricius in 351. There were also several very bloody revolts against Byzantine authority in Palestine during the fifth and sixth centuries (Avi-Yonah 1984, 251, 254; Bachrach 1984).

The Jews were by far the most vehement in their objection to Roman rule, compared to any of the many peoples of the Empire. Alon ([1980, 1984] 1989, 698) notes “the long, drawn-out stubborn refusal of the Jews to come to any kind of terms with Roman rule” and the fact that even after the Jews never completely submitted to “the wicked kingdom” (p. 698). Many authors have noted the religious fanaticism of the Jews in the ancient world and their willingness to die rather than tolerate offenses to Israel or live under foreign domination. For example, Josephus, the first-century Jewish historian and apologist, stated that

[We face] death on behalf of our laws with a courage which no other nation can equal. (*Against Apion*, 2:234)

And from these laws of ours nothing has had power to deflect us,  
neither fear of our masters, nor envy of the institutions esteemed by  
other nations. (*Against Apion*, 2:271)

Although not all Jews were willing to die rather than betray the law, “story after story reveals that this generalization is true” (Sanders 1992, 42). “No other nation can be shown to have fought so often in defence of its own way of life, and the readiness of Jews to die for their cause is proved by example after example” (Sanders 1992, 239). Crossan (1991, 103ff) shows that Jewish political activity against the Romans often included threats of martyrdom if external signs of Roman domination were not removed from Jerusalem and the Temple. Only the Jews, of all of Rome’s subject peoples, were exempted from having to sacrifice to the Empire’s gods, and they were the only group that was allowed to have their own courts and an *ex officio* government under the Patriarchate/Sanhedrin.

Moreover, although a later section will emphasize the unique role of the priests in maintaining ethnic and national integrity, non-elite groups, such as the Hasideans (“pious ones”), the Pharisees, and many ordinary peasants and townspeople were fanatical supporters of these goals. While this type of altruistic fanaticism is highly compatible with a group evolutionary strategy perspective as developed here, such fanaticism seems excessive even within this context. These data indicate an extremely ingrained sense of national identity and ethnic separatism.

Another widespread phenomenon indicating the extreme tendency toward cultural separatism of Jewish groups is that of crypsis during times of persecution (as, e.g., during the Iberian Inquisitions). In some cases, crypto-Jews continued to covertly separate themselves from the rest of society, practice a truncated version of Jewish ritual, and marry among themselves for centuries.<sup>5</sup>

One should also note the extreme sense of exclusivity that has often characterized Jewish interactions with other Jews. This is a highly robust phenomenon. Indeed, from a genetic perspective, the Jewish gene pool, and especially the Sephardic and Oriental Jewish gene pools, may be viewed as a set of genetically unique and isolated subgroups, each with its own set of recessive genetic disorders (Goodman 1979, 468). Zimmels (1958, 43–44) notes a general pattern in which immigrant Jews made their own communities when their numbers were substantial. Thus, in the early Middle Ages, Babylonian Jews immigrating to Palestine founded their own communities, as did Palestinian Jews immigrating into Cairo. Both the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim immigrating into Turkey in the 16th century formed their own communities separate from the previously existing communities of Romaniote Jews.

There was also a tendency for separatism based on community of origin. Thus, the 16th-century Sephardic community in Salonica consisted of seven Spanish communities deriving from different areas of Spain, as well as at least five communities deriving from different parts of Portugal.<sup>6</sup> Not surprisingly, the most turbulent synagogue was one whose members derived from different

parts of Spain (Shaw 1991, 52). In other areas of the Ottoman Empire during this period, there were also Romaniote Jews (deriving from the Roman/Byzantine era) and two types of Arabized Jews, as well as Karaite Jews (who maintained complete isolation from all other Jewish groups) (Shaw 1991, 45). Each of these communities remained separate, with its own rabbis, synagogues, cemeteries, schools, hospitals, and slaughterhouses (for the preparation of *kashrut* meat). Even after Jewish ritual and law were unified with the writings of Rabbi Joseph Caro (1488–1575), “differences relating to ancestral origins still remained” (Shaw 1991, 56).

Zimmels (1958, 60ff) describes the very difficult relationships between Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews, including especially the Sephardic sense of superiority and the tendency to develop their own communities and institutions and to reject intermarriage. In England in 1766, the Sephardic group prohibited marriage with Ashkenazim, and such marriages were regarded “with intense and unconcealed disapproval” (Zimmels 1958, 75). Baron (1973, 36) describes the Sephardic Jews of Amsterdam in the 17th and 18th centuries as rejecting marriage with Ashkenazi Jews. In 1762, Isaac de Pinto wrote that “[t]he Portuguese and the Spanish, who have the honor of being descendants of the tribe of Judah or believe to be such, have never mixed, through marriage, association, or in any other way, with the children of Jacob known under the name of German [*Tudesques*], Italian, or Avignonese Jews” (quoted in Baron 1973, 36).

Although low levels of intermarriage did occur during the 19th century, there remained a great deal of exclusivity during the 19th and 20th centuries. Benardete (1953, 145–146; see also Sachar 1992, 63) cites observations indicating that the Sephardim in the United States considered themselves “a people apart” with “hermetic groupings” and superior to Ashkenazi Jews even though they were of lower social class than the latter.

In Morocco, the Sephardim remained separate for the most part from the native Jews for whom they used the disdainful term *forasteros* (aliens) (Patai 1986). We have also noted in Chapter 6 that the Jewish communities of Palestine were closed to Jews of different origins, with the result that the Yemenese Jews, who did not have the wealthy international connections of the Ashkenazim and Sephardim, were effectively excluded from benefiting from Jewish charity derived from the Ashkenazim and Sephardim. Among immigrants to the United States, Ladino-speaking groups from different towns in Greece maintained their own institutions, and it proved impossible to develop a federation of these groups or even agree on a common prayer book (Sachar 1992, 339). This very powerful sense of separatism from other Jews was also characteristic of other Oriental Jewish immigrant groups in the United States, with the result that there were some 36 different burial and mutual-aid societies in New York in 1912 (Sachar 1992, 339). This fragmentation along intraethnic lines continues in contemporary times: Elazar (1980, 232) notes that ethnic fragmentation among Jewish groups in New York inhibits overall communal

organization. Each Orthodox community, especially the Hasidim, remains “as separate and self-contained as it can possibly be . . .” (p. 233).

It is also remarkable that the Jews during the first centuries A.D. very readily developed exclusivist divisions within the society. Thus, in Chapters 3 and 4 the hierarchy of racial purity was discussed, including the segregation and eventual exclusion of the *Nethinim*, the Samaritans, the offspring of Solomon’s wives, and others of mixed and foreign blood. In Chapter 7, the prolonged exclusion and denigration of the Jewish *‘am ha-ares* were discussed, and Jeremias (1969, 303ff) emphasizes the fact that many ordinary trades were despised, again suggesting a strong tendency to form ingroups and outgroups within the Jewish community.

The men who followed [these] trades were not only despised, nay hated, by the people. They were *de jure* and officially deprived of rights and ostracized. Anyone engaging in such trades could never be a judge, and his inadmissibility as a witness put him on the same footing as a gentile slave. . . . In other words he was deprived of civil and political rights to which every Israelite had claim, even those such as bastards who were of seriously blemished descent. (Jeremias 1969, 311)

It is also of some interest to note that some historical variants of Judaism have been far more exclusive even than mainstream Judaism, suggesting a very deep seated tendency in this direction. For example, the Essenes were a Jewish religious sect in Palestine dating from approximately 140 B.C. to 70 A.D. (see Sanders 1992, 341ff). The group was a sort of apotheosis of collectivism in the sense of Triandis (1990, 1991), including a surrendering of personal freedoms and economic goods to the community; extreme self-sacrifice (including willingness to be a martyr); a strict hierarchical and authoritarian group structure; a strong emphasis on exclusivism and the purity laws, which were a consistent aspect of traditional Jewish exclusivism; and a high degree of affection for other ingroup members combined with an attitude of “everlasting hatred” (Sanders 1992, 361) toward the rest of humanity, and especially other Israelites. They envisioned destroying other Jews, or perhaps converting them, before destroying the gentiles.

Interestingly, Jeremias (1969, 298) notes that the Essenes were extremely concerned with the genealogical purity of their members—a concern even greater than the very great concern of Jewish society as a whole during the period (see Chapter 4). Jeremias also points to regional variation within ancient Jewish society in Palestine at the beginning of the common era regarding the extent of exclusivity and concern with racial purity. In certain areas, such as Sepphoris and Jerusalem, extreme care was taken to ensure the rights of racially pure Israelites.

Indeed, mainstream Judaism developed out of the Pharisaic tradition whose name means “separated” (Schürer [1885] 1979, 396) and denotes the fact that the Pharisees separated themselves from the rest of the Israelites, many of whom



they considered ritually unclean. Schürer ([1885] 1979, 400ff) traces the origins of the Pharisees to the Hasideans (“pious ones”) who spontaneously supported the Maccabean revolt against the Greek Seleucids (second century B.C) and who had a wide following among the masses of Israelites in their emphasis on religious law. It was the Pharisees who elaborated the rituals and customs of Judaism (many of which segregated Jews from gentiles) and emphasized their strict observance as a central feature of traditional Judaism.

It should also be noted that Hasidic and other ultra-Orthodox groups (haredim) are a prominent and increasingly powerful force within contemporary Judaism, amounting to at least 650,000 Jews worldwide (see Landau 1993, xxi).<sup>7</sup> Historically, the type of social organization represented by these groups has been far more the norm than the exception, so that even in late-19th-century Poland the great majority of Jews were organized in ultra-Orthodox Hasidic congregations dominated by their rebbes (e.g. Litman 1984, 6).<sup>8</sup> These groups are extremely collectivist in Triandis’s (1990, 1991) sense. They rigidly adhere to traditional exclusivist practices such as dietary and purity laws and have very negative views of outsiders, including more liberally inclined Jews. The authoritarian nature of these groups is particularly striking: “A haredi . . . will consult his rabbi or hasidic rebbe on every aspect of his life, and will obey the advice he receives as though it were an halachic ruling” (Landau 1993, 47).<sup>9</sup>

Like the Essenes and other Jewish extremist groups, contemporary haredim are also deeply concerned about issues of racial purity. Indeed, the resurgence of Orthodox Judaism and ultra-Orthodox Jewish fundamentalism may well result in a schism of the Jewish people along the lines of racial purity. As indicated in Chapter 4, genealogy is an extremely important aspect of status in the Hasidic community. Moreover, Landau (1993, 291ff) describes the opposition of the Orthodox and ultra-Orthodox communities to intermarriage and to procedures that facilitate conversion to Judaism.<sup>11</sup> Orthodox Jews and certainly the haredim do not recognize conversions performed by Reform or Conservative rabbis. Nor do they recognize the recent change in traditional Jewish law by the Reform movement that allows individuals to trace their genealogical Jewishness through the father, rather than the mother. Rabbi Aharon Soloveitchik of Yeshiva University stated that the result of the proposed policy would be that “mamzerut [bastardy] will be escalated to a maximum” (quoted in Landau 1993, 320).<sup>11</sup> From the perspective of the Orthodox and the fundamentalists, the rest of Jewry is highly contaminated with non-marriageable individuals whose taint derives from their genetic ancestry.

Moreover, it is not just the extremist Jewish sects that are by any measure extremely authoritarian and collectivist. The precedence of community control over individual behavior, a fundamental feature of a collectivist type of society, is a highly salient feature of mainstream Judaism, apparent throughout this volume (see especially Chapter 7). Shaw (1991, 65) provides a particularly well described example from Jews in the Ottoman Empire. The community very precisely regulated every aspect of life, including the shape and length of beards, all aspects of dress in public and private, the amount of charity required

of members, numbers of people at social gatherings, the appearance of graves and gravestones, precise behavior on the Sabbath, the precise form of conversations,<sup>12</sup> the order of precedence at all social gatherings, *et cetera*. The rules were enforced “with a kind of police surveillance,” and failure to abide by the rules could result in imprisonment in community prisons or, at the extreme, in excommunication.<sup>13</sup>

The tendency to set up ingroup/outgroup barriers so central to collectivist societies can also be seen by the finding that certain 20th-century intellectual movements dominated by Jews have developed a distinct flavor of cultural separatism and authoritarianism. For example, psychoanalysis from its origins has been a “science apart” from the rest of psychology and psychiatry, resulting in two separate and incompatible discourses about human behavior (see *SAID*, ch. 7). Psychoanalysis was and remains a highly authoritarian movement in which group boundaries are rigidly maintained and in which heretics are expelled.

Similarly with Jewish dominated radical political movements,<sup>14</sup> Liebman (1973) notes that

[gentile intellectuals] really are not totally accepted into even the secularist humanist liberal company of their quondam Jewish friends. Jews continue to insist in indirect and often inexplicable ways on their own uniqueness. Jewish universalism in relations between Jews and non-Jews has an empty ring. . . . Still, we have the anomaly of Jewish secularists and atheists writing their own prayer books. We find Jewish political reformers breaking with their local parties which stress an ethnic style of politics, and ostensibly pressing for universal political goals—while organizing their own political clubs which are so Jewish in style and manner that non-Jews often feel unwelcome. (p. 158)

### **A Genetic Perspective on Individualism/Collectivism**

In summary, the data indicate that Judaism can be characterized as a collectivist (or even “hyper-collectivist”) culture in Triandis’s (1990, 1991) terms. In accounting for this tendency, I suggest that the ancient Israelites were genetically predisposed to be high on a cluster of traits centered around group allegiance, separatism, ethnocentrism, and collectivism. Moreover, with the adoption of a group strategy in which allegiance to the group must be a constant concern, there would also be cultural selection for individuals who were high on these traits. Highly collectivist individuals (referred to by Triandis as “allocentrics”) would be more likely to maintain group membership and submerge their individual interests in favor of group goals. They would thus represent the epitome of the group ethic and would presumably be more likely to be successful within the group. On the other hand, individuals who were low on collectivism (referred to by Triandis as “idiocentrics”) would be expected to

be less committed to group goals, less able to submerge individual interests in favor of group goals, and therefore more likely to defect from the group.

This genetic perspective essentially states that collectivism, like many other phenotypes of interest to evolutionists (MacDonald 1991), shows genetic variation (see discussion in Rushton 1989, 553ff). This genetic variation may well have resulted because of differential selection pressures in ancestral environments. LeVine and Campbell (1972) describe variation in the extent to which human groups have been forced to adopt powerful boundary mechanisms that distinguish themselves from other groups. Groups that are geographically isolated from direct competition with other human groups for an evolutionarily significant period may not have developed the propensity toward extreme collectivism and ethnocentrism.

I speculate that such isolated groups with low population density would have been common in northern areas characterized by extremely harsh ecological conditions, as occurred during the Ice Age. Under ecologically adverse circumstances, adaptations are directed more at coping with the adverse physical environment than at competing with other groups (Southwood 1977, 1981), and in such an environment, there would be less pressure for selection of highly collectivist groups. Evolutionary conceptualizations of ethnocentrism emphasize the utility of ethnocentrism in group competition. Ethnocentrism would thus be of no importance at all in combating the physical environment, and such an environment would not support large groups.<sup>15</sup>

The idea would be, then, that the ancient Israelites were simply higher than average on traits predisposing them to collectivism. As a result, when they were conquered and exiled among other groups, they developed such cultural practices as endogamous and consanguineous marriage, the hierarchy of racial purity, and the segregation and eventual exclusion of racially impure groups such as the *Nethinim*, the Samaritans, the offspring of Solomon's wives, and others of mixed and foreign blood. Further, they were relatively highly predisposed to engage in self-sacrificing, altruistic behavior (including martyrdom) in the interests of the group.

Reflecting the idea that the Israelites had a strong predisposition to develop diaspora communities, Baron (1952a, 96) notes that the ideology of an ethnic group retaining its integrity in diaspora conditions followed, rather than preceded, the reality of the diaspora. The diaspora was already a reality in the eighth century B.C., long before the Babylonian exile. As a result,

Theory had to follow reality. No longer was settlement on the soil of Palestine or life under a Jewish government essential to Jewishness. Even in the dispersion, far from their own country and under a foreign monarch, Jews remained Jews ethnically . . . (Baron 1952a, 96)

There is reason to believe that there is a genetic basis for this powerful tendency toward collectivism. In Chapter 7, it was noted that one facet of conscientiousness may be labeled "social conscientiousness" and includes items

related to performing assigned tasks conscientiously, fulfilling commitments, fulfilling social obligations, and being dependable and reliable. This trait may well be an important component of group allegiance. Conscientiousness, like all other personality traits (and therefore presumably all of the traits related to collectivism), is moderately heritable (e.g. Digman 1990; Rowe 1993). Moreover, the data summarized in Chapter 7 indicate cultural (and ultimately genetic) selection for conformity to group norms among Jews in the sense that Jews who defected from Judaism tended to be non-conformists who rebelled at the stifling life of a collectivist group.

It is of interest that there is some agreement that the Near Eastern peoples have a more ingrained sense of ethnocentrism than has been characteristic of the vast majority of Western societies.<sup>17</sup> The contrast between Eastern and Western cultures is central to Triandis' (1990, 43–44) work on cross cultural variation on individualism and collectivism. Triandis includes both Arabs and Jews as exemplars of collectivist cultures in contrast to Western individualist cultures. Western individualism originated in the Greco-Roman world of antiquity and, although the precise dating is controversial, re-emerged after the decline of the hegemony of medieval corporate religiosity.

Bickerman (1988) notes the relatively greater sense of ethnic exclusiveness among the Near Eastern peoples than was apparent in the Greek world of antiquity.<sup>17</sup> The Greek view of cities in the ancient world was that they were open to any person and that any person who adopted the language and customs of these cities could feel at home. Indeed, there is considerable scholarly agreement that Greek anti-Semitism in the ancient world derived from the fact that Jews wanted political rights, but were unwilling to adopt a common language and set of customs with the Greeks (see *SAID*, ch. 2). On the other hand, “[o]riental civilizations had no concept of naturalization and were averse to acculturation” (Bickerman 1987, 80). This general contrast is also compatible with Johnson's (1987, 134) point that the Greek conceptualization of a multi-racial, multi-national society strongly conflicted with Jewish separatism and unwillingness to respect the deities and practices of other peoples.

The Romans are generally viewed as being derived from an ethnically mixed group of Italians and other groups (McDonald 1966). Moreover, the long-term trend in the Roman Empire was for gradually increasing conferral of citizenship, culminating in the granting of virtually universal citizenship in 212 A.D. by Caracalla. There was also a gradual representation of provincials in the senate and equestrian order, and provincials replaced Italians as emperors by the third century (Garnsey & Saller 1987, 9). Jordan (1989, 111) notes the general tolerance of “alien” groups in Roman society and the idealization of this tolerance in Roman jurisprudence.<sup>18</sup>

Indeed, as Schürer ([1885] 1986, 132) notes, the Roman imperial government tended to protect the Jews from repeated outbreaks of hostility in cities throughout the Empire. And the Roman government repeatedly confirmed the right of Jews (unique among the subject peoples) to their own religious communities and their exemption from sacrificing to the imperial cults and from

service in the military. As a result, a major source of popular anti-Semitism in the ancient world derived from the Jewish unwillingness to participate in a homogeneous, assimilative culture: “Precisely at the time when through Roman world-rule and the levelling effect of Hellenism there was a general tendency for local cultures either to be submerged or to be absorbed in the overall Graeco-Roman culture, it must have been felt as doubly frustrating that only the Jews were unwilling to be thought of as taking part in the process of amalgamation” (Schürer [1885] 1986, 152–153; see also *SAID*, ch. 2).

The Greek and Roman pattern of conquest and empire-building, unlike that of the Israelites described in the Tanakh, did not involve genocide followed by the creation of an ethnically exclusivist state that dominated the remnants of the conquered peoples (the *Nethinim*) and never assimilated them even after many centuries. Rather, the tendency was for conquest to be followed in the long run by genetic and cultural assimilation.

The paradigm for such assimilative behavior is Alexander the Great’s intention of building a universalist state in which there would be complete genetic and cultural assimilation with the conquered peoples—the dream of a universal world-state based on universal brotherhood and partnership and on cooperation between conquerors and conquered (see Hegermann 1989). Alexander adopted many Persian cultural practices (e.g., type of dress and court ceremonies), and he married an Iranian princess and forced his men to do the same.<sup>20</sup> In contrast, the whole point of historical Judaism has been to resist alien cultures. Moreover, Israelites who married foreign women in the period of conquest after the Exodus and in the resettlement after the Babylonian exile were condemned and excluded, and Joshua “destroyed all that breathed, as the LORD, the God of Israel, commanded” (Josh. 10:40).<sup>20</sup>

Similarly, the Germanic conquerors of the Roman Empire in the fifth century took their places among their new subjects largely without displacing the former citizens of the Empire, so that in some areas people were quite unaware that they were no longer members of the Empire (see Geary 1988). Eventually, there was complete cultural and genetic assimilation among the conquerors and their new subjects.

The Spanish conquest of the New World also resulted in a great deal of genetic intermingling, with the result that in the long run Hispano-American societies were not characterized by an ethnically pure elite and a genetically segregated subject population: “As the conquistadors brought the lands of America under Spanish dominion, they effectively converted the mass of the Indians into people of partially Hispanic blood, Hispanic language and manner, and Hispanic religion” (Castro 1971, 303). Genetic assimilation occurred.

The relatively greater Eastern sense of ethnocentrism is also indicated by the much greater tendency toward consanguineous marriage that is characteristic of the entire region, and thus not confined to the Jews.<sup>21</sup> As indicated in Chapters 3 and 6, consanguineous marriage (marriage with biological relatives) and endogamous marriage (marriage within the group) are important components of a group strategy because they result in the correlation of individual fitness with

the fitness of the group. Group-oriented, collectivist societies emphasize consanguinity and endogamy based on known patterns of biological descent (e.g., tracing genealogies to prove group membership or establishing degrees of biological relationship such as first cousin or niece).

Goody (1983) shows that first cousin marriage was the norm among all Near Eastern peoples, and this practice continued into the Muslim era. Jews have also shown a very pronounced tendency toward consanguinity, including not only first cousin marriage, but also uncle-niece marriage (see Chapters 3, 4, and 6). Indeed, while uncle-niece marriage is prohibited by Muslim law, such marriages are considered ideal in Jewish law and have been practiced throughout Jewish history (see Goitein 1978, 26; Goodman 1979, 463–467), suggesting that the Jews are even more inclined toward consanguinity than other Near Eastern groups. Modern groups of Samaritans also practice very high levels of consanguineous marriage, including 43 percent with first cousins and over 80 percent with some relative (Bonné 1966).

In marked contrast, there was a long tradition favoring exogamy at Rome. The ancient law prohibited marriage with second cousins (e.g., Gardner 1986; von Ungern-Sternberg 1986; Thomas 1980; Watson 1975), or, indeed all relatives, since the Romans did not count beyond second cousins (Watson 1975). Practices regarding incest became more relaxed later in the Republic and during the Empire, and, indeed, Thomas (1980) shows that first-cousin marriage was sometimes used by the aristocracy as a marriage strategy aimed at consolidating resources and power beginning near the end of the third century B.C. However, as Mitterauer (1991) notes, this does not indicate any basic change in the fundamentally exogamic marriage pattern characteristic of the West. Similarly, Saller (1991, 342) concludes that “[s]ome Romans of the pre-Christian era did marry cousins, but not with enough regularity that the late-fourth century law of Theodosius can be said to have taken away a significant inheritance strategy.”

Indeed, within the Roman Empire, there was a conflict between the practices of East and West when all free inhabitants became Roman citizens in the third century. Mitterauer (1991) notes that the Christian practices regarding consanguinity had merged with the Roman perspective, and the direction of influence clearly came from Rome, so that essentially the Roman tradition came to be regarded as Christian (p. 316).

In order to rationalize these much more stringent regulations, the Christian theologians resorted to the language of Leviticus 18:6: “None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness.” However, the Christians essentially adopted the Roman perspective on what constituted kin and changed the regulations entirely. Indeed, even within the Christian Church, there was a split between the Eastern branch, where consanguinity was more common, and the Western branch, which adopted the stringent Roman norms. Thus, in the fifth century, extensive Christian prohibitions on incest originating in the Western Church met with a great deal

of resistance in the Byzantine Empire and were modified to accommodate local customs.

The Christian Church then went beyond both the system of Leviticus and the Roman system by inventing prohibitions on spiritual relatives. Thus, unlike the Jewish preoccupation with purity of blood and genealogy, the Christian attitude eventually granted no priority at all to actual blood relationships. Mitterauer (1991, 320) notes that a basic principle of Christianity is “the Christian rejection of endogamous tendencies among Jews: physical descent is without any religious importance.”

The Christian Church, despite its obvious Jewish origins, is from an evolutionary perspective fundamentally opposed to Judaism in matters of interest to an evolutionist. Boyarin (1993, 6) contrasts the basic Jewish concern with sexuality, reproduction, genealogy, and a concept of historical peoplehood based on genetic relatedness with the denial of the importance of these qualities in Christianity. Early Christian thinkers criticized the Jewish tendency to take these Biblical themes literally, while they themselves tended to allegorize these Biblical themes and created new cultural symbols such as the virgin birth and the cultural ideal of celibacy, which were diametrically opposed to these Jewish themes.

From an evolutionary perspective, what really matters is reproductive relationships, and in this regard the Christian Church became the religious embodiment of basic Roman cultural institutions. During the medieval period, the Church’s emphasis on exogamy weakened the extended kinship group, since the expanded range of incestuous marriages prevented the solidarity of extended kinship groups by excluding “the reinforcing of blood with marriage” (Goody 1983, 145; see also Bourchard 1981).

Moreover, while collectivist societies emphasize genealogy and degree of genetic relatedness in marriage, individualist societies tend to emphasize personal attraction (e.g., romantic love, common interests) (Triandis 1990). Reflecting these issues, Money (1980) has noted the relatively greater tendency of Northern European groups toward romantic love as the basis of marriage.<sup>22</sup> There has been a trend, beginning in the Middle Ages, toward the companionate marriage based on affection and consent between the partners, eventually affecting even the marriage decisions of the high aristocracy (e.g., Brundage 1987; Hanawalt 1986; MacFarlane 1986; Stone 1977; Stone 1990). MacFarlane (1986) notes that “[W]hereas in industrial Western societies the emotional relationship between man and wife is primary, it is not the pivot of social structure in the majority of societies” (p. 174; see also Westermarck’s [1922] contrast between Eastern and Western stratified societies). The idealization of romantic love as the basis of monogamous marriage has also periodically characterized Western secular intellectual movements (Brundage 1987), such as the Stoics of late antiquity (e.g. Brown 1987; Veyne 1987) and 19th-century Romanticism (e.g., Corbin 1990; Porter 1982).

Another important contrast is that non-Western societies (including Judaism) have emphasized fertility to a much greater extent than have Western societies

(MacFarlane 1986). While Jews had a religious obligation to marry and have children, Christianity legitimated celibacy and did not bestow spiritual rewards on highly fertile individuals. Whereas the role of unmarried adult was well established in Western society, unmarried individuals were extremely exceptional among the Jews (e.g., Goitein 1978, 61–63). Lack of fertility was not a grounds for Christian divorce, while for Jews infertility was a psychological and social disaster that fully justified a divorce. By contrast, although there was a strong desire to leave an heir in early modern England, failure to do so was not a psychological disaster.

Finally, while the East has a pronounced tendency toward polygyny, Western societies have tended toward monogamy. From the perspective of evolutionary theory, monogamy constitutes an egalitarian mating system, since each male is allowed only one marriage partner no matter how much wealth or power he has.<sup>23</sup> The Christian Church became an ardent crusader in fostering monogamy in Western Europe in opposition to the reproductive interests of the aristocracy (see MacDonald 1990). There is every indication that this concern for monogamy derives from the traditional Roman pattern of marriage (MacDonald 1990).

This contrasts strongly with the clear evidence of resource polygyny among the Jews. As indicated in Chapter 3, resource polygyny was the norm in the Tanakh. Polygyny was never prohibited among the Jews until the famous *herem* of Rabbenu Gershom dating from the 11th century in the West (Zimmels 1958, 166ff), but this only applied to Ashkenazi Jews, and polygyny continued among Sephardic and Oriental Jews into the contemporary era.<sup>24,25</sup>

I suggest that ultimately it was the ethnic exclusivity and powerful sense of group cohesion and collectivism of the East that resulted in the long-term degradation of Jews in Muslim societies described in Chapter 7 (see also *SAID*, ch 2). The Greco-Roman culture in the Eastern Roman Empire was essentially a civic culture that had very little influence on the indigenous cultures of the area (Bowerstock 1990; Garnsey & Saller 1987, 203). After the decline of Western influence in the area, the Jews were again confronted by societies with a powerful sense of ethnic exclusiveness and communal (group) identity. In the absence of powerful alien ruling elites who used the services of Jews as the ideal middlemen between themselves and the native populations, the Jews were rather quickly and decisively degraded in status and excluded from any possibility of economic domination. Any society with a powerful sense of ethnic identity and racial exclusiveness is expected to quickly and easily adopt a group identity in confronting a cohesive group such as the Jews.

Prominent examples of Western collectivist societies have also tended to be characterized by relatively intense anti-Semitism. For example, the development of hegemonic, corporate Catholicism during the Western Middle Ages in France was associated with high levels of anti-Semitism and exclusion of Jews.<sup>26</sup> Jordan (1989, 27) describes the efforts of the Church to remove Jews from the economic life of France in the 12th–14th centuries. As part of the effort to develop a corporate Christian economic community, Jews were gradually



pushed out of occupations and professions they formerly engaged in. In this regard, these efforts are entirely analogous to the exclusionary effects of the cooperative, corporate thrust of Jewish economic activity throughout its history (see Chapter 6).<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, there was a concerted effort by the Church to prevent resources from being drained from the Christian community via Jewish moneylending to Christians.<sup>28</sup> Beginning in 1206 under the often reluctant King Philip II, there was increasing regulation of Jewish moneylending as a result of “a continuous chorus of criticism” (Jordan 1989, 44) emanating from the Church and ultimately from governmental authority.<sup>29</sup> The Fourth Lateran Council complained that “[t]he more Christians are restrained from the practice of usury, the more are they oppressed in this matter by the treachery of the Jews, so that in a short time they exhaust the resources of the Christians” (see Gilchrist 1969, 182). The council compelled secular powers to end Jewish usury, and Christians were to be excommunicated if they continued to engage in commercial dealings with Jews until this occurred. “Radical” Christian thinkers rejected the idea that Jewish religious law allowed lending at interest to Christians (Jordan 1989, 28), and Jews in turn defended the practice as conforming to their religious law. A major concern was the indebtedness of the Christian lower classes and the potential for exploitation of Christians hired as servants by wealthy Jews, but there was also concern to prevent the property of wealthy individuals from falling into Jewish hands.

The following period, under Louis IX, saw the complete triumph of the Church’s hegemonic, exclusionary economic policy, the emergence of a Christian middle class,<sup>30</sup> and, not coincidentally, the deterioration of the Jews. Louis was extremely religious and attempted to make his state into a corporate, hegemonic Christian entity in which social divisions within the Christian population were minimized in the interests of group harmony. Consistent with this group-oriented perspective, Louis appears to have been genuinely concerned about the effect of Jewish moneylending on society as a whole, rather than its possible benefit to the crown—a major departure from the many ruling elites throughout history who have utilized Jews as a means of extracting resources from their subjects. A contemporary biographer of Louis, William of Chartres, quotes him as concerned “that they [the Jews] may not oppress Christians through usury and that they not be permitted, under the shelter of my protection, to engage in such pursuits and to infect my land with their poison” (quoted in Chazan 1973, 103). Louis therefore viewed the prevention of Jewish economic relations with Christians not as a political or economic problem, but as a moral and religious obligation. And since the Jews were present in France at his discretion, it was the responsibility of the crown to prevent the Jews from exploiting his Christian subjects.

In the end, although popular hostility and royal desire for Jewish resources (via confiscation) were important causes of the eventual expulsion of Jews from France in 1306,<sup>31</sup> Chazan (1973, 204) emphasizes the critical importance of the fact that France had become “a society so thoroughly organized around

Christian life as to make Jewish presence inevitably peripheral and marginal.”<sup>32</sup> In other words, France had become a collectivist society in Triandis’s terms, and the Jews were excluded despite their economic benefits to the high aristocracy.<sup>33</sup> This “purified Christian state” persisted until the end of the Middle Ages in France (Jordan 1989, 256).<sup>34</sup>

On the other hand, while Eastern societies and medieval Western Christianity had very negative effects on Judaism, the main population explosions of Jews have occurred in Western societies where there has been a relative lack of concern regarding ethnicity and a strong sense of individualism rather than group interests. There have really been three major periods of Jewish population growth and development in traditional societies: during the Greco-Roman world of antiquity, during pre-expulsion Spain, and in early modern Eastern Europe. The individualistic nature of ancient Greco-Roman society, at least until the advent of Christianity as a hegemonic state religion, is well established (e.g., Triandis 1990). In the other two cases, the evidence provided in Chapter 5 indicates that the Spanish and the Polish nobility protected the Jews and allowed them to compete economically with the lower orders of their own people. Such behavior is individualist in the sense that the nobility is utilizing the Jews in a self-serving manner that compromises the interests of the lower orders.<sup>35,36</sup>

In the Islamic world, Judaism essentially muddled along in an extremely downtrodden and oppressed manner except during brief periods in which Jews were utilized as middlemen by alien ruling elites.<sup>37</sup> Following the Enlightenment and the development of individualistic societies in Western Europe, it was Jews in Western societies who reached out and attempted to obtain political and economic rights for their relatively backward and oppressed co-religionists in Muslim societies in the 19th and 20th centuries, rather than the other way around.

Indeed, Judaism has been far more successful demographically in individualistic European societies than in Arab lands characterized by collectivist social structures: Goitein (1974) notes that Jews in Arab countries constituted only 10 percent of the total Jewish population in the early 20th century, and Zimmels (1958, 75) has compiled data indicating that, while the Ashkenazi population increased by approximately 100-fold in the period from 1170 to 1900, the population of Sephardic and Oriental Jews actually declined by 36 percent after reaching its peak prior to the expulsion from Spain and Portugal.

To conclude: Whereas prototypical Western societies have shown strong tendencies toward assimilation and individualism, Judaism is at its essence exclusivist and collectivist. And there is evidence (reviewed in *SAID*, ch. 2) that individualist, assimilative Western societies, including the Greco-Roman world of antiquity and modern Western democracies (and excluding collectivist Western societies such as Naziism, communism, and medieval Christendom), have had relatively low levels of anti-Semitism. This general tendency is highly compatible with Triandis’s (1991, 80) findings that people in individualist societies are much less aware of ingroup and outgroup boundaries and combat

outgroups in a “rational” manner (i.e., without adopting inaccurate negative stereotypes or blaming the group for the behavior of some group members). Jewish particularism is thus expected and found to thrive precisely in Western societies that (apart from Jews themselves) are highly assimilative and individualistic.

The foregoing provides evidence that the Near Eastern peoples, and especially the Jews, tend in general toward racial exclusivity and collectivism compared to most Western societies. In the following, it will be argued that certain unique aspects of Jewish history are contributing factors to the Jews’ relatively greater tendency toward these traits. I will consider two plausible candidates for such contextual influences on Judaism as a group evolutionary strategy: the experience of originating as a people during the Egyptian sojourn and the invention of a hereditary (tribal) priestly class with a powerful motivation to maintain the integrity of the group.

## **SOJOURNING AND ITS ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF JUDAISM**

This way of seeing things [i.e., the belief in the cycle of exile and restoration] was not necessary, since the Jews who did not go into exile and those who did not come home had no reason to take the view of matters that characterized the Scripture. . . . Everything was invented and interpreted. (Neusner 1987, 5)

In Chapter 3, it was noted that the Tanakh assumes the reality of a diaspora and that there are many statements reflecting a positive attitude toward sojourning. This positive attitude toward sojourning can also be seen by examining several stories in which the patriarchs and/or the Israelites live as a minority among foreigners. These stories may well have a historical basis. Anthropological data indicate that a common life style in the Near East during early Biblical times would be for small clans to temporarily attach themselves to larger groups, especially in times of scarcity, and then move on after a period of sojourning (Johnson 1987, 13ff). Moreover, as Patai (1971, 6–7) points out, even if many of these sojourning events are not historical, they indicate that “in the earliest national-traditional Hebrew consciousness (i.e., in the days of the monarchy) the Diaspora had primacy over the land of Israel.” Patai suggests that the point of these early stories is to show that the Hebrews had a divine right to a certain piece of land and that they desired to return there even when they had been forced to leave it.

The Biblical stories of sojourning by the patriarchs among foreigners are very prominently featured in Genesis. Typically there is an emphasis on deception and exploitation of the host population, after which the Jews leave a despoiled host population, having increased their own wealth and reproductive success.

Indeed, immediately after the creation story and the genealogy of Abraham, Genesis presents an account of Abraham's sojourn in Egypt. Abraham goes to Egypt to escape a famine with his barren wife Sarah, and they agree to deceive the pharaoh into thinking that Sarah is his sister, so that the pharaoh takes her as a concubine. As a result of this transaction, Abraham receives great wealth (while his wife does not actually conceive a child by the pharaoh). But disasters afflict Egypt as a result of the immorality of the arrangement, and the pharaoh confronts Abraham with his deception. Abraham is allowed to leave with his wife and the possessions obtained as a result of the deception. A similar sequence occurs during the sojourn of Abraham and Sarah with King Abimelech and on the part of Isaac during his sojourn in Gerar. Both eventually leave with great riches.<sup>38</sup>

The greatest sojourn story in the Pentateuch, however, is clearly the sojourn of Jacob's family in Egypt—an event whose historicity is unquestioned (Patai 1971, 5; Sevenster 1975, 182). The details are instructive. Indeed, Baron (1952a, 41) asks

whether this pre-Mosaic Egyptian ghetto [i.e., Goshen] did not already cast its shadows over all the future history of the people. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that there and during their migrations through the desert the Israelite tribes retained a vivid memory of their previous dwelling in Palestine and of their blood relation with the Palestinian Hebrews they were soon to join. . . . Neither the territory of Palestine, nor the desert, nor Egypt is regarded as significant, but the memory of unity, a consciousness of common history apart from that of other peoples. "They went about from one kingdom to another people," sang a later poet (Ps. 105:13).<sup>39</sup>

Similarly Patai (1971) states that "even in this period [i.e., during the monarchy until the collapse of the northern kingdom in 722 B.C.], the only era in Jewish history without a dispersion, the memory of the Diaspora was not allowed to fade from the consciousness of the people. On the contrary, the Egyptian bondage . . . was made by tradition into a veritable cornerstone of Biblical Hebrew religion" (p. 9). Patai notes that the sojourn in Egypt and the Exodus had a very prominent part in Hebrew religious ritual and were related to the three annual pilgrimage festivals. The consciousness of the importance of sojourning is also said to account for the many references in the Pentateuch to being kind to strangers who live among you "for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Exod. 22:20, 23:9).

Like the others, the Egyptian sojourn begins with deception and ends with the Israelites obtaining great treasure and increasing their numbers. In this case, the way is prepared by a relative who obtains great influence in the host city. Joseph obtains his power and influence in Egypt because of his great talents, and he uses them to gain admission for his family. Joseph tells them to bring only cattle and to deny ever having been shepherds, "both we, and our fathers; that ye may dwell in the land of Goshen; for every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians" (Gen. 46:34).

In a pattern that we have seen was recurrent during the diaspora (see Chapter 5), Joseph acts in collaboration with the aristocratic and royal authorities against the interests of the lower classes. After collecting large amounts of grain (inevitably from the common people), he sells it back to them during the famine so that the pharaoh ends up with all of the land and the people become serfs owing one fifth of their produce to the pharaoh. The collaboration with the authorities against the interests of the lower classes pays off for the Israelites: “And Israel dwelt in the land of Egypt . . . and they got them possessions therein, and were fruitful, and multiplied exceedingly” (Gen. 47:27). Deuteronomy notes that “Thy fathers went down into Egypt with threescore and ten persons; and now the LORD thy God hath made thee as the stars of heaven for multitude” (Deut. 10:22).<sup>40</sup>

Moreover, the account of Exodus makes clear that the Israelites had accumulated considerable wealth during their sojourn in Egypt and that when they left, not only did they take their own flocks and herds, but also when they asked the Egyptians for jewelry and clothing, “they let them have what they asked. And they despoiled the Egyptians” (Exod. 12:36). Johnson (1987) notes that “there are hints in the Bible that the hardships were endurable; Moses’ horde often hankered for ‘the flesh-pots of Egypt’” (p. 30).

Sojourning and deception are also linked in the Books of Esther and Daniel, both of which are of post-exilic origin. Esther’s cousin Mordecai tells Esther to reveal neither “her people nor her kindred” (Esther 2:10) to the Persians. Later, Esther uses her position to foil a plan to destroy the Jews and plunder their property because of their refusal to give obeisance to the king.<sup>41</sup>

The final sojourn depicted in the Bible is of course the Babylonian captivity—usually viewed as the beginning of diaspora Judaism. Here the Israelites do not come voluntarily, but there is every indication that they prospered, so that even when allowed to return, many remained in Babylon (e.g., Schmidt 1984). Johnson (1987) notes that as a result Israel itself ceased to be viewed as a necessary condition for Jewish existence. From this point on, the majority of Jews lived outside the homeland of Israel.

Indeed, Ackroyd (1968) notes that there is a very explicit “Exodus ideology” in the writings of the prophets during the Babylonian exile. For example, in the Book of Jeremiah, the Babylonian exile is explicitly compared to the Egyptian sojourn, with the point being that, as in the former case, there will be a happy ending: “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).

The Deuteronomistic writers during the Babylonian exile are able to take inspiration from the original Exodus: “The exile is no longer an historic event to be dated in one period; it is much nearer to being a condition from which only the final age will bring release. Though bound to the historical reality of an exile which took place in the sixth century, the experience of exile *as such* has

become the symbol of a period, viewed in terms of punishment but also in terms of promise” (Ackroyd 1968, 242; italics in text).

These ideas are also highly compatible with the treatment of Neusner (1987). Whereas the purpose of the Yahwist writer of the Pentateuch was to rationalize the Davidic monarchy as being the result of a divine plan, the purpose of the Priestly redactors of the exilic period was to rationalize the Babylonian exile as the result of God’s wrath at Israel’s non-compliance. The Davidic monarchy was “politics as usual,” simply another attempt at empire with the harems and political oppression typical of Oriental monarchies. In the exile context, the new hero is now Moses, who had led the Israelites out of Egypt and had established the original covenant. Within the new ideology, a cycle of exile and restoration is posited as the fate of the Jewish people, and within the exile, there must be strict segregation of Jews from their neighbors. The Priestly redaction of the Pentateuch is essentially an Exodus ideology in which the Jews during the Babylonian exile are seen as being like the Israelites wandering in the desert in the Exodus from Egypt.

These accounts make clear that it is not only the negative experiences during sojourning, such as slavery in Egypt, that are emphasized in the Biblical accounts, but also the positive. Indeed, the prototype of this view of the Egyptian sojourn is at Genesis 15:13: “Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance.” Sojourning, while certainly dangerous and far from an ideal situation, can and does result in the acquisition of wealth and increased reproductive success. From this perspective, it is their own experience of sojourning as a *highly successful* strategy by which an ethnic group is able to retain its identity and increase its wealth and reproductive success even in a diaspora environment that is a cornerstone of Judaism as a group evolutionary strategy.

An evolutionist can only add that such a perspective makes sense within the context of viewing humans as flexible strategizers (Alexander 1987; MacDonald 1991). Within this perspective, the tendencies to value wealth and reproductive success may be viewed as biological universals, which may be analyzed as evolved motivational systems. However, the historical accounts are highly compatible with supposing that the success of the sojourning life style of the patriarchs, the successful sojourn in Egypt, and the successful sojourn in Babylon would result in the Jews learning that this was a viable strategy and could thus become a permanent feature of their outlook on life.

Such a flexible response to environmental events must be viewed as underdetermined by evolutionary/ecological theory, but nevertheless it certainly violates no principles of the theory of evolution. The priestly redactors living in exile in Babylon need not have developed a means to retain ethnic identity within a diaspora context. Nevertheless, the theory developed here proposes that they were biologically predisposed to resist assimilation, and their successful

diaspora experiences then provided a framework with which to interpret their past and construct a strategy for the future.

The ultimate goals programmed by evolution had not changed, but there was a novel realization that this strategy could be made to work in the future. As Baron points out, there was undoubtedly an awareness that all empires are only temporary. By adopting the sojourning strategy, the Jews could, as Baron (1952a, 96) states, retain their ethnic identity and “increase and multiply” without facing the inevitable consequences that all the empires of the ancient world faced: destruction of political and military power and consequent ethnic fragmentation, reproductive oppression, and enforced assimilation.

Nevertheless, in evaluating the importance of the perception of sojourning success as a causal factor in the development of Judaism, one must consider the possibility that the sojourning ideology of the Tanakh is simply a rationalization of a previously existing powerful tendency toward endogamy, consanguinity, and ethnocentrism. We have noted that the ideology of sojourning followed, rather than preceded, the existence of a diaspora. And an ideology of retaining ethnic solidarity in a diaspora is scarcely required unless one is already committed to the importance of retaining ethnic integrity. Explaining fear of exogamy and ethnocentrism—central aspects of Judaism—as resulting from particular experiences thus seems misconceived. I would suggest, however, that the realization that the sojourn in Egypt had been successful would have given the exiles confidence that their strategy could succeed. And it certainly provided the basis of a very compelling diaspora ideology.

## **THE UNIQUE POSITION OF THE PRIESTS AND LEVITES AS A CULTURAL FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF JEWISH ETHNOCENTRISM**

One very striking aspect of the Pentateuch from an evolutionary perspective is the designation of the tribe of Levi as a hereditary group living among all of the other tribes and supported by offerings of various kinds. Within this tribe, the sons of Aaron and their descendants assumed an exalted status as priests. From an evolutionary perspective, the designation of these groups by an archaic lawgiver (reputed to be Moses) was a masterstroke because it resulted in the creation of hereditary groups whose interests were bound up with the fate of the entire group.

Consider the difference if each tribe had had its own religious functionaries—as would certainly have happened in the absence of such a rule. There would be no group in the society whose fate was bound up with the fate of the society as a whole. Conflicts between tribes would be bound to develop as some tribes expanded more rapidly than others. The effect of the Mosaic system was to enable the formation of a very large kinship group, one whose size was many times that of the small clans of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but which still had a

significant force representing the common interest. The benefit clearly was that it enabled a very unified, cohesive social structure that maximized within-group cooperation and significant egalitarianism combined with outgroup hostility—presumably a very adaptive combination during the period when the Israelites were seizing their land.

There are many examples indicating that the Israelites were quite wary about the eventual results of establishing a monarchy. Any person who was raised to be king was expected not to become overly rich—“he must not multiply horses for himself . . . and he shall not multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply for himself silver and gold” (Deut. 17:16–17). This theme is repeated in Samuel’s admonitions about a future king: “He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers” (1 Sam. 8:13).

There are other examples indicating that Israelite society was intended to be a relatively egalitarian kinship group. Johnson (1987) notes that the legal code of Moses prescribes less physical punishment for many crimes than several codes of the same period. This fits well with the idea that lawgivers considered the Israelites fundamentally as a large kinship group and that within-group violence should be minimized. Thus, flogging had to be performed within sight of the judge, “lest, if one should go on to beat him with more stripes than these, your brother be degraded in your sight” (Deut. 25:3).

This attempt to maximize within-group egalitarianism and minimize the fissioning of the tribes was fairly unsuccessful. As recounted in the Books of Judges and Samuel, after the founding of Israel the groups tended to fission into tribal factions that could be united only in the face of external threat. Johnson (1987) characterizes this early phase as a democracy and meritocracy. Decision making within the tribes was egalitarian, but the result was that any large cooperative effort was very difficult to achieve: “In those days there was no king in Israel; Every man did that which was right in his own eyes” (Judg. 21:25). Johnson argues that this structure remained functional until the need to confront large local powers produced a unified state under King David. However, the problem with the Israelite monarchy was that it created so many divisions based on differences in social class as well as political power differences between the tribes that there was little unity. Tribal conflict became endemic, civil war erupted, and the northern kingdom split off from the southern kingdom. Clearly the Mosaic system was not able to prevent fissioning of the tribal system.

When Israel became a monarchy, there was a pronounced tendency to establish the typical large court characteristic of the Near Eastern civilizations, including harem polygyny. Unlike the classical Roman civilization (MacDonald 1990; see above), there were no social controls on reproductive competition, with the result that centralized power quickly resulted in enormous variation in reproductive success as well as enormous cleavages between the kinship groups.

However, the despotism was not complete: Even during this period, the kings appear to have realized that Israel was “a theocracy and not a normal state” (Johnson 1987, 57). Thus, King David was sensitive to the complaints of the



religious authorities when he overstepped his authority by siring a child by Uriah's wife Bathsheba, attempting to pay him off, and finally having him killed. The punishment is appropriate: The child born to Bathsheba will die, and his wives will have intercourse with another man (in the event, his rebellious son Absalom) with the full knowledge of all Israel. Later, Elijah curses King Ahab for obtaining Naboth's vineyard through treachery. The king repents and is spared, but the king's son is cursed.

Nevertheless, the oppression, especially under Solomon, was real. Solomon employed forced labor, but exempted his own tribe, the Judans. This forced labor, along with high taxes, appears to have been a major cause of the splitting of the kingship on Solomon's death. When Solomon's son Rehoboam states that he will make even more labor and financial demands of the Israelites than his father did, the result is rebellion and the split into two kingdoms. Indicating the continued importance of kinship ties in this period, the cleavage was along kinship lines, with the Judans and Benjaminites carrying on the old monarchy and a new kingdom forming from the rest of the tribes, under Jeroboam, an Ephraimite.<sup>42</sup>

The tendency toward centralization and oppression was also seen in the splintered kingdoms, and Johnson (1987) comments that "virtually all the kings of Israel broke with the religious purists sooner or later" (p. 68). Nevertheless, Johnson (1987) suggests that in Judah there was a revival of theocratic democracy before Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 586 B.C. Indeed, the forced labor of King Solomon appears to have been replaced by a taxation system when King Joash restored the Temple (2 Chron. 24:8).

Baron (1952a) notes that the prophets "castigated the oppression of the poor, the exploitation of free labor, the expropriation of small landholders, and the political, administrative and judicial system which sanctioned these crimes (p. 88). For example, Isaiah was well aware that social class differences and oppression among the Israelites prevented solidarity: "Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees, and the writers who keep writing oppression, to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey" (Isa. 10:1-2). Social justice is the aim, but the message is directed at the poor of "my people," that is, the kinship group, and reflects a concern over the destruction of common interests among the Israelites.<sup>43</sup>

Besides the tendency for class oppression, the prophets were also well aware of the tendency of Israelite society to disintegrate along kinship lines. The prolonged struggles between the house of Saul and the house of David can be seen as the struggle between two kinship groups (Benjaminites versus Judans), and when Baasha from the tribe of Issachar seizes the throne of Israel, he destroys the kinship group of Jeroboam (tribe of Joseph). Moreover, when the split in the kingship occurs after Solomon, the lines of fissure occur along tribal lines. When David becomes king, the tribes gather around him and assert their kinship links: "Behold, we are your bone and flesh" (2 Sam. 5:1). Later, the Judans take pains to deny that they have benefited in any way from their

kinsman David being king (2 Sam. 19:42). In the competition among the tribes, clearly Judah becomes by far the largest: At 2 Sam. 24:9, it is stated that the men of Judah number over half of the total for the other tribes.

Isaiah is quite aware of the poisonous nature of internecine fighting between the kinship groups as well as the destructive effects of social class differences. Regarding strife among kinship groups, he says, “They eat every man the flesh of his own arm: Manasseh, Ephraim; and Ephraim, Manasseh; And they together are against Judah” (Isa. 9:19–20). In the glorious future, these rifts between kinship groups will be eradicated: “The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and they who harass Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim” (Isa. 11:13).<sup>44</sup>

The prophets, deriving mainly from the priests and Levites, thus appear to have been quite conscious of their role as a unifying force within Israel. Moreover, during the Babylonian exile the strategy was recast into a sojourning strategy by the only real force remaining for Israelite unity—the Priests and Levites. Although this institution was not particularly successful during the monarchy in minimizing sources of intrasocietal conflict, it was spectacularly successful during and after the exile. In the resulting diaspora strategy, the conflicts of interest were fundamentally between Jews and non-Jews and not within the Jewish community. As Baron (1952a 134) observes, in the diaspora “[g]one were the deep inner dissensions which had characterized the public life of both Samaria and Jerusalem before their downfall.”<sup>45</sup> Rather than fissioning politically and exploiting each other, Judaism came to be conceptualized as a group strategy in which the group would exist as a diaspora living among foreigners. If one accepts the truth of the sojourning accounts of the Pentateuch, the new strategy was a return to the original strategy of competing for resources with the people they were sojourning among.

Since they lived among the other tribes and were dependent on them for support, the priests and Levites are expected to have a sort of group-selectionist outlook in which the needs of the entire group are emphasized, rather than selfish sectarian interests. It is expected that this group would be the first to criticize the oppression of the other tribes by the monarchy because such oppression would lead to social division and the eventual breakup of the state, and especially if members of this tribe continued (as they did) to live among the other tribes. In the Book of Judges 19–21, the rape and murder of a Levite’s concubine by Benjaminites is depicted as resulting in a bloody civil war among the tribes—perhaps an object lesson on the importance of intertribal unity and on the need to protect the defenseless Levites from oppression by the other tribes. Such a group would therefore be expected to emphasize national solidarity even during exile (e.g., Ezekiel).

In Chapter 3, it was suggested that monotheism for the Israelites was nothing more or less than an expression of the common interests of the Jewish people viewed as a unified kinship group. In a sense, therefore, one can equate the monotheistic God, the interests of a unified Israel, and the interests of the Levites and particularly the priestly descendants of Aaron. This equation

receives explicit support in the language of the Tanakh: “And the LORD said unto Aaron, ‘Thou shalt have no inheritance in their land, neither shalt thou have any portion among them; I am thy portion and thine inheritance among the people of Israel’” (Num. 18:20). Indeed, the Levites are enjoined to give a tithe of their tithe, including the best meat and produce (the “Lord’s offering”), to Aaron the priest (Num. 18:25–29). Thus, the priests and Levites have no right to any land, but must be supported by the rest of the tribes,<sup>46</sup> and there is an equation among God, group interests, and the interests of the priests and Levites.

Such a tribe also would be expected to be greatly concerned with genealogy, since membership in the tribe was entirely hereditary. Epstein (1942, 154) notes that the priests and prophets were much more opposed to exogamy than were either the political aristocracy (e.g., Solomon and his many foreign wives)<sup>47</sup> or the common people. And, in Chapter 4, it was noted that there was an extreme concern with genealogy on the part of the priestly aristocracy through the Second Commonwealth period, and indeed throughout Jewish history. This concern with genealogy would be expected especially in the case of the high priesthood, which was supposed to be directly descended from the sons of Aaron.

In this regard, the situation was quite unlike the situation for religious personnel in Greece and Rome, where being a priest was sometimes a mark of high social status, but never hereditary (Beard & North 1990, 7). Thus in fifth century Athens, religious decisions were made by the same democratically elected body of men as made secular decisions, while in Republican Rome, political power and religious office went together, but great precautions were taken to prevent any one lineage from monopolizing these positions. Certainly, there was no priestly tribe at the center of the state that was supported by the rest of society.<sup>48</sup>

The Babylonian exile appears to be a critical event for the development of the priesthood. Schürer ([1885] 1979, 257–274) notes that the prestige and power of priests increased dramatically after the exile essentially because the priests had rewritten the laws during the exile so that the divine law now coincided with priestly interests. One important result was that the contributions to priests became more like a tax, rather than being solely a part of sacrifices as set out in Deuteronomy. According to the Deuteronomic prescriptions, the priest would get a small part of the sacrificed animal, and the worshiper would get the rest. However, the Priestly Code of the Book of Numbers, written during the exile, required that the priests receive a tithe of agricultural produce and the first born of animals as well as numerous other offerings.

Later, this income was augmented from a variety of sources, including voluntary contributions and a Temple tax for diaspora Jews, which amounted to “a great deal of money” (Sanders 1992, 84), estimated to be over a million dollars in today’s money. The result was that the priesthood as a class controlled vast amounts of wealth. Sanders (1992, 78, 147) estimates that the tithing

system was supporting approximately 20,000 priests and Levites in the first century A.D., including a wealthy, landowning priestly aristocracy.<sup>49</sup>

From this perspective, it is no accident that it was the members of the Israelite priestly class, and in particular the *kohen gadol* (high priest), who led the affairs of the nation from the period of the Babylonian exile until they were replaced by a non-hereditary scholarly aristocracy of rabbis in the period following the destruction of the Second Temple, a period of over 500 years.

The Zadokite family monopolized the high priesthood for several centuries from the time of Solomon until removed from this monopoly by the Hasmoneans (who were also a priestly family) in the second century B.C. In the post-exilic period prior to the Hasmonean power, the high priests were the effective military and civil rulers of Jerusalem and had wide influence throughout Judea, even though ultimate power lay elsewhere. During the Hasmonean period, the deposed Zadokites founded at least one Temple and were intimately involved in the Essene sect (characterized by supra-normal levels of separatism, purity, and observance of the law). Loyalist Zadokites became a major component of the Sadducean party and may well have contributed two high priests under Herod the Great (Sanders 1992, 23–26).<sup>50</sup>

It was the priestly class who performed the final writing and redaction of the Pentateuch, which emphasized national/ethnic unity in the face of a diaspora. Chronicles 1 and 2 appear to have been written by priests, and an important theme is the status of the Zadokite priests in the affairs of Israel. The pivotal figure of Ezra, who performed a critical role in establishing the racially exclusive post-exilic community, was a Zadokite priest.

The priests also played the central role in the political events of the post-exilic period. When the Seleucid (Greek) Antiochus IV defiled the Temple with pagan sacrifice in 167 B.C., the priest Mattathias, although not a Zadokite, was the instigator of the ensuing disorders. This priestly revolt was successful, inaugurating the Hasmonean period under the leadership of Mattathias and his successors. The tribe of Levi benefited greatly during this period, and, indeed, it was during the Hasmonean period that the high priesthood was formally merged with political and military leadership, thus achieving its highest level of power and influence. An important early accomplishment of this merging of religious and political interests was the destruction of the budding assimilationist movement referred to in 1 Maccabees 1:11.<sup>51</sup>

Moreover, the Sanhedrin continued to be dominated by priests up until the destruction of the Temple (Alon 1989, 45; Schürer [1885] 1979, 369). Priests were also important leaders in the diaspora (Sanders 1992, 52), and retained family connections via marriage with other priestly families even though scattered over a wide area (see Epstein 1942). Even after the destruction of the Temple, there was an unsuccessful struggle with Pharisaic elements in which the priests attempted to retain their exclusive status. For this group, the integrity of the nation strongly coincided with their own interests as a hereditary elite.

The end of the Commonwealth also marked a tendency for a decline in the hereditary rights of priests and Levites (Alon [1980, 1984] 1989, 26).

Leadership among Jews came to be associated with personal abilities, rather than birth, with the result that the society as a whole became more democratic or at least meritocratic. The hereditary, tribal aristocracy of the descendants of Aaron could hardly be expected to survive the complete loss of political power for very long, but while it lasted, this aristocracy was undoubtedly a potent force for retaining national and ethnic identity under even the most implausible of circumstances. From a political and a genetic point of view, the fall from centralized political power then resulted, within mainstream Judaism at least, in a coalescence between the priestly aristocracy and the scholarly, religiously observant class.

As noted in Chapter 4, being of priestly or Levitical descent continued to command respect in the Jewish community into modern times. The writings of Maimonides in the 12th century show that the requirements for ethnic purity in the marriages of priests continued to be more stringent than for the rest of the Jewish population, and establishing an unblemished genealogy continued to be of great importance. Again, one recalls Maimonides' description of a child who, recounting his immersion and eating of the heave offering, states that his companions "kept their distance from me and called me 'Johanán, the eater of dough offering'" (p. 130). And as noted in Chapter 4, individuals from the tribe of the Levites and especially the Kohanim continued to be singled out during synagogue service into modern times. Particularly striking is the role of the Kohanim in leading the synagogue service on the Day of Atonement, the most solemn Jewish holiday (Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 396). The Kohanim were also provided obligatory contributions on the birth of one's first son (Zborowski & Herzog 1952, 56, 320).<sup>52</sup>

It is this unique feature of ancient Judaism that I believe was critical in resisting the natural tendencies for fission among tribal societies during the early centuries after the Exodus and that was responsible for retaining national/ethnic identity even after being conquered by other groups bent on destroying ethnic ties among their subjects and enforcing assimilation. The presence of the priesthood among the Babylonian exiles and its absence among the Syrian exiles from the Northern kingdom may also explain why the latter eventually became assimilated while the former did not. Without the presence of a group that was intensely and self-interestedly committed to the integrity of the group, the eventual result was assimilation.

In Chapter 1, there was a brief discussion of the Spartan system as a group evolutionary strategy. Interestingly, there are legendary lawgivers for both the Spartans and the Israelites, Lycurgus and Moses, respectively. (Josephus relates the story that the Spartans developed the idea that they were descended from the same stock as the Jews and were brothers.) Both lawgivers stressed the importance of internal solidarity and egalitarian relationships within the society, and both emphasized ethnic and cultural separatism. Both developed means of unifying large kinship groups. Both groups dominated other ethnic groups who acted as servants among them, while retaining their genetic separatism (although

the Helots appear to have had a much more prominent role in this regard than did the *Nethinim*).<sup>53</sup>

From a broader perspective, one can view Lycurgus and Moses as originators of group strategies. Although these individuals are perhaps mythical, the systems that developed in Sparta and among the Israelites have all the appearance of being human contrivances. This is essentially what Baron (1952a) means when he says that Judaism is not a natural political system. In a similar way, the “unnaturalness” of the Spartan system fascinated the ancients and continues to fascinate political theorists in the modern world. Both systems are quite unique when compared to the political structures that developed in surrounding areas, and both have elements of enforced intrasocietal egalitarianism, as well as attempts to deal with the divisive effects of tribalism within the society, while maintaining sufficient strength to confront external foes. Just as with political philosophers such as Plato, Hobbes, and Marx, these ancient social engineers, by using their intellectual abilities and their understanding of human nature, developed blueprints for social systems. In the case of Moses and Lycurgus, these systems were designed to have a good chance of retaining a powerful group orientation, which would be capable of withstanding external forces and preventing internal fission. As in the case of the framers of the U.S. Constitution, a political philosophy was actually constructed for a real society. However, unlike the societies envisioned by these political philosophers or the founding fathers, both Judaism and the Spartan system appear to qualify as altruistic group strategies from an evolutionary perspective.

It would appear that the system devised by the Israelite lawgiver was in some sense a better strategy for maintaining long-term ethnic coherence than that designed by the Spartan lawgiver, since the Israelite strategy, arguably, continues today (see *SAID*, ch. 10). The Spartan system was an excellent defensive system, but was ill equipped to administer an empire, and there were no provisions, such as the hereditary Israelite priestly class, that would have allowed it to survive being militarily conquered—a contingency that was all but inevitable in the ancient world and that certainly continues to some extent today.

However, I suspect that the Israelite system has been so successful in its persistence precisely because crucial aspects of the strategy were continually changed by the Jews to meet current contingencies. Thus, it is extremely unlikely that a putative Israelite lawgiver such as Moses, contemplating the design of the post-Exodus Israelite society, envisioned Judaism as a movement for national/ethnic identity in a diaspora. Nor is there any reason to suppose that the subsequent policy of favoring universal education, a highly educated elite, eugenic practices, and high-investment parenting was part of the original Israelite strategy. From the evidence presented in Chapter 7, it would appear that these latter aspects of mainstream Judaism were the invention of diaspora times and essentially involved a realization that these aspects were important if the Jews were to compete successfully in the Greco-Roman world.

However, by creating a hereditary class whose interests were to maintain the integrity of the group, the original lawgiver created a very powerful force for national/ethnic cohesion; and in the end, the only commonality for the Israelite/Jewish strategy was the need to maintain national/ethnic identity no matter what the external situation. The point here is that the invention of a hereditary tribe of priests and Levites with a centralizing function within a group of other tribes was probably a necessary condition for the development of Judaism as it developed into its peculiar form as a group evolutionary strategy.

## **CONCLUSION: RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT**

The material reviewed in this chapter is further confirmation of the extremely powerful centripetal forces that have resulted in an intense commitment to the group throughout Jewish history. It is this intense commitment, more than anything else, which is the *sine qua non* of Judaism as a group evolutionary strategy. However, the material reviewed in Chapter 5 also indicates that historical Judaism has often been a powerful competitor for resources within human societies. Group strategies are very powerful in competition with individual strategies within a society, and especially so in the case of Judaism with its very high degree of with-group cooperation and altruism as well as its historical commitment to eugenic practices related to intelligence and high-investment parenting.

Both the intense level of group commitment characteristic of Judaism and the power of Judaism in resource competition with gentiles are important features of the theory of anti-Semitism developed in *SAID*. Data reviewed there indicate that anti-Semitism has been a virtually universal feature of societies where Jews have resided, and, in the present volume, we have already had occasion to refer to several instances where anti-Semitism has resulted in extreme levels of intrasocietal violence (e.g., the Iberian Inquisitions, the Nazi holocaust). Given the ubiquity of anti-Semitism and the very powerful forces that it has unleashed, there is every reason to suppose that Judaism and anti-Semitic movements have had important effects on human societies. Here I will simply close by reiterating my belief that there is an urgent need to develop a scientific theory of Judaism and anti-Semitism, for it is only by developing such a theory that it will be possible to ensure that the future will not be like the past.

## **NOTES**

1. The derivation of these groups from those exiled by the Syrians is doubtful (Porten 1984, 343). It is interesting that the community in China eventually disappeared by becoming assimilated into the surrounding population. Mourant, Kopec, and Domaniewska-Sobczak (1978) note that records of the group indicate that there was

considerable genetic admixia as a result of Chinese women marrying into the community, while women from the community were not allowed to marry outside it. The Chinese practice therefore differed substantially from that of the other Jewish communities, with the predictable result that the community was eventually assimilated culturally as well.

2. Reflecting this intense separatism, Shaw (1991, 129) mentions the fact that Turkish Karaites moved in order “to avoid contact with other Jews,” and marriage with non-Karaite Jews was viewed as an abomination on both sides (pp. 47–48). The Karaites are interesting in that some groups appear not to be ethnically Semitic, and, indeed, the Nazis accepted a claim by some Eastern European Karaite groups that they were Jewish only by religion and spared them. Mourant and colleagues (1978) state that the Nazis may well have used blood group data available at the time in order to make this determination. Nevertheless, other Karaite groups in the Near East appear to be of Semitic origin.

3. It is interesting to note that, although the tendency for ethnic separatism has been maintained by all of these Jewish groups, only mainstream Judaism appears to have developed the eugenic/high-investment strategy as a component of their national/ethnic separatist strategy (although at times this policy was not pursued for external reasons; see Chapter 7). Within these other groups there does not appear to have been the extreme idealization of scholarship and the scholar that produced the enormous corpus of Jewish religious writings. Coinciding with this non-acceptance of the Jewish tradition of learning, these groups have not enjoyed anywhere near the success of mainstream Judaism. The effective breeding population of the Samaritans was estimated to be only 39 in the 19th century (see Mourant et al. 1978), while the Kurdish Jews suffered doubly, laboring as serfs of the Kurds who themselves were oppressed by the Muslims. The other Oriental Jewish groups remained at low population levels and low social status. This suggests that the tendency for ethnic separatism is more common among the Jews and thus more likely to be of genetic origin than is the eugenic/high-investment strategy developed out of Judaism based on the complete oral and written Torah. As suggested in Chapter 7, the eugenic/high-investment strategy appears to be a purely cultural shift that has proved to be virtually indispensable for the success of a diaspora movement based on ethnic separatism. (Of course, once the eugenic/high-investment strategy was adopted, there were genetic consequences: The Jews created Judaism, and Judaism created the Jews.)

4. Even though subject to Rome, any symbol of Roman sovereignty, such as pictures of the emperor or other symbols of Roman authority, were vigorously rejected, so that, e.g., the Roman general Vitellius took a detour rather than cause an uproar among the people by bringing his military standards into Judaea. In Judaea, the image of the emperor was even removed from coins struck in Palestine out of deference to Jewish scruples (see Schürer [1885] 1979, 81ff).

5. This phenomenon is discussed extensively in *SAID* (chs. 3 and 4).

6. Only the severe decline of Ottoman Jewry (by over 50%) due to increased anti-Semitism and other factors resulted in a measure of unification in the following two centuries (Shaw 1991, 127ff). As emphasized by Alexander (1979), external threats tend



to result in increased unification and common interests. Later, with prosperity, there was again more fractionation, and increasing numbers of Ashkenazim began to manage their affairs separately from the Grand Rabbinate. Moreover, the Ashkenazi group itself was highly divided on the basis of national origin (Shaw 1991, 171).

7. The haredim represent about 5 percent of the total worldwide Jewish population, while the total Orthodox population (including the haredim) represents about 12 percent of the total worldwide Jewish population (Landau 1993, xxi–xxii, 22ff). (Heilman [1992, 12] estimates the number of haredim at 550,000.) However, Orthodox Jewish leaders claim that their population is consistently undercounted by liberal Jewish demographers intent on minimizing the importance of Orthodoxy (Landau 1993, 22ff), presumably in the interests of combating anti-Semitism. Artificially low estimates of the numbers of Orthodox Jews might be expected to deceive gentiles into supposing that the extreme exclusivity of Orthodox Judaism represents only a very small minority of Jews and thus deflect potential anti-Semitism resulting from their practices.

8. Ben-Sasson (1971, 215) describes the ideals of the medieval “Hassidim of Ashkenaz” in Germany as attempting to marry completely among themselves and exclude other Jews completely from their communities. They wished to “create and maintain a community of Pious, alike in lineage and morals; it is for the sake of this ideal that the closure of the community is to be applied.”

9. “The haredim’s blind obeisance to rabbis is one of the most striking characteristics of haredism in the eyes of the outside world, both Jewish and Gentile” (Landau 1993, 45). Famous rebbes are revered in an almost god-like manner (*tzaddikism*, or cult of personality), and, indeed, there was a recent controversy over whether the Lubavitcher Rebbe Schneerson claimed to be the Messiah. Many of his followers believed that he was the Messiah, and Mintz (1992, 348ff) points out that it is common for Hasidic Jews to view their rebbe as the Messiah.

10. In England, the process of conversion into Modern-Orthodox Judaism takes three to four years (Landau 1993, 305). Waxman (1989, 498) reports that the Syrian Jewish community absolutely rejects intermarriage and conversion no matter how sincere the prospective convert appears.

11. The importance of genetic background among the haredim can also be seen by the fact that one ingredient affecting one’s resource value on the marriage market is a physical appearance that does not depart from the group norm on color of skin or hair. Recall the comment mentioned in Chapter 7 indicating that a haredi with red hair had great difficulty finding a wife. In looking at photographs of groups of haredim one is struck by their almost clone-like degree of phenotypic resemblance.

12. It is interesting that among the psychological traits found in collectivist societies is a bifurcation of the real and the social selves (Triandis 1991). Here the ritualized form of conversation among Jews in a traditional society suggests that the social self was completely conventionalized and socially prescribed.

113. As discussed in Chapter 7, these practices intensified in a period of group conflict and economic decline.

14. Jewish radical organizations such as the Russian Bund essentially replicated traditional Jewish separatism in a secular, socialist milieu. Issues related to Jewish identity and radical intellectual/political movements are discussed extensively in *SAID* (ch. 6).

15. Lenz (1931, 657) proposed that, because of the harsh environment, “Nordic” peoples evolved in small groups and have a tendency toward social isolation. Lenz proposed that Jews evolved in larger groups (p. 667) and as a result have highly developed social skills related to social influence, such as empathy, which enable them to anticipate others’ actions and desires. Such a perspective would not imply that Northern Europeans lack collectivist mechanisms for group competition, but only that these mechanisms are relatively less elaborated and/or require a higher level of group conflict to trigger their expression. See also Chapter 7, note 12.

16. I must report that Count Gobineau ([1854] 1915, 29–30) singles out the Arabs and other Middle Eastern groups, including the Jews, as having a very pronounced tendency to retain their purity of blood and resist genetic assimilation. However, he saw the tendency to resist genetic assimilation as a general human characteristic, occurring even in some areas of France, which he believed to represent a society with a high degree of genetic admixture: “The human race in all its branches has a secret repulsion from the crossing of blood, a repulsion which in many of the branches is invincible, and in others is only conquered to a slight extent. Even those who most completely shake off the yoke of this idea cannot get rid of the few last traces of it; yet such peoples are the only members of our species who can be civilized at all.” For Gobineau, then, Western Europe in general was characterized less by concern with purity of blood than was typical of Eastern groups. However, Gobineau also believed that some European groups, including the Croats, Magyars, Saxons, and Wallachians had a very powerful tendency to resist genetic admixture.

17. I would suggest that Sparta is a possible exception, since the Spartans certainly did not allow others to become Spartan citizens and they appear to have had a very highly developed sense of ethnic exclusivity (Hammond 1986). Interestingly, there is good reason to suppose that the Spartan system, like Judaism, was a contrived evolutionary strategy. See below and Chapter 1.

18. In the words of Aristides, a Roman provincial in the second century addressing Rome:

You have caused the word “Roman” to belong not to a city, but to be the name of a sort of common race, and this not one out of all the races, but a balance to all the remaining ones. You do not now divide the races into Greeks and barbarians . . . you have divided people into Romans and non-Romans. Yet no envy walks your empire. For you yourselves were the first not to begrudge anything, since you made everything available to all in common and granted to those who are capable not to be subjects rather than rulers in turn. (Quoted in Garnsey & Saller 1987, 15)

19. Boyarin (1993, 231) argues that Western universalism beginning in the ancient world resulted in a “severe devaluation” of ethnicity. Boyarin acknowledges the exclusivist,

ethnocentric nature of Judaism, but, in the manner of many recent multi-cultural ideologues, views the rabbinical writings as a “necessary critique” (p. 234) of assimilative tendencies of the ancient world. “The very emphasis on a universalism, expressed as concern for all of the families of the world, turns rapidly (if not necessarily) into a doctrine that they must all become part of our family of the spirit, with all of the horrifying practices against Jews and other Others that Christian Europe produced” (p. 235).

It is difficult to see how an assimilationist culture that de-emphasizes ethnicity would necessarily commit horrifying practices against Jews. (Anti-Semitism was relatively uncommon in the ancient world and much of what there was derived from the Jewish lack of participation in the common culture. See above and *SAID*, ch. 2.) Nor is it clear how Jews would benefit if Western culture imitated Judaism and became more ethnocentric and concerned about retaining racial purity. One would suppose that such a development would lead to intense, racially based anti-Semitism, as in the case of Naziism. Boyarin conflates the Western tendency toward individualism with medieval corporate religiosity, which did indeed have a strong tendency to exclude Jews. The latter must be seen as a departure from the tradition of Western individualism, and, indeed, in *SAID* (ch. 3) it is argued that the Church developed in the fourth century as a collectivist, authoritarian group strategy defined by its opposition to Judaism. Even at its most collectivist, however, and in radical opposition to Jewish practices, the medieval Church retained the Western tendency toward the de-emphasis on genetic relatedness as a basis for group membership or as a criterion of status within the Christian community. Boyarin’s argument also ignores the exclusionary tendency of Muslim religious orthodoxy—hardly a Western phenomenon—which resulted in the long-term degradation of Jewish culture. Clearly, the best strategy for Jews has always been to retain their highly collectivist, exclusivist, and ethnocentric culture while living in a highly individualist society. Indeed, as discussed in *SAID* (ch. 8), an important strand of 20th-century Jewish intellectual activity has been to develop theories of anti-Semitism in which collectivist, authoritarian gentile groups are proposed to be indications of gentile psychopathology.

20. This is not to say that the Greeks and Romans did not exploit the conquered peoples or that they were not interested in reproductive success, as Hegermann’s (1989; see also Hengel 1989, 176) account makes clear. Regarding the Hellenistic period, Hegermann (1989, 129) notes that, “as in the Roman period, powerful political ambition and ruthlessness went hand in hand with a determined search for peace and a sense of dedication to a humanizing cultural mission.” I am only saying that there was much less concern with endogamy and racial purity among the Greeks than among the Jews. However, the difference is relative, not absolute: Hengel (1989, 174), while agreeing that the Jews intermarried far less than other groups, notes that Alexander’s army rejected the intermarriages and provides other evidence that the Greeks did not engage in panmixia with the conquered peoples. Nevertheless, status as a Hellene definitely did not depend on genetic descent, and many intellectuals of the period emphasized the concept of a universal humanity including even the barbarians (Hengel 1989, 178, 179).

21. Mitterauer (1991) suggests that the Jews were less concerned with endogamy than were other Near Eastern groups. Thus, the Jews early on rejected a variety of common forms of Near Eastern marriage that functioned to keep a purchased wife in the family when the husband died: a daughter-in-law after death of the son, a stepmother after the

death of the father, an aunt by marriage after the death of the uncle, and a sister-in-law after the death of the brother. Note that none of these prohibited marriages actually involves a blood relative. However, the Jews practiced the levirate (marriage of the brother's wife if the brother had no sons) as a religious obligation, as well as *Entochterehe* (marriage of sonless men's daughters to close male relatives; see Numbers 36:6-8).

22. Recently Salter (1994) has suggested that Northern European groups have a number of individualistic adaptations related to sexual behavior, including a greater tendency toward romantic love and genetic (rather than social) mechanisms (such as the *purdah* of Near Eastern civilization) to prevent cuckoldry. In general, I suppose that at the psychological level the evolutionary basis of individualism involves mechanisms in which adaptive behavior is intrinsically rewarding (e.g., romantic love) rather than socially imposed or coerced, as in collectivist cultures. See MacDonald (1991, 1992a) for discussions of the evolutionary basis of motivation.

23. An important feature of individualist societies is a tendency toward egalitarianism (Triandis 1990). Roman monogamy can thus be seen as reflecting the tendency toward individualistic social structure typical of the West.

24. Even prior to Rabbi Gershom's decree, there is evidence for a Christian influence on Jewish marriage patterns. During the (Christian) Byzantine period Jews were required to abide by Christian laws on monogamy, divorce, and consanguinity (Ruether 1974, 190; Shaw 1991, 19), but during the (Muslim) Ottoman period, Zimmels (1958, 63) notes that Ashkenazi immigrants to Turkey adopted the Sephardic pattern of polygyny. Similarly, Jews in the Roman Empire obeyed the Roman law, but in Persia during the same period, Jews were polygynous (Baron 1952b, 226). In Spain, polygamy among Jews was relatively common in Moorish areas compared to Christian areas up until the expulsion (Neuman 1969, II:37). Levirate marriages (implying polygyny) were also the common practice in Spain throughout the Middle Ages (See also Baron 1952b, 223ff).

25. Interestingly, while monogamy in Western Europe was essentially imposed by the Christian Church in opposition to the marriage strategies of the elite, among the Jews controls on concubinage were an aspect of individual reproductive strategies by the family of the woman. A common component of the *ketubah* marriage contract among the Sephardic Jews was a provision that the husband would not take a concubine, thus ensuring that the investment of the wife's family would not be diluted among the offspring of several women.

26. In *SAID* (ch. 3) I argue that the development of Christian corporate hegemony in the fourth and fifth centuries was a gentile group strategy in opposition to Judaism. This strategy represented a fundamental shift from the individualism of Greco-Roman culture to a collectivist, authoritarian movement, which has historically been more typical of Judaism.

27. Similarly, in England, the Christianization of national life excluded Jews from public administration, trade, and agriculture (Rabinowitz 1938, 37). On the other hand, Jordan (1989, 111) notes that in the south of France there was much greater tolerance of Jewish economic activity because there was no emergence of an "institutionally coherent state"

that would exclude “aliens.” The result was that Jews often had authority over Christians and competed with Christians in a wide range of economic activities in this area.

28. The intense popular resentment of moneylending (whether by Jews or by Christians) during this period is discussed in *SAID* (ch. 2). This resentment was rational in the sense that few individuals could hope to profit by taking a loan at the interest rates common in the medieval period. Interest rates in northern France were 65 percent and compounded until 1206, when the rate was capped at 43 percent and compounding was made illegal (Chazan 1973, 84; Rabinowitz 1938, 44). Moreover, Jordan’s (1989) treatment indicates that both compounding and rates higher than the legal limit continued even after attempts to abolish these practices. The great majority of the loans were not for investment in businesses, but rather for living expenses in a society that hovered near the subsistence level (e.g., Gilchrist 1969, 62; Jordan 1989, 159). Jewish communities tended to prosper at these rates of interest (and even at much lower rates, as in 15th-century Florence [Gilchrist 1969, 73]), but the rates must be understood as including taxes by authorities who used Jewish moneylending as a source of revenue. Rabinowitz (1938, 113) provides statements of contemporaries indicating that moneylenders themselves viewed their occupation as extremely lucrative compared to artisanry or agriculture.

Interest rates of this magnitude therefore resulted in a net flow of resources out of the gentile community into the Jewish community with no compensating increase in economic activity within the gentile community. The opposition of the Church during this period to usurious moneylending (which was not without effect [see Gilchrist, 1969, 106ff]) was thus rational in the sense that the eradication of moneylending at rates typical in the Medieval period would benefit the gentile community as a whole. The medieval Church, like traditional Judaism, must be understood as a collectivist, exclusionary entity with a strong sense of Christian group interests. (Thus, the common medieval metaphor for society is a body in which the Church is the head and eyes, the nobility the hands and arms, and the peasantry the legs and feet [Rabinowitz 1938, 117]). Like traditional Judaism, this group conceptualization was one in which there was harmony of all social classes, including a responsibility of charity for the poor (Gilchrist 1969, 118ff; see also Hill 1967).

29. The following is based on Chazan (1973, 78ff) and Jordan (1989, *passim*).

30. In both Poland and Spain, on the other hand, the evidence reviewed in Chapter 5 indicates that Jewish competition substantially hindered the emergence of a Christian middle class. Jordan (1989, 182) indicates that Christian merchants were also instrumental in the expulsion of the Jews as a means of removing a source of competition, again suggesting that the removal of the Jews was an important factor in the development of a gentile middle class.

31. During the reign of Philip IV, the Church and the monarch clashed over treatment of Jews and there was a marked increase in popular hatred of Jews, leading, beginning in the 1290s, to expulsions from particular areas and in 1306, from the entire kingdom. Popular hatred also led to a later expulsion in 1322 after Jews were readmitted in 1315 (Jordan 1989, 244ff). The expulsion order of Charles II of Sicily (Count of Anjou and Maine) of 1289 reflects popular animosity winning out over royal revenues: “[F]or the honor of God and the tranquillity of [the area] . . . although we enjoy extensive temporal benefit from the . . . Jews—, preferring to provide for the peace of our subjects rather

than to fill our coffers with the mammon of iniquity . . .” (quoted in Chazan 1973, 185). (To an evolutionist, it is interesting that besides the complaint that Jews obtained riches via usury, the order also complained that Jews seduced Christian maidens.) Charles’s subjects were forced to pay for the privilege of living without Jews with a special tax, a practice then followed by Philip IV of France. Immediately prior to the expulsion of 1306 in France there was an increase in the number of communities that were willing to pay the crown to rid themselves of Jews, as also occurred in England prior to the expulsion of 1290 (Roth 1978).

32. Similarly, in northern Italy in the late 15th century, Franciscans led a campaign against Jewish moneylending because of perceived negative effects of this activity on the Christian community (Shulvass 1973, 118). The campaign included the development of charitable *Monti di Pieta* lending institutions, which gave loans on a non-profit basis. The following period was characterized by much greater community control over the interest rates Jews could charge on loans.

33. Castro (1954, 496–497) suggests that the situation in which an unassimilated ethnic group (Jews) was placed over the masses of Spaniards by the nobility resulted in the impossibility of a modern (i.e., individualist) European state developing in Spain because it prevented the development of the homogeneous, corporate, feudal state that was the historical forerunner of the modern state.

It is a serious affair when the services that we lend or are lent to us do not mesh with a system of mutual loyalties and common values, as they did where the feudal organization was an authentic reality. In important areas of Spanish life, loyalty and esteem were replaced by the tyranny of the lord and the flattering servility of the Jews, forced to pay this price to subsist. This false situation was fatal, and equally so was the situation in which the common people had to accept a group whom they hated and despised as their superiors, legally entitled to prey regularly upon their meager resources. And the more evident that the superiority of the Jews turned out to be, the worse it became. From such premises it was impossible that there should be derived any kind of modern state, the sequel, after all, of the Middle Ages’ hierarchic harmony. . . . The main paths that were open to the Christian feudal state were obstructed in Spain by the Jew, as necessary as he was foreign.

34. During the modern era, Naziism is another example of a highly cohesive, collectivist group that strongly opposed Judaism. The collectivist, exclusionary aspects of Naziism are discussed further in *SAID* (ch. 5). Given the propensity for gentile collectivist societies to exclude Jews, it is not surprising that a powerful strand of Jewish intellectual activity in the 20th century has been to pathologize highly cohesive, collectivist gentile social structures, gentile nationalism, gentile authoritarian political groups, and gentile ethnocentrism (e.g., the Frankfurt School of Social Research; see *CofC* (ch. 5). It is clearly in the interests of Jews to advocate the continuation of the quintessential Western cultural commitment to individualism as the best environment for the continuation of Jewish collectivism.

35. On the basis of his cross-cultural data Triandis (1990, 1991) finds that upper-status individuals are more likely to be individualist in their outlook and therefore not identify

with group aims. In Chapter 5, it was noted that there were often very close relationships between Jews and upper-class gentile elites combined with widespread anti-Semitism among the lower classes. Upper-class gentiles are thus more likely to ally themselves with Jewish interests and fail to develop a sense of collective gentile interests in opposition to Judaism as a group evolutionary strategy.

36. As indicated in Castro (1954; see note 33 above), the role of Jews in Spain may have been essential, at least during the period of the Reconquest.

37. Data on anti-Semitism in Muslim societies are discussed in *SAID* (ch. 2).

38. In the Isaac story, Isaac is apparently draining too many resources from the Philistines, for he later says to their leaders when they come to him, “Wherefore are ye come unto me, seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?” (Gen. 26:27). He is forced to leave and finally finds a spot in the valley of Gerar where he could dig a well without conflict with the neighboring groups. Speiser (1970, 12–13) notes that there has been a polemical literature regarding the morality implicit in these stories of deception. He also notes that a wife designated as a wife-sister had a higher status than an ordinary wife in cultures of the area.

39. Note the emphasis in Baron’s (1952a) comment on the consciousness of ties of biological relatedness as crucial to the diaspora mentality. The 19th-century proto-Zionist Moses Hess (1943, 235) also points out that both the Talmud and the Midrash emphasize that the Israelites in Egypt did not assimilate by taking Egyptian names and that their women remained faithful to their “Jewish nationality.”

40. Exodus 12:37 states that the leaving group consisted of about 600,000 men plus women and children. From an ecological perspective, it was the very large economy of Egypt that made this large increase in population possible, while still retaining a strong sense of group identity. Had they remained in the desert, the groups would have undoubtedly fissioned long before they had achieved this population. (Even Abraham and Lot must go their separate ways after the first Egyptian sojourn because they have accumulated so much wealth [Gen. 13:6].)

41. The Book of Esther was an inspiration for crypto-Jews attempting to deceive the gentile society regarding their true affiliations during the period of the Iberian Inquisitions (Beinart 1971b, 472).

42. This new kingdom was apparently far less orthodox than the Judan kingdom (Johnson 1987), and it is stated in both Kings and Chronicles that the Levites were expelled. A major theme of these works, and especially the Book of Hosea, is the impending doom for the northern kingdom as a result of straying from proper religious observances. Quite possibly the oppression at the hands of Solomon resulted in a much more general distrust of orthodox religion in the north.

43. Amos 8:4; Jeremiah 5:28, 6:6, 7:5, and 22:3; Micah 6:11; Zechariah 7:8; and Malachi 3:5 also decry the oppression of the Israelite state.

44. The choice of Manasseh and Ephraim is significant because these are two half-tribes in the tribe of Joseph and therefore represent the idea that even closely related kinship groups had developed large conflicts of interest, although together they continued to harass the more distantly related tribe of Judah. After the death of Solomon, the fracture resulted in two states, one under the leadership of Judah and the other under the leadership of an Ephraimite.

45. See also Chapter 6.

46. Interestingly, in the numerical count of the tribes at Numbers 26, the tribe of Levi has the fewest members. Since the tribe was (from an ecological perspective) parasitic on the rest of the Israelites, it is quite possible that there were subtle controls on their population, while at the same time they were protected from oppression from other tribes (the story of the rape of the Levite's concubine by Benjaminites [Judg. 19–21] comes to mind).

47. Besides Solomon, Epstein (1942, 183n) notes two other instances in which members of the royal family married foreign wives.

48. Moreover, the tribal nature of the priesthood is not apparent in other ancient societies. Kuhrt (1990) finds that religious personnel in Babylon were appointed by the king. Temple personnel were highly diverse, "drawn from a specified group of the urban community, in an apparently independent and spontaneous fashion, sometimes dictated by economic exigencies" (p. 154). These individuals may well have had commercial or industrial power, but in any case there is no evidence that the priesthood had a tribal organization as in Israel.

The situation in Egypt was more similar to that in Israel, but there were important differences. Thompson (1990) finds that the priestly offices were hereditary and the priesthood itself was possessed of considerable wealth and power. (A high priest of Ptah writes, "I was a great man, rich in all riches, whereby I possessed a goodly harem . . ." [quoted in Thompson 1990, 115].) For example, there was a small elite group of intermarrying families of high priests of the cult of Ptah in which the high priesthood was passed from father to son over several generations. However, unlike the case of Israel, there was a variety of cults, and priests participated in an official capacity in several of them. There would thus appear to be a variety of cults maintained by an interlocking set of families, with the cult of Ptah at the pinnacle of power and wealth. However, priesthoods could be purchased and ceded by the government, and there was a wide variety of cults supported by the people and the government. As a result, although the Egyptian priesthood was clearly far more the focus of a family strategy than was the case in the Greco-Roman world, there is no indication that the priesthood as a whole in any sense constituted an endogamous tribe in which a subset was priests and in which an even more exclusive subset was the high priests. Lacking this strong sense of belonging to a kinship group, the priesthood itself disappeared quickly when the Romans reduced the power and wealth of the Egyptian temples.

49. There is also a scholarly tradition emanating mainly from Christian sources that emphasizes the business aspect of the Temple. There was a great deal of buying and selling of sacrificial animals at the Temple and some suggestion that the priests and Levites were directly involved in this commerce (Sanders 1992, 85ff, 185ff) as well as in



their normal role as consumers of the sacrificial products. Nevertheless, while Sanders (1992) himself demurs from this judgment (if only because the Jewish system may have been less exploitative than other Oriental religions), he notes that “[m]odern scholars, both Jews and Christians, are inclined to see the temple system as corrupt, or as detrimental to the people’s welfare” (p. 91). The only point here is that the system produced a hereditary class with a vital stake in a continuing national/ethnic identity and non-assimilation with surrounding peoples.

50. In a comment consistent with the heightened role of genealogy in Eastern cultures emphasized in this chapter, Jeremias (1969, 193) notes that: “[i]t is very enlightening to see that the Zadokite family, though politically obscure, stood in the popular view high above the influential but illegitimate high-priestly families. In the east, ancestry has always counted more than power, in fact it is regarded as divinely ordained. . . .”

51. The Hasmonean period also produced its share of despots. For example, according to Josephus, Alexander Jannaeus (r. 103–76 B.C.) executed 800 of his Jewish opponents by crucifying them. Before they died, he had “the throats of their wives and children cut before their eyes; and these executions he saw as he was drinking and lying down with his concubines” (Flavius Josephus, *The Wars of the Jews*; I, iv, 6). I suppose that an evolutionist should not be surprised at such a deed, but I also suppose that only an evolutionist can comprehend the exquisite symbolism represented by one man calmly flaunting his reproductive assets while his opponents are forced to observe their reproductive assets being slaughtered prior to themselves being subjected to an extremely painful death.

52. Recently the marriage of a convert female to a man named Cohen produced a national crisis in Israel and in diaspora circles. The issues centered around the age-old prohibition against priestly marriage to converts (see Landau 1987, 304ff).

53. There were some differences as well. The Spartans were far more egalitarian and centralized than were the early Israelites. Moreover, it would appear that tribal lines within the Spartan society were de-emphasized to a greater extent than among the early Israelites, and there was no provision for a hereditary class (tribe) of religious personnel supported by the rest of the society.