

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

Abraham's Children

Race, Identity, and the DNA of the Chosen People

Jon Entine

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Reviewed by Richard Lynn

Jon Entine has written an excellent book whose main themes are an account of Jewish history from ancient times to the present and the genetic identity of the Jews. He also has some interesting observations on Jewish intelligence and achievements. As regards the genetic identity of the Jews, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it was generally accepted that the Jews are a race with their own distinctive genetic make-up and that many Jews could be identified from their appearance. In the second half of the twentieth century many geneticists and anthropologists asserted that there is no such thing as race, and hence that the Jews in particular could not be a race.

For instance, in 1994, in a typical statement, the leading geneticists Cavalli-Sforza, Menozzi, and Piazza¹ wrote that "the concept of race has failed to gain any acceptance." However, they found that "we can identify 'clusters' of populations." Remarkably, these "clusters" turn out to be the same as the races of classical anthropology. Their major "clusters" are Sub-Saharan Africans (formerly "Negroids"), Northeast Asians (formerly "Mongoloids"), North Eurasians (formerly "European Caucasoids"), etc. These so-called "clusters" are a transparent euphemism for races.

As part of the fashion to deny the reality of race, many people asserted that the Jews are not a race. In 1976, Arthur Koestler devoted a book to expounding the theory that European Jews are largely European Caucasians descended from Khazars who converted to Judaism in the ninth century.² This theory convinced many people who

¹ L. L. Cavalli-Sforza, P. Menozzi, and A. Piazza, *The History and Geography of Human Genes* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

² Arthur Koestler, *The Thirteenth Tribe* (New York: Random House, 1976).

wanted to be convinced, and in 1989 Raphael and Jennifer Patai followed it up with a whole book, *The Myth of the Jewish Race*.³ Entine shows that all of this was wrong and that most Jews do have a distinctive genetic profile, although whether this should be called a race or a cluster or whatever is just a choice of words. Furthermore, the Ashkenazim (European Jews) can be distinguished genetically from the Sephardim (originally from Spain) and the Oriental Jews (from the Middle East).

This said, none of these Jewish groups are of pure descent from the original population of Palestine. Over the centuries there has been some interbreeding between Jews and the gentile populations among whom they have lived. This has been almost entirely between Jewish men and gentile women, with the result that some European Jews have fair hair and blue eyes and are indistinguishable from European gentiles.

Entine gives many interesting details of Jewish genetics. For instance, the Lemba in the south of Africa have some Jewish genes acquired many centuries ago from Jewish traders. On the other hand, the Ethiopian Jews who adhere to the Jewish faith do not have any Jewish genes but were converts to Judaism.

Entine notes that the European Jews have a high average level of intelligence, although a number of Jews prefer not to draw attention to this and some have disputed it. Nevertheless, there is overwhelming evidence for a high IQ of Ashkenazim in the United States and Britain, and probably elsewhere, to judge by evidence of their achievements. This is likely the principal reason that European Jews have been so successful from the middle of the nineteenth century up to the present, and are hugely over-represented in the professions, business, and among chess grandmasters, top bridge players, and Nobel prize-winners.

There is a good discussion of the explanation of the high IQ of the Ashkenazim. Is this genetic, or is it environmentally brought about by socialization by Jewish mothers? Entine presents the theory that eugenic practices may be responsible for the high Ashkenazim IQ.

It is an interesting question whether European Jews have other qualities that contribute to their success. It has sometimes been asserted

³ Raphael Patai and Jennifer Patai, *The Myth of the Jewish Race* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989).

that Jews value success, hard work, and money, and these give them a motivational advantage, but these qualities are hard to measure and there is no strong evidence for them.

In a recent study, Satoshi Kanazawa and I looked for evidence of this but were unable to find any.⁴ We found that in the United States Jews do not desire their children to be successful any more than gentiles, and that there are hardly any differences between Jews and gentiles in the qualities they desire in their children.

The Oriental Jews do not have the high IQ of Ashkenazim, and they have not made comparable intellectual achievements. This has given rise to social problems in Israel, where the Ashkenazim have a higher IQ than the Oriental Jews and consequently do much better in education and employment. However, no one in Israel dares to mention this. The poor achievements of the Oriental Jews are attributed to discrimination against them by the European Jews. It is the same as in the United States and Latin America where the poor achievements of blacks and Hispanics are blamed on discrimination against them by Europeans. Political correctness rules in Israel. This IQ difference between the Oriental Jews and the Ashkenazim may have arisen because the Ashkenazim were more persecuted in Europe than were the Oriental Jews in the Ottoman empire, with the result that the more intelligent Ashkenazim in Europe survived to a greater extent.

Entine is good at pointing out the elephant in the room. In his previous book, *Taboo: Why Black Athletes Dominate Sports and Why We're Afraid to Talk About It*, he documented the obvious fact that blacks are better than Europeans and Asians at most sports, and this is because they have genetic advantages, such as longer legs. In the present book he has done it again. Yes, most Jews are to some degree genetically different from gentiles, and the Ashkenazim have a higher average IQ, which is likely genetic. Entine is courageous and is treading on dangerous ground. I hope he will not pay a price for telling the truth.

Richard Lynn is professor emeritus of psychology of the University of Ulster. The author of sixteen books, he is now working on a new book on Jewish IQ and achievement.

⁴ R. Lynn and S. Kanazawa, "How to Explain High Jewish Achievement: The Role of Intelligence and Values," *Personality and Individual Differences* 44 (2008): 801-808.