

**Double or Nothing**  
**Jewish Families and Mixed Marriage in the United States**

A conference presented by the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute  
and the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies

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**Keynote Address: Judaism in the Interfaith Household**

**Moderator:**

Leonard Saxe

**Presenter:**

Harvey Cox, Hollis Professor of Divinity, Harvard Divinity School

**Leonard Saxe:** Good morning and welcome, all of you, to a beautiful spring day at Brandeis University. Shammai, who was the sage whose legal rulings competed with those of Rabbi Hillel, taught us, and it's recorded in Pirke Avot, the Ethics of our Fathers, "Make Torah study a habit, say little, do much, and greet every person cheerfully." We're going to implement this teaching in reverse order this morning. Most of you were here last night and were greeted several times. I'm Len Saxe, the director of the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies here at Brandeis. I'm very pleased that the Cohen Center has been able to cosponsor this conference on marriage and religion in conjunction with the Hadassah-Brandies Institute. It reflects our goal at the Cohen

Center to use diverse social science techniques to understand contemporary Jewry and to apply cutting-edge research techniques and theories to the problems and issues that face our world, in particular, the Jewish world. I want to start off by thanking my colleague and friend, Sylvia Barack Fishman, for providing the grist for our discussion today through her research and through the publication of *Double or Nothing*.

It's my honor to be able to introduce our first speaker of today's session, Professor Harvey Cox, the Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard University. Professor Cox is known to many of us through his book, *The Secular City*. He's the author of a recent book, *Common Prayers: Faith, Family, and a Christian's Journey through the Jewish Year*. Now, how does a Christian theologian journey through the Jewish year? Well, one way is that he marries a Jewish woman and decides not to convert, but to raise their son as a Jew. *Common Prayers* is a rich portrait of a marriage of people of two faiths. It's also an insightful examination of Judaism and what it means to be Jewish in the modern era, or maybe I should say the postmodern era.

One of Professor Cox's most interesting set of observations throughout *Common Prayers* is his reactions to how Judaism treats *Tanakh*, how Judaism treats the Bible. For Jews, it's not merely a text but is the basis for debate and commentary. In the spirit of such debate, and permitting me to fulfill the first part of Shamai's teaching, I'd like to offer a brief comment on this past Shabbat's *parsha*, Torah reading. Jews all over the world this past weekend read a section of Leviticus dealing with leprosy, providing chapter and verse about how to identify, treat, and deal with a person afflicted with leprosy. It's in great detail, down to the description of each and every manifestation of the condition. How does one explain it? How does one write an interpretation of the detailed rules for purification? The rabbis have also struggled with this question, and one of the traditional creative interpretations is actually based on a play on words

that links leprosy with *lashon harah*, literally “the evil tongue.” In this interpretation, the affliction of leprosy is seen as the result of a person speaking badly about another. When you speak badly about a person, even if it is truthful—you don’t get off with truth as a defense—it can be bad, it can be hurtful, it can be damaging. We must, so the teaching goes, be as careful about what comes out of our mouths as we are about what we put into our mouths. Two weeks ago, in the portion read in synagogues, we read of the laws of *kashrut*, what we put in our mouths. Then comes this *parsha* about leprosy, which has been interpreted in terms of disparaging gossip.

What’s the connection to Professor Cox and Professor Cox’s talk this morning? In a moment, you’re going to hear from one of the world’s most respected and well-read Christian theologians. How improbable, you might be thinking, that he is married to a Jewish woman and is the proud father of a Jewish son, and how truly improbable that he has embraced Judaism, albeit maintaining the distance and perspective of a person of deep Christian faith—as he describes it, from the Temple’s “court of the gentiles.” But Professor Cox’s ability to learn and teach us about Judaism is no more improbable than the way we link this Torah reading about disease, in our interpretation of it, to the evil things that we say of others. It’s no less important in terms of the lessons Professor Cox provides. Just as a Jewish spouse who marries a non-Jewish person learns, by doing so, what the tradition means to them, or how Hebrew-speaking Israeli Jews learn what their Judaism means only when they only when they leave Israel and come to the Diaspora, Professor’s Cox’s perspective of a participant-observer, or perhaps it’s an observer-participant, has much to teach us. Professor Cox, we are honored by your presence today. We very much look forward to your comments about mixed marriage and the lessons that you draw from it.

**Harvey Cox:** Thank you very much, Leonard. I wondered where you were going with that business on the leprosy, but I think you pulled it off pretty well. It's a great, great honor and a positive delight to be here with you today. I would like to thank the cosponsors, the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute and the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies. I appreciate their cooperation, and I appreciate the invitation.

Indeed, how does a Christian theologian find himself taking a journey—or numerous journeys by now—through the Jewish year? It happened to me, of course, because I fell in love some twenty years ago now with a Jewish woman. We've now had nearly twenty years of a perfectly wonderful, blessed, and extraordinarily happy marriage. Like many people who explore this possibility, however, before we married, we had to face some questions about our respective faith traditions. (Don't we all wish people who are about to take this step might think about it carefully beforehand and not after the barn door is closed or open, whatever that expression may mean?) We talked about it, and of course all the options that Sylvia mentions in her book were there. One of us could convert to the other tradition. No. We were both determined to stay with our own tradition. We were both comfortable with them, and we both loved our own traditions. We could declare our marriage what some call a religion-free zone, or what my colleague, Alan Dershowitz, refers to as an "interfaithless family." We didn't want that either. The option we chose was for both of us to continue to participate in our own religious traditions and to try, insofar as conscience would permit it, to learn about, participate in, and appreciate the tradition of the other person. This is what we have done, I think very successfully, over the years.

By the way, just as I was finishing writing the book, I was going to call it "The Court of the Gentiles." I'm very attracted to the metaphor of that place within the ancient Jewish temple which was reserved for non-Jews, where you could come in, you could pray, you could have a

sacrifice made. You're close to the action but you're not exactly in the center, and you're not excluded either. There's a kind of a welcoming courtyard there. The publisher did not like that title. I once said to my wife, Nina, as I was thinking about titles, "Maybe I'll call this book 'How I Survived Sixteen Years of Marriage to a Jewish Woman'." She said, "You call it that and there won't be any seventeenth year of marriage." So I hit upon this title, which is not the best title, but nonetheless, there it is.

So here I am now, almost twenty years later, having participated in a lot of Passover Seders—we have one every year at our home—Torah studies, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services, more Bar Mitzvahs than I thought I'd signed on for, trips to Israel, and many other things. I've come to believe that even though I had read a lot of books about Judaism—after all, I'm in the field of religious studies—even though I thought I knew something about it, what I learned, and how I came to appreciate the Jewish tradition from this very, very close participation was something quite different. It's what I call the olfactory and the tactile element. There's something about the actual living of Jewish ritual and tradition. The customs which are so integral to Judaism—the Jewish year, the food, the smells of the food—I have discovered, are perhaps far more integral than they are to my own tradition, where they can vary widely from culture to culture.

So I decided to write this book about Judaism mainly for my Christian friends and colleagues, because I thought I could say some things that even the most learned scholar of Jewish studies couldn't say. I could make some comparisons and contrasts from my own experience and help them to understand it. To my great surprise, however, I began getting invitations mainly from Jewish organizations, from synagogue adult councils, from Hillel foundations, and fewer from Christian organizations. I still haven't quite been able to explain

that. It's probably because, as Robert Burns once said, "We like to see ourselves as others see us." It's useful to see one's own tradition from the perspective of another person who is familiar with and appreciative of it.

My assignment today is to talk a little bit about what we do in our own household about Jewish observances. I want to pick out just two or three of the holidays that I mentioned a few minutes ago and how I've related to them, how our whole family has related to them. We decided that Nicholas would be raised Jewish. His mother is Jewish. I think that's an absolute bottom line in any kind of a mixed marriage like ours. I think it's something that Christian and Jewish institutions have to make much, much clearer to those who are entering into this kind of a marriage. This is not an option from my point of view, but the bottom line.

As you might imagine, what has come to be most important to me and to us is *Shabbat*. I can't imagine what we'd do without it. I don't know how I lived for all those years without it, without that pause on Friday afternoon and evening for the lighting of the candles, the blessing of the wine and the challah, and the attempt to make the next day different from the other days. We don't turn our computers on, on Sabbath. We don't pay any bills. This is best part about it, no bill-paying on *Shabbat*, no banking. We're not consistent observers of Sabbath, but we make it different, we make it a day in which we can appreciate each other and appreciate the world, not try to improve it or tweak it, and just be there as those who are grateful for what God has done for us in giving us all of this. So *Shabbat* has become enormously important, and we all participate in it. I say the blessing in Hebrew over the wine, my son says it over the challah, Nina lights the candles, and we welcome the queen.

I began getting interested, by the way, in what happened in those early years of the Christian movement, when the vast majority of the people who were later to be Christians were

Jews. Most of them, I discovered, continued to celebrate Sabbath until the majority of the people who came into this new movement were not from Jewish background and didn't know much about Sabbath. The issue arose, should we have Sabbath or not? There's a famous passage in the Epistle to the Romans, where apparently a little discussion is going on among the Roman early Christians. St. Paul responds to their dispute, and instead of taking the side of those who say, "Yes, you should continue to do it," or those who say "No, you shouldn't," he says, "Let every person decide in their own minds how they're going to do this." Well, we've made that decision in our family. I'm very grateful for it.

Also, you might be interested to know that this is my second marriage. I have adult children from my first marriage. My son lives in Cambridge with his wife and young children, and for the last ten years, he has rarely missed coming to our place for *Shabbat*. He was the kid who didn't really take to the religious education I tried to give him. Maybe that's what happens to the children of theologians and rabbis: they want to try something else. He didn't really participate much in religious life. *Shabbat* has been his way of re-entering. There's something about those ancient prayers, the candles, the wine and the bread. His wife also comes, and now their little boy comes as well. So that's *Shabbat*.

Of the annual holidays, the one that I like most and participate in with the most fervor is Passover. We have a Passover Seder every year in our home. Nina leads the Passover Seder. We have a regular group of people who come, Jews and non-Jews. We always have a lively discussion, which I appreciate very much, because that's what you're supposed to do at a Passover Seder. I love that part. I can't think of any Christian ritual—actually, I'm sure there aren't any—in which you are asked to have a discussion in the middle of the ceremony. This, to me, is a marvelous recommendation, a marvelous indication of something vital and changing

about the Jewish tradition. What does it mean, right now? You don't wait until it's over. You do that in the middle of the ritual. From his earliest years, our son Nicholas has just loved that part of it, raising questions, trying out different answers to them, and learning at the same time to prepare the food, which we all do.

From my own faith tradition, as far as Passover is concerned—I don't know how anybody can understand the life of Jesus without understanding what he was doing in Jerusalem on the last week of his life, which has been so badly presented in these last weeks by Mel Gibson. What was Jesus doing there? He was there for Passover! Many Christians, if they know that, they don't think about it very much, or they don't understand it. Our tradition grows out of an event in the life of Jesus which marked him, as he was from birth to death, as a practicing Jew. There he was. I think it's also important because unfortunately, the understanding of Christian communion, which is built on the Seder, has become so individualistic and often so transcendent that it's lost some of the earthiness and some of the corporal quality that's present in this wonderful feast of freedom which is called the Passover. Passover celebrates the fact that God is on the side of those who are the captives, who are in bondage, who are crying out in their pain and asking for liberation. I believe that is still the case, but it's sometimes lost in the over-individualization of the way the Christian communion has evolved from the Passover Seder.

Now, I want to mention that there was a time when I had a problem with Hanukkah. First of all, having known a little bit about what really happened at Hanukkah, which was a kind of a Jewish civil war, I thought it was a little strange to be celebrating a military victory by the Maccabees. So I was always skeptical about Hanukkah. Also, I had a very painful memory. As a kid, I saw the movie of Anne Frank. I remembered the wonderful depiction of the Hanukkah meal that they had when they were hiding in the attic in Holland. Everybody was depressed and

irritable. Hanukkah came along, and Anne gave everybody a little gift and went around the table and sang the Hanukkah song, “Hanukkah, Hanukkah,” one line of which is, “In every age, some hero or sage came to our aid.” But nobody came to her aid, and I could hardly sing that song without pausing. Would that that were true! But it has not been historically true, and I had a problem with that. I had a problem with this holiday. I was greatly comforted when I talked to a couple of rabbis who confessed they also had a problem with Hanukkah, especially with the way Hanukkah has been escalated by the popular equation of it with some kind of a bland thing called the holiday season, in December. They resent the fact that instead of picking one of the important Jewish holidays, this minor holiday has been escalated beyond its importance. But then I talked to Marshall Meyer—may he rest in peace, one of my oldest friends, formerly the rabbi at B’nai Jeshurun in New York. He said, “Look, this is a holiday about religion and culture. All religions have to relate in one way or another to their envioning culture. They either overidentify and disappear, or they resist and encapsulate themselves and become irrelevant. Somewhere in between there’s the tension that has to be maintained. That’s what we talk about. That’s what we celebrate at Hanukkah.” That did it. From then on, I could be a full participant in Hanukkah, carrying my own rabbinically certified understanding of Hanukkah. I now participate fully, and we all do.

Not all Jewish observances, of course, are in the calendar. There are two that I want to mention of which I have, for various reasons, become enormously appreciative. The first is the custom of sitting *shiva*. Nina’s mother came to our home for her last weeks when she was dying and we had the privilege, the gift, of having her with us in her last weeks and days. And after she died in our home, saying the *Shmah* with us at her side, we did sit *shiva*. We had the funeral and we invited friends in and were sitting *shiva*, and I thought, there’s something enormously wise

about this custom. You're not expected to do anything for the few days, the seven days after you've had this kind of loss. Other people take care of you, and you're allowed to be sad, and other people bring food in. But at the end of seven days, as I understand this custom, you're supposed to get up, put on your clothes, and go out and walk around the block. Then, a month later, you can remember this as a special occasion. A year later, you have a *yahrzeit*. There's something profoundly insightful spiritually and psychologically about that process which I don't know of in any other tradition—certainly not in mine, where very quickly—too quickly, I think—we talk about celebrating the life of the person who just died. When somebody dies, I don't want to start celebrating their life right away, I want to be sad, and in Judaism, you're allowed to be sad. The ritual actually encourages you to be sad. I remember talking with Nina about this, and she said to me, "Yes, as Jews, we do death well." I think she was right. It's yet another insight from the Jewish tradition which I think is sharable to those of us who are not part of it.

The second occasion was Nicholas's Bar Mitzvah, in which, thank God, he didn't get a passage about some dread disease. He got what I consider to be, just by a stroke of luck or providence, one of the most wonderful passages you can imagine for a Bar Mitzvah, namely *Lech Lechah*, the call to Abraham: "Leave behind all those things that you're so familiar with and so fond of and take the next step to a place you don't even know about, which I will show you." So we prepared for that, he and I and his mother. His mother did a lot of the work on the actual preparation of the Bar Mitzvah party. I did a lot of work with him in studying the text, looking at the rabbinical sources. We had some terrific discussions. By the way, in his preparation for it, he studied Hebrew, and I decided that I would study some Hebrew too. I'd had it many, many years ago. Please don't ask me what grade I got in it. But I went to an adult

Hebrew class along with a lot of other embarrassed parents whose kids were studying for their Bar Mitzvahs and who thought they ought to brush up a little bit on their Hebrew. We had a perfectly marvelous, unforgettable Bar Mitzvah day at Temple Beth Zion in Brookline. I had notified all my relatives, by the way, brothers and sisters, two years in advance. I said, “Look, you have to know that for Jews, a Bar Mitzvah is not optional. You put this on your calendar now so you have no excuse two years from now.” Well, they did. They understood that. I guess the tone of voice probably communicated it to them. They came from upstate New York, from South Carolina, from Pennsylvania. They all came all to Brookline, in large numbers. Most of them had never been inside a synagogue, although my sister, who teaches junior high school, had been to a number of Bar Mitzvahs. The others had never been. This was the most wonderful introduction to Judaism that I could imagine anyone having, with the reading of the Torah and the celebration. I asked some of them later, and the high point for them was when Nicholas read from the Torah in Hebrew and then gave his commentary. These are people for whom there aren’t many sacred objects. They come from the kind of free-church, Baptist side of the Christian spectrum. To see this kid there with the Torah scroll, reading it from the original, was enormously impressive. Then, when he carried it around the synagogue, that was the high moment.

Let me toss out a couple of ideas as I close. People have asked me, “Well, aren’t you raising Nicholas in two different religious traditions?” The answer is absolutely no. We made the decision to raise Nicholas Jewish. He understands that, he accepts it, he loves it. He understands that his father is not Jewish, his mother is—and he understands who he is. I do not believe children should be raised in some kind of a confusing syncretistic mixture of religious traditions, and the idea that children should decide somehow when they’re 16 or 18 or 21 or 38 which

tradition they're going to be part of I think is equally ridiculous. That's not possible. You raise a child in a particular tradition. In our case, the mother is Jewish, the child is Jewish. We made that decision, and I have never had a moment of regret. It's enriched both of us.

Some people also ask me whether Nicholas is going to be prepared to live out his Jewish identity, having come from such a family. I hope I don't appear to be bragging when I say I think he may be better equipped, having grown up this way, than some children in Jewish families who are kept sequestered from other religious options that they're going to meet throughout their lives in as diverse and pluralistic a society as ours. I say this after having taught, year after year, large numbers of Harvard undergraduates who are Jewish, many of whom do not come from mixed families and who are now being exposed [to other religions for the first time] and sometimes don't know what to make of it. One of the things that puzzles me, by the way, is the appeal on the Harvard campus that that Chabad Lubovitch is beginning to have for considerable numbers of students, who somehow or another think that's the real thing, that's the real Jewishness. I also have a hard time explaining why, when I was teaching at the Naropa Institute ten or fifteen years ago, so many of the young people who were attracted to Tibetan Buddhism came disproportionately from Jewish backgrounds.

I hope and pray Nicholas will have a kind of Jewish identity throughout his life in which he'll be better able to cope with a completely new situation.

We have a few moments for some questions. Thank you for having me, and thanks for sponsoring this, and I look forward to the rest of the day.

**Q:** I come from Hartford, Connecticut. I'm president of the Hadassah chapter of Hartford. My question is, how did you deal with Christmas? I have a son who married the most wonderful girl, who converted, and she has a great deal of difficulty with Christmas. So how did you deal with

that?

**Harvey Cox:** I knew this question was going to come up. Let me explain how we deal with it. I want to say first of all that I do not agree with those people who say, “Look, we do Christmas in our mixed home because it’s just a secular and cultural holiday.” I think that’s an insult. It’s not. It’s a religious holiday for Christians. It would be as bad as saying, “Look, you can put Jewish symbols up out in the public because they’re really just cultural.” What we do is the following: we have a Christmas dinner at our home. My other children come. We have a small tree in our home, and Nicholas has known from the very beginning, as his mother knows, that this is my holiday, not his, not theirs. It’s a birthday. It’s the birthday of Jesus. We celebrate the birthday of Jesus, because he’s important to us. You are invited to the birthday party. He’s not to you what he is to us. It’s a little like when you go to somebody else’s birthday party, and they’re singing “Happy Birthday,” and they get to “Happy birthday, dear daddy,” or “Happy birthday, dear grandpa,” or “Happy birthday, dear Harold.” The relationship to the birthday kid or man is different, but the principle is hospitality. One welcomes other people into one’s celebrations. I have been welcomed into Jewish celebrations all over the country, all over the world. I’m not Jewish, but I have always felt welcome. I hope that people who are not Christian who come to our celebrations feel welcome but don’t feel that they have to accept it in the way we do. This is one of the reasons, by the way, why I’m so much opposed to the concept of the holiday season, as though somehow Christmas and Hanukkah can be merged. I think the more Jewish Hanukkah becomes, and the more specifically Christian Christmas becomes—rather than the kind of commercial orgy that it is now—the more distinguishable and non-syncretistic they will be. My plea is to oppose syncretism, as Sylvia does in her book. But I certainly hope that in a mixed family, the one holiday that Christians often celebrate in their homes rather than somewhere else

is not banned from the household, as long as it's explained carefully.

**Q:** What about Jesus and your belief in Jesus as the son of God. We bring up our children sharing our beliefs and values with them, and we know we can't count on them having the same ones, but we don't usually bring them up expecting them not to believe something we believe. But at least in this culture, where one way to be Jewish is to define yourself against the Christian milieu, and not believing in certain things that Christians believe, I was wondering how you handle this in your family vis à vis your son.

**Harvey Cox:** Pretty much analogous to the way I deal with Christmas. There's a very, very wide range of beliefs about Jesus within Christianity. After all, there are something like two billion Christians in the world, everything from liberal Congregationalists to Christian Unitarians to Orthodox and Episcopalians and fundamentalists. There isn't any single belief about Jesus. One of the most refreshing things to me is the enormous new creative wave of literature written by Jews about Jesus in the last thirty or forty years. Martin Buber was the pioneer in this, but there's been a lot of interesting historical research and theological writing. There's a book that came out two years ago called *Jewish Views of Jesus*, with about ten essays by Jewish scholars with a variety of opinions. However, when it comes down to the bottom line, there's a difference of opinion about the significance of Jesus for most Jews and for most Christians. I would bet that there is a certain overlap at the Unitarian-liberal-Congregational edge and at the Reformed edge, but who knows? I think it's important to help children to see that there are a variety of ways of interpreting the same thing. Their take on it doesn't have to be the same as other people's, even their own parents, but they should honor and appreciate their parents, just as their parents appreciate each other, even though they don't agree on certain things.

**Q:** Can you say something about how you made the decision to raise your son Jewish? You said

that was the bottom line, but specifically, could you get into what influenced that decision or who influenced that decision, who you involved in the discussion and so forth?

**Harvey Cox:** That's a good question. You know, Sylvia has a good quote from me. She uses very good sources, by the way. In *Common Prayers* I was quite aware of the fact that for most Jews, the prospect of a mixed marriage is viewed with apprehension because of the children, not necessarily because of the spouse. What happens with the children? I understood also that for Jews, the continuation of the life and witness of the covenant people in the world as a light to the nations is absolutely central to Judaism. Therefore to deprive a Jewish woman—or, I would say, a Jewish father, but that's not my decision to make—of an offspring who will continue to be a part of the covenant people, would be as bad a denial of an integral part of Jewish faith. I knew that, so it didn't take very much discussion.

Let me just make one other point with reference to this. I'm getting pretty tired of all these church groups that make apologies for the way Christians have treated Jews over the centuries. It had to be done. The apologies were made. Enough, already. The next step Christian groups have to take is to educate and prepare Christians who are marrying Jews about this very point that I've just made. And I think this ought to start with the Catholic church, which has in fact ruled, although the rule is not enforced, that the child has to be raised Catholic. If they're really serious about going beyond supercessionism, they must acknowledge that these are both covenant communities that serve God, and learn to understand this business of the continuation of the covenant people. So this is what we have to do on our side of the ledger. On the Jewish side, I think helping those of us who are in mixed marriages to raise our children Jewish is absolutely essential, and there isn't a whole lot of help out there. There's increased sympathy for it, but not really very much concrete help. It's beginning to come now, but I wish there more.

**Q:** I would like to say that in my mind, you are a righteous Gentile, and it is an honor to hear what you have to say. I feel this is an extraordinary set of ideas that you are expressing. I would like to learn how to act on them, so I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. I want to ask, since you were so intent on having your son become a Jew, why did you choose the name Nicholas rather than Noah or Benjamin or some name that people would immediately recognize as Jewish? A person who would introduce herself to me as Christy or a boy who would introduce himself to me as Nicholas would communicate to me that he is not a Jew. So much of Jewish life is connected to our names.

**Harvey Cox:** The name Nicholas was chosen by his mother. He's named after his great-grandfather, a Russian Jew whose name was Nicholas. His Hebrew name is Nissan. He does have a Jewish name. He had a naming ceremony. I thought that if his mother was intent upon having that name, I was certainly not going to oppose it.

**Q:** For some young couples going through what you went through, the partner whose religion was not the one in which the child is being raised might feel that the child would not identify with him or with her. They would feel some loss. Especially, I think, among younger couples, this could be a problem. You want the child to feel as though it's your child. What advice you would give to couples like that.

**Harvey Cox:** Yes, I think that might be a problem. This has to do with the lack of symmetry in participation. I can participate fully in Jewish religious life. I go to the synagogue, I hear the prophets, I hear the Torah and the Psalms. It's all familiar. I can pray, I can worship there. It's not the same for Nina. When she comes [to church], as she does sometimes on our equivalent of the high holidays, she hears things that are not only different from but contrary to the rabbinical interpretations of the texts. So I don't expect her to participate as fully in my liturgical tradition

as I can in hers. However, as far as the child identifying, when we all go to synagogue for Rosh Hashanah or for Yom Kippur or for Purim or whatever, I'm there. I'm there with Nicholas and Nina. I'm sitting next to them. I have a *yarmulke* on. He can identify. Insofar as possible, I can participate, and I don't think he feels any kind of barrier. I was there for his Bar Mitzvah, and I helped him think through what in the world *Lech Lechah* meant. Our family was there en masse to celebrate this event in his life. Now, if it were the other way around, there might be a problem. I don't know. I can only speculate. If the wife-husband thing was a little different than it is with us, it might be different. I don't know. I can only talk about my own experience. We're loaded with sociologists here who can help you with other kinds of cases and other kinds of instances.