

**WHY IS THE IQ
OF ASHKENAZI JEWS
SO HIGH?**

Twenty Possible Explanations

by

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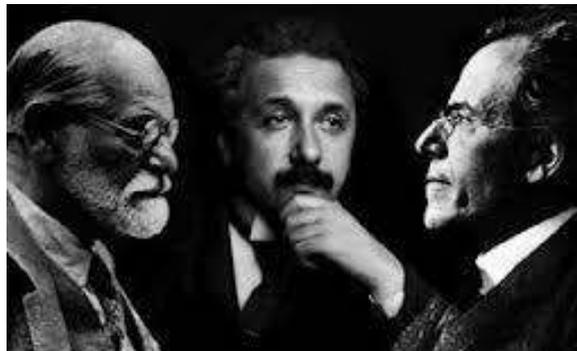
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Ashkenazi Jews are smart. Shockingly brilliant, in general. Impressive in brain power. How did they get that way?

Ashkenazi Jews, aka Ashkenazim, are the descendants of Jews from medieval Alsace and the Rhine Valley, and later, from throughout Eastern Europe. Originally, of course, they were from Israel. Genetic research from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine suggests that the Ashkenazi bloodline branched away from other Jewish groups there 2,500 years ago, and that 40% of them are descended from only four Jewish mothers. Approximately 80% of the Jews in the world today are Ashkenazim, with the remainder primarily Sephardic.



Researchers who study the Ashkenazim agree that the children of Abraham are on top of the IQ chart. Steven Pinker – who lectured on “Jews, Genes, and Intelligence” in 2007 - says “their average IQ has been measured at 108-115.” Richard Lynn, author of “The Intelligence of American Jews” in 2004, says it is “only” a half-standard higher: 107.5. Henry Harpending, Jason Hardy, and Gregory Cochran, University of Utah authors of the 2005 research report, “Natural History of Ashkenazi Intelligence,” state that their subjects, “score .75 to 1.0 standard deviations above the general

European average, corresponding to an IQ of 112-115.” Charles Murray, in his 2007 essay “Jewish Genius,” says “their mean is somewhere in the range of 107-115, with 110 being a plausible compromise.”

A Jewish average IQ of 115 is 8 points higher than the generally accepted IQ of their closest rivals—Northeast Asians—and approximately 40% higher than the global average IQ of 79.1 calculated by Richard Lynn and Tatu Vanhanen in *IQ and Global Inequity*.

Plus, contemplate this astounding tidbit: Ashkenazi “visual-spatial” IQ scores are only mediocre; in one study their median in this category was a below-average 98. They surmount this liability by logging astronomic figures in “verbal IQ”, which includes verbal reasoning, comprehension, working memory and mathematical skill; a 1958 survey of yeshiva students discovered a median verbal IQ of 125.6.

What does it mean that Ashkenazim have a high IQ, in terms of producing “geniuses”? With their population so small - a mere 0.25 of the world total - does it make any serious difference? The answer is YES. A “bell curve” is used to illustrate IQ percentile in a specific group – in a “general population” where IQ average is 100 the curve assumes these proportions:

Less than 70 IQ - 2.5%
70-85 IQ - 12.5%
86-100 IQ - 35%
101-115 IQ – 35%
116-130 IQ – 12.5%
Greater than 130 IQ – 2.5%

Applying the same bell curve for Ashkenazim, but with a 17-point upward lift in median IQ (using the *From Chance To Choice* digit) produces the IQ upgrade below:

Less than 87 IQ – 2.5%
88-102 IQ – 12.5%
103-117 IQ – 35%
118-132 IQ – 35%
133-148 IQ – 12.5%
Greater than 148 IQ – 2.5%

This shifting upward of the bell curve by more than a standard deviation (15 points) means that more than five times as many Ashkenazim are eligible for Mensa (minimum 130 IQ) and more than five times as many have the average IQ of an Ivy League graduate.

In reality, Ashkenazim are enrolled in the Ivies by a proportion *ten times greater than their numbers*; for example they represent 30% of Yale students, 27% of Harvard, 23% of Brown, 32% of Columbia, and 31% of Pennsylvania.

This suggests that either the “bell’s curve” is lifted for the Ashkenazi a bit longer at the high end or there are additional factors that enhance their ability to succeed. Regarding the first possibility, Charles Murray notes that “the proportion of Jews with IQs of 140 or higher is somewhere around six times the proportion of everyone else.” Harpending, Hardy and Cochran sport roughly the same equation; “4 out of every 1,000 Northern European is 140+ IQ, but 23 out of every 1,000 Jew is 140+.” Murray also relays a report from sky-high up in the genius range, when he notes that a 1954 survey of New York public school children with 170+ IQs revealed that 24 of the 28 were... Jewish.

Now that I’ve established that Ashkenazi have superlative IQ scores, let’s observe what they’ve accomplished with their highly functional brains.

In the 19th century, Mark Twain noted that:

[The Jews] are peculiarly and conspicuously the world’s intellectual aristocracy... [Jewish] contributions to the world’s list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and

abstruse learning are way out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvelous fight in this world... and has done it with his hands tied behind him.

Twain's observation is not dated. Ashkenazi Jews have continued to mentally out-compete other demographics since his statement, often suffering horrendous consequences for their toil. Here is a brief list of Ashkenazi accomplishments in the last 90 years.

Nobel Prizes: Since 1950, 29% of the awards have gone to Ashkenazim, even though they represent only a small fraction of humanity. Ashkenazi achievement in this arena is 117 times greater than their population. This pace isn't slowing down; it is accelerating. In the 21st century, they've received 32% of the total, and in 2011, five of the thirteen Nobel Prize winners were Jewish – 38.5%.

Hungary in the 1930s: Ashkenazim were 6% of the population, but they comprised 55.7% of physicians, 49.2% of attorneys, 30.4% of engineers, and 59.4% of bank officers; plus, they owned 49.4% of the metallurgy industry, 41.6% of machine manufacturing, 72.8% of clothing manufacturing, and, as housing owners, they received 45.1% of Budapest rental income. Jews were similarly successful in nearby nations, like Poland and Germany.

“Significant Figures”: In “Jewish Genius” by Charles Murray, the author tallies up important contributing individuals in a variety of vocations, noting how immensely over-represented Jews are compared to what could be expected due to their small population. His conclusion in various categories is: Biology – “significant” Jews appear 5 times greater their population, Chemistry 6X, Physics 9X, Literature 4X, Music 5X, Visual Arts 5X, Math 12X, Philosophy 14X.2

USA (today): Ashkenazi Jews comprise 2.2% of the USA population, but they represent 30% of faculty at elite colleges, 21% of Ivy League students, and 25% of the Turing Award winners. Plus, “Jews have made up 50% of the top two hundred intellectuals... 40% of partners in the leading law firms in New York and Washington... 59% of the directors, writers, and producers of the fifty top-grossing motion pictures...”

Israel: In 1922 this swamp-and-desert land had an impoverished population of 752,000 inhabitants. Today there are 7,746,000 residents, with a large Ashkenazi population (3 million, and 60% of the workforce) that has elevated it into a high-tech entrepreneurial nation with the highest per capita income in the region. Israel rates 1st *in the world* in graduate degrees, 1st in museums, 1st in home computers, and 1st in publishing scientific papers.

Personally, I find the Nobel Prize statistic the most amazing. Consider this: if everybody on the planet was an Ashkenazi Jew, would the result be 117 times more Nobel Prize-winning caliber individuals, with 117 times as many spectacular achievements, per annum? INSTANT SINGULARITY! Without any help from AI...

(Sephardic Jewish achievement is represented in many of the categories above, especially in Nobel Prize statistics. When this article was originally published - in a shorter version, on August 7, 2011 by the Institute for Ethics in Emerging Technology (ieet.org) – Sephardic Jews expressed some perturbation that they were omitted from the essay. I'd like to acknowledge the immense contribution of Sephardic Jews with this all-too-brief list of notables from their lineage:

Elias Canetti (Nobel Prize in Literature, 1981), Tobias Michael Carel Asser (Nobel Peace Prize, 1911), Rene Cassin (Nobel Peace Prize, 1968), Franco Modigliani (Nobel Prize in Economics, 1985), Francois Jacob (Nobel Prize in Medicine/Physiology, 1965), Salvador Luria (Nobel Prize in Medicine/Physiology, 1969), Baruj Benacerraf (Nobel Prize in Medicine/Physiology, 1980), Rita Levi-Montalcini (Nobel Prize in Medicine/Physiology, 1986), Emilio Segre (Nobel Prize in Physics, 1959), Claude Cohen-Tannoudj (Nobel Prize in Physics, 1997), plus philosopher Jacques Derrida, economist/philanthropist Bernard Baruch, painter Amedeo Modigliani, and Benjamin Disraeli, the British Prime Minister.

In the medieval era, Sephardic achievements were also quite significant. In George Sarton's *Introduction to the History of Science*, the author notes that 95 out of 626 scientists in the world from 1150-1300 were Sephardic Jews -15% - far exceeding their population proportion.

However, when Sephardic IQ is presently recorded, the sums are no higher than the northern European average, and definitively not as elevated as Ashkenazi.)

Let's proceed. With the facts I've laid out, only the most obtuse reader can resist my pronouncement that Ashkenazi Jews are, on average, *extraordinarily* intelligent. I'm not asserting Ashkenazi cognitive specialness because I'm Philo-Semitic, or Zionist, or pro-Israeli. I'm pointing it out because it is irrefutably true.

That said, the question that my essay seeks to unravel is... *Why?* Why is the IQ of Ashkenazi Jews so high? Is the reason due to their genetics, environment, culture, education, or a unique combination of multiple factors?

In my initial publication of this essay, I provided eight reasons for high Ashkenazi IQ. But then, I received a flurry of email suggestions (many from professors) providing me with additional information. Twenty theories are now listed in this expanded essay, and I've attempted to give my sources the credit they deserve, even though – in several instances - I don't have their actual names, just their Internet chat-monikers. Here's my new list – many related to each other - presented in roughly chronological order:

Babylonian Eugenics – In 586 B.C.E., Jerusalem was totally destroyed by the Babylonians, led by their monarch Nebuchadnezzar, who “carried into exile... all the [Jewish] officers and fighting men, and all the craftsmen and artisans... only the poorest people of the land were left.” (2Kings 24:10-14) *The Indestructible Jews*, by Max Dimont, defines the deported people as “the flower of Judah's aristocracy and intellectuals.”

The exiled Jews of this first Diaspora became highly successful in Babylon. Dimont claims, “In the libraries of Babylon, intellectual Jews found a new world of new ideas. Within five decades, exiled Jews bobbed to the surface of the top echelons on Babylonian society, in business enterprises, in the scholastic world, in court circles. They became leaders in commerce, men of learning, advisors to kings.”

In 538 B.C.E., the Persian king Cyrus the Great granted Jews permission to return to their homeland. Wealthy Jews - who had established successful trade routes and businesses in Babylon - financed zealous returnees who wanted to re-settle Judah. Initial attempts failed, but eventually, 1,760 settlers led by the prophet Ezra and the governor Nehemiah rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem and resurrected the nation. These “Babylonian” Jews returning to Israel discovered that their poorer brethren that were left behind a half-century earlier had slipped away via assimilation, vanishing into neighboring pagan creeds. Cyril Darlington, in his *The Evolution of Man and Society*, suggests that the temporary separation of the Jewish elite, and permanent removal of the uneducated and unskilled, provided a genetic intellectual boost to the creed.

The returning Jews also instituted two customs that enhanced the mental solidity of their culture's future. A ban on intermarriage with Gentiles was enforced, and the first five books of Moses were canonized, as the Torah.

People of the Difficult Book: The Torah (the first five books of the Jewish Bible) and the Talmud (recordings of rabbinic discussions) are intellectually complex and sophisticated. Practitioners of Judaism are required to learn and study the extensive, mentally rigorous laws. Thematic content of the scriptural passages is not simplistic or literal, it is, conversely, designed for comprehension on multiple, abstract, metaphorical levels. Blind faith and slavish devotion, encouraged by other faiths, is not conducive to Judaism. Instead, worship in the ancient monotheism demands significant literacy skills due to the cognitive demands of the texts, with tradition maintaining that understanding the Talmud requires “study of seven hours a day for seven years.” Charles Murray notes that, “no other religion made so many demands upon the whole body of its believers,” with the subsequent analysis that, “Judaism evolved in such a way that to be a good Jew meant that a man had to be smart.”

Healthy Hygiene & Diet: Professor Sam Lehman-Wilzig of Bar-Ilan University in Israel provided me with this theory. His suggestion is based on the fact that - due to their customary practices - the Jews probably enjoyed better hygiene than Gentiles. He points to the Jewish washing of hands before every meal, the men bathing at least once a week in the “mikveh” (a purification bathhouse) and the

women bathing at least once a month, after their menstruation was over. He also notes the restriction on pork prevented Jews from contracting trichinosis. (Famous casualties of this parasitic disease include Gautama Buddha and Wolfgang Mozart). With lower disease rates, Jewish bodies would not have suffered as much as Gentiles and this would have improved their mental capacities.

This notion has been repeated elsewhere. In 1953, research by Johns Hopkins University pharmacologist David I. Macht surmised that all the dozens of meat items banned by Jewish dietary laws in *Deuteronomy* and *Leviticus* were, in fact, more toxic than the *kosher* flesh that was permitted. Additionally, in the recent book *Survival of the Sickest*, author Sharon Moalem suggests that Jews removing leaven from their homes during Passover helped keep out the rats that spread bubonic plague in the 13th century. Last but not least, wealthy Ashkenazi Jews dwelling in larger houses in eastern Europe would have survived epidemics easier because they didn't suffer the same high multiple infection rate that occurred in smaller homes with greater crowding.

Extensive correlation between high IQ, healthy diet, infectious diseases, sanitation, and home crowding, is examined via research studies in later chapters of this book, particularly in "Early Years."

Education Emphasized, Way Back in B.C. – Jeremiah Unterman of Jerusalem informed me that the Torah instructs every Jewish father to teach the Torah to his children, and Marisa Landau notes on a *futurepundit.com* 6/4/05 discussion that it's forbidden by the Jewish religion to keep child illiterate. Additionally, Landau reports that Jewish women learned to read and write, a phenomenon that was unique in the ancient world. Landau also mentions that it has long been a custom among Jews to provide a full pension - for up to 10 years – to an intelligent son-in-law who wishes to entirely devote himself to study. The Jews, it seems, invented the notion of "scholarships."

In the medieval era, the French monk, Peter Abelard (1079-1142) penned this about Jewish education: "A Jew, however poor, even if he had ten sons, would get them all to letters, not for gain as the Christians do, but for understanding of God's law. And not only for his sons, but his daughters."

Mandatory Schools For Males - In 64 A.D., the high priest Joshua ben Gamla issued and implemented an ordinance mandating schools for all boys, beginning at age 6. Within 100 years, Jews had established universal male literacy and numeracy, the first ethnicity in history to achieve this.

The progressive, demanding edict created a huge demographic shift. The high, oft-times prohibitive cost of educating children in the subsistence farming economy of the 2nd to 6th centuries prompted numerous Jews to voluntarily convert to Christianity, leading to a decline in Jewish population from 4.5 million to 1.2 million.

Natural "eugenics" favored two groups in this situation: 1) the sons of wealthier, ostensibly more intelligent Jews, who could provide greater funding for the schools that maintained their offspring's membership as Jews, and, 2) the smartest boys who could quickly learn reading, writing and arithmetic at a pace at which they could afford to "stay Jewish."

Who was left out? Removed from the gene pool? Answer: the poorer, uneducated Jews, and/or those with the lowest IQ.

Urban Upgrade – 80-90% of Jews were farmers in 1 AD. But only 10-20% remained in agriculture by 1000 A.D. The education required by Joshua ben Gamla's edict delivered verbal and math skills to Jewish boys, enabling them to move out of subsistence rural life into highly-skilled urban professions, involving sales, trade, and financial transactions.

Moving from a pastoral environment into cities implements an IQ boost, due to urbanism's increased complexity, literacy, and technology. A Hanoi National University study in 2006 showed a whopping 19.4 IQ difference between city and country students. A 1970 survey in Greece recorded a difference of 10-13 points. Other studies note smaller discrepancies of only 2-6 points, but unanimously, urban residents always score higher, and Jews are one of the world's longest-urbanized ethnicities.

Dialectic and Rational Thought – Dr. Sam Lehman-Wilzig informed me that one of the noteworthy approaches to Jewish learning is "dialectic." The Talmud itself is not a "law code" but instead, a huge

compendium of ARGUMENTS. Jews are encouraged to see different perspectives of an issue, and they're taught to question everything, including the Law, the Rabbi's logic, and one's own belief system. Rabbis developed argumentative principles, an entire system of questioning that the Jews have utilized for 2,000 years in both religious and secular debates.

Dialectic was not a 'Jewish' invention: it was a learning technique that Jews borrowed and adapted from Greek philosophy; the synthesis is a 'Socratic-Jewish methodology.' Traces of the Greek influence are evident in the Passover Seder where the Jewish father reclines on a pillow (similar to the Greeks) while the youngest Jewish child asks Four Questions. This method of learning was unique during the Middle Ages, compared to Catholic Europe's 'authoritative' traditions.

Dr. Sanford Aranoff, Professor of Science and Mathematics at Rider University, conveyed to me a similar message. In his opinion, Judaism is based on principles of rational thought. (Rational thinking begins with clearly stated principles, continues with logical deductions, and then examines empirical evidence to possibly modify the principles.)

The analytic, strategic skills developed in both Jewish dialectic and critical thinking are an important component of IQ tests, and they're essential in legal, academic, science, and engineering careers.

Clever Clerics Propagate: A major difference between Catholicism and Judaism is that priests have been celibate since the 4th century Council of Carthage decreed that they abstain from conjugal relations, whereas Jewish rabbis have always been encouraged to marry and multiply. In the Middle Age this resulted in massive IQ depression for Catholics, because their brightest, academically gifted boys were usually locked up in seminaries that wasted their gene pool. Meanwhile... sage, scholastic Jewish rabbis were marrying smart women and creating large, clever families. Three tomes that examine this phenomenon are Robert Novick's *Anarchy, State and Utopia*, Ernst Vandenberg's *The Jewish Mystique*, and Paul Johnson's *A History of the Jews*.

Breeding for Brains:

"Our Rabbis teach, Let a man sell all that he has and marry the daughter of a learned man. If he cannot find the daughter of a learned man, let him marry the daughter of one of the great men of his day. If he does not find such a one, let him marry the daughter of one of the heads of the congregation, or, failing this, the daughter of a charity collector, or even the daughter of a schoolmaster; but let him not marry the daughter of an illiterate man, for the unlearned are an abomination, as also their wives and their daughters." P'sachim, fol. 49, col. 2.

Judaic texts like the one above emphasize repeatedly that knowledge and intelligence are supreme virtues, with ignorance the grossest liability. Following this dictum, the Jews enhanced their gene pool for smartness. In *A History of the Jews*, author Paul Johnson notes that, "among the Jews the most intelligent people have always been very valued and sought after as husbands, so they procreate and spread their good genes." Charles Murray observed another matchmaking tendency, when he notes that "by marrying the children of scholars to the children of successful merchants, Jews were in effect joining those selected for abstract reasoning ability with those selected for practical intelligence."

Meanwhile, Catholics were marrying for "class" reasons, angling for blue-blood aristocrat gains that had no link to intelligence. Physical strength and valor was also desired, via brave knights on the battlefield - this exaltation of brawn over brains likewise did nothing to advance that religion's collective IQ.

Trading Tongues: Ashkenazi merchants plied their wares over a vast area, originally to Islamic regions, but later internationally - from rubber in Brazil to silk in China. To prosper in the exchange, they memorized multiple languages. The stateless tribe needed diverse fluency anyway, to communicate in adopted lands with their neighbors that spoke German, Polish, Latvian, Lithuanian, Hungarian, Russian, Ukrainian, French, Dutch, etc.

The Ashkenazi developed a "fusion" tongue: Yiddish (German, Hebrew, Aramaic, plus other Slavic languages and a touch of Romance). At its height - before World War II - Yiddish was spoken by 13 million. The polyglot language produced exemplary culture in literature, theater, and film.

Neurologists today recognize that multiple language learning enhances memory, mental flexibility, problem solving, abstract thinking, and creative hypothesis formulation. Explanations of the benefits abound; I recommend listening to the video, “Bilingualism Will Supercharge Your Baby’s Brain.”

Squeezed Into Brilliance: Jews in Europe were officially excluded from “common” occupations such as agriculture from 800-1700 A.D. Indeed, they were usually not allowed to own land. The restrictions forced Ashkenazim for 900 years into urban vocations that were cognitively more demanding, such as trade, bookkeeping, commerce, sales, and investment. The frequent Christian prohibition against charging of interest in money lending - prohibited as “usury” – assisted in opening up financial banking occupations for Jews. Historical records reveal that 80% of the Jews in Roussillon, southern France, in 1270 were money-lenders.

Later, after they were evicted from Western Europe, Ashkenazim were welcomed in Poland as urban investors and initiators of trade who could help modernize the nation. They were also in great demand in middle management positions because they had mathematic and business administration skills.

Ashkenazim who weren’t mathematically and verbally adept enough to succeed in these “white collar” jobs drifted away from Judaism—low IQs were pushed out. Conversely, the most successful merchants and number crunchers raised larger families, passing on an increasing percentage of algebraic brains.

Winnowed By Persecution: The most intelligent and/or wealthy Ashkenazim were better equipped to escape Inquisitions, pogroms, persecutions, holocausts, and other genocidal threats because they: 1) could afford to emigrate; 2) could predict the need to do so; and 3) had social and economic opportunities in the nations they fled to. Poorer, less connected, and less astute Ashkenazi ranks thus were inexorably depleted.

The repeated annihilation, expulsion, and flight of the Jewish people is universally known. The first Diaspora to Babylonia has already been mentioned. A second Diaspora is popularly regarded as a series of dispersals from Israel after the failure of Jewish revolts against the Roman Empire from 70 C.E. – 135 C.E. In 629 C.E., King Dagobert of the Franks ordered the Jews to convert, leave his land, or face execution. The First Crusade, 1096-1099 C.E., cruelly slaughtered thousands of Ashkenazi, an estimated 25%. Jews were expelled from England in 1290, France in 1394 and parts of Germany in the 15th century. Pogroms in the Russian Empire in the 19th and early 20th century murdered substantial numbers of Jews, and the Holocaust, instigated by Adolf Hitler, led to the genocide of approximately six million, primarily Ashkenazi.

Whenever and wherever persecution began, Jews were more likely to escape if they could pay their way out, or were wealthy enough to have horses, carriages, employees as guards, rich relatives to flee to, and friends in “high places.” High IQ has frequently been correlated with economic success.

Sick Genius: Ashkenazim are prey to about nineteen debilitating genetic diseases, and it’s been surmised that several of them might have cognitive “side effects” that can enhance intelligence. Many of the disorders can kill or severely weaken those who have two copies of the gene, but if you inherit just one, you get a “heterozygote advantage” that can include neuron growth promotion and accelerated interconnection of brain cells. For example, having just one of the allele in Tay-Sachs and Niemann-Pick – GM2ganglioside - could moderately increase dentrite growth.

Another Ashkenazi ailment is Gaucher’s disease, which seems to promote axonal growth and branching. A survey discovered that out of 255 employed patients of Gaucher’s disease at Shaare Zedek Medical Centre in Jerusalem, were in occupations that require IQs over 120, and 15% were scientists. Another survey of Ashkenazim with Torsion Dystomia revealed an average IQ of 121.

I interviewed Gregory Cochran via email; he’s the University of Utah co-author of the 2005 research report, “Natural History of Ashkenazi Intelligence.” In his words, “any IQ boost due to Gaucher’s [would be] a good deal less than 10-15 points [but] It may be that big for Torsion Dystonia: everyone who has treated them marvels at how sharp they are... [However] only a fraction [of Ashkenazi IQ elevation] is due to particular mutations like Gaucher, in our opinion.” In another interview, Cochran pinpointed the fractions as, “One in two thousand Ashkenazi, at most, carry a Tay-Sachs mutation and a Gaucher mutation, the two most common.”

Ashkenazim are not an isolated ethnicity, after residing with Eastern European neighbors for over a millennium. While many observers suggest that they're 30% European, an Emory University study concluded that researchers "were able to estimate that between 35 and 55 percent of the modern Ashkenazi genome comes from European descent."

Positive Thinking – Aubrey Max Sandman, PhD, an electrical engineer in London, sent me an email asserting that positive attitude is what counts, not genetics. His opinion is that non-Jews do not work as hard as Jews, to attain their full potential.

In actuality, "positive thinking" actually does elevate IQ. 2011 research at Michigan State University revealed that a subject's "mind set" makes a difference in intelligence because their attitude determines if they react productively, or self-destructively, to their mistakes. The report will soon be published, hopefully with specific data charting IQ gains, in an upcoming issue of *Psychological Science*.

Check Mate: Chess historically has been a highly favored activity among Ashkenazim; a 1905 magazine described it as the "Jewish National Game." Almost 50% of Grandmasters are Ashkenazi. The visual, organizational, and strategic skills required for chess build up the *precuneus* in the *superior parietal lobe*, and the *caudate nucleus*, a part of the *basal ganglia* in the *subcortical* region. Admittedly, these benefits are not hereditary, but youngsters who practice the game can elevate their memory storage, strategic planning, and IQ.

Additional information about the benefits of chess can be found in my later chapter, "School Years."

Melodic Minds: Music has been revered in Jewish religious traditions for 3,000 years. Klezmer "reached a very high level of sophistication and ornamentation," according to the Jewish Music Institute, and Ashkenazi composers and instrumentalists contribute hugely to Western classical music (one history site declares, "The Jews 'Own' the Violin"). Have centuries of practice paid off? Researchers today believe music training optimizes neuron development and improves brain function in math, analysis, memory, creativity, stress management, concentration, motivation, and science.

Additional information about the benefits of musical training can be found in the following chapters: "Early Years" and "School Years."

Comfortable Supportive Families, With High Expectations: Success promotes success, on the neurological level. Victory provides a rush of *dopamine*, a neurotransmitter that activates motivation for further accomplishments. Ashkenazi children generally understand they are capable of high achievement, and they're urged to develop their skills for contribution to humanity.

Is stern discipline necessary to produce these results? Ashkenazim have long discouraged spanking of their children; strong familial ties, incessant encouragement, and hard focused work at excellent institutions, seems to be sufficient.

Available income that allows offspring to study and develop intellectually is also important; wealth also permits access to elite schools. Surveys indicate that American Jews earn about twice the income of non-Jews, plus they have 2.5 times more capital assets. The result? The average American Jew receives 2.5 more years of education. Even during the Middle Age many Jews were upper and middle class in economic status, a condition that secured good education for their children.

Untermensch Go Elsewhere? A 40+-year old Jewish commenter from New York City with the nomenclature "ASAMATTEROFFACT" informed me that - in his opinion - Ashkenazi who lack high intelligence and creativity end up feeling inferior. He believes this eventually leads to the "untersch" marrying outside of the tribe. Only the *ubermensch* remain to reproduce. His point of view was echoed by another poster - Efox" - who stated that less intelligent Jews incapable of being their own "Priest" inevitably left Judaism to join another religion.

Empathetic Rabbis – A commenter who identified himself as "zeev from jew york city" informed me that many rabbis were "Einsteins of Empathy" – amazingly kind, patient, loving and understanding of

other humans. The high-level “empaths” impacted their congregations, making their lives better and promoting their ambitions and enterprizes.

In later chapters (“Early Years” and “School Years”) I discuss the IQ-boosting benefits of “Emotional Support” and “Teacher Effectiveness” – two gifts that were undoubtedly provided by compassionate rabbis.

Fear of Anti-Semitism? – Commenter “Morris Wise” stated a paranoiac position after reading my original article on the *instapundit.com* website. In his opinion, Jews are driven to attain high academic success, career achievement, and wealth, because they want to feel safe, protected and insulated from anti-Jewish feelings in the outside community. This point-of-view can, of course, be justified by the long history of resentment and persecution that Jews have experienced.

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Twenty explanations for high Ashkenazi IQ! My opinion? Regarding the fourscore? They’re possibly all correct, and valuable to contemplate. However, what I find most intriguing are the “environmental” factors *that are accessible to all humanity*.

I wonder: if the people of the world really want high-level intellectual achievement, why don’t we play chess with our children at night, instead of tossing them a violent video game? Why can’t we listen to their classical compositions on the weekend, instead of urging them to get concussions on the football field? Isn’t a “dietary code” actually an excellent idea, in American culture with its 33.5% adult obesity? Why can’t we provide them with excellent schools, entice them to learn foreign grammar, and convince them to believe in and expand their abilities, instead of forcing them to endure years of educational mediocrity and expecting nothing back but the same?

If all humanity adopted the best available characteristics of successful cultures like the Ashkenazi, would we, as a whole, immensely benefit? Would we learn more quickly, more deeply, and produce greater wonders? Would we become over- instead of under-achievers?

If we promoted high IQ behavior to humans everywhere, globally, would we all become... enhanced? Better humans?

<http://immortallife.info/articles/entry/why-is-the-ig-of-ashkenazi-jews-so-high>

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