Why the Jews?

**#1**

**Haaretz, October 30, 2018**

*At least 11 people were killed after a man opened fire on a Pittsburgh synagogue on Saturday.*

*The perpetrator entered the Tree of Life Congregation Synagogue and yelled 'All Jews must die' ...*

**The Lakewood Scoop, Oct. 29, 2018**

*Authorities are investigating the discovery of a doll with a knife through it, hanging near a Lakewood school. The doll, wearing what appears to be similar to a school uniform, had a knife through its head.*

**The Times of Israel, June 6, 2018**

*Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan attacked Jews and Judaism during a three-hour sermon from his pulpit at Mosque Maryam in Chicago ... During his sermon Farrakhan, a known anti-Semite, warned his listeners about “Satanic Jews who have infected the whole world with poison and deceit.”*

**Questions:**

**(a) Did you ever experience Anti-Semitism? If yes, how did you feel about it?**

**(b) Should one hide his belonging to Jewish nation to avoid Anti-Semitism?**

**(c) Should one proudly display one’s Jewishness via star of David, Kippah etc?**

**#2**

*Sam is happily married to his non-Jewish wife Christina. One day they get into a minor fight, as couples do once in a while, and Christina calls Sam, “a Dirty Jew.”*

*Sam is very disturbed and is contemplating a divorce.*

**Question: Do you think this is enough of a reason for divorce?**

**#3 Question: Why do people hate Jews?**

**(Based on *Why the Jews*, by Raphael Shore, Aish.com)**

Historians have classified 6 explanations as to why people hate the Jews:

1. Economic - “We hate Jews because they possess too much wealth and power” (They drain the country’s wealth.)

2. Chosen People - “We hate Jews because they arrogantly claim that they are the chosen people.”

3. Scapegoat - “Jews are a convenient group to single out and blame for our troubles.”

4. Deicide - “We hate Jews because they killed Jesus.”

5. Outsiders - “We hate Jews because they are different than us.” (The dislike of the unlike.)

6. Racial Theory - “We hate Jews because they are an inferior race.” (A threat to their existence as a race. “The Jews are polluting a superior racial makeup by mixing with us & marrying among us”)

**Question: Are these causes or excuses for Anti-Semitism?**

**Mishnah, Pirkei Avos 3:18**

*He [Rabbi Akiva] used to say: Beloved is man for he was created in the image of G-d. It is a greater love that it was made known to him that he was created in the image of G-d, as it is stated, ‘For in the image of G-d did He make man’ (Torah, Bereishis 9:6). Beloved are the Children of Israel for they are called children of the L-rd. It is a greater love that it was made known to them that they are called children of the L-rd, as it is stated, ‘You are children to the L-rd your G-d’ (Torah, Devarim 14:1). Beloved is Israel that they were given a precious utensil (the Torah). It is an greater love that it was made known to them that they were given a precious utensil, as it is said, ‘For I have given you a good possession; do not forsake My Torah’ (Proverbs 4:2).”*

**Question: Is our claim for being the Chosen Nation not similar to racism?**

**#4 (Based on *Why the Jews*, by Raphael Shore, Aish.com)**

Anti-Semitism is unique amongst the hatreds in the world in a combination of four aspects:

1. Longevity - it's been around a long time

2. Universality - virtually everywhere in the world

3. Intensity - it's expressed in a particularly virulent manner

4. Confusion - there is surprisingly little agreement on why people hate the Jews.

**Question:**

**(a) Do you agree with his statement?**

**(b) Is there anything positive about Anti-semitism?**

**#5 THE REAL REASONS FOR ANTI-SEMITISM**

**Talmud Shabbos 89**

*The Torah was received at Mount Sinai. The Hebrew pronunciation of "Sinai" is almost identical to the Hebrew word for "hatred" – sinah. Why was the Torah given on a mountain called Sinai? Because the great sinah – the tremendous hatred aimed at the Jew – emanates from Sinai.*

**Question: How do you understand this statement?**

**The Beast From the Abyss, Hermann Rauchning**

(Herman Rauchning had been Hitler’s personal confidante, but he abandoned Nazism and attempted to alert the free world to the scope and danger of the Nazi threat.)

*It is against their own insoluble problem of being human that the dull and base in humanity are in revolt in anti-Semitism. Nevertheless Judaism, together with Hellenism and Christianity, is an inalienable component of our Christian Western Civilization – the eternal "call to Sinai," against which humanity again and again rebels.*

**The Voice of Destruction, H. Rauschning**

*Hitler stated: “It is true, we are barbarians. I free humanity from the shackles of the soul, from the degrading suffering caused by the false vision called conscience and morality…The Jews have inflicted two wounds on mankind – circumcision on its body and conscience on its soul. These are Jewish inventions…The war for world domination will be fought entirely between us – the Germans and the Jews. All else is façade and illusion.”*

**Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, p. 312**

*In his new language [the Jew] will express the old ideas; his inner nature has not changed…the Jew…can speak a thousand languages and nevertheless remains a Jew. His traits of character have remained the same…It is always the same Jew.*

**Ernest van den Haag (social psychologist), The Jewish Mystique, pp. 60-61**

*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.*

**#6**

**Question: Is there a way to stop Anti-Semitism?**

**Dennis Prager and Joseph Telushkin, Why the Jews, pp. 190-191**

*… 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.*

**Question:        What do you think about this statement?**

**#7 Question: What’s your takeaway from today’s discussion?**