

ADDENDUM III

TABLE 1 COMPARISON — FOOD RITUALS AND TABOOS

The Lemba <i>The wasenzhi or heathen</i>	Early Israel <i>The heathen</i>
<p><i>Similarities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Their dietary laws are distinct and different from those of the heathen ◦ They are not supposed to mix with the heathen because they are eaters of dead meat ◦ They are the ‘chosen people’ and have to eat differently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Their dietary laws were distinct and different from those of the heathen ◦ They were not supposed to intermarry with the heathen ◦ They were the ‘chosen people’ and had to eat differently
<p><i>Differences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ They may not eat food with or from the heathen or use their cooking utensils ◦ They call the Lemba women <i>wasenzhi</i> and they have to undergo a purification process before marriage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ No such practice was known ◦ Their women were also ‘chosen people’
<p><i>Ritual washing</i></p> <p><i>Similarities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Cleanliness is the most important dietary regulation ◦ ‘Cultural diffusion’ resulted in disregard of these laws ◦ They should wash their hands before working with any food. The dictum ‘hold and wash’ is adhered to on many occasions ◦ Nobody is allowed to touch a dead person, bones or a grave and if so that person needs to be cleansed 	<p><i>Ritual washing</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Cleanliness was the most important dietary regulation ◦ ‘Cultural diffusion’ resulted in disregard of these laws ◦ They had numerous purification regulations ◦ Nobody was allowed to touch a dead person, bones or a grave, or the house and furniture of a deceased person and if they did so those people needed to be cleansed by sprinkling with water

Differences

- Their earlier laws were more strict

Dietary laws

Similarities

- Do not mix meat and milk (Lv 11) - probably later influence of Judaism
- Lv 11 is very important to them
- Only clean animals may be eaten (Lv 11; 17; Dt 12; 14), but the elephant, zebra, rhino and hippo are also not allowed
- Mainly vegetarian

Differences

- They sometimes eat fish and rice (may be an influence from their stay on the East Coast)

Slaughter rituals

Similarities

- Meat is only considered *kosher* killed when killed by a circumcised Lemba man in the correct way
- The animal should be bled to death and the blood should be shed on the ground

Differences

- The special blessing (*shidja*) makes it clean
- A special knife (*tshishizho*) is used

- Their later laws became more strict
- Specific purification regulations and laws dealing with defilement were given to the priest
- Certain metals needed to be purified by fire and others by water for purification (cf Nm 31:16-24)

Dietary laws

- No specific indication that it was not acceptable to mix milk with meat, but this is possibly a later (than that in early Israel) interpretation (Lv 11; 17; Dt 12; 14)
- Lv 11 became very important
- Only clean animals were to be eaten (Lv 11; 17; Dt 12; 14)
- Mainly vegetarian

Slaughter rituals

- An animal had to be *kosher* killed
- The killing was to be painless and bloodless and the blood shed around the altar
- Without blood there was no forgiveness

Similarities

- They remember that they had an annual day of fast

Differences

- The priests wore white robes
- The chief sacrificed an unblemished black ox

Fasting

- ^o A day of fasting was prescribed in the Mosaic law

- ° Usually fasting was a sign of sorrow and repentance

TABLE 2 COMPARISON — MARITAL CUSTOMS

The Lemba

Endogamy

Similarities

- This custom was based on purity
- This is their secret of survival as a distinct people
- Daughters could only marry their own people and only circumcised ('clean') men
- Men avoid non-Lemba women
- Non-Lemba people will make them eat pork and other prohibited food
- They may not marry their own brothers and sisters

Proselytisation and purification

Similarities

- Earlier one could only become a Lemba by birth, but now men can join through circumcision
- They are then allowed to use *Pesah*

Differences

- ° A women has to undergo purification before she can become a Lemba:

Early Israel

Endogamy

- This custom was based on purity
- This was their secret of survival as a distinct people
- Daughters could only marry their own people and only circumcised ('clean') men
- Men were not supposed to marry gentiles
- The gentiles were believed to lead them astray
- They were forbidden to marry their own brothers and sisters

Proselytisation and purification

- Male proselytes underwent circumcision, witness immersion and offered a sacrifice
- They were then allowed to use Passover
- No purification for women was known

- She has to crawl through an ant-hill and the ants purify her
- Fire burns away all contamination
- Ox blood mixed with emetic herbs brings out all impurities when drunk
- Her head is put through a hole in a hut and after it is shaven she crawls through the hole
- She may never return to her native village lest she be tempted to eat forbidden foods

Polygamy and monogamy

Similarities

- Men may marry more than one wife, but most men are monogamists - forced by circumstances (economic reasons)
- Not every man has many wives, only the wealthy
- Consequences: No disconsolate old women are found.
- Ranking determines the succession of the children
- The succession follows the father's line
- The first wife is usually the most important wife
- Reasons for polygamy; (1) wars diminished numbers of men; (2) the levirate marriage; (3) man's nature

Levirate

Similarities

- The brother takes the widow of his deceased elder or younger brother
- The offspring are raised and rank in office as if they were the children of the deceased

- Women were often used as barter items

Polygamy and monogamy

- Descendants of Seth were monogamists, but Lamech was the first to have two wives (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Esau and others had more than one wife). However, most men were monogamous - forced by circumstances
- Not every man had many wives, only the wealthy
- Consequences: No disconsolate old women were found.
- Ranking determines the succession of the children
- The succession follows the father's line
- The first wife was usually the most important wife
- Possibly the same reasons for polygamy as those among the Lemba

Levirate

- The brother took the widow of his deceased elder or younger brother
- The offspring were raised and rank in office as if they were the children of the deceased

- The purpose was to preserve family ties, in order to have the security of a husband and father, to ensure a male heir and that property would not fall into foreign hands

Lobola

Similarities

- *Lobola* is given by the husband's father to the father of the bride
- The dowry can be negotiated. It could be cattle, or money, or both
- No pre-marital co-habitation before full *lobola* has been paid and a hut is built
- Girls are inspected by old women to prove their virginity

Differences

- Divorced women's children belong to her former husband if the *lobola* is not paid back
- The children belong to her own people if the *lobola* is returned
- If virginity has been lost the bride is sent back to her parents, the *lobola* is to be paid back and they should pay the groom's parents

Women marrying other women

Differences

- A handicapped woman who wants the support of another woman and children will marry a woman and children with similar needs
- This is probably not a sexual relationship and men from outside are used for procreation purposes

- The purpose was to preserve family ties, in order to have the security of a husband and father, to ensure a male heir and that property would not fall into foreign hands

Moher (dowry)

- The dowry had to be paid by the husband to the father of the bride
- It was uncertain how much was to be paid, nevertheless, it could be paid by means of labour or tasks rendered
- No intercourse was allowed, unless they were engaged, otherwise the *moher* had to be paid in advance and the man was not allowed ever to divorce her
- There needed to be proof of the bride's virginity

- It is not sure what exactly the regulations were in these instances
- It is not known what happened to the children in such a case
- If she was falsely accused of lost virginity, her husband was not allowed ever to divorce her. If, however, she had lost her virginity before, he was allowed to divorce her

Women marrying other women

- No such practice was known in early Israel

TABLE 3 COMPARISON — BURIAL CUSTOMS

<p>The Lemba</p> <p><i>The procedures</i></p> <p><i>Similarities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Only single graves are known ◦ The grave is a room-like hole ◦ The deceased is laid on his/her side or back on a shelf ◦ The grave had a door like a tomb ◦ They are buried in a fully-stretched out position <p><i>Differences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Water is poured into the grave to symbolise that they crossed the sea to come to Africa ◦ They are buried with their heads in a northerly direction - to indicate their direction of origin ◦ They believe the soul returns to Jerusalem ◦ Some say they cut a dying man's throat with his own razor, others say it is a misunderstanding ◦ Children were buried in the same way as adults ◦ Collective graves are not used <p>Mourning</p> <p><i>Similarities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The prayer is ended with 'Amin' <p><i>Differences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ All the people shave their heads and mourn for seven days ◦ They are glad for the deceased and praise-songs are sung 	<p>Early Israel</p> <p><i>The procedures</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Sometimes single graves were used ◦ Room-like graves ◦ The deceased was laid on his/her side or back on a shelf ◦ The grave had a door like a tomb ◦ They were buried in a fully-stretched out position <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Children were sometimes buried in urns under the floor of the house ◦ Collective family graves were common practice ◦ Bones were collected over time <p>Mourning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Prayers were ended with 'Amin' <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Hair was not shaven - Canaanites did this ◦ When a death was announced the spectators begin to wail ◦ The good qualities of the deceased were loudly praised
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ No work is done at that time ◦ On the seventh day they have a feast. An ox or goat without blemish is sacrificed ◦ The blood of the animal is sprinkled over the heads of the men or is drunk (the latter is in contradiction to the general perception) ◦ The priests pray to the ancestors - calling them one-by-one, by name ◦ Then they all kneel and the word 'hundji' is called out ◦ On the seventh day a person's soul returns to his/her body 	
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TABLE 4 COMPARISON — SOCIAL ORGANISATION

<p>The Lemba <i>Twelve clans/lineages</i> <i>Similarities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Initially only ten, later twelve ◦ Each clan has its own ancestors, history, purpose and skills <p><i>Differences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Successive leadership (from one clan to another) took place in the past <p><i>Segmented society with a loose social organisation</i> <i>Similarities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Principally not bound to a specific area ◦ Without a central chief, but each clan or lineage has its own chief (<i>ish</i>) ◦ Characteristic customs are adhered to from generation to generation ◦ The social organisation could differ from family to family, and from clan to clan 	<p>Early Israel <i>Twelve clans/tribes</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Initially only ten, later twelve ◦ Each clan had its own ancestors and history, purpose and skills ◦ No successive leadership <p><i>Segmented society with a loose social organisation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Principally not bound to a specific area ◦ Without a central judge, only in times of war ◦ Characteristic customs remained with them from generation to generation ◦ The social organisation could differ from family to family and from clan to clan
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Egalitarian, except for the position of women ◦ Patriarchal system ◦ The chief and the elders have authority in the villages ◦ They have a loose social organisation ◦ Every individual was connected to a family and family ties are rated highly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Egalitarian, except for the position of women ◦ Patriarchal system ◦ The judge and the elders had authority in the villages ◦ They had a loose social organisation ◦ Every individual was connected to a family and family ties were rated highly
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TABLE 5 COMPARISON — EXPERIENTIAL DIMENSION

<p>The religious experience among the Lemba <i>Conceptions of God/gods</i> <i>Similarities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ They worship the God of heaven, the God of Abraham ◦ The ancestors are mediators through whom communication takes place ◦ Their idea of God has largely been formed by experiences that they, and especially their forefathers, had ◦ Moses plays a role in their traditions ◦ Their idea of God is also determined by influences from other religions ◦ Emphasis is placed on Mwari's sacredness and uniqueness ◦ God is the creator, provider, controller, Ancestor, but also the One who punishes the evil deeds of men ◦ Other gods are accepted but they do not mix with the 'heathen' nations ◦ In times of war Mwari assisted them <p><i>Differences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Their concept of God has three facets: ◦ (i) The concept of Mwari or Modimo the Supreme Being 	<p>The religious experience in early Israel <i>Conceptions of God/gods</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ They worshipped the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ◦ Perhaps the ancestors played a role as mediators between God and his people ◦ Their idea of God was largely formed by their own experiences, and especially by their ancestors' experiences ◦ Moses played a role in their traditions ◦ Their idea of God was also shaped by influences from other religions ◦ Their God was sacred and unique ◦ God was the creator, provider, controller but also the One who punishes the evil deeds of men ◦ Other gods are accepted, but 'heathen' nations were not tolerated ◦ Yahweh was also known as the God of War ◦ Their concept of God included: ◦ El, and the eternal covenant with their forefathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ (ii) A Semitic related deity also known as Mwari, Modimo or Jehovah - the God of the Bible ◦ and (iii) the New Testament notion of Jesus Christ the Son of God and the Holy Spirit. Jesus is seen as a senior ancestor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Yahweh revealed himself to them at Mount Sinai and confirmed the Covenant ◦ The gods of the Canaanites, Baal and Ashoreth played a role
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<p>Covenant-making with men (Lemba)</p> <p><i>Similarities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Genesis 17 is the most important scripture ◦ They perceive themselves as 'children of Abraham' by faith and birth, 'chosen people', 'the good men' and 'holy people' ◦ The circumcision ceremony is the occasion where 'newcomers' become part of the Covenant of God or Mwari ◦ Other peoples are perceived to be 'heathen' or unclean ◦ The Covenant has obligations for both partners ◦ Covenant-making belongs to men <p><i>Differences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ To some of the Lemba clans the Covenant is an important insurance ◦ The emphasis is invariably on circumcision ◦ No promises of descendants or a specific land are emphasised ◦ Confession of sin plays an important part 	<p>Covenant-making with men (Israel)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Genesis 15 & 17 refer to the Covenant between El and the forefathers ◦ They perceived themselves as 'children of Abraham', 'chosen people' and 'holy people' ◦ The circumcision ceremony was the occasion where 'newcomers' became part of the Covenant of God ◦ Other peoples were perceived to be 'heathen' or unclean ◦ The Covenant had obligations for both partners ◦ Covenant-making belonged to men <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The Covenant was the most important assurance of an alliance between God and Israel ◦ The emphasis rested especially on the Covenant ◦ Promises of descendants and a special land were made ◦ Confession of faith in Yahweh played an integral role during the ceremony ◦ Traditions about God's acts of redemption were linked to other religious feasts ◦ The Covenant was renewed at Sichem
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Ngoma lungundu (Lemba)

Similarities

- They once had a drum because they were a 'holy people'
- It was perceived as a symbol of Mwari's presence
- The Lemba had to carry the *ngoma lungundu* for the Vhasendji on the journey southwards into Africa
- Mwari spoke through the sound of the drum
- Mwari was dissatisfied with the evil practices of his people
- The devoted Lemba were saved from the wrath of Mwari
- The wrath of Mwari or his voice came with the shaking of the earth, the blazing of fire or the roar of thunder
- The high priest is the mouth-piece of Mwari
- The drum contained the cult objects of the Vhasendji
- The sound of the drum had a special effect on the enemies during warfare - it made them powerless

Differences

- The drum belonged to the Vhasendji
- The ancestral spirits dwell in sacred places
- They call Mwari their 'Father'
- The drum had special rain-making qualities
- It is uncertain whether the drum was linked to the Covenant

The Ark of the Covenant (Israel)

- They once had the Ark because they were a holy people
- It was perceived as a mobile shrine and symbol of God's presence
- The Levites had to carry the Ark of the Covenant for their own people on their journey through the desert
- God spoke from the Ark and the Tabernacle
- God was dissatisfied with the evil practices of his people (e.g. at Mount Sinai)
- Only Moses and a few devoted persons escaped the wrath of God in the desert (cf Numbers)
- The wrath of God manifested through the shaking of the earth, the blazing of fire or the roar of thunder
- Moses and later the high priest were the mouth-piece of God
- The Ark later contained the Ten Commandments
- The Ark played an important role during warfare, without which victory was not possible

- The Ark belonged to the Israelites
- The dwelling-place of ancestral spirits is in Sheol
- It is not known that they called Yahweh 'Father'
- The Ark did not have rain-making qualities
- The Ark was linked to the Covenant

Mountains, rivers and other sacred places (Lemba)

Similarities

- Experiences of the divine are often linked to mountains, rivers and other symbols
- A holy place was linked to a theophany of a kind
- The Mberengwa, Dumghe and other mountains are considered sacred because:
- Their ancestors are buried there
- Strange and mysterious sounds (associated with God or the ancestors) are heard from the mountain

Differences

- Peculiar things take place in front of the mountains
- Circumcision takes place on the mountains and no uncircumcised persons may climb the mountains without permission
- Confession of sins and purification should first take place before entering the mountain
- Their life-giving rivers originate on top of these mountains
- The rivers are places where divine encounters could occur (some say the ancestors)
- They go up the mountain to pray for rain once a year
- The traditional African cultures added to their ecstasy and experience of the divine

Mountains, rivers and other sacred places (Israel)

- All sanctuaries, or high places were connected to the natural holy places such as mountains, glades or fountains
- A holy place was associated with a theophany, e g Moses at Sinai (or Horeb)
- Mountains such as Sinai (or Horeb) were considered sacred because:
- They were connected to the ancestors who worshipped there, not necessarily buried there
- God spoke to Moses and others at the mountain
- No such things could be substantiated from the Old Testament except for thunder and lightning
- Only Moses was allowed to ascend Mount Sinai
- Encounters with the divine took place at rivers (e g Jacob)
- The Canaanite high places added to their ecstasy and experience of the divine
- The open high places gave them the opportunity to describe God in metaphors from nature

The cult of the ancestors

(Lemba)

Similarities

- The names of the ancestors are mentioned in each prayer
- For the welfare of the family the head of the family should not forsake the cult of the ancestors. Some perceive them as 'gods'
- Prayer-meetings are held during which they address the ancestors and end their prayers with 'amu, amune'
- The dead live on in an underworld existence
- Forsaking the ancestors, the living will lose their moral right to the land
- The role of the living dead was a daily reminder to the family of its own past and identity
- Offerings are being brought to the graveyards
- In practice the cult of the ancestors is present
- Some respondents see their ancestors as gods who can help or hurt them

Differences

- Some of the Christians see Jesus as the Senior forefather
- Mwari's presence is experienced in warfare and in the ancestors at the graveyard
- To honour one's parents is to provide for them after death as well

The cult of the ancestors

(Israel)

- The names of their forebears Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were mentioned in most prayers
- For the welfare of the family the head of the family should not forsake the cult of the ancestors. Some perceived them as 'gods'
- Prayers were ended with the Hebrew word 'amen'
- The dead lived on in an underworld existence
- Forsaking the ancestors, the living would lose their moral right to the land
- The role of the living dead was a daily reminder to the family of its own past and identity
- Offerings to the dead were not unknown in Israel. Many polemics were addressed against these practices
- In practice the cult of the ancestors was present
- Some perhaps saw their ancestors as gods who could help or hurt them
- Yahweh's presence was experienced in warfare and at the open shrines and the presence of the Canaanite gods was experienced at their high places (but not in the ancestors)
- Some interpreted the commandment to honour one's parents as having to provide for ancestors after death as well

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ When they need rain, are suffering or in times of barrenness the help of the ancestors is requested (at the graveyards) ◦ A trancelike state or communion with the ancestors is achieved through specific ritual actions:beer-drinking, using secret words, prayers and songs, calling out the names of the ancestors in a repetitive way and screaming out in a loud voice ◦ The <i>Gshamo</i> ceremony are held for the return of the spirits of the deceased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ They prayed to God for rain ◦ It is no easy matter to guage the feelings and sentiments which this 'cult' inspired in the living. The detail is no longer known. The concern for the survival of the names of the dead was deeply rooted in the mind of early Israel ◦ No such ceremony is known
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<p>Annunciations and other encounters (Lemba)</p> <p><i>Similarities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The male and female ancestors reveal themselves mainly through the women ◦ Prophets also get messages from God <p><i>Differences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Usually the ancestors bring messages ◦ They are also aware of the guidance of the Holy Spirit 	<p>Annunciations and other encounters (Israel)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Barren mothers played the role of primary receivers of the divine messages ◦ Moses and the prophets also received messages from God ◦ Usually the 'angel of God' brought the message that a son would be born ◦ The Holy Spirit was not present in such a way in early Israel
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TABLE 6 COMPARISON — THE MYTHICAL DIMENSION

Myth among the Lemba

Creation mythology

Similarities

- The God of heaven first created male, then female from the dust of the earth
- God is the all-powerful sole Creator

From the 'Promised Land' over the sea and through the desert to Africa (Lemba)

Similarities

- In Yemen they met Phoenician and Arab traders who introduced them to trade with the Orient and Africa
- In Africa they were guided by a star and the *ngoma lungundu* as symbols of Mwari's presence
- They perceive themselves to be Israelites, Jews, children of Abraham, chosen people
- During their festivals, ceremonies and conferences, they remind their children of their history and culture and the mighty acts of Mwari

Differences

- They escaped the Babylonian Exile and migrated into the open spaces of Yemen
- They came from a place on the other side of the Phusela
- They came to Africa by boat
- War broke out in their country of origin and they couldn't go back. They had to take local wives
- They once spoke a language of their own

Myth among early Israel

Creation mythology

- God created male, then the plants, then the female from the dust of the earth (Gn 2)
- God was the all-powerful sole Creator (Gn 2)

From (Egypt) Africa through the sea and through the desert to the 'Promised Land' (Israel)

- In Canaan they met the Phoenician and Canaanite traders
- They were guided through the desert by pillars of cloud and fire, and the Ark of the Covenant as symbols of God's presence
- They perceived themselves to be Israelites, children of Abraham, chosen people
- During their special festivals and ceremonies they reminded their children of their history and culture and the mighty acts of God (Yahweh)
- God delivered them from slavery in Egypt
- God led them through the Red Sea and the desert to the 'Promised Land'
- They came by foot to the 'Promised Land'

- They still have secret words which should not be revealed to uncircumcised people, which could be traced back to Arabic and Hebrew words

- At Mount Sinai God appeared to Moses, and renewed the Covenant and gave the Decalogue to the people

Guided by a star and ngoma lungundu (Lemba)

Similarities

- In Africa they were guided by the *ngoma lungundu* and a star was sent by Mwari to guide them southwards into Africa
- The drum is alleged to be still in one of the caves of the Dimghe Mountain in Zimbabwe
- The drum was considered holy, a symbol of Mwari's presence and was not to be touched in an improper way or to be put down in the dust
- The Lemba had to carry the drum
- God struck his people with illness because of unbecoming practices

Differences

- They had a drum as symbol of God's presence
- The drum contained sacred objects such as beads, *malembe* and others

Guided by a pillar of cloud and fire and the Ark of the Covenant (early Israel)

- In the desert they were guided by means of a pillar of cloud and fire, by Yahweh to the 'Promised Land'
- The Ark of the Covenant was considered holy and could not be touched or put down in an improper way
- The Levites had to carry the Ark of the Covenant
- God brought illness to his people because of their unbecoming practices
- They had an Ark as symbol of God's presence
- The Ark contained the Ten Commandments

TABLE 7 COMPARISON — THE RITUAL DIMENSION

<p>The Lemba</p> <p>Rituals of passage</p> <p><i>Male circumcision</i></p> <p><i>Similarities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Takes place on the eighth day ◦ Seen as an incorporation into the Covenant with God/Mwali (by some of the clans) ◦ The circumcision makes the Lemba special, different from the 'heathen' around them ◦ Receiving new names after circumcision ◦ Combines the circumcision ceremony with the <i>Pesah</i> ◦ Practices the cutting of boys' hair just after the ceremony <p><i>Differences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The whole community is involved ◦ An initiation rite before marriage ◦ Teaching takes place, by means of songs, chants, recitations and demonstrations on the following areas of life: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - observance of proper procedures (e.g. <i>kosher</i> killing and married life) - love for the truth and one another - honesty - respect for elders and parents 	<p>Early Israel</p> <p>Rituals of passage</p> <p><i>Male circumcision</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Took place on the eighth day ◦ Seen as an incorporation into the Covenant with God (by some of the clans) ◦ The Covenant (and circumcision) made them special, different from the 'heathen' around them ◦ Receiving new names after the Covenant with God was established ◦ Circumcision was linked to the <i>Pesah</i> ceremony ◦ Jeremiah 9:26 uses the metaphor 'to clip their hair on the temples' to refer to the circumcision ◦ Only the father and mother were involved in the ritual and later perhaps the elders ◦ Possibly originally an initiation rite before marriage, but the connection disappeared when the circumcision was connected to the Covenant with God ◦ It is not known which teaching took place
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***The initiation ritual for women
(Lemba)***

Similarities

- An initiation ritual for young women during puberty as preparation for marriage
- This practice indicates uncertainty in the lives of young women

Differences

- Teaching by means of songs, chants, recitations and demonstration on:
 - cleanliness
 - married life
 - how to entertain your husband
- One purpose of this ritual, is also to make them tough

***The New Moon ceremony
(Lemba)***

Similarities

- The chief and others blow their horns
- No work on the following day

Differences

- Arrival of new moon seen in a bowl of water, a day or two before it becomes visible
- Old men and old women shave their heads: if you do not shave your head you become foolish
- Everybody fasts for the rest of the day

***The initiation ritual for women
(Israel)***

- The possibility of an initiation rite for young women did exist (Jdg 11)
- It illustrated an uncertainty in the lives of young women

- Contents of teaching not known

***The New Moon ceremony
(Israel)***

- Trumpets (and horns) were blown
- They kept a day of cessation

- The Babylonians and Canaanites had a special day set aside to observe the full moon and that could have influenced the Israelites to adopt the same
- Shaving of heads unknown
- Fasting during this ritual unknown

Rituals of sacrifice (Lemba)

Pesah

Similarities

- The *Pesah* is linked to circumcision
- An animal is sacrificed and slaughtered in a prescribed way
- The shedding of blood is made sacred
- No uncircumcised person may join the meal or ceremony
- The meal bonds participants by a special tie of blood

Differences

- They do not follow a sacred calendar in determining the dates of the festival
- Celebration teaches boys everything about Lemba culture and married life
- Combined with circumcision as rite of passage from boyhood to adulthood

Theyhula and unleavened food (Lemba)

Similarities

- Only unleavened food may be used

Rituals of sacrifice (Israel)

The Passover or Pesah

- The *Pesah* is linked to circumcision
- Emphasis is on the animal sacrifice and the slaughtering takes place in a prescribed way
- The shedding of blood is made sacred
- No uncircumcised person may join the meal or ceremony
- The meal bonds the participants by a tie of blood

- They followed a specific agricultural calendar
- The blood is painted onto the lintel and the doorposts of each house
- The meal was a symbol of the Israelites' hurried exodus; the meat was eaten that same night with bitter herbs and unleavened bread; their loins were girded; they wore sandals and were ready with staff in the hand; this marked a rite of passage from the status of slaves to the status of free men
- The celebration was to teach the children about God's acts of deliverance and Israel's escape from Egyptian oppression and slavery
- The Passover is a sign of the renewal of the Covenant

The Festival of the Unleavened Bread (Israel)

- Only unleavened food could be used

Differences

- Young women crush unsoaked mealies
- Magic and warfare ceremony
- People wash themselves and shave their heads, form a circle and put on white cotton cloths
- They place a spotless beast or goat in the middle of a circle of people
- The priest prays for the victim
- All prayers are ended with 'amu, amune'
- They slaughter the animal and shed the blood on the ground
- Sometimes the blood is sprinkled over the worshippers
- The meat is eaten without any salt and the bones are placed neatly together
- The priest prays to the ancestors by invoking their names

First Fruit and Harvest Festival (Lemba)

Similarities

- Held once a year (in December) after the first fruit or corn (or whatever) is harvested

Differences

- They kneel down to drink a special brew of sorghum from a pot; brew made by the women

- They used other grains (not mealies)
- The feast indicated the beginning of the barley harvest

- On the first and the last days of the harvest they brought dedication offers and they were not allowed to do ordinary work
- The feast was linked more and more to the Passover

First Fruit and Harvest Festival (Israel)

- Held once a year at the end of the harvest and the beginning of offering of first fruits

- No concurrences with these practices are known

- The mother of the house says a prayer for a blessing on the food, invoking the ancestors by their names
- The children drink and eat first
- Then they pour the beer on the ground as a libation
- The purpose is to keep sickness and demons away

Fasting (Lemba)

Similarities

- They remember a day-long fast once a year
- The high priest plays a central role in the performance of the ritual (on that day)
- The chief sacrifices an unblemished black ox
- The leader wears a white cloth

Differences

- Some of the meat is sacrificed on the graves of the ancestors
- The remains of the meat are eaten

Other sacrifices (Lemba)

Similarities

- In the main, a vegetarian community; can only afford to eat meat on special occasions
- A sacrificial meal is usually held within the family, clan or larger context of the tribe

- Two loaves of leavened bread made of the new grain were offered, a year old spotless lamb as a burnt offering and a libation offer of wine
- Originally a Canaanite festival which gained new meaning and content through the Israelites

The Day of Atonement (Israel)

- An annual day of fasting to cleanse people from all their sins
- The high priest played a central role in the completion of the ritual
- The high priest had to be cleansed by the offering of a bull
- The priests wore special linen garments
- Lots were cast to determine the fate of the goat
- The priest laid his hands on the victim and conferred all the transgressions of the people upon it and sent it into the wilderness
- The priest and people resumed their unsanctified role

Other sacrifices (Israel)

- In the main, a vegetarian community; could only afford to eat meat on special occasions
- A sacrificial meal usually held within the context of a family, clan or larger circle of tribes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The purpose is fellowship with the deity and with one another <p><i>Differences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ A sacrifice before a <i>new kraal</i> is occupied ◦ The priest sacrifices an animal ◦ The blood is sprinkled against one of the upright posts and on one of the rafters of each hut ◦ The rest of the blood is sprinkled on the ground in the kraal ◦ Then the meat of the animal is consumed by the members of the kraal ◦ A <i>new granary</i> should also be consecrated by a priest ◦ A white fowl is sacrificed for a new granary ◦ The blood is sprinkled on the floor and inside the walls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The purpose was fellowship with the deity and one another <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ No such sacrifices are known ◦ The fat was sacrificed to Yahweh and the rest of the meat was eaten together ◦ No such practices were known
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TABLE 8 COMPARISON — THE LEGAL AND ETHICAL DIMENSION

<p>The Lemba The Covenant</p> <p><i>Similarities</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ See themselves as 'children of Abraham' (Gn 17) ◦ Circumcision is the sign of the Covenant ◦ Stress that circumcision is the occasion where initiates are incorporated into the Covenant ◦ The Covenant has obligations for both parties 	<p>Early Israel The Covenant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Saw themselves as 'children of Abraham' (Gn 17) ◦ Circumcision was the sign of the Covenant ◦ Stressed that circumcision is the occasion where new members were incorporated into the Covenant ◦ The Covenant had obligations for both parties
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The 'law' (Lemba)

Similarities

- Only refer to their 'law'
- Some say they *only* worship the God of Bible
- Children suffer for the sins of parents but are also rewarded for faithfulness
- Remembrance of the sabbath

Differences

- Figurines are made by means of which God is worshipped
- Mixing of poison is a sin

Case law (Lemba)

Covenant obligations

(a) Casuistic laws

Similarities

- A kind of casuistic law occurs

Differences

- If the parents do not confess all their sins their son will certainly die during circumcision

(b) Monetary compensation

Differences

- *Lobola* has to be paid back if it is discovered on the wedding night that the newly wedded wife is not a virgin

The Ten Commandments (Israel)

- Received the commandments as Covenant principles from Yahweh at Mount Sinai
- They could worship Yahweh only
- Children suffered for the sins of parents but were also rewarded for faithfulness
- Kept the Sabbath

- No images or icons of God were allowed, but figurines were found
- The name of Yahweh could not be taken in vain
- Condemned murder and coveting
- No similar law was known

Case law (Israel)

The Covenantal Code (Ex 21-23)

(a) Casuistic laws

- Material in Exodus 21-23 represents a casuistic frame

- No substance in the Old Testament for Lemba casuistic laws

(b) Monetary compensation

- The bride was sent back to her parents or was stoned to death if it was discovered that she was not a virgin

(c) Earn one's own living

Similarities

- The Lemba are not supposed to 'enslave' themselves;
- They should not work for other people

Differences

- No mention of the buying and selling of slaves

(d) Love for your neighbour, care for the poor and show hospitality

Similarities

- Poor people should be helped because they have been created by God
- Hospitality towards strangers is a communal value

(e) Offerings made at childbirth

Similarities

- Blood has to be spilled

Differences

- A lamb or cock is slaughtered to unite the child with their ancestors and with God

Family ethics and women

(Lemba)

Chiefs, elders and a patriarchal family
Similarities

- Clans or lineages headed by their own chief and elders
- Patriarchal community with their social organisation based on the extended family

(c) Slavery

- Israelites were not supposed to have themselves enslaved
- In case of impoverishment they are only supposed to work for fellow Israelites

- A father could sell his daughters on the slave market when he was in debt

(d) Widows, orphans, resident strangers and hospitality

- Marginalised people had to be cared for since God had compassion for them and He was perceived to be the court of appeal for victims of injustice
- Hospitality towards strangers was highly valued

(e) Offering for the first-borns (Ex 22:29-30)

- Blood had to be spilled

- First-born had to be redeemed by means of sacrifices

Family ethics and women

(Israel)

Judges, elders and a patriarchal family

- A loose social organisation with a judge who led from time to time
- Patriarchal community with their social organisation based on the extended family

- Ethical and family codes reflect the intention to purify the community, which should be uniform and whole
- Respect for ancestors, living and dead and for the elders

Inheritance

Similarities

- Boys and girls inherit from their father and the heir is determined by the *lobola* cattle given by the father of the man
- Women are ranked according to the preferential marriage already given

Differences

- A woman married to another woman is subject to the authority of the woman who has paid the *lobola*
- All the *lobola* property goes to her father
- The children obtained by this marriage inherit her property, while her own children inherit from their father

Virginity of women

Similarities

- Lemba girls are subject to inspection by some old women to prove virginity

Differences

- If a woman had lost her virginity she is sent back to her parents

Economic ethics

Similarities

- Economically disadvantaged people and foreigners should be cared for

- Ethical and family codes reflected the intention to purify the community, which had to be uniform and whole
- Respect for ancestors, living (and dead) and for the elders

Inheritance

- Only the sons could inherit; the eldest son usually inherited double
- Widows could not inherit, except when there were no children
- No substance for such marriages (a woman to another woman) in the Old Testament

Virginity of women

- Women had to give proof of their virginity on their wedding night by presenting a blood-stained cloth
- If a woman had lost her virginity she was stoned

Economic ethics

- Economically disadvantaged people and strangers had to be cared for and received special protection from God

- They have to care for the material needs of the priest
- Love for the truth and honesty are emphasised

Differences

- No such laws are known

Dietary laws, cleanliness and other codes (Lemba)

Leviticus 11

Similarities

- Stress the importance of cleanliness and uncleanness
- They are not allowed to eat with the *wasenzhi* (heathen; unclean people; eaters of dead meat)
- They follow the regulations in Leviticus 11
- They avoid all meat of animals with cloven hoofs and animals which do not chew the cud
- They do not touch the meat of fallen animals
- Bleed animals to death and the blood must be shed on the ground (Dt 12:6, 23; Nm 19)
- They do not eat the blood of animals which they kill
- The animal must be killed by a circumcised Lemba (who is clean) in a special way

Differences

- They do not mix meat and milk in their foods (following the code from Leviticus). Probably influence from modern Judaism.
- Without the special blessing, called the *shidja* (in Shona), dead meat is unclean

- Material needs of the Levites had to be cared for
- Love for the truth and honesty was stressed
- Business ethics involved the sabbath year, etc

Priestly codes in Leviticus

(Israel)

Leviticus 11

- Stressed the importance of cleanliness and uncleanness
- They were not supposed to mix with the heathen
- They followed the regulations of Leviticus 11
- They avoided all meat of animals with cloven hoofs and animals which did not chew the cud
- They did not touch the meat of fallen animals
- Bled animals to death and the blood had to be shed on the ground
- They could not eat the blood of animals which they killed
- Animals had to be killed in a special way
- There are no specific indications that meat and milk were not mixed in early Israel
- Swarming creatures were considered to be unclean and contaminated, like an invisible poison

- Only the Lemba know the secret words for the special blessing
- Taboo on eating elephant, zebra, rhinoceros and hippopotamus

Sex taboos and prohibited marriages

Similarities

- The Lemba have many rules governing the body
- They are not supposed to marry outside their tribe or to an uncircumcised Lemba
- The principle of cleanliness in the girls' sexual life is emphasised very strongly

Priestly groups

Similarities

- The priesthood is something bestowed on a particular family by God
- The people give the priest some tokens of appreciation for his services but pay him for circumcision

Differences

- In the past a priest spoke from high places while others listened
- The priest makes his skills as a traditional doctor available to the people
- The priest conducts circumcision

Enemies within

Differences

- Cultural diffusion is their greatest enemy

- No such words are known
- No such taboo are known

Sex taboos and prohibited marriages

- The Priestly Code had many rules governing the body
- They were not supposed to marry outside their kinship or social group
- There were rules for men and for women concerning cleanliness and uncleanness

Priestly groups

- The priesthood was something bestowed on a particular family by God
- The people were supposed to look financially after the priests and Levites

- The father or mother conducted circumcision
- The Levites were a family appointed by God to serve at the places of worship

Enemies within

- The worship of other gods: idolatry

- The Lemba do not specifically mention whether child sacrifice and consulting the dead are prohibited

No centralised authority to enforce these laws

Similarities

- Elders and chiefs have limited authority

Differences

- Initiation ceremonies play an important role in the 'enforcing' of certain laws

Proverbs

Differences

- If person commits a mistake, he will commit it again
- Be aware of danger and always take advice
- One can't be a chief without a people
- To bear a child is not easy
- Minor things are not important
- If one wants to marry your daughter he has to pay
- Do not handle more than one can manage
- Even young people can give the elderly advice
- You do not lose anything in paying homage

- Child sacrifices were prohibited and the practice of consulting 'the dead' was an abomination

No centralised authority to enforce the Code of the Covenant

- Elders and the judges/leaders of the people had some authority

Proverbs

- No concurring proverbs are known.
- Diligent work was rewarded
- One with a kind heart profits him- or herself; and *vice versa*
- The sluggard suffers hunger, and the diligent person suffers no want
- Wealth incurs stress; therefore having little but serving the Lord is propitious

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The Lemba people regard themselves as Jews or Israelites who migrated southwards into Yemen and later as traders into Africa. Scattered over parts of South Africa and the rest of Southern Africa, they are concentrated largely in the former Venda (the Limpopo Province), Sekhukhuneland (present-day Mpumalanga and Limpopo Province) and in the southern parts of Zimbabwe. Their enthusiasm for sacred hills, animal sacrifice, ritual slaughtering of animals, food taboos, their circumcision rites and endogamy suggests a Semitic influence or resemblance, embedded in an African culture.

Has Le Roux "discovered" a "lost tribe of Israel" who might be able to illuminate concepts of pre-monarchic Israel right on our doorstep?

This book seeks to determine to what extent the culture of early Israel (1250-1000 BCE) is similar to African cultures, more specifically to that of the Lemba. It offers more than a mere comparison between the culture of early Israel with that of certain African tribes, and the ambit within which the book operates is ultimately Old Testament Studies.

The Lemba's ancestors' possible early departure from Israel could imply that their religion may contain remnants of a very ancient type of religion, which might be of great value when these are juxtaposed with those of early Israel. Le Roux takes Lemba traditions seriously, without attempting to verify or falsify Lemba claims. Questions regarding their possible Jewish origins and whether a comparison between Lemba traditions and the Old Testament can make a contribution to the debate about the claims of the Lemba, are addressed.

The book searches for an understanding of the relevance of the Old Testament in Africa; and is therefore selective in its comparison between the Lemba and early Israel. A selection of presumably representative social and religious practices from these two entities was made. The purpose is to determine what early Israel's experience of certain customs and rituals was and what role it played in their communities.

The author finally considers the relevance of the Old Testament in an African context and its possible implications for the interpretation of the Old Testament, suggesting further study of these phenomena in Africa. Le Roux also investigates the implications of her study for the relevance of the Old Testament to missionary endeavours in Africa.

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