

## I Heard Tell

Don't you just hate it when you read something, but do not record the writer who wrote it? Yeah, me too.

However, there is ample evidence to support the information under a heading of "I heard tell." So, I heard tell....

There is a great deal said about the divisions that exist in our society relative to ethnic origins. Prejudice has existed since...how long?

"And when Esau was forty years old he took to wife Judith the daughter of Beeri the Hittite, and Basemath the daughter of Elon the Hittite. And they were a grief of mind unto Isaac and to Rebekah" (Gen. 26:34-35).

"And Miriam and Aaron spake against Moses because of the Cushite woman whom he had married; for he had married a Cushite woman" (Numb. 12:1).

Samson: "Then his father and his mother said unto him, Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all my people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines? And Samson said unto his father, Get her for me; for she pleaseth me well" (Judg. 14:3).

"The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican." (Lk. 18:11).

Let us get a bit more personal:

"Blessed art thou, O Lord our God, who hath created me a human and not animal, male and not female, Jew and not Gentile [goy (Jewish name for a non-Jew, definition added by ret)] circumcised and not uncircumcised, free and not slave." Although this is one I "heard tell," it is verifiable: "Tosefta Berakhot 6:18 teaches in the name of Rabbi Yehuda ben Ilai (mid-2nd c. CE) that every (Jewish) man is obligated to recite three blessings daily. These express gratitude for one's station in life through the negative statements: thank God that I am not a gentile, a woman, or a slave (or in earlier formulations, a boor). This language echoes Greek prayers preserved first by Plato. Especially because this text also appears as a legal dictum in the Babylonian Talmud, Menahot 43b, these blessings, which modern scholars call the "blessings of identity," gradually became part of the preliminary prayers to the daily morning service."

"At times, Jews have recited more positive formulations. Thus, some Palestinian-rite Jews of the late first millennium and medieval Italian Jews recited "who has made me an Israelite and not a gentile" (with parallel formulations for other blessings, and sometimes with additions, like "who has made me human and not a beast," and "who has made me circumcised and not uncircumcised."). "Gentile" in this context is a catch-all term for non-Jew, so the intent of the person reciting this blessing correlates with the non-Jews with whom

he personally interacts. Some Jews in Muslim lands recited "who made me Israelite and not Ishmaelite" (Ms. Parma 887).

Socrates: He was grateful for FORTUNE — “that I was born a human being and not an animal, a man and not a woman, a Greek and not a barbarian.”

Chinese referred to:

The white man as, Gwai Lo, literally means “ghost man.”

The black man as, Hakgwei as, “black ghost.”

“According to a survey of 210 foreign residents conducted by the National Human Rights Commission of Korea and released last year, 44.7 percent of respondents said discrimination based on race exists in Korea, and 47.7 percent said ethnicity-based discrimination prevails in the country” (The Korea Herald, Sept. 28, 2021).

Whatever ethnic, national or whatever race, historically it appears that most consider their race to be God’s gift to creation.

For what do you pray?

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