



Saturday, April 22, 2023

**On The Bimah**

Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb

**Board Greeter**

Marci Greenstein

**Gabbay**

Ken Avner

**Oneg Captain**

Amy Jaslow

**Parshiot Tazria & Metzora, & Rosh Chodesh Iyar - Vayikra 12.1-15.33**

Rishon - Vayikra 12.1-4

Reader: Helen Avner

Aliyah: Stacy Feuer & Michael Ostheimer

Pages: Revised Plaut –735/Original Plaut – 826

Sheni - Vayikra 14.1-4

Reader: Rabbi Fred Scherlinder Dobb

Aliyah: Harvey & Patti Iglarsh

Pages: Revised Plaut –752 /Original Plaut – 841

Maftir for Rosh Chodesh - Bamidbar 28.9-15

Reader: Samantha Cutler

Pages: Revised Plaut – 1082 /Original Plaut – 1210

Fred Scherlinder Dobb

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## Bikes for the World Collection -- Sunday, April 30 @ Adat Shalom.

Please bring your serviceable complete bicycle, adult or children's, accompanied by a suggested minimum \$10 per bike donation. Flat tires or a missing seat or pedal matter little. Fat-tired mountain bikes and one-speed "cruisers" are the most-desired models. We also accept tandems, recumbents, adult tricycles, trail-a-bikes, and even unicycles. Also, children's bikes, because (1) they get children to school, (2) servicing a kid's bike overseas generates mechanic employment just as an adult bike does, and (3) they fit well into the interstices of a shipping container (and increase the value of the shipment)! ALSO usable bicycle SPARE PARTS and components, including tubes, tires, wheels, chains, pedals, saddles, cables, and mountain bike handlebars (but not "drop" handlebars).

AND, usable bicycle accessories, including helmets, pumps, locks, gloves, chains (for locks), bicycle books and manuals, and hand tools including general tools such as wrenches and screwdrivers, as well as specialized bike tools.

We will have tax receipts for all donations.

**Book Collection:** We are collecting nearly new children's books for Kindworks to be part of backpacks for the summer for over 2000 underserved kids and youth, ages 3 through 18. The kids who will receive the Summer Fun Sacks include Afghan and migrant youth in temporary and permanent housing; children served through A Wider Circle's DC Ward 8 Hub; and in programs run by Identity, Linkages to Learning, MoCo Rec Long Branch Center, Platform of Hope, SAMU First Response, Rainbow Community Development Center, and others. Please place your donations in the book bin in the Adat Shalom Lobby.

### ANI V'ATAH

### אני ואתה

(Arik Einstein - Miki Gavrielov)



אני ואתה נשנה את העולם,  
אני ואתה אז לבואו כבר פולם,  
אמרו את זה קודם לפני,  
לא משנה - אני ואתה נשנה את העולם.

You & I will change the world

You & I – then all will follow

They've said it before me

No matter: you & I will change the world

*Ani v'ata n'shaneh et ha'olam*

*Ani v'ata az yavo'u kvar kulam*

*Amru et zeh kodem l'fanai*

*Zeh lo m'shaneh: Ani v'ata n'shaneh et ha'olam.*

You & I will try from the start

It'll be hard, so what, it's no so bad

They've said it before me; no matter

You & I will change the world

*Ani v'ata n'naseh me'haht'chala*

*Yih'yeh lanu ra, ein davar, ze lo nora*

*Amru et zeh kodem l'fanai; ze lo m'shaneh*

*Ani v'ata n'shaneh et ha'olam.*

אני ואתה ננסה מהתחלה,  
יהיה לנו רע, אין דבר, זה לא נורא,  
אמרו את זה קודם לפני,  
זה לא משנה - אני ואתה נשנה את העולם.

FROM THE ISRAELI DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, 75 YEARS AGO THIS WEEK

THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

THE STATE OF ISRAEL is prepared to cooperate with the agencies and representatives of the United Nations in implementing the resolution of the General Assembly of the 29th November, 1947, and will take steps to bring about the economic union of the whole of Eretz-Israel.

WE APPEAL to the United Nations to assist the Jewish people in the building-up of its State and to receive the State of Israel into the comity of nations.

WE APPEAL - in the very midst of the onslaught launched against us now for months - to the Arab inhabitants of the State of Israel to preserve peace and participate in the upbuilding of the State on the basis of full and equal citizenship and due representation in all its provisional and permanent institutions.

WE EXTEND our hand to all neighboring states and their peoples in an offer of peace and good neighborliness, and appeal to them to establish bonds of cooperation and mutual help with the sovereign Jewish people settled in its own land. The State of Israel is prepared to do its share in a common effort for the advancement of the entire Middle East.

WE APPEAL to the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora to rally round the Jews of Eretz-Israel in the tasks of immigration and upbuilding and to stand by them in the great struggle for the realization of the age-old dream - the redemption of Israel.

PLACING OUR TRUST IN THE "ROCK OF ISRAEL," WE AFFIX OUR SIGNATURES TO THIS PROCLAMATION AT THIS SESSION OF THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE, ON THE SOIL OF THE HOMELAND, IN THE CITY OF TEL-AVIV, ON THIS SABBATH EVE, THE 5TH DAY OF IYAR, 5708 (14TH MAY, 1948).

## Yahrzeits for the week of 2 Iyar, April 22

### **2 Iyar - April 22**

Alexander Kleinman, Grandfather of Ellie Kleinman  
and, Father of Ted Kleinman  
Stanley Green, Father of Jody Green  
Elmer Kane, Father of Donald Kane

### **3 Iyar - April 23**

Ilse Bacharach, Mother of Joan Bacharach  
Esther Green, Grandmother of Deena Goldsmith  
Marcia Melinger, Mother of Joseph Melinger

### **4 Iyar - April 24**

Rose Schonzeit, Grandmother of Darin Schonzeit  
Anita Greenwald, Mother of Hal Greenwald

### **5 Iyar - April 25**

Herbert S. Fuhrman, Father of Bob Fuhrman  
Michael Orchen, Grandfather of Marla Zipin

### **6 Iyar - April 26**

Phillip Spivak, Grandfather of Michelle Melinger  
Milton Turen, Father of Kit Turen  
Ruth Gavil, Mother of Andrew Gavil  
Rae Wolfe, Aunt of Bruce Kutnick  
Roslyn Nitkin, Mother of Ralph Nitkin  
Sam Book, Husband of Sandra Hayward  
Emanuel Kumin, Father-in-law of Linda Kumin

### **7 Iyar - April 27**

Annie Greenblatt, Mother of Art Greenblatt  
Renée Lipson, Mother of Jodi Lipson

### **8 Iyar - April 28**

Joseph Teck, Grandfather of Loren Amdursky  
Julian Steinfeld, Father of Roberta Jacobson  
Marilyn Leavitt, Mother of Todd Leavitt

# Being Nosy About Someone's Conversion is Forbidden by Jewish Law



By Sandra Lawson

1

ויקרא י"ט:י"ח

לֹא־תִקֹּם וְלֹא־תִטּוֹר אֶת־בְּנֵי עַמֶּךָ וְאֶהְבֵּת לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ אֲנִי יְהוָה:

Leviticus 19:18

You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against your countrymen. Love your fellow as yourself: I am the LORD.

Someone who converted is your "countryman." Love this person as you would love yourself and your loved ones, meaning, don't ask them invasive and personal questions that will make them feel alienated, exposed, and different. Welcome them with warmth and help them feel like they belong, just as you would want someone to help you feel like *you* belong. That is what "V'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocho" is all about.

2

בבא מציעא נ"ח ב:י"ב-י"ג

תני תנא קמיה דרב נחמן בר יצחק כל המלבין פני חבירו ברבים

כאילו שופך דמים א"ל שפיר קא אמרת דחזינא ליה דאזיל

סומקא ואתי חוורא אמר ליה אביי לרב דימי במערבא במאי

זהירי א"ל באחוורי אפי דאמר רבי חנינא הכל יורדין לגיהנם חוץ

משלשה הכל ס"ד אלא אימא כל היורדין לגיהנם עולים חוץ  
 משלשה שיורדין ואין עולין ואלו הן הבא על אשת איש והמלבין  
 פני חברו ברבים והמכנה שם רע לחבירו מכנה היינו מלבין אע"ג  
 דדש ביה בשמיה

Bava Metzia 58b:12-13

The Gemara relates that **the *tanna*** who recited *mishnayot* and *baraitot* in the study hall **taught a *baraita* before Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak: Anyone who humiliates another in public, it is as though he were spilling blood.** Rav Naḥman bar Yitzḥak **said to him: You have spoken well, as we see that** after the humiliated person blushes, **the red leaves his face and pallor comes in its place, which is tantamount to spilling his blood. Abaye said to Rav Dimi: In the West, i.e., Eretz Yisrael, with regard to what mitzva are they particularly vigilant?** Rav Dimi **said to him:** They are vigilant in refraining from **humiliating** others, **as Rabbi Ḥanina says: Everyone descends to Gehenna except for three.** The Gemara asks: **Does it enter your mind that everyone descends to Gehenna? Rather, say: Anyone who descends to Gehenna ultimately ascends, except for three who descend and do not ascend, and these are they: One who engages in intercourse with a married woman,** as this transgression is a serious offense against both God and a person; **and one who humiliates another in public; and one who calls another a derogatory name.** The Gemara asks with regard to **one who calls another a derogatory name: That is identical to one who shames**

him; why are they listed separately? The Gemara answers: **Although** the victim **grew accustomed to** being called that name **in** place of **his name**, and he is no longer humiliated by being called that name, since the intent was to insult him, the perpetrator's punishment is severe.

When we ask someone about their Jewish legitimacy, we are humiliating them. Imagine someone who moved to New York City 10 years ago and having someone say to them "You're from New York? I don't know about that -- you don't seem like a New Yorker. Where *exactly* did you grow up? What high school did you go to?" This feeling of making someone feel insecure and defensive, the Gemara describes this pain to be so harmful, it is as if you had spilled their blood.

The Gemara says that we will all descend into Gehenna at the end of our lives, but we will eventually become purified and ascend out of it and go to Olam Haba. However, there are a few folks who won't ascend. These are folks who have humiliated someone in public and those who have called someone a derogatory name. This would include telling someone, "You aren't a real Jew because you converted Reform." That is humiliating. You're telling them: "You're a goy" or "You're a shiksa" -- which are "derogatory names."

בבא מציעא נ"ט א:ב'

ולא עוד אלא אפילו בשעה שעוסקין בנגעים ואהלות אומרים לי  
 דוד הבא על אשת איש מיתתו במה ואני אומר להם מיתתו בחנק  
 ויש לו חלק לעוה"ב אבל המלבין את פני חבירו ברבים אין לו  
 חלק לעוה"ב

Bava Metzia 59a:2

**And moreover**, they torment me to the extent that **even at the time** when **they are engaged** in the public study of the *halakhot* of **leprous sores and tents** in which there is a corpse, i.e., halakhic matters that have no connection to my sin, **they say to me: David, one who engages in intercourse with a married woman, his death is effected with what** form of execution? **And I say to them: One who engages in intercourse with a married woman** before witnesses and with forewarning, **his death is by strangulation, but he still has a share in the World-to-Come. But one who humiliates another in public has no share in the World-to-Come.** The transgression of you, who humiliate me, is more severe than my transgression.

If you humiliate someone in public, you will not be deserving of going to Olam Haba. Unrelated to conversion, but still worth noting: humiliating someone for committing a sin is even more serious than the sin itself. Your invasive questions can make someone feel really uncomfortable.

בבא מציעא נ"ט א:ג'



(ואמר) מר זוטרא בר טוביה אמר רב ואמרי לה אמר רב חנא בר ביזנא אמר ר"ש חסידא ואמרי לה א"ר יוחנן משום רשב"י נוח לו לאדם שיפיל עצמו לכבשן האש ואל ילבין פני חברו ברבים מנ"ל מתמר דכתיב (בראשית לח, כה) היא מוצאת והיא שלחה אל חמיה

Bava Metzia 59a:3

**And Mar Zutra bar Toviyya says that Rav says; and some say Rav Ḥana bar Bizna says that Rabbi Shimon Ḥasida says; and some say Rabbi Yoḥanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai: It is more comfortable for a person to cast himself into a fiery furnace, than to humiliate another in public to avoid being cast into the furnace. From where do we derive this? From Tamar, daughter-in-law of Judah. When she was taken out to be burned, she did not reveal that she was pregnant with Judah's child. Rather, she left the decision to him, to avoid humiliating him in public, as it is written:** "And Judah said: Bring her forth, and let her be burnt. **When she was brought forth, she sent to her father-in-law,** saying: I am pregnant by the man to whom these belong. And she said: Examine these, whose are these, the signet, and the cords, and the staff?" (Genesis 38:24–25).

Tamar took the law of not humiliating someone so seriously, she was willing to be burned alive, rather than save herself by exposing her

pregnancy which would humiliate Judah. (This story is very problematic.)

5

בבא מציעא נ"ט ב:י"ב  
 תנו רבנן המאנה את הגר עובר בשלשה לאוין והלוחצו עובר  
 בשנים

Bava Metzia 59b:12

§ **The Sages taught: One who verbally mistreats the convert violates three prohibitions, and one who oppresses him in other ways violates two.**

Verbally mistreating someone who converted (asking them personal questions and inquiring about their legitimacy) violates three laws, and oppressing them violates two laws.

6

בבא מציעא נ"ט ב:י"ג  
 מאי שנא מאנה דכתיבי שלשה לאוין (שמות כב, כ) וגר לא תונה  
 (ויקרא יט, לג) וכי יגור אתך גר בארצכם לא תונו אותו (ויקרא  
 כה, יז) ולא תונו איש את עמיתו וגר בכלל עמיתו הוא לוחצו נמי  
 שלשה כתיבי (שמות כב, כ) ולא תלחצנו (שמות כג, ט) וגר לא  
 תלחץ (שמות כב, כד) ולא תהיה לו כנושה וגר בכלל הוא אלא  
 אחד זה ואחד זה בשלשה

Bava Metzia 59b:13

The Gemara asks: **What is different** with regard to verbal **mistreatment, that three prohibitions are written** concerning it: **“And you shall neither mistreat a convert”** (Exodus 22:20); **“And when a convert lives in your land, you shall not mistreat him”** (Leviticus 19:33); **“And you shall not mistreat, each man his colleague”** (Leviticus 25:17), **and a convert is included in the category of colleague?** With regard to **one who also oppresses a convert as well, three prohibitions are written:** **“And you shall neither mistreat a convert, nor oppress him”** (Exodus 22:20); **“And you shall not oppress a convert** (Exodus 23:9); **“And you shall not be to him like a creditor”** (Exodus 22:24). This last prohibition is a general prohibition, **in which converts are included.** Consequently, it is not correct that one who oppresses a convert violates only two prohibitions. **Rather, both this one, who verbally mistreats a convert, and that one, who oppresses him, violate three prohibitions.**

This section highlights many passages in Torah that command us to treat those who have converted with respect. It refers to someone who has converted to be a colleague. You would not go to a colleague and act as if you are a "creditor," interrogating them and demanding answers.

בבא מציעא נ"ט ב:י"ד

תניא רבי אליעזר הגדול אומר מפני מה הזהירה תורה בל"ו  
מקומות ואמרי לה במ"ו מקומות בגר מפני שסורו רע

Bava Metzia 59b:14

**It is taught in a *baraita* that Rabbi Eliezer the Great says: For what reason did the Torah issue warnings in thirty-six places, and some say in forty-six places, with regard to causing any distress to a convert? It is due to the fact that a convert's inclination is evil, i.e., he is prone to return to his previous way of living.**

If you cause a convert to feel uncomfortable and stressed about being in Jewish spaces, you will cause them to leave. They may very well return to their previous religion, which would be such a shonde! One thing the world doesn't need less of is another Jew.

בבא מציעא נ"ט ב:ט"ו

מאי דכתיב וגר לא תונה ולא תלחצנו כי גרים הייתם בארץ מצרים (תנינא) רבי נתן אומר מום שבך אל תאמר לחברך והיינו דאמרי אינשי דזקיף ליה זקיפא בדיותקיה לא נימא ליה לחבריה זקיף בינתא:

Bava Metzia 59b:15

**What is the meaning of that which is written: “And you shall not mistreat a convert nor oppress him, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 22:20)? We learned in a *baraita* that Rabbi Natan says: A defect that is in you, do not mention it in another. Since the Jewish people were themselves strangers, they are**

not in a position to demean a convert because he is a stranger in their midst. **And this** explains the adage **that people say: One who has a person hanged in his family [*bidyotkei*], does not say to another member of his household: Hang a fish for me**, as the mention of hanging is demeaning for that family.

This section really speaks for itself. Empathy! Relating to someone! We were strangers in the land of Egypt. We were nervous, afraid, and in need of kindness and understanding. So when you ask inappropriate questions -- questioning a Jew's belonging in a Jewish space -- you demean them and forget your own journey in Mitzrayim.

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# Creating an Inclusive Judaism for the Future



By Sandra Lawson

The American Jewish community is becoming more diverse. The same demographics that we see in American society are seen in the American Jewish community. In helping communities to become more radically welcoming of others, I created this source sheet to help people in the Jewish community understand what Judaism says about welcoming others into our community.

בראשית א':כ"ז

(כו) וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים | אֶת־הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ

זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם:

Genesis 1:27

(27) And God created a human being in God's image, in the image of God, God created him; male and female God created them.

שמות י"ב:ל"ח

(לח) וְגַם־עֶרְב רַב עָלָה אִתָּם וַיֵּצְאוּ וּבָקָר מִקְנֵה כְּבֵד מְאֹד:

Exodus 12:38

(38) Moreover, a mixed multitude went up with them, and very much livestock, both flocks and herds.

שמות י"ב:מ"ט

(מט) תורה אחת יהיה לאזרח ולגר הגר בתוכם:

Exodus 12:49

(49) There shall be one law for the citizen and for the stranger who dwells among you.

שמות כ"ג:ט'

(ט) וגר לא תלחץ ואהם ידעתם את נפש הגר כי גרים הייתם בארץ מצרים:

Exodus 23:9

(9) You shall not oppress a stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger, having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt.

ישעיהו נ"ו:ז'

(ז) ... כי ביתי בית תפלה יקרא לכל העמים:

Isaiah 56:7

(7)...For My House shall be called A house of prayer for all peoples."

## Love Your Neighbor as Yourself

*Talmud Bavli Bava Metzia 59b*

**What** is the meaning of that **which is written: “And you shall not mistreat a convert nor oppress him, because you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 22:20)? We learned that Rabbi Natan says: A defect that is in you, do not mention it in another.** Since the Jewish people were themselves strangers, they are not in a position to demean a convert because he is a stranger in their midst.

6

וּקְרָא י"ט:י"ח

... (יח) ... וְאֶהְבֶּתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ

Leviticus 19:18

(18). Love your fellow as yourself

*Ramban on Leviticus 19:18*

The phrase “Love your neighbor as yourself” cannot be meant literally, since man cannot be expected to love his neighbor as himself. Moreover, Rabbi Akiva has ruled that “Your life comes first.” The Torah here enjoins us that we should wish upon our neighbor the same benefits that we wish upon ourselves. Perhaps, this is the reason for the dative instead of the accusative form of the verb phrase; we find the same in “And you shall love him as yourself” (19:34). Indeed, sometimes a person may wish upon his neighbor certain benefits, but only wealth, not wisdom and the like. But even if he wishes his cherished friend well in everything, i.e. wealth,



honor, learning, and wisdom, he will not do so unstintingly; he will still insist on a larger share of the benefits. It is this shortcoming that the Torah condemned. Rather, a man should wish his fellow well in everything, just as he does in his own case, and he should place no limitations on his love. Therefore, in the case of Yonatan and David (I Shemuel 20:17), it says that Yonatan “loved him as his own soul,” since he had removed all jealousy from his heart, declaring “And you shall rule over Israel” (ibid. 23:17).

7

משנה תורה, הלכות דעות ו'ג'

(ג) מְצוּה עַל כָּל אָדָם לְאַהֲבֵה אֶת כָּל אֶחָד וְאֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל כְּגֹפוֹ  
 שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (ויקרא יט יח) "וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֶךָ כְּמוֹךָ". לְפִיכָף צָרִיךְ לְסַפֵּר  
 בְּשִׁבְחוֹ וּלְחַוֵּס עַל מְמוֹנֵו כַּאֲשֶׁר הוּא חָס עַל מְמוֹן עֵצְמוֹ וְרוֹצֵה  
 בְּכַבוֹד עֵצְמוֹ. וְהַמְתַּכְּבֵּד בְּקִלּוֹן חֲבֵרוֹ אֵין לוֹ חֵלֶק לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא:

Mishneh Torah, Human Dispositions 6:3

(3) It is mandatory upon every man to love each and every one of Israel even as he loves his own self, for it is said: "But thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Lev. 19.19.). One is therefore, obliged to speak in praise of his neighbor, and to be considerate of his money, even as he is considerate of his own money, or desires to preserve his own honor. "But whosoever glorifies himself in disgracing his neighbor has no share in the world to come" (Yerushalmi, Hegigah. 2.1). *Cairo quotes Pirke Abot, chapter 2, as authority for this; but the error evidently was made by copyist. G.*

משנה תורה, הלכות דעות ו'ד'  
 (ד) אֶהְבֶּת הַגֵּר שָׂבָא וְנִכְנָס תַּחַת כַּנְפֵי הַשְּׁכִינָה שְׁתִּי מְצוֹת עֲשֵׂה.  
 אַחַת מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא בְּכָלֵל רַעִים וְאַחַת מִפְּנֵי שֶׁהוּא גֵר וְהַתּוֹרָה  
 אָמְרָה (דברים י ט) "וְאֶהְבֶּתֶם אֶת הַגֵּר". צִוָּה עַל אֶהְבֶּת הַגֵּר כְּמוֹ  
 שְׁצִוָּה עַל אֶהְבֶּת עַצְמוֹ שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (דברים ו ה) "וְאֶהְבֶּת אֶת ה'  
 אֱלֹהֶיךָ". הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא עַצְמוֹ אוֹהֵב גֵּרִים שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (דברים י יח)  
 "וְאֹהֵב גֵּר":

Mishneh Torah, Human Dispositions 6:4

(4) The love for the proselyte, who came and embraced the protection beneath the wings of the Shekinah, rests upon two mandatory commandments, one because he is included in the commandment concerning a neighbor, and the other because he is a stranger, and the Torah charged us, saying: "Love ye therefore the stranger" (Deut. 10.19.). He commanded on the love for the stranger as He commanded concerning the love for Himself, saying: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God" (Ibid. 6.5.). The Holy One, blessed is He! loves the strangers Himself, even as it is said: "And (He) loveth the stranger" (Ibid. 10.18). *Baba Mezi'a, 59b. G.*

בבא מציעא נ"ט ב:י"ג  
 מאי שנא מאנה דכתיבי שלשה לאוין (שמות כב, כ) וגר לא תונה  
 (ויקרא יט, לג) וכי יגור אתך גר בארצכם לא תונו אותו (ויקרא

כה, יז) ולא תונו איש את עמיתו וגר בכלל עמיתו הוא לוחצו נמי  
 שלשה כתיבי (שמות כב, כ) ולא תלחצנו (שמות כג, ט) וגר לא  
 תלחץ (שמות כב, כד) ולא תהיה לו כנושה וגר בכלל הוא אלא  
 אחד זה ואחד זה בשלשה

Bava Metzia 59b:13

The Gemara asks: **What is different** with regard to verbal **mistreatment, that three prohibitions are written** concerning it: **“And you shall neither mistreat a convert”** (Exodus 22:20); **“And when a convert lives in your land, you shall not mistreat him”** (Leviticus 19:33); **“And you shall not mistreat, each man his colleague”** (Leviticus 25:17), **and a convert is** included in the category of **colleague?** With regard to **one who also oppresses a convert as well, three prohibitions are written:** **“And you shall neither mistreat a convert, nor oppress him”** (Exodus 22:20); **“And you shall not oppress a convert** (Exodus 23:9); **“And you shall not be to him like a creditor”** (Exodus 22:24). This last prohibition is a general prohibition, **in which converts are included.** Consequently, it is not correct that one who oppresses a convert violates only two prohibitions. **Rather, both this** one, who verbally mistreats a convert, **and that** one, who oppresses him, **violate three prohibitions.**

This section highlights many passages in Torah that command us to treat those who have converted with respect. It refers to someone who has

converted to be a colleague. You would not go to a colleague and act as if you are a "creditor," interrogating them and demanding answers.

*Diane Kaufmann Tobin April 2013*

Many born Jews are resistant or unwittingly fearful of completely welcoming those who join us through conversion, intermarriage, and adoption. The abiding notion of exile, formed in Egyptian bondage more than three millennia ago and reinforced by centuries of persecution, remains part of our psyche today.

If there is a way in which converts are different from born Jews, it is their lack of that fearful lens onto the world. The Israelites spent 40 years in the desert, precisely to shed this fearful outlook. The mikvah, containing 40 *se'ahs* of rainwater, is a place of transformation and rebirth. When converts immerse in the mikvah, they are touched by that desert generation who led us into the Promised Land. Converts, unburdened by collective tragedy, have the potential to change the collective mindset of the Jewish people. We should embrace the wisdom of our ancestors and those among us who bring fresh dedication and affirmation to the future of Judaism.

## **Contemporary**

What is Pluralism?

—*Diana L. Eck, 2006*

The plurality of religious traditions and cultures has come to characterize every part of the world today. But what is pluralism? Here are four points to begin our thinking:

First, pluralism is not diversity alone, but the *energetic engagement with diversity*. Diversity can and has meant the creation of religious ghettos with little traffic between or among them. Today, religious diversity is a given, but pluralism is not a given; it is an achievement. Mere diversity without real encounter and relationship will yield increasing tensions in our societies.

Second, pluralism is not just tolerance, but the *active seeking of understanding across lines of difference*. Tolerance is a necessary public virtue, but it does not require Christians and Muslims, Hindus, Jews, and ardent secularists to know anything about one another. Tolerance is too thin a foundation for a world of religious difference and proximity. It does nothing to remove our ignorance of one another, and leaves in place the stereotype, the half-truth, the fears that underlie old patterns of division and violence. In the world in which we live today, our ignorance of one another will be increasingly costly.

Third, pluralism is not relativism, but the *encounter of commitments*. The new paradigm of pluralism does not require us to leave our identities and our commitments behind, for pluralism is the encounter of commitments. It means holding our deepest differences, even our religious differences, not in isolation, but in relationship to one another.

Fourth, pluralism is *based on dialogue*. The language of pluralism is that of dialogue and encounter, give and take, criticism and self-criticism.

Dialogue means both speaking and listening, and that process reveals both common understandings and real differences. Dialogue does not mean everyone at the “table” will agree with one another. Pluralism involves the commitment to being at the table — with one’s commitments.

*Rabbi Leiah Moser April 2013*

We need to do a better job of recognizing and including non-Jewish partners and other members of the “mixed multitude” who form an important and vital part of our communities. Rather than hold these people at arms length as uncomfortable reminders of our failure to adhere to our ancestors’ rigid ethnic boundaries, we ought to reach out to them, making a place for them, both ritually and organizationally, within our communities.

From the essay: *Preparing Our Communities For Conversations On Race*

### Walking Into the Building

*Rabbi Joshua Lesser 2018*

We also must think about how people are treated when they walk into the building. There are still ways that Jews of color and multiple ethnicities are ignored, mislabeled and subjected to inappropriate assumptions or questions. It is important to be overt with the congregation.

We have regularly sent out to our community communications with these five guidelines:

### **When encountering another person**

- 1. Avoid making assumptions about gender identity, sexual orientation, religious identity, Jewish background, race or reasons for joining us.**
- 2. Respect a person's identity and self-label, and respect a person's chosen name and pronouns. Do not comment about whether a name sounds Jewish or not.**
- 3. Do not comment on whether someone looks Jewish or not.**
- 4. Do not assume people want to only speak about their identity, particularly when their identity is different from yours. Engage them in conversation and get to know them. Be engaging rather than curious.**
- 5. Do not expect a guest to immediately become your resource on understanding their identity.**