



## Does Judaism Condone Islamophobia?

Source Sheet by: Jonah Winer

### Pirkei DeRabbi Eliezer 30

### פרקי דרבי אליעזר ל'

"And he [Ishmael] dwelt in the wilderness of Paran" (Gen 21:21). Ishmael sent for a wife from among the daughters of Moab, and after three years Abraham went to see Ishmael his son, having sworn to Sarah that he would not descend from the camel in the place where Ishmael dwelt. He arrived there at midday and found there the wife of Ishmael. He said to her: Where is Ishmael? She said to him: He has gone with his mother to fetch the fruit of the palms from the wilderness. He said to her: Give me a little bread and a little water, for my soul is faint after the journey in the desert. She said to him: I have neither bread nor water. He said to her: When Ishmael comes (home) tell him this story, and say to him: A certain old man came from the land of Canaan to see thee, and he said, Exchange the threshold of thy house, for it is not good for thee. When Ishmael came (home) his wife told him the story, A son of a wise man is like half a wise man. Ishmael understood. His mother sent and took for him a wife from her father's house, and her name was Fatimah.

Again after three years Abraham went to see his son Ishmael, having sworn to Sarah as on the first occasion that he would not descend from the camel in the place where Ishmael

וישב במדבר פֶרַן שלח ישמעאל ולקח לו אשה מבנות מואב לאחר שלש שנים הלך אברהם לראות את ישמעאל בנו ונשבע לשרה שלא ירד מעל הגמל במקום שישמעאל שרוי תמן והגיע לשם בחצי היום ומצא שם את אשתו של ישמעאל אמ' לה היכן הוא ישמעאל אמרה לו הלך הוא ואמו להביא פירות ותמרים מן המדבר אמ' לה תני לי מעט לחם ומים כי עייפה נפשי מדרך המדבר אמרה לו אין לי לחם ולא מים אמ' לה כשיבא ישמעאל הגידי לו את הדברים הללו וב"ן חכ"ם כחצ"י חכ"ם ואמרי לו זקן אחד מארץ כנען בא לראותך ואמ' חלף מפתן ביתך שאינה טובה לך וכשבא ישמעאל מן המדבר הגידה לו את הדברים הללו ובן חכם כחצי חכם והבין ישמעאל ושלחה אמו ולקחה לו אשה מבית אביה ופטימה שמה ועוד אחר שלש שנים הלך אברהם לראות את ישמעאל בנו ונשבע לשרה כפעם ראשונה שאינו יורד מן הגמל במקום שישמעאל שרוי שם והגיע לשם בחצי היום ומצא שם אשתו של ישמעאל ואמ' לה היכן הוא ישמעאל אמרה לו הוא ואמו הלכו לרעות את הגמלים במדבר אמ' לה תני לי מעט לחם ומים כי עייפה נפשי מדרך המדבר והוציאה לחם ומים ונתנה לו עמד אברהם והיה מתפלל לפני ה' על בנו ונתמלא ביתו של ישמעאל מכל טוב ממין הברכות וכשבא ישמעאל הגידה לו את הדבר וידע ישמעאל שעד עכשו רחמי אביו עליו כרחם אב על בנים.

<p>dwelt. He came there at midday, and found there Ishmael's wife. He said to her: Where is Ishmael? She replied to him: He has gone with his mother to feed the camels in the desert. He said to her: Give me a little bread and water, for my soul is faint after the journey of the desert. She fetched it and gave it to him. Abraham arose and prayed before the Holy One, blessed be He, for his son, and [thereupon] Ishmael's house was filled with all good things for the various blessings. When Ishmael came [home] his wife told him what had happened, and Ishmael knew that his father's love was still extended to him, as it is said, "Like as a father shows mercy to his sons" (Psalm 103:13).</p>	
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*What realities do you think Rabbi Eliezer is struggling with in this Midrash? What do you think is the significance of the distinctly non-Jewish name of Ishmael's wife Fatimah?*

**Rambam Mishneh Torah, Laws of Forbidden Foods 11:7**

<p>A Ger Toshav -- He who has accepted the Seven Mitzvot of the sons of Noah, as we have explained -- it is prohibited to drink his wine, but it is permitted to derive benefit from it. And one may leave wine with him briefly, but not for a long time. And so too any Gentile who does not worship the stars and the constellations, such as the Ishmaelites, their wine may not be drunk, but one may derive benefit from it. And such instructed all the Geonim. But those who worship the stars and the constellations, one may not derive benefit from their wine.</p>	<p>גַּר תּוֹשָׁב וְהוּא שֶׁקִּבֵּל עָלָיו שְׁבַע מִצְוֹת כְּמוֹ שֶׁבִאֲרַנוּ יֵינוּ אֲסוּר בְּשִׁתּוּתָהּ וּמִתֵּר בִּהְנִיָּהּ. וּמִיִּחְדִּין אֲצִלוּ יַיִן וְאִין מִפְּקִידִין אֲצִלוּ יַיִן. וְכֵן כָּל עַכּוּ"ם שְׂאִינוֹ עוֹבְדֵי עַכּוּ"ם כְּגוֹן אֵלֵי הַיְשָׁמְעָאִים יֵינָן אֲסוּר בְּשִׁתּוּתָהּ וּמִתֵּר בִּהְנִיָּהּ. וְכֵן הוֹרוּ כָּל הַגְּאוּנִים. אֲבָל אוֹתָם הָעוֹבְדִים עַכּוּ"ם סֵתָם יֵינָם אֲסוּר בִּהְנִיָּהּ</p>
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*What do you think Rambam saw as the difference between a worshiper of "stars and constellations" and an "Ishmaelite"? Why would he permit the Ishmaelite's wine?*

<p>These Muslims [Ishmaelim] are not in any way idolaters. [Idolatry] has already been removed from their mouths and their hearts, there foolishness and errors on other matters withstanding, and they unify G-d in the appropriate manner without any admixture [of idolatrous beliefs].</p>	<p>אלו הישמעאלים אינם עובדי ע"ז כלל, וכבר נכרתה מפיהם ומלבם. והם מיחדים לאל, יחוד כראוי, יחוד שאין בו דופי... וכן אלו, יתע הישמעאלים היום כולם, טף ונשים נכרתה ע"ז מפיהם; וטעותם וטפשותם בדברים אחרים היא... אבל ביחוד השם, יתע, אין להם טעות כלל.</p>
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*What do you think Rambam means by "they unify G-d in the appropriate manner"?*

#### משנה תורה, הלכות מלכים ומלחמות י"א:ז' 11:7 Rambam Mishneh Torah Laws of Kings and Wars

<p>But, the plans of the creator of the world--no person can understand them for our ways are not the same as His ways and our plans are not His plans. And all of these things about Jesus of Nazareth, and about that Ishmaelite who rose after him--they are only to make the path for the King Messiah straight, and to fix the whole world for worshipping God together, as it is said, "For I will give the peoples clear speech, for them all to call out the name of God, and to worship Him with one purpose (Zephaniah 3:9)</p>	<p>אבל מחשבות בורא עולם--אין כוח באדם להשיגם, כי לא דרכינו דרכיו ולא מחשבותינו מחשבותיו. וכל הדברים האלו של ישוע הנוצרי, ושל זה הישמעאלי שעמד אחריו--אינן אלא ליישר דרך למלך המשיח, ולתקן את העולם כולו לעבוד את ה' ביחד: שנאמר "כי אז אהפוך אל עמים, שפה ברורה, לקרוא כולם בשם ה', ולעובדו שכם אחד" (ראה צפניה ג, ט)</p>
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*How do you think Rambam imagines other religions "Make the path for the King Messiah"?*

#### מאירי בית הבחירה ע"ז כב, 5 Avodah Zarah Bet HaBechira, (1249-1315) Rabbi Menachem Meiri

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<p>It has already been stated that these things [discriminatory laws regarding relations with gentiles] were said concerning periods when there existed nations of idolaters, and they were contaminated in their deeds and tainted in their dispositions . . . but other nations, which are restrained by the ways of religion and which are free from such blemishes of character – on the</p>	<p>וכבר התבאר שדברים הללו נאמרו לאותם הזמנים שהיו אותם האומות מעובדי האלילים והיו מזוהמים במעשיהם ומכעורים במדותיהם... אבל שאר אומות שהם גדורים בדרכי הדתות ושהם נקיים מכעורים שבמדות הללו ואדרבה שמענישים עליהם אין ספק שאין הדברים הללו מקום להם כלל.</p>
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contrary, they even punish such deeds – are, without doubt, exempt from this prohibition.	
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*What do you think the Meiri means by "restrained by the ways of religion"? Who do you think he means to include in this group?*

### **'On interfaith relationships' Rabbi J B Soloveitchik. Letter to the RCA 1964**

The Jewish religious tradition expresses itself in a fusion of universalism and singularity. On the one hand, Jews are vitally concerned with the problems affecting the common destiny of man...On the other hand, we are a distinctive faith community with a unique commitment, singular relationship to G-d and a specific way of life...Our love of and dedication to G-d are personal and bespeak an intimate relationship which must not be debated with others whose relationship to G-d has been molded by different historical events. We are, therefore, opposed to any public debate, dialogue or symposium concerning the doctrinal, dogmatic or ritual aspects of our faith vis-à-vis "similar" aspects of another faith community.

When, however, we move from the private world of faith to the public world of humanitarian and cultural endeavors, communication among the various faith communities is desirable and essential.

*Why do you think Rav Soloveitchik draws these boundaries specifically? What historical context do you think he has in mind? Why do you think he felt "communication among the various faith communities is desirable and essential" in certain areas?*

### **Emeritus Chief Rabbi, Lord Sacks. The Dignity of Difference. 1st edition**

"The radical transcendence of G-d in the Hebrew Bible means nothing more nor less than that there is a difference between G-d and religion. G-d is universal, religions are particular . . . In the course of history, G-d has spoken to mankind in many languages: through Judaism to Jews, Christianity to Christians, Islam to Muslims...

Fundamentalism, like imperialism, is the attempt to impose a single truth on a plural world. It is the Tower of Babel of our time. The test of faith is whether I can make a space for difference. Can I recognize G-d's image in someone who is not in my image, whose language, faith, ideals, are different from mine?"

**Mishnah Avos 1:12 משנה אבות א'י"ב**

<p>Hillel used to say: Be of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving [one's fellow] creatures and bringing them closer to the Torah.</p>	<p>הלל אומר, הוי מתלמידיי של אהרן, אוהב שלום ורודף שלום, אוהב את הבריות ומקרבן לתורה.</p>
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**Chofetz Chaim, Shmirat Halahshon, Sha'ar Haz'chirah**

Seek it (peace) for your loved one and pursue it with your enemy. Seek it in your place and pursue in other places. Seek it with your body and pursue it with your material resources. Seek it for your own benefit and pursue it for the benefit of others. Seek it today and pursue it tomorrow. With reference for "seek it tomorrow," it teaches that one should not despair, thinking that one cannot make peace, but rather one should pursue peace today and also tomorrow and on the day afterwards, until one reaches it