

Native American Jews? A Fulfillment of Prophecy?

By HaRav Ariel Bar Tzadok

Copyright © 2010 by Ariel Bar Tzadok. All rights reserved.

www.KosherTorah.com

www.KosherTorah.com

In 1650, Rabbi Menashe Ben Israel, Chief Rabbi of Amsterdam recorded an incredible story in his book Mikveh Yisrael. He relates a conversation that he had with a Jewish Dutch explorer of the Americas. The explorer related how he made contact with the Native Americans but after trying to communicate with them in every possible European language, he had no success. Being a Jew, as was his first mate, these two began to talk amongst themselves in Hebrew. To his utter amazement, upon hearing him speak Hebrew to his first mate, the Native American chief responded in kind and stated, "Shema Yisrael."

This is only one of the very numerous instances that seem not only to suggest, but to actually prove that indeed, somehow, in some way, a number of Biblical Israelites managed to leave the Holy Land, over two thousand years ago and by the Hand of G-d found their way to the shores of what today we call the Americas. It was known in Talmudic times that the world was indeed round and some Sages suggest that there is hints to the existence of what today we call the Americas in some of the oldest Rabbinic literature.

Archeological evidence to establish this claim is rather significant and wide spread. There are numerous archeological artifacts that have been found throughout the Americas, specifically here in the United States that are clearly thousands of years old and written in either Biblical Hebrew or later block (modern) Hebrew script. These include full inscriptions of the Ten Commandments, etched in stone and written in Ktav Ivrit (original pre-Babylonian Biblical Hebrew script). There is even one claim made that an ancient pair of Tefillin have actually been found buried in an Indian burial ground.

In 1775, Englishman James Adair, after living with Native Americans for 40 years, recorded his experiences and published a book about them in London entitled, "The History of the American Indians." Almost his entire work is dedicated to document and prove that the Native American tribes of the central and southern territories, soon to become the U.S.A. were definitively of Jewish origins and to his day maintained a sizable amount of their ancient Israelite heritage. He goes so far as to say that the tribes that he knew worshiped a single God Creator who they called in their language Ye'ho'wah. Adair's book created quite a stir and was widely read.

Even President Thomas Jefferson in 1803 was aware of Adair's book and made mention of it in one of his letters to John Adams. Jefferson quotes Adair's belief that, "all the Indians of American to be descended from the Jews: the same laws, usages; rites and ceremonies, the same sacrifices, priests, prophets, fasts and festivals, almost the same religion, and that they all spoke Hebrew."

The belief of the Native American/Israelite connection proliferated widely in the early 1800s. Even a new religion was founded upon the belief. We have all heard of the Mormons, famously of Utah. But many (non-Mormons) do not know that Mormon founder Joseph Smith was originally from the North East and proclaimed that his "Book of Mormon" (which serves as a Mormon Bible) claims to tell the history of a family of Jewish refugees who fled Jerusalem prior to the Babylonian exile. Smith claims that this history was revealed to him from special writings given to him by an angel. Yet, regardless of Mormon

theology, the Native American/Israelite concept was alive and thriving at that time and many believed it, not needing Joseph Smith to establish a religion based on it.

I will leave it to my readers to explore the evidence for themselves. James Adair's book, [The History of the American Indians](#), written in 1775 is still available today. A copy of the original London publication can be found on Amazon.com. I also recommend to everyone a very interesting DVD also available from Amazon.com entitled [Lost Civilizations of North America](#). This production also claims that DNA testings have shown a positive match between certain Native Americas and inhabitants of Holy Land from over 2000 years ago. One can also do a web search for the [Los Lunas Ten Commandments Stone](#) in New Mexico. One can further see that certain websites presenting themselves as teaching [Cherokee Spiritual Traditions](#) certainly look suspiciously similar to ancient Torah teachings.

In these days, when we believe Biblical prophecies are being fulfilled around us and how in the End of Days many of the "lost tribes" would rejoin the Jewish nation, I would love to pursue the possibility of locating those Native American elders who may still have safeguarded their ancient and sacred histories and who may be able to shed some light on this wondrous revelation.

I once spoke with an elder of a southwestern Native American tribe. He told me how during the Second World War he had served in the armed forces, which brought him for the first time in his life to New York City. While there having time to look around, he related to me how in one set of buildings he recognized what for him were ancient Native holy symbols. He concluded that there must be a lost segment of his "Indian" tribe in New York. He told me the symbol that convinced him of such is what we know as the Menorah and the set of buildings he mentioned were synagogues. The Lost Civilizations of North America does show an ancient Native symbol which, in my opinion could be nothing other than a menorah. So, apparently the Native chief knew something 70 or more years before the producers of the DVD did.

Rabbi Menashe Ben Israel understood the discovery of lost Israelites to be a clear and immanent sign that we are living close to the days of the coming of Mashiah. While I cannot say with certainty that all Native Americans are of Israelite stock, nonetheless the way they suffered under the dominion of European oppressors certainly makes them no different from Jews who lived in European lands for centuries. Both Jews and Native Americans suffered similar oppression under the boot of Europeans. The similarities of our sufferings under the boot of the same oppressors certainly adds to the evidence that not only are these people historically Israel, but they remain spiritual Israel to this day, suffering as all Jews do. Maybe their Jewish identity may be lost to our eyes, but apparently it is not lost to the eyes of Heaven.

I am presently conducting an in-depth study into the ancient spiritual traditions of the Native peoples whose land I presently inhabit. I want to learn everything about them, good or bad, Israelite or otherwise. If there is any real connection between our peoples, if we truly are one, then I believe we should make every effort to discover this, validate it and proceed from there to reach out to our lost family and help reintroduce them to the Boreh Olam, Creator of the Universe (the Great Spirit?) and to reunite them with their lost ancient past and their even better most promising future.

If any of my readers know any leaders among the Native American elders who would be willing to meet with and dialogue with me as an Orthodox Rabbi, I would love the opportunity to hold such a meeting and see where we can build common foundations and from there, see what Heaven has in mind.

I do believe we are ever so close to the dawn of a new era in human history where our old idols and self-deceptions will finally be broken forever. Maybe by finding lost family and reuniting with them, we can move this great process along. At least, that is my hope.