

CHAPTER 9

ANTISEMITISM IS A CONSEQUENCE OF GROUP *SINAT CHINAM*

Jewish history has taught us that the phenomenon called antisemitism has accompanied us everywhere in the Diaspora and that it is found today in Israel disguised as anti-Zionism.

Rabbinic perspectives on antisemitism explain that it has been an external antagonistic force that opposed either our values, or our nationality, or our sovereignty over the Land of Israel.

But its relationship to *sinat chinam* has been ignored since the latter is by definition an “intra-Jewish internal” issue.

This chapter introduces the counterintuitive notion that antisemitism and group *sinat chinam* are in fact intimately related to each other, not just because they both involve hatred. It will be shown that, throughout our history, a causal relationship has existed between them such that antisemitism erupted whenever group *sinat chinam* got out of control. To the extent that antisemitism is a consequence of group *sinat chinam*, it means that group *sinat chinam* is in fact extremely dangerous for our people. It would also suggest that combatting antisemitism should not only focus on our enemies but include a program to eliminate group *sinat chinam* by promoting unity in our communities in the Diaspora and in Israel.

RABBINIC PERSPECTIVES ON ANTISEMITISM

Rabbi Doron Perez/Vilna Gaon

In his review of an upcoming book of Rabbi Perez, David Weinberg¹ indicates that “Perez delineates three archetypes of historical antisemitism, based on a teaching of the Vilna Gaon: Moabite spiritual enmity (which expresses itself in opposition to Jewish values), Edomite physical destruction (opposition to Jewish nationality or race), and

¹ David M Weinberg, A Vision for Unity in Israel, HaMizrachi, vol 6 No1, 6-7.
<https://mizrachi.org/hamizrachi/a-vision-for-unity-in-israel/>

Philistine political denialism (opposition to Jewish governance and sovereignty in the Land of Israel).

Put differently, there is antisemitism that focuses on opposition to Judaism (Torah), to the Jewish people, and to the Jewish state, expressed at different times in history, mutating like a virus from one form of hatred to another.”

Rabbi Perez shows the relevance of this approach by analyzing the attitude of Palestinian leadership toward Israel. Palestinian nationalism corresponds to the ancient Philistine opposition to Jewish governance and sovereignty anywhere in the Land of Israel. “Antisemitism and anti-Zionism have morphed into one mad malady of Jewish/Zionist demonization. He qualifies Modern Palestinian nationalism of “oppositional nationalism—not positively promoting oneself but negatively denying others.....It goes beyond the realm of conventional politics and history. It lies in the spiritual realm, in a millenia-old spiritual and historical phenomenon known as the ancient Philistines.”

Rabbi Moshe Taragin: Torah, Peoplehood, and Land

In an article entitled “The Sacred Partnership,”² Rabbi Taragin addresses the question: “How did a nation survive a two-thousand year exile, without common currency, flag, or land?..What was the bonding agent of this solidarity?” The answer is that “During exile, religious consciousness was based on one variable, and it was divine and all-consuming. Upon returning to our land.....two new religious variables were introduced....a divine mandate to settle our land and a divine mandate to rebuild our people and attend to the needs of every Jew.” This raises the following question “In religious terminology, how do we balance between Torah, peoplehood and land? Or, in Hebrew, how do we balance between Torat Yisrael, Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael?

There is a direct correspondence between Rabbi Taragin’s triad of Torat Yisrael, Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael, and Rabbi Perez’s three types of antisemitism:

- Moabite spiritual enmity targets our Torah
- Edomite physical destruction targets our people, Am Yisrael

² Rabbi Moshe Taragin, The Sacred Partnership. Jewish Link News April 4, 2023.

- Philistine political denialism targets our sovereignty in the Land of Israel.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks zt"l: Manifestations of Antisemitism

Dr Daniel Rose³ summarized the various forms of antisemitism expressed by Rabbi Sacks:

- Religious antisemitism where Jews are hated for their religious beliefs
- Economic antisemitism where Jews are hated for their financial and economic success (and their contributions to their country's economy is ignored)
- Racial antisemitism where Jews are hated because they are an inferior race
- Social/Cultural antisemitism where Jews are hated because they assimilate too much or too little
- Political/Ideological antisemitism where Jews are hated for being disloyal to their country
- Holocaust-based antisemitism where Jews are hated for exaggerating the facts of the Holocaust
- Zionism-based antisemitism where Jews are hated through criticism of the State of Israel.

For centuries, Jews had no choice but respond to these manifestations of antisemitism. In what follows, I provide evidence supporting the notion that the emergence and degree of antisemitism is directly related to the degree of disunity and intensity of group *sinat chinam* that exists within Jewish society, in the Diaspora or in Israel.

HISTORIC EVIDENCE THAT ANTISEMITISM IS RELATED TO GROUP *SINAT CHINAM*

Enslavement of Jews in Egypt was due to Disunity

In the first chapter of Shemot, the Stone edition Chumash⁴ describes “the first instance in history of what has become the familiar pattern of antisemitism.” For Pharaoh, the Jews in Egypt were becoming too numerous. As a result, they were too dangerous to keep and too important to lose. He therefore devised a plan to enslave them which allowed the state to “benefit from their talents without fear that they will desert the country.”

³ Dr Daniel Rose, Responding to Antisemitism in the Thought of Rabbi Sacks zt"l, *Hamizrachi* July 2021, 52.

⁴ The Chumash The Stone Edition Shemot 1:8-14 (Mesorah Publications Ltd, Brooklyn, 1994), 293

When Moshe went out of the palace to empathize with his brothers' suffering and tried to resolve a dispute between two Jews who were fighting, the wicked one challenged Moshe. "Moshe became frightened and very worried. He saw that there were Israelites who would resort to informing on him." Moshe said: "The matter has truly become known...Until now, I wondered what sin Israel committed to be subjugated so, and made to live such hard lives, more than any nation in the world. But today the matter has become known. They slander one another, they resort to character assassination and inform on each other; they therefore deserve this subjugation."⁵

This interpretation shows that, for Moshe, profound disunity among Jews explained the severe form of antisemitism put in place by Pharaoh.

Disunity Triggered Amalek's Attack

The first confrontation between Israel and Amalek took place as soon as the Jews became a people, even before they received the Torah at Sinai (Shemot 17: 2-15). Amalek had no reason to launch a treacherous and unprovoked attack since their land was not endangered."⁶

Rabbi Beinish Ginsburg⁷ explains why Amalek attacked precisely at that time. Amalek's attack was in Rephidim called Massah U'Meribah which means 'complaining and testing.' He cites a comment of the Kli Yakar (based on Rashi in Shemot 19:2) that the expression Massah U'Meribah "refers as well to the Jews complaining and arguing among themselves. The Jews lacked Achdus in all their encampments in the Midbar until they reached Har Sinai." The Kli Yakar also underlines that the name Rephidim is the same as the word 'Preidim" which means separated. "Am Yisrael were separated among themselves, and that is what allowed Amalek to attack."

During the battle with Amalek, the fact that Aharon and Hur supported the arms of Moshe was also related to deficiency in unity among Bnei Israel. Aharon was "Ohev Shalom V'rodef Shalom" and contributed Achdus and harmony among Bnei Yisrael, and Hur was the son of Miriam's who is the symbol of Mitzvot Bein Adam L'chavero and Gemilut Hassadim.

⁵ Yalkut Meam Loez, The Torah Anthology, Shemot 2:14 (Maznaim Publishing Corporation, Brooklyn, 1978),56

⁶ The Chumash The Stone Edition Shemot 17:8 (Mesorah Publications Ltd, Brooklyn, 1994), 391

⁷ Rabbi Beinish Ginsburg Parshas Shekalim - Achdus and the Struggle against Amalek, YU Torah Feb 15, 2009

The Torah indicates that Amalek attacked Bnei Israel on another occasion, after hearing that Aharon died (Bamidbar 21:1). Since Aharon could no longer contribute Achdus and harmony to Bnei Yisrael, their Achdus was weakened, and they became vulnerable to Amalek's attack. Rabbi Ginsburg proposed the principle that Am Yisrael is susceptible to attack by Amalek when we lack Achdus, concluding that we must emphasize Mitzvot Bein Adam L'chavero and Achdus in our struggle against Amalek.

Disunity Triggered Haman's Assault on Jews of Persian Empire

Rabbi Ginsburg illustrates the validity of this principle in the conflict between Haman and Mordechai toward the end of the Babylonian Exile. Haman was a descendant of Agag, King of Amalek, while Mordechai (and Esther) were descendants of Shaul, the first King of Israel. When Haman approached King Achashveirosh to be allowed to kill the Jews, he described them as a people "scattered and dispersed among the nations." According to Kli Yakar, this description indicates that the Jews were lacking in Bein Adam L'chavero and Achdus. Rabbi Ginsburg writes that Haman's expression "scattered and dispersed" can be interpreted as "'scattered and dispersed among themselves." The Jews lacked unity. Haman was pointing out to Achashveirosh that on a spiritual level the Jews are susceptible to attack when they lack achdus.

Rabbi Ginsburg cites a Megilla commentary of Rav Alkabetz that makes three points regarding the power of unity to negate Haman's claim:

- (i) Esther understood the danger of dispersion of the Jewish people and directed Mordechai to "go and assemble the Jews." The Jews gathered and fasted together.
- (ii) Mordechai and Esther instituted the mitzvah of Mishloah Manot to emphasize Achdus and friendship.
- (iii) When the Megilla writes "and the Jews accepted.." it utilizes the singular instead of the plural to reflect the increase in Achdus the Jews felt at that time.

Lubavitcher Rebbe's Teachings on the Power of Unity and Dangers of Disunity⁸

⁸ https://www.chabad.org/therebbe/article_cdo/aid/150875/jewish/The-Oneness-of-the-Jewish-People.htm

The Lubavitcher Rebbe teaches that “As long as our people are united, they cannot be destroyed by their enemies....Only when their unity is fractured, can a decree calling for their destruction be countenanced in Heaven.” As evidence, the Rebbe cites a verse from Hoshea (4:17): “Ephraim is joined to idols: let him be” which means that “when the people of Israel are joined in a bond of unity, even if they worship idols, their sins will not harm them. They will fight wars and be victorious.”

Consistent with the commentary of Rav Alkabetz, the Rebbe teaches that “Before Esther approached Achashverosh, she requested that Mordechai ‘go and gather together all the Jews.’ She realized that she could not successfully intercede on their behalf until they joined hands and thereby corrected the spiritual flaw that had brought about the decree of destruction.” How did they join hands and correct the spiritual flaw?

The answer is found in the Megillah statement: ‘The Jews fulfilled and accepted upon themselves.’ (Esther 9:27). What the Jews did was extraordinary. Chazal explain that the Jewish people “fulfilled what they had already accepted upon themselves [at the time of the Giving of the Torah].” The Rebbe states that “the unity achieved on Purim was even greater than the unity that prevailed at the Giving of the Torah.”

You may wonder how that is possible.

“When the Jews received the Torah, the entire nation was collected in one place. Furthermore, they were living in the desert and thus were not disturbed by the practicalities of day-to-day existence; there were fewer factors which could interfere with the establishment of oneness among them. At the time of the Purim miracle, by contrast, the Jews were scattered throughout the civilized world. They had to contend with the difficulties of living in exile, and, after Haman’s decree, with the threat that hung over them. Nevertheless, they were able to overcome their personal differences and join together in perfect unity.”

Similarly, the two mitzvot of *mishloach manot* and *matanot laevyonim* promote and display two expressions of unity. *Mishloach manot* unites us with our friends, while *matanot laevyonim* unites us with individuals we have never seen before: “we show that our relationships with

others are not limited by our personal feelings. We express the essential and unconditional bond that unites our entire people without differentiation.”

The above evidence shows that whether the Jewish people was enslaved in Egypt or traveling through the desert or dispersed throughout the Persian empire, their survival was dependent of their degree of internal unity, supporting the principle that antisemitism emerges when we allow group *sinat chinam* and exhibit disunity.

The Kabbalah’s Explanation of Anti-Semitism

I start by a disclosure that my background in Kabbalah is limited to daily portions of the Zohar that are part of the *Chok LeYisrael* seder of learning. What I present here originates from Dr Laitman’s recent book entitled “The Jewish Choice: Unity or Anti-Semitism; Historical Facts on anti-Semitism as a Reflection of Jewish Social Discord,”⁹ and his Times of Israel article.¹⁰ Dr Michael Laitman is Founder and president of the Bnei Baruch Kabbalah Education & Research Institute.

According to Dr Laitman, neither Jews nor antisemites are aware of the Kabbalah’s explanations for the cause and solution to Anti-Semitism. Anti-Semitism emerges when Jews fail to unite because the nations of the world have a need for unity, and they depend on the Jewish people to lead the world in a world-wide drive or campaign for global unity. Dr Laitman also indicates that when he lectured on this subject and warned Jews of the urgent need to unite, they generally showed little receptivity. In his book, he travels through all of Jewish history starting with Abraham and Moshe all the way to what is happening today in the United States and in Israel. He builds a strong case showing a correlation between the degree of disunity or conflict among Jews and the intensity of antisemitism. He cites the writings of the Kabbalist Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag, particularly his commentary on *The Book of Zohar* regarding the mission of the Jewish people to achieve unity and lead the world in that direction.

⁹ Dr Michael Laitman, “The Jewish Choice: Unity or Anti-Semitism; Historical Facts on anti-Semitism as a Reflection of Jewish Social Discord” (Laitman Kabbalah Publishers, 2019).

¹⁰ Dr Michael Laitman, How Kabbalah Explains Anti-Semitism, Times of Israel, SEP 22, 2019; <https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/how-kabbalah-explains-anti-semitism/>

There is a difference of emphasis in the teachings of Chazal and the Kabbalists regarding the power of unity. For example, Rabbi Baruch Bodenheim writes:¹¹ “Hashem wants unity in His people and relates to a united group with much greater compassion than to an individual. Unity in a group is very powerful: it can delay or greatly mitigate a punishment,” but an individual doesn’t receive this special protection. On the flip side, if a group splinters and argues, its culpability for a crime is greater than that of an individual committing the same crime. An example of the latter is the generation of Noah where petty thievery was widespread in society and this led to the destruction of the world. The Kabbalists’ approach is consistent with the principle that Jewish disunity triggers antisemitism, but they add that the Jewish people need to unite not just for themselves but for the sake of humanity’s unity. And if the Jewish people does achieve unity, the nations of the world will recognize it and give us credit for that accomplishment.

Jewish Unity as Response to Oppositional Palestinian Nationalism

We described above Rabbi Perez’s understanding of Modern Palestinian nationalism as “oppositional nationalism” that “goes beyond the realm of conventional politics and history.” Interestingly, consistent with the above analysis, he proposes Jewish unity as a solution:¹² “there is a spiritual and cosmic nature to Palestinian denialism that can be successfully countered only by a spiritual and cosmic uniting of Jews in a renewed covenant of purpose.” “As great as the external threats are to Israel – and indeed they are – in many ways the internal issues are no less and perhaps even more threatening.” “There is a significant spiritual correlation between the geopolitical reality facing the Jewish people in general and Israel in particular and its metaphysical state. It is impossible to separate the external historico-political circumstances of the Jewish people from their internal moral and spiritual state.... If Jewish society in Israel, which reflects an intense gamut of views, can find space one for the other, we may provide both the example and impetus for all of humanity to

¹¹ Rabbi Baruch Bodenheim, The Power of Unity, January 25, 2018; <https://jewishlink.news/features/22978-parshas-beshalach-the-power-of-unity>.

¹² David M Weinberg, A Vision for Unity in Israel, HaMizrachi, vol 6 No1, 7. <https://mizrachi.org/hamizrachi/a-vision-for-unity-in-israel/>

find space for one another.” He concludes as follows: “Israel’s relationship with G-d is an inextricable part of the story. When we find space for others, we find space for the G-dliness in each other and in turn for Hashem’s *shechinah* – His presence – to be felt in the rebuilt *Beit HaMikdash* in Jerusalem and throughout the world, may it be speedily in our days.”

Rabbi Doron Perez Addresses Disunity caused by the Judicial System Reform

In January 2023, the new elected government proposed changes to the judicial system which sparked significant backlash in Israel and in the Diaspora. Those who opposed the reform organized weekly mass protests and strikes that impacted sectors of Israel's economy. This issue degenerated leading to disunity which split the Israeli public in two camps (this issue is addressed in more detail in Chapter 11).

The Third-Generation Pattern

Rabbi Doron Perez cited the historical observation of Netanel Ellinson¹³ where the two prior Jewish commonwealths, King David and the Hasmonean kingdom (period of the Second Temple), experienced a crisis of disunity when the nation approached its seventy-fifth year of independence. Seventy-three years after David’s coronation, the people of Israel divided themselves in two kingdoms, Yehudah and Yisrael. And when the Hasmonean kingdom reached its seventy-third year, civil war erupted between the two sons of Queen Shlomis Alexandra Hyrkanus and Aritstobolus, and the latter turned to the Roman general Pompey for help (see Chapter 9). Ellinson characterized this three-generation trend as follows: the first is that of the founders, the second is that of the builders, and the third is ‘the generation of the destroyers’ where “apathy sets in, then discord, and finally tragic divisiveness.”

This theme of the third generation is also highlighted by Menachem Rahat¹⁴ (see below) and Rabbi Jeremy Gimpel¹⁵ who pointed out that Moshe had already warned Bnei Israel about the

¹³ Rabbi Doron Perez, The Next Seventy-Five Years <https://mizrachi.org/hamizrachi/the-next-seventy-five-years/>

¹⁴ Menachem Rahat, The Curse of the Eight Decade, HaMizrachi, vol 6 No1, 30.

¹⁵ Rabbi Jeremy Gimpel, Yom HaAtzmaut-75 Years The Third Generation HaMizrachi, vol 6 No1, 8.

third generation:¹⁶ “When you beget children and grandchildren and will have been long in the Land, you will grow corrupt”

Rabbi Doron Perez writes: “As we celebrate Israel’s seventy-fifth anniversary, we find ourselves at this very same juncture....Israel is grappling with the roiling and divisive issue of judicial reform, revealing deep fault lines and fissures in Israeli and Jewish society.”¹⁷

Disunity Is More Dangerous Than Palestinians

Menachem Rahat writes:¹⁸ “we must not be confused by the Palestinian criminal gangs. Ultimately, they are not the true threat to the sovereign Jewish state in Eretz Yisrael. Far more threatening and dangerous to our future is the division and polarization within Israeli society. The same brotherly hatred that came down to the world in the days of Kayin and Hevel, which was repeated in the lives of Yitzchak and Yishmael and Yaakov and Esav, and exploded again with the brother’s hatred for Yosef—this is the hatred that burns among us and threatens to overwhelm the Zionist enterprise....The State of Israel, now in its eighth decade of life and about to celebrate its 75th birthday, is today closer than ever before to the danger of a fratricidal war, each man against his brother. This is the moment to learn from history, before we destroy ourselves through the fire of hate.”

“WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT TO HASHEM THAT WE ALL GET ALONG?”

In his book on *Megillat Esther*, Rabbi Daniel Glatstein addressed a key question: “Why is it so important to HaShem that we all get along?”¹⁹ There are two answers, one pertains to HaShem’s honor in the world, and the other pertains to HaShem’s Oneness in the world.

HaShem’s Honor

¹⁶ Devarim, 4:25

¹⁷ Rabbi Doron Perez, *The Next Seventy-Five Years* <https://mizrachi.org/hamizrachi/the-next-seventy-five-years/>

¹⁸ Menachem Rahat, *The Curse of the Eight Decade*, HaMizrachi, vol 6 No1, 30.

¹⁹ Rabbi Daniel Glatstein, *The Concealed and the Revealed* (Mesorah Publications, Ltd, Rahway, 2022), 102.

“The Mesilas Yescharim (Chapter 19) writes that it is impossible for HaShem’s honor to be amplified except through the redemption of the Jewish people and through their honor....The honor of the Jewish people and the *kavod* of HaShem are dependent on one another. G-d’s *kavod* is, *kavyachol*, reliant on ours, and vice-versa.

The Jewish people are HaShem’s ambassadors, representing and reflecting His Name throughout the world...When the world looks at our nation, we are the prism through which they are looking at HaShem....We reflect the identity of G-d.”

HaShem’s Oneness

In Chapter 4, we cited Rashi’s *pshat* on the Shema, and indicated that in reciting the Shema we accept the responsibility of changing the world from a state of *HaShem Elokeinu* to a state of *HaShem Echad*, recognized as the One and True G-d by the entire world.

How do we fulfill that mission?

We cited Rabbi E L Abish’s answer:²⁰ The Gemara²¹ explains that this is to be achieved by learning Torah and by behaving and interacting with the nations of the world in a pleasant manner. People observing the refined behavior of a learned Jew will quickly realize that the Torah teaches and conditions one to act and behave in a pleasant manner. Concerning such a person, HaShem says ‘You are My servant through whom I am glorified.’²² This will cause people to behave morally and acknowledge HaShem as the only true G-d.”

Rabbi Daniel Glatstein²³ expresses a similar idea but focuses on the responsibility that we have to achieve unity, *Achdut*. “HaShem’s being One, being *Echad*, is promulgated to the world when we display unity through peace, harmony and friendship. When the Jewish people are *Am Echad*, one cohesive nation, then the reality of HaShem being *Echad* is reflected.....When the Jews do not get along, when there is discord among them, HaShem is perceived as fragmented as well...When the Jews are at peace with one another, that proclaims to the world that HaShem is One.”

²⁰ Rabbi E L Abish, Portraits of Prayer 2 (Israel Bookshop Publications, Lakewood NJ, 2022), 82-83.

²¹ Yoma 86a

²² Yeshayahu 49:3

²³ Rabbi Daniel Glatstein, The Concealed and the Revealed (Mesorah Publications, Ltd, Rahway, 2022), 104.

Rabbi Glatstein then cites the Ramchal (*Maamar Hachochmah*):²⁴ “HaShem’s illumination is strengthened only through the medium of another entity that coalesces into a single cohesive unit. Even though each member of Klal Yisrael has a distinct identity and personality, the Jews are still considered *goy echad*, a single nation....The only way Klal Yisrael can promulgate the Oneness of HaShem throughout the world is by having *achdus*. Jewish cohesiveness is not meant just for the betterment of our society, but much more importantly, it conveys HaShem’s identity to the world....If there is discord and disparity among the Jews, then the message of HaShem’s being One is lost, and, *chas v’shalom*, a different message is conveyed. If there are multiple ambassadors, there must be multiple kings. This alternative message is heresy!... Jewish *achdus* proclaims to the entire world *HaShem Echad!* All this compels us to focus on the achievement of *achdus* among Klal Yisrael.

PERSPECTIVE

If we step back and look Jewish history, it can be summarized as “The Tale of Two Hatreds.” One is internal, it is our personal and group *sinat chinam* that prevent us from achieving *Achdut*. The other is external, it is antisemitism in its many forms. These two hatreds function as mirror images of each other because they are both inherently “baseless.” Group *sinat chinam* is baseless because it makes us hate Jews we don’t even know. Antisemitism is baseless hatred since it is amalgam of false accusations and conspiracy theories directed at us. Our history supports the notion that these two baseless hatreds are interdependent such that the external one, antisemitism, depends on the internal one, the *sinat chinam*. This implies that we can curb antisemitism if we manage to curb *sinat chinam*. Since antisemitism continues to mutate and we have not been able to eradicate it, why not try to curb *sinat chinam*? It's a win-win approach!

²⁴ Ibid., 105.

TAKE HOME MESSAGE FOR CHAPTER 9

Dear Reader,

We are about to take a spiritual leap. If you believe you are G-d-fearing, you will now have to put that belief to the test. If you think you are not quite at the stage of a G-d-fearing Jew, all I ask is that you read on with an open mind.

This chapter asserts that:

- (i) Antisemitism, which has historically plagued society, is DIRECTLY related to how Jews treat one another, on an individual and on a group basis.
- (ii) This relationship goes back to Biblical times, most notoriously but not exclusively with Amalek who initiated unprovoked evil attacks on us. There are additional precedents set by the nations of Moav, Edom and the Philistines who resented our Jewish values (Torat Yisrael), race (Am Yisrael) and Sovereignty in the land of Israel (Eretz Yisrael), respectively.
- (iii) These concepts explain millenia of harassment, oppression, and destruction directed at Jews on every continent, in every era.

On sacred memorial days (Tisha B'Av), we read texts and *kinnot* that move us to lament those losses. Our agenda now is different. The question is how committed are we to PREVENTING FURTHER LOSS?

The surest path to that accomplishment is by working on findings way to **unite** as much as possible, as soon as possible. The first two steps toward unity are to protect ourselves against personal and group *sinat chinam*.

I submitted to you ample evidence that getting along is, and has always been, what HaShem expects of His children. The sad irony- in ancient times and even in modern day Israel- is that it takes a crisis to band us together. When the crisis is over, we repeatedly fall into the grasp of the yetzer hara who delights again and again in our disunity.

If you only read one sentence in this chapter, let it be: “This is the moment to learn from history, before we destroy ourselves through the fire of hate.” This fire of hate starts with our personal and grou *sinat chinam* which then trigger antisemitism. How does that happen? It is a mechanism that is inherent to our relationship to the non-Jewish world.

You, and I, and all of us, have been chosen to be Hashem’s ambassadors on earth. The nations of the world cannot help but see God through our actions and behavior. Whether or not they admit it, they know that we have indeed been chosen. Therefore, if our behavior misrepresents Hashem or His Honor or His Oneness, we fail our mission, and we fail the entire world.

The Jewish nation is made up of many individuals and sectors. Although each has their own identity, talents and contribution, they are not meant to negate one another. Hashem’s expectation that we live in a harmony is a minimum, non-negotiable demand because our unity reflects on Our God: “. *“HaShem’s being One, being Echad, is promulgated to the world when we display unity through peace, harmony and friendship. When the Jewish people are Am Echad, one cohesive nation, then the reality of HaShem being Echad is reflected.”*

Unless the world sees our harmony, it will not come to recognize HaShem as the singular Master of the World. Finding ways to unite as a people is compelling. This realization will raise humanity’s conduct and usher in the Messianic era. Our unity can be achieved step by step because it starts with you and me!

