

INTERMARRIAGE - JEWISH TEXTS

The following text is the primary source for the prohibition of Intermarriage. Drawn from the book of Deuteronomy, it dates later (possibly centuries later), than most of the rest of the Torah. Certainly, in the earlier Biblical texts, there was no idea of endogamy. Despite the very limited context, a principle was extapolated, and the theme of the danger of foreign women, in particular, was picked up by Ezra as the people prepared for a new life back in the land.

Deuteronomy 7:1-8

א כִּי יבִיאֲךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה בֹא-שָׂמָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ וְנָשַׁל
גוֹיִם רַבִּים מִפְּנֶיךָ הַחִתִּי וְהַגִּרְגָּשִׁי וְהָאֱמֹרִי וְהַכְּנִעֲנִי וְהַפְּרִזִי וְהַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי
שִׁבְעָה גוֹיִם רַבִּים וְעֲצוּמִים מִמֶּךָ: ב וַיִּתְּנֶם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְפָנֶיךָ וְהִכִּיתֶם
הַחִרָם וְתַחֲרִים אֹתָם לֹא-תִכְרֹת לָהֶם בְּרִית וְלֹא תִחַנְּם: ג וְלֹא תִתְחַתֵּן בָּם
בְּתוּךָ לֹא-תִתֵּן לְבָנוֹ וּבִתּוֹ לֹא-תִקַּח לְבָנָהּ: ד כִּי-יָסִיר אֶת-בְּנֵךְ מֵאֲחֵרִי וְעַבְדּוֹ
אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים וְחָרָה אַף-יְהוָה בְּכֶם וְהִשְׁמִידֶךָ מִהָרָ: ה כִּי אִם-כָּה תַעֲשׂוּ
לָהֶם מִזְבְּחֹתֵיהֶם תִּתְּצוּ וּמִצִּבּוֹתָם תִּשְׁבְּרוּ וְאֲשִׁירֵיהֶם תִּגְדְּעוּן וּפְסִילֵיהֶם
תִּשְׂרֹפוּן בָּאֵשׁ: ו כִּי עַם קְדוֹשׁ אַתָּה לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּךְ בְּחַר | יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ
לְהִיֹּת לּוֹ לְעַם סֻגְלָה מִכָּל הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר עַל-פְּנֵי הָאָדָמָה: ז לֹא מֵרַבְּכֶם
מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים חָשַׁק יְהוָה בְּכֶם וַיִּבְחַר בְּכֶם כִּי-אַתֶּם הִמְעַט מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים: ח כִּי
מֵאַהֲבַת יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם וּמִשְׂמֹרוֹ אֶת-הַשְּׁבִעָה אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע לְאַבְרָהָם הוֹצִיא
יְהוָה אֶתְכֶם בְּיַד חֲזָקָה וַיַּפְּדֶךָ מִבְּיַת עַבְדִּים מִיַּד פְּרַעֲה מֶלֶךְ-מִצְרָיִם:

1. When the Eternal One your God shall bring you into the land which you are entering to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, and the Hivites, and the Yebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you;
2. **And when the Eternal One your God shall deliver them before you; you shall strike them, and completely destroy them; you shall make no covenant with them, nor show mercy to them;**
3. **And you shall not make marriages with them; your daughter you shall not give to his son, nor his daughter shall you take to your son.**
4. **For they will turn away your son from following me, that they may serve other gods; so will the anger of the Eternal One be kindled against you, and destroy you speedily.**
5. But thus shall you deal with them; you shall destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their Asherim, and burn their carved idols with fire.
6. For you are a holy people to the Eternal One your God; the Eternal One your God has chosen you to be a special people to himself, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth.
7. The Eternal One did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people; for you were the fewest of all peoples;
8. But because the Eternal One loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn to your fathers, has the Eternal One brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of slaves, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

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Ezra 9:10 - 10:4

י וְעַתָּה מִה־נֹאמַר אֱלֹהֵינוּ אַחֲרֵי־זֹאת כִּי עָזַבְנוּ מִצְוֹתֶיךָ: יֵא אֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתָ בְּיַד
עֲבַדֶּיךָ הַנְּבִיאִים לֵאמֹר הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתֶּם בָּאִים לְרִשְׁתָּהּ אָרֶץ נְדָה הִיא בְּנֹדֶת
עַמֵּי הָאָרְצוֹת בְּתוֹעֲבֹתֵיהֶם אֲשֶׁר מִלְּאוּהָ מִפֶּה אֶל־פֶּה בְּטִמְאַתֶּם: יב וְעַתָּה
בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם אֶל־תִּתְּנוּ לְבָנֵיהֶם וּבְנֹתֵיהֶם אֶל־תִּשְׂאוּ לְבָנֵיכֶם וְלֹא־תִדְרְשׁוּ שְׁלֹמֶם
וְטוֹבָתָם עַד־עוֹלָם לְמַעַן תִּחְזְקוּ וְאַכְלֹתֶם אֶת־טוֹב הָאָרֶץ וְהוֹרִשְׁתֶּם לְבָנֵיכֶם
עַד־עוֹלָם: יג וְאַחֲרַי כָּל־הַבָּא עָלֵינוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂינוּ הַרְעִים וּבְאַשְׁמֹתֵנוּ הַגְּדֹלָה כִּי |
אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ חֲשַׁכְתָּ לְמַטָּה מֵעוֹנֵנוּ וְנִתְּתָה לָנוּ פְּלִיטָה כְּזֹאת: יד הַנְּשׁוּבִי
לְהַפֵּר מִצְוֹתֶיךָ וְלִהְתַּחַתֹּן בְּעַמֵּי הַתְּעַבּוֹת הָאֵלֶּה הֲלֹא תִאֲנַף־בָּנוּ עַד־כֹּלָה
לְאִין שְׂאֲרִית וּפְלִיטָה: טו יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל צַדִּיק אַתָּה כִּי־נִשְׂאָרְנוּ
פְּלִיטָה כְּהַיּוֹם הַזֶּה הִנֵּנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ בְּאַשְׁמֹתֵינוּ כִּי אִין לַעֲמוּד לְפָנֶיךָ עַל־זֹאת:

פרק י

א וּכְהִתְפַּלֵּל עֲזָרָא וְכַהֲתוּדוּתוֹ בְּכֹה וּמִתְנַפֵּל לְפָנָי בֵּית הָאֱלֹהִים נִקְבְּצוּ אֲלוֹ
מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל קָהָל רַב־מְאֹד אַנְשִׁים וְנָשִׁים וַיִּלְדִּים כִּי־בָכוּ הָעַם הַרְבֵּה־בְּכֹה:
ב וַיַּעַן שְׁכַנְיָה בֶן־יְחִיאֵל מִבְּנֵי עוֹלָם [עֵילָם] וַיֹּאמֶר לְעֲזָרָא אֲנַחְנוּ מְעַלְנוּ
בְּאֱלֹהֵינוּ וְנָשָׁב נָשִׁים נְכָרִיּוֹת מֵעַמֵּי הָאָרֶץ וְעַתָּה יִשְׁמְקוּהָ לְיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־זֹאת:
ג וְעַתָּה נְכַרְתַּבְּרִית לְאֱלֹהֵינוּ לְהוֹצִיא כָּל־נָשִׁים וְהַנוֹלָד מֵהֶם בְּעֶצְתִּי אֲדַנִּי
וְהַחֲרָדִים בְּמִצְוֹת אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְכַתּוּרָה יַעֲשֶׂה: ד קוּם כִּי־עָלֶיךָ הַדָּבָר וְאַנְחָנוּ עִמָּךְ
חֲזַק וַעֲשֵׂה:

10. And now, O our God, what shall we say after this? For we have forsaken your commandments,

11. Which you commanded by your servants the prophets, saying, The land which you are entering to take possession of it, is a land unclean because of the uncleanness of the people of the lands, who, with their abominations, have filled it from one end to another with their uncleanness.

12. **And now do not give your daughters to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons, nor seek their peace or their welfare for ever; that you may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children for ever.**

13. And after all that has come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great guilt, seeing that you our God have punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and have given us such deliverance as this;

14. Should we again break your commandments, and intermarry with the people of these abominations? Would you not be angry with us till you would consume us, so that there should be no remnant nor any to escape?

15. O Eternal God of Israel, you are righteous; for we are left a remnant that has escaped, as it is this day; behold, we are before you in our guilt, for we cannot stand before you because of this.

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Chapter 10

1. And while Ezra prayed, and confessed, weeping and casting himself down before the house of God, a very great assembly of men and women and children gathered to him out of Israel; for the people wept bitterly.

2. And Shechaniah the son of Yehiel, one of the sons of Elam, answered and said to Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken foreign wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this matter.

3. And now let us make a covenant with our God to put away all such women, and those born of them, according to the counsel of my Eternal One, and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the Torah.

4. Arise; for it is your task, and we are with you. Be of good courage and do it!

Ruth 4:9-13

ט וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעֵז לְזִקְנִים וְכָל־הָעָם עֵדִים אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם כִּי קָנִיתִי אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לְאֵלִימֶלֶךְ וְאֶת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לְכִלְיוֹן וּמַחֲלוֹן מִיַּד נְעֻמִי י וְגַם אֶת־רוֹת הַמַּאֲבִיחָה אִשְׁתׁ מַחֲלוֹן קָנִיתִי לִי לְאִשָּׁה לְהַקִּים שֵׁם־הַמֵּת עַל־נַחֲלָתוֹ וְלֹא־יִכָּרֵת שֵׁם־הַמֵּת מֵעַם אַחִיו וּמִשְׁעַר מְקוֹמוֹ עֵדִים אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם: יא וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־בְּשַׁעַר וְהַזְּקֵנִים עֵדִים יִתְּנוּ יְהוָה אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה הַבָּאָה אֶל־בֵּיתְךָ כְּרַחֵל וְכִלְאָה אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ שְׂתֵי־הֵם אֶת־בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל וַעֲשֵׂה־חֵיל בְּאַפְרָתָה וּקְרָא־שֵׁם בְּבַיִת לָחֵם: יב וַיְהִי בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כִּבְבֵית פִּרְעֹ אֲשֶׁר־יָלְדָה תָמָר לִיהוּדָה מִן־הַזָּרַע אֲשֶׁר יִתְּנוּ יְהוָה לָךְ מִן־הַנְּעֻרָה הַזֹּאת: יג וַיִּקַּח בְּעֵז אֶת־רוֹת וַתְּהִי־לוֹ לְאִשָּׁה וַיָּבֵא אֵלָיָה וַיִּתֵּן יְהוָה לָהּ הַרְבֵּי וַתֵּלֶד בָּנוּ: יד וַתֹּאמְרָה הַנְּשִׁים אֶל־נְעֻמִי בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא הִשְׁבִּית לָךְ גֹּאֵל הַיּוֹם וַיִּקְרָא שְׁמוֹ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל: טו וַתֵּהִי לָךְ לְמַשְׁיב זָפֶשׂ וּלְכָל־כֹּל אֶת־שִׁיבְתְּךָ כִּי כָלְתְּךָ אֲשֶׁר־אַהֲבִיתְךָ יִלְדָתוּ אֲשֶׁר־הִיא טוֹבָה לָךְ מִשְׁבַּעַה בָּנִים:

9. And Boaz said to the elders, and to all the people, You are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi.

10. And also Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Mahlon, have I bought to be my wife, to restore the name of the dead to his inheritance, so that the name of the dead shall not be cut off from among his brothers, and from the gate of his place; you are witnesses this day.

11. And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. May the Eternal One make the woman that has come into your house like Rachel and like Leah, who both built the house of Israel. May you prosper in Ephratah, and be famous in Beth-Lehem;

12. And may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, of the seed which the Eternal One shall give you of this young woman.

13. So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife; and when he went in to her, the Eternal One gave her conception, and she bore a son.