

Igbo Torah Thoughts

Parashah #1, B'reshit: "In the Beginning"

B'reshit/Genesis 1:1-6:8

By: Rabbi Yehudah "Tochukwu" ben Shomeyr

Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God..."

The most enigmatic statement of all time; fully loaded and brimming with mystery and question.

What does God look like? I don't know, but what does a spirit look like? Because God is a spirit (John 4:24).

What does love look like? Because God is love (I John 4:8, 16).

Could God look like us?

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. – Gen. 1:26-27

Seeing as God is a spirit and yet mankind is made in His image and likeness; we need to ask ourselves, "What did the first man look like?"

ADAM

God made Adam out of earth East of Eden (Gen. 2:7-8). So where is Eden and East of it?

Well, the boundaries for Eden are given in Genesis 2:10-15:

And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone. And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia. And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates. And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

Scholars call this area the “Fertile Crescent” or “Mesopotamia” and is known today as an area connecting the Middle East to Africa, divided by the Red Sea. Before the British conquered the world and divided and designated the areas on the map of the world as we know it today, all this area was considered connected and one land mass. The ancients called it Canaan, it later became known as Ophir (Gen. 10:29) after one of the sons of Shem. Eventually “O” became “A”, “Ph” became “F” and the “R” was kept. Flavius Josephus, the Jewish Historian wrote, “Ophren (Epher) the grandson of Abraham through Keturah, led a military expedition against Libya and captured it. When his grandchild colonized that place, they called it (from his name) Africa.”

So now we have the context of where Eden is and what lies to the east of it. We know Adam was created east of Eden, then placed in Eden itself. We know that God created Adam from the soil East of Eden and so, we can ask, “What color was

the soil of that area and was that the color of Adam?" Is the Sunday school flannel-graph pictures us older folks grew up with, with the white, naked, brown and blonde haired Adam and Eve correct?

The soil around that area varies from a rich reddish-black to dark brown color, to a sandy orange color. Adam, by the very name in Hebrew is rooted in the word "dam" meaning blood and blood is red. So I think it is safe to say Adam was a deep mahogany color; a "black" man if you will.

Scientifically, for there to be lighter skinned people, you first must start with black skin pigmentation to eventually get what you call "white." Light colored people do not have much melanin (skin pigmentation) as "black" folks do and due to the laws of science, you have to have melanin before you can have a lack of it, you have to have a black man before you can ever have a white man.

GOD AND MESSIAH

So if the first man (Adam) was a man of color, and as mentioned before, we were made in God's image, did this fact shape how God's people seen Him in dreams and visions?

I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. – Daniel 7:9

Hebraically, it implies that the hair on God's head was of a woolly consistency, like that of what we would expect of a "black" man.

I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. – Daniel 7:13

This verse implying, Messiah who came out of God and His Oneness, was like the “son of man” and we have already established that the first man was a man of color. So this Messianic “Son of Man” would be a man of color like the first man Adam.

Now the book of Daniel and the Book of Revelation are both prophetic books, mirrors of one another. How did John the Revelator, knowing the Book of Daniel like the back of his hand, envision the fulfilment of this Messianic “Son of Man”, the first Adam (I Cor. 15:45) Yeshua the Messiah?

His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. – Rev. 1:14-15

Now the Greek and Aramaic use similar verbiage to describe the hair of the Ancient of Days in Daniel. Whereas Daniel implies of the texture of the hair, John implies the color and hints about the texture; which again is like that of a “black” man. When I say “black” I mean anyone of the Afro-Hammetic and or Semitic ethnicity whose skin colors varies from black to brown to tan and whose hair ranges from tight, woolly, kinky curls to thick and wavy.

Recall also that sheep can have black or white hair and depending upon the species of sheep (who produces wool) can range from curly to wavy. And ironically the Scripture likens us to sheep (Isa. 53:6).

Notice that an additional description, it is that of skin color; burnished bronze, which is a red or orangy brown color, the color of a Semitic Arab or Jew.

NOAH AND HIS SONS

Knowing we (mankind) originated in Adam and came about through Noah's three sons (Shem, Ham and Japheth), we must ask, "What color was Noah and his sons?"

You may think I'm going to say that Noah was black. Nope. He was white. You may think I am contradicting myself because I just made a solid case for Adam, the first man, being "black." So why do I say he was white? Well, perhaps my verbiage is a bit misleading, to be more specific; I believe Noah was an albino.

And now, my father, hear me; for to my son Lamech a child has been born, who resembles not him; and whose nature is not like the nature of man. His colour is whiter than snow; he is redder than the rose; the hair of his head is whiter than white wool; his eyes are like the rays of the sun; and when he opened them he illuminated the whole house. When also he was taken from the hand of the midwife, His father Lamech feared, and fled to me, believing not that *the child* belonged to him, but that he resembled the angels of heaven. And behold I am come to you, that you might point out to me the truth. – Enoch 105:10-12

The shocked reaction of Noah's father would indicate everyone up to that point was born one color; black. This was "strange", not normal.

Albinism is simply an absence of melanin. This would set things up nicely for what we call today, “ethnic diversity” to come into the world. If Noah, as a white albino man was a new phenomenon, we can assume there was no one else around like him and thus he married a black woman. Who I believe according to the wide range of color and ethnicities in the world today had:

- Hamm – A Black Man – Father of all the African dark skinned, Hammitic Peoples.
- Shem – A Brown Man – Father of all the Semitic (Jew/Hebrew) and Arab Peoples.
- Japheth – A “White” Man – Father of what is called “Caucasian” Peoples.

A tradition according to which both Semites and Hammites were dark skinned and Japhethites being the only fair skinned son of Noah, is found in Rabbinic Hebrew Tradition as well. According to the 8th century Pirke De-Rabbi Eliezer 23 said that Shem was “black and comely” and Hamm was “black as a raven.”

Onnie Kirk in his book “Once We Were Family” said on page 19, “Each of Noah’s sons had a different degree of melanin. Melanin is the chemical factor that determines the color of our skin; Hamm had more than Japheth or Shem.”

Ken Ham, Carl Wieland and Don Batten say virtually the same thing in their book, “One Blood” on pages 68-70.

NIMROD

And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth. He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD. And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar. Out of that land went forth Asshur, and builded Nineveh, and the city Rehoboth, and Calah, And Resen between Nineveh and Calah: the same is a great city. And Mizraim begat Ludim, and Anamim, and Lehabim, and Naphtuhim, And Pathrusim, and Casluhim, (out of whom came Philistim,) and Caphtorim. – Gen. 10:8-14

Nimrod who is a son of Cush, which according to Bible dictionaries means black, was a descendant of Hamm (Gen. 10:6), father of the Canaanite nations and was the first world ruler until divine confounding of the languages at Babel (Gen. 11).

ABRAHAM

Abraham and Sarah were Semitic, likely a deep brown mahogany color. Hagar, Sarah's handmaid whom they acquired in Egypt (Gen. 16:1-3) was likely the daughter of Pharaoh possibly through a secondary wife or a concubine. And Pharaoh, being a descendant of Hamm, was black, thus Hagar was likely black also. Egypt in Hebrew is Mitzrayim and Egyptian in Hebrew means "burnt or black faced." Egypt being one of the 11 Canaanite nations descended from Hamm through Canaan (Gen. 9:18) and were "black" people. Hagar and Abraham produced Ishmael who was likely dark like his mother Hagar and Isaac through Sarah was likely a rich dark brown. Keturah, who Rabbis say is really Hagar converted to Abraham's Faith had many more children after the death of Sarah and these children by in large were likely dark like the original Egyptians.

We first knew the original Egyptians were black people because white archeologists knocked off the broad noses and large full lips of the Egyptian statutes and artifacts in order to hide their clearly Hammitic features. Not wanting the world to know that one of the first and most powerful nations upon the ancient earth were black people. Next we have the bones and mummies and CT scans that forensic scientists have taken and have re-created their faces, shows that prior to the Hyksos, Egyptians were black African people. This apparently was common knowledge back when Family Bibles carried the old wood cut pictures which portray Pharaoh as a black man. Egypt was known in Canaan as “Kemet” which means, “Land of the Blacks.”

THE PATRIARCHS

Jacob and Esau were descendants of Shem and so we can assume they were brown or darker. Esau apparently was more of a mahogany color like Adam because the Bible says he was red (Gen. 25:25). His name in Hebrew has roots in the name Adam because his descendants were eventually called “Edomites” and Edom (same consonants as Adam), means “red.”

Jacob as we know married into his mother’s Semitic side of the family. He married the daughters of Rebecca’s brother Laban. Laban, a name which means, “white.” So it is possible Laban was an albino, like Noah was.

JACOB AND THE 12 TRIBES: SONS OF THE HANDMAIDS

Jacob married Rachel and Leah, Semites, likely dark brown like himself and the handmaids, Bilhah and Zilpah, whose ancestry we cannot definitely determine, but according to Targam Jonathan were daughters of Laban, likely from concubines (other wives) hinted at in Jasher 30:13, which may have been Semitic or Hammitic women, seeing as Laban was living among Canaanites.

And Laban had no sons but only daughters, and his other wives and handmaids were still barren in those days; and these are the names of Laban's daughters which his wife Adinah had borne unto him; the name of the elder was Leah and the name of the younger was Rachel; and Leah was tender-eyed, but Rachel was beautiful and well favored, and Jacob loved her. – Jasher 30:13

This being the case, it is likely the sons of Jacob from Bilhah and Zilpah were darker than the rest of their brothers. Gad and Asher were sons of Zilpah and a portion of Gad we know is black, for we can trace Gad's sons Eri, Areli and Arodi to the Igbo people of Nigeria. Dan and Naphtali were sons of Bilhah and because of the description of Samson who was a Danite (Judges 13:5, 16: 13,19) could have looked like a Rastafarian man today with a long beard and dreadlocks because no razor was to touch his head.

For, lo, thou shalt conceive, and bear a son; and no razor shall come on his head: for the child shall be a Nazarite unto God from the womb: and he shall begin to deliver Israel out of the hand of the Philistines... And Delilah said unto Samson, Hitherto thou hast mocked me, and told me lies: tell me wherewith thou mightest be bound. And he said unto her, If thou weavest the seven locks of my head with the web... And she made him sleep upon her knees; and she called for a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head; and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him. – Judges 13:5, 16:13,19

Beta Israel of Ethiopia claim to be descendants of Dan and they are black people.

- **Simeon** – Simeon whose mother was Leah; some of Simeon's descendants were black because he had children by a Canaanite (black) wife (Exd. 6:15). “And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman: these are the families of Simeon.”
- **Judah** – Whose mother was Leah married a Canaanite woman (Gen. 38:1-11) So many of his sons would be black men.
- **Levi** – Also a son of Leah produced Moses who married Zipporah (who at first confused him with being a black Egyptian man) a daughter of Midian, which would be a son of Abraham through Keturah/Hagar as well as took an Ethiopian (black) woman to wife (Num. 12:1). Also note that the Lemba tribe in Ethiopia have been proven by a DNA test to be Levites and they are black people.

MOSES

As mentioned above, Moses married a black woman and he himself must have been quite dark for we all know how he was raised by Pharaoh's daughter and when he had to flee Egypt for his life Jasher says (Ch. 71-76) that Moses first flees to Cush, a land of black people, and becomes commander of an army, obviously under the guise of passing himself off to be a dark Egyptian, because when he leaves Cush and meets Zipporah he is taken by her to be an Egyptian, not by way he dressed, but by the way he looked; his complexion.

Now when Pharaoh heard this thing, he sought to slay Moses. But Moses fled from the face of Pharaoh, and dwelt in the land of Midian: and he sat down by a well. Now the priest of Midian had seven daughters: and they came and drew water, and filled the troughs to water their father's flock. And the shepherds came and drove them away: but Moses stood up and helped them, and watered their flock. And when they came to Reuel their father, he said, How is it that ye are come so

soon to day? And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock. And he said unto his daughters, And where is he? why is it that ye have left the man? call him, that he may eat bread. And Moses was content to dwell with the man: and he gave Moses Zipporah his daughter. And she bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land. – Exd. 2:15-22

And they said, An Egyptian delivered us out of the hand of the shepherds, and also drew water enough for us, and watered the flock. – Exd. 2:19

Also, with leprosy being white (Num. 12:1, 9-10, Deut. 18:18) Moses had to be dark for leprosy to show up so noticeably and dramatically upon his hand as one of the miraculous signs he was to use to convince the Children of Israel of his mission.

And the LORD said furthermore unto him, Put now thine hand into thy bosom. And he put his hand into his bosom: and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Put thine hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again; and plucked it out of his bosom, and, behold, it was turned again as his other flesh. – Exd. 4:6-7

When Moses sister Miriam spoke against Moses' decision to take on a second wife by marry an Ethiopian (black) women, she didn't protest due to the color of his new wife's skin, but against Moses taking on a second wife seemed to her to smack with pride. Due to her unfounded criticism the LORD struck Moses' sister Miriam (who was a black like her brother) with white leprosy.

And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Ethiopian woman whom he had married: for he had married an Ethiopian woman. And they said, Hath the LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? And the LORD heard it. (Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.) And the LORD spake suddenly unto Moses, and unto Aaron, and unto Miriam, Come out ye three unto the tabernacle of the congregation. And they three came out. And the LORD came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam: and they both came forth. And he said, Hear now my words: If there be

a prophet among you, I the LORD will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream. My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all mine house. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the LORD shall he behold: wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against them; and he departed. And the cloud departed from off the tabernacle; and, behold, Miriam became leprous, white as snow: and Aaron looked upon Miriam, and, behold, she was leprous. – Exd. 12:1-10

JOSEPH: EPHRAIM AND MANASSEH

Joseph, though his mother was the Semite Rachel, nonetheless was dark and became darker by being exposed to the harsh Egyptian sun as a slave and then eventually being appointed by Pharaoh as viceroy of Egypt, to the point that his very own brothers failed to recognize him and took him for a black Egyptian. It wasn't until he revealed himself to his brothers, likely by removing his Egyptian headgear to reveal his wavy Semitic hair, instead of tightly curly Hammitic/Egyptian hair, did they know it was really Joseph. Joseph had Ephraim and Manasseh by a black Egyptian woman (Gen. 41:45), thus Ephraim and Manasseh were black men.

DAVID AND SOLOMON

- **David** – David being from the Tribe of Judah, was said to be “fair and ruddy (I Sam. 17:42) and those ignorant of the Hebrew has said that this means David was a white boy with red hair, rosy cheeks and freckles. Not so. “Fair” just means handsome and ruddy means that his dark skin had a reddish hue to it. This means that David was likely a mahogany color.

David had many wives, but Bathsheba was a black woman. Bath-Sheba = Daughter of Sheba. Sheba was the son of Cush (Gen. 10:7). Thus a son of Hamm, who settled in what is now the Sudan and Ethiopia.

Also note that David was a product of Boaz, a Semite and Ruth a Moabite, a dark Canaanite woman (Ruth 1:4, 22). Moab, originally a son of Lot and his daughter (Gen. 19) was likely Semitic brown, but living in Canaan and eventually becoming enemies of Israel, married into the surrounding black Canaanite peoples, thus making the Moabites as the generations went on, black people.

- **Solomon** – Whose mother was black Bathsheba, had many wives due to political marriages to keep peace in the land. But one of his many wives we know was a black woman, all one has to do is read the Song of Solomon and see that his lover was a black.

I am black, but comely, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, as the tents of Kedar, as the curtains of Solomon. Look not upon me, because I am black, because the sun hath looked upon me: my mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept. – Song of Solomon 1:5-6

Solomon was describes to look like his father.

My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy, and black as a raven. – Song of Solomon 5:10-11

The word “white” is misleading; it means in the Hebrew, “dazzling” and it comes from a word meaning, “glare.” Whit in this verse is used in conjunction with the word ruddy, like in the description of David (I Sam. 17:42).

I sleep, but my heart waketh: it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. – Song of Solomon 5:2

So we can say because “dew” is mentioned in the verses prior that this lover of Solomon describes him as a dark, ruddy, brown man glistening with dew. White, straight haired people’s hair does not collect glistening beaded drops of dew like a black man. Furthermore, in v. 11 it tells us Solomon had bushy, some translations says curly hair that was black as ravens hair. So this could mean Solomon had somewhat of an Afro hair doo. Tradition states he has a son with the Queen of Sheba a black woman from Ethiopia and produced the Menelick dynasty of Ethiopian Kings. Menelick an aberration derived from the Hebrew meaning “From the Kings.”

YESHUA (JESUS)

The color of Messiah has been mentioned before at the beginning of this article, to further drive the point home, let us consider that God told Joseph to take Miriam (Mary) and Yeshua and flee to Egypt (Matt. 2:13-15). Now by this time, due to the Hyksos and other factors Egyptians were not as dark as they were in Moses’ time, not to mention the Egypt of Yeshua’s day had become a cosmopolitan melting pot of peoples, students, traders, soldiers and immigrants of every color, and diverse and large place an olive skinned, burnished bronzed colored Yeshua could easily hide and blend in with the Egyptians.

RAV SHA'UL (APSTOLE PAUL)

Art not thou that Egyptian, which before these days madest an uproar, and leddest out into the wilderness four thousand men that were murderers? But Paul said, I am a man which am a Jew of Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city: and, I beseech thee, suffer me to speak unto the people. – Acts 21:38-39

Rav Sha'ul (Apostle Paul) was dark enough to be confused for an Egyptian.

SO ARE ALL JEWS AND HEBREWS BLACK?

No. It's just that after Babel, Hamm and Shem stayed close together and spread South and East whereas Japheth migrated North then East and West. So for a long time the families of Shem and Hamm intermarried with each other and it wasn't until the Babylonian and Assyrian captivities that Jews and Hebrews then began to meet white Japhethites and then mix with them.

The color wheel of a son of Israel has become diverse, spanning one end of the melanin color scale to the other. Because of early intermarriages with Canaanites, and intermarriage within the Babylonian and Assyrian captivities, the color of a Jew, Hebrew and Israelite varies.

Also recall the Torah law of taking a captive as a wife (Deut. 21) the marrying of converts, the influx of Gentile converts in the 1st century, the rapes during pogroms, holocausts and wars as well as the various migrations of Jewish communities all must be factored in for us to correctly conclude that Israel is

black and white and every color in between. So does it matter? No, after all it is just melanin and nothing more.

So let us all refuse to argue and abandon the tug of war some of us have been caught in and have been cornered and forced to choose sides between Black Hebraism and British Israelitism and admit, confess, acknowledge and proclaim the evidences that has been presented, that Jews, Hebrews and Israelites, sons of Abraham, whatever you want to label it, is and spans the color of the human rainbow.

HAFTARAH: Isa. 42:5-43:10

I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images. – Isa. 42:8

It first must be stated, unlike the African tribes surrounding the Igbo, that the Igbos believe in one, all-powerful, all-knowing, pre-existing, indescribable, unseen, invisible God and Creator who is called Chukwu (The Great God) or Chineke (The God Who Creates). A compound name of Chukwu is Chukwu Abiama which means, “The God of Abraham.” Is this not also the description of YHWH God of the Jews and Christians?

There are images missionaries found in Igboland which have been mistaken for idols, when in actuality they were images of ancestors, such as Eri, etc. But there were no images found designated as Chukwu or Chineke. Igbo Nri preists have confirmed this by first deeming there is no God but Chukwu Abiama and that the images represent the Igbo ancestors because before the white man, there was no

photography and the carved image was the way the Igbo preserved the image and memory of their ancestors.

Some claim that Eri was a minor deity of the Igbo. We see that it is mostly foreigners commenting on the Igbo who misinterpreted Eri as being a god and mostly not the Igbo themselves.

I am not denying that paganism was never a part of the Igbo people. Just like Israel when they entered the Promised Land and failed to expel all the Canaanite nations before them who eventually became their downfall and divine reason for expulsion from the Land through the Assyrian and Babylonian Captivities. Likewise, the further the Igbo, who were descendants of Gad, Judah, Levi and various other Israeli tribes, got from Israel through time and distance the easier it was for some Igbo to fall into forms of paganism. Outsiders who witnessed this, as well as misunderstood the various image of Igbo ancestors that they had seen erroneously wrote and taught that the Igbo had many gods and the Afro-centric pseudo scholars have monopolized on these facts to perpetuate their falsehoods and agenda.

Today in Igbo culture, images are rarely used, because of the advent of photography; photos have now taken the place of carved images in obi's (Igbo shrines). This is similar to the board of names with a light bulb beside each name found in Jewish synagogues today. It is believed that Chukwu heeds those who honor and respect their ancestors who have gone on before to be with Him. Sadly, this has been mistaken by missionaries and anthropologists as idol worship or at best ancestral worship.

Some have mistook the word "Chi," equivalent to the Hebrew word "El" meaning "God," to be one's "personal deity" instead of recognizing that "Chi" means that

Chi/Chukwu is personable to them. It literally means “My God.” So in other words, Chi means that each Igbo person has a personal relationship with Chukwu.

Chi also brings the connotation of “life” or “life force” and is very much like the Hebrew word for life which is Chai.

True, paganism and false gods have been found among the Igbo but only as a result of being influenced by other tribes which were their neighbors. Even this should cause us to connect the Igbo to Israel because why was Israel exiled out of the Land in the first place? Because of their inclination toward idolatry.

I should also mention here what is in Igboland is called the Ikenga which is likened unto the angels on the Ark of the Covenant or one’s own guardian angel. In Judaism, as in Igbo culture, one’s home (obi) is considered a temple, modelled after the Tabernacle or Temple in Jerusalem; it is not uncommon to see replicas of what is found in the Tabernacle/Temple such as Menorahs or even images of angels. Angels were in the Temple, In the Igbo obi there is an image called the Ikenga and it is a type of guardian angel mistaken by outsiders as one’s personal household deity.

The angels in the Jerusalem Temple were made of aromatic cedar overlaid with gold. The Ikenga is usually made from the ogirisi tree, sacred to the Igbo, which is an aromatic evergreen tree. The Ogirisi are also used as grave markers.

SHABBAT SHALOM! IGBO KWENU!

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