

A 'Spiritual Teacher' Asserts Chenault Was an Avid Student

By AGIS SALPUKAS

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CINCINNATI, July 3—A man who calls himself Hananiah E. Israel, and says he is a spiritual teacher, says here today that Marcus Wayne Chenault had been one of his pupils and that he had revealed to Mr. Chenault that black ministers were among the main oppressors of black people.

Mr. Chenault has been arrested and charged in the slaying of Mrs. Martin Luther King Sr. last Sunday. His attorney, Randolph Bacote, said in an interview today that Mr. Chenault had not mentioned Mr. Israel to him but had told him that "all his religious beliefs came through a revelation."

Mr. Israel, who lives in one room on the second floor of a house in Avondale, a mostly black residential area, said in a two-hour interview today that Mr. Chenault came to him last March and asked him to unscramble his mind.

"He said that he was a college kid who didn't know anything," Mr. Israel said while sitting at a table on which rested two Bibles and his own literature. "The boy was bril-

liant. All I had to give him was the key to open his mind."

Mr. Israel, whose legal name is Stephen Holiman, said that most of what he described as the revelations that he passed on to Mr. Chenault resulted from long research in libraries and a reinterpretation of the Bible from a black viewpoint.

Although Mr. Israel has spent many years trying to spread these teachings, which he described as coming from "the Mighty One," he said that Mr. Chenault was one of the first to seek him out and to ask for clarifications. They had about five meetings and numerous telephone conversations, he said.

Only a few people have expressed interest in his ideas, Mr. Israel said. Reduced to essentials, Mr. Israel's beliefs are that the Israelites of the Old Testament were black and that the God of the Old Testament is black.

To punish the "black Israelites" for past sins, he said, he believes that God sent blacks into 400 years of slavery in North America.

Among the key agents in this punishment, he said, are black ministers, whom he called false shepherds keeping black

people in ignorance. They will be destroyed, he said, when the punishment is met.

Mr. Israel, who said he based much of his beliefs on the teachings of the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, said that he was not sure whether Mr. Chenault had shot Mrs. King while divinely inspired.

But he added that he did not believe that Mr. Chenault had acted out of insanity.

Unaware of Intentions

Mr. Israel, who answers the phone with the Hebrew word "Shalom" and keeps a kosher household, does not attend any formal house of worship.

He said that Mr. Chenault had never expressed to him any intention of doing violence. "He was a friendly, jovial type," he said, "the type of fellow who always had a big smile."

Mr. Israel, who is 68 years old and lives on a small Social Security pension and income from odd jobs as a handyman, said that when a friend told him of the shooting of Mrs. King and Mr. Chenault's arrest he was "shocked and flabbergasted."

But he added that he felt no remorse about the slaying because the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. had been told by black Hebrews on one of his trips to Chicago that he was

oppressing black people by working for racial integration.

He recited several verses of Scripture to support his view that the Bible forbids the mixing of the races.

He also said that black ministers were "big shots." "They got a big car, expensive clothes, expensive rectories," he said. "They get money and get drunk. They feed themselves and not the flock," he added.

Views Tape Recorded

He said he had given Mr. Chenault a series of tapes that he had made for a radio program designed to express his ideas on black ministers.

He added that Mr. Chenault had brought several friends on three visits but he had not heard from him for about five months. He said he had talked to the Federal Bureau of Investigation at length about Mr. Chenault when they came to see him last Sunday night.

Mr. Israel, a thin man who wears a faded black square hat with a Star of David, said that he first became interested in the Old Testament while talking with street-corner preachers in Chicago.

Hours in Library

During the Korean War, he said, he helped several young black men gain status as conscientious objectors. It was at that time, he said, that God revealed to him the plight of the black people and that he began to spend long days at the Carnegie Library in Chicago.

There, with books piled around him, he recalled, he first developed his ideas on the Bible. He said he moved to Dayton in 1958 and placed newspaper advertisements directed at blacks. One ad said: "What every Negro should know concerning the Scripture. This information is an uncovering of the greatest mystery. The best kept secret in the world today."

He recalled that a small number of people replied and that he had become "disappointed" about spreading his teachings and was delighted to find a pupil as avid as Mr. Chenault.

"It's not normal to take my teaching so quick," he said.

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Mimi Fuller/The Cincinnati Post

A man describing himself as Hananiah Israel, spiritual teacher, telling yesterday in Cincinnati of ideas he said he had imparted to Marcus Wayne Chenault, who is accused of the slaying of Mrs. Martin Luther King Sr.