



## United We Stand, Divided We Fall

*By Rabbi Ariel Bar Tzadok*

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I believe that it is rather apparent that there is a severe lack of unity among the Jewish people. Secular Jews fight with religious Jews, Reform Jews fight with Orthodox Jews, Ashkenazi Jews fight Sephardic Jews, and left-wing Jews fight right-wing Jews. On and on the divisions grow. On and on the chasms widen. What we do not realize is that we are about to collectively fall into our self-made chasms.

There is an age-old saying; "united we stand, divided we fall." With all the infighting that is going on between Jews we fail to recognize, that the hurt we cause is only to ourselves.

In our own eyes, we Jews are divided up into numerous "camps." Even in the religious community I have seen the worst type of exclusionary behavior, by one religious group looking down upon another. Those who wear black hats seldom have anything to do with those who wear knit kippahs (yarmulkes). One group of Hasidim has nothing to do with another and so on. On and on I can go, but it pains me to do so, thus I will not.

We all so willingly wave our banner of self-righteous correctness. Our way is right and their way is wrong! Each group says this about the other. Well, enough is enough!

All Jews must remember that we all have a common last name. Whether we are Sephardi Jews, Ashkenazi Jews, religious Jews, secular Jews, Israeli Jews or American Jews, we all share one thing in common and that is the name: Jew.

At the same time that we Jews lack any type of national cohesion, our enemies have all the cohesion in the world, at least around one point. Whether it be Arab extremists or branches of fundamental Christianity, be it white supremacists or African American racists, all these different groups share one thing: their hatred of Jews.

Anti-Semites make no distinction between what type of Jew they hate. They hate us all. In addition, there is no place to hide. Indeed, even converting out of the Jewish religion does not save one from the scourge of Jew haters. About a year or so ago I was monitoring a Christian missionary television program hosted by an apostate Jewish convert. On his program, he endeavors to appear and sound Jewish. He admitted that



he still faces anti-Semitism from members of his own church, and he simply cannot understand why.

In Israel today we argue over left wing versus right wing politics. Here in the United States we argue between Torah faithful Judaism and modern American counterparts. We eat each other alive and dissolve any type of national cohesion that we so desperately need for collective Jewish survival.

Did we not learn anything from the Holocaust and what has happened after it? Since W.W.II, there have been many other holocausts, in Cambodia, Serbia, Africa, and others. The world pays attention, yet does nothing to help, at least not until after millions have died. Is this going to be our fate again? If the growing number of anti-Semites around the world have their way, they will kill us all and sweep the collective memory of the Jews under the rug of history.

Did you ever stop to think why certain European countries spend so much time, effort, and money arming the enemies of the State of Israel? What interest does it serve them other than for their anti-Semitic allies and henchman to attempt another holocaust?

Modern political opinion is that if only there were a Palestinian state then there would finally be everlasting peace. Who on earth are you kidding?

To this very day Moslem extremists do not hate Israelis in particular, they hate Jews. In addition, they hate America who they believe is controlled by Jews.

Do you doubt this? Tell me, which secular, left wing, anti-Zionist, anti-religious Jew is welcome to live and prosper in Iran? Iraq? Libya? Syria? Which anti-Semitic group will welcome with open arms the completely secular Jew? The KKK? The American Nazi party? Who? Be honest! Which hate group will welcome any Jew, any Jew whatsoever? The answer is obviously clear! They repeat it repeatedly. They hate all Jews, and most of them hate the Jewish religion and Torah even more.

In order to prove my point I wish to quote to you some statements that were made within the past few weeks in the public Palestinian media, television, radio and newspaper. Read them yourself, check my sources. Verify their authenticity, sit back, and think about what you read.

\* A crossword puzzle clue in the official PA newspaper Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, February 18, 1999:

*Clue for 7 across: "Jewish center for eternalizing the Holocaust and the lies" correct answer: "Yad Vashem" [Israel's national Holocaust memorial].*

\* Excerpts from a religious program broadcast on official PA television on February 16, 1999:



*"The Jews are used to deceit... they fake the facts and changed the laws of Allah.... They faked the words of Allah and changed their religion and laws and they are the wicked. And whomever does not rule according to what Allah brought down, whomever rebelled against this... is the descendant of the Satans and he is worthy of receiving the punishment of the oppressors... They changed this Torah to an expression of the History of the Jews, and their history is full of guilt and crimes... they changed the grace of Allah into heresy and they faked this Torah..."*

\* Excerpt from a television program entitled "Palestine: History and Heritage" broadcast on official Palestinian Authority television on December 1, 1998:

*"To the east is the Al-Buraq wall, which the Jews call the Wailing Wall, but it is in truth a wall that was built previously by our forefathers the Caananites... Those who claim it is from the Temple - are of course only the Jewish archaeologists themselves..."*

\* Excerpt from November 20, 1998 Friday prayer sermon broadcast on the official PA radio station the Voice of Palestine:

*"So we see that they [the Jews] have complete control over the political leadership, not only in America and the Western world, but also over world leaderships, including the leaders of the Arab and Muslim world. Jewish money and media are the leaders of the nations and continents..."*

\* Article in the official PA newspaper Al-Hayat Al-Jadeeda, November 7, 1998:

*"Corruption is part of the nature of the Jews. So much so that it is only on rare occasions that one finds corruption in which Jews were not behind it. Their intense love of money and accumulating wealth is well known and they do not care what method is used to achieve it. They are likely to use the lowliest and most convenient methods to achieve their objectives.... If one studies their history, it becomes apparent that the Jews were subjected to losses and expulsion as a result of their wickedness and their despicable acts. All this occurred after their true nature and their responsibility for destroying the world was revealed... Since this is their mode of behavior, they have focused their efforts on developing their plotting mentality, as they believe the secret of their survival lies in their control over the economies of the countries which opened their gates before them."*

\* Excerpts from a religious program broadcast on official PA television on November 3, 1998:

*"There is no light nor teaching in their Torah today. Their Torah today is just a collection of writings in which those people wrote lies about God, His prophets and His teachings... the Jews are the seed of Satan and the devils.... The Jews believe only in the first five books, which includes the Book of Genesis, all of which is lies about God and about the day of Creation... The Jews do not believe in God nor in the End of Days. They have*



*distorted it [the Torah], lied about it and forged it... They invented it as a history book for the Jews, full of promises to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that they would be given the land of Palestine... the entire Torah comes to demand ownership of the land for the Jews. Their history is full of rebellion and humiliation - They have distorted the faith and exchanged the gift of God for heresy, rebellion and prostitution, and distorted the Torah...." (GPO)*

Did you take the time to contemplate the repercussions of these statements? Did you ask yourself how many more statements like these have been made? Did you consider how many people, around the world, and right here in America believe these things and worse?

It is easy to dismiss these ideas and say that they are merely the words of fanatics and that eventually they will go away. I wonder if the Jews in 1930's Germany believed this same way. Why did they not see the coming of Hitler and the holocaust? It certainly did not happen to them all of a sudden. The political and social signs of the coming destruction were evident for decades before.

What do you think? Are there signs today of another crises that can befall world Jewry? Do you say no? Let us hope you are right. Let us hope that all anti-Semitism fades away in the "New World Order" of things. Yet, who now is doing the dreaming; you who believes that anti-Semitism will never rear its ugly head again against world Jewry, or me who believes that it is simply a matter of time before Israel is attacked "big time" by our Middle Eastern neighbors. With or without a Palestinian state, what do you see coming?

Just in case you agree with me that the international position of world Jewry should be a matter of individual concern for us all, what then can we do to assist our people and ourselves? Granted a strong state of Israel is crucial for Jewish survival. In this way when Russian anti-Semitism goes berserk, those Jews will have a place to go.

Who knows what could happen here in the United States if, G-d forbid, there was ever a serious economic crisis? While I do not believe the U.S. government would put Jews in concentration camps, the general population might perpetuate ever-increasing attacks against Jews. Fantasy? Let us hope so. If not, at least we have the State of Israel, at least for now.

With or without a homeland, we still do have a mighty weapon in our arsenal, which is undefeatable. This is our spiritual power, the same spiritual power that our secular and liberal fellow Jews denies connection to. Nonetheless, it is our weapon of last resort.

In Genesis, chapter 32, we read about the episode of Ya'aqob Avinu meeting his brother Esav after being apart for over 20 years. Esav hated Ya'aqob and wanted him dead. Ya'aqob knew this all too well. So, he prepared for their inevitable meeting. RaMBaN, in his famous Biblical commentary, explains to us that from this meeting of Ya'aqob with





Esav the Jewish people are to learn how to deal with Esav's descendants, the anti-Semites.

Without going into peripheral detail about this episode the last resort taken by Ya'aqob was prayer. It was the power of prayer that saved our father (and thus us). RaMBaN discusses the great value of prayer in times of crises. Crises can be either individual or collective.

**The greatest crises facing world Jewry today is not the threat from outside forces, but rather the threat from inside.**

**The greatest enemy facing world Jewry today is the constant spirit of strife and infighting.**

**We have forgotten that we are one nation and have become many nations.**

It seems that we continue to divide and sub-divide. This attitude of separation has become so ingrained in our psyche that we even joke about it. I am sure you have heard the joke about the Jew stranded on a desert island. After a number of years, he is rescued. The rescue crew sees that the Jew built two synagogues on the island. When asked why he built two of them, he replied, "this is the one that I go to, and that is the one I never go to." We chuckle, but we should not.

Jewish prayer has always revolved around a minyan (a group of at least ten men). Jewish prayer is collective. There is power in numbers. This is ever so true in spiritual matters.

Unity, this is what we so desperately need today. We must remember that all those other Jews out there who we feel are so dead wrong about this or that thing are, nonetheless, still our brother Jews. They are still our family. We must do whatever we can to heal the breaches between us. This is definitely not a call to accept non-authoritative Torah opinions as being (G-d forbid) legitimate. Nonetheless, we still have to deal with our family, regardless of their beliefs. We still must treat them like family, simply because they are. When we start acting like a family, we will be able to better resolve all our outstanding issues. For this, we must all pray. B'ezrat HaShem.