

NCSY Torah  
— on One Foot Series

# DATING JEWISH

קח לד אשה  
מבנות אחי אמך

SPECIAL  
OFFER  
INSIDE!



Including Ideas from

“WHY MARRY JEWISH?”

by Doron Kornbluth

compiled by Rabbi Jack Abramowitz

designed by Renée Rosenfeld

## You Gotta Have Love

And Isaac...married Rebecca. She became his wife and he loved her and Isaac was comforted after the death of his mother. *Genesis 24:67*

Jacob worked seven years for Rachel, but it only seemed to him like a few days because of his love for her. *Genesis 29:20*



### But Love Isn't The Only Thing

Abraham said to Eliezer, "Swear by Hashem...that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the

Canaanites...rather, go to my homeland and my relatives to find a wife for my son Isaac."

*Genesis 24:3-4*

Isaac instructed Jacob, "Do not take a wife from the Canaanite women...take a wife from the daughters of Laban, your mother's brother."

*Genesis 28:1-2*

## Not Just a Good Idea – It's the Law!

Do not intermarry. Don't give your daughter to their son and don't take their daughter for your son; he will cause your descendants to turn away from Hashem and worship other 'gods.'

*Deut. 7:3-4*

Ezra rose and said to the people, "You have been unfaithful and have married non-Jewish wives, adding to the nation's guilt." *Ezra 10:10*



## RACIST?

Isn't it racist for Jews to refuse to date non-Jews? Absolutely not. Non-smokers may refuse to date smokers, vegetarians may refuse to date carnivores, and political liberals may refuse to date conservatives. It's not racist to only date people who share certain interests or beliefs. If a position on any issue is important to you, you might choose to only date (and potentially marry) like-minded people. That doesn't mean that we don't like other types of people, just that we want to raise a family with certain moral and ethical ideals.

### TWO MORE REASONS WHY IT'S NOT RACIST TO DATE ONLY JEWS:

- Anyone can potentially become Jewish by converting. Racists hate other groups; they don't invite them to join. (Please note that conversions must be sincere in order to be valid - it's not just a formality that can be used for the purpose of marriage!)
- Racists don't intermarry because they don't want to be "infected" by other groups. When Jews (and members of other religions) refuse to intermarry, it's because of a concern of preserving their heritage. In other words, "It's not you, it's me!"

## SAVE THE JEWS

People go to great lengths to save endangered species. If it's worth trying to save tigers, whales or spotted owls, isn't it worth



trying to preserve a people that gave the world monotheism, justice and the polio vaccine?

# WHAT IS LOVE?

In *Lev Eliyahu*. Reb Elya Lopian writes of a man who says he loves fish. But if he *really* loved fish he wouldn't eat them! What he means is "I love the way fish make me feel" or, in short, "I love me." *Real* love is when you put the other person's needs before your own desires.

"We love those to whom we give more than those from whom we have taken."

*Michtav Me'Eliyahu*



G-d says, "I have loved you with an eternal love, therefore I have done kindness to you."

*Jeremiah 31:3*

"Therefore a man will leave his father and mother and cling to his wife and they shall be one flesh."

*Bereishis 2:24*

Rashi says that this refers to children, who are the combination of both parents. The Ramban questions this, pointing out that animals are also united in their offspring. He explains that this is why the Torah specifies that a man clings to his wife. People are the only creatures that form the emotional bond of love.

A man should love his wife as he loves himself - and honor her *more* than he does himself!

*Yevamos 62b*

## WHO ARE YOU?

Regardless of whether or not you consider yourself "religious," do you identify as a Jew?

Do you feel a sense of connection to Jewish history, traditions or spirituality? Do you intend to pass that connection on to your kids? Then you should date only Jews.

If you interdate, there's a very good chance that you will intermarry. That will make it hard for

you to pass on any connection to Judaism that you now feel.

Judaism is more than just a religion; it's a way of life. It's much easier (and more effective) to cultivate a relationship with someone who shares a common history and experiences.

A common outlook on holidays and other traditions can be the glue that holds a

relationship together; it also fosters the potential for both partners to later grow as Jews.

If you consider your Judaism worth preserving, interdating is the most effective way to undermine your own convictions. Dating Jewish doesn't force you to be "religious."

It does, however, leave the door open for you to explore and grow in your Judaism at a later date, should you so choose.



Many teens reading this pamphlet may be the children of intermarriage. That's not easy. The situation can create a lifelong test of mixed allegiances. Church confirmation or Bar Mitzvah? Marry in a synagogue or church? Should a rabbi or a minister officiate? Where should family members be buried?

In the unfortunate event that the parents separate, it can be even more difficult. Christmas or Chanukah? Passover with Mom or Easter with Dad? Sadly, religion often becomes a weapon in cases of divorce. People often get screened to protect future children from

potential genetic disorders, such as Tay-Sachs. Why not screen ourselves to protect the next generation from a potential conflict of faith?

## WHAT ABOUT THE KIDS?

## WHY MARRY JEWISH?

In his book *Why Marry Jewish?*, author Doron Kornbluth lays out numerous factors young Jews should evaluate if they're considering intermarrying. Here are just a few of them:

- Many Jews have strong negative emotional reactions to Christian imagery (such as crosses or Christmas trees), but positive associations to Jewish symbols (such as Passover Seders and Chanukah menorahs). Christians may have different or even opposite responses to many of the same things. Do you turn your head if you hear the word "Jew" or "Israel" in the street? Would your non-Jewish partner? People may not even be aware of their own internal emotional loyalties.
- The twenties - when most people are marrying - is also the age when most people are their least religious. But as people mature and life events such as births, weddings and deaths occur, they connect with their spiritual heritage. If two people share a spiritual identity, this can bring them closer. But if they are on different spiritual paths, it can send them farther apart. The question of "baptism or *bris*" is a spiritual time bomb waiting to explode.
- Rabbi Jacob J. Hecht writes that "love is essential to a marriage...but much more is needed. Marriage represents a bond.... That bond must be cemented not only with love, but also with a commonality of purpose and a sharing of goals and ideals. Marriage between two people (of) different faiths robs that bond of much of its commonality."



### "IT'S JUST ONE DATE"

Jews who intermarry are *four times* more likely to have dated non-Jews than those who marry Jewish. That one date is statistically *very significant!*

### GOING... GOING... ?

Statistically speaking, one out of every two Jewish teens will intermarry and have two kids. Regardless of how those kids are raised, they will each intermarry and have two kids of their own, *none of whom* will be Jewish. Bye-bye, Judaism!

### THE CHILDREN OF INTERMARRIAGE

- Only 18% are being raised Jewish - and even members of that small group celebrate Christmas more than they do Passover!
- 65% go to church. Only 19% go to synagogue as teens. Only 14% were Bar or Bat Mitzva.
- Only 18% feel that being Jewish is important and only 11% would be bothered if their children were not Jewish.
- Over 90% marry non-Jews. Only 3% would encourage their children to marry Jewish.

### THE SAD TRUTH

Over half of all marriages end in divorce. The divorce rates are *several times higher* for couples from different religious backgrounds than for other groups. Many, many studies have shown that the more similar the partners' backgrounds, the more likely the marriage is to succeed and that same-faith marriages are the *most likely* to succeed. This is true even when neither partner considers him or herself to be "religious."

### YOU CAN HAVE IT ALL!

In logic, a "false dilemma" is a forced choice between two things that aren't really your only options such as, "Should I make a fortune or save the rainforest?" People do this a lot with religious issues, asking questions such as, "Which is better, to be religious in America or secular in Israel?" In such cases, there are other options - for example, people can make money while protecting natural resources or be religious in Israel.

Similarly, the choice of "Is it better to marry for love or to marry Jewish?" is a false dilemma - you can have both! Not only do you *not* have to choose between Judaism and love, statistically speaking, all-Jewish marriages are happier and more successful!

Dating is, by definition, an affair of the heart - but that doesn't have to be to the exclusion of the mind! In the end, you can have a happier and more fulfilling relationship by using your brain to define your dating pool before your heart takes over.

## THE REMEDY

52% of Jews intermarry.\*  
98% of NCSY alumni marry Jewish.\*\*

\*Source: National Jewish Population Study

\*\*Source: Faithful Youth, Lilly Endowment



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