



What is a Jew?

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אשד



דן



יהודה



ראובן



יוסף



נפתלי



יששכר



שמעון



בנימין



גד



זבולון



לוי



Ethnicity
+
Religion

שופטים יא:כג-כד

וְעַתָּה יְקֹנֵק אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הַחֹרִישׁ אֶת הָאֲמֹרִי מִפְּנֵי עַמּוֹ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאַתָּה תִּירָשְׁנוּ: הֲלֹא אֵת אֲשֶׁר יִירִשְׁךָ כְּמוֹשׁ אֱלֹהֶיךָ אוֹתוֹ תִירָשׁ וְאֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר הַחֹרִישׁ יְקֹנֵק אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִפְּנֵינוּ אוֹתוֹ נִירָשׁ:

Shofetim 11:23-24

So now the LORD, the God of Israel, has dispossessed the Amorites from before His people Israel, and should you possess them? Will you not possess that which Chemosh your god gives you to possess? So whomever the LORD our God has dispossessed from before us, them will we possess.





Ethnicity

Religion

Jewishness: Ethnicity and Heredity

בראשית יז:ז-ח

⁷וְהִקְמַמְתִּי אֶת בְּרִיתִי בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ וּבֵין זַרְעֲךָ אֶתְרִיךָ לְדֹרֹתָם לְבְרִית עוֹלָם לְהִיוֹת לְךָ לֵאלֹהִים
וּלְזַרְעֲךָ אֶתְרִיךָ⁸: וְנָתַתִּי לְךָ וּלְזַרְעֲךָ אֶתְרִיךָ אֶת אֶרֶץ מְגֹרֶיךָ אֵת כָּל אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן לְאֶחְזֶזֶת עוֹלָם
וְהָיִיתִי לָהֶם לֵאלֹהִים:

Bereishit 17:7-8

⁷I will maintain my covenant between us and your seed who will follow you for all generations as an eternal covenant. To be your God and the God of your seed who will follow you. ⁸I give to you and to your seed who will follow you the land you are living in, all of the land of C'na'an, as an eternal possession. And I will be their God.

Jewishness: Ethnicity and Heredity

דברים כט:ט-יד

⁹אתם נצבים היום בלכם לפני יקוק אלהיכם ראשיכם שבטיכם זקניכם ושטריכם כל איש ישראל¹⁰: טפכם נשיכם וגר אשר בקרב מתגורר מחטב עצי ערד שאב מימי¹¹: לעברך בברית יקוק אלהיך ובאלתו אשר יקוק אלהיך כרת עמך היום¹²: למען הקים אתך היום לו לעם והוא יהיה לך לאלהים כאשר דבר לך וכאשר נשבע לאבותיך לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב¹³: ולא אתכם לבדכם אנכי כרת את הברית הזאת ואת האלה הזאת¹⁴: כי את אשר ישנו פה עמנו עמד היום לפני יקוק אלהינו ואת אשר איננו פה עמנו היום:

Devarim 29:9-14

⁹You stand here today before Adonai your God... ¹¹to enter into a covenant with Adonai your God... ¹²in order to maintain you as God's nation, as God will be your God, as has been told to you and as was promised to your ancestors, to Avraham, to Yitzhak and to Ya'akov. ¹³But it is not only with you that I make this covenant... ¹⁴but with both those who are standing here with us today, in the presence of Adonai our God, along with those who are not here with us today.

Michael Wyschogrod, *The Body of Faith* 65-67

...why a covenant with the carnal instead of the spiritual seed of Abraham? Is it physical relationship that is essential? Are there not those who are Abraham's children in the spirit who are more dear to God than a crass, perhaps unbelieving, Jew who is related to Abraham in the flesh but whose spiritual illumination is quite dim? Are not the real elect the aristocrats of the spirit, who derive from all people, cultures, and races?

Michael Wyschogrod, *The Body of Faith* 65-67

The difficulty with [the] spiritualization of the God-man relationship is that it is untrue to man's nature, which is largely carnal. The division of man into the spiritual and the material is itself an act of abstraction that has a limited validity but that must not obscure the basic unity of human existence... Man is not a coupling of the spiritual and material but a creature who thinks and runs, grieves and cries, is amused and laughs... the God of Israel confirms man as he created him to live in the material cosmos. There is therefore no possibility of a divine requirement for the discarding of a part of human existence.

Michael Wyschogrod, *The Body of Faith* 65-67

...And that is why God's election is of a carnal people. By electing the seed of Abraham, God creates a people that is in his service in the totality of its human being and not just in its moral and spiritual existence. The domain of the family, the most fundamental and intimate human association, is thereby sanctified, so that obedience to God does not require hate of father and mother.”

Judaism as Religion and Mission

דברים כט:יז-כ

¹⁷פֶּן יֵשׁ בְּכֶם אִישׁ אוֹ אִשָּׁה אוֹ מִשְׁפָּחָה אוֹ שִׁבְט אֲשֶׁר לְבָבוֹ פָּנָה הַיּוֹם מֵעַם יִקְנֹךְ אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְלַכֵּת לַעֲבֹד אֶת אֱלֹהֵי הַגּוֹיִם הֵהֱם פֶּן יֵשׁ בְּכֶם שָׂרֵשׁ פֶּרֶה רֵאשׁ וְלַעֲנָה¹⁸: וְהָיָה בְּשִׁמְעוֹ אֶת דְּבָרֵי הָאֱלֹהִים הַזֹּאת וְהִתְבָּרַךְ בְּלִבּוֹ לֵאמֹר שְׁלוֹם יְהִי לִי כִּי בִשְׂרָרוֹת לְבִי אֶלֶף לְמַעַן סְפוֹת הַרְוֶה אֶת הַצִּמְאָה¹⁹: לֹא יֵאבֶה יִקְנֹךְ סֵלֶם לוֹ כִּי אִזּוֹ יַעֲשֶׂן אַף יִקְנֹךְ וְקִנְאָתוֹ בְּאִישׁ הַהוּא וְרִבְצָה בּוֹ כָּל הָאֱלֹהִים הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסֵפֶר הַזֶּה וּמָחָה יִקְנֹךְ אֶת שְׁמוֹ מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם²⁰: וְהִבְדִּילוֹ יִקְנֹךְ לְרַעַה מִכָּל שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כָּל אֱלוֹת הַבְּרִית הַכְּתוּבָה בְּסֵפֶר הַתּוֹרָה הַזֶּה:

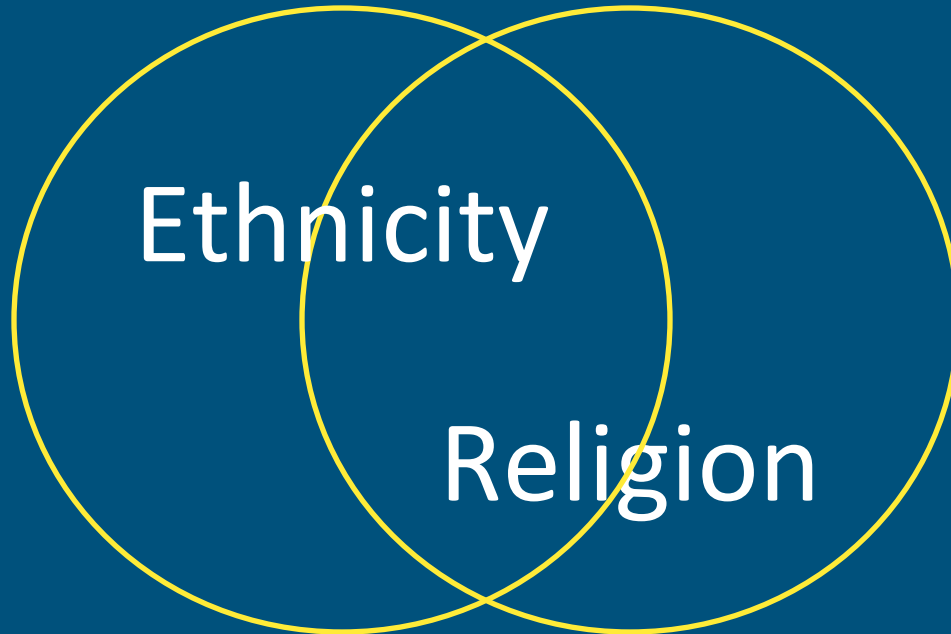
Devarim 29:17-20

¹⁷Perhaps there is someone among you, a man or a woman or a clan or a tribe, whose heart is today turning away from the Lord our God to go worship the gods of those nations. Perhaps there is among you a root sprouting gall and wormwood. ¹⁸When he hears the words of this curse and feels blessed in his heart, saying, “I will have peace, for I will follow the whims of my heart”... ¹⁹The Lord will not be willing to forgive him, for then the anger and jealousy of the Lord will be kindled against that man, and all the curse that is written in this scroll will lie upon him. The Lord will wipe out his name from underneath the heavens. ²⁰The Lord will separate him out for evil from all the tribes of Israel according to all of the curses of the covenant that is written in this scroll of teaching.

Judaism as Religion and Mission

Rambam Responsum #293

...The core point is that Avraham our father is the one who taught and educated the people, informing them of the religious truth and the unity of God, rejecting idols and their worship. He brought many into the Divine Presence and taught, instructed and commanded his descendants to follow God's way, as it is said in the Torah, "For I have singled him out, that he may instruct his children and his posterity to keep the way of the Lord..." Therefore, anyone in any generation who converts and anyone who unifies God's name as is written in the Torah is a student of Avraham our father and a member of his household, and Avraham himself is responsible for setting him on the right path just as he did to the people of his own generation... Avraham our father is thus the father to all of his descendants who properly follow his example and also a father to all of his students and to any future convert...



Ethnicity

Religion