

## **FEBRUARY 22ND 2019 / 17TH ADAR I 5779**

Dear chevreh,

There has been a frightening escalation in anti-Semitism and Jew-Hatred\* (see citation below) lately. Antisemitism is rising sharply across Europe, France reporting a 74% increase in the number of offences against Jews last year and Germany reporting a 60% increase in incidents. Just this Tuesday, nearly 100 gravestones at a Jewish cemetery in France were vandalized with swastikas. Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam joined forces with a Holocaust denier and anti-Semitic ideologue to attack the Jewish religion and blame various ills of modern society on Jews during a recent keynote event at the Nation of Islam's conference in Chicago.

We all felt a chill when we heard the chanting "Jews will not replace us" in Charlottesville in 2017. We were devastated when the murders at Pittsburgh took place. None of this is taking place in a vacuum. Seventy one percent of the 387 "extremist related fatalities in the United States" from 2008 to 2017 were committed by members of far-right and white-supremacist groups, according to the Anti-Defamation League's [Center](#) on Extremism. In fact, white nationalism and the presence of white supremacist hate groups are at an all-time high in our country.

What feels different than at other times in history, however, particularly than from the 1930s and 1940s, is the reaction of non-Jewish people to this hatred. Just this week thousands of people rallied in France to oppose anti-Semitism. President Macron said, "Every time a French person, because he or she is Jewish, is insulted, threatened — or worse, injured or killed — the whole Republic is attacked."

Rabbi David Teutch, founding director of the Center for Jewish Ethics, shared his reaction to Pittsburgh and anti-Semitism in America, commenting on the tremendous outpouring of support through rallies, vigils, funds, attendance at synagogues and more. He wrote:

*My German Jewish father and grandfathers were taken to Dachau after Kristallnacht in Germany; there was virtually no resistance from the non-Jewish community. Here in America, the Jewish community has built bridges with Christians and Muslims, civil-rights activists and those working for deeper social*

*change. And we have heard from our allies with unprecedented energy... We need to keep building bridges with the many groups and individuals who share our hopes for America and our world. We need to continue to fight for fair treatment for people of color, for those who wish to immigrate to America, for minorities of every sort. We need to join with allies fighting for universal [health](#) care, for gun control, for equal educational and economic opportunity... Our alliances for doing good in the world are our best protection.*

Many of us feel more vulnerable with the increase in Jew-hatred. We strive to find more ways to secure our buildings and our Jewish spaces, as well as to strengthen our relationships with others. This is not always simple; there is much to say about exclusion of Jews in [progressive](#) spaces because of our relationship to Israel, and considerable debate about the relationship between anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism. But we can be heartened by the outcry and support of allies when Jewish people are harmed and cemeteries desecrated.

*Olam chesed yibaneh.* May we continue to build our world with love – and through justice - even as and especially because there are those who are trying to dehumanize and harm us.

I look forward to seeing many of you at Shabbat services followed by the KHN Poetry Cafe this evening at 7:00 PM.

Shabbat shalom,

Rabbi Diana

#### **Further Reading**

\*One scholar tries to define the two: [https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/on-contemporary-jew-hatred-and-mistakes-to-avoid/?fbclid=IwAR1ldwYGpITec6aRMH7tFGdmkPdncIjWvs6\\_IpYPCPzq8gNifSkwnhaOwHs](https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/on-contemporary-jew-hatred-and-mistakes-to-avoid/?fbclid=IwAR1ldwYGpITec6aRMH7tFGdmkPdncIjWvs6_IpYPCPzq8gNifSkwnhaOwHs)  
[\[https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/feb/15/antisemitism-rising-sharply...](https://www.theguardian.com/news/2019/feb/15/antisemitism-rising-sharply...)  
[\[https://www.adl.org/blog/anti-semite-louis-farrakhan-teams-up-with-notor...](https://www.adl.org/blog/anti-semite-louis-farrakhan-teams-up-with-notor...)  
[\[https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/22/opinion/christopher-hasson-extremism....](https://www.nytimes.com/2019/02/22/opinion/christopher-hasson-extremism....)  
[\[https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/issues/rage-...](https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/issues/rage-...)  
[https://www.timesofisrael.com/thousands-rally-in-france-to-oppose-recent-anti-semitic-acts/?fbclid=IwAR1hGy3WOTITD34e9xZ049YjmG-uj2\\_HRfJghy5OM1MvTxMLaljNG02cvTM](https://www.timesofisrael.com/thousands-rally-in-france-to-oppose-recent-anti-semitic-acts/?fbclid=IwAR1hGy3WOTITD34e9xZ049YjmG-uj2_HRfJghy5OM1MvTxMLaljNG02cvTM)  
[\[http://evolve.reconstructingjudaism.org/pittsburgh-perspective\]](http://evolve.reconstructingjudaism.org/pittsburgh-perspective)