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## ANTI-SEMITISM III: THE ROOT CAUSES OF ANTI-SEMITISM & CAN IT BE ERADICATED?

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This third Morasha shiur on anti-Semitism seeks to uncover the essential reasons for hatred of the Jewish people and determine whether there are solutions to stop it. The first Morasha shiur examined the nature and pervasiveness of over 3,700 years of anti-Semitism and then demonstrated that the severe, ongoing hate, persecution and physical attacks against the Jewish people are unique, far beyond any other bigotry throughout history. The second class explored several principal theories of anti-Semitism and then showed that these explanations at best fall short of a complete understanding, and at worse are incorrect.

That people hate members of other groups is commonplace in human history. But the universality and depth of hatred for the Jews is of a qualitatively different order. As Reverend Edward H. Flannery of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops put it, “Hatred of the Jew is the greatest hatred in human history” (New York Times, November 30, 1974, cited in Dennis Prager & Joseph Telushkin’s *Why the Jews*, pg. 14).

This class presents a simple but substantiated thesis: If hatred of the “different, other” is a universal human trait, the reason the Jews are hated more than any other group is simply because they are the ultimate “other.” Anti-Semitism will be shown to be a function of the Jews’ task to bring God and Divine values into the world. As Reverend Flannery said, “It was Judaism that brought the concept of a God-given universal moral law into the world...the Jew carries the burden of God in history [and] for this has never been forgiven” (quoted as the opening words of *Why The Jews*).

This class will 1) show that this is the traditional Jewish understanding of anti-Semitism and 2) conclude by searching for ways to put it to an end.

This class addresses the following questions:

- ☞ Is there a way to determine the root causes for anti-Semitism?
- ☞ What is the principle of *maaseh avot siman l’banim*, and how is that applied to understanding anti-Semitism?
- ☞ What are the three main reasons for anti-Semitism throughout history?
- ☞ Is there anything to be done to eradicate anti-Semitism?

## CLASS OUTLINE:

Overview:	<b>The Root Causes of Anti-Semitism</b>
Section I:	<b><i>Maaseh Avot Siman L'Banim</i></b>
Section II:	<b>Hatred of God, the Jewish People and Jewish Values</b>
Section III:	<b>Tool for Ensuring that the Jews Carry Out Their Mission</b>
Section IV:	<b>Consequence of Pervasive Jewish Transgression</b>
Section V:	<b>Is There Anything to Do to Eradicate Anti-Semitism?</b>

## OVERVIEW. THE ROOT CAUSES OF ANTI-SEMITISM – THE TORAH’S VIEW

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To understand the root causes of anti-Semitism, we need to examine the Torah’s explanations, including prophecies that foretell expressions of anti-Semitism itself in Jewish history. We will discover that the paradigms for all types of anti-Semitism are contained in the Torah and are further elucidated in the Talmud and by their respective commentators. We examine four fundamental root causes of anti-Semitism, based on two writings of Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin (known as the Netziv): 1) his commentary on the Torah and 2) an essay entitled *Shearit Yisroel – The Remnant of Israel* (published in his commentary on Shir HaShirim/Song of Songs). Recently, Rabbi Moshe Meiselman, the Dean of Yeshivat Toras Moshe, published an adaptation of that essay in his Journal, *Oraissa*.

In this class, Section I describes the spiritually driven dynamic known as *maaseh avot siman l’banim*, of how episodes of anti-Semitism in the Torah, specifically as experienced by the Avot, forefathers of the Jewish people, contain the paradigms of anti-Semitism for future history. The next three Sections are the three major categories of anti-Semitic expression as rooted in the experience of the forefathers: Section II reflects anti-Semitism directed at God, the Jewish people and Jewish values. Section III discusses anti-Semitic expressions necessary for the Jews to carry out their mission and prevent assimilation. Section IV addresses anti-Semitic expressions that are viewed as a consequence of pervasive Jewish transgression.

Please note that these three categories are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, Amalek attacks the Jewish people after the Exodus from Egypt because they embrace Divine values, yet are only *able* to attack because of widespread Jewish transgression. Similarly, the Syrian-Greeks leveled decrees against Jewish observances during the Second Temple Period but were only able to do so because of prevalent Jewish misconduct.

## SECTION I. *MAASEH AVOT SIMAN L'BANIM*

*Maaseh avot siman l'banim* is a core principle that maintains that specific events, actions and interactions experienced by the forefathers of the Jewish people, portend future history of the Jewish people. Consequently, episodes of anti-Semitism experienced by the Avot contain paradigms of anti-Semitism for future history. The principle of *maaseh avot siman l'banim* is described by the Ramban (Nachmanides) in his Torah commentary citing the Midrash Tanchumah.

1. **Ramban, Bereishit (Genesis) 12:6 citing Midrash Tanchumah – Events encountered by the forefathers are indicative of future experiences of their descendants.**

*“And Avraham passed into the Land of Canaan until the site of Shechem”* — [Shechem did not yet exist as a city, yet the Torah refers to it as such] to inform you of a great principle, succinctly taught by our Sages about the Torah’s discussion of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob). The Midrash Tanchumah 9 teaches that all events that were encountered by the forefathers are indicative of future experiences of their descendants. Therefore the Torah so vividly describes the experiences of the forefathers, such as their journeys and digging wells, that you might think they are superfluous and inconsequential; yet they are all written to teach about future events. For when an event happened to the three forefathers, we can extrapolate what has been decreed to be experienced by their descendants.

ויעבר אברהם בארץ עד מקום שכם [בראשית יב:ו] - אומר לך כלל תבין אותו בכל הפרשיות הבאות בענין אברהם יצחק ויעקב, והוא ענין גדול, הזכירוהו רבותינו בדרך קצרה, ואמרו (תנחומא, ט) כל מה שאירע לאבות סימן לבנים, ולכן יאריכו הכתובים בספור המסעות וחפירת הבארות ושאר המקרים, ויחשוב החושב בהם כאלו הם דברים מיותרים אין בהם תועלת, וכולם באים ללמד על העתיד, כי כאשר יבוא המקרה לנביא משלשת האבות יתבונן ממנו הדבר הנגזר לבא לזרעו.

Thus, we will see below that the nature of anti-Semitism experienced throughout Jewish history was originally encountered by our forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.

It does not appear coincidental, then, that the very first anti-Semitic incident occurs so early on in the history of Judaism, when King Nimrod responds to Avraham Avinu introducing Judaism to the world.

## Avraham and Nimrod

### 2. **Rambam (Maimonides), Laws of Idolatry (Hilchot Avodah Zarah) 1:3 – Avraham discovers God, takes a stand against idolatry and receives a death sentence.**

After Avraham recognized the existence of God, he began to challenge the idol worship of Ur Kasdim and argued with the idol worshippers, saying that the path that they were following did not lead to the truth. He broke their idols and explained to all the people that it is only appropriate to serve the God of the Universe...

When Avraham and his ideas gained recognition, the King [Nimrod] attempted to kill him. He was miraculously saved and traveled to Charan. Then Avraham arose and vociferously asserted to the entire world that there is one God in the universe, and only He should be served.

כיון שהכיר וידע התחיל להשיב תשובות על בני אור כשדים ולערוך דין עמהם ולומר שאין זו דרך האמת שאתם הולכים בה ושיבר הצלמים והתחיל להודיע לעם שאין ראוי לעבוד אלא לאלוה העולם...

כיון שגבר עליהם בראיותיו בקש המלך להורגו ונעשה לו נס ויצא לחרן, והתחיל לעמוד ולקרוא בקול גדול לכל העולם ולהודיעם שיש שם אלוה אחד לכל העולם ולו ראוי לעבוד.

Significantly, King Nimrod is also known as King Amraphel, who before casting Avraham into a furnace, is infamously responsible for unifying the world to fight against God's authority, building the Tower of Babel in protest.

### 3. **Rashi, Bereishit 14:1 – King Nimrod is the same person as King Amraphel, reflected in his Hebrew name's etymology.**

Amraphel is Nimrod who told Avraham to jump into the fiery furnace. (The name Amraphel is a contraction of the Hebrew words "say" אמר and "jump" פול).

אמרפל הוא נמרוד שאמר לאברהם פול לתוך כבשן האש:

### 4. **Bereishit 10:8 and Rashi's commentary – King Nimrod caused the entire world to rebel against God.**

And Cush was the father of Nimrod, who began acting as a [rebellious] power on Earth.

**Rashi:** i.e. By causing the entire world to rebel against God through the scheme [he devised for] the generation [that was punished by] dispersion.

וכוש ילד את נמרוד הוא החל להיות גבר בארץ:

רש"י: להיות גבור. להמריד כל העולם על הקב"ה בעצת דור הפלגה:

**5. Rabbi Yehoshua Hartman's Gloss 15, Gur Aryeh, Rashi, Bereishit 10:8, explaining Talmud Bavli, Eruvin 53a – Nimrod was entirely focused on engineering a unified world-wide rebellion against God.**

The Talmud (Eruvin 53a) states, "Nimrod engineered a world-wide rebellion [against God] with his kingship," meaning that the entire focus of his kingship was to catalyze a [unified world-wide] rebellion against God.

אמרפל הוא נמרוד שאמר לאברהם פול לתוך  
כבשן האש:

See further Midrash HaGadol, Bereishit 11:28.

Consequently, as we will see below in Section II, one of the central causes of anti-Semitism is the hatred of God, the Jewish people and Jewish values.

### Yitzchak, Yishmael and Avimelech

Avraham and his wife, Sarah, are childless, and Sarah requests that Avraham marry her maidservant, Hagar, who subsequently gives birth to Yishmael. Later, God tells Avraham that he and Sarah will have a child, Yitzchak (Isaac), with whom he will forge the Jewish covenant. Yishmael acts immorally, quarrels with Yitzchak over the inheritance from Avraham, and threatens Yitzchak's life (Rashi, Bereishit 21:9). Concerned for Yitzchak's welfare, Sarah, with God's backing, requests that Avraham banish Yishmael and Hagar from their home (Bereishit with Rashi 21:10-14). Much later, after the destruction of the First Temple, the Jews are exiled to Babylonia. In route, as the Jews search for food, Yishmael's descendants kill many Jews (Bereishit Rabbah 53:14, Rashi, Bereishit 21:17). Yishmael's descendant (Mohammad), establishes Islam, claiming God has rescinded His covenant with the Jewish people and has re-established it with adherents to Islam. (See Anti-Semitism I in this series, Section IV. Islamic Anti-Semitism.) Midrash Shochar Tov 14:2 implies that Yishmael is interested in world domination, and the Jewish nation stands in his way.

Yitzchak marries Rivkah (Rebecca), and they have twins, Yaakov (Jacob) and Esav (Esau). They encounter a famine, which forces them to relocate to the land of the Philistines. Yitzchak becomes extremely prosperous and wealthy there and the local King Avimelech becomes jealous of Yitzchak and tells him to leave the region. The Chofetz Chaim writes that jealousy of Jewish strength is another paradigm of anti-Semitism.

**6. Chofetz Chaim on the Torah, Parshat Toldot, Bereishit 26:16 – The nations become jealous because of the Jewish people's strength.**

*Avimelech said to Yitzchak, "Go away from us, for you have become much more powerful than us (Bereishit 26:16)." The Torah is teaching us here the source of anti-*

לך מעמנו, כי עצמת ממנו מאד. (בראשית  
כ"ו ט"ז) כאן ספרה לנו התורה, מהיכן נובעת  
שנאת האומות לעמנו. סבת קנאתם ושנאתם  
היא בשביל שעצומים אנחנו, "רב ועצום ממנו"

Semitism. The reason for their jealousy and hatred is that we are strong, as the new king of Egypt declared, “You have become more powerful than us,” [Shemot/Exodus 1:9]. And here Avimelech said to Yitzchak, “You have become much more powerful than us.”

[שמות א:ט], אמר המלך החדש של מצרים, וכאן אמר אבימלך ליצחק, "כי עצמת ממנו מאד".

## Yaakov and Esav

Yaakov and Esav struggle over who deserves to be the rightful heir of the Jewish people. Yaakov purchases from Esav the first-born's rights, which the latter despised.

### 7. Bereishit (Genesis) 25:29-34, translation incorporating Rashi's commentary – Yaakov purchases the birthright from Esav.

Yaakov was preparing a stew, and Esav came in exhausted (from murdering) in the field. Esav said to Yaakov, “Pour some of this red food down my throat now, for I am exhausted.” Therefore, he was given the name Edom (red). Yaakov said, “As sure as today is today, sell me your birthright.” Esav replied, “Look I’m going to die (by improperly participating in the Divine Service), so what use is the birthright to me?” Yaakov said, “Sell it to me as sure as today is today,” so he swore to him and sold his birthright to Yaakov. Yaakov gave Esav bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank and left; and Esav despised the birthright.

ויזד יעקב נזיד ויבא עשו מן השדה והוא עיף: ויאמר עשו אל יעקב הלעיטני נא מן האדם האדם הזה כי עיף אנכי על כן קרא שמו אדום: ויאמר יעקב מכרה כיום את בכרתך לי: ויאמר עשו הנה אנכי הולך למות ולמה זה לי בכרה: ויאמר יעקב השבעה לי כיום וישבע לו וימכר את בכרתו ליעקב: ויעקב נתן לעשו לחם ונזיד עדשים ויאכל וישת ויקם וילך ויבז עשו את הבכרה:

The struggle between Yaakov and Esav to lead the Jewish nation manifests again when Yitzchak senses he is nearing the end of his life and wants to give the firstborn blessings to Esav. Rivkah disguises Yaakov and sends him ahead of Esav to receive the blessings, since she feels that Esav is unworthy of the blessings and Yaakov is truly deserving.

### 8. Ibid., 27:30-33, 41, translation incorporating Rashi – Yaakov preempts Esav to receive blessings to lead the Jewish people.

When Yitzchak had finished blessing Yaakov, and Yaakov had just left the presence of his father, Esav his brother

ויהי כאשר כלה יצחק לברך את יעקב ויהי אף יצא יצא יעקב מאת פני יצחק אביו ועשו אחיו בא מציודו: ויעש גם הוא מטעמים ויבא לאביו



returned from hunting. Esav also prepared delicacies and brought them to his father. He said to his father, "My father should arise and eat of his son's food so your soul shall bless me." Isaac his father asked him, "Who are you?" and he replied, "I am Esav your firstborn." Then Yitzchak shuddered greatly in bewilderment and said, "Who was it then who hunted game, brought it to me and I ate from it before you came and I blessed him? He will still be blessed"... Now Esav harbored hatred toward Yaakov because of the blessing Yitzchak had blessed Yaakov, and Esav said to himself, "The days of mourning will come soon for my father, and then I will kill my brother Yaakov."

וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָבִיו יָקֹם אָבִי וַיֹּאכַל מִצֵּיד בְּנֹו בְּעֶבֶר  
תִּבְרַכְנִי נְפִשָּׁה: וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יִצְחָק אָבִיו מִי אַתָּה  
וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנִי בְנֶךָ בְּכֹרֶךָ עֲשׂוֹ: וַיִּחְרַד יִצְחָק חֲרָדָה  
גְּדֹלָה עַד מָאֹד וַיֹּאמֶר מִי אִפּוֹא הוּא הֶעָד צִיד  
וַיָּבֵא לִי וַאֲכַל מִכָּל בְּטָרִם תִּבְּוֹא וַיִּבְרַכְהוּ גַם בְּרוּךְ  
יְהִי: ... וַיִּשְׁטֹם עֲשׂוֹ אֶת יַעֲקֹב עַל הַבְּרָכָה אֲשֶׁר  
בָּרַכּוֹ אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר עֲשׂוֹ בְּלִבּוֹ יִקְרְבוּ יָמֵי אָבִי  
וְאֶהְרֹגָה אֶת יַעֲקֹב אַחִי:

Even though Yitzchak himself affirmed bestowing the blessings upon Yaakov after he was cognizant of what transpired (Bereishit 27:33 above), Esav harbors enmity towards his brother. Since Yaakov is symbolic of the entire Jewish people as he eventually fathers the Twelve Tribes, Esav (along with his descendants) is thus viewed as one of the archetypal anti-Semites with whom the Jewish people eternally contend.

#### 9. **Rashi, Bereishit 33:4 citing Sifrei, Beha'alotcha 69 – Esav's hate for Yaakov transcends time.**

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai taught: It is halachah (here meaning "an established fact") that Esav hates Yaakov.

אמר ר' שמעון בן יוחאי: הלכה היא בידוע שעשו  
שונא ליעקב.

### **Yaakov and Lavan**

Yitzchak and Rivkah then send Yaakov away for two purposes: to escape from Esav and to travel to Charan to marry into Avraham's extended family. On the way to Charan, Yaakov escapes being murdered by Esav's son, Elifaz. Elifaz was sent by his father to murder Yaakov, but he is unable to follow through with the plan because of his affinity for Yaakov, having grown up in Yitzchak's home. Yaakov tells Elifaz to take all of his assets, rendering him impoverished, which is comparable to death. Yaakov arrives in Charan destitute; he meets his future wife Rachel and is taken to meet his prospective father-in-law, Lavan.

Bereft of any assets, Yaakov negotiates an arrangement with Lavan to work seven years to marry Rachel. We then get a glimpse at the scheming Lavan: Despite Yaakov's suspecting cautionary measures, at the *chuppah* (wedding ceremony), Lavan switches Leah – the older

sister – for Rachel. Yaakov ends up agreeing to work for Lavan for an additional seven years to marry Rachel along with Leah.

Again, *maaseh avot siman l'banim*, Yaakov's interaction with Lavan foretells future anti-Semitism. In fact, on the second most universally observed festival (after Yom Kippur), Passover, Judaism actually obligates us to ponder anti-Semitism, pointing to Lavan as the prototype. At the Passover Seder, Jews study and experience the *Haggadah*, which explores the roots and nature of the Jewish nation and its history. The Haggadah makes a very strong statement on the topic of anti-Semitism.

#### 10. The Passover Haggadah – Anti-Semitism is a constant in Jewish history.

And it is this [God's promise to deliver us from Egypt and, according to the *Midrash*, all of our subsequent oppressors] that has stood by our fathers and by us! For it is not just one individual who rose against us to annihilate us, but in every single generation people rise up against us to annihilate us, and the Holy One, Blessed is He, saves us from their hands.

והיא שעמדה לאבותינו ולנו, שלא אחד בלבד  
עמד עלינו לבלותינו, אלא שבכל דור ודור  
עומדים עלינו לבלותינו, והקדוש ברוך הוא  
מצילנו מידם:

Since anti-Semitism is such a constant of Jewish history, one can find dozens of sources that discuss the topic throughout Torah literature. But it seems wise to first focus on what the Haggadah itself views as a prime example of anti-Semitism, Lavan, the father-in-law of Jacob. Lavan can be regarded as one of the “best” archetypal representatives of all anti-Semites. The next paragraph of the Haggadah discusses a somewhat surprising choice for its focus.

#### 11. Ibid. – Lavan is an archetype of anti-Semites.

Go out and learn what Lavan the Aramean wanted to do to our father Yaakov. For Pharaoh decreed only against the male children, but Lavan sought to obliterate everyone, as it says: “An Aramean [sought to] destroy my forefather. And he (Yaakov) went down to Egypt...”

צא ולמד מה בקש לבן הארמי לעשות ליעקב  
אבינו, שפרעה לא גזר אלא על הזכרים, ולבן  
בקש לעקור את הכל, שנאמר, ארמי אבד אבי  
וירד מצרימה.....

Fortunately, Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin (known as the Netziv) has provided us with a key to understanding this perplexing paragraph (adapted by Rabbi Meiselman as mentioned in this shiur's Overview):



12. “The Remnant of Israel,” in *Oraissa*, by Rabbi Moshe Meiselman, pp. 33-35 – The anti-Semite’s motive; what the Jew represents.

The Midrash tells us that מעשה אבות סימן לבנים the acts of the patriarchs are symbolic for their descendants. The Ramban explains this to mean that the stories of the lives of the אבות – the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob – symbolize in detail the future history of the Jewish people. If so, we must look at Jacob, whose life was symbolic of the lives of the Jewish people in exile, for an understanding of contemporary anti-Semitism.

Jacob coexisted with his father-in-law Laban twenty years in relative stability until, in an unexpected turn of events, Laban’s pent-up hatred for Jacob exploded. Laban is viewed by Chazal [our Sages] as the historical prototype for all anti-Semites, and his relationship with Jacob is viewed as archetypal of the relationship between Jews and their anti-Semitic neighbors throughout history.

Historically anti-Semitism has always expressed itself in two ways: **first** through a jealousy of Jewish wealth and a suspicion of theft; and **second**, in a hatred of our faith and service of God. Of the two, the more prominent and, at times, most significant to the superficial observer has been the jealousy directed at our economic success. Hatred of our religion has generally been present in a more subtle manner and remained in the background.

So, for example, we never find Laban making overt statements against Jacob’s beliefs and religious practices. It is only *Chazal’s* insights into the Biblical text which would indicate that the **key** element in their dispute was religious hatred. The Rabbis based their interpretation on the verse [Devarim/Deuteronomy 26:5], ארמי אוֹבֵד אָבִי וִירַד מִצְרַיִם, “The Aramean wanted to destroy my father and he (Yaakov) migrated to Egypt.” The word אוֹבֵד puzzled the Rabbis. The present tense implies a continual process of destruction whose goal is to ensure that no remembrance of Jacob will remain. Thus, the Rabbis explain that Laban would have preferred that Jacob assimilate during his stay in Laban’s house – a gradual destruction, as it were. However, when Jacob decides to leave, Laban has no choice but genocide and thus the suddenness of his outburst: “I have the power to wreak evil upon all of you.” Had Laban been merely jealous of Jacob’s money as he ostensibly claimed, he would have had no desire to destroy all of the members of Jacob’s camp. But Laban in his desire to erase Jacob’s beliefs also wanted to eliminate all those who believed as Jacob did, as the Haggadah says, בָּקֵשׁ לַעֲקוֹר אֶת הַכֹּל, “He wished to uproot everything.” Laban would have been satisfied with nothing short of an absolute annihilation of Jacob – both physical and spiritual...

Lavan’s *desire* that Yaakov assimilate, accompanied by his hatred of Yaakov, is explained by the Netziv (below in Section III) as a paradox that is the very tool which God employs to prevent assimilation and keep the Jews focused on their mission.

Yaakov's fourteen-year stay with Lavan stretches to twenty, and God then tells him that the time has come for him to take his family and leave Charan, and to return to the land of Canaan. It is at this juncture that we find a third major reason for anti-Semitism: transgression. When Yaakov returns to the Land of Canaan from Lavan with his family, he prepares for a confrontation with Esav, from whom he had escaped after receiving the blessings from Yitzchak. Afraid of war, Yaakov divides his family into two camps so that if Esav were to annihilate one group, the second would survive. What is the cause of Yaakov's concern, especially since God had promised him protection prior to his return to Canaan?

**13. Maharal, Gur Aryeh, Bereishit 32:7 on Rashi 32:7 – Vulnerability from transgression.**

...Why should Yaakov fear Esav! In fact, God promised that Yaakov would be safe, as the verse says, "I will be with you and protect you" (Bereishit 28:15), and yet, now he was afraid. The Gemara explains (Berachot 4a, Sanhedrin 95b) that the reason that Yaakov was fearful was that [he feared that] perhaps he was now vulnerable to attack from Esav due to [his] transgressions.

... למה היה ירא יעקב, והלא הבטיחו הקב"ה שנאמר לעיל כח:טו "והנה אנכי עמך ושמרתיד", ועכשיו היה מתירא, ובגמרא מתרץ בפרק קמא דברכות ד. ובפרק חלק סנהדרין צח ע"ב (וכן פירש"י בסמוך) פסוק י, דלכך היה ירא - שמא יגרום החטא וכו'.

As we learned above, since Yaakov represents the Jewish people, and Esav is a paradigm for anti-Semitism by other nations, Yaakov is teaching us here that transgression can make us vulnerable to anti-Semitic expression.

Once back in Canaan, a massive regional famine sets in. Initially, there is enough food for Yaakov's family in contrast to their neighbors. Reminiscent of Avimelech's resentment of Yitzchak's power (Source 6 above), Yaakov tells his family not to call attention to their assets to prevent arousing jealousy from the Children of Yishmael and Esav.

**14. Bereishit 42:1 with Rashi citing Talmud Bavli Taanit 10b – Don't attract attention from your neighbors so they will not notice that you have food when they do not.**

Yaakov perceived that there was food in Egypt and said to his sons, "Why are you acting conspicuously?"

**Rashi:**

"Why do you appear before the Children of Yishmael and the Children of Esav as if you have plenty to eat?" – for at that time Yaakov's family still had grain.

וַיֵּרָא יַעֲקֹב כִּי יֵשׁ-שֹׁבֵר בְּמִצְרַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב לְבָנָיו לָמָּה תִתְרָאוּ:

**רש"י:**

למה תראו עצמכם בפני בני ישמעאל ובני עשו כאלו אתם שבעים, שבאותה שעה עדיין היה להם תבואה. (תענית י:)

Although flaunting wealth is not considered a principal cause of anti-Semitism among the (three) main reasons analyzed in the class, it is viewed as aggravating pre-existing anti-Semitism.

### Yaakov and Lavan

We conclude the discussion of *maaseh avot siman l'banim* with a look at Bilaam, the greatest non-Jewish prophet. He lived at the time of Moshe (Moses), and thus did not interact with the Avot. However, his profound jealousy of their greatness and legacy prompted a desire to curse the Jewish people. After the Jewish people received the Torah at Mount Sinai, they traveled in the desert for forty years, defeating the belligerent Amorite nations. Fearful of further Jewish conquest and aware that the Jews' strength lies in their spiritual connection to God, the nearby Moabite and Midianite nations enlisted the services of Bilaam to curse the Jews! An entire section of the Torah recounts the repeated attempts by Bilaam to imprecate the Jewish people.

### 15. Bamidbar (Numbers) 22:2-6 (ArtScroll Translation) – Bilaam is enlisted to curse the Jewish people.

Balak son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorite. Moab became very frightened of the [Jewish] people, because they were numerous, and Moab was disgusted in the face of the Children of Israel. Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now the congregation will lick up our entire surroundings, as an ox licks up the greenery of the field." Balak son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time.

He sent messengers to Bilaam son of Beor to Pethor, which is by the River of the land of the members of his people, to summon him, saying, "Behold! A nation has come out of Egypt; behold, it has covered the surface of the earth and it sits opposite me. So now, curse this people for me, for it is too powerful for me; perhaps I will be able to strike it and drive it away from the land. For I know that whomever you bless is blessed and whomever you curse is accursed."

וַיֵּרָא בָלָק בֶּן צְפּוֹר אֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יִשְׂרָאֵל  
לְאֻמּוֹת: וַיִּגְרַם מוֹאָב מִפְּנֵי הָעָם מְאֹד כִּי רַב הוּא  
וַיִּקְרַץ מוֹאָב מִפְּנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל: וַיֹּאמֶר מוֹאָב אֶל זִקְנָיו  
מִדִּין עֲתָה יִלְחָכוּ הַקָּהָל אֶת כָּל סְבִיבֹתֵינוּ בְּלַחֲוֹ  
הַשּׁוֹר אֶת יֶרֶק הַשָּׂדֶה וּבָלָק בֶּן צְפּוֹר מֶלֶךְ לְמוֹאָב  
בָּעֵת הַהוּא:

וַיִּשְׁלַח מְלָאכִים אֶל בָּלָעַם בֶּן בְּעוֹר פֶּתוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר  
עַל הַנָּהָר אֶרֶץ בְּנֵי עַמּוֹ לִקְרֹא לוֹ לֵאמֹר הִנֵּה עַם  
יֵצֵא מִמִּצְרַיִם הִנֵּה כִסָּה אֶת עֵין הָאָרֶץ וְהוּא יֹשֵׁב  
מִמְּלִי: וְעַתָּה לְכָה נָא אֲרָה לִי אֶת הָעָם הַזֶּה כִּי  
עָצוּם הוּא מִמֶּנִּי אוֹכֵל נֶפֶשׁ בּוֹ וַאֲגַרְשֵׁנוּ מִן  
הָאָרֶץ כִּי יִדְעֹתִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר תִּבְרָךְ מִבְּרַךְ וְאֲשֶׁר  
תָּאָר יוֹאָר:

Bilaam himself conceded that he actually aspired to live like the upright forefathers, revealing that his motivation to curse the Jewish people was due to jealousy.

## 16. **Netziv, Introduction to Sefer Bereishit – Jealousy drove Bilaam to curse the Jews.**

The first Book of the Torah is called “Bereishit” - Genesis. It is also referred to by the Prophets as the Book of the Upright as discussed in the Talmud (Avodah Zarah 25a): “Rabbi Yochanan explained this is the book of Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov who are called upright (moral/principled), [as Bilaam the prophet said (Bamidbar 23:10)], “If I would only die the death of the upright...!”

Bilaam prayed for himself that his destiny would be like the forefathers...

זה הספר הנקרא ספר בראשית. נקרא בפי הנביאים ספר הישר כדאיתא בגמ' עבודת כוכבים (כ"ה ע"א)...ומפרש ר' יוחנן זה ספר אברהם יצחק ויעקב שנקראו ישרים שנאמר תמות נפשי מות ישרים.

ובלעם התפלל על עצמו שיהא אחריתו כמו בעלי זה הכנוי...

The 16th century authority and kabbalist, Rabbi Chaim Vital (Otzrot Chaim, Shaar Ha'Orot Zayin, Ch. 2) writes that like Bilaam, Esav too was jealous of the spiritual aspirations and accomplishments of the Avot, and that is what drove his anti-Semitism.

We will now more fully explore the three major causes of anti-Semitism that were experienced by the forefathers: 1) hatred of the Jewish God, the Jewish people and Jewish values, 2) God using anti-Semitism as a tool to prevent assimilation and to keep the Jews focused on their mission and 3) widespread transgressions that make the Jewish people vulnerable and subject to hatred.

### KEY THEMES OF SECTION I

- ✧ Since the very beginning of Judaism, when Avraham discovered monotheism, there has been hatred towards Jews and the God they represent.
- ✧ King Nimrod was the first Jew-hater. As a champion of the rampant idolatry of that era, his abhorrence for Avraham's monotheistic claims was so intense that he sentenced him to death.
- ✧ Yishmael was the patriarch of the Yishmaelites, who eventually established Islam, a religion that has openly stated and exhibited its anti-Jewish sentiments.
- ✧ Esav, who hated Yaakov for receiving their father's blessing instead of himself, and his descendants are viewed as archetypical anti-Semites with whom the Jewish people eternally contend.
- ✧ Lavan is considered by the Pesach Haggadah as having sought to uproot the Jewish people. Like Esav, he was considered an archetype of anti-Semitism.
- ✧ Bilaam, considered the greatest prophet of the non-Jews, did not let his belief in God stop him from persistent attempts to curse the Jewish people.

## SECTION II. HATRED OF THE JEWISH GOD, THE JEWISH PEOPLE AND JEWISH VALUES

Of all of the explanations of anti-Semitism, the most fundamental throughout world history is nations hating the Jewish God, the Jewish people, and Jewish values.

1. **Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin, *Why the Jews*, pp. 6-7 – Judaism is the cause of anti-Semitism.**

Many answers [explaining anti-Semitism] have been offered by scholars. These include, most commonly, economic factors, the need for scapegoats, ethnic hatred, xenophobia, resentment of Jewish affluence and professional success, and religious bigotry. But ultimately these factors do not explain anti-Semitism; they only explain what factors have *exacerbated* it and caused it to erupt in a given circumstance. None accounts for the universality, depth, and persistence of anti-Semitism...

The very consistency of the passions Jews have aroused demands a consistent explanation. Ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, medieval and many modern Christians and Muslims, and Nazis and Communists have perhaps only one thing in common: they have all, at some point, counted the Jews as their enemy, often their greatest enemy. Why?

...Contrary to modern understanding of anti-Semitism, the age-old Jewish understanding of anti-Semitism does posit a universal explanation for Jew-hatred: Judaism, meaning the Jews' God, laws, peoplehood, and claim to being chosen. The historical record, as we shall show, confirms the traditional Jewish view that the Jews were hated because of Jewish factors. Modern attempts to deJudaize Jew-hatred, to attribute it to economic, social, and political factors, and universalize it into merely another instance of bigotry, are as opposed to the facts of Jewish history as they are to the historical Jewish understanding of anti-Semitism.

In effect, an attack on the Jewish people is inherently an attack on the Jewish God and Jewish values. In Biblical Egypt, Pharaoh subjects the Jews to oppressive slave labor and decrees infanticide for all baby boys. (See Shemot [Exodus] 1:7-16.) Pharaoh defiantly resists freeing the Jewish nation after successive plagues when his own countrymen observed, "It is the finger of God!" (Ibid. 8:15). Yet Pharaoh's attitude remains, "Who is God that I should listen to Him and send out Israel? (Shemot 5:2)"

Such hatred is further seen just after God miraculously takes the Jewish people out of Egypt after ten plagues, splits the Reed Sea and drowns the powerful Egyptian army in pursuit. While the surrounding nations are overwhelmed by fear, one nation called Amalek attacks the Jewish people. So wicked was their brazen denial of God that the Torah declares that this nation must be destroyed.

2. **Devarim 25:17-19 – Following the Exodus from Egypt, Amalek attacked the Jewish people. We are commanded to remember the deeds of Amalek and to wipe out this nation.**

Remember what Amalek did to you by the way, when you came forth out of Egypt; how he happened upon you by the way, and struck at your rear, all who were feeble behind you, when you were faint and weary; and he did not fear God. Therefore, it shall be, when the Lord your God has given you rest from all your enemies around, in the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance to possess it, that you shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven – you shall not forget!

זְכוֹר אֶת אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה לְךָ עֲמָלֵק בַּדֶּרֶךְ בְּצֵאתְךָ מִמִּצְרָיִם: אֲשֶׁר קָרָךְ בַּדֶּרֶךְ וַיִּזְנֹב בְּךָ כָּל הַנֶּחֱשָׁלִים אַחֲרֶיךָ וְאַתָּה עֵיף וְיָגֵעַ וְלֹא יָרָא אֱלֹהִים: וְהָיָה בְּהִנָּיִחַ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְךָ מִכָּל אִיְבֶיךָ מִסָּבִיב בָּאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לְךָ נַחֲלָה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ תִּמְחָה אֶת זִכְרֵוֹ (זְכוֹר) עֲמָלֵק מִתַּחַת הַשָּׁמַיִם לֹא תִשְׁכַּח:

The Netziv traces Amalek's hatred back to Nimrod, the very king who sought to kill Avraham for protesting idol worship and introducing monotheism and Judaism to the world.

3. **Netziv, Shemot 17:14 – Amalek, like Nimrod, despised Divine intervention in the world.**

How can we understand the expression [Shemot 17:14], "I (God) shall surely wipe out the memory of Amalek"? Is the intention to wipe out the memory of the Kingdom of Amalek? How are we to relate to this mitzvah of remembering, which was established for all generations, after this evil kingdom has already been erased from the world? Even if there are a few remaining progeny from the nation, what would be the point? And if the intention is to forget their name or memory, this is impossible since the Torah is eternal and their name is written there!

Rather, wiping out the memory of Amalek refers to the philosophy they introduced to the world. It is clear that Amalek must have had a special reason for provoking the Jewish nation. After all, it must have been clear to them that Israel would not be easily vanquished. Furthermore, Amalek had no

וגם ענין שים באזני יהושע אינו מבואר. אבל מתחלקים לבאר גוף המאמר כי מחה אמה את זכר עמלק אם הכונה למלכות עמלק. על מה קבעו חז"ל מצות זכירה זו לדורות אחר שכבר נמחית מלכות הרשעה זו מן העולם. ואם אפילו יש איזה אנשים מזרע אומה זו בעולם מה זה ענין. ואם הכונה שיהא נשכח שמו וזכרו זה א"א כלל שהרי התורה נצחית והיא מזכרתו.

אלא ע"כ הכונה תעודת עמלק בעולם דזה ברור שלא לחינם התגרה עמלק עם ישראל אשר בלי ספק לא נעלם ממנו כי לא בנקל יהי' יוכל לו והלא מתעבר על ריב לא לו אלא משום שראשית גויים עמלק כדבר בלעם בעת הופע עליו אור רוח"ק, וע"כ אין הכונה שהיא האומה היותר מצלחת ומאושרת בעולם שהרי מעולם לא היה עמלק



previous quarrel with Israel. But, as Bilaam expressed in his prophecy [Bamidbar 24:20], “Amalek is the first among the nations.” This does not mean that they are the most successful or wealthiest nation, for Amalek was in fact an insignificant nation.

Rather the matter is similar to that of the war of Amraphel (Nimrod) and his allies against Avraham Avinu as explained in my commentary on Genesis. Amalek knew that the Jewish people would be the focal point of Divine justice; they would introduce the principles of Divine intervention in human affairs on the basis of one's actions. From the time the Jewish people left Egypt they were ready to receive the Torah. This greatly disturbed the other nations, especially Amalek, since they are viewed as the “first among the nations” or archetype of seething haters of Divine intervention in the world.

And God promised that the time will arrive when the memory of Amalek will be blotted out; meaning that their goal – a world run by nature, bereft of Divine involvement in response to one's actions – will be obliterated. This wish will be forgotten from among the nations. Then God will reign as the King of the world in the Messianic era, may it arrive speedily in our days.

כ"א ממלכה שפלה.

אלא הענין דכמו שהיה מלחמת אמרפל וחבריו על א"א ביחוד כמו שנתבאר מדיוק המקראות בס' בראשית והוא משום שידעו שעל ידו נעשה עין משפט היינו להוריד השגחה עליונה ע"פ המעשים כך מאז יצאו ישראל ממצרים ומוכן היה לקבל את התורה הרע לאוה"ע ביותר ועמלק הוא ראשית גויים השונא את ההשגחה תכלית שנאה.

והבטיח הקב"ה כי תגיע שעה שימחה זכר עמלק היינו תכלית תעודתו שתהיה הליכות הטבע חפשי בלי השגחה לפי מעשים, זה הרצון יהי נשכח מאוה"ע והיה ה' למלך על כל הארץ וזה ימות המשיח שיגיע ב"ב.

All wars fought by heathens against the Jews are essentially embracing the philosophy of Amalek to fight against God and Divine values, despite any outward rationalizations.

4. **Rabbi Aharon Kotler, Mishnas Rabbi Aaron, Vol. III, pg. 77 – All wars and persecutions of Jews are fights against God.**

It is written (Shemot 17:16): “God wages a war against Amalek from generation to generation.” This war is for all generations until the world reaches its ultimate perfection under the sovereignty of God,

כתיב (שמות י"ז ט"ז) מלחמה לד' בעמלק מדור דור. המלחמה בכל הדורות עד זמן התיקון הכללי שיהא השם שלם והכסא שלם כשימחה זרע של עמלק, ואז, והיה ד' למלך על כל הארץ (זכריה י"ד ט'), כל המלחמות והרדיפות על כלל ישראל

when the progeny of Amalek will be wiped out. "At that time God will be King over the entire world" (Zechariah 14:9). All wars and persecutions against the Jewish people are related to the war against Amalek, for their war is directed against Heaven and against the Jewish people since they are the nation of God.

הם מסוג מלחמתו של עמלק, כי המלחמה היא כלפי מעלה ועל ישראל מצד שהם עם ד'.

5. **Midrash, Exodus Rabbah 51:5 – The nations wish to fight against God.**

To what are the idolaters [nations of the world] comparable? They are similar to a man who hated the king, and wished to overpower him, but was unable to. What did he do? He went to one of the officers, and attempted to defeat him...Likewise, the idolaters come to battle against God, but they are unable to, so they fight instead against the nation of Israel.

למה העובדי כוכבים דומין לאדם שהיה שונא למלך והיה מבקש לשלוט בו ולא היה יכול. מה עשה הלך אצל אנדריאנטוס ובקש להפילו... כך העובדי כוכבים באים להתגרות בהקב"ה ואינם יכולין והם באין ומתגרין עם ישראל.

When the Jews, and the Jews alone, received the Torah and became irrevocably the main vessels of God's Revelation, hatred for them became a fixed part of our world. Nations that have attacked the Jews through the ages ostensibly claim that they have some quarrel with them. But like the man in the Midrash, their quarrel is actually with the "King." One brief statement in the Talmud encapsulates the essential reason for anti-Semitism:

6. **Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 89a – The giving of the Torah is the main cause for anti-Semitism.**

Why is it [that mountain on which the Torah was given] called *Sinai*? Because hatred (*sinah*) [for the Jews] descended there upon the Gentiles.

מאי הר סיני? שירדה שנאה לעכו"ם עליו.

7. **Iyun Yaakov, Ein Yaakov, Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 89a – Jews are hated on account of Torah study and mitzvot.**

This does not mean that the non-Jews were hated...rather it means that the non-Jews hate us, as it is written in the Midrash. It is on account of the Torah we study and the mitzvot that we fulfill that they hate us more than any other nation...

אין הכוונה שעו"כ שנאים... אלא ה"פ שירדה שנאה דהיינו שהם שונאים אותנו כדאיתא במדרש בשביל התורה והמצוות שאנו מקיימין הם שונאים אותנו יותר מכל האומות...

8. **Rabbi Yeshayahu Shteinberger, in Hadarom, Elul 5755, pg. 116 – Sinai is the root of anti-Semitism.**

The special relationship of our Father in Heaven with Israel is the main cause of anti-Semitism. “Why is it [Mount Sinai] called Sinai? For from there descended hatred for Israel” (Talmud, Shabbat 89a, b). It is no coincidence that the same Torah of Sinai that gives us our separate status as a “nation of priests and a holy people” (Shemot 19:6) is simultaneously the root of anti-Semitism.

היחס המיוחד של אבינו שבשמים לישראל הוא גורם השנאה העיקרי. למה נקרא שמו סיני שמשם ירדה שנאה לעם ישראל. לא במקרה מעמד הר סיני המעניק לנו את מעמדנו הנבדל כ"ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש" הוא גם השורש לאנטישמיות.

9. **Rabbi Yoel Schwartz and Rabbi Yitzchak Goldstein, Ha-Shoah, pg. 227 – Eternal hatred for a holy nation.**

Anti-Semitism is not a rational phenomenon. It is an eternal hatred for the eternal nation, a hatred that has no logic or reason, based on the essential nature of the Jews as a holy nation: “[It is called] Sinai, for from there descended hatred for Israel.” We should not, therefore, be surprised to find [anti-Semitism] even among the best of nations.

האנטישמיות אינה תופעה רציונאלית היא שנאת עולם לעם עולם שנאה בלתי מוסברת ובלתי הגיונית הנובעת מעצם מהותו כעם קדוש "סיני ששם ירדה שנאה לישראל" ואל לנו לתמוה על הופעתה גם בקרב המתוקנות שבאומות.

10. **Ernest van den Haag (social psychologist), The Jewish Mystique, pp. 60-61 – Jews suffer from “their own invention.”**

Fundamental to anti-Semitism...though seldom explicit and conscious, is hostility to the Jewish belief in one God, a belief to which anti-Semites very reluctantly converted and which they never ceased to resist. Anti-Semitism is one form this resistance takes. Those who originated this burdensome religion—and yet rejected the version to which the Gentiles were converted—easily became the target of the resentment. One cannot dare to be hostile to one's all-powerful God. But one can be to those who generated Him, to whom He revealed Himself and who caused others to accept Him.

The Jewish God Himself is invisible and unrepresentable; even unmentionable, a power beyond imagination, a law beyond scrutiny. He is universal, holding power over everybody and demanding obedience and worship from all. Nonetheless, He entered history and listened to, argued with and chose the Jews—and the Jews alone... No wonder they are the target of all those who resent His domination...

Most unpleasant, their invisible God not only insisted on being the one and only and all-powerful God—Creator and Lord of everything and the only rightful claimant to worship—He also developed into a moral God...

The Jews have suffered from their own invention ever since; but they have never given it up, for it is, after all, what makes the Jews Jewish.

Another illustration of anti-Semitism directed against God and Jewish observance was by the Syrian-Greeks during the Second Temple Period.

11. **Rabbi Chaim Friedlander, Siftei Chaim, Vol. II, pg. 57 – The Greeks decreed that the Jews should renounce their relationship with God.**

... The purpose of the Greeks' decrees was to darken and conceal the image of the Jewish people as the Chosen Nation, holy to God, treasured and different from all other nations. For this reason they decreed that the Jews could not perform circumcision or observe Shabbat, as these mitzvot are signs of the covenant between God and His nation, sanctifying their bodies to God (through circumcision) and time (through Shabbat). The Greeks instituted these laws to nullify the greatness of the Jews and make them equal to other nations.

...הכוונה שמטרת היוונים בגזירותיהם היתה להחשיך ולכסות את המראה והתדמית של עם ישראל כעם סגולה קדוש לה', הנבחר והשונה מכל העמים. לכן גזרו על המילה והשבת (כמבואר במגילת אנטיוכוס) שהן אות ברית בין השי"ת לישראל עמו, המקדשים לה' את גוף האדם - המילה, ואת הזמן - השבת. את זאת עשו היוונים כדי לבטל את מעלתם של ישראל ולהשוותם לכל העמים.

12. **Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur, Vol. II, pg. 459 – The Greeks aimed to detach the Jewish people from tradition, from holiness, and from being the Chosen People.**

The Jewish exile by the Greeks darkened the eyes of the Jews [it obscured their ability to have clarity of understanding]. Not only did the Greeks enact many decrees against the Jews in order to have them forget the Torah and bring darkness upon them, but they also wanted to prevent the Jews from observing God's laws and to take away their status of being the Chosen Nation so that they should become "free" and assimilate. This would undermine the essence of the holy nation!

גלות התורה ביוון החשיכה עיני ישראל. די בגזירות להשכיחם תורה כדי להחשיך להם. ועוד זאת שהתכוונו להעבירם מחוקי רצונו יתברך ולדחותם מלהיות העם הנבחר להיות בני חורין ו"מתעלים" - הרי זה פוגע בעצם מהותה של האומה הקדושה!

We are most painfully aware of how this hatred has impacted the generations of our grandparents and parents, and even our own:

13. **Adolf Hitler, quoted in Hitler Speaks, by Hermann Rauschning – The modern incarnation of Amalek.**

The Jews have inflicted two wounds on mankind – circumcision on its body and conscience on its soul. They are Jewish inventions...I am freeing humanity from the shackles of the soul, from the degrading suffering caused by the false vision called conscience and ethics... The struggle for world domination will be fought entirely between us, between the Germans and the Jews. All else is facade and illusion.

14. **Jacques Maritain, A Christian Looks at the Jewish Question, pp. 29-30, 1939 (quoted in Why the Jews, pg. 198) – Anti-Semitism stems from Jewish morality.**

Israel...is to be found at the very heart of the World's structure, stimulating it, exasperating it, moving it. Like an alien body, like an activating ferment injected into the mass, it gives the world no peace, it bars slumber, it teaches the world to be discontented and restless as long as the world has not God, it stimulates the movement of history...It is the vocation of Israel which the world hates.

## KEY THEMES OF SECTION II

- ⌘ The most fundamental explanation for anti-Semitism throughout world history is nations hating the Jewish God, the Jewish people, and Jewish values.
- ⌘ Pharaoh could not tolerate the idea that there is a power greater than his. He represents the anti-Semitism of those who cannot submit themselves to God and cannot bear the Jewish stance on God's supremacy.
- ⌘ Following the Jewish people's miraculous delivery from Egypt after the ten plagues and drowning of the mighty Egyptian army in the Reed Sea, they were brazenly attacked by the Amalek nation. Amalek's hatred was so intense, they were willing to start up with the Jews and enter a war they knew they would lose.
- ⌘ All wars fought by heathens against the Jews are essentially embracing the philosophy of Amalek to fight against God and Divine values.
- ⌘ Anti-Semitism is described by the Talmud as rooted in the giving of the Torah, hence Divine values, at Mt. Sinai.
- ⌘ Towards the end of the Second Temple Period, the Greeks aimed to detach the Jewish people from tradition, holiness, and from being the Chosen People.
- ⌘ Hitler sought to annihilate the Jews for having "inflicted two wounds on mankind – circumcision on its body and conscience on its soul."

## SECTION III. TOOL FOR ENSURING THAT THE JEWS CARRY OUT THEIR MISSION

Until now we have discussed the idea that anti-Semitism is a result of 1) the principle of *maaseh avot siman l'banim* (the paradigm established by the behavior of anti-Semitism towards the forefathers) and 2) the Jews' connection to the idea of God and His Law. Another essential principle in grasping the Torah's view of the nature of anti-Semitism is that **God uses anti-Semitism to ensure that the Jewish nation keeps to its mission.**

There are many sources explaining this idea, but for the sake of convenience, let us return to the Netziv's discussion.

1. **"The Remnant of Israel," in Oraissa, by Rabbi Moshe Meiselman, based on the Netziv pp. 36-37 – The story of Yaakov and Lavan, the prototype for exile, shows that at some point anti-Semitism will stop assimilation.**

In viewing Laban as the prototype of anti-Semitism, one must distinguish between two differing types of anti-Semitism. Laban typifies only one specific form. Both types must be analyzed and understood in terms of the unique nature of Jewish history... [One] type is where the Jews live in proximity to their neighbors in the exile. Initially, they are invited to become one with them and to shed all differences. Gradually, some Jews become convinced that under such hospitable circumstances there is no longer a necessity to maintain religious practices that separate them from their neighbors. The lesson from Laban is that the Jew must remember that this hospitality is not permanent: In each land, circumstances will arise that will turn the gentile's love and hospitality to hatred and persecution. However, while this hatred is permanent, השגחה – divine guidance of history – determines when it emerges.

Besides his analysis of the story of Lavan, the Netziv rereads the crucial paragraph from the Haggadah (Section I, Source 10 above) as actually saying that anti-Semitism is the key to the miraculous survival of the Jews' survival as a distinct nation. (*"For it is not just one individual who rose against us to annihilate us, but in every single generation people rise up against us to annihilate us, and the Holy One, Blessed is He, saves us from their hands."*) The Netziv does not read this passage with the simple understanding that God's promise has stood up for us against the hatred of the gentiles for all the generations. Rather, he explains that the hatred of the nations and God's stepping in to protect us from full destruction in all the generations is what has stood up for us in maintaining our separate identity.

2. **Ibid., pp. 38-39 – The Haggadah teaches that anti-Semitism saves us from assimilation.**

The Haggadah tells us: "And God said to Abraham, 'Know that your children shall be strangers in a land not their own, and they will be enslaved and persecuted four hundred years. And I shall judge the people who enslaves them and they shall then go



out with great wealth.' And this has enabled us and our forefathers to survive – that not just one has stood up to destroy us but that in each generation they stand up to destroy us and God saves us from their hands. Let us learn from what Laban attempted..."

But, what does it mean to say that the secret of Jewish survival is, paradoxically, the desire to destroy the Jewish people? To understand this we must first understand how we are supposed to relate to the exile. When God told Abraham that his descendants would dwell in exile, He said **וְגֵר הָיָה זֶרַעְךָ**, "Your seed will be strangers." Jewish national destiny is to dwell among the nations but to remain unique and distinct. Accordingly, the Haggadah highlights the biblical statement about Jacob **וַיֵּגֶר שָׁם** "and he sojourned there." Jacob did not intend to become rooted in Egypt but merely to spend time there, as a guest, as a stranger. This was not due to a lack of hospitality on the part of Pharaoh or the Egyptian people. Jacob and his sons were free to become citizens. Rather, it was Jacob's choice to remain a stranger. Jacob's goal was that he and his sons should remain separate. Indeed this is Moshe Rabbeinu's blessing to the Jewish people, "And Israel shall dwell securely, separate, in accord with the vision of Jacob..."

For his part, Joseph insisted that his brethren dwell separately in Goshen. During his lifetime he did not allow them to leave and they dwelt with the Egyptians in harmony. After his death we are told, "And the land was filled with them." The lines of demarcation were eroded. Indeed, the Midrash records that, as they spread through Egypt, their stated goal was to be as the Egyptians. The most immediate consequence to this decision was the cessation of the practice of circumcision, that physically defining aspect of Israel's covenant with God.

The response to the Jews' desire to assimilate, the Midrash tells us, was a growing hatred of them by the Egyptians. The process of intermingling that resulted in an attempt to adopt non-Jewish customs and finally in a rejection of God's covenant is what ultimately caused Egyptian anti-Semitism.

There is one crucial *Chazal* (quote from our Sages) from which the Netziv, among many others, learned that attempts to assimilate will actually cause greater anti-Semitism.

### 3. **Yalkut Shimoni, Shemot Ch. 1, 162 – Assimilation Causes Anti-Semitism.**

*And the land was filled with them...* Another understanding: They [the Jews] filled the theaters and the circuses. Immediately [the Egyptians] made enactments that the Jews separate from them. *And a new king arose over Egypt* – Rabbi Abba Bar Kahana said, "Was he a new king? Rather he enacted new and harsh decrees upon them."

ילקוט שמעוני (שמות - פרק א - המשך רמז קס"ב)

וּתְמַלֵּא הָאָרֶץ אוֹתָם ... דָּבָר אַחֵר שֶׁנִּתְמַלְאוּ בְּתֵי טְרַיָּאוֹת וּבְתֵי קִרְקַסְיָאוֹת מֵהֶם. מִיָּד גָּזְרוּ עֲלֵיהֶם שִׁפְרָשׁוֹ מֵהֶן. וַיָּקָם מֶלֶךְ חָדָשׁ עַל מִצְרַיִם אָמַר רַבִּי אֲבָא בַר כַּהֲנָא וְכִי מֶלֶךְ חָדָשׁ הָיָה אֵלָּא שֶׁחָדָשׁ עֲלֵיהֶם גְּזִירוֹת שֶׁל פּוֹרְעָנוֹת.

4. **“The Remnant of Israel,” in Oraissa, by Rabbi Moshe Meiselman, pg. 39 – A general rule: If the Jews do not separate themselves to fulfill their unique task, they will be separated in far harsher ways.**

In the same vein the Talmud (Sanhedrin 104a) tells us that the desolation of the Jewish people is always due to their refusal to remain separate.

איכה ישבה בדד (Eicha/Lamentations: 1:1) Rabbah in the name of Rav Yochanan said, “I, God, said that Israel should dwell securely according to the vision of Jacob.” Now that they have rejected this, let the city dwell desolate.

The above Talmudic statement informs us that as a consequence of their rejection of this mission, the nations of the world have forced them to dwell apart. In this way Israel is saved from herself.

This is also the content of Bilaam’s prophecy: they are a nation, that when alone, dwell securely, but when they try to be accepted by the nations of the world – on those nations’ terms, will never be respected. Israel is respected by the world only as the bearer of a moral message and mission. When that is rejected, and to the degree that it is, Israel brings upon herself the contempt of the nations around her.

God has endowed various aspects of creation with distinct purposes and goals. The rejection of a national or personal mission is viewed in the most serious terms. Divine retribution is the means by which God guarantees that the ultimate purpose of creation be attained, as was seen during widespread moral breakdown, such as: the flood in the times of Noah, the generation of the tower of Babel, and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Just as this principle applies to the realm of general human society, so too is it valid vis-a- vis the special mission of the Jewish people. Their Divine election, dating from the Revelation at Sinai, gave the Jewish people the capacity and obligation to correct humanity and to teach and demonstrate to it the nature of human perfection – belief in one God and proper behavior. Isaiah described this mission in the verse, “I have formed you with a unique nature and made a covenant with you so that you will be a light to the nations of the world.” As long as we continue to fulfill our national purpose, God will protect and reward us, thereby helping us to fulfill that very purpose.

### KEY THEMES OF SECTION III

- ⌘ Another essential principle in grasping the nature of anti-Semitism is that God uses anti-Semitism to ensure that the Jewish nation keeps to its mission.
- ⌘ One source for this principle is the Hagaddah, *For it is not just one individual who rose against us to annihilate us, but in every single generation people rise up against us to annihilate us, and the Holy One, Blessed is He, saves us from their hands.*

- ⌘ The Netziv explains that the above passage means that both the hatred of the nations and God's stepping in to protect us from full destruction in all the generations is what has stood up for us in maintaining our separate identity.
- ⌘ Attempts to assimilate will actually cause greater anti-Semitism. The desolation of the Jewish people is always due to their refusal to remain separate.
- ⌘ Israel is respected by the world only as the bearer of a moral message and mission. When that is rejected, and to the degree that it is, Israel brings upon herself the contempt of the nations around her.

## SECTION IV. CONSEQUENCE OF PERVASIVE JEWISH TRANSGRESSION

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In addition to the causes of anti-Semitism mentioned thus far (1. hatred of God, Jewish values and the Jewish people as representatives of God and 2. God's using it as a tool to insure the Jewish nation stay in line with their mission), we will now explore how it can arise because of Jewish transgression. Anti-Semitism may occur because the Jews themselves abrogated their relationship with God, either by transgressing central mitzvot between God and the Jewish people or between fellow Jews.

We discussed the source that transgression creates vulnerability to anti-Semitism from other nations based on the principle of *maaseh avot siman l'banim*, from the "halachah" that Esav hates Yaakov. We also made mention of Yaakov dividing his camp into two, fearing an attack based on the possibility that any transgressions made him vulnerable, as discussed above in Section I, Source 13.

As we learned above, since Yaakov represents the Jewish people, and Esav is a paradigm for anti-Semitism expressed by other nations, Yaakov is teaching us that transgression makes us vulnerable to anti-Semitism.

In addition to Yaakov, we also derive this principle from Amalek who attacked the Jewish nation soon after crossing the Reed Sea. Even though we learned above in Section II that Amalek attacked the Jewish nation because they represented God and His values, yet the Midrash reveals that the actual *causative* factor that enabled Amalek's attack was a pervasive Jewish shortcoming.

1. **Rabbi Chaim Friedlander, Siftei Chaim, Moadim Vol. II, pg. 166 – Amalek attacked the Jewish nation due to their lack of appreciation for Torah and its holiness.**

How was it possible for Amalek to challenge the Jewish people at the height of their success? We learn this from the comment of the Sages on the verse, "And Amalek came and battled Israel at Rephidim (Shemot 1

הכיצד התאפשר לעמלק להתגרות בישראל בהיותם בשיא הצלחתם, זאת נלמד מדברי חז"ל על הפסוק "ויבוא עמלק וילחם עם ישראל ברפידים" (שמות יז, ח), ברפידים - על שרפו ידיהם מדברי תורה. וצריך להבין, מהי המידה

7:8) – “The location “Rephidim” is highlighted to teach the reason why Amalek attacked at that place – because Israel weakened in their Torah study\* (Mechilta). One needs to understand: what is the direct causality here that a slackening in Torah study would enable the malevolent Amalekites to attack the Jewish nation?

The explanation is that the Jew’s weakened Torah study indicated disrespect for Torah, leading to slackening. This disrespect flowed from a lack of appreciation for the tremendous importance of Torah and the insufficient awareness of its holiness; the consequence was their sluggishness towards Torah. Therefore, the direct causality was that they were punished by the brazenness of Amalek, who do not acknowledge at all the value of holiness and whose entire aspiration and goal is to completely uproot and totally remove these values.

כנגד מידה של רפיון בלימוד, המאפשר לעמלק, שתכונתו זלזול, לפגוע בעם ישראל.

הביאור הוא: רפו ידהם בתורה -- היינו זלזול שגרם לרפיון בתורה, זלזול שנבע מאי הערכת חשיבותה הנעלה של התורה, ואי הכרה מספקת בקדושתה, והתוצאה מכך רפיון בתורה. ולכן “מידה כנגד מידה” נענשו באמצעות חוצפת עמלק שאינו מכיר כלל בערך הקדושה, וכל שאיפתו ומגמתו לעקור ולסלק לגמרי ערכים אלו.

\*Soon after crossing the Reed Sea at Marah, God gave the Jewish people three comprehensive areas of Torah law to study (*Mishpatim* - social ordinances, laws of Shabbat, and the *Parah Adumah* - Red Heifer) prior to Mount Sinai. The name Rephidim is interpreted as a contraction of the words רפו ידיהם, “they loosened their hands,” i.e., they loosened their grip on Torah study.

Another illustration of transgression leading to anti-Semitism is the Purim story which took place in Persia between the destruction of the First Temple and the rebuilding of the Second Temple, as recounted in Megillat Esther. Haman with the backing of King Achashverosh sought to exterminate world Jewry. The Talmud searches for an explanation for such a catastrophic edict.

## 2. **Talmud Bavli, Megillah 12a incorporating selected commentaries of Rashi, Maharsha and Rif in English translation – Why there was a decree to annihilate the Jews.**

Disciples asked Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, “Why did the Jews in that generation deserve to be annihilated?” He said to them, “You tell me.” They responded, “Since they enjoyed the banquet Achashverosh held to show that the Beit HaMikdash (Temple)

שאלו תלמידיו את רשב"י מפני מה נתחייבו שונאיהן של ישראל שבאותו הדור כליה? אמר להם אמרו אתם. אמרו לו מפני שנהנו מסעודתו של אותו רשע. אם כן שבשושן יהרגו שבכל העולם כולו אל יהרגו?

would not be rebuilt and that God had forsaken the Jews.” Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai replied, “If that’s the case, only the Jews in Shushan who went to the banquet should have been killed; why was the decree to kill Jews worldwide?”

The students said, “You tell us the answer.” He responded, “They bowed down to an idol during the reign of Nebuchadnezzar who destroyed the First Temple\*.” The students inquired, “So, why wasn’t the edict fulfilled?” He replied, “The Jews only bowed down outwardly from fear of death from Nebuchadnezzar, but without real inner conviction. Similarly, God only enabled Haman and Achashverosh to frighten the Jews to repent, but never intended to allow their annihilation...

אמרו לו אמור אתה. אמר להם מפני שהשתחוו  
לצלם. אמרו לו וכי משוא פנים יש בדבר? אמר  
להם הם לא עשו אלא לפנים אף הקב"ה לא עשה  
עמהן אלא לפנים...

\*The Rif [Ein Yaakov, Megillah 12a] writes that the edict resulted from a combination of episodes: the Jews enjoying Achashverosh’s banquet in Shushan and bowing down to Haman who wore an idol, which in turn recalled the transgression of bowing down to Nebuchadnezzar’s idol.

Here too one can point to a combination of two factors that caused anti-Semitism: Haman descends from Amalek who (as discussed above) detests God and the Jewish people, yet the door only opened to his evil schemes through the shortcomings of the Jewish people.

The Netziv discusses transgressions that led to anti-Semitism expressed by Babylonia and Rome, the nations that destroyed the First and Second Temples, respectively. Whereas one might think these are additional examples of overt anti-Semitism, he guides us away from being overly simplistic. These nations were engaged in normal forces of history – territorial conquest and ambition; yet the Talmud informs us that the essential triggers were Jewish national transgressions.

### 3. **“The Remnant of Israel,” in Oraissa, by Rabbi Moshe Meiselman, pp. 36-37 – Widespread Jewish transgressions led to the destruction of the First and Second Temples.**

The [third] type of anti-Semitism [in addition to those represented by Amalek and Laban discussed above - Ed.] is that exemplified by Babylonia and Rome, nations that were bent on world conquest and confronted the Jewish people among many nations that they wanted to conquer. On a level of simple historical understanding, this type of anti-Semitism does not require analysis. The overt reasons are ones of conquest, power and wealth.

Even here an explanation is required. For although on a level of simple historical explanation, Babylonia and Rome treated Israel as they would any other nation, and hence could not even be classified as anti-Semitic, there are serious theological undertones to these conquests as well. The Sages insisted that the real causation lay within Israel's misdeeds and these nations' antagonisms to Israel's beliefs. The overt reasons of conquest, power and wealth are not really adequate for an understanding of Jewish history. Jewish history operates on a different plane.

Babylonia and Rome were bent on world conquest. Israel apparently occupied no special place in their plans. Israel was simply part of the world they wanted to rule. Yet, the verse says: "Why did God do this to the land?" and proceeds to explain the conquest of the Land of Israel by the Babylonians in terms of the failings of the Jewish people. Similarly the Rabbis said the First Temple was destroyed due to idolatry, murder and immorality; the Second Temple because of causeless hatred [among Jews - Ed.]. Those outside forces (conquest, power and wealth), ostensibly the causes of destruction, are not listed at all.

This statement of the Netziv provides us with a good principle regarding anti-Semitism. Whatever surface reasons we may find, the crucial issue is for what purpose God is using it.

An additional example of the consequence of widespread transgressions is the Syrian-Greek occupation and decrees towards the end of the Second Temple Period. As mentioned above in Section II, although the Syrian-Greeks held great contempt for Judaism, the only reason God *allowed* them to enforce anti-Semitic decrees was pervasive Jewish transgression. No matter what the Greek political or ideological motives may have been, ultimately it was not they who were calling the shots.

4. **Rabbi Yoel Sirkis (Bach), on Tur Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim, 670 – Laxity toward Jewish service in the Beit HaMikdash.**

On Chanukah, the main reason for the decree upon the Jews was that they were lax in their service of God in the Beit HaMikdash (Temple). Accordingly, the Heavenly Decree was to take away the Temple Service from them...

אבל בחנוכה עיקר הגזירה היתה על שהתרשלו  
בעבודה וע"כ היתה הגזירה לבטל מהם  
העבודה....

5. **Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur, Vol. II, pg. 456 – The Greek decrees corresponded directly to their causes.**

We have gained a new clarity: Decrees do not come without reason! The decrees came measure for measure: If there had been no weakening in their Divine Service, there would have been no decree by the Greeks...

פנים חדשות ראינו כאן: גזירות אינן באות בלי  
סיבה! והגזירה באה במידה כנגד מידה: אם לא  
היתה איזו התרשלות בעבודה - לא היו גזירות  
היוונים.



Now that we have seen the three essential causes for anti-Semitism – 1) hatred or jealousy of God, the Jewish people and Jewish values, 2) its function as a Divine tool to ensure the Jews carry out their mission and prevent assimilation and 3) a consequence of pervasive or national Jewish transgression – is there anything we can do to eradicate its seemingly endless grip?

#### KEY THEMES OF SECTION IV

- ⌘ Anti-Semitism can occur because the Jews themselves abrogated their relationship with God, either by transgressing central mitzvot between God and the Jewish people or between fellow Jews.
- ⌘ The source for the concept that transgression creates vulnerability to anti-Semitism is based on the principle of *maaseh avot siman l'banim*: 1) from the “halachah” that Esav hates Yaakov and 2) by Yaakov dividing his camp into two, fearing an attack based on the possibility that any transgressions made him vulnerable to Esav.
- ⌘ Ostensibly, Amalek attacked the Jewish nation because they represented God and His values. The Midrash reveals that the actual causative factor that enabled Amalek’s attack was the Jewish nation’s lack of appreciation for Torah and its holiness.
- ⌘ Another illustration of how transgression can lead to anti-Semitism is the Purim story. When the Jews in Shushan bowed down to Nebuchadnezzar’s idol, the decree to annihilate the Jews was initiated, but it was only finalized when the Jews enjoyed Achashverosh’s banquet.
- ⌘ Babylonia and Rome destroyed the First and Second Temples, respectively. The Talmud informs us that the essential triggers were Jewish national transgressions.
- ⌘ Although the Syrian-Greeks held great contempt for Judaism, the only reason God allowed them to enforce anti-Semitic decrees was the Jews’ laxity in their Divine Service.

### SECTION V. IS THERE ANYTHING TO DO TO ERADICATE ANTI-SEMITISM?

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The question of how best to react to anti-Semitism has engaged many generations of Jewish thinkers and laymen alike. For millennia, the response of Judaism to anti-Semitism was simply to bear the load. Confrontation was avoided, bribes were used wherever possible, and, if nothing helped, Jews simply tried to ride the waves of hatred and violence that came their way.

Throughout history, one way to escape, with the exception of the Nazi model, was conversion to the majority faith. This, of course, hands a definite victory to anti-Semitism, for it implies the destruction of Judaism. On a national or even group level, such conversion was never considered an option, and it has been a historical rarity even on an individual level.

In recent centuries, modernizing Jews hoped that assimilating into the Gentile society, without necessarily denying Jewish identity, would terminate anti-Semitism. The European experience of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries put a definite end to such hopes. In spite of highly “successful” assimilation in such countries as Germany and France (where Jews speedily achieved political and economic prominence), anti-Semitism, far from petering out, was stronger than ever, culminating in the horrors of the Holocaust. Ironically, today, particularly in the U.S. and Europe, an unfathomable 70% intermarriage rate has achieved the same effect as large-scale conversion.

Some have proposed to eradicate anti-Semitism by launching massive grassroots activism and political campaigning to legislate a non-discriminatory environment for Jews.

1. **Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin, *Why the Jews*, pp. 190-191 – Fighting the symptoms of anti-Semitism but not the cause.**

... As all Jews must recognize, virtually all their efforts to combat anti-Semitic outbreaks [by means of political lobbying and general activism] deal with the symptoms rather than the causes of Jew-hatred. This is why no matter how effective these efforts, they cannot solve anti-Semitism. These efforts are important and effective—but only in a society relatively free of anti-Semitism. When a Jewish group publicly condemns someone for anti-Semitism, that condemnation is effective only if the society has values that hold anti-Semitism contemptible. Thus, the only *solution* to anti-Semitism is for Jews to affect the values of non-Jews. All other attempts to end anti-Semitism are doomed to failure. They only buy time until the next eruption.

Where, then, lies the antidote to anti-Semitism? The solution to eradicating anti-Semitism relates directly to resolving the three principle causes discussed in this class: 1) hatred or jealousy of God, the Jewish people and Jewish values, 2) anti-Semitism as a Divine tool to ensure the Jews carry out their mission and prevent assimilation and 3) a consequence of pervasive or national Jewish transgression. Let's first propose that the Jewish people possess the tools and means to overcome the second two causative factors by: 1) uniting to embrace both the Jewish mission and mitzvah observance and 2) catalyzing a sustained world-wide campaign to stop Jewish transgression, respectively.

2. ***Ibid.*, pp. 191-193 – Jews must affirm the centrality of God and Divine ethics, and mankind will absorb that message.**

Jews must therefore resume their original task of spreading ethical monotheism. The Jewish role is not to bring mankind to Judaism, but to universal moral law. *It is the*

*exquisite irony of Jewish history that this task, which has been the ultimate cause of anti-Semitism, must be fulfilled in order to end anti-Semitism.*

This means in essence that the Jews must make the world aware of two basic principles: ethics need God, and God's major demand is ethics. The Jewish people in the tradition of ethical monotheism's greatest advocates, the Jewish Prophets, must therefore oppose religionists of any religion who advocate God without depicting goodness as God's central concern; and likewise oppose secularists who advocate a value system devoid of religious and moral values. In the first case God is rendered morally irrelevant and religion becomes a superstitious refuge from the moral demands of this world. In the second instance, ethics become relative, rarely transcending personal taste. God without ethics has led to crusades and Qaddafi; ideologies without God have led to Gulag and Auschwitz.

Even if we were successful in these two goals, why would anti-Semitic nations or religious groups want to change their attitude? We would still be left with the first major cause of anti-Semitism! God and Jewish values challenge the essential world view of Amalek, and other nations may share Esav and Bilaam's hatred and jealousy. Yet, there is a clear approach to totally eradicating anti-Semitism, and this in fact was accomplished during an astounding period in Jewish history during the reign of Shlomo HaMelech, King Solomon, at the beginning of the First Temple era. How was this achieved?

The Torah unconditionally teaches us that the Jewish mission is to study the Torah and observe the mitzvot which will lead to peace with non-Jews.

### 3. **Vayikra (Leviticus) 26:3-6,9 – When the Jewish people are diligently studying and observing the Torah, there will be peace.**

If you study the Torah diligently and follow My laws and observe My commandments and perform them, I will provide your rains in their time, the Land will give its produce, and the tree of the field will yield its fruit. Your threshing will last until the vintage, and the vintage will last until the sowing; you will eat your bread to satiety, and you will dwell securely in your land. And I will provide peace in the Land, and you will lie down with no one to frighten you; I will remove wild beasts from the Land, and no army will pass through your land... I will turn towards you, and I will make you fruitful and increase you, and I will establish My covenant with you.

אם בְּחֻקֹּתַי תֵּלְכוּ וְאֶת מִצְוֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ וְעֲשִׂיתֶם אֹתָם: וְנָתַתִּי גֶשְׁמִיכֶם בְּעֵתָם וְנָתַנָּה הָאָרֶץ יְבוּלָהּ וְעַץ הַשָּׂדֶה יִתֵּן פִּרְיוֹ:

וְהָשִׁיג לָכֶם דְּוִישׁ אֶת בָּצִיר וּבָצִיר יִשְׁיג אֶת זֶרַע וְאֶכְלֶתֶם לַחֲמֻכָּם לְשִׁבְעָה וְיִשְׁכַּבְתֶּם לְבֶטֶח בְּאֶרְצְכֶם: וְנָתַתִּי שָׁלוֹם בְּאֶרֶץ וּשְׁכַבְתֶּם וְאִין מִחֹרִיד וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי חֲיָה רָעָה מִן הָאָרֶץ וְחֹרֵב לֹא תַעֲבֹר בְּאֶרְצְכֶם... וּפְנִיתִי אֵלֵיכֶם וְהִפְרִיתִי אֶתְכֶם וְהִרְבִּיתִי אֶתְכֶם וְהִקִּמֹתִי אֶת בְּרִיתִי אִתְּכֶם:

4. **Netziv, Vayikra 26:6, 9 – The nations of the world will recognize God's existence and Kingship and be at peace with the Jewish people.**

The Torah states that the Jewish people will dwell securely in the Land, so why does it need to add that there will be peace in the land? The Torah is coming to add how they will dwell securely at that time. Behold, even though they will not need to leave the Land to secure a livelihood, nevertheless this is not a proof that they will not need security patrols to protect the land. Therefore this verse, "And I will provide peace in the Land" is coming to teach that there will be no wars among the inhabitants, for there will peace in the Land. Moreover, there will be no wars with the nations of the world for it is written (Vayikra 26:6), "You will lie down and no one will frighten you."

Included in the blessing that God will "increase the Jewish people" is the proliferation of their wisdom, might, and all virtues.

...And the Torah states here (Vayikra 26:9) that God will grant the Jewish people great success and stature beyond the nations of the world. The Jews will then strengthen their faith in God. The nations of the world will also recognize and know the Divine Kingship.

פסוק ו':

ונתתי שלום בארץ. מוסיף הכתוב לבאר האידך תשבו בטח, שהרי אע"ג שלא יהיו נצרכים לצאת מן הארץ בשביל פרנסה, מכל מקום אין בזה ראיה שלא יהיו נצרכים להתהלך ממקום למקום בשביל שמירת הארץ. על זה אמר הכתוב דלא בשביל מלחמת התושבים עצמם שיהי שלום בארץ. ולא בשביל מלחמת אומות העולם שהרי ושכבתם ואין מחריד.

פסוק ט':

והרביתי אתכם. נכלל בזה גידול ברוב חכמה וגבורה ובכל מעלה.

והקימתי את בריתי אתכם. ...ואמר הכתוב שבזה שיצליחו ויהיו גדלים שלא בערך שארי אומות העולם, תקום ותתחזק בריתי היינו אמונה בה' איתכם. שיהיו אומות העולם גם כן יכירו וידעו מלכות שמים.

What is the connection – how can Torah study and mitzvah observance help to end anti-Semitism? When there is clear recognition by the nations of the world that the Torah is Divine wisdom and that God rules the world, not only will anti-Semitism end, the nations themselves will believe in God and Divine values. There is a precedent in world history for such harmony – during the forty-year reign of Shlomo HaMelech, King Solomon, when the nations of the world not only recognized that God rules the world, they also understood that their material success was dependent on the Divine service performed on their behalf by the Jews.

5. **Melachim (Kings) I, 5:1,4-5, 9, 11, 14, 18, 6:11-13 – Shlomo HaMelech led the Torah-observing nation in peace for nearly forty years.**

And Shlomo ruled over all the kingdoms from the Euphrates River to the land of the

ושלמה הָיָה מוֹשֵׁל בְּכָל הַמְּמַלְכוֹת מִן הַנָּהָר אֲרָץ פְּלִשְׁתִּים וְעַד גְּבוּל מִצְרַיִם מִגִּשְׁשִׁים מִנְּחָה וְעַד־רִים

Philistines, and to the border of Egypt, they brought presents and served Shlomo all the days of his life. For he reigned over all the people beyond the Euphrates River, from Tiphseh to Gaza, over all the kings beyond the Euphrates River, and he had peace with the lands on all sides around. Judah and Israel dwelt in security, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan to Beersheba, all the days of Shlomo. And God gave Shlomo wisdom and great understanding, and breadth of heart as the sand that is upon the seashore. And he was wiser than all men...and his fame spread to all the nations around him. And they came from all the nations to hear the wisdom of Shlomo, emissaries from all the kings who had heard his wisdom. [And Shlomo said,] "And now the Lord my God has given me rest on every side; there is neither adversary nor misfortune."

And the word of the Lord came to Shlomo saying, "(Concerning) this Temple which you are building, if you follow My statutes, and fulfill My ordinances, and observe all My commandments to follow them; then I will uphold My word with you, which I spoke to David your father. And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will not forsake My people, Israel."

את שלמה כל ימי חייו: כי הוא רדה בכל עבר הנגה מתפסח ועד עזה בכל מלכי עבר הנגה ושלום היה לו מפל עבריו מסביב: וישב יהודה וישראל לבטח איש תחת גפנו ותחת תאנתו מן ועד באר שבע כל ימי שלמה: ויתן אלהים חכמה לשלמה ותבונה הרבה מאד ורחב לב פחול אשר על שפת הים: ויחכם מפל האדם... ויהי שמו בכל הגוים סביב: ויבאו מפל העמים לשמע את חכמת שלמה מאת כל מלכי הארץ אשר שמעו את חכמתו: ועתה הניח יהוה אלהי לי מסביב אין שטן ואין פגע רע:

ויהי דבר יהוה אל שלמה לאמר: הבית הזה אשר אתה בנה אם תלך בחקותי ואת משפטי תעשה ושמרת את כל מצותי ללכת בהם והקמתי את דברי אתה אשר דברתי אל דוד אביך: ושכנתי בתוך בני ישראל ולא אעזב את עמי ישראל:

The nations of the world hear about the great wisdom of Shlomo and travel to Israel to discern its authenticity.

6. **Ibid., 10:1 (with Ralbag), 3, 6, 7, 9 – The Queen of Sheba travels to Israel to determine if Shlomo HaMelech really has Divine wisdom.**

The Queen of Sheba heard of Shlomo's fame, that his wisdom was a gift of God to fulfill His will, and she came to test him with riddles. And Shlomo answered all her questions; nothing was hidden from the king that he did not tell her. And she said

ומלכת שבא שמעת את שמע שלמה לשם יהוה ותבא לנסתו בחידות: ויגד לה שלמה את כל דבריה לא היה דבר נעלם מן המלך אשר לא הגיד לה: ותאמר אל המלך אמת היה הדבר אשר שמעתי בארצי על דבריה ועל חכמתה: ולא האמנתי לדברים עד אשר באתי ותראינה עיני



to the king, “It was a true report that I heard in my country about your words and about your wisdom. However, I did not believe the words until I came and saw with my own eyes, and, in fact, not even a half had been told to me. You have wisdom and goodness beyond what I had heard. Blessed be the Lord Your God, who has chosen you, to place you on the throne of Israel; because of the Lord’s everlasting love for Israel, He appointed you as king to do justice and righteousness.”

וְהָיָה לֹא הִגֵּד לִי הַחֲצִי הַזֶּה חֲכָמָה וְטוֹב אֶל  
הַשְּׁמוּעָה אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתִּי: יְהִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בָּרוּךְ  
אֲשֶׁר חָפֵץ בְּךָ לְתִתְּךָ עַל כָּסֵא יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאַהֲבַת  
יְהוָה אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל לְעַלְמֵם וַיִּשְׁמְךָ לְמֶלֶךְ לַעֲשׂוֹת  
מִשְׁפָּט וְצֶדֶק:

7. **Ibid. (with Malbim) – The Queen recognizes that Shlomo HaMelech’s wisdom is Divine.**

The Queen of Sheba realized that King Solomon’s wisdom was Divine, not natural.

שָׁבָא שָׁמְעַת אֶת שִׁמְעַת שְׁלֹמֹה לְשֵׁם יְהוָה: ר"ל  
שְׁחַכְמָתוֹ הִיא אֱלֹהִית, לֹא טִבְעִית.

8. **Ibid. (with Abarbanel) 5:9 – The kings sent their scholars to learn from Shlomo HaMelech.**

People came from all the nations to listen to the wisdom of Shlomo. They were emissaries from the kings of various countries who had heard of Shlomo’s fame. Those kings sent wise individuals from among their people to learn Shlomo’s wisdom.

שָׁהִיוּ בָּאִים מִכָּל הָעַמִּים אֲנָשִׁים לִשְׁמוּעַ אֶת  
חֲכָמַת שְׁלֹמֹה וְהֵם הָיוּ שְׁלֹחִים מֵאֵת מַלְכֵי  
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר שָׁמְעוּ שִׁמְעָתוֹ שֶׁל שְׁלֹמֹה, כִּי הָיוּ  
אוֹתָם הַמַּלְכִּים שְׁלֹחִים אֲנָשִׁים נְבוֹנִים מֵעַמֵּיהֶם  
לִשְׁמוּעַ אֶת חֲכָמָתוֹ.

9. **Ibid. – Why did Shlomo HaMelech merit all these blessings?**

We learn from the life of Shlomo HaMelech that in God’s compassion, he merited many crowns: crowns of Torah, wisdom, grandeur, kingship, wealth and honor. He earned all of this because he had a pure heart (reverent in respect to God) and clean hands (honest in his dealings with others), as it is written in Tehillim [Psalms] 84:12, “God bestows favor and glory. He withholds no goodness from those who walk in perfect innocence.”

הִנֵּה הַתְּבָאָר מִכָּל זֶה הַסְּפֹר שֶׁהַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה  
בְּחִמְלַת ה' עָלָיו זָכָה לְכַתְרִים הַרְבֵּה, כְּתַר תּוֹרָה  
וְחִכְמָה רַבָּתָא וְכְתַר מַלְכוּת הַעוֹשֵׁר וְהַכְּבוֹד,  
וְשָׁקְנָה כָּל זֶה לְתוֹם לִבּוֹ וּלְנִקְיוֹן כַּפָּיו, כַּמֵּאֵמֶר  
הַמְּשׁוֹרֵר תְּהִלִּים ד':יב "חֵן וְכְבוֹד יִתֵּן ה' לֹא יִמְנַע  
טוֹב לְהוֹלִכִים בְּתַמִּים"



The nations of the world further recognized that God supervises and directs the world and is responsible for their material success. Their representatives would journey to Jerusalem during Sukkot when the Jews brought sacrificial offerings to God in the Temple on behalf of the nations.

**10. Netziv, Harchev Davar, Bamidbar 29:12 – During the Festival of Sukkot, Israel offered sacrifices on behalf of the nations of the earth, and will do so again when the Beit HaMikdash (Temple) is rebuilt.**

It is written in Zechariah 14 that in the future, the nations of the world [in addition to the Jewish people] will travel to the Beit HaMikdash in Jerusalem during the intermediate days of the Festival of Sukkot to be present when sacrifices are offered on their behalf. Meaning, [in addition to the Jews] they too will recognize that God rules the world and their material success depends on the Divine service that the Jews perform on their behalf.

This was also the practice of the nations during the reign of King Shlomo [when representatives from all the nations would come to Jerusalem during the Festival of Sukkot when Israel offered seventy offerings on behalf of the seventy nations of the earth]. (The offerings are listed in Numbers 29:12-34.) Therefore, King Shlomo would teach them Kohelet, the Book of Ecclesiastes.

כתוב בספר זכריה י"ד, דלעתיד יהיו גם אומות העולם באים בחול המועד סוכות לעמוד על קרבנם. דהיינו, בשביל שיכירו גם המה את מלך ה' צבקות ויהיו יודעים דפרנסתם תלוי במוספי החג שישראל מביאים בשבילים...

וכך היה המנהג בימי שלמה, ומשום הכי היה שלמה מגיד קהלת בחוה"מ סוכות לפני חכמי אומות העולם.

In a world where the Jewish people behave as righteous emissaries of God, the nations of the world can also recognize God, His wisdom, and His supervision and direction of the world. This recognition will certainly return in the Messianic era (and is also possible beforehand).

**11. Rambam, Commentary on the Mishnah, Introduction to Sanhedrin, Ch. 10 – With miraculous assistance, the Messiah will ensure world peace.**

The Messianic Era will be a time when kingship will return to Israel and [all Jews] will return to the Land of Israel. This king will be very great and his palace will be in Zion [Jerusalem]. His name and fame will spread and become more widespread than

אמנם ימות המשיח הוא זמן שתשוב המלכות לישראל ויחזרו לארץ ישראל, ויהי אותו המלך גדול מאד ובית מלכותו בציון יגדל שמו וזכרו יהיה מלא הגוים יותר מן המלך שלמה, וישלימו אתו כל האומות ויעבדוהו כל הארצות לצדקו הגדול ולנפלאות שיהא על ידו, וכל מי שיקום

that of King Shlomo. All the nations will make peace with him and all the countries will serve him on account of his great righteousness and because of the wonders that will be done by him. Anyone who rises against him will be destroyed by God, and will be given into his [Mashiach's] hand.

עליו יאבדהו השם יתעלה וימסור אותו בידו.

The Messianic era will be the end of Amalek and hence any residual anti-Semitism.

**12. Rambam, Hilchot Melachim 12:5 – The purpose of peace and prosperity is to facilitate the promulgation of the knowledge of God.**

In that time there will be no famine or war, no jealousy or competition. Goodness will be bountiful, and every type of delicacy will be readily available. The task of the whole world will purely and simply be to know God. The Jewish people will have exceptional wisdom and understand the deepest secrets of existence. They will attain knowledge of their Creator as much as is humanly possible, as the verse states: "The earth will be full of knowledge of God, like water covers the sea bed" (Yeshayahu/ Isaiah 11:9).

ובאותו הזמן, לא יהיה שם לא רעב ולא מלחמה ולא קנאה ותחרות--שהטובה תהיה מושפעת הרבה, וכל המעדנים מצויין כעפר. ולא יהיה עסק כל העולם, אלא לדעת את ה' בלבד. ולפיכך יהיו ישראל חכמים גדולים, ויודעים דברים הסתומים; וישגו דעת בוראם כפי כוח האדם, שנאמר "כי מלאה הארץ דעה את ה' כמים לים מכסים" (ישעיהו יא,ט).

**13. Yeshayahu 2:2-3 – All the nations of the world will come to the Beit HaMikdash in Jerusalem to seek out knowledge of God.**

It will happen at the End of Days: The mountain of God's Temple will be firmly established as the head of the mountains ... and all the nations will stream towards it. Many people will go and say, "Come, let us go up to the Mountain of God, to the Temple of the God of Yaakov, and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths." For out of Zion shall the Torah come forth, and the word of God from Jerusalem.

וְהָיָה בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים נִכּוֹן יְהִיֶּה הַר בֵּית ה' בְּרֹאשׁ הַהָרִים וְנִשְׂא מִגְבְּעוֹת וְנִהְיוּ אֱלֹדֵי כָל הַגּוֹיִם: וְהָלְכוּ עַמִּים רַבִּים וְאָמְרוּ לָכוּ וְנַעֲלֶה אֶל הַר ה' אֶל בֵּית אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב וְיִרְנוּ מִדֶּרֶכָיו וְנִלְכֶה בְּאַרְחֵתָיו כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה וּדְבַר ה' מִירוּשָׁלַם:

(See also Ezekiel 37:20-28. For more in-depth study, see the Morasha classes on the Messiah.)

Until the world reaches that glorified Messianic era, what steps can the Jewish people take to eradicate anti-Semitism? **First**, we must study and observe the Torah as we learned above (in Source 3). **Second**, we must be prepared to be unswerving in our dedication to Jewish life which can earn Divine protection, as we learn from Chanukah:

14. **Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur, Vol. II, pg. 456 – Jews risked their lives for Judaism.**

When the Kohanim risked their lives for the Divine Service with unswerving dedication, they immediately saw miracles: (1) In the war – “God gave over the strong into the hands of the weak, etc.,” and (2) through the rededication of the Temple Service – with the miracle of the flask of oil.

וכאשר הכוהנים מסרו נפשם על העבודה - מיד  
ראו שוב נסים, הן במלחמתם - "מסרת גבורים  
ביד חלשים" וכו' - והן בהחזרת העבודה - בנס  
הפך שמן.

15. **Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler, Michtav M'Eliyahu, Vol. II, pg. 114 – Totally sincere commitment to Jewish life.**

Through the total and absolute dedication of the Hasmoneans to Judaism, they rose to the level of being purely sincere in their commitment, and this was the essential spiritual reason that they merited to overcome the Greeks. And the miracle of the oil, that the lights were not extinguished, showed them a sign from Heaven, that the eternal inner light had been revealed in their hearts.

אך במסירת נפשם של החשמונאים עלו למדרגת  
לשמה גמור, וזאת היתה הסיבה האמיתית  
הרוחנית שמחמתה זכו להתגבר על היוונים. ובנס  
השמן שנרות המנורה לא כבו הראו להם סימן  
מן השמים שנתגלה בלבם האור הפנימי שאין לו  
הפסק לעולמים.

**Third**, we need to avoid Jewish transgression. Jewish unity is especially important, particularly since the Second Temple had been destroyed as a result of senseless hatred between Jews. By engaging in *chesed*, acts of loving-kindness, and expressing earnest concern for our fellow Jews, we can help perfect the world.

16. **Sfat Emet, Rosh HaShanah, 5641 – Loving one's fellow Jew will help rebuild the Beit HaMikdash.**

Since the Beit HaMikdash was destroyed due to baseless hatred, it will – please God – be rebuilt as a result of loving our fellow Jews.

כיון שע"י שנאת חנם נחרב. כ"ש שע"י אהבת  
ישראל יהי' נבנה בעזה"י.

**Finally**, as we mentioned above in Section I, Source 14, we should not flaunt wealth, which draws attention and aggravates anti-Semitism.

Meanwhile, we are still living with the challenges of anti-Semitism in exile. If anti-Semitism leads to a precarious situation, the Chofetz Chaim has written clear recommendations:

**17. Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaKohen Kagan, Chofetz Chaim on the Torah, Parshat Vayetzei, pg. 69 – If you are physically endangered, move to the Land of Israel.**

[After Yaakov had married Leah and Rachel and raised his family in Charan and worked for Lavan for twenty years,] God said to Yaakov, “Return to the Land of your forefathers” (Bereishit 31:3).

When the nations speak against the Jewish people, falsely accuse us, and oppress us – as in the context of “And [Yaakov] heard the words of the children of Lavan” – we restrain ourselves completely, we hear that we are insulted but we do not respond. They go in their way and we go in our way. However, once we see that their faces “are not what they had previously been,” as “Yaakov had seen the changed expression in Lavan,” [then it is a different situation].

When the government leaders show us angry faces, then we are forced to find for ourselves a place of refuge. The refuge most secure for us is the land of our forefathers, [as it is written] “Return to the land of your forefathers.”

ויאמר ה' אל יעקב שוב אל ארץ אבותיך  
(בראשית ל"א ג).

כשהאומות מדברים סרה על עם ישראל,  
מעלילים עלינו ודוחקים את רגלינו-בבחינת  
"וישמע את דברי בני לבן" - עדיין מבליגים אנו  
על כ"ז, שומעים חרפתנו ואיננו משיבים, אינהו  
בדידהו ואנן בדידן. אבל מכיון שאנו רואים את  
פניהם, "שאינם כתמול שלשום",-בבחינת "וירא  
יעקב את פני לבן" -

כשהעומדים בראש הממשלות מראים לנו  
פנים זועפים, אזי אנו מוכרחים לבקש לנו מקום  
מקלט, והמקלט היותר בטוח הוא לשוב אל ארץ  
אבותינו- "שוב אל ארץ אבותיך".

See also the Chofetz Chayim's commentary on Parshat Vayishlach, pp. 72-73, where his words in 1933 (prior to World War II) were nearly prophetic, foreseeing that world Jewry would be saved from their enemies and that “And on Mt. Zion will be the remnant, and it will be Holy” (Ovadiah 1:17).

## KEY THEMES OF SECTION V

- ⌘ Is there a simple solution to the age-old problem of anti-Semitism? Jewish sources will offer a simple answer: “No.” Jew-hatred is embedded into the very fabric of the world; it cannot simply be wiped away by classical means of re-education and multi-national conferences. The historical perspective concurs with this analysis. Anti-Semitism is a perpetual fixture of the world.
- ⌘ Yet, there is cause for hope. As the world advances to the Messianic Age, we can anticipate drastic change. At that time there will be clear recognition by the nations of the world that the Torah is Divine wisdom, that God rules the world, and that their material success is dependent on the Divine service performed on their behalf by the Jews as during the near forty-year reign of King Solomon.
- ⌘ Until the world reaches that glorified Messianic era, what steps can the Jewish people take to stop anti-Semitism? First, we must continue to strive to study and observe the Torah. Second, we must be prepared to be unswerving in our dedication to Jewish life which can earn Divine protection. Third, we need to avoid Jewish transgression. Finally, we mustn’t flaunt wealth to call attention and aggravate anti-Semitism.

## CLASS SUMMARY:

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### IS THERE A WAY TO DETERMINE WHAT THE ROOT CAUSES OF ANTI-SEMITISM ARE?

- To understand the root causes of anti-Semitism we need to examine the Torah’s explanations. This is because the Torah’s multi-leveled interpretations, prophecy included, foretell how anti-Semitism expresses itself in Jewish history. The paradigms for all types of anti-Semitism are contained in the Torah and are further elucidated in the Talmud and by their respective commentators.

### WHAT IS THE PRINCIPLE OF *MAASEH AVOT SIMAN L'BANIM*, AND HOW IS THAT APPLIED TO UNDERSTANDING ANTI-SEMITISM?

- *Maaseh avot siman l'banim* is a spiritually driven dynamic that specific events experienced by the Avot, forefathers of the Jewish people, portend future history of the Jewish people. Consequently, specific episodes of anti-Semitism in the Torah, especially those between Avraham and King Nimrod, Yitzchak and Yishmael, Yaakov and both Esav and Lavan, contain the paradigms of anti-Semitism for future history.

## WHAT ARE THE THREE MAIN REASONS FOR ANTI-SEMITISM THROUGHOUT HISTORY?

- Largely guided by the *Netziv*, the basic causes of anti-Semitism are: 1) hatred or jealousy of God, the Jewish people and Jewish values, 2) its function as a Divine tool to ensure the Jews carry out their mission and prevent assimilation and 3) a consequence of pervasive or national Jewish transgression.

## IS THERE ANYTHING TO BE DONE TO ERADICATE ANTI-SEMITISM?

- **First**, we must continue to strive to study and observe the Torah. **Second**, we must be prepared to be unswerving in our dedication to Jewish life which can earn Divine protection. **Third**, we need to avoid Jewish transgression. **Finally**, we should not flaunt wealth to call attention and aggravate anti-Semitism.

## RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL READING

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**The Chosen People:** Israel and the Nations, Rabbi Avraham Edelstein, Ner Le'Elef, [nleresources.com/kiruv-and-chinuch/online-books/nle-teaching-books/the-chosen-nation/](http://nleresources.com/kiruv-and-chinuch/online-books/nle-teaching-books/the-chosen-nation/)

**Sichot Mussar**, Rabbi Chaim Shmuelewitz, First Edition, "Gadlut HaAdam," pg. 103, addressing the birth of Amalek from Timnah and Elifaz after the Avot's Beit Din did not accept her desire for conversion.

**Ohr Gedalyahu, Moadim, Rabbi Gedalia Shor**, pp. 16-17; Ohr HaChaim: While in exile, the Jewish people gather holiness from the host nations and enable converts to join them. Arizal: if the Temples had not been destroyed, people from around the world seeking holiness/spirituality would have traveled on their own to the Land of Israel.

*Ramchal* (Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto) at the start of his *Ma'amar HaChochmah* discusses the tension between Gentiles and Jews as being related to the basic metaphysical core of the world.

The principle that transgression creates vulnerability in general is also found in Devarim 20:5-8, Parshat Shoftim, regarding a proclamation to soldiers with exemptions from serving in the army because of ostensibly pressing needs to attend to in light of the possibility of falling in battle: to inaugurate a new home, redeem a new vineyard, or marry his engaged bride. The Talmud [Sotah 44a] cites Rabbi Yossi HaGalili who states that the Torah is actually providing a means for soldiers to avoid embarrassment and return home, aware that they have transgressed and are therefore less protected in warfare.