

Mindsets

TEACHING ON ISRAEL AND THE CHURCH

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Keystone Classroom

Mindset: “We hate Jews because they Possess too much Wealth and Power.”

“But thou shalt remember the LORD thy God: for it is He that giveth thee power to get wealth, that He may establish His covenant which He swore unto thy fathers, as it is this day” (Deuteronomy 8:18, KJV).

“But remember the LORD your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms His covenant, which He swore to your ancestors, as it is today” (Deuteronomy 8:18, NIV).

Economics and money have been a long time jealousy of the Church and people of the nations of the world when it comes to the Jewish people. Historically, they have been portrayed as “grabby, mercenary, moneygrubbing and greedy” people. After living here so many years, I wish to say, with all my heart, that the exact opposite is true. Jewish people are some of the most generous, charitable, humane, philanthropic and unselfish people I have ever met in my life. Giving is one of the great characteristics of the Jewish people. They know God smiles on the generous heart and therefore, act on that belief by “doing”, and not just “hearing” God’s commands. Truly, I have yet to find a people more giving than the Jewish people. I know, because I have lived with them for a very long time. They are not what the world and media has characterized them as being. My promise to God is “not to remain silent on behalf of Jerusalem, and the Jewish people; therefore, the rea-

son for my speaking up. *“For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet, till her vindication shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch.” (Isaiah 62:1).*

Throughout the centuries the Jewish people suffered very much at the hands of the gentiles, many were very, very poor. Often they prospered because they followed Biblical commandments and God Himself gave them the ability to be intelligent, wise and ingenious (just as God blessed Daniel in the Bible with wisdom from upon High). Returning home from the nations, they again have prospered above and beyond their size and numbers. It is when they have prosper, that people begin to form their own opinions about “how did they get their wealth? They must have gotten it by ill means and all sorts” because they are “crooks.” These are the thoughts that often come into the minds of the nations





in a very anti-semitic world. They are lies and not true at all. This does not mean they are perfect, but, as a whole the heart of the Jewish people is a merciful and compassionate heart.

Because the blessing of the Lord *“I will bless those who bless My People...”*. (Genesis 12:3) rests upon the Jewish people/nation, we have seen the LORD HIMSELF bring them out of poverty when they came back to their Land. They had a “mind to work” and hard work and ingenuity brought them much success. They returned from the nations of the world broken, bruised and battered but they had hope in God. Their national anthem even expresses the hope within their hearts, as God fulfills His Sacred Promises to them.



“In 2013 world-renowned rock star and BDS enthusiast Roger Waters managed to upset the Anti-Defamation League after a performance in which he featured Stars of David alongside dollar signs. The ADL claimed that Waters employed an ancient despicable anti-Semitic stereotype. Indeed, the display was hateful, but how ancient was its message, really?”

Like many anti-Semitic stereotypes, the association of Jews with money was forged during a famous Passover Seder held in a Jerusalem inn approximately 2,000 years ago. Known by the morbid name The Last Supper, that meal was interrupted by Roman soldiers lead by Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus’ closest supporters. According to the New Testament, Judas came in and kissed Jesus so that the Romans could identify him as their suspected traitor.

For centuries, the story of Judas turning Jesus in was utilized to inspire animosity between Jews and Christians. According to the story, Judas gave Jesus up for a sum of thirty shekalim – a considerable amount of money in its time.

“...In the early centuries of the first millennia, Christianity spread throughout the Roman world until it was

declared the Roman Empire’s official religion. Nonetheless, the Jewish people persistently clung to their old religion, a provocative act within the Roman-Christian world.

There is an ultimate contradiction between the Jewish idea of an eternal law given exclusively to the Children of Israel on Mount Sinai and the Christian notion of a universal religion. Because of this tension, and in an effort to elevate its own interests, the Christian church felt the need to paint a dark picture of Judaism.

The emphasis on Judas betraying Jesus for money was, therefore, a shining example of anti-Jewish propaganda. Judas’ act has become Christianity’s symbol for both betrayal and greed. The negative depiction of Jews as money-hungry backstabbers maintained its popularity until the Middle Ages. At that time most Christians were illiterate and only knew the story of Judas from pictures; they were not aware of the fact the Jesus was himself a Jew. They knew, however, that Judas was a Jew, both because of his typical Jewish name and because of the way he was depicted in pictures — with a bundle of money in his hand. Apparently Marshall McLuhan’s old saying that “the medium is the message” had already taken hold.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the caricature of the rich greedy Jew was nurtured by Christian authorities. The walls and ceilings of Europe’s most magnificent cathedrals featured illustrations, sculptures and frescoes depicting Jews as blood-sucking leeches. One the most popular images was the visual motif of the “Judensau” (the “Jews’ sow”) wherein Jews appeared in obscene postures, sucking from a sow’s udders. The pieces were commissioned with full knowledge of the pig’s status as the most impure creature in the Jewish religion.

At some point it became clear to the ecclesiastical establishment that in order to implement the stereotype of Jews as rich and greedy, sculptures alone would not suffice. They began disseminating legal orders excluding Jews from a number of professions, banning them from universities and precluding them from owning





land. The Jews were left with no choice but to make a living from commerce, peddling, and money lending.

But, lest there be any confusion, Jews did not become rich lending money. The Christian nobility, on the other hand, for whom it was forbidden to lend money, made huge profits using Jews as their collectors. In their new status, Jews had to confront borrowers who were usually poor peasants and tenant farmers. Naturally, these poor borrowers came to loathe the Jewish collectors. To put this idea in perspective, who are you angrier at when you get a parking ticket, the mayor, or the inspector who actually hands you the ticket?

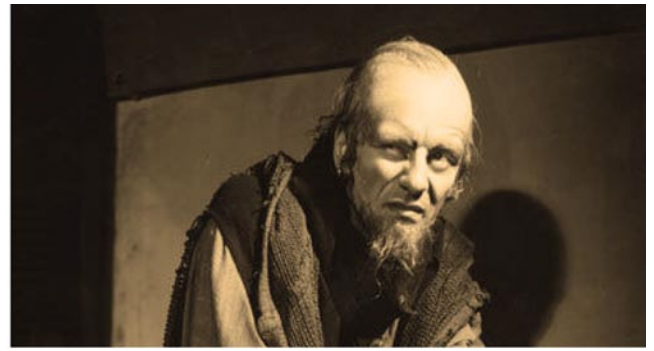
The image of the greedy Jewish moneylender appears in countless works of art and literature. Perhaps his most



famous incarnation is in William Shakespeare's "The Merchant of Venice," where he is depicted as Shylock the Jewish moneylender, bearing a telltale oversized nose. When Shylock loans 300 ducats to a Christian merchant named Antonio, he demands no interest, instead requiring that, should Antonio fail to return the sum within three months, Antonio will give him a pound of his own flesh. When Antonio fails to pay, Shylock will not settle for repayment of the debt, instead insisting on personally cutting the flesh from Antonio's body. This play was written in the 16th century, 300 years after all of England's Jews had been deported.

"The Merchant of Venice" reinforced the then common Christian perception that a Jew is greedy, cynical and merciless. So powerful was the play's impact on popular culture that four centuries later Nazi propaganda utilized its powerful and dangerous message, producing dozens of adaptations of the play throughout 1930s Germany.

In their book "The Chosen Few: How Education Shaped Jewish History," researchers Maristella Botticini and Zvi Eckstein offer another explanation for the association of Jews with money in the Middle Ages. The researchers claim that, following the destruction



of the second temple, a dispersed Jewry had to maintain an intellectual net of theoretical texts in order to preserve their Jewish identity. Therefore they had to be literate and pass reading skills on to their children as well, thus becoming educated as a rule and therefore more successful than many members of the non-Jewish societies they lived amongst.

Historians agree, however, that most mediaeval Jews were poor. The difference between them and their non-Jewish counterpart was that they maintained social networks and institutions to provide mutual aid. The rich donated to the poor and the poor enjoyed services offered by the community such as health care, wedding funds and charity.

While it is estimated that in the 18th century about 75% of European Jews earned a living as moneylenders and from related services in loans, banking and commerce, scholars believe that the correlation between Jews and money strengthened during the modern era. In particular, the 19th century industrial revolution afforded Jews an opportunity to become extremely wealthy thanks to an extensive network of inter-communal relations that resulted in a Jewish oligarchy that overtook entire trades. One of the outcomes was a rise in anti-Semitism.

Take, for example, the Rothschild dynasty. The founding father was Meyer Anselm Rothschild, a coins supplier and personal council to Prince Wilhelm in the





18th century. Meyer established a bank that became a banking empire with branches all over Europe, run by his heirs. The Rothschilds went into railroad construction, mining the Suez Canal, the wine trade and the early cinema industry, to name a few industries. Their financial prominence and international positioning led to some absurdities, such as when Nathan Meir Rothschild financed the wars of England while his brother, Shlomo Meir, invested in rehabilitating Austria from the effects of the very same wars by founding the Austrian national bank.

Among the 19th century's superrich Jewry were the Baron Israel Hirsch from Germany, one of the founders of the Austria-Hungary railway network; the Poliakovs, who constructed railways throughout Russia; the Brodezkis family, who monopolized the sugar trade in Russia; and the Wissotzky family, owners of an international tea company. Between the Brodezkis' sugar and the Wissotzky's tea was borne a famous Russian joke: two Jews actually control each and every cup of tea you enjoy.

This growing wealth in Jewish hands fed the flames of public rage. The socialists criticized the Jews from the left for being greedy capitalists, while the political right proliferated anti-Semitic and racist sentiment.

In the late 19th century, the millions of Eastern European Jews who immigrated to America did not abandon their heritage of financial practices on Ellis Island. Over the years they entered many key positions in New York's financial industry and on Wall Street. Names like Lehman Brothers, Solomon Brothers and Goldman Sacks are known worldwide, but there were many

others. Since 1987 all heads of the Federal American Bank have been Jewish, as well as four out of eight Secretaries of the Treasury and three out of twelve chiefs executive of the World Bank.

A 2008 Pew Forum study found that Jews are the wealthiest ethnic-religious group in the United States. 46% of them earn more than \$100,000 per year, compared to 19% of non-Jewish Americans. These statistics, together with the fact that over 100 of the 400 richest people on earth are Jewish, help fan the flames of anti-Semitism. These truths are why The Protocols of the Elders of Zion — or even Roger Waters' anti-Semitic performance — still resonate. Myths often contain a seed of truth, and so the seed of the long and rich history of Jews and money, in the hands of bigots, has given rise to an ugly and dangerous myth." (www.Beit Hatfutsof).

As you have just learned, characterization of the "Jew" has been taken out of context, exaggerated, and twisted, and it was often Christian communities that did so. It is so important for Christians who follow Jesus, as Lord and King, to seek the truth, and not draw from other's "opinions" or "hearsay." It is our obligation to seek accuracy and correctness of what we are told, or hear. Let's not be found speaking negatively about the Jewish people. For it is God Himself who has warned us in Genesis 12:3 about speaking blessings or cursings over them. There are consequences if we choose to curse through negative and hateful speech. Let us be a people who seek truth and walk in it.

-Sharon Sanders-
Co-Founder Christian Friends of Israel



"I am a committed Christian, a disciple of Jesus, (Yeshua in Hebrew). Having lived in Israel for over thirty years with my husband, Ray, through educating ourselves, personal experience of living and working among the Jewish people, and sitting under the best of Jerusalem Bible scholars we have taught in over fifty-five nations of the world. Many have come to a rich understanding of a unique nation. It is my prayer, that my teachings will open up the eyes of multitudes in the Church to understand God's Plan for the beautiful People of Israel." -Sharon Sanders-