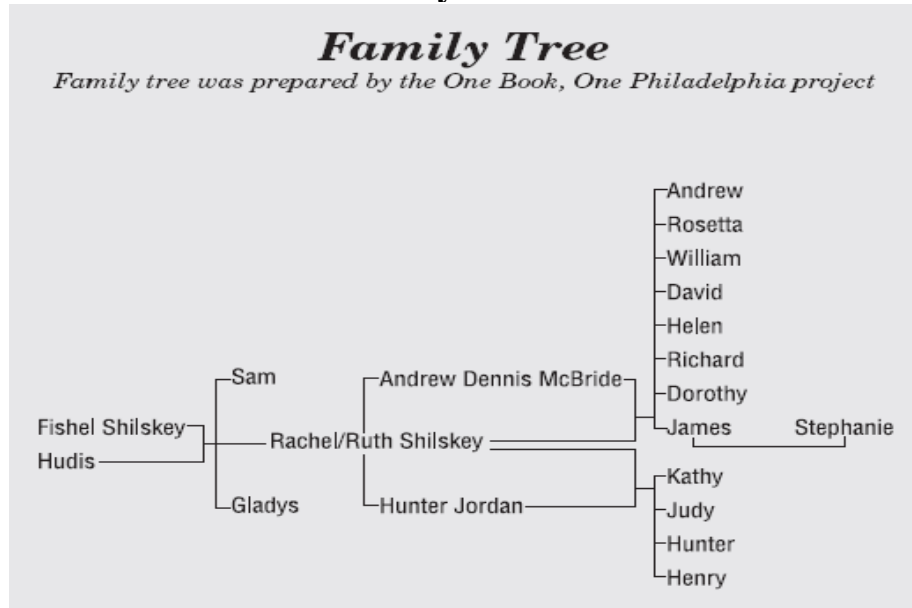


# THE COLOR OF WATER: A BLACK MAN'S TRIBUTE TO HIS WHITE MOTHER

By James McBride

## The Color of Water: Family Tree



Source: <http://libwww.library.phila.gov/onebook/obop04/FamilyTree.cfm>

### Compare and Contrast Judaism and Christianity:

These religions share a closely connected past, yet they are separate and distinct. A number of sites help you examine the religions' similarities and differences. See, for example, <http://library.thinkquest.org/C004351F/>; <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/~jtreat/rs/resources.html>; and [http://www.religioustolerance.org/jud\\_desc.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/jud_desc.htm)

### Types of Jewish Movements:

Through much of the book, James' mother makes comments about her experience with Orthodox Judaism. Just as there are many sects and denominations among Christian traditions, there are also different traditions in Judaism.

Below are the five main traditions of Judaism active in North America today.

**Conservative\* Judaism:** This began in the mid-nineteenth century as a reaction against the Reform movement. It is a main-line movement midway between Reform and Orthodox.

**Humanistic Judaism:** This is a very small group, mainly composed of atheists and agnostics, who regard mankind as the measure of all things.

**Orthodox\* Judaism:** This is the oldest, most conservative, and most diverse form of Judaism. Modern Orthodox, Chasidim and Ultra Orthodox share a basic belief in the derivation of Jewish law, even as they hold very different outlooks on life. They attempt to follow the original form of Judaism as they view it to be. They look upon every word in their sacred texts as being divinely inspired.

**Reconstructionist Judaism:** This is a new, small, liberal movement started by Mordecai Kaplan as an attempt to unify and revitalize the religion. They reject the concept that Jews are a uniquely favored and chosen people.

**Reform\* Judaism:** They are a liberal group, followed by many North American Jews. The movement started in the 1790's in Germany. They follow the ethical laws of Judaism, but leave up to the individual the decision whether to follow or ignore the dietary and other traditional laws. They use modern forms of worship. There are many female rabbis in reform congregations.

\* These are the largest forms of Judaism.

**A survey conducted in 2001 for the 2002 edition of the *American Jewish Year Book* indicated that fewer than 10% of American Jews are estimated to be Orthodox.** However, Orthodox synagogues represent 40% of all U.S. synagogues. Reform Judaism has 26 percent of all synagogues; Conservatives have 23 percent. "*Every other denomination or group representing synagogues — Reconstructionist, Sephardi, Traditional, Humanistic, Gay/Lesbian — accounts for 3 percent or less of synagogue affiliations...*" The total number of U.S. synagogues has increased from 2,851 in 1936 to 3,727 in 2001. From: [http://www.religioustolerance.org/jud\\_desc.htm](http://www.religioustolerance.org/jud_desc.htm)