

BIBLICAL PERIOD**1) Leviticus 18:1-3**

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: I the Lord am your God. You shall not copy the practices of the land of Egypt where you dwelt, or of the land of Canaan to which I am taking you; not shall you follow their laws. My rules alone shall you observe, and faithfully follow My laws: I the Lord am your God.

RABBINIC PERIOD**2) Traditional Aleinu**

"It is up to us to offer praises to the Source of All, who has not made us like the other nations, who has not made us like the other peoples of the earth, who has not given us the same portion as theirs nor the same destiny...."

3) Traditional Torah blessings

"Blessed are You God...Who has chosen us from all of the other nations and given us the Torah."

MEDIEVAL PERIOD**4) Mishneh Torah "Knowledge" 11:1, Moses Maimonides, 1168, Egypt**

"We should not follow the customs of the Gentiles, nor imitate them in dress or in their way of trimming the hair, as it is said, "And you shall not walk in the customs of the nation which I have cast out before you." (Lev. 20:23) "Neither shall you walk in their statutes" (Lev. 18:3) "Take heed to yourself that you be not ensnared to follow them." (Deut. 12:30) These texts all refer to one theme and warn against imitating them. The Israelite shall, on the contrary, be distinguished from them and be recognizable by the way he dresses and in his other activities, just as he is distinguished from them by his knowledge and his principles. And thus it is said, "And I have set you apart from the peoples (Lev 20:26). He shall not put on a garment like that specially worn by them nor let the lock of his hair grow in the way they do."

MODERN PERIOD**5) Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, 20th century, founder of Reconstructionist Judaism**

"...be faithful to Judaism "because it is ours, the only religion we have..."

"if we wish to foster Jewish group solidarity, we must live up to a higher ethical standard than the average. No other justification for our remaining an identifiable minority will avail."

"question of election "forced itself upon me" in this form: how could Jews "accord religious significance to American sancta [is that which the nation held sacred] without giving up the claim to being God's chosen people:"

"the individual best serves humanity through his own group, the Jew by placing his particular traditional to the service of all humanity."

CONTEMPORARY PERIOD**6) Reconstructionist Torah Blessings**

"Blessed are You God...Who has called us to your service and placed in to us an eternal life. Blessed are You God who has given us your Torah."