



Reprinted from Moment Magazine, May/June 2010, "Ask the Rabbis" column

***What does it mean to be Jewish today?
What can we, as Jews, offer the world?***

Response by Rabbi Peter Schweitzer

For secular, cultural Jews, who make up half the American Jewish community, being Jewish is all about choice and personal discovery. It has nothing to do with being chosen. Or being obedient to divinely-revealed commandments. Nor is it an all-consuming, full-time enterprise. Our Jewish identity competes with other commitments, identities, and persuasions. It is a balancing act. We pick and choose how much and how often, with whom and where, to be Jewish. Jewish identity for us is increasingly hyphenated. We are Jewish and.

We are grateful to be living in a modern world where reason trumps faith and scientific method calls into question traditional beliefs. This means seeking out truths everywhere. And re-defining boundaries. We prefer for them to be permeable and pluralistic, not prohibitive or separatist. We want to be part of the world, not shut off from it. This means being open to ideas and relationships and leading the way to a world of greater openness and exchange.

We can offer the world the lesson of our journey, from degradation to freedom, from oppression to liberation. It means speaking out for hope and possibility. As inheritors of the prophetic tradition, we will continue to be at the forefront of a call for justice, peace and equality.

Through our creativity and innovation we honor a heritage that has always been evolving, adapting and re-defining itself in each generation. While we cherish our roots and inheritance, we do not retreat to some overly romanticized past. Nor do we escape to some idealized messianic future. Rather, and in keeping with this journal's name, we live in the Moment!

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