Who are the "Ashkenazim" ?

Kanook – Tlingit Nation
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Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu is of Ashkenazim Descent

Common definition tells us they are Ashkenazi Jews, or Ashkenazic Jews and that they descended from the "medieval" Jewish communities along the Rhine in Germany and the Alsace in the south to the Rhineland in the north – whereas Ashkenaz is the medieval Hebrew name for the region and thus for Germany. But walking back a bit further one asks where did they originate?

Albeit history is a little vague on their exact origins, it has become common knowledge they descended from the Khazars, again another race of people who have become hidden behind the curtain of time.

Modern day scholars associate the Khazars with the "Uyghurs" or "Tiele" confederation tribe called the He'san in Chinese sources from the 7th-century – whereas the Khazar language appears to have been a sub of the Oghur languages a separate branch of the Turkic language family, yet similar to that spoken by the early Bulgars and corresponding to the modern day Chuvash dialects. Some scholars have taken an additional step claiming that the Khazars were a tribal union of the Chinese Uyghurs living in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China, and the Sabir that appear to have been a Turkic people of Hunnic origin whereas the name Sabir is believed linked to the people of Siberia and even the far Eastern Hsien-pi, and some other Altaic Turkic people. This particular association to the Ashkenazi Jews is a primary belief of Russian Scholars –

Whereas the "Hunnish origin" is demonstrated by the rise of the Khazars after the fall of the Attila Empire in 454, albeit the Khazar and consequently the Ashkenazim nation was a combination of people from various ethnic backgrounds, as steppe nations traditionally absorbed those they conquered – keep in mind that their name Khazar in the Turkic language means to "wander, flee". Armenian history has references to the Khazars as early as the late 2nd-century, where most scholars associate these references to Sarmatians or Scythians. Ancient scholar

Priscus tells us that one of the nations in the Hunish confederacy was called the "Akatziroi", and relates that they were the early proto-Khazars.

Others such as Dmitri Vasilyev of the Astrakhan State University believe that the Khazars moved to the Pontic steppe region only in the late 500s, having moved from the region that became recognized after the exploits of Alexander the Great who had extended the Greek culture into the region with his conquests in the 4th-Century-BC, Transoxiana. Vasilyev maintains a great majority of Khazar populations remained behind in Transoxiana under the Pecheneg, which were made up of Hungarian, Croatian, Greek and Serbian influence and were classified as an overall semi-nomadic Turkic people of the Central Asian steppes – speaking the Pecheneg language which belonged to the Turkic language family, and they also remained under the Oghuz occupation of the region, the Oghuz again were a historical nomadic confederation in Central Asia also being a group of Turkic people who spoke the southwestern branch of the Turkic language. It was in the 9th-century that the Oghuz Turks from the Aral steppes drove the Pecheneg Turks of the Emba region and the River Ural towards the west – whereas in the 10th-century they inhabited the steppe of the rivers Sari-su, Turgai and Emba to the north of Lake Balkash of modern day Kazakhstan – it was a clan of this nation, the Seljuks that embraced Islam and in the 11th-century then entered Persia (Iran) and founded the Great Seljuk Empire.

Digging back a bit further, if you're one who believes in the chronology of the Bible or Hebrew Torah, they link to Noah was through his son Japheth, in some traditions either the oldest or youngest son of Noah – depending on how you want to translate the Hebrew word *ha-gadol*, regardless Japheth is, again if you believe in the genealogies of Genesis, considered the father of the Europeans, as established in Genesis 10:5, which states that the sons of Japheth moved to the "isles of the Gentiles", which is commonly believed to be the Greek isles.

Japheth's oldest son is said to be Gomer, with the people associated with him the Gomerites located in Anatolia Galatia (Turkish Highlands-Central Turkey), "For Gomer founded those whom the Greeks now call Galatians, but were then called Gomerites", whereas Galatia literally takes its name from the ancient Celts who settled there.

The first son of Gomer (in the good book) is Ashkenaz, who is considered to be the father of the Sycthians, Sarmatians and other Indo-Aryans, this accounted for in the use of the name "Ashkuz" (Saka) for the Scythians in Assyrian Akkadian inscriptions, whereas it 'may' also refer to the Phrygians, who according to Homer's Iliad settled around Lake Ascania in the Bursa Province in Modern Day Turkey.

"Ashkenaz" is believed to the ancestor of the Germanic, Scandinavian and Slavic people, more than likely due to the similarity of the names "Gomer" and "German", and the similarity of

"Ashkenaz" to the name "Ask" the first human male in Norse mythology, keep in mind that the "Medieval Hebrew" name for Germany is Ashkenaz. Thereby association and records it can be noted that "Ashkenazi Jews" are descended from the medieval Jewish communities of the Rhineland.

Now I understand that some of you, like my brother Hank will jump up and down screaming that they originally were part of Noah's clan and have a God given right to Israel, but then again weren't we all?

Before the ancestors of Ashkenazi, the Khazars, converted to Judaism they were a group that practiced Turkic Shamanism, their focal point being the sky God Tengri, albeit they were also heavily influenced by Confucian practices from China, notably that of the Mandate of Heaven – whereas the Ashina clan (who mostly far east Asian) who were considered to the the chosen of Tengri and the kaghan (big-boss shaman) was the incarnation of the favor the sky-god bestowed on the Turks, if for some reason he failed in his duty's this meant he had lost favor and was executed. This might be one of the reasons the subsequent leaders pushed for another religion, whereas a leader you ran the risk of getting your head-lopped off if you made a screwed up decision. They worshipped more that one deities, all subordinate to Tengri – such as the fertility goddess Umay, Kuara, a thunder god and "Erlik" the god of death.

Although it is not entirely clear, either being during the last decades of the 8th-century of the early 9th-century the Khaza royalty and nobility converted t Judaism and later part of the general population followed – albeit the percentage of those who swung away from Turkic Shamanism is debated even today.

The majority of scholars today suggest that the Khazar Empire, being between two major religions the Muslims to the east and the Christians to the west converted to the religion of Moses to maintain a degree of neutrality – whereas both religions recognized Judaism as one that deserved a certain amount of respect – and put up with the conversion of the nation between them.

Albeit the exact date is foggy, recently discovered coins suggests that Judaism was the established state religion by 830AD, although *St Cyril* who visted Khazaria in 861AD did not identify the Khazars as Jews, even though the shaman of that period "Zachariah" had a biblical Hebrew name. Some medieval sources provide the name of the "rabbi" who oversaw the conversion of the Khazars as Isaac Sangari or Yitzhak ha-Sangari.

The 1st Jewish Khazar king was "Bulan", albeit some sources maintain it was a later king, "Obadiah", who invited in three religions (Islam, Christianity and Judaism) choosing the later as the State Religion, albeit in contemporary Karaite Judaism or Karaism the Khazar Jews are

referred to as “bastards” thereby making it highly unlikely that the Khazars adopted the extreme movement of Karaite Judaism which is different than Rabbinic Judaism.

In earlier times they had close relations with the Jews of the Levant and Persia, whereas the Persian Jews hoped that the Khazars “might” succeed in conquering the Islamic Caliphate, where it is referenced in Isaiah 48:14 “The Lord hath loved him”, this some say refers to the Khazars who will go and destroy “Babel” – boy, I’m telling you give a religious scholar the ‘good book’ and 1000s of interpretations spring forth like water from a new well.

According to Khazar Correspondence, which was an exchange of letters in the 950s and 960s between Hasdai ibn Shaprut, the foreign secretary of the Caliph of Cordoba and Joseph Khagan of the Khazarr, it appears that two Spanish Jews, “Judah ben Meir ben Nathan” and “Joseph Gagris” settled in the land of the Khazars, and that Isaac ben Abraham also moved to Khazaria.

According to traditional conservative and orthodox philosophies a person can “only” be considered a Jew if his or her mother was from a matrilineal descent from a female believed to be present at Mt Sinai when Moses came down with the Ten Commandments – (or and this is a big or) they are of the descent from a female who was “converted” to Judaism before the birth of her children and another (or) he/she has converted to Judaism. This means that a person can be Ashkenzai and not be a Jew by “some” within the Jewish communities, making the term “Ashkenazi” more applicable as a broad ethnicity which evolved from the practice of Judaism in Europe.

Although in the 11th century, they comprised only 3 percent of the world's Jewish population, at their peak in 1931, Ashkenazi Jews accounted for 92 percent of the world's Jews. Today they make up approximately 80 percent of Jews worldwide. Most Jewish communities with extended histories in Europe are Ashkenazim, with the exception of those associated with the Mediterranean region. The majority of the Jews who migrated from Europe to other continents in the past two centuries are Ashkenazim, Eastern Ashkenazim in particular. This is especially true in the United States, where most of the 5.3 million American Jewish population is Ashkenazi, representing the world's single largest concentration of Ashkenazim.

Of note – popular opinion is that Ashkenazic Jews are the descendants of the “non-Semitic” converted Khazars – a view held by a majority of scholars and religious leaders across the Jewish world.

Prominent Ashkenazic Jews:

Golda Meir, born Golda Mabovitch, Albert Einstein, Leonard Bernstein, George Gershwin, Sigmund Freud, and Elijah ben Shlomo Zalman (Ancestor of **Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu)**