

Who is the Jew?

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The question “Who is the Jew?” inverts the question “Who is a Jew?”. For “Who is a Jew?” only seeks to treat the Jew as a particular object of a genus, of a category, to objectify the Jew, to find the natural Essence of the Jew, when the Jew in fact has no Nature, being only a position at the Center, crossing the World [Empire] and the Universe, holding this stance while nonetheless acting and living in the World. Whether “a” Jew is defined by Rabbinic law, the halacha (Jewish Law) of the dogma, doctrine, and code of human authorities apodictically given,¹ or by the Modern concepts of ethnicity [World], race [Nature], or religion [Convention], it asks the Jew to answer to the World, to give the World an identity-category to determine him there, as a particular in the World. “Who is *the* Jew?” asks : what is the World to the Jew, or, more precisely, what, in particular, does the Jew do to the World?

The Shema (“Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One”) and its Oneness are the Center of the Jew, crossing the Jew and the Other on the inside of the Jew, as the Ger.² The Jew holds himself in the memory of the Exodus, of being a Stranger (Ger) in the Land of Israel. “For remember that you were a Stranger in the Land of Egypt” (Leviticus 19:34, Exodus 22:2, Deuteronomy 10:19) is continually repeated. When יהוה chooses the Jewish People he makes this

¹ David Halivni’s claim (Halivni 1986) that this law is justificatory rather than apodictic cannot be the case, since if it were, then each Rabbinic claim would be open to contestation in a space of Reason, the unique authority of the Rabbis would fall apart, and the Rabbinic tradition as such would be fully obviated by Karaism, and ironically, returned to its more organic, polycentric Talmudic development (as opposed to the Modern reification of the Law Codes).

² The term “Ger,” or stranger, in Hebrew came to refer, in Rabbinic Judaism, to a Jewish convert (*ger tzedek*), while, in its Biblical meaning, the term refers to a non-Israelite living in the Land of Israel (*ger toshav*).

memory inseparable from Chosenness. The Torah itself is bound to the memory of Egypt, and so to the Ger at the heart of the Jew.

Why are the Jews chosen? Why this particular People? The acceptance of the Ger [the Ger Toshav (foreign resident) in the Land of Israel, or the Ger Tzedek (righteous convert) in the Diaspora] is not a concession to universalism by a particularistic people, but the heart of what makes this People particular. A particularity merely to the World, not to the Universe, and not of course to the Ancients who also practice the reciprocity of perspectives. The World does not know the completeness of the Shema, of the People integral with themselves as the Jewish People (“hear, O Israel!”), but dismembers the person in its identity categories, as a finite object, shatters the vessels that the Torah recomposes.

The history of Jewish descent shows a gradual internalization of the Ger into the putative Nature of the Jew. From an original, social Jewishness transmitted by the father, and an external female nationness, associated with the mother (the foreign woman, the temptress, the irrelevance of female lineage), emerges its inverse, an internalization of the non-Jewish woman, or the female Ger, into Jewish descent as now defining the natural, or born, status of the Jew through matrilineal descent under Rabbinic Law. We see in genetics (mtDNA) a tracing of this internalization in the non-Israelite status of the matrilineal lines which have come to define born Jewishness. While on the other hand patrilineal Jewishness transforms itself into a Ger position. The two are in fact internal to each other, and patrilineal Jewishness and its claims itself reveals the internal Ger position that constitutes the putative naturality of born Jewishness.

The Ger Toshav (foreign resident) and the Ger Tzedek (the convert) collectively demonstrate the double inclusion of the Ger inside the Jew and the Jew inside the Ger, the reciprocity of perspectives crossed within the Jew. The Ger Toshav is the Ger inside of the Jew in Israel, the Nations who live amongst the Jew, and the Ger Tzedek is the Jew inside of the Ger, the Jew who lives among the Nations, but must also understand the Nations to be internal to him (through

conversion). The Jew is a canonical formula [Lévi-Strauss] crossing the World back to the Center inside of the Jew.³

The idea of a Jewish race (whether White or Brown) excludes the fact that the Ger and the Jew are precisely convertible with each other. "An Israelite in all respects," the Talmud says (Yevamot 47b): that there is no difference between the born Jew and convert means nothing but that the Jew is at the very Center of that reciprocal "difference." This is why Moses first-born son, Ger-shom, was named "I was a stranger in another Land." The name refers to Moses and yet is spoken patrilineally through the name of his son (whose Mother is Midianite). Moses, the Prophet, was a Ger. Moses, the Egyptian.

The same question is posed by the Khazar-theory, and antisemites of all stripes. It is the question of the real Jew, the natural Jew, etc. The convert is a victory for the antisemite, who claims thereby to contest the Nature of the Jew, even though the Jew is not chosen for his Nature, but chosen to be without it. Is this not the irony of the Jew by choice? Since the Jew who chooses to be a Jew, has done nothing but replicate the choice of the God himself, who chose the Jew for their freedom, and not for their nature, and so does the Jew by choice thereby not reveal himself to have been born a Jew, retroactively, while the born Jew who never chooses it, to have never been a Jew, since all that was chosen by the God is freedom?

Is this not also the same freedom [Exodus] that the secular Jew chooses, not when he merely ignores the statutes of the halacha, negatively, by assimilation, etc. but follows the positive true Halacha in positively existing Jewishness, the form of life that rejects every idolatry of human authority? Or the Karaite, who thinks from the patrilineal Jew, becoming themselves a kind of internal heretical Ger within the Rabbinic Jew? Or the Crypto-Jew, who suspends the Jew of the World, replaces even the Jew of the World with Christianity or Islam, the religions of the Nations, so as to maintain the Shema (the One) at the Center of the Jew irreducible to the World? Or the Jew at the margins of the World [Africa, India, China, the Americas, etc.], the non-talmudic Jews, who stake their claim to the Jew and so force the inclusion of the Universe into the World as against the idolatrous [Orthodox]

³A transformational analogy operating on functions and terms. $Fx(a) : Fy(b) :: Fx(b) : Fa^{-1}(y)$.

a= ger, b = jew, x = diaspora, y=israel.

diaspora (ger) : israel (jew) :: diaspora (jew) : ger⁻¹ (israel).

The Jew crosses the Diaspora and Israel as roles or functions, so as to turn Israel into the Center of all Humanity (i.e. of the function, ger⁻¹, Humanity itself at the crossing of self and other).

Jew? Or the Messianic Jew, who takes the “absurd” step of affirming Jesus as Jewish messiah, who thinks across Christianity and Judaism, across Gentile and Jew, from the Center of “the Two-Fold Yeshua community,”⁴ taking on the impossibility of this position within the World, Convention, Tradition, and all their feeble objections? Or the Russian Jew, who takes the Jew as pure Nationhood to its absolute limit, but thereby subverting natural Jewishness itself, through posing a non-halachic Nationhood uninterpretable in terms of the born Jew within Judaism? This is the true Halacha, that crosses outside of Halacha itself, that holds within it the Memory of the Exodus [Pesach], that holds the Jew forever under the wings of the Shechinah [there are two of them]. This is the Torah, which made the Jew a peculiar Nation amongst Nations, because one that would stand for Humanity itself.

It's not that there is not a Jewish nature or a Jewish nation, but that when there is, it is simply a position so as to obviate nature or the nation. The Jew's nature is a kind of effect of the particularity that the Jew has for the World that is not defined by the World, yet appears in the World nonetheless. The Jew crosses the World and the Universe as such, is given a mission, a promise, to the World, to repair it [tikkun], to make it conformal with the Universe.

The Jew holds the messianic completion of the World made conformal in his heart. The Jew, and the Jewish People, are this completion themselves [Rosenzweig]. The Jewish story is compacted in-itself, and needs no supplement or supersession. This is the only reason they might reject the other prophets, such as Jesus or Mohammed, though to accept or reject them is entirely a free act. The Jews have no special status in Nature, but only a position as an Ancient People who affect the World.

That the Jew is the particular group responsible for all the World's problems, who needs to be destroyed in their particularity to Save the World, is the distorted image of the Jew as universal Humanity who ends the World. In antisemitism, the Jewish generic, the Jew at the Center of the Universe and the World, is rejected and attacked as a particular unintegrable with the World. Israel, the Nation, etc. is denied, to be superseded by the universalism of leftism or the assertion of a right-wing group [combined in leftist moral universalism and Palestinian nationalism]. They seek to

⁴<https://ourrabbis.org/main/resources/the-mjrc-vision-of-messianic-judaism>.

supersede the particularity of the Jew, fearing the threat to the World of the generic incarnate [Wyschogrod], of the collective Christ.

The ordinary Christian, unlike the leftist secular-Christian, sees the Jew as himself on the other side of the mirror. He no longer opposes him as particular (as the antisemite) but sees the Jew as all Humanity [Paul]. The ordinary Christian integrates the Christian generic and the Jewish generic, just as the Messianic Jew attempts in the Two-Fold Yeshua-community. That is the secret to the difference between the ordinary Christian and the supersessional antisemite. For the ordinary Christian, it is not the Christian who is universal, but the Jew.

The paradox of Zionism : the truth of Zionism will never be “Religious Zionism” (*dati leumi*), will never be Zionism as Religion, Orthodox idolatry. Zionism will not succeed if it makes the Jew into a particular Nation without its true particularity to lack Nature. But the mutual inclusion of the Ger and the Jew is also hidden by the false aporia of Exilism [Magid] and Zionism. Indeed, if Zionism means nothing but that the Jew is made a Nation-Race, then the specificity of the Jew [at the Center] is lost. Yet, if Exilism means that Israel must be negated - the particularity of the Jew to the World, made concrete and real, in a land, a territory, a nation, a language, etc. - then equally the Jew [at the Center] is lost. Kaplan, and Rawidowicz, already saw that the Jew was destined to think-across the Diaspora and Israel, across Babylon and Jerusalem. A “cultural” Zionism, that is really simply a Zionism without Nature.

The one who says “I am a Jew” speaks as the God did when he named himself יהוה, and as Moses when he answered to God and said, “I am here,” at the Center of the Universe. *Yiddishkeit* is nothing but this tautological intimacy of the Jew with the Center in his Jewishness [Shagar]. It is a place where there is no division, identical with the person. Indeed, it is a self-giving act [Fichte]. It is not a purely individual act, however, since it expresses already the community inside the individual, belonging to a People, as in Ruth the Moabite’s declaration that “your People will be my People; and your God my God” (Ruth 1:16). The one who states this is the Jew, even if they are not a Jew.

The idea of a Jewish race excludes the inner identity of the Ger and the Jew. Even the seemingly more integrative idea of a Jewish ethnicity, in the last instance still makes the Jew into a group inside the World, merely an endogamous group, with its interests represented in the World, one that also does not necessarily describe its lived reality, but creates a prescriptive norm of what “counts as”

status, conversion, proper marriage etc. oriented to “survival” that is in fact mere survival in the World and governed by idolatrous human authorities and institutions, placing the telos of Tradition and Orthodoxy over and above the ordinary Jew. The idea of Jewish religion outside of the Jew himself is simple Idolatry.

The Jews are a People. A People because they are the collective, fractal expression of a Person – first Adam, then Moses, one day, Moshiach - who is the image of the God. A People because they live amongst the Nations even as they stand for something irreducible to the World or Nature. The Jews will never be merely a religion, dissolvable into some abstract universalism [of the World]. The Jews are an Ancient People, analogic with the Ancients at the margins of the World, who see themselves as analogic Jews, in symmetry.

The Jewishness of anthropology is expressed in the Exile itself, the one who crosses the worlds, who crosses the World and the Universe and returns at the Center of them both. The anthropologist who thinks-with, not as a mere academic endeavor, to objectify them, but to compose *his own personhood* at the Center of the Universe. It is precisely deconstruction, and the philosophy of difference, that still fails to think the Jew, and now tries to obscure his subversive force. To only move in the direction of Otherness, of Difference over Identity, results in an Exilism, that denies the Home of the Jew - Israel - and does not grasp the Jew at the Center of the reciprocity of perspectives, between the wings of the two Cherubim.