CONVERSION TO JUDAISM THROUGH THE AGES: HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL REFLECTIONS

A PANEL DISCUSSION

THE CENTER FOR JEWISH LAW AND CONTEMPORARY CIVILIZATION

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Of all Judaic rituals, that of *giyyur* (conversion) is arguably the most radical: it irrevocably turns a Gentile into a Jew. Since the classical Jewish tradition regards Jewishness as an ascriptive status acquired through birth to a Jewish mother, the very possibility of such a transformation is anomalous. Due to a wide and complex set of factors, attitudes toward conversion, details of the process and expectations for the convert have differed depending on the historical time and place.