

Requiem for a Pretense

Yes, I know. The world is in turmoil as madmen aim their missiles at either coast, leaving us nowhere to flee but Kansas. And a funny-shaped microscopic version of Sponge-Bob has overtaken the planet with an unprecedented pandemic, ruining practically every form of business across the world other than those involved in manufacturing face masks.

Listen. Allow me to distract you for a moment from watching the CNN pandemic scorecard.

Did I ever tell you the story of the man who was reincarnated so many times and through so many forms that he finally gave up and resolved to simply enjoy the peaceful bliss of being neither dead **nor** alive? It's a great tale cleverly spun by the prolific 19th-century Russian Talmudist, poet and storyteller, Avraham Ber Gottlober.

You see, briefly, there was this Hassidic singer who just couldn't do life right the first time, let alone the second time, not to mention the third, fourth, fifth or sixth time, and so they kept sending him back, each time trying something different, like reincarnating him first as a horse, then as a cantor, then as a fish, then as a tax-collector, a dog, a critic, a donkey, a doctor, a leech, a moneylender, a hog, and finally as a contractor. (You have to admit, though, the *leech* idea was not only brilliant, but *original*.)

His main problem was his inability to accept who and what he was and was **not** and his relentless attempts at pretending he was who he wasn't or was not who he **was**. For instance, as a Hassidic singer, he was anything but a Hassid, let alone a singer, but pretended to be both in order to earn the esteem of the community and the local rabbi. To carry on this pretense effectively, he would drink himself into a stupor so that he instinctively bellowed out tunes and chants with such fervor and abandon that everyone thought him divinely-inspired. (I know, you're wondering, like, what's a story about a chronically reincarnated *schmeggeg* with issues got to do with the precarious nature of contemporary world events? – try to be patient.)

So anyway, this guy dies, but there's no place in the Beyond that wants to accept him as is because he doesn't even accept himself as is. And as you know, all such rejects are shipped back into the charge of the Angel of Death since he's the one who took them out to begin with. And when a soul is

returned to the Angel of Death, he in turn – having no place to keep it and too many forms to fill out if he does – reincarnates the soul into a form or situation best suited for the soul’s rehabilitation toward some semblance of qualification for acceptance by the Beyond. This is not the only reason for reincarnation in Judaism, but it’s one of many. For example, let’s say you’ve always craved pomegranates but never got around to eating one. Well, then you’d most likely be **reborn** into a family that runs a fruit stand, because Heaven has no room for regrets. And like the 4th-century Rabbi Zechariah taught: “In the future, you will have to account before God for all of the [permissible] pleasures of life that you went *gaga* over but chose not to partake of” (*Talmud Yerushalmi, Kidushin* [toward the end]).

And of course, throughout the story, mostly narrated by the reject himself, Gottlober infuses his character with an ample repertoire of clever quips, like when he moves from being a horse to becoming a cantor: “When a horse canters, at least he’s **getting** somewhere; but when a cantor is *hoarse*, then he’s **stuck!**”

To give you just one more example: When he incarnated as a doctor, he pretended not only to be as proficient as he wasn’t, he also pretended to be religiously-observant, such as not eating pork or shellfish and not riding on the Sabbath. And of course his pious ruse would bring him not most but **all** of the Jews in the region to his practice which grew and grew and grew.

Until one fine Sabbath day, while he was stuffing his face with freshly-caught crabs (very not kosher) in the privacy of his home, the rabbi walked in on him unannounced, a large number of congregants in-tow, maybe to pick him up for a special dinner in his honor – who knows? You can imagine his shock at the sight of the rabbi and the rabbi’s shock and everyone else’s shock at the sight of the supposedly religiously-observant doctor stuffing his face with crabs! Well, as you probably guessed, being startled like that, he choked on the pre-Heimlich crabs and died! So you see already how his repeated attempts at hiding who and what he was **really** all about once again got the best of him, or I should say the worst, and it was no different when he came back as a fish or a hog. As a fish, for instance, he ended up eating his own kind by pretending he was a different species of fish than they.

And then – listen to this -- one Friday afternoon, he noticed a worm wiggling about beneath the surface of the sea. And even though he wasn’t at all the type of fish that ate worms, he pretended he **was** and became instantly

hooked. (Just like he once ate crab meat while pretending to be the kind of Jew who didn't.) By the time he came to, it was a few hours before the Sabbath, and his widowed wife – now married to the cantor he used to compete with during his incarnation as a cantor – was about to slice him open in preparation for the Sabbath meal when he mustered forth every fiber of his previous cantorial capacity to manage a pathetically squeaky sound out of his otherwise mute embodiment, pleading with her not to cut him!

“It’s me, honey! Please! Please don’t slice me! (*squeak squeak*).”

His wife immediately recognized his whining, threw him back into the pail, and headed for the village rabbi who advised that the fish – that is, her **ex** -- be immediately enrobed in a shroud and accorded a ritual burial. And so, to make a tall tale shorter, our “fish” was carried intact to the synagogue in a very small wooden coffin, properly eulogized with concocted praises and biographical half-truths, and buried in the local Jewish cemetery with all due honors and accompanying rituals.

After several **more** innovative reincarnations, our hero grows so accustomed to coming and going in between the worlds that he turns into a **lifer** ghost, a wandering spirit whose interest in leaving one world for the other has gone out the window – one is as good as the other, he figures -- and he happily spends his time commuting between realms at will, sharing his tales with whoever would listen, even landing an interview on *Coast to Coast AM* and *Oprah*. Basically, our hero had spent so many incarnations pretending that he was what he wasn't or wasn't what he was that he ended up actually believing he was still alive even though he was as dead as a doorknob.

Gottlober, you see – the author of this tale -- was in his youth a major figure in the *Haskalah*, the Jewish version of the “Enlightenment Movement” of the early 19th century. He envisioned a world in which the Jew would be accepted and respected as an equal in the newly-emancipating atmosphere of the Occident that now overshadowed the heretofore repressive culture of the Church with burgeoning societies of innovative science, daring art, audacious literature, open-ended philosophy and biblical criticism. He and other “enlightened” Jews wasted little time in abandoning the sheltered ghetto life of prayer, Talmud and herring for a brave new world in which the Jew would no longer be perceived as a pariah by a now-more-enlightened Christian culture. Sadly, however, the “enlightenment” notwithstanding, anti-Jewish

pogroms continued across Europe as well as Gottlober's beloved Russia (especially around Easter when celebrants would opt for hunting Jews rather than eggs), shattering his illusion of a Jew-safe world and awakening him to the realization that assimilation was as realistic for Jews as was marriage for kangaroos. In the end, he realized that no matter how sincerely we endeavor to integrate ourselves into the global community, we will always stand out as who we **are**, not as who we try **not** to be. And this is how he came to write his most famous story, "*Der Gilgul* -- The Reincarnation." Barely four years after Gottlober died, in fact, the most virulently anti-Semitic tract – *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* – hit the stands with unprecedented fury to further poison the enlightened world against us. By the way, *The Protocols* is still in print today, being sold and distributed by the millions across the Middle-East and Asia. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, it's been a government sanctioned high school textbook for years! (*The Week*, August 25, 2006).

Gottlober was right. We have tried over the millennia a wide variety of incarnations in our meager endeavor to "fit in" and hopefully at the same time avoid or elude being loathed, with absolutely no lasting success. At one point in our history, we even tried **siding** with the world in its dastardly opinion of us, as so eloquently communicated by the notable Israel Jacobson in his dedication speech at the founding of the first Reform Temple in 1810:

Our ritual is still weighed down with religious customs which must be rightly offensive to reason as well as to our Christian friends. It desecrates the holiness of our religion and dishonors the reasonable man to place too great a value upon such customs; on the other hand he is greatly honored if he can encourage himself and his friends to realize their dispensability.

It made no difference. Before we could decide on one more component of our ancient tradition to whittle away at, we found ourselves crammed in railroad cattle cars en-route to Auschwitz alongside fellow Jews who had converted to Christianity long ago in the hope that they would avoid the very sort of consequence they now faced head-on. But did we learn anything from all this? I'm not so sure. I remember as a high school yeshiva boy not more than 20 years after the Holocaust studying at a boarding yeshiva in St. Louis when I snuck away one fine Shabbat day and wandered over to a nearby Reform Temple to see what it was about. At the front door I was met by a finely-attired distinguished looking gentleman who politely but firmly asked that I remove my yarmulke before entering. I was so shocked by his request that I bee-lined it back to the yeshiva and immersed myself so deeply in the

Talmud that dozens of ancient sages actually leaped out of the folios and fled in all directions to escape the intensity of my zeal.

I know things have changed and now *everyone* wears a yarmulke -- Reform, Conservative, Renewal, Humanistic, Reconstructionist, the Pope, devotees of ISIS – everyone but **me**. But that's not the point. The point is that when you study Jewish history within the scope of **world** history you will notice how we attempted numerous incarnations over and over again assuming things would go better for us when they only got worse. None of them fit. We always ended up looking like we were walking around in clothing two or three sizes too big or too small.

Bottom line, you can't be but who you are. You can change your stripes, your sex, your religion, but you will always remain a Jew and will continue to be despised an average of 60% more than any other minority group member worldwide, according to all the statistics, FBI and otherwise. Truth be told, half the globe wishes you would go away while the other half is happy to have someone to blame for all the ills of society.

In Saudi Arabia, everything bad was the fault of the Jews. When the air conditioner broke or suddenly the tap stopped running, the Saudi women next door used to say the Jews did it....I had never met a Jew. (Neither had these Saudis.)

-- Ayaan Hirsi Ali in *Infidel*, p. 47

A truck full of Hamas members with homemade weapons blew themselves up, killing sixteen of the Palestinians they purportedly exist to defend. The terror group immediately blamed their own deadly incompetence on the omniscient Jewish conspiracy.

-- *The American Spectator* (9/26/05)

We can march with them, protest with them, ally with them, vote with them all we want – bottom line, they will never accept us, in spite of all those phony interfaith dialogues we continue to naively revel in. Like Abraham Joshua Heschel put it: “How can we take seriously a friendship that is conditioned ultimately on the hope and expectation that the Jew will disappear?” (*The Jerusalem Post*, July 9, 1965, p. 6).

You know, when I first began working at a Forensic Hospital, I was issued an Administrative Directive delineating the *do's* and *don'ts* of my role as a chaplain. Among them was the proscription against distributing any religious material to the patients which in any way denigrated another faith or its adherents. Immediately, I suggested to my supervisor that the wording be changed because, as it stood, it would mean that Christian and Muslim chaplains would not be permitted to distribute copies of the New Testament or the Koran since both are filled with anti-Jewish tirades. Sure enough, the wording in the Directive was eventually changed.

Face it – if you are Jewish, you either murdered Christ or poisoned Mohammed. You're screwed either way. And if you think that Buddhists or Native Americans or Hindus or Wiccans or Zoroastrians carry a more positive picture of you, think again, because the slander spewed against us over the centuries by the *Good News for Mankind* and the *Religion of Peace* successfully spread far beyond their respective cultures and have long ago infused **world** culture with a portrayal of the Jew as a demonic usurper bent on controlling the world, exploiting the disadvantaged and sabotaging all that is good. (Did I mention that we supposedly also run the *Illuminati*?)

Even the renowned 19th-century humanist Kant could, and did, dubbing us “vampires in society” and our Judaism worthy of “euthanasia” (quoted in W.A. Kaumann's *Goethe, Kant, and Hegel: Discovering the Mind*, vol. 1, p. 74). Kant, as you know, was a Universalist; he believed in the value of all human beings – except, of course, the Jews, whose founding principle is...hmmmm...the value of all human beings! Even saintly old Gandhi was affected by the deeply-entrenched global anti-Semitic venom and barely ten days after *Kristallnacht* was busily chastising us for “imposing” ourselves on a country “which belongs to the Arabs,” referring to our desperate efforts to flee *en-masse* to the safety of our ancestral homeland (November 20, 1938 [*GhandiServe Foundation*]). And during the very same year that we breathed a 2,000-year-old sigh of relief when the Second Vatican Council publicly exonerated us from the charge of deicide, Pope Paul VI was busy reminding the world during a Passion Sunday Lenten service how we nonetheless not only failed to recognize Jesus as our Messiah, “but fought him, abused him, and finally killed him” (*The New York Time*, April 5, 1965, p. 33).

But Pope Paul's slip-of-the-tongue notwithstanding, do not for a minute presume that we've been exonerated for the death of Christ by **all** or even

most factions of the Church, as so fluently articulated by Sheik Yousef Al-Qaradhawi in the summer of 2006 across Arab media:

More than thirty years ago, the Vatican issued a document exonerating the Jews of [spilling] the blood of Jesus. Not all Christians accepted this document. The pope in the Vatican and the Catholics are the ones who exonerated them. They exonerated them under political pressure. But the Protestants did not exonerate them, the [Greek] Orthodox did not exonerate them, and the Patriarch Shinoda in Egypt did not exonerate them, and kept saying they bear the responsibility.... (*Middle East Media Research Inst.*, 8/26/06, from Qatar TV, Clip #1249).

Sheik Yousef was right-on. After all, Vatican-Two notwithstanding, the Catholic Church still considers the Jew a dried-up has-been and the only remaining impediment to the Second Coming of Christ (*Ecumenical Council on the Jews and Catechism No. 674*). And let's not forget our dear friend and supporter the Reverend Billy Graham, who in 1972 described us to then-President Richard Nixon as promoters of pornography and a threat to the sanctity of the American Way in addition to being a "stranglehold [that] has got to be broken or the country's going down the drain" (*New York Times*, March 17, 1972).

The Jew has tried every possible incarnation and failed at every one of them, and has been sent back over and over again in the hope that he will finally **get** it someday. Get **what?** -- that all of his attempts at pretending to be what he is not, or to not be what he is, are doomed to abysmal failure and that he will always awaken to discover that he's still where he always was -- friendless, despised, denigrated, smeared and misunderstood. He has been cast off every bandwagon and maligned in every church, mosque, elevator and barroom, and probably a tennis court or two as well.

A couple weeks back, Miriam Ashina and I stopped in a local bar for a drink after completing a grueling errand. It didn't take more than five minutes before "Jew" graced the conversation at the other end of the bar: "Yeah, he's pretty much like a **Jew**, always counting his money...." Of course they couldn't tell that we were Jews. First, the barroom was dark. Second, Jews are not known to frequent bars. Third, Jews are demonic, so they are not always visible. Fourth, we tipped generously.

Aside from a handful of anomalistic non-Jews who **appreciate** us (that includes a minor rabble of you who are reading this), we've got no one on our side other than our old neglected ancestral friend—*a'teek yo'min* -- "Ancient of Days," as the Kabbalah calls him -- the un-seeable, un-peggable, un-namable,

unknowable Life Force of the Universe we have referred to by so many names that we've all but forgotten the most important one: *ana mon de'ana* – Aramaic for “I Am Whatever It Is That I Am” (Exodus 3:14), which was not only the particular name which Creator chose to reveal to us more than 3,400 years ago but also the mantra he'd hoped we would adopt for ourselves.

Sadly, *ana mon de'ana* has been all but dissipated from our hearts by the very institution that we created to remember him. We have joined the rest of the world in confining him within pompous texts, sophisticated clerics, fancy temples and empty clichés in a tragic attempt to earn a position on the Hall of Fame alongside Recognized Bonafide Glorified World Religions even though our “prophets were those who in the name of God stood up against that which most people to this very day call Religion” (Abraham Joshua Heschel in *God in Search of Man*, pp. 230-231). Proudly, we beam at the delightful sound of seeming inclusivity in the oft-repeated motto, “Judeo-Christian,” even though there is as much Judeo about Christianity as there are whiskers on a tootsie roll.

I haven't forgotten about those of you who are **not** Jewish. If you really feel an affinity for us, I respectfully ask that you acquire your own copy of *Fiddler on the Roof*. All you need to know about the Gestalt of the Jewish Mystique is in that movie. Period. No *Idiot's Guide to Judaism* will help you to understand us, no books on Jewish philosophy or practice, no bibles -- all a huge waste. Just watch the movie over and over again until it hits you. It is a user-friendly rendition of the entire Torah. And if you truly love Jesus, know that the religion you may have grown up with in his name stands for everything he stood **against**, and that if he were alive today he'd walk right by the church and scamper into the nearest Chabad House for a shot of vodka, a plate of *lokshen kugel* and a taste of Talmudic aphorisms.

For all the talk of wanting Jews to accept Jesus as the Messiah...it was clear early on that a Jew could accept Jesus only by rejecting – betraying – everything Jesus himself believed...(Father James Carroll in *Constantine's Sword*, p. 148).

And if you are a Muslim Arab and truly love our common ancestor Abraham, know that the religion you may have grown up with stands for everything he stood **against**, and that up until the 7th century, your ancestors lived harmoniously and cooperatively alongside us without fanfare.

For almost a thousand years, Jews lived in the oases of Teyma, and Yathrib (later known as Medina) in the northern Arabian Peninsula.... They were

respected by the local Arabian tribes for their religion, culture, erudition, and literacy (*Kuwaiti News Agency*, November 4, 2015).

But, back to nuclear-armed missiles and Sponge-Bobical viruses .

Let me put it this way: We can make all sorts of attempts to quiet chaos, my friends, but chaos will always remain an integral component of the fabric of our existence. After all, it is out of chaos that life first emerged (Genesis 1:2) and trying to calm it is like altering the orbit of the earth. So let the world continue gallivanting about in its delusionary assumption that it is capable of anything other than its perpetually dizzying spin across the Great Nothing. You, however, have a job to do, and it's got nothing to do with whether a missile lands in your neighborhood or not, or whether you contract Covid-19 or 20, or whether you have a number tattooed on your wrist. Think about the young Jewish mom on her way to the Gas Chamber who begged a Nazi camp guard to loan her his pocketknife for just one moment. Assuming she would use it to kill herself, he obliged her. She took the knife, recited the blessing-prayer over circumcision and cut the foreskin of the newborn she clutched in her arms. Or the scene in the novel *Portnoy's Complaint* where a Jewish boy hangs himself, but not before pinning a note on his chest that read something like: "Mom – Mrs. Finkelstein called and asked if you could call her back before nine tonight." Both stories, the tragically painful and factual one and the tragically comedic fictitious one bespeak our way of dealing with the inexplicable madness we call life. The Jew goes on, he cares neither for the politics of global events nor the angst of the Angel of Death, knowing that there is nothing he can do about either. He is fiddling on top of a collapsing roof. He is on a nonstop flight to nowhere, and in the end he'll be the only one who gets there while everyone else will be grasping for his coat tails begging him to take them along.

This is what the LORD Almighty says: "In those days ten people from all languages and nations will take firm hold of a Jew by the hem of his robe and say, 'Let us go with you, because we have heard that ~~George Burns~~ God is with you'" (Zechariah 8:23).

We in essence live beyond and in spite of life itself and defy existence to its core. Even if bombs are whistling over our heads, we will continue to concern ourselves with the ritual removal of foreskins and teachings about cantorial reincarnations and the benefits of *matzoh*. We are pariahs and should stop pretending we're not. And we should be damn proud of it, to boot.

And that is why we work very hard at discouraging those who love us from ever converting. “It is far easier to perform a miracle,” quipped the 18th-century Rabbi Mendl of Kotzk, “than to be a Jew.”

Indeed.

Missiles? Bombs? Lockdowns? Apocalypse? Overrated -- **all** of it. Did you braid the *challah* yet for the Sabbath? Did you thank God when you came out of the bathroom that your bladder is still working? Did you put a five-dollar bill in your pocket in case you encounter a homeless person? You’re a **Jew**, for god’s sake! Learn from your failed incarnations and resolve to flourish as a **lifer** ghost, meandering about in and out of **both** worlds, yours and theirs, without compromising your own reality which is that you belong to neither. Reclaim your Jewishness, and live a more wholesome death. Like the character in *Der Gilgul*, you can pretend all you want that you are alive, but trust me on this: in the eyes of the world you’re a fucking fossil, a has-been, a reject, long ago superseded by two major world religions who paved their way to stardom over your dead body. Joining the “politically-correct” *Tikun Olam* mania to heal the planet is therefore -- at best -- **ironical** when in the eyes of the world it is **you** who are the **problem!** And just in case you failed to notice – your participation in demonstrations did not make you any more appreciated by your fellow demonstrators than you weren’t already. So stop thinking you can change the world with your “Celebrate Islam Week” or your “Ecumenical Passover Seders,” or your walks or runs for or against this or that or the other. Nobody cares. They don’t want you around. They are too busy shouting hateful epithets at you on campuses to hear anything you’ve got to say. They’re too preoccupied passing resolutions against your homeland and writing you out of history altogether!

In the last ten years the United Nations has passed more resolutions against Israel than against all Arab and relevant Islamic countries combined, and by a wide margin of 288 against Israel versus 97 against all the others. By this measure the United Nations deemed Israel three times as bad as all these undemocratic, mainly highly repressive, and often murderous regimes combined. Fully two out of every five human-rights resolutions the United Nations passed during the most recent ten-year period attacked Israel. That’s right: the United Nations deemed Israel alone to be worthy of total condemnation that comes close to equaling that which it doled out to the rest of the world, with all the world’s dictatorships, violence, war making, eliminationism, and mass murder.

-- Harvard Professor Daniel J. Goldhagen
in *The Devil That Never Dies*, p. 427

What is it about Jews that compels non-Jews to concoct boundless fantasies about them? UNESCO, the body that is supposed to look after culture for the United Nations, has come up with a magnificent example of these fantasies, decreeing that Jews have no connection with the Temple Mount....Re-invention of reality on this farcical scale brings to mind a play by the Hungarian Ferenc Molnar in which some dispossessed aristocrats are discussing what is wrong with the world, and one of them says, "It is all Napoleon's fault, but I have just read a book which proves that Napoleon never existed." Perhaps UNESCO's next step is to discover that Jews never existed.

-- Senior Editor David Pryce-Jones
in *The National Review* (10/13/16)

Armageddon? Apocalypse? Nuclear War? What is it **your** business? You're a frigging **ghost**! You don't exist. The world is tired of you showing up pretending that you **do**. Don't you get it yet that your very existence challenges the validity of those who claim to have replaced you? So stop wasting your time and energy and go immerse in a *mikveh* or something, and let the world bounce about without your unwanted aid. You can best save the world by being more and more the anomaly that you **are**. Have you forgotten your forte? Don't you remember how you composed the most joyfully stirring *nigunim* as the Crusaders came at you with their blood-drenched swords; and how you danced in other-worldly elation as you were expelled from one country to another; and how you cracked jokes while they ransacked your synagogues; and how for every Jewish book they burned you sat down to compose a hundred more? So what exactly are you so concerned about? Death? Pain? Cataclysms? End of times? Missing an episode of "Billions"? None of these can rob you of who and what you are.

Only **you** can.

###

The Conundrum of Jewish Leftism

By Gershon the Winkler, Jew

One of the most compelling Jewish thinkers of modern times, Martin Buber, once described us as "a wedge which Asia has driven into Europe's structure, an

element of fermentation and disturbance of the peace....” (quoted in Robert Weltsch, ed., *Deutsches Judentum* [“German Judaism”], p. 33).

Indeed, like it or not, we are an irregularity on the face of the planet. We’ve tried again and again to become like everyone else, to fit in, and have failed abysmally over and over again. On the one hand, we have no clue how the world outside of us actually functions, and, on the other hand, the world outside of us is bewildered in regard to who or what we are and where we belong, or, more truthfully, **whether** we belong at all. We are like the walking dead, a hapless group that the world considers to have died long ago along with hosts of other mythical characters, but which stubbornly refuses to accept it.

Reb Bunam and Reb Mendl (18th-century) have told of their frequent meetings with the dead who did not know they had died, people who lived in an imaginary world, homeless spirits whom even Hell would not admit...they lived in neither this world nor the next. Driven and confused, they roamed about without goal or reason (A.J. Heschel in *A Passion for Truth*, p.23).

It is no wonder the ancient Greeks dubbed us a “threat to humanity,” intimidated by what they perceived as our “secrecy” and “separatism,” labelling us as pariahs in their xenophobic rants for the crime of simply being – well -- **different**. And different we continued to be, even when we occasionally chose to assimilate or convert. You will not find, for example, a Jewish convert to Islam or Buddhism or Christianity or Native Americanism who isn’t in one way or another still living their newly-adopted religion or culture with a uniquely “Jewish” twist. Hitler understood this and refused to take a chance on half-Jews or quarter-Jews, or ex-Jews, considering all of us a danger to society. The Spanish Inquisition had a heyday rooting out Jewish converts to the Church because they stuck out like a sore something or other, always seeming “different” in their mannerism, their audacity, their radical views, their outspokenness, their propensity to question everything, maybe even unconsciously roll their eyes when offered the wafer. The Jew simply cannot conceal her or his or their Jewishness. One way or another it sticks out. To whom do you suppose that disclaimer on the bottom of restaurant menus are intended -- “*No substitutions allowed*”? Bottom line, whether you are born Jewish or a “Jew-by-Choice,” you are strapped with being so notably different from everyone else across the planet that if you showed up at a UFO conference, they’d immediately quarantine you for observation.

The alien character of the Jews is the central cause of the origin of anti-Semitism, and this alien character has two aspects: The Jews are alien to other peoples because they are foreigners derived from another land, and they are alien because of their

foreign customs which are strange and outlandish in the eyes of the local inhabitants (Victor Tcherikover, *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews* [New York, 1979], p. 358).

From ancient times to the present, it mattered not at all whether you were a Jew who believed in God or not, or whether you were religious or not, spiritual or not, or whatever. If you were Jewish, you were and are by your very nature at **worst** an offspring of the Devil (John 8:44 and First John 3:10) and at **best** an ape or a pig (Koran 5:60), if not just plain godless. “The fact that the Jews did not produce images of their God,” notes Princeton Professor Peter Schafer, led the ancient Greeks and Egyptians to the “radical conclusion that the Jews simply were to be regarded as godless” (*Judeophobia: Attitudes Toward the Jews in the Ancient World* [Harvard, 1998], p. 36).

Freud himself couldn't figure us out even after decades of self-analysis as it pertained to his **own** identity as a Jew. In his latter-day conclusions, he realized that even though we look like most everyone else amid the populations that we grace, the fact is that “the intolerance of the masses strangely enough manifests itself more strongly against **small** differences than against fundamental distinctions” (Sigmund Freud, *Der Mann Moses*, Vol. 16, p. 197). And those “small differences” seeping out of one of the tiniest of the world's minorities have had by far the most devastating as well as the most constructive impact on humanity. “No other people,” noted Buber, “has begotten such base adventurers and betrayers; no other people such exalted prophets and redeemers” (*On Judaism*, p. 24).

The mystique of “Jewish” may perhaps be found in the underlying meaning of the Hebraic word חֲצִפָּה *chutzpah*, the secret of our people's distinct and unrelenting character as well as of our mysterious survival through thousands of years of inexorable exile, oppression and genocide. No matter what happened to us, we never gave in and never stopped singing, dancing, and laughing – even during the Holocaust! (e.g., *Laughter in Hell: The use of Humor during the Holocaust*, by Steve Lipman [Jason Aronson Publishers, 1993]).

Chutzpah is not **slang** for us, it is an **ideology!** -- it is an in-your-face attitude of living and being, come what may. Abraham Joshua Heschel gave it the term “Spiritual Audacity,” because – whether you are religiously-inclined or not, the Jewish character is rooted soul-deep in an inexplicably other-worldly peapod. “The basic cause of Greco-Roman anti-Semitism,” wrote French historian Marcel Simon, “lay in Jewish separatism. This means, in the last analysis, that it lay in their religion, since the religion produced the separatism” (*Verus Israel: Study of the*

Relations Between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire [Oxford, 1986], p. 202). Interestingly, the word *chutzpah* itself is a combination of two words: חוץ meaning “Outside,” and צוף “Outlook,” which would mean that *chutzpah* is the practice of stepping outside of what is clearly or unclearly before us; moving beyond the way in which we are ordinarily accustomed to perceiving something, as we find often in the Torah narrative: וַיִּשָּׂא עֵינָיו וַיִּרְאֵהוּ -- “And he lifted his eyes and he saw” (Genesis 18:2), meaning he saw the world and its issues outside the way in which the rest of the world saw itself. This is the audacious nature of the Jewish mystique, daring to **not** be or think like everyone else.

The Jews were never quite like the others; they were always inclined to isolate themselves...There was always something exceptional about the religion of the Jews, and this made them difficult in social intercourse, ill-adapted to the pattern of ancient society (Jan Nicolaas Sevenster, *The Roots of Pagan Anti-Semitism in the Ancient World* [Leiden, 1975], p. 89).

Sadly, though, while our audaciousness has helped us to win prizes in science and medicine, we have no clue how to deal with the lessons of history. Every time we grow too comfortable, our idealism gets the best of us and brings out the worst in us. The moment we were “emancipated” from the ghettos of Europe during the Enlightenment Era of the 19th century, for instance, we wasted not a moment in becoming – in Buber’s words -- “an element of fermentation and disturbance of the peace,” lambasting everything around us, from politics and culture to values and traditions! We even spearheaded left-wing movements which in turn sparked revolutionary activities earning us the scapegoat-of-the-century award by Germany when they lost World War One.

In left-wing politics...Jews provided the ideological leadership in 19th century Germany...Jews were among the leaders of the revolutionary wing...The leadership of Austrian socialism...and Hungarian Communism was almost entirely Jewish, and there was not a single non-Jew in some East-European delegations at the congress of the Second International [an organization of socialist and labor parties formed in Paris in 1889]...Most of the founding-members of the German Communist Party in 1918, including the most prominent among them, were of Jewish origin (Walter Z. Lacqueur, *Out of the Ruins of Europe*, p. 472).

The dream of Jewish statehood, too, was thwarted, if not utterly sabotaged, by Leftist Jewish leadership. And it had nothing to do with concern over how our statehood would be received by the local Arab populace. Even Ben Gurion himself voiced his apprehension in **that** regard. No, my friends, it was outright rejected by Leftist Jewish leaders who worked tirelessly to turn it on its head, preferring their

illusory dream of assimilation and acceptance to the dream of a safe haven for an oppressed Jewry. During the **First** World War, Britain and France had turned to the Jewish leadership of Bolshevik Russia in the hope of winning their military support against the Ottoman Empire in exchange for the offer of a Jewish homeland in then-Ottoman-run Palestine. The Jewish Bolshevik leaders, however, not only rejected the idea but then went ahead and “wiki-leaked” it to an already-outraged Arab public dealing with the massive influx of pogrom-survivors pouring in from Eastern Europe. In the end, their dream of assimilation dissipated in the fumes of Stalin’s firing squads and in the Zyklon-filled chambers of wishful thinking.

Even in the aftermath of the Holocaust, when Jewish statehood in the ancestral homeland was becoming a reality, Buber foresaw the cataclysmic consequences that would follow if the intent was to “fit in” -- to become “a nation like all others.” Although a devoted supporter of the Zionist movement at first, he eventually withdrew his endorsement when it turned politically mimical.

Zionist thinking in its current forms has failed to grasp the principle that the transformation of life must spring from the return to the origin of our nature...I am setting up Hebrew humanism in opposition to that Jewish nationalism which regards Israel as a nation like unto other nations... (*The Writings of Martin Buber*, pp. 294 and 296).

Buber realized that while we are experts at being what we **are**, we are absolute failures at being what we’re **not**. Because, severed from its roots, the Jewish genius tends to spin out of control and create Frankensteinian monsters who wreak more havoc than innovation. As the late eminent historian and sociologist Eva Gabriele Reichmann predicted: “With the release from the chains of Jewish tradition, all tradition will in itself be easily rejected” (*Die Flucht in den Hass: die Ursachen der deutschen Judenkatastrophe* [“Escape into Hate: The Causes of the German Jewish Catastrophe”], p. 41). Indeed, the more we rejected our own ancient ways, the more we critiqued the traditions and values of the cultures around us, rousing populations that already harbored disdain toward us to eventually act on it with a gusto we’d never anticipated. We created authors then and now who generously nourished the haters, as well as philanthropists who benevolently funded the instigators. We created Trotsky, for instance, whose ideals did more harm to Jews and Judaism than all of the oppressive czars combined. Centuries earlier we’d created Paul of Tarsus who inspired *The Greatest Lie Ever Told*, even outdoing the latter-day *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion* by creating not only anti-Jewish doctrinal writ available in the night table drawer of every motel but inventing an entire religion based on the supersession of the one in which he claimed to have been reared.

Paul presented a mere travesty of Judaism.... Paul's theory did not fit the facts; and whether by conscious intention or not, the facts had to be distorted to fit the theory...with the result that from his day to the present, Judaism has suffered under a cruel injustice.... (R. Travers Herford, *The Pharisees*, pp. 219-220).

To paraphrase Reichmann, it would behoove us to learn to look at ourselves not only with our own eyes but also with the eyes of the world around us (*Die Flucht in den Hass: die Ursachen der deutschen Judenkatastrophe*, p. 290). Because, we've forgotten how dangerous we can be to ourselves when we misdirect our otherwise *Yiddishe Koppes* to ends for which they were never intended. Our well-meaning attempts at proving to the world how humanistically-inclined we are and how zealously concerned we are for social welfare and change have only proven catastrophic over and over again and resulted in our well-intentioned gestures being thrown right back at us with a vengeance.

The history of the Jews in Germany shows that even useful gifts by a minority to the majority of a people will sometimes not be received in good grace and can indeed result in disastrous consequences to the minority (Horst von Maltitz, *The Evolution of Hitler's Germany*, p. 88).

They don't want us at their LBGTQ parades, and they don't want us at their anti-ICE demonstrations and they certainly don't want us at their BLM protests. (<https://jewishjournal.com/news/323844/philadelphia-blm-protesters-call-jews-synagogue-of-satan/>). We are a pariah to a world we so devotedly try over and over and over again to mollify like a victim of spousal abuse. What will it take to remind us that our interference pro or con in any political conflict only further fuels the eternally-damning flames of antisemitism? That every time we raise our voices for or against anything, the decibel of the voices that resound in response end up superseding ours with a deafening roar? What will it take to convince us that joining the "politically-correct" *Tikun Olam* mania to fix everything we deem wrong in society is -- at best -- **ironic** when in the eyes of the world it is **we** who are the **problem!**? And that our participation in demonstrations have not rendered us any more appreciated by our fellow demonstrators than we weren't already.

In January of 2009, no less than 900 academicians signed and delivered to then-President Barack Obama a petition accusing Israel of being an "apartheid regime" and a "racist regime," as well as committing "crimes against humanity" and guilty of "ethnoidal atrocities." Not long afterward, the late University of Illinois Professor Fred Gottheil sent out his *own* petition among 675 of the same petitioners who had signed the **first** one. The intent of this *second* petition was to protest the oppression and abuse of women, gays and lesbians in a number of

Middle-Eastern Muslim countries. All three groups are subject to severe discrimination, imprisonment, and sometimes execution in some of these societies, so surely the same academicians who signed the condemnation of Israel, which does *not* discriminate against women, gays and lesbians, would support Gottheil's cause with unprecedented *gusto!* But that didn't happen. Instead, only **30** responded. And only 27 actually **signed**. The remaining 645 who had endorsed the censure of Israel for "Human Rights Violations" refused to censure the chronic human rights violations against women, gays and lesbians in these Muslim countries. Of the 645 who had endorsed the anti-Israel petition, a whopping 164 even involved faculty who taught classes in gender and women studies, and only 5 of *them* signed Gottheil's document (*American Thinker* [September 5, 2010]).

Though I think that chimerical hostility has also been directed at some other groups and their members, I am convinced that Jews...have suffered in ways beyond description because of the completely irrational way in which many non-Jews...tried to defend themselves from doubts about themselves by attributing unreal characteristics to "Jews" (Gavin .I. Langmuir, *Toward A Definition of Antisemitism* [Oxford, 1990], p. 17).

Yesterday, we rabble-roused in Europe and kindled the flames of radical Leftism there, and today in the good old USA we're doing it all over again. And you want me to keep quiet and just focus on Talmudic aphorisms? My fellow Jews and Noahides, please stay awake. Because we're at it once again, shouting nonsense from podiums of political candidacy and from soap-boxes of contrived demonstrations that only further fan the flames of Jew-loathing; joining in protests which at their organizational roots and intents are anti-Jewish and anti-Israel. Are we paying any attention at all to what and who we are voting for, supporting, funding? Are we once again bartering our very own **Judaism** for someone else's **Leftism**?

Jewish monotheism meant a social conscience imbued with personal responsibility and love for one's fellow man... For many young Jews this commitment to a left-wing idealism provided a new religion... The specific Jewish religious heritage was transformed into ethical idealism and directed toward bringing about a change in present society... For many a Jew the rejection of traditional Judaism led to this new religion (George L. Mosse, *Germans and Jews*, p. 206).

I do not believe anything of the likes of Kristallnacht and what it spawned would ever happen again, but I do worry about the damage our more contemporary Leftist leanings can cause and **is** causing to the security and to the polity of the United States and Israel, homes to most of the world's Jewish populations. Simply put, we are good at a lot of things, but we have proven fatally inept at Radical

Leftism, from Korach the disgruntled Levite to Paul the misdirected Visionary, to our Russian Trotsky and our German Tucholsky.

It is in the main those Jews who attempted to cut themselves loose most completely from their environment who became the Socialist leaders, such as Adler and Bauer in Austria, Singer and Kurt Eisner in Germany, Rosa Luxemburg in Poland, and Trotsky and Zinoviev in Russia... The ideology of protest is natural to the uprooted intellectual....” (Peter G. J. Pulzer, *The rise of Political Antisemitism in Germany and Austria*, pp. 261-262).

The liberating lull in our tragic history which we experience today should not be misconstrued as a sign that we have been liberated from the xenophobic mold in which we'd been cast for centuries. Judeophobia remains as real a global malady today as it has been for thousands of years.

To a considerable extent the complete freedom of expression during the Weimar Republic and the extreme tolerance of the regime proved to be the undoing of the Jewish intellectuals... They merely mistook the uprising against the old regime and against the war in 1918 for a symptom of readiness of the German people for a Bolshevik type of revolution, and in doing so, they fatally alienated themselves (Horst von Maltitz, *The Evolution of Hitler's Germany*, p. 152).

So, is Left right? Maybe for some, and in certain circumstances, but not for us, We're just not good at it. Great revolutionary minds have indeed brought positive change to the world, but where **they** did it as wood to a bonfire, **we** usually end up doing it like kerosene to an inferno. We were instructed to be “a **light** onto the nations,” not a blazing blowtorch. We have far too often underestimated our potency in making waves and our incompetence in stemming tsunamis.

Traditionally, they [the Jews] have shown great ability on the level of abstract thought, but politics also involves instinct, common sense, wisdom and foresight, and in this respect their record has not been impressive. The inability to understand the imponderables in the life of peoples has been a great handicap. It has led them time and again into belittling national traditions, one of the main reasons for the failure of the radical Left everywhere (Walter Z. Lacqueur, *Out of the Ruins of Europe*, p. 479).

One upon a time, in Czarist Russia, a beleaguered Jew struggling to make a living finally woke up to the realization that in order to succeed in the world-at-large, he would have to become Christian. So, he up and went to the local Orthodox Church, consulted with the local priest and prepared for his conversion. Among the practices to which he was introduced was abstaining from meat on

Fridays. And, of course, to make sure our Jewish friend was truly Catholic, the priest looked in on him every now and then to ascertain the authenticity of his commitment to his newfound faith.

In no time at all, our friend's business began to boom beyond his wildest expectations and as much as he regretted having to abandon the faith of his ancestors and his community, he reveled in the abundance wrought by his conversion.

But one Friday afternoon, while sneaking a sandwich with a hefty slab of pastrami, the priest happened by and caught him.

“You! You're eating meat on **Friday!!** Aha! Just like I suspected! Your conversion was a **lie!!**”

“No! No! No!” protested the Jew-turned-Catholic. “You've got it all wrong, Father! You see, I actually made myself a sandwich of fish, and suddenly – you won't believe this! – but the fish suddenly turned into a pastrami!”

“How preposterous!” shouted the cleric. “How can a fish turn into a pastrami? Once a fish, **always** a fish!”

“**Exactly!**” the Jew shouted back, throwing all caution to the wind as his ancient *chutzpah* overtook him. “And by the same token, once a Jew **always** a Jew!!!”