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**The Truth About Antisemitism**

**By Daniel Keren**

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**Rabbi Yossy Goldman**

 Have you ever wondered why non-Jews hate Jews? There is no denying the recent uptick in antisemitism in the past year. Are we at fault? What can we do about it, and is there any chance for it to change? These are the questions that Rabbi Yossy Goldman, Rabbi Emeritus of Sydenhan Shul in Johannesburg, one of the largest synagogues in South Africa discussed in a Jewish Living Institute youtube lecture titled – “Why the Jews? The Truth About Antisemitism.”

 Rabbi Goldman dealt with the reality that antisemitism exists regardless of what the Jew does or does not do. For example, in the not-too distant past, Jews in Poland were hated because they were poor, while Jews in Germany were hated because they were rich. Jews were criticized and hated in Russia because they were bourgeoisie and capitalists, while Jews were hated in America because are cursed capitalists. The Gemara teaches us just as halacha (Jewish law) never changes, so also Eisav’s (symbolizing the non-Jews of the world) hatred of Yaakov never changes and doesn’t need any justification for its existence.

**The Man Who Tried to Join a Non-Jewish Country Club**

 Perhaps the worst response a Jew could make is to try and hide his or her Judaism. In a humorous vein, Rabbi Goldman spoke of a survivor of the Holocaust who came to America and changed his name and pretended to be a Christian. At one point he attempted to join an elite country club that had a policy of not admitting Jews as members. He was told that he was being rejected. When he protested and asked why he was being rejected, the country club president told him, “it is because on the application form when you were asked what your religion was, you wrote down “goy.”

 Rabbi Goldman who originally came to South Africa to open a Chabad House and later was appointed to serve as a rabbi of a non-Chabad shul recalled an incident when a prominent Jewish writer asked the Lubavitcher Rebbe if the Holocaust could ever happen again. And this was at a time when it seemed that world was still ashamed of the Holocaust and most nations were sympathetic to Jews and even Jews in Israel. The Lubavitcher Rebbe’s response was that if it was up to the nations of the world, it could start tomorrow morning. But fortunately for the Jews, Hashem will not allow it to happen.

**Inspired By David Ben Gurion**

 Surprisingly, Rabbi Goldman said one of his greatest and inspiring heroes was a non-religious personality – the first Prime Minister of the State of Israel – David Ben Gurion. Quoting Ben-Gurion, the important thing is not what the goyim say, but what we as Jews do. Rabbi Goldman recalled an important concept that the late former Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom – Rabbi Jonathn Sacks would frequently declare from his contact with many non-Jews that non-Jews respect those Jews who respect themselves.

 Rabbi Goldman asked – “What can we do to fight antisemitism?” The only answer is to do something positive by leading active Jewish lives, even if we have to pay a lot of tuition to ensure that our children and grandchildren are educated and thus able to lead dynamic Jewish lives.

 If you would like to view this positive and upbeat 45-minute YouTube video on a very scary topic, you can google – “Why the Jews? The Truth About Antisemitism” or YouTube code -- <https://youtu.be/kogbCPXZBkU?si=mUHW88gdcbu7xAV->

*Reprinted from the February 9, 2024 edition of The Jewish Connection.*

**Rav Avigdor Miller on**

**Why Do Frum Yeshiva**

**Libraries Have Secular Books**

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The trouble is that in the yeshivas, the principal of the high school should be the rosh yeshiva himself. That’s how it should be. The rosh yeshiva with the big white beard, he should be the principal of the high school because that’s where we need him most.

In Frankfurt-am-Main, the frum German community had a gymnasium, a high school, and the teachers of the secular subjects were very frum Jews. A man once told me this - many years ago he was brought up there and he said that the man who taught him algebra taught him mussar and yiras Shamayim in the algebra class. He taught him algebra too. That’s how it used to be.

In Frankfurt-am-Main, together with the secular subject, they taught him Torah and mitzvos. You can do that. You can show everything is connected with Torah. It’s very important to utilize that.

But what do they do? They take somebody who once went to the yeshiva who has a college degree. He’s a frum Jew, but he’s shallow and he becomes a principal. He doesn’t really have the spirit of Torah in him. And therefore, is it a surprise that sometimes he lets things get past him? Not such good things pass his inspection.

That’s why I say that the rosh yeshiva should be in the high school office and should supervise everything. And then from the high school will go forth boys that are tzaddikim. You know many boys are failures in Gemara. They’re discouraged in the Gemara and therefore they turn away from the yeshiva. Even though they’re in the yeshiva, they lose their idealism.

But in the secular department, you can win them back. You can win them back in the secular department. It’s easy because they’re at home there. And if the teachers had idealism, then they could talk yiras Shamayim always in the secular department.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Mishpatim 5784 email of Toras Avigdor, based on the teachings of Rav Avigdor Miller, zt”l. Adapted from Tape #724 (January 1989).*

**Thoughts that Count**

**for Our Parsha**

*Speak to the Children of Israel, that they take for Me an offeri*ng (Ex. 25:2)

Why does the Torah use the word "take" instead of "give"? Because in reality, everything in the world already belongs to G-d without us having to "give" it to Him, as it states, "For all things come from You, and of Your own have we given You." However, when a person does a good deed with his own money, he acquires it for himself in the true meaning of the word. Only then can he offer it to G-d as something that is truly his. *(Malbim)*

*And the cherubim shall stretch out their wings upward...and their faces shall look one to another* (Ex. 25:20)

Every talmid chacham (Torah scholar) should aspire to these very same traits: On the one hand, his "wings should stretch out upward" - he must be very careful to observe the mitzvot between man and G-d. At the same time, his face must look toward his brethren - i.e., relate to his fellow man with justice and righteousness. *(Olelot Efraim)*

*And you shall make a crown of gold (zahav) around its border* (Ex. 25:25)

The numerical equivalent of the word "zahav" is the same as "David," as the crown of sovereignty was promised to King David and his descendants forever. (King Moshiach is a descendant of King David.) *(Baal HaTurim)*

*Reprinted from the Parshat Terumah 5761/2001 edition of L’Chaim Weekly.*

**The Cherubim and the Eternal**

**Love of G-d for the Jewish People**

**From the Teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Zt”l**



The Torah portion of Teruma contains the commandment "And you shall make two cherubim of gold." The cherubim were placed atop the Ark of Testimony in the Sanctuary, which contained the Tablets of the Covenant.

What did the cherubim look like? Our Sages offer several opinions. Rashi describes the cherubim as "having the face of a baby." Nachmanides maintains they had the form of "the chariot that was seen by Ezekiel."

**The Intense Revelation of the Divine Presence**

Rashi's explanation is based on a passage in the Talmud that depicts the cherubim as looking like a boy and a girl facing each other, symbolic of G-d's love for the Jewish people. When G-d spoke to Moses, the Divine voice issued from between the two cherubim, as it states, "And I will speak with you from above the Ark cover, from between the two cherubim that are upon the Ark of the Testimony." This was the place of the most intense revelation of the Divine Presence.

In general, Rashi's commentary explains the Torah's "literal" meaning, whereas Nachmanides' interpretations are more mystical and esoteric. Nachmanides thus describes the cherubim according to their deeper, spiritual significance, i.e., as resembling the "chariot" seen by the Prophet Ezekiel, while Rashi gives us the simple facts, i.e., that the cherubim had the face of a baby.

However, it is Rashi's literal interpretation that best expresses the depth of the connection between the Jew and G-d. Our Sages say that the idea of creating the Jewish people occurred to G-d before He thought of creating the Torah, as it were. In other words, the love that G-d has for the Jews transcends and is "higher" than the Torah. G-d loves the Jewish people with the kind of love a parent feels for his child, which is independent of the child's conduct or actions.

**The Inner Bond Between the Jewish People and G-d**

This is reflected in the fact that physically, the cherubim were placed on top of the Ark of Testimony, which contained the Ten Commandments. For the inner bond between the Jewish people and G-d, which is derived from their essence, is above even the Torah itself.

This also helps explain why the innermost level of a Jew's bond with G-d remains unaffected even if he sins and transgresses the Torah's commandments, G-d forbid (as opposed to the more external aspects of their relationship, which sustain damage).

Lastly, in emphasizing the indestructible connection between the Jew and G-d, the cherubim and kaporet (covering over the Ark) achieved atonement for the Jewish people, as alluded to in the word itself (kaporet is related to kapara - atonement).

*Reprinted from the Parshat Terumah 5761/2001 edition of L’Chaim Weekly. Adapted from Likutei Sichot, vol 26.*

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“*On the Shulchan / Table you shall place Lechem Ha’panim [literally, ‘bread of faces’] before Me, always*.” (25:30)

Rashi says It had surfaces or faces. A person was able to almost see himself in the bread. How one looked at the bread, is the way the bread appeared to the person. If he looked at the bread with belief and a pure heart then the person saw the miracles of the bread. A week after it was placed on the table, it was still ‘hot out of the oven’.

If on the other hand a person looked at the bread as a non-believer and with a cold heart, then the bread appeared as old spoiled moldy bread. Rashi says in Parshas Emor about the person who cursed Hashem he made fun and said isn’t it normal for a king to eat fresh bread every day, should he eat cold nine-day old bread? He was only able to see old spoiled moldy bread. (Admor MiGur)

*Reprinted from the Parshat Terumah 5784 email of R’ Yedidye Hirtenfeld’s whY I Matter parsha sheet for the Young Israel of Midwood in Brooklyn.*

**Rabbi Berel Wein on**

**Parshat Terumah 5784**



The initial and most successful building campaign in Jewish history is recorded for us in this week's Torah reading. The Torah, in recounting the event, teaches us that Moshe was to accept offerings of gold, silver, copper, precious stones, weaving materials, acacia wood, artistic talent and everything else that would be necessary for the construction of the great tabernacle/Mishkan in the desert.

The Torah, though, places a caveat on the donations of goods and services, wealth and talent that Moshe was to receive from the people of Israel. The Torah states that he was to accept all donations but only from those whose hearts will motivate their generosity. We are all aware that it is much easier to write a check than to really feel good, excited and sincere about the donation.

The nature of human beings is to be less than forthcoming in their generosity and even if they are willing to part with some of their material possessions, the spirit and true intent of that generosity is often missing. Here the Torah is teaching us an important lesson. A building or any institution whose purpose is service of G-d and the spiritual enhancement of human beings cannot be built of human material generosity alone.

As the Talmud so succinctly phrases it, “G-d demands our heart.” Professional fundraisers employ all means and tactics to raise money for their goals and projects. However, after many decades of observing fundraising techniques, I know that it is very difficult to penetrate the heart of the donor. Without such a penetration, the fund-raising exercise becomes devoid of spiritual meaning and soulful uplift.

I think that the giving feeling that the Torah emphasizes here is achievable only when one feels that the cause or object of one's generosity is really worth more than the wealth that one is parting with. The example I use in teaching is that if one feels that giving charity is the equivalent of paying one's taxes then that donation is completely devoid of any spiritual content. We all have to pay our taxes as a national duty and a practical necessity. Yet people do not feel any sort of spiritual achievement in paying their taxes. We may sign the check but our hearts are not in it.

This attitude, which after all is still acceptable when paying our material taxes is concerned (since no government is really interested in the spiritual effects of its taxes on the status of your soul), is not the attitude that will suffice when it comes to building a tabernacle/Mishkan. In this latter case we are asked not only to give of our material wealth and personal talents but truly to give of ourselves as well.

The demand of the Torah is not only to give from our heart but to give our heart itself to the exalted cause and spiritual greatness of the tabernacle/Mishkan. It is not a donation that the Torah asks of us, rather it is a commitment of self that is demanded. The tabernacle/Mishkan has long ago disappeared from our physical view but its lessons remain relevant and important to us today as when they were taught millennia ago.

Shabbat shalom

*Reprinted from the current website of rabbiwein.com*

**Food Under a Bed**

**By Rabbi Hillel Raskin**

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**Rabbi Hillel Raskin**

I forgot food under a stroller with my child sleeping. May the food be eaten?

Chazal teach that one should not place food or drink under a bed.

The reason for this halacha is the subject of debate amongst Rishonim.

The Rambam explains the concern is that a harmful substance may fall in without the person realizing it.

But others explain that a ruach ra’ah (evil spirit) rests on such food, and this is the reason quoted in Shulchan Aruch.

According to this reason, the concern applies even if the food is sealed.

Though some poskim are lenient regarding raw foods, the Alter Rebbe does not differentiate between the two.

**A Dispute on Whether Such Food Can Be Eaten After the Fact**

What is the halacha of such food after the fact? While some poskim hold that the food may still be consumed, others hold the food is prohibited, and it should be disposed of to prevent others from mistakenly consuming it.

The Rebbe Rashab was stringent and even discussed whether Tobacco left under a bed may be smoked.

Is an airplane seat or stroller also considered a “bed”? Some poskim hold the issue only applies to a proper bed designated for sleeping, and according to some, only a bed for adults.

This would exclude a baby stroller.

Additionally, poskim are lenient if the food is completely off the ground, like under a plane or bus seat.

Food under a pillow or inside one’s pockets while sleeping is permitted.

Conversely, putting food under a bed on which no one is sleeping is a machlokes among poskim. Some say that its designation for sleep brings a ruach ra’ah, while others hold it’s only an issue if someone is sleeping on it at the time, and that is the accepted custom.

In practice, any food left under the bed of a sleeping person should be thrown out. Yet, if it involves significant loss, one should consult a rov.

*Reprinted from the Parshat Mishpatim 5784 edition of The Weekly Farbrengen. Rabbi Raskin is Rov of Anash in Petach Tikva, Israel.*

**Fighting Antisemitism at Columbia Just Got Harder**

**By Jeff Jacoby**

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**Jeff Jacoby**

***At Columbia Law School, only one student club was rejected this year — the one formed to oppose antisemitism.***

Long before antisemitism erupted on college campuses last fall, Marie-Alice Legrand knew what hostility to Jews could lead to.

As a young girl growing up in Hamburg, Germany, Legrand could look from her bedroom window onto [the bare expanse of the Bornplatz](https://gedenkstaetten-in-hamburg.de/en/memorials/show/synagoge-am-bornplatz-synagogenmonument-und-wandgemaelde-im-pferdestall-1), the site of what was once the city's largest synagogue. The great Jewish house of worship was torched on Kristallnacht by antisemitic mobs; a few months later the Nazis ordered the Jewish community to demolish what remained of the building and turn over the land to the city.

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**Marie-Alice Legrand**

The deportation of Hamburg's Jews to the death camps began in 1941. In the summer of 1942, the Jewish family that owned what would later become Legrand's childhood home was murdered in Auschwitz.

Like all schoolchildren in modern Germany, Legrand was taught from an early age about the Holocaust. "I always thought about what those individuals must have gone through," she told me in a phone conversation Monday. "When we learned about the hatred of the Jews, about the mass murder, I tried hard to relate to the people who were involved."

**Everything Changed After Oct. 7**

A Black German of French Caribbean descent, Legrand went to Paris to study history and management, then moved to New York to earn a law degree at Columbia University. She said she hadn't expected to become an activist in her final year, but everything changed after Israel was savagely attacked on Oct. 7.

Legrand was shocked when the Columbia campus erupted in "blatant antisemitism and hate," as [she wrote on LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/posts/marie-alice-legrand-55995bb3_hamasisisis-activity-7117931162185949184-KpRc?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_desktop). Anti-Israel throngs publicly cheered the Hamas atrocities and marched behind banners bearing Palestinian flags and the words "By Any Means Necessary." A tenured Columbia professor [waxed ecstatic](https://electronicintifada.net/content/just-another-battle-or-palestinian-war-liberation/38661) over the murders, rapes, and abductions of Israelis, which he called "astounding," "awesome," and "victories of the resistance." More than 140 other faculty members signed a letter defending the barbaric assault as a legitimate "military action" against the Jewish state.

The callousness of what she was seeing scandalized Legrand. She knew students at Columbia who had lost friends or relatives in the Oct. 7 pogrom, she told me, but "there was not one ounce of sympathy or compassion extended to my Jewish and Israeli friends." She reached out on social media. "You are not alone," she posted. "I unequivocally support and stand with you."

**Creating a New Group Called Law**

**Students Against Antisemitism**

She decided to offer more than comfort. Over the next few months, Legrand assembled a group of students, Jews and non-Jews alike, to create a new campus club, Law Students Against Antisemitism. They drafted a charter laying out their objectives: to raise awareness of historical and contemporary antisemitism, to foster dialogue, and to provide support for students targeted by antisemitism.

Student groups are ubiquitous at Columbia — the university boasts that there are more than 500 clubs and organizations, at least 85 in the law school alone. Given the surge of venomous anti-Jewish and anti-Israel bigotry, especially among young Americans and in academia, the need for groups like Law Students Against Antisemitism is self-evident.

On Jan. 23, Legrand and the group's other officers appeared before the law school student senate to request official recognition for their club. Such recognition, which is needed to reserve space on campus and be assigned a Columbia email address, is normally a routine formality. Eight other clubs requested approval last month; all eight were rubber-stamped in a few minutes.

But not Law Students Against Antisemitism.

**Afraid of the Definition of the International**

**Holocaust Remembrance Alliance**

Before the vote was held, a delegation of progressive students showed up to demand that Legrand's group be rejected on the grounds that it would "silence pro-Palestine activists on campus and brand their political speech as antisemitic." It would do so, they claimed, by adopting the standard definition of antisemitism drafted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

The accusation was ridiculous on multiple grounds. First and most obviously, no voluntary student group has the power to silence anyone, on campus or off. Second, as recent months have made plain, there has been no shortage of pro-Palestine expression on Columbia's campus.

Above all, it is beyond surreal to denounce an organization opposed to antisemitism for adopting the most widely used definition of the term. The IHRA formulation has been accepted by 42 countries — including the United States — and by well over 1,000 states, provinces, cities, nongovernmental organizations, and corporations. In fact, it is the definition relied on by the federal government in its enforcement of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act.

In the end, the absurdity of the attack made no difference. For an hour, Legrand and her colleagues were grilled by the student senate. Then, by an anonymous vote, [Law Students Against Antisemitism was rejected](https://www.columbiaspectator.com/news/2024/02/01/law-school-student-senate-denies-approval-of-law-students-against-antisemitism-group/).

Legrand knows only too well how tenacious antisemitism can be. She said she was "heartbroken" by the student senate vote and by the moral perversity of those who would mobilize to kill an organization like hers. But she is not giving up. She hasn't forgotten the view from her childhood bedroom window. And she knows that in the fight against antisemitism, surrender can be fatal.

*Reprinted from the February 8, 2024 website of aish.com This op-ed originally appeared in The Boston Globe.*

**You Shall Make the Boards for the Tabernacle of Acacia Wood, Standing Erect (26:15)**

The midrash comments: Take from those acacia trees which were already standing for this purpose. Avraham had planted these trees in Be'er Sheva. When Yaakov went to Egypt, he transplanted the trees there. Then, before he died, he told his sons that Hashem would one day command that they build a mishkan, and they should use these trees.

Were there no suitable trees in Egypt? Why did the Patriarchs go to such trouble? R' Yaakov Kaminetsky z"l (died 1986) explains that the Patriarchs acted thus in order to raise the spirits of their descendants who would be enslaved in Egypt. It was not enough to promise the Jews that they would be redeemed; the groves of acacia trees that Yaakov planted in Egypt were a tangible reminder to the enslaved Jews that their eventual salvation was a reality.

Similarly, R' Kamenetsky writes, this is one reason that the authors of the siddur included the order of the korbanot / sacrifices in the daily prayers. The more we are familiar with what took place in the Bet Hamikdash, the more real the eventual rebuilding of the Bet Hamikdash will seem to us. (Emet Le'Yaakov)

*Reprinted from the Parshat Terumah 5784 email of R’ Yedidye Hirtenfeld’s whY I Matter parsha sheet for the Young Israel of Midwood in Brooklyn.*

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***19th Century painting of the Western Wall by Gustav Bauernfeind (1848-1904)***