

The Abraham & Millie Arbesfeld  
**Kollel Yom Rishon**

Sunday Morning Learning Programs for Men & Women

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**Judaism's Encounter  
with Other Cultures:**

In Honor of the 25<sup>th</sup> Yahrtzeit of  
Rabbi Dr. Leo Jung z"l

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*Theological Encounters  
of Different Kinds*

Generously Sponsored by Robyn and Shukie Grossman and Family



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כה' כסלו חשע"ג • December 9, 2012

## 1. Exodus 20:2-4

<p><b>ב</b> אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ, אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם מִבֵּית עֲבָדִים: לֹא-יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים, עַל-פָּנָי.</p>	<p><b>שמות כ</b>  <b>2</b> I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.</p>
<p><b>ג</b> לֹא-תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל, וְכָל-תְּמוּנָה, אֲשֶׁר בְּשָׁמַיִם מִמֶּעַל, וְאֲשֶׁר בָּאָרֶץ מִתַּחַת--וְאֲשֶׁר בַּמַּיִם, מִתַּחַת לָאָרֶץ.</p>	<p><b>3</b> Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth;</p>
<p><b>ד</b> לֹא-תִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה לָהֶם, וְלֹא תַעֲבֹדֵם: כִּי אֲנֹכִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ, אֵל קַנָּא--פֶּקֶד עֹוֹן אֲבֹת עַל-בָּנִים עַל-שְׂלֵשִׁים וְעַל-רִבְעִים, לְשֹׂנְאֵי.</p>	<p><b>4</b> thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me;</p>

## 2. I Kings 18:25-29

<p><b>כה</b> וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי לְבִיאי הַבַּעַל, בַּחֲרוּ לָכֶם הַפָּר הָאֶחָד וַעֲשׂוּ רֵאשִׁינָה, כִּי אַתֶּם, הַרְבִּיבִים; וְקִרְאוּ בְּשֵׁם אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, וְאֵשׁ לֹא תִשְׂמֹו.</p>	<p><b>מלכים א' יח</b>  <b>25</b> And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal: 'Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress it first; for ye are many; and call on the name of your god, but put no fire under.'</p>
<p><b>כו</b> וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת-הַפָּר אֲשֶׁר-נָתַן לָהֶם, וַיַּעֲשׂוּ, וַיִּקְרְאוּ בְּשֵׁם הַבַּעַל מִהַבֹּקֶר וְעַד-הַחֲצֹהַרְלִים לֵאמֹר הַבַּעַל עֲנֵנוּ, וְאִין קוֹל וְאִין עֲנָה; וַיַּפְסְחוּ, עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה.</p>	<p><b>26</b> And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed it, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying: 'O Baal, answer us.' But there was no voice, nor any that answered. And they danced in halting wise about the altar which was made.</p>
<p><b>כז</b> וַיְהִי בַצְּהַרְיִם וַיִּהְתַּל בָּהֶם אֱלֹהֵי, וַיֹּאמֶר קִרְאוּ בְּקוֹל-גָּדוֹל כִּי-אֱלֹהִים הוּא--כִּי שִׁיחַ וְכִי-שִׁיג לוֹ, וְכִי-דֶרֶךְ לוֹ; אוֹלֵי יִשָּׁן הוּא, וַיִּקָּץ.</p>	<p><b>27</b> And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said: 'Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is musing, or he is gone aside, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.'</p>
<p><b>כח</b> וַיִּקְרְאוּ, בְּקוֹל גָּדוֹל, וַיִּתְגַּדְּדוּ כַּמְשָׁפָטִים, בַּחֲרָבוֹת וּבְרִמְחִים--עַד-שֶׁפָּךְ-דָּם, עָלֵיהֶם.</p>	<p><b>28</b> And they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with swords and lances, till the blood gushed out upon them.</p>
<p><b>כט</b> וַיְהִי, כַּעֲבֹר הַצְּהַרְיִם, וַיִּתְנַבְּאוּ, עַד לַעֲלוֹת הַמִּנְחָה; וְאִין-קוֹל וְאִין-עֲנָה, וְאִין קִשְׁב.</p>	<p><b>29</b> And it was so, when midday was past, that they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening offering; but their was neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.</p>

### 3. Isaiah 56:7

<p><b>יְשַׁעִיהוּ נו</b>  ז וְהֵבִיאֹתִים אֶל-הַר קִדְשִׁי, וְשִׁמְחֹתִים  בְּבֵית תְּפִלָּתִי--עוֹלְתֵיהֶם וְזִבְחֵיהֶם  לְרִצּוֹן, עַל-מִזְבְּחִי : כִּי בֵיתִי, בֵּית-תְּפִלָּה  יִקְרָא לְכָל-הָעַמִּים.</p>	<p>7 Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer; their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon Mine altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.</p>
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### 4. Tosefta, Sandedrin 13:2

Rabbi Eliezer said: all gentiles do not have a share in the world to come as it is written: The wicked shall return to Sheol, [even all the nations who forget G-d.] (Psalms 9:17)...  
 Rabbi Joshua said to him: if the text had said “the wicked shall return, to sheol all nations, and was quiet, then I would say like you said. But now the verse said those who forget G-d. Behold there are saints among the nations they have a share in the world to come.

### 5. Talmud, Bava Metizah 114b

The graves of Gentiles do not defile, for it is written, And you my flock, the flock of my pastures, are men; only you are designated 'men'. And non-Jews are not designated as men.

### 6. Shemot Rabbah 19:4; Baba Kamma 38a.

The Holy One declares no creature unfit, but receives all. The gates of mercy are open at all times, and he who wishes may enter.

### 7. Maharal – Beer HaGolah, chapter 7.

Israel and Edom are inverse and opposite – when one is an ascent then the other is in descent. At the beginning, Israel is connected to the nations like a shell around a fruit. At the end, the fruit is separated from the shell completely and Israel is separated from them.  
 The separation from idolaters makes a nations complete in itself and sustains the essence of Israel.  
 Idolaters are compared to water and Israel to fire. If the two substances, fire and water, are mixed together, the water puts out the fire. But if the fire remains distant an separate from the water, then the fire consumes and dries out the water until nothing is left. In truth, this is the uniqueness of Israel.

### **8. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings 11:4**

Even Jesus of Nazereth, who imagined that he was the Messiah, but was put to death by the court, Daniel had prophesized, as it written, “And the children of the violent among your people shall lift themselves up to establish a vision; but they shall stumble” (Daniel 11:14). For has there ever been a greater stumbling block than this? All the prophets affirmed that the Messiah would redeem Israel, save them, gather their dispersed, and confirm the commandments. But he caused Israel to be destroyed by the sword, their remnant to be dispersed and humiliated. He was instrumental in changing the Torah and causing the world to err and serve another besides G-d.

The human mind has no power to reach the thoughts of the Creator, “for his thoughts and ways are unlike ours” (Isaiah 55:8). All these matters of Jesus of Nazereth and the Ishmaelite who stood up after him are only intended to pave the way of the Anointed King, and the mend the entire world to worship G-d together, thus: “For them I shall turn a clear tongue to the nations to call all in the Name of the Lord and to worship him with one shoulder” (Zeph. 3:9). Thus the messianic hope, the Torah, and the commandments have become familiar topics of conversation among the inhabitants of the far isles and many peoples, uncircumcised of heart and flesh.

### **9. Rav Saadiah Gaon, *Book of Beliefs and Opinions*, Introduction.**

As for ourselves, the community of monotheists, we hold these three sources of knowledge to be genuine. To them, however, we add a fourth source...the validity of authentic tradition...This type of knowledge...corroborates for us the validity of the first three sources of knowledge.

### **10. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, *The Dignity of Difference***

Judaism is a particularist monotheism. It believes in one God but not in one religion, one culture, one truth. The God of Abraham is the God of all mankind, but the faith of Abraham is not the faith of all mankind.

There is a difference between God and religion. God is universal, religions are particular.

Because we know what it is to be a parent, loving our children, not children in general, we understand what it is for someone else, somewhere else, to be a parent, loving his or her children, not ours.

Christians, Jews, Sikhs, Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Zoroastrians, and Baha'i. Because though we do not share a faith, we surely share a fate. Whatever our faith or lack of faith, hunger still hurts, disease still strikes, poverty still disfigures, and hate still kills. Few put it better than that great Christian poet, John Donne: “Every man’s death diminishes me, for I am involved in mankind.”