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British Ethnologist Richard Dawkins Declares 'Jew' is Not a Race

a *by Algemeiner Staff*



British Ethnologist and Author Richard Dawkins.
Photo: Wikimedia Commons

The British ethnologist who invented the idea of a “meme” long before the term applied to images floating around the Internet offered his two cents on Tuesday as to whether the Jewish people constitute a race or not.

Speaking through his Twitter handle, Richard Dawkins said that “statistical concentrations of genes in geographical

areas” meagerly supported the notion that race in fact exists.

“But ‘Jew’ is not a race,” he contended.

Drawing a parallel to Jewish linguistic categorization, namely being a “Semite,” Dawkins wrote in a separate tweet: “I’m doubtful that ‘semitic peoples’ (e.g. Jews, Arabs etc) means

anything more than 'speakers of semitic languages'. 'Jew' is not a 'race'."

Both messages drew over 200 'likes' and retweets.

The discussion of whether Jews are a race or not has understandably emotionally charged roots: Adolf Hitler's Nazi Germany contended that not only were Jews a race, but an inferior one deserving of extermination.

But in the 1980s, a U.S. Supreme Court ruling designated Jews as a race to provide protection against discrimination.

The obvious distinction is that it is possible to convert to Judaism, to become a Jew, while becoming the member of a race is perhaps impossible.

Responding to Dawkins' post, some users brought up the notion of Jews as an ethnicity, rather than a race, in which the genetic language encoded in the individual is not the only dividing line.

Another user drew a parallel with being Hispanic in the U.S.:
"@RichardDawkins same goes for #Hispanic in the US. Hispanics are not a race."

Dawkins, who was University of Oxford's Professor for Public Understanding of Science, also responded to one user who asked: "Would this finally give merit that Jew culture and not Jew race is the reason for so many contributing Nobel Prizes?"

"I suspect so, although the possibility that genes play a role is compatible with the view that 'Jew is not a race,'" wrote Dawkins.

Interestingly Dawkins has commented on this issue before. [Speaking to the New Republic](#) in 2013 on what he called the "phenomenally" high number of Jews winning Nobel prizes in science, Dawkins said: "Race does not come into it. It is pure

religion and culture. Something about the cultural tradition of Jews is way, way more sympathetic to science and learning and intellectual pursuits than Islam.”