

Cleaning out the chometz

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In many Jewish households worldwide the week before Passover is a time of intensive chametz clearing out.

Michael Kuttner In Israel, supermarkets are stocked full of cleaning material and advertisements for special deals abound. Spring is in the air and after winter months of cold weather the Biblical command to rid our houses of accumulated leaven products seems to be a very logical exercise. Not only are we commanded to eliminate leaven from our dwellings but also any other place where it may have accumulated during the year such as vehicles, offices, factories etc. It seems that the entire country is undergoing a spring clean and there can be no doubt that as far as most Jewish Israelis are concerned Passover is imminent.

There is another aspect to getting rid of leaven residue which deserves greater attention. Based on commentaries by many scholars and Rabbis, the Hebrew word Chametz or leaven can also be analogous to the character trait of arrogance, conceit and egotism. It has also been described as symbolic of the “yetzer hara” which in translation means “an evil inclination.” This affliction unless uprooted, cleaned out and eradicated more often than not leads to evil deeds. What starts with evil dehumanisation and delegitimisation progresses very rapidly to acts of evil intent. We have seen so many times in our history the results of such unchecked behaviour and therefore with the imminent annual celebration of the Exodus from slavery to the Promised Land, now is as good a time as ever to shine the spotlight on modern manifestations of evil inclinations.

Unfortunately there is never a shortage of such phenomena. The trick is how to deal with these infestations and more importantly how to neutralise the poison which abounds.

Just in time for Passover the latest conspiracy libel has burst onto the stage. Once upon a time Jews used to be accused of all sorts of blood libels in the making of unleavened bread (matzot). It still surfaces occasionally in the depths of Eastern Europe and from the fetid minds of Islamic fanatics. However it has tended to mutate over the years and the latest example was provided recently by courtesy of the non existent “peace” partners whom the rest of the world thinks should be in control of half of Jerusalem as well as Judea & Samaria.

The former Governor of the Palestinian Monetary Authority who is also a senior economist, in other words a person who is educated, qualified and one would assume tolerant, burst forth with this choice piece of evil intent. In a speech translated courtesy of MEMRI he claimed on Al Quds television **“there is a global Jewish hegemony which caused the financial crisis of 2008. Jews plundered from the land of Palestine and from other Islamic countries.”**

One could shrug off this blatant example of venomous vituperation as just more ranting from a brain addled idiot. However this person is taken seriously by the masses exposed to his conspiracy theories and as we should know by now doing nothing only makes matters worse. I guarantee that this was never reported by your local media and it is certain that when the UN Security Council next meets to consider its next outrageous demand against Israel, not one country will have taken any notice of the continuing hate incitement against the Jewish State.

In a similar vein and proving that this sort of idiocy is not confined to the dark alleys of the Middle East and polluted teachings of fanatic preachers, we witnessed a remarkable statement from the hallowed halls of academia. In the 1930’s the universities of Germany became infected with the chametz of Jew hatred. Faculty and students alike propagated the vilest slanders against Jewish students which culminated in the mass expulsion of all Jewish faculty and students.

This past week in the United States of America at one of the country’s most prestigious colleges, Stamford University no less, this amazing assertion was made at a student senate meeting on anti-Semitism by a student leader: **“it is not anti-Semitism to claim that Jews control the media, economy, Government and other social institutions.”**

Following an uproar the person concerned has now resigned from his senate position but the fact that he felt perfectly comfortable in making his original claim combined with the ever increasing toxic atmosphere for Jewish students on campuses proves that the problem of Jew hatred disguised as Israel hatred is spreading. Universities in the UK and elsewhere are becoming fertile breeding grounds for the same sort of evil intent which ultimately resulted in the delegitimisation and elimination of European Jews.

Meanwhile it has been reported that anti Jewish “incidents” in Austria last year increased by over 80%. This should be a wake up call for those still residing there but based on past experience the warning bells will be ignored.

Rounding off this short summary of evil intents, the Iranian supreme leader proclaimed: ***“missiles not negotiations will be part of Iran’s future relations with the outside world.”***

The true and tried method of eliminating chametz (leaven) for Passover is to first of all identify it. Having done that the next step is to thoroughly cleanse all traces. For the week of Passover we banish it from our homes.

Combating the scourge of anti Israel/Jewish infections is rather more complicated but the method is the same. First we must identify it and not sweep it under the carpet. Then we must deal with its insidious poison by naming and shaming the perpetrators. Not only must we expose them but their hate must also have consequences. That means the institutions of learning, the media and other places where these people work should be made accountable. This is not a week long effort but one which is ongoing.

Just as the pre Passover cleaning requires a team effort with all members of the family helping so the ongoing battle against delegitimation needs a communal effort. In this campaign it is all hands to the pump. As Mordechai told Esther, do not imagine that you will be spared if you do nothing to thwart the evil decree against the Jewish People of Persia.

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