

Avram Haivri
Jews as Insiders/Outsiders

Minneapolis Jewish Artist's Lab
Nov. 8, 2016 7 Cheshvan 5777
Rabbi Alexander Davis

Small Group Discussion

1. Have you ever felt like an outsider? As a Jew? As an artist?
2. How did this make you feel?

Text Study

What does *Ivri* mean? What are its implications? Who makes the designation?

Look up the following citations. Read the verses in their context. See also commentary as indicated to gain a fuller understanding of the term.

Joshua 24:1-3 (Note Hebrew of verse 2)

א וַיֵּאסֶף יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת־כָּל־שִׁבְטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׂכֵמָה וַיִּקְרָא לְזִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וּלְרֹאשֵׁיו וּלְשֹׁפְטָיו וּלְשֹׁטְרָיו
וַיִּתְּצֻבוּ לִפְנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים : ב וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶל־כָּל־הָעָם כֹּה־אָמַר ה' אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעֵבֶר הַנְּהָר יָשְׁבוּ
אֲבוֹתֵיכֶם מֵעוֹלָם תֵּרַח אָבִי אֲבִרָהָם וְאָבִי נָחוֹר וַיַּעֲבֹדוּ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים : ג וְאִסַּח אֶת־אֲבִיכֶם אֶת־
אֲבִרָהָם מֵעֵבֶר הַנְּהָר וְאוֹלַךְ אוֹתוֹ בְּכָל־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וְאָרַב [וְאֲרָבָה] אֶת־זָרְעוֹ

1. Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel at Shechem. He summoned Israel's elders and commanders... 2. and said to all the people, "In olden times, your forefathers- Terach, father of Abraham and father of Nachor- lived beyond the Euphrates and worshipped other gods. 3. But I took your father Abraham from beyond the Euphrates and led him through the whole land of Canaan and multiplied his offspring.

Genesis 50:10

Read the Hebrew to see the connection

Gen 40:15

See pshat commentary

Genesis 43:32

See pshat commentary

Exodus 1:15

See pshat commentary

Jonah 1:8-9

ח וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֵלָיו הַגִּידָה נָא לָנוּ בְּאִשֶּׁר לַמִּיָּהָרָעָה הַזֹּאת לָנוּ מִהַמְּלַאכְתְּךָ וּמֵאֵין תְּבוֹא מָה אַרְצְךָ
וַאִימָזָה עִם אֲתָה : ט וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵיהֶם עֲבָרִי אֲנֹכִי וְאֲתִיחַ אֶ-לֵהִי הַשָּׁמַיִם אֲנִי יָרָא אֲשֶׁר-עָשָׂה אֶת
הַיָּם וְאֶת-הַיַּבֶּשֶׁת :

8. They said to him, "Tell us, what is your business? Where have you come from? What is your country and of what people are you." 9. "I am a Hebrew," he replied. "I worship the Lord, the God of heaven who made both sea and Land."

Small Group Discussion

1. What are the positive aspects of being an *Ivri*?
2. What are the negative aspects?
3. Look at commentaries by Hirsch, Artscroll, Sacks. How do they describe the *ivri*? How are they alike/different? What resonates with you? What does not?
4. Can you be an *ivri* in character and live peacefully among your neighbors as Hirsch suggests? Is being an *ivri* "energizing" as Sacks suggests?
5. How important is being an *Ivri* for you as a Jew? An artist?

Journal Question

In your own life, when have you felt yourself...

1. An *Ivri* as in a descendant tracing your lineage back many generations?
2. An *Ivri* in geographic terms moving from some other place?
3. An *Ivri* in philosophical/theological/spiritual terms holding different opinions than others?