
Opening Questions to throw out for Class Discussion

Has anyone in the room experienced antisemitism?

What do you think the root cause of antisemitism is?

If asked to speak in front of a non-Jewish audience about antisemitism what would you say?

Ezekiel prophesies that in the [era of] “footsteps of the Messiah” a solution will be proposed among Jews: “We will be as the nations” [Ezekiel 20:32]. The actualization of the prophecy began with the Berlin Enlightenment (Haskalah), almost 150 years ago. Its proponents masked what they were doing with the words, “Be a Jew in your home and a person in public.” The fruits of this approach quickly ripened. Their children apostatized. Their slogan amounted to an undermining of the foundations of the Torah. The Torah had warned that Jews should be separated from the nations in their whole lifestyle. “And I have set you apart from other peoples, that ye should be Mine” [Leviticus 20:26].

The Maskilim came and said exactly the opposite: “Be only like the nations.” God said about this: “In that ye say: We will be as the nations . . . shall not be at all.” “Surely with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm and with fury poured out” [Ezekiel 20:32–33]. It will begin with “a mighty hand.” If that does not help, the “outstretched arm” will come. If this also does not help, then there will be a “fury poured out.” We cannot know in which of the three processes we now are. The near future will show us. In any event, it is clear that the prophecy of “shall not be at all” will be realized. The nations are driving us away from them in a murderous way. It is said, that it is difficult to be a Jew. A wonder has occurred in recent times. It is increasingly difficult to become a gentile. The gentiles are driving us back.

It is said in the name of the Gaon [dean of scholars Yosef Dov Ber Soloveichik], the author of Beit Halevi, of blessed memory: It is written, “He who separates between light and darkness and between Israel and the gentiles” [Havdalah service at end of sabbath (sic)]. There is a specific distance between light and darkness [twilight]. One cannot change the distance, lengthen or shorten it. It is the same between Israel and the gentiles. There is a specific distance as to how far they should be one from the other. If the Jews approach too closely, the gentiles push them back. From this, one

can understand why the more the Jews have approached the gentiles, the more severely the Jews have been repelled. We see this now in the lands where Jews have completely assimilated, how horribly the gentiles push back. It was also this way in Egypt when the servitude became difficult. The Jews began to emulate the Egyptians, thinking that through this their situation would become easier. What did God do? "He turned their heart to hate His people" [Psalms 105:25]. The more they wanted to assimilate with the Egyptians, the greater the animosity of the gentiles toward them. When the Jews realized their mistake, the redemption came. The same will be with us. "If you are separated from the nations, you are Mine. If not, you are with Nebuchadnezzar and his friends" [Rashi ad Leviticus 20:26]. . . .

"In the generation that the son of David will come, the face of the generation is like the face of the dog" [Mishnah Sota 9:15, and B. T. Sanhedrin 97a]. . . .

The Hofets Hayim of blessed memory used to give a second meaning to "the face of a dog" (in the name of the sage Rabbi Yitshak ben Hayim Volozhiner, author of Nefesh Hahayim, of blessed memory). The nature of a dog is that if one throws a stone at it, the dog runs to bite the stone. When a Haman arises against Jews, we ne

There is an explanation that has become popular in modern times, that it is Israel's destiny to be isolated, friendless, hated, abandoned and alone, as if antisemitism were somehow written into the script of history. I do not believe this. It isn't. None of the prophets said so. To the