



SHALOM HARTMAN מכון
INSTITUTE שלום הרטמן

iEngage Together & Apart

Unit Three

The Judaism of Becoming

Unit Two Summary: Judaism of Being

1. There are two dominant narratives about Jewishness in the Jewish tradition – the Covenant of Being and the Covenant of Becoming.
2. The Book of Genesis teaches us that Jewishness is a category of ethnic, familial belonging irrespective of action, belief, or moral virtue.
3. The Jewishness of Being generates a set of **values** and **obligations** including:
 - Loyalty and solidarity
 - Membership is inviolable
 - No “good Jew” and “bad Jew”
 - Tolerance and acceptance of all Jews, despite diversity of practices and beliefs
4. Dangers include elitism and insularity.



Judaism as Religion: Covenant of Becoming

Judaism is what you DO/BELIEVE

MISSION: a People who will be a BLESSING

Genesis 12:1-3

The Lord said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you.

²I will make of you a great nation,

And I will bless you;

I will make your name great,

And you shall be a blessing.

³I will bless those who bless you

And curse him that curses you;

And all the families of the earth

Shall bless themselves by you."

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־אַבְרָם לֵךְ מֵאֶרֶץ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָךְ: וְאָעֲשֶׂה לְךָ גוֹי גָּדוֹל וְאַבְרָכְךָ וְאַגְדַּלְתָּה שְׁמִי וְהָיָה בְרָכָה: וְאַבְרָכָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ וּמְקַלְלֶיךָ אָאֵר וְנִבְרָכוּ בְּךָ כָּל מְשֻׁפָּחוֹת הָאָדָמָה:



Conditional Covenant: “IF” you keep these laws...

Exodus 19:4-6

⁴“You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagles’ wings and brought you to Me. ⁵Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, ⁶but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.’ These are the words that you shall speak to the children of Israel.”

וְעַתָּה אִם־שָׁמוּעַ תִּשְׁמָעוּ בְּקוֹלִי וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם אֶת־בְּרִיתִי וְהֵייתֶם לִי סִגְלָה מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים כִּי־לִי כָל־הָאָרֶץ :
וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ־לִי מְמַלְכֵת כְּהֹנִים וְגוֹי קְדוֹשׁ



BECOMING: *aspiring to become holy*

Leviticus 19:1-2

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: **2** Speak to the whole Israelite community and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God, am holy.

וַיִּדְבֹר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. **ב** דַּבֵּר אֶל-כָּל-עַדַת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאָמַרְתָּ אֲלֵהֶם--קְדוֹשִׁים תִּהְיוּ: כִּי קְדוֹשׁ, אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.



מכון שאלום הרטמן
SHALOM HARTMAN
INSTITUTE

CHOICE

“The Chosen People” vs. “The Choosing People”

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

¹⁵See, I set before you this day life and prosperity, death and adversity. ¹⁶For I command you this day, to love the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His laws, and His rules, that you may thrive and increase, and that the Lord your God may bless you in the land that you are about to enter and possess... I have put before you life and death, blessing and curse. Choose life—if you and your offspring would live—²⁰by loving the Lord your God, heeding His commands, and holding fast to Him. For thereby you shall have life and shall long endure upon the soil that the Lord swore to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give to them.

העידתי בכם היום את השמים ואת הארץ החיים והמות נתתי לפניך הברכה והקללה ובחרת
בחיים למען תחיה אתה וזרעך: לאהבה אתה' אלהיך לשמע בקלו ולדבקה בו כי הוא חייך
וארך ימיך לשבת על האדמה אשר נשבע ה' לאבותיך לאברהם ליצחק וליעקב לתת להם:



JEWISH VALUES

Exodus 23:9

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

וְגֵר לֹא תִלְחָץ וְאַתֶּם יָדַעְתֶּם אֶת־נַפְשׁ הַגֵּר כִּי־גֵרִים הֵיִיתֶם בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:



JUDAISM OF BECOMING

Mission: a People who will be a blessing to the world

Conditional Covenant: “IF” you keep these laws...

BECOMING: aspiring to become holy; lifelong journey

Choice: “The Chosen People” vs. “The Choosing People”

Values: moral commitments



JUDAISM OF BEING

People
Nation
Family
Ethnicity
Belonging
Solidarity/Obligation
“Genesis Jews”
Unconditional Covenant
JUDAISM is WHO YOU ARE

JUDAISM OF BECOMING

Religion
Beliefs
Practices
Torah
Mitzvot
Mission
“Exodus Jews”
Conditional Covenant
JUDAISM is WHAT YOU DO



Chosenness of Being

Deuteronomy 7:7-8

⁶For you are a people consecrated to the Lord your God: of all the peoples on earth the Lord your God chose you to be His treasured people. ⁷It is not because you are the most numerous of peoples that the Lord set His heart on you and chose you—indeed, you are the smallest of peoples; ⁸but it was because the Lord favored you and kept the oath He made to your fathers that the Lord freed you with a mighty hand and rescued you from the house of bondage, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

כִּי עַם קָדוֹשׁ אַתָּה לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּךָ בָּחַר | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְהִיּוֹת לוֹ לְעַם סִגְלָה מִכָּל הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר
עַל־פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה : לֹא מֵרַבְּכֶם מִכָּל־הָעַמִּים חָשַׁק יְהוָה בְּכֶם וַיִּבְחַר בְּכֶם כִּי־אַתֶּם הַמְעַט מִכָּל־
הָעַמִּים : כִּי מֵאַהֲבַת יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם וּמִשְׁמֵרוֹ אֶת־הַשְּׁבֻעָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְתֵּיכֶם הוֹצִיא יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם
בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וַיַּפְּדֶךָ מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים מִיַּד פְּרַעֲה מֶלֶךְ־מִצְרָיִם :



Leviticus 26:41-44

⁴¹When I, in turn, have been hostile to them and have removed them into the land of their enemies, then at last shall their obdurate heart humble itself, and they shall atone for their iniquity. ⁴²Then will I remember My covenant with Jacob; I will remember also My covenant with Isaac, and also My covenant with Abraham; and I will remember the land. ⁴³For the land shall be forsaken of them, making up for its sabbath years by being desolate of them, while they atone for their iniquity; for the abundant reason that they rejected My rules and spurned My laws. ⁴⁴Yet, even then, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or spurn them so as to destroy them, annulling My covenant with them: for I the Lord am their God. ⁴⁵I will remember in their favor the covenant with the ancients, whom I freed from the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God: I, the Lord.



מכון שאלום הרטמן
SHALOM HARTMAN INSTITUTE

Chosenness of Becoming

Isaiah 49:6

⁶For God has said:

“It is too little that you should be My servant
In that I raise up the tribes of Jacob
And restore the survivors of Israel:
I will also make you a light of nations,
That My salvation may reach the ends of the earth.”

וַיֹּאמֶר נְקַל מִהְיוֹתִי לִי עֶבֶד לְהַקִּים אֶת־שִׁבְטֵי יַעֲקֹב וּנְצִירֵי [וּנְצוּרֵי] יִשְׂרָאֵל לְהַשִּׁיב וּנְתַתִּיךָ לְאֹר
גוֹלִים לְהַלְוֹת יְשׁוּעָתִי עַד־קִצֵּה הָאָרֶץ: (ס)

Isaiah 42:6-7

⁶I the Lord, in My grace, have summoned you,
And I have grasped you by the hand.
I created you, and appointed you
A covenant people, a light of nations—
⁷Opening eyes deprived of light

אֲנִי יְהוָה קָרָאתִיךָ בְּצַדֵּק וְאֶחְזַק בְּיָדְךָ וְאַצְרִיךָ וְאַתֵּנֶנְךָ לְבְרִית עִם לְאֹר גוֹלִים: לְפָקַח עֵינַיִם עִוְרוֹת



Amos 3:2

²You alone have I singled out
Of all the families of the earth—
That is why I will call you to account
For all your iniquities.

רק אתכם ידעתי מכל משפחות האדמה עליכן אפקד עליכם את כל עונותיכם :



מכון שאלום הרטמן
SHALOM HARTMAN
INSTITUTE

CONVERSION OF BEING OR BECOMING?

Moshe Halbertal, "On Modern Jewish Identities," *Jewish Peoplehood: Change and Challenge*

National	Covenantal	Cosmopolitan
Judaism of Being Zionism Solidarity Loyalty and Obligation	Judaism of Becoming God Mitzvot Torah	Tikkun Olam Political Activism Social Justice Universalism



Moshe Halbertal, “On Modern Jewish Identities”

The plurality of modern Jewish identity is thus deep and radical, and its basic structure provides three different orientations of what it is to be a Jew ... Yet, many modern Jews do not reside in purity in either of these alternatives. For these Jews, the condition of pluralism is not merely a description of the radical diversity of Jewish modern identity in its modern historical form. The plurality resides in their own soul. They, as Jews, are a complex hybrid of identities. They carry in their own soul the fractures of modern Jewish identity and its burdens.



SHALOM HARTMAN מכון
INSTITUTE שלום הרטמן

Michael Waltzer, “*The Anomalies of Jewish Political Identity*”

We all know how anomalous Jewish identity is, and we all know the reasons. The Jews are a people as well as a nation (albeit for a long time a stateless one), and as such, they are a collective of a familiar kind. There are many nations, and we are one among them. At the same time, the Jews are a religious community, a community of faith, as we say in the United States – which is another collective of a familiar kind. There are many religions, and ours is one among them. The anomaly is that these two collectives are not of the same kind, and, except in the Jewish case, they don’t ordinarily coincide.

In the United States, it was Jewish advocates of cultural pluralism... who invented the idea of hyphenated Americans...

We are both American Jews (religiously) and Jewish-Americans (nationally). We pretend that we are like American Catholics, on the one hand, and like Italian-Americans on the other. But the analogy doesn’t work in either case. Many American Catholics, for example, are not Italian, and some Italian-Americans are not Catholic, while our religious and national identities continue, anomalously, to coincide. Even those of us who aren’t personally religious, are Jewish in both these senses.

Being anomalous isn’t popular. People find us hard to understand. Because neither our national nor our religious community is inclusive in the standard way, we are accused of being parochial, hostile to outsiders, exclusionary, chauvinist, and, in any group except our own, disloyal and subversive...

It really isn’t all that hard for our neighbors to live with our anomalies, if they are minded to do so, and they should be so minded. In a world where there are many ways of being different, and an extraordinary diversity of customs and beliefs, what justice requires (from us, in the Diaspora and in Israel, and from everyone else too) is respect for difference – and our own differences are among those that demand respect.

Of course, we should insist that the world allow us to be what we are... but first we must accept ourselves as we are – anomalies and all.



SHALOM HARTMAN מכון
INSTITUTE שלום הרטמן

Phillip Roth, *Operation Shylock*

Why couldn't the Jews be one people? Why must Jews be in conflict with one another? Why must they be in conflict with themselves? Because divisiveness is not just between Jew and Jew – it is within the individual Jew. Is there a more manifold personality in all the world? I don't say divided. Divided is nothing... But inside every Jew there is a mob of Jews.

The good Jew, the bad Jew. The new Jew, the old Jew. The lover of Jews, the hater of Jews. The friend of the goy, the enemy of the goy. The arrogant Jew, the wounded Jew. The pious Jew, the rascal Jew. The coarse Jew, the gentle Jew. The defiant Jew, the appeasing Jew. The Jewish Jew, the de-Jewed Jew. Shall I go on? So I have to expound upon the Jew as the three-thousand-year amassment of mirrored fragments...

Is it any wonder that a Jew is always disputing? He is a dispute, incarnate.



Donniel Hartman

“The Jewish people are healthier, stronger, and more vibrant when the Covenant of Being and Becoming dance together.”

This dance is not merely the story of Jewish peoplehood over the ages, but a blueprint for our future.”



SHALOM HARTMAN מכון
INSTITUTE שלום הרטמן

Boundaries of Judaism

<u>PLURALISM</u>	<u>TOLERANCE</u>	<u>DEVIANCE</u>
Equally valid	Wrong but doesn't destroy collective life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Red Lines• Sanctions• Exclusions

