

Selections of Jews for Nothing by Rabbi Dov Aharoni Fisch

The problem facing us today is not that there are Jews for Jesus or Jews for Reverend Moonie. The problem is that there are so many sweet, holy Yiddelehs who are Jews for Nothing. (SHLOMO CARLEBACH)

If bizarre religious cults have made headway in their efforts to recruit young Jewish devotees, it has become clear that their successes have not evolved ex nihilo. On the contrary, it is they who have come to offer meaningful alternatives to the spiritual void presently plaguing so much of American Jewish society. Again and again it has become apparent that the most wholesome and inspiring values of the respective cults are abundantly present in authentic Judaism. Yet, to the consternation of the American Jewish community, tens of thousands of young people are deserting the very Judaism which nurtured them, in order to embrace foreign theologies. Why? Can it be that these young Jews never learned what authentic Judaism asserts? Can it be that they were never taught the rich spiritual values of Jewish life, the historic potency of Jewish faith, the awesome challenge of Jewish commitment? Can it be that—despite the fact that they were treated to the best private education America could offer— they remained ignominiously ignorant of Jewish knowledge? Can it be?¹

Tragically, young Jews do not receive meaningful Jewish educational opportunities in many assimilated regions. Raised by liberally oriented parents who decide that “religion should not be shoved down my child’s throat; when he grows old enough, let him choose for himself whether or not he wants to be religious,” these Jewish youths are, in effect, deprived of a free choice. How can they “choose” to live by a religion about which they are completely ignorant? Bereft of a Jewish education, they know nothing about the Sabbath, the dietary laws, or any of the other Torah commandments—save that which they have heard in the spiritual dark alleys of suburbia. How ironic it is that the same parent who determines that a child should be provided with sex education at a young age, in order to prevent later mis-conceptions (sic), is fiercely determined to prevent the youth from obtaining religious information at the same time! If a child cannot be expected to know intuitively how his own body functions, can he more readily be expected to understand the “mechanism” of his soul? How is a child to grow to make a truly free religious

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choice at a later moment in his life if, denied a Jewish background during his youth, his theological information derives only from the “spiritual alley”?²

Consider, as well, a child’s cultural training. How many Jewish parents force their sons to study a musical instrument (usually a piano or violin) and force their daughters to attend ballet classes? The young boy may scream, holler, and curse that he wants to play ball with his friends rather than be confined in the house until he completes his daily musical exercises, but his “freedom of choice” is denied him on the grounds that “one day he will thank us for it.” Perhaps he will never thank his parents for retarding his athletic development by imposing the daily rigors of homework and musical exercises on him? Such a possibility is discounted, for he is still “too young” to make such decisions on his own. How will he ever know whether he would like to be a musician if he is never given the chance to study the subject of music? How will the girl ever really know that she would not find ballet fulfilling if she is not given the opportunity to spend a few years practicing toe exercises? When it comes to so many fields of education, the enlightened Jewish ethic is: Expose the child. Give him a chance to learn the subject well enough so that he can make an educated decision regarding his future. If it is not his desire to perform in an orchestra, let him make that determination after he has, at least, learned how to read the musical scale. Before he rejects a career in medicine, ascertain that he has studied high-school biology. How, then, can it be argued that a young Jew should be sent to a public (or private) secular school—and not to a yeshiva—in order to allow him the opportunity to “freely” decide, upon maturation, whether or not he wants to be Jewish? What freedom is he being given? Should he not first be exposed to Judaism? If he is expected to study high-school sciences before rejecting a career in medicine, should he not have a concomitant opportunity to study high-school-level Judaism before rejecting his four-thousand-year heritage? If he is required to do thirty-minute piano exercises and hours of homework every day, should he not be expected to put in a similar amount of time in doing his Jewish-studies assignments?³

When a Jewish youth matures, he will meet Jewish and non-Jewish friends. And if he is sent to public school (or private secular school), the chances are greatly increased that he will develop warm friendships with non-Jews of his sex and of the opposite sex. If he has not been given a solid Jewish education—comparable to that offered him on a secular level—why should he not one day intermarry? Because he has a religious duty? What religious duty? He does not even know as much about his religion as he knows about the violin or the composition of an amoeba. His religion

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is a meaningless label. If he had any religious duty, he fulfilled it when he read the haftora at his bar mitzva; that was all the Jewish literacy ever expected of him, and he was permitted to drop out of Hebrew school upon the completion of its recitation. So why should he not one day intermarry? Because he has an obligation to “his people”? What people? He is an American. And he wants to marry an American. So what if she is not Jewish? She is pretty or smart or sensible or exotic—or whatever it is that he looks for in a young woman. Why should he not marry a non-Jew?⁴

Note: I am hoping this book will be put on Kindle and Audible. If you have influence with the author please inform him of the benefits of audiobooks and Kindle; especially for those who have trouble reading.

Buy the book: <https://www.amazon.com/Jews-Nothing-Cults-Intermarriage-Assimilation/dp/0873063473>

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