

# SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

Yom Kippur 5777

October 12, 2016 Tishrei 10, 5777

**DEDICATIONS: In memory of Victor Azrak – Haim ben Sarina  
And our grandfather David Gindi, haKohen ben Sarina**

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## The Custom of Kapparot

For many years while Rabbi Abittan Z'SL was alive, many of us in the synagogue did a joint field trip at 4AM on Erev Kippur. We set out in a caravan of cars to Williamsburg be the first ones to do Kapparot with the chickens. We figured being first would avoid the problems with the chickens, with the shochets, etc. I have to be honest that it was very moving for us to hold the chicken, wave it over our heads and then see the shochet slaughter the chicken followed by our making the blessing of kisui dam – covering the blood. The emotion, I felt, was the essence of act. We then came back to Long Beach and to the Synagogue for Selihot, Shaharit, Hatara and then a dip into the ocean across the street. Rabbi Abittan never joined us which should have been a message to us in the first place. But I heard stories from my mother of how they collected the chickens and kept them in the bathtub. There was one for each child and the shochet would come and slaughter them. So I figured that this was an accepted family custom and we should seriously try to keep it going.

As years passed and the doing of Kapparot became more and more popular, the Rabbi told us that he disapproved of this commercializing of Kapparot and unless very strict conditions were met, we should not continue to do it. He reasoned that given the realities and present day problems, we should replace the chickens with money. This is now my practice.

Rabbi Yosef Bitton of Manhattan Beach writes: In many communities, there is a Minhag of doing Kapparot in the eve of Yom Kippur, what is the best way to do the Kapparot, with chicken or with money for charity? His answer is in line with what the rabbi told us. And we see, even Rav Ovadia z'sl changed his opinion following the commercialization.

First of all, we need to clarify that there is no Mitsva in the Tora to perform the Kapparot, or any kind of animal sacrifice, in the eve of Yom Kippur. In our days, as Maimonides explains "en sham el-la

teshuba", there is nothing else but Teshuba to atone for our sins. Teshuba is a serious mental and emotional process of retrospection, which consists in the admission and confession of our flaws and bad habits, which ultimately should lead us to improving our behavior .

Kapparot is a practice which was initiated by the people -not by the rabbis- at the time of the Geonim (year 800-1000 CE). The Kappara made with a live animal suppose to help inspiring our Teshuba. By seeing the Shehita (slaughtering) of the chicken, we realize the extreme fragility of our lives. We then realize the appropriateness of doing Teshuba, reflecting on our own mortality. This is, by the way, the frequent explanation for the effect that the qorban, in the times of the Bet haMiqdash, had in the sinner's consciousness.

However, soon after the custom of Kapparot became more popular some prominent Rabbis like Ramban (Nahmanides) raised their voices against this practice. Maran Rabbi Yosef Caro (1488-1575) the author of the Shulhan Arukh, the supreme Code of Law for all Jews, disapproved the practice of Kapparot with chicken in the eve of Yom Kippur, explicitly and with very harsh terms. Moreover, in the first edition of the shulhan 'arukh (Venice 1565) it is written in the title of siman 605, where Rabbi Yosef Caro discusses Kapparot גהנו רופכ מוי ברעב תורפכ גהנו "The custom of Kapparot in the eve of Yom Kippur is a foolish custom". In later editions the editors erased the last line. (see the original edition of the Shulhan 'arukh here )

Why such strong opposition to the Kapparot?

First, as Nahmanides said: mishum darke haemori "because it is similar to the practice of idol worshipers" . (Even today, many cults like Macomb, Vodoo, etc. use a small chicken as a sacrifice to their deities. You can Google for example "Eshu" or "Ellegua" major idol-warriors of Santeria which must be worship by sacrificing to them a small chicken).

Second, the fact that the Kappara performance looks like the Korbanot performance, made many rabbis very concerned: because slaughtering an animal as a sacrifice outside the Bet haMiqdash (haqrabat hutz) is a serious Biblical transgression that deserves karet . For this reason many rabbis in the past forbade the

consumption of the chicken that was slaughtered in the fashion (or intention) of a qorban (The Rishba, while still opposed to the Kapparot with chicken, allowed to eat that chicken, which was usually given to the poor, because it is not one of the animals who were offered as a sacrifice in the Bet haMiqdash).

Third, when many people want to do Kapparot on the eve of Yom Kippur, the Shehita might not be done with enough care and attention in terms of the checking of the knives and other ritual details. This is the point brought by Rabbi Obadiah Yosef z"l (who in the past supported the Kapparot) to favor the performance of Kapparot with Tsedaqa (see this).

There is yet another problem, which should be of a great concern when thinking about doing chicken Kapparot. Because of the great demand and the short time to slaughter so many animals, the chickens are too often mistreated in the process, left for days in cages without food or water. This is a serious transgression of an explicit Biblical prohibition instructing us to treat animals with respect and avoid unnecessary suffering (tsa'ar ba'ale hayim). The new Ashkenazi Chief rabbi of Israel, Rabbi David Lau addressed this issue last year (see here).

Lastly, if the person who does the Kappara would give directly the slaughtered chicken to a poor person, as it used to be done in the past, then we could view this Kappara as a form of Tsedaqa. But people who do the Kapparot would very often take seriously the idea of transference of his sins into the chicken and therefore not they, not even needy people would be eating those chicken "full of sins". Many of these chickens are not eaten but just wasted. And if one kills an animal unnecessarily (not to be eaten) one is transgressing another explicit Biblical prohibition bal tashchit, i.e., unnecessary waste of the blessings, in this case an animal life, that God granted us.

In conclusion, the best way of doing Kapparot is by giving Tsedaqa (=charity for needy people). In this case, none of the above mentioned problems would apply, and in addition before Yom Kippur begins, you will be fulfilling the beautiful Biblical commandment of charity. Which is a Mitsva with no negative side effects. On the contrary, Tsedaqa was regarded as the most important Mitsva, as Maimonides writes: "We have to care about the Mitsva of Tsedaqa more than [we care about] any other positive commandment" (MT, Matanot 'aniyim 10:1). Tsedaqa brings a great zekhut (merit) to the giver, and a great relief to the recipient תומם ליצת הקדצו

See this video where Rabbi Shelomo Aviner, Rosh Yeshivat Ateret Cohanim, explains the ways of doing kapparot and mentions, among other things, that Rabbi Kaddouri z"l and Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach z"l made kapparot with Tsedaqa instead of chicken.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=257TGsDD5vg>

### The Thirteen Attributes of Mercy

Each day for the last forty days we have been saying Selichot which is centered on the Yag Midot or 13 Attributes of Mercy. We repeat these verses again and again and during Selichot of Yom Kippur, another 26 times. It behooves us to have some insight into this tefilah. If we understand and act on these words, we will be guaranteed a successful Yom Kippur. Take the time to review the following before Yom Kippur. Think about the words and make some initial attempt to act on them and over Kippur commit to working on each one.

The Torah, in two places, refers to God's attributes of mercy, which are employed as supplications to assuage God's anger. In Shemot (34:6-10), after the Sin of the Golden Calf, God Himself reveals these attributes, as He forges a 'new' covenant with the Jewish people. VBM Etzion.org posts:

Then God passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "Lord, Lord, God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in loving-kindness and truth; Who keeps loving-kindness for thousands, Who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations." Moshe made haste to bow low toward the earth and prostrate. He said, "If now I have found favor in Your sight, God, I pray, let God go along in our midst, even though the people are so obstinate, and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us as Your own possession." Then God said, "Behold, I am making a covenant. Before all your people I will perform miracles which have not been produced in all the earth, nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of God, for it is an awesome thing that I am going to perform with you."

In addition, in the wake of the Sin of the Spies, after God threatens to destroy the Jewish people and to make a nation from Moshe (Bamidbar 14:12), he pleads and concludes (vv. 17-19):

"But now, I pray, let God's power be great, just as You have declared, 'Lord is slow to anger and

abundant in loving-kindness, forgiving iniquity and transgression; but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generations.' Pardon, I pray, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of Your loving-kindness, just as You have forgiven this people, from Egypt even until now."

Indeed, the Talmud (Rosh Ha-shana 17a) elaborates upon the events described above.

"Then God passed by in front of him and proclaimed" – Rabbi Yochanan said: "Were it not written in the text, it would be impossible for us to say such a thing: this verse teaches us that God enwrapped Himself like the prayer-leader and showed Moshe the order of prayer. He said to him: 'Whenever Israel sin, let them perform this service before Me, and I will forgive them...'"

Rav Yehuda said: "There is a covenant made concerning the Thirteen Attributes, that they never return empty-handed, as it is written, 'Behold, I am making a covenant.'"

This passage implies that whenever the Jewish people sin — or, according to other sources (see Eliyyahu Zuta 23), whenever the Jewish people are in crisis — they are instructed to recite the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, and they will be redeemed.

Interestingly, the Ein Yosef (Rosh Ha-shana 17a; see also Alshikh al Ha-Torah, Parashat Shelach Lekha) cites Rabbi Moshe Alshikh (1508-1593, Tzefat), who questions: how many have recited the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy without witnessing results! He explains, in the name of the author of Livnat Ha-sappir:

For this very reason, it does not say: RECITE this service, but rather: "PERFORM this service" – implying that [forgiveness] is not dependent upon speech alone, but rather upon performance... If you emulate these attributes, they will not return empty-handed.

Indeed, Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (16th-century Tzefat) bases his entire work, Tomer Devora, a book of ethical teaching, on the Thirteen Attributes and how to emulate them.

In other words, the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy, according to the Alshikh, are not a magical formula for attaining forgiveness, but rather a spiritual and ethical program which should make a person worthy of forgiveness.

## Tomer Devorah Thirteen Attributes of Hashem

Tomer Devorah is the basis for most Jewish-based character development writings today. Tomer Devorah was written by Rabbi Moshe Cordevero, the teacher of the Arizal.

His concise book is the basis for self-improvement teachings since it was written in the 1500-1600's. In this book, the thirteen attributes of the Creator are described, showing us how these attributes are demonstrated by the Creator. Moreover, it teaches us ways to emulate these attributes so as to strengthen our connection to the Creator by being like the Creator and to bring His Characteristics into this world, whenever possible.

The book shows us each of the Creator's 13 attributes and how He manifests them, AND it shows how each person, who is made in the Creator's image, can do the same within our lives. Patience, forgiveness, wiping the slate clean and more are all lights that each person can bring into dark situations. Every time we choose this, we move away from the things that conceal His Attributes and toward the quiet enjoyment of connection. When a person chooses to build connection to the Creator, the benefits of this are two fold - a person can bring light into the world by bringing the Creator's characteristics into the world AND a person grows in their spiritual identity (deveikus) and earn and build great pleasure for himself. Choosing to emulate His Attributes provides a person with the most pleasant life a person can obtain, both in this world and for all eternity.

Below is the English translation of the first Chapter of Tomer Devorah. Below is a link to ten free video classes by Rabbi Cohen online at

<http://www.naaleh.com/search/artist/Rabbi%20Yitzchak%20Cohen/topic/187>

- Rabbi Yitzchak Cohen, born in the Midwest and educated at Yeshivas Torah Vodaath, is a well-known Mussar personality who has been inspiring hundreds of students at Yeshivas Rabbenu Yitzchak Elchonon and Camp Morasha for over thirty years. His impassioned message of devotion to G-d and uncompromising loyalty to Truth has impacted the lives of his many students and admirers in an astounding way.

Chapter one

It is proper for man to emulate his Creator, for then he will attain the essence of the Supernal Form in both image (tzelem) and likeness (demus). For if his physical form reflects the Supernal Form, while his

actions do not, he falsifies his stature. They will then say of him, “a handsome form whose deeds are ugly.” For the essential aspect of the Supernal image and likeness are His deeds. And what use will it be to him to reflect the Supernal Form physically with the likeness of the shape of his limbs, when his deeds do not emulate those of his Creator? Thus, it is proper that man emulate the functions of keser – which are the Thirteen Supernal Attributes of mercy – alluded to, in the essence of the verses (Michah 7:18-20): “Who is G-d like You, Who pardons iniquity and removes transgression for the remnant of His heritage? He does not retain His wrath eternally for He is desirous of kindness. He will again be merciful to us, He will suppress our iniquities, and You will cast into the depths of the sea all of their sins. Grant truth to Yaakov, kindness to Avraham, as You have sworn to our forefathers from days of old.” Therefore, it is proper that one should contain in himself these Thirteen Attributes. We will now explain the thirteen functions of these attributes.

#### 1. Who is G-d like You?

This attribute teaches us that the Holy One, Blessed is He, is a forbearing King Who tolerates insult in a manner beyond human comprehension. Without doubt, nothing is hidden from His providence. In addition, there is not a moment that man is not nourished and sustained by virtue of the Divine power bestowed upon him. Thus being, no man ever sinned against G-d without G-d Himself bestowing His existence and the ability to move his limbs, at that very moment. Yet, even though a person uses this very power to transgress, He does not withhold it from him at all. Rather, the Holy One, Blessed is He, tolerates this insult and continues to bestow on him the power to move his limbs. Even at the very moment that person uses this power for transgression, sin and infuriating deeds, the Holy One, Blessed is He, continues to tolerate him. One cannot say, G-d forbid, that He cannot withhold this benevolence, for it is within His power to shrivel up a person's arms or legs instantly, just as He did with Yaravam (See Melachim A13-4). Yet, even though it is within His power to withdraw the power that he bestowed, and He could maintain, “Since you sin against Me, sin with that which belongs to you, not with that which belongs to Me,” He does not, for this reasoning, withhold His goodness from man; rather, He tolerates the insult and continues to bestow power and benefits man with His benevolence. Behold, this is a degree of insult and tolerance of it that is immeasurable. For this reason, the ministering angels refer to the Holy One, Blessed is He, as the “Forbearing King” (Pirkei Heichalos Chapter 24). This is the meaning of the saying: “Who is G-d like You” –

You are G-d Who possesses kindness, Who is benevolent. A G-d Who possesses the power to take revenge and claim what is rightfully Yours, and yet, You are tolerant and forbearing until man repents.

Thus, this attribute of being tolerant, is one that man should emulate. Even when he is insulted to such a degree (mentioned above), he should still not withdraw his benevolence from the recipient.

#### 2. Who pardons iniquity

Behold, this attribute is greater than the previous one. For whenever a person commits a transgression, a destructive being is created – as stated in the Mishnah (Avos 4:13), “He who commits a single transgression acquires against himself a single accuser”. And this accuser stands before the Holy One, Blessed is He, and declares, “So and so created me.” Considering that no being in the world exists without the bestowing of life from the Holy One, Blessed is He, then this destructive being which stands before Him, with what sustenance does he exist? The strict measure of justice would justify that the Holy One, Blessed is He, should claim, “I do not nourish destructive beings! Go to the one who made you, and derive your sustenance from him.” The destructive being would then immediately descend and take his life, or cut him off from his spiritual source, or he would receive his deserving punishment until the destructive being would cease to be. Nevertheless, the Holy One, Blessed is He, does not do this. Rather, He bears and tolerates the sin, and just as He nourishes the entire world, He nourishes and sustains this destructive being until one of three things happens: Either the sinner repents, and destroys and nullifies it (the destructive being) through his acts of penance; or the righteous judge nullifies it through the suffering or death of the sinner; or he will descend to Gehinnom to repay his debt there. This is also the explanation of Kayin's plea, “Is my sin too great to bear?” (Bereishis 4:13), which our Sages (Tanchumah Breishis, Chap 9) interpreted as: “You tolerate the entire world! meaning – You nourish and sustain. “Is my sin so severe that You cannot tolerate it: - meaning to sustain it (the destructive being), until I repent and rectify the sin?” Thus, that G-d nourishes and sustains the evil creature created by the sinner, until he repents, represents a great quality of tolerance.

From this, man should learn to what extent he should be tolerant. He should tolerate the wrong of his fellow and his harm, even though he harmed him to such a degree, that the harm he caused him continues to exist. He should tolerate this until his fellow rectifies

the wrong himself or it (the harm) disappears on its own. And the same applies to other situations.

### 3. And removes transgression

This is a very great attribute, for when G-d forgives a sinner, He does not convey His pardon through an emissary. Rather, the Holy One Himself, Blessed is He, grants the pardon, as it is written: "For with You is forgiveness..." (Tehillim 13:4) What is the nature of this forgiveness? He washes away the sin, as it is written: "For G-d has washed away the filth of the daughters of Tziyon..." (Yeshaya 4:4) Similarly, it is written: "And I will sprinkle purifying waters upon you..." (Yechezkel 36:25). This, then, is the attribute of "Removing transgression" – He sends purifying waters, and removes and washes away transgression.

A person should behave in exactly the same manner. He should not say, "Why should I rectify what so and so corrupted or ruined?" This should not be said, for when man sins, the Holy One, Blessed is He, Himself, not by way of an emissary, rectifies his corruption and washes away the filth of his sins. From this, a person should understand to be ashamed to return to his sinful ways, for the King Himself cleanses the filth of his spiritual garments.

### 4. For the remnant (shei'ris) of His heritage

The Holy One, Blessed is He, conducts himself towards Bnei Yisroel in this way: He says, "What shall I do for Bnei Yisroel, who are My relatives? I have with them a family relationship!: for they are the "spouse" of the Holy One, Blessed is He, and He also calls them, "My daughter," "My sister," and "My mother," as our sages (Medash Shiur HaShiurim 3:25) explain. And as it is written "Bnei Yisroel, a nation related to Him" (Tehillim 48:4)), - He has an actual family relationship with them and they are His children. . this, too, is the meaning of the words "shei'ris of His heritage," implying she'er bassar (a flesh relationship). In the final analysis, they are G-d heritage. And what does He say? "If I punish them, the pain is Mine!" As it is written – In all their pain, He is afflicted" (Yeshaya 63:9). The word lo is actually written with an aleph implying that their pain extends to the level of keser called pelech (aleph has the same letters as peleh – referring to the sefira of keser) and how much more so to the level of the dual visage (tiferes and malchus) through which the world is mainly conducted. For it is read lo tzar with a vav signifying that the pain is His. This is also the intention of the verse that is written, "And His soul could not tolerate the misery of Yisroel" (Shoftim 10:16), for He cannot tolerate their suffering and

disgrace, since they are the remnant (shei'ris) of His heritage.

A person should behave this same way towards his fellow, since all Bnei Yisroel are related to each other, being that all souls are united, and each soul contains a part of all others. This is why, nothing can compare to a multitude who do a mitzvah (Toras Kohanim 26:8). The reason being, because they are all united and complement one another. And thus, our Sages explain (Brachos 47b) regarding one who is counted among the first ten to arrive at the Bais Haknesses (synagogue) that even if one hundred come after him, he receives a reward equivalent to them all. "One hundred" is to be understood literally, since the souls of each of the first ten are included in each other, thus there are ten times ten, which equals one hundred. And since each soul includes all of the others, every one of them is a combination of one hundred souls. Therefore, even if a hundred come after him, his reward equals all of the hundred. This is also why "Bnei Yisroel are guarantors thus responsible and liable for one another" (Shevuos 39a), since each Jewish soul actually contains a potion of all the others, and when an individual sins, he blemishes his own soul and also the portion of every other Jew that he possesses within himself. It is this portion that requires his friend to be a guarantor for him. Hence, all Jews are related to one another.

Therefore, it is proper for man to desire the benefit of his fellow, view his neighbor's good fortune in a positive way, and cherish his friend's honor as his won – for he (his friend) is actually himself! And for this reason, we are commanded to "Love your fellow Jew as yourself" (Vayikra 19:18). Furthermore, it is proper that one should be pleased with the integrity of his fellow, and should never speak ill of him or be desirous of his disgrace, just as the Holy One, Blessed is He, desires neither our disgrace nor our suffering, because of our relationship; so too, a person should not be desirous of his fellow's disgrace, suffering or downfall. Rather, he should be pained by it as if he himself was actually suffering that same pain or rejoicing in the person's good fortune as if he were enjoying that same good fortune.

The daily learning of Sefer Tomer Devora is for an aliyah for the neshama of 14 year old Dov Mattisyahu ben Yaffa Yehudis, who was hit by a car in Silver Spring Md on 4 Sivan, 5766 and who was niftar on 12 Sivan, 5766 and for a refuah shelama for 12 year old Yechiel Yaakov Tzvi ben Devorah Esther who is recovering after being hit by a car 3 Sivan in Chicago 5766 in Chicago and for Reuvain Moshe ben Chana

a 4 year old boy who is in critical condition after being hit by a car in Brooklyn on 21 Sivan

#### 5. He does not retain His wrath eternally

This is another attribute that even when a person persists in sinning, the Holy One, Blessed is He, does not retain His wrath. And even when He does retain it, it is not forever. Rather, He nullifies His anger even if a person does not repent, as we find in the days of Yaravam ben Yoash, when the Holy One, Blessed is He, restored the orders of the land of Israel (Melachim B 14:26); they were worshippers of idols, but He had mercy on them, thought they did not repent. If so, why did He have mercy on them? Because of this attribute of not retaining His wrath forever. On the contrary, He deliberately alleviates His wrath. Even though the sin still exists, He does not punish immediately; rather, He waits hopefully and has mercy on the sinners on the possibility that they will repent. This is the intention of the verse "Not forever will he battle, nor will he bear a grudge for eternity" (Tehillim 103:9). Rather, the Holy One, Blessed is He, conducts Himself with both tenderness and harshness, all for the benefit of Bnei Yisroel.

This is a fitting attribute with which a person should conduct himself towards his fellows. Even if one is permitted to reprimand his friend or his children severely, and they would accept the rebuke, this is no reason to intensify his reprimand and persist in his anger, though he was angered. Instead, he should nullify it (his anger) and not retain his wrath eternally, even if this is such a wrath that is permissible for man. This idea is comparable to our Sages' explanation of the verse "When you see the donkey of someone you hate lying under its burden," (Shemos 23:5). What is the cause of this hatred? He saw him transgress a sin, and being a lone witness, he cannot testify against him in court. Thus, he hates him because of that sin. Even so, the Torah demands, "You shall help along with him," meaning, abandon that anger which is in your heart. And on the contrary, it is a mitzvah to befriend him with love, for perhaps with this method you will succeed in causing him to repent. This is exactly the attribute of – "He does not retain His wrath eternally."

#### 6. For He is desirous of kindness

We have already explained elsewhere (Pardas Rimonim, Shaar Heichalos Chap. 5) that in a certain Heavenly chamber, angels are appointed to receive the grants of kindness that man performs in this world. And when the attribute of strict judgment accuses Bnei Yisroel, these angels immediately

display those acts of kindness, and the Holy One, Blessed is He, has mercy upon Bnei Yisroel, since He is desirous of their kindness. And even though they may be guilty, He has mercy on them if they grant kindness to one another. This can be compared to the time of the Destruction of the Holy Temple, when it was said to the angel Gavriel: "Go in between the galgal, beneath the keruvim, and throw them on the city..." (Yechezkel 10:2) For he (Gavriel) is the angel of judgment and strictness, and he was given permission to receive the powers of judgment, from the fire on the Altar, which is between the galgal, below the keruvim. This is judgment according to the strictness of malchus, which became so severe that it sought to destroy everything and uproot the core of Bnei Yisroel, because they had incurred the penalty of annihilation. However, the passage continues "The form of a man's hand appeared under the wings of the keruvim meaning that the Holy One, Blessed is He, said to Gavriel, "They grant kindness towards one another (Vayikra Raba 26:8). So even though they were guilty, they were saved, and a remnant of them was left. The reason for this is due to this attribute of "He is desirous of kindness," meaning – the kindness that Bnei Yisroel grant for one another. And He reminds them (the Heavenly court) of this righteous aspect of them, even though, in other aspects, they are not righteous.

Hence it is proper for man to conduct himself with this attribute. Even if one is aware that another person is committing evil against him, and angers him, nevertheless if he has some good redeeming quality – e.g. he is benevolent to others or he possesses some other good trait with which he conducts himself righteously – this good side of him should be sufficient for one to nullify his anger against him and to have a positive feeling towards him and to desire his kindness and say "It is enough for me that he has this good quality." How much more so does all this apply to one's wife; as our Sages explained: "It is enough that they raise our children and save us from sin." So, too, one should say to himself with regard to every man, "It is enough that he has done for me or someone else such and such a favor, or that he has a such and such positive quality, and he should always be desirous of kindness.

#### 7. He will again be merciful to us

The Holy One, Blessed is He, does not conduct Himself in the same manner as man. For when one is angered by his fellow, when he reconciles with him, the reconciliation is only minimal – not to the extent of the original love between them. But if a person sins and afterwards repents, his stature before the Holy One, Blessed be He, is even greater than before.

This is the intention of the statement our Sages made, "At the level where baale teshuvah stand, perfect tzaddikim cannot stand." The reason for this is, as explained in the Talmud (Menachos 29b) regarding the letter Hei: "Why is it made open like a porch? So that anyone who wants to go astray from His world can do so!" The explanation of this is as follows: The world was created with the letter Hei, for the Holy One, Blessed is He, created the world as such that it is wide-open to evil and sin. There is no direction where earthliness, the evil inclination, and blemishes of the soul are absent! It is just like a porch, which is not fully fenced, rather, it has a huge breach on the bottom toward evil. Anyone who desires to leave His world has many exits; wherever he turns, he will find an aspect of sin or transgression through which he can enter the domain of the Outside Forces. And yet, it also has a gap at the top left corner, symbolizing that if he repents he will be accepted by G-d. The Sages asked, "Why shouldn't he reenter the same path through which he left? Our Sages answer: Because this way will not help him enough in his repentance." Meaning, that it is not enough for a repentant sinner to guard himself against sin the same way a perfectly righteous person does. Tzaddikim, since they have not sinned require only a minor barrier, whereas for a repentant sinner, a small barrier is insufficient – he needs a number of strong restraints. The reason being, since this minor barrier was already breached once, if he approaches it, his evil urge will easily seduce him again. Therefore, he must further himself a great distance, and not reenter the porch at the breached side. Rather, he should ascend and enter the narrow gap at the top of the Hei, by engaging in self afflictions, thus mending the breaches.

For this reason, "At the level where baalei teshuvah stand, perfect tzaddikim cannot stand." – for they did not enter through the same entrance as the righteous such that they should be together with the righteous. Instead, they pained themselves in order to ascend through the upper door, they inflicted penances on themselves, and distanced themselves from sin much more than the righteous. They have therefore ascended and attained the level of Hei, that is the roof of the Hei symbolizing the fifth Palace of Gan Eden, whereas the righteous have entered only through the lower opening of the Hei – the entrance of the porch. Therefore when a person does teshuva – that is to say tashuv Hei – he returns the hei to its proper place, and then the Holy One, Blessed is He, returns His Shechinah upon him. And He will restore His love for the repentant person not only as the original love was, but rather in an even greater measure. This is the explanation of the attribute "He will again be merciful to us": He will increase His

mercy toward Bnei Yisroel, perfecting them and drawing them closer to Himself.

This is also how a person should behave towards his fellow. He should not nurture the hatred born of past anger. Rather, when he sees that his fellow desires his love, he should raise his level of mercy and love toward him much more than before, and say, "He is to me like the baale teshuvah, in whose company even the perfectly righteous cannot stand."

And he should befriend him to the fullest extent, much more than he would befriend those who are perfectly righteous in their behavior towards him and have never wronged him.

#### 8. He will suppress our iniquities

Behold, the Holy One, Blessed is He, conducts Himself with Bnei Yisroel according to this attribute, which is the essence of suppressing iniquity. For mitzvos are compared to blossoms of a grapevine, sprouting its developing fruit – and it shoots upwards without limit, to enter His blessed Presence. However, sins have no entrance there, G-d forbid. Rather, He suppresses them, denying them entry, as it is written: "Evil will not dwell with You (Tehillim 5:5), which our Sages (Shabbos 149b) interpret as implying that "no evil will dwell in Your dwelling." Thus, iniquity has no entry into the Inner Sanctum. For this reason, "there is no reward for mitzvos in this world" (Kiddushin 39b) because they reside in His blessed Presence; therefore, how could G-d grant a spiritual reward in a material world for mitzvos that are present before Him? Behold, the entire world is not worthwhile of a single mitzvah and the spiritual bliss of His Presence.

For the same reason, G-d does not accept mitzvos as bribes. For instance, the Holy One, Blessed is He, does not say "He has fulfilled forty commandments and committed ten transgressions; thus, the reward for thirty commandments remain, for ten are deducted for the ten transgressions!" G-d forbid! Rather, if even a perfectly righteous individual commits a single sin, it is considered to Him as if he has burned the Torah scroll – until he appeases Hashem for his guilt, after which he will receive reward for all of his mitzvos. This is a great kindness that the Holy One, Blessed is He, does for the righteous. He does not deduct from their mitzvos, for mitzvos are very precious and ascend until they come before His blessed Presence – so, how, then, can transgressions be deducted from them? Punishment for transgressions is a portion of that which is most shameful – Gehinom -- while the reward for mitzvos is from that which is so precious, the

radiance of the Shechinah. So, how, then, can He deduct one from the other? Rather, the Holy One, Blessed is He, collects the debt due for transgressions and then He pays the reward due for all the mitzvohs. This is the attribute of “suppressing iniquity” meaning that transgressions do not prevail before Him as the commandments do. Rather, He suppresses them, preventing them from ascending and entering His Presence. Although He observes all the ways of man, both bad and good, nevertheless, He does not suppress the good. Rather, it blossoms and rises up, merging with other mitzvot to build a spiritual edifice and form a precious garment. Transgressions don’t have this characteristic – rather, He suppresses them, so they will have no such success and no entry into the Inner Sanctum.

A person should also conduct himself according to this attribute; he should not suppress his fellow’s favor and remember the evil or harm he has done to him. On the contrary, he should suppress the evil, erasing it from his memory and abandoning it, so that no evil will dwell with him, and his favor should be constantly arranged before him. One should always remember the favor of his fellow, allowing it to prevail over all the evil actions he has done to him. He should not subtract from the favor he has done to him in his heart, and say, “Although he did me a favor, he also did me harm,” thereby forgetting the favor. One should not do this! Rather, he should allow himself to be appeased in every possible way regarding the harm, and never overlook the favor. He should turn a blind eye to the harm he has done to him as much as possible, just as the Holy One, Blessed is He, does in suppressing our iniquities, as I have explained above.

9. And You will cast into the depths of the sea all of their sins

This is an especially good attribute of the Holy One, Blessed is He, For when Bnei Yisroel sinned, He delivered them into the hands of Pharaoh and they repented. If so, why should He punish Pharaoh, or Sancheriv, or Haman and others like them? Yet the Holy One, Blessed is He, is not content with saying “They repented, so no further evil will befall them, and thus, Haman, Pharaoh or Sancheriv will be removed from them.” This is not sufficient; rather, the wickedness of Haman reverts onto his own head, and so too, with Pharaoh and Sancheriv.

The reason for this conduct lies in the essence of the verse pertaining to the Temple service on Yom Kippur, where two identical goats were brought, one was sacrificed on the altar, and the other sent to Azazel – pushed down a rugged mountain. “The goat that was sent to Azazel will carry all their sins, to the

desolate land” (Vayikra 16:22); meaning that the goat actually bears the punishment for their sins! Now, this is very difficult to understand, for it Bei Yisroel sinned, why should the goat bear their sins? However, the reason for this conduct is as follows: When a person confesses with the intention in his confession to receive a cleansing of his sins – as King David said: “Cleanse me abundantly from my iniquities” (Tehillim 51:4), and so are our words in prayer, “Cleanse my sin with Your great compassion” – he only prays that his afflictions be light so that they will not interrupt his Torah study. As we say in our prayers: “...but not by way of severe afflictions.” This is also the intention when one states, “You are righteous with regard to all that befalls me,” – he actually accepts willingly upon himself afflictions in order that he be vindicated for his sins, for there are sins that can be cleansed only by means of afflictions or death. This is the conduct; immediately when one confesses in prayer, the Holy One, Blessed is He, decrees some sort of affliction upon him for his sins. As the Zohar in Parshas Pikudei (pg 262b) explains, this is the portion of the Satan as portrayed by the ‘goat’ that was sent to Azazel. What is actually his portion? That the Holy One Blessed is He, decrees on him (that is the one who sinned and afterward repented and confessed) afflictions, and then instantly Satan comes by there, and collects his due. And behold, the ‘goat carries the sins,’ meaning that the Holy One Blessed is He, gives him permission to collect his due, and through this, the Bnei Yisroel become cleansed. But, eventually, everything will revert back to Satan. The reason for this is that the holy One, Blessed is He, decreed upon His world that all who do this – bring suffering upon Bnei Yisroel—should be nullified. That is why G-d decreed, “The animal which was involved in human transgression resulting in man’s execution must be killed” (Vayikra 20:15). Similarly, the stones used to carry out the sentence of those condemned to death by stoning and the sword used to carry out the sentence of decapitation must be buried (Sanhedrin 46b) in order to nullify their existence and power after they have been used to carry out the judgment.

Behold, this is actually the essence of the statue of Nevuchadnezzar which he saw in his dream (Daniel 2:32-34): When Bnei Yisroel were given over into the hand of the Babylonian king symbolized by “a head of gold,” this same “head” was eventually subjugated and given over into the hands of Persia, symbolized by “a silver chest and arms,” who was, in turn, expelled by another nation, and so on, until Bnei Yisroel descended to the fourth Kingdom of Edom and Yishmael, symbolized by “legs of iron and clay.” And what will be the final good ending? Eventually the Holy One, Blessed is He, will uplift them (the Bnei



Yisroel), and execute justice upon them (those kingdoms). As it is written: "I will use up My arrows against them" (Devarim 32:23), meaning that the arrows will be used up but the Bnei Yisroel will not be annihilated (Sota 9a). "And then the parts of iron, clay, brass, silver and gold will be crushed together" (Daniel 2:32). First, it is written, "And he smote the idol to its legs" (Ibid 2:34), implying that there was nothing left of the idol but its legs; for they had lost all their power symbolized by the way the head, arms and torso were removed. Nevertheless, in the end as it is written "Together they will be crushed" (ibid 2:35), for in the future the Holy One Blessed is He will indict Satan and the wicked who carry out his deeds and actions, and He will visit justice upon them. This is the meaning of the verse (Micha 7:19) "and You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea", implying that He will cast the power of judgment, to be executed upon those are likened to the depths of the sea (as the verse states). (Yeshayah 57:20): "The wicked are like the spewing sea, for it cannot rest, and its waters spew mud and mire". This refers to those who execute judgment on Bnei Yisroel: He will return their evil deeds upon their own heads. The reason for this is, for after Bnei Yisroel receives their judgment, the Holy One, Blessed is he, reconsiders even the initial punishment, and exacts retribution for their insult and suffering. And furthermore, "I was angered only a little, and the nations of the world helped to do more evil than required" (Zechariah 1:15).

This, too, is an attribute that man should use in his behavior toward his fellow. Even if the latter is wicked and crushed through afflictions, do not hate him, for 'after having been whipped, he is like your brother' (Makkos 23a). Befriend the rebellious and those who have been punished and have mercy on them. And on the contrary, save them from their enemies, and don't say – "His own sin caused his suffering." Rather, have mercy on them in accordance with this attribute, as I have explained above.

#### 10. Grant truth to Yaakov

This attribute, represents a quality of Bnei Yisroel, even those individuals of average spiritual stature, who do not know how to go beyond what the Law requires, and are called "Yaakov" (not Yisroel which refers to a higher level), because they conduct themselves solely with the conduct of truth. So too, the Holy One, Blessed is He, possesses the quality of truth, with regard to the reality of the judgment of uprightness. And to those who conduct themselves in this world with uprightness, the Holy One, Blessed is He also conducts Himself toward them with this

quality of truth, having mercy on them in a way that is upright and just.

So, too, a person should act towards his fellow in a way that is upright and true, never perverting the justice of his friend. He should have true mercy on him, just as the Holy One, Blessed is He, has mercy on His creatures of average stature, according to this quality of truthfulness, in order to perfect them.

#### 11. Kindness to Avraham

Those who conduct themselves in this world beyond the requirements of the Law, like Avraham or Patriarch – the Holy One, blessed is He, also conducts Himself towards them in a way that goes beyond the requirements of the Law. That is, He does not deal with them according to the strict letter of the law, not even according to the path of uprightness. Rather, He goes with them beyond the attribute of uprightness, just as they conduct themselves. This is the attribute of 'kindness to Avraham': the Holy One, Blessed is He, acts with the attribute of kindness towards those who conduct themselves like Avraham.

So too, man: Although he conducts himself with righteousness, uprightness and justice towards all men, towards those who are particularly good and pious, his conduct should go beyond the requirements of the Law. If towards other people he is a bit tolerant, with these pious men he should be much more so. He should have mercy on them, going with them beyond the requirement of the Law in which he conducts himself towards others. They should be exceedingly precious to him and beloved, and they should be counted among his friends.

#### 12. As You have sworn to our forefathers

Some people are unworthy, yet the Holy One, Blessed is He, has mercy on all of them. The Talmud (Berachos 7a) explains the verse "I shall show favor to whom I choose to show favor" (Shemos 33:19) – The Holy One, Blessed is He, says, "this storehouse is for those who are unworthy" (this means that there is a storehouse of grace, from which the Holy One, Blessed is He, shows favor and grants them an unearned gift. For the Holy One, Blessed is He, says "Behold, they have the merit of the Patriarchs. I made an oath to the Patriarchs, so even if they are unworthy, they will merit, because they are offspring of the Patriarchs, to whom I swore. Therefore, I will lead them and guide them until they are perfected."

Man should also behave in this same manner. Even if he encounters wicked people, he should not behave

cruelly towards them or taunt them and so on. Rather, he should have mercy on them, and say "Ultimately, they are the children of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. Thought they may not be righteous, their forefathers were righteous and worthy. Hence one who despises the sons despises the fathers too. I do not wish their fathers to be despised because of me!" Thus he should conceal their disgrace and help to improve them, as much as is in his power.

### 13. From days of old

Behold, this is an attribute with which the Holy One, Blessed is He has conducted Himself towards Bnei Yisroel. When the merit of the Patriarchs and all other merits are exhausted, what can He do for them when behold they themselves are unworthy? He does as it is written, "I recall for your sake, the kindness of your youth, the love of your bridal days, how you followed Me in the wilderness, in an unsown land" (Yirmiyah 2:2). The Holy One, Blessed is He, actually recalls the olden days and the previous love He had then towards the people of Israel, and He has mercy on Bnei Yisroel. With this, He remembers all the mitzvos they have fulfilled since their birth as a nation, and all the favors and good qualities with which the Holy One, Blessed is He, conducts His world. From all these, He fashions something especially auspicious with which to be merciful for their sake. Behold, this attribute encompasses all the others, as explained in the Idra (Zohar Naso 134b).

Similarly, man should perfect his conduct towards other people. Even if he cannot find a reason for loving and having mercy on his fellows from amongst those already mentioned, he should say, "There was surely a previous time when they had not yet sinned, and in that time or in their days of old they were righteous." For their sake, he should recall the good which they did in their youth, and recall for their sake the love of infants who have just been weaned from their mother. This way, he will not find a single person unworthy of benefiting him, praying for his well-being and having mercy on him.

This completes our explanation of the Thirteen Attributes in which a person should emulate his Creator. These are the Supernal Attributes of Mercy, and their quality is, that just as a person conducts himself in this world below, so will he be worthy of opening up the channel of the same Supernal Attribute Above. Exactly according to his conduct, so will he bestow above in the Supernal World the same and he will cause that Supernal attribute to shine here in this world.

For this reason, one should not divert his mind from these Thirteen Attributes or allow these verse to depart from his mouth; so that he should remember them when a situation arises requiring the use of one of these attributes. He should then remind himself and say: "Behold, this action which is required in this situation is contingent on this particular attribute. I will not budge from it, lest this attribute become concealed or disappear from the world."

### Torah Readings on Yom Kippur OU Staff

On the morning of Yom Kippur, two Torah Scrolls are removed from the Aron HaKodesh (Holy Ark).

The Torah Reading is from Vayikrah (Leviticus) Chapter 16, verse 1-34. This portion discusses the instructions to Moshe and Aharon concerning the procedure for the priestly service on Yom Kippur, which would enable them to achieve atonement for Israel. The portion then details the laws of Yom Kippur. There are six aliyahs (a number used only on Yom Kippur) and a Maftir. When Yom Kippur falls out on Shabbos, there are 7.

The Maftir is read from a second Torah Scroll and is from BaMidbar (Numbers) Chapter 29, verse 7-11. The maftir relates the Sacrificial Service for Yom Kippur.

Following the Maftir, the Haftorah is read. The Haftorah is from Yeshayahu (Isaiah) Chapter 57: verse 14 until Chapter 58, verse 14. Isaiah urges the Jewish People to return to Hashem through good deeds, kindness and sincere Teshuvah.

In the afternoon, during Mincha, one Torah Scroll is removed from the Aron HaKodesh.

The Torah reading is from Vayikrah (Leviticus) Chapter 18, verse 1-30. The portion deals with forbidden sexual relationships. Though the exact reason for reading this section now is not entirely clear, here are some possible reasons. 1) They are read now because everyone is in shul. 2) It is as if to say, "Though right now you are on a lofty spiritual level on Yom Kippur, don't think you cannot drop down in a second to the worst abominations. 3) The cornerstone of morality is self-control over animal sensuality (Hirsch)

Following the three aliyahs, the Haftorah is read. The Haftorah is the book of Yona (Jonah). Though everyone knows that a large fish swallowed Yona, the message of Yona is actually a timeless lesson in

the power of Teshuva and G-d's desire to help man rather than punish him

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**Praying For Teshuba**

\The Gemara in Masechet Berachot teaches, "Ha'kol Bi'ydeh Shamayim Hutz Mi'yirat Shamayim" – "Everything is in G-d's Hands, except for fear of G-d." This means that although G-d controls everything that happens in the world, there is one area which He chose not to control, and that is our free will. We, and only we, decide whether to act properly or improperly. G-d does not force us to choose good over evil or vice-versa. He leaves this completely in our control.

The Ben Ish Hai (Rav Yosef Haim of Baghdad, 1833-1909), in his Ben Ish Hayil, raises the question of how to reconcile this fundamental precept with other sources, which indicate that G-d can cause us to repent. In one context, the Gemara says that opposing the Yeser Ha'ra (evil inclination) and performing Teshuba would be impossible without G-d's help. And, we recite each day in the Amida prayer, "Hashibenu Abinu Le'Toratecha," praying that G-d should bring us back to religious observance. How can we recite such a prayer if G-d does not interfere with our free will, and only we decide whether to act correctly?

The Ben Ish Hai answered this question by distinguishing between two different stages of repentance: the initial thought, and the follow-up action. Teshuba begins with a stirring of the heart, with the recognition in one's mind that he needs to improve. But this is only the beginning. After arriving at this realization, one must then do the hard work to change and to pray for forgiveness. The Ben Ish Hai explained that G-d "interferes" with our free will by putting the idea of Teshuba in our minds. The thoughts of Teshuba, and the feelings of disappointment with ourselves which we occasionally experience, come to us as a gift from the Almighty. But the rest is up to us. G-d puts the thoughts of Teshuba in our minds, but we must then invest the effort to make it happen. And thus when we pray "Hashibenu," asking G-d to bring us back in repentance, we refer to the initial push and inspiration. We ask G-d to give us those initial feelings, the desire to repent, acknowledging that the rest of the process is solely up to us.

These two stages are reflected by the two stages of the Yamim Nora'im (High Holidays). In our Rosh Hashanah prayers, we do not mention anything about

repentance and forgiveness. The Rosh Hashanah prayers focus on the theme of G-d's kingship, and the fact that He judges the earth. Rosh Hashanah is the time when we develop the thoughts of Teshuba, by contemplating G-d's rule over the universe. This is alluded to in the word "Rosh," which means "head," indicating that this is the time when we develop thoughts and feelings of repentance. The rest of this period, the Ten Days of Repentance and Yom Kippur, is when we take these thoughts and put them into practice, taking the time to pray for forgiveness and to think about how we can improve during the coming year.

The message for us is that Teshuba requires hard work, but also requires prayer. We must pray that G-d inspire us to improve so we can then work to make the changes that need to be made. This is true all year round, but especially during the period of Yamim Nora'im. As part of our efforts to repent, we must beg the Almighty to do His part, to stir our hearts and give us the inspiration we need to perform complete Teshuba and turn ourselves into better people.

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**Chief Rabbi Sir Jonathan Sacks**  
**The Mutating Virus: Understanding Antisemitism**

Below is a transcript of a speech by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks at "The Future of the Jewish Communities in Europe" Conference at The European Parliament on 27th September 2016 in Brussels.

The hate that begins with Jews never ends with Jews. That is what I want us to understand today. It wasn't Jews alone who suffered under Hitler. It wasn't Jews alone who suffered under Stalin. It isn't Jews alone who suffer under ISIS or Al Qaeda or Islamic Jihad. We make a great mistake if we think antisemitism is a threat only to Jews. It is a threat, first and foremost, to Europe and to the freedoms it took centuries to achieve.

Antisemitism is not about Jews. It is about anti-Semites. It is about people who cannot accept responsibility for their own failures and have instead to blame someone else. Historically, if you were a Christian at the time of the Crusades, or a German after the First World War, and saw that the world hadn't turned out the way you believed it would, you

blamed the Jews. That is what is happening today. And I cannot begin to say how dangerous it is. Not just to Jews but to everyone who values freedom, compassion and humanity.

The appearance of antisemitism in a culture is the first symptom of a disease, the early warning sign of collective breakdown. If Europe allows antisemitism to flourish, that will be the beginning of the end of Europe. And what I want to do in these brief remarks is simply to analyze a phenomenon full of vagueness and ambiguity, because we need precision and understanding to know what antisemitism is, why it happens, why antisemites are convinced that they are not antisemitic.

First let me define antisemitism. Not liking Jews is not antisemitism. We all have people we don't like. That's OK; that's human; it isn't dangerous. Second, criticizing Israel is not antisemitism. I was recently talking to some schoolchildren and they asked me: is criticizing Israel antisemitism? I said No and I explained the difference. I asked them: Do you believe you have a right to criticize the British government? They all put up their hands. Then I asked, Which of you believes that Britain has no right to exist? No one put up their hands. Now you know the difference, I said, and they all did.

Antisemitism means denying the right of Jews to exist collectively as Jews with the same rights as everyone else. It takes different forms in different ages. In the Middle Ages, Jews were hated because of their religion. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century they were hated because of their race. Today they are hated because of their nation state, the state of Israel. It takes different forms but it remains the same thing: the view that Jews have no right to exist as free and equal human beings.

If there is one thing I and my contemporaries did not expect, it was that antisemitism would reappear in Europe within living memory of the Holocaust. The reason we did not expect it was that Europe had undertaken the greatest collective effort in all of history to ensure that the virus of antisemitism would never again infect the body politic. It was a magnificent effort of antiracist legislation, Holocaust education and interfaith dialogue. Yet antisemitism has returned despite everything.

On 27 January 2000, representatives of 46 governments from around the world gathered in Stockholm to issue a collective declaration of Holocaust remembrance and the continuing fight against antisemitism, racism and prejudice. Then came 9/11, and within days conspiracy theories were

flooding the internet claiming it was the work of Israel and its secret service, the Mossad. In April 2002, on Passover, I was in Florence with a Jewish couple from Paris when they received a phone call from their son, saying, "Mum, Dad, it's time to leave France. It's not safe for us here anymore."

In May 2007, in a private meeting here in Brussels, I told the three leaders of Europe at the time, Angela Merkel, President of the European Council, Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, and Hans-Gert Pöttering, President of the European Parliament, that the Jews of Europe were beginning to ask whether there was a future for Jews in Europe.

That was more than nine years ago. Since then, things have become worse. Already in 2013, before some of the worst incidents, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights found that almost a third of Europe's Jews were considering emigrating because of anti-Semitism. In France the figure was 46 percent; in Hungary 48 percent.

Let me ask you this. Whether you are Jewish or Christian, Muslim: would you stay in a country where you need armed police to guard you while you prayed? Where your children need armed guards to protect them at school? Where, if you wear a sign of your faith in public, you risk being abused or attacked? Where, when your children go to university, they are insulted and intimidated because of what is happening in some other part of the world? Where, when they present their own view of the situation they are howled down and silenced?

This is happening to Jews throughout Europe. In every single country of Europe, without exception, Jews are fearful for their or their children's future. If this continues, Jews will continue to leave Europe, until, barring the frail and the elderly, Europe will finally have become Judenrein.

How did this happen? It happened the way viruses always defeat the human immune system, namely, by mutating. The new antisemitism is different from the old antisemitism, in three ways. I've already mentioned one. Once Jews were hated because of their religion. Then they were hated because of their race. Now they are hated because of their nation state. The second difference is that the epicenter of the old antisemitism was Europe. Today it's the Middle East and it is communicated globally by the new electronic media.

The third is particularly disturbing. Let me explain. It is easy to hate, but difficult publicly to justify hate.

Throughout history, when people have sought to justify anti-Semitism, they have done so by recourse to the highest source of authority available within the culture. In the Middle Ages, it was religion. So we had religious anti-Judaism. In post-Enlightenment Europe it was science. So we had the twin foundations of Nazi ideology, Social Darwinism and the so-called Scientific Study of Race. Today the highest source of authority worldwide is human rights. That is why Israel—the only fully functioning democracy in the Middle East with a free press and independent judiciary—is regularly accused of the five cardinal sins against human rights: racism, apartheid, crimes against humanity, ethnic cleansing and attempted genocide.

The new antisemitism has mutated so that any practitioner of it can deny that he or she is an antisemite. After all, they'll say, I'm not a racist. I have no problem with Jews or Judaism. I only have a problem with the State of Israel. But in a world of 56 Muslim nations and 103 Christian ones, there is only one Jewish state, Israel, which constitutes one-quarter of one per cent of the land mass of the Middle East. Israel is the only one of the 193 member nations of the United Nations that has its right to exist regularly challenged, with one state, Iran, and many, many other groups, committed to its destruction.

Antisemitism means denying the right of Jews to exist as Jews with the same rights as everyone else. The form this takes today is anti-Zionism. Of course, there is a difference between Zionism and Judaism, and between Jews and Israelis, but this difference does not exist for the new antisemites themselves. It was Jews not Israelis who were murdered in terrorist attacks in Toulouse, Paris, Brussels and Copenhagen. Anti-Zionism is the antisemitism of our time.

In the Middle Ages Jews were accused of poisoning wells, spreading the plague, and killing Christian children to use their blood. In Nazi Germany they were accused of controlling both capitalist America and communist Russia. Today they are accused of running ISIS as well as America. All the old myths have been recycled, from the Blood Libel to the Protocols of the Elders of Zion. The cartoons that flood the Middle East are clones of those published in Der Sturmer one of the primary vehicles of Nazi propaganda between 1923 and 1945.

The ultimate weapon of the new antisemitism is dazzling in its simplicity. It goes like this. The Holocaust must never happen again. But Israelis are the new Nazis; the Palestinians are the new Jews; all Jews are Zionists. Therefore the real antisemites of

our time are none other than the Jews themselves. And these are not marginal views. They are widespread throughout the Muslim world, including communities in Europe, and they are slowly infecting the far left, the far right, academic circles, unions, and even some churches. Having cured itself of the virus of antisemitism, Europe is being reinfected by parts of the world that never went through the self-reckoning that Europe undertook once the facts of the Holocaust became known.

How do such absurdities come to be believed? This is a vast and complex subject, and I have written a book about it, but the simplest explanation is this. When bad things happen to a group, its members can ask one of two questions: "What did we do wrong?" or "Who did this to us?" The entire fate of the group will depend on which it chooses.

If it asks, "What did we do wrong?" it has begun the self-criticism essential to a free society. If it asks, "Who did this to us?" it has defined itself as a victim. It will then seek a scapegoat to blame for all its problems. Classically this has been the Jews.

Anti-Semitism is a form of cognitive failure, and it happens when groups feel that their world is spinning out of control. It began in the Middle Ages, when Christians saw that Islam had defeated them in places they regarded as their own, especially Jerusalem. That was when, in 1096, on their way to the Holy Land, the Crusaders stopped first to massacre Jewish communities in Northern Europe. It was born in the Middle East in the 1920s with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Antisemitism re-emerged in Europe in the 1870s during a period of economic recession and resurgent nationalism. And it is re-appearing in Europe now for the same reasons: recession, nationalism, and a backlash against immigrants and other minorities. Antisemitism happens when the politics of hope gives way to the politics of fear, which quickly becomes the politics of hate.

This then reduces complex problems to simplicities. It divides the world into black and white, seeing all the fault on one side and all the victimhood on the other. It singles out one group among a hundred offenders for the blame. The argument is always the same. We are innocent; they are guilty. It follows that if we are to be free, they, the Jews or the state of Israel, must be destroyed. That is how the great crimes begin.

Jews were hated because they were different. They were the most conspicuous non-Christian minority in a Christian Europe. Today they are the most conspicuous non-Muslim presence in an Islamic

Middle East. Anti-Semitism has always been about the inability of a group to make space for difference. No group that adopts it will ever, can ever, create a free society.

So I end where I began. The hate that begins with Jews never ends with Jews. Antisemitism is only secondarily about Jews. Primarily it is about the failure of groups to accept responsibility for their own failures, and to build their own future by their own endeavours. No society that has fostered antisemitism has ever sustained liberty or human rights or religious freedom. Every society driven by hate begins by seeking to destroy its enemies, but ends by destroying itself.

Europe today is not fundamentally antisemitic. But it has allowed antisemitism to enter via the new electronic media. It has failed to recognize that the new antisemitism is different from the old. We are not today back in the 1930s. But we are coming close to 1879, when Wilhelm Marr founded the League of Anti-Semites in Germany; to 1886 when Édouard Drumont published *La France Juive*; and 1897 when Karl Lueger became Mayor of Vienna. These were key moments in the spread of antisemitism, and all we have to do today is to remember that what was said then about Jews is being said today about the Jewish state.

The history of Jews in Europe has not always been a happy one. Europe's treatment of the Jews added certain words to the human vocabulary: disputation, forced conversion, inquisition, expulsion, auto da fe, ghetto, pogrom and Holocaust, words written in Jewish tears and Jewish blood. Yet for all that, Jews loved Europe and contributed to it some of its greatest scientists, writers, academics, musicians, shapers of the modern mind.

If Europe lets itself be dragged down that road again, this will be the story told in times to come. First they came for the Jews. Then for the Christians. Then for the gays. Then for the atheists. Until there was nothing left of Europe's soul but a distant, fading memory.

Today I have tried to give voice to those who have no voice. I have spoken on behalf of the murdered Roma, Sinti, gays, dissidents, the mentally and physically handicapped, and a million and a half Jewish children murdered because of their grandparents' religion. In their name, I say to you: You know where the road ends. Don't go down there again.

You are the leaders of Europe. Its future is in your

hands. If you do nothing, Jews will leave, European liberty will die, and there will be a moral stain on Europe's name that all eternity will not erase.

Stop it now while there is still time.

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