

ASK ANYTHING

Question: Are the original Israelites, the descendants of Jacob, The Twelve Tribes of Israel Black or dark skin?

Answer: The Torah doesn't tell us the skin color of our forefathers, nor of the early Israelites. Avraham stemmed from the areas of modern day Iraq and Iran. We find the citizens of these countries having dark skin, but being Caucasians nonetheless. Avraham's descendants moved from modern day Israel to Egypt and back. There is no evidence pointing to say that these people's skin developed into dark enough skin to be black.

There are commentators who explain that Cushim were a people of black skin. In questioning Moshe's separation from his wife Zipporah, Moshe's sister Miriam refers to her as a "Cushite." Some explain that Miriam referred to Zipporah as a "Cushite" saying that she was black. If Miriam pointed out that her sister-in-law, who came from Midian, not like the rest of the Jewish people was black. If so, then it seems logical to infer that the Jews of Moshe's time were not black.

This question seems purely academic. In the same way that the Torah makes no mention of the Jews' skin color; it makes no mention of any significance of skin color.