Jerome Gellman

*God’s Kindness Has Overwhelmed Us: A Contemporary Doctrine of the Jews as the Chosen People*

In the fourth chapter Gellman lays out the argument for his claim that God chose the Jews upon which to lavish his overwhelming love as a kind of display to the rest of humanity that God desires to love everyone. Rather than compel or woo them, God forces his love on the Jews, commanding them to love back. In contrast, God issues a *call* to non-Jews, “a call that can be accepted or rebuffed (71).”

One question we might raise has to do with the nature of the call. Gellman points out the contrast between his understanding of Jewish chosenness and the historical interpretation of God’s choosing of Jewish people as being indicative of exclusive love towards them, or perhaps God’s greater love for them over others. One worry the latter interpretation raises concerns divisions in racial identity and the notion of hierarchy. If God loves Jews more than others or in an exclusive way that signals a special status, this suggests a subordinated status for non-Jews. It also suggests that God is engaging in divine racism, as William R. Jones points out in his seminal book *Is God a White Racist?* (although, Jones’ target is Christian theology and not Judaism). Does Gellman’s rearticulation of Jewish chosenness escape this worry? What mechanisms in Gellman’s account ensure that God’s choice of the Jews is not mistaken as “due to God’s special love for the Jews (73)?” As Gellman anticipates, an objection to his view is that if God’s purpose in choosing the Jews is meant as a way of displaying his love for humanity as a whole, why is it still largely unknown (74)?