



OUTSMARTING ANTISEMITISM

A new four-session course from the Rohr Jewish Learning Institute

“The wolf will dwell beside the lamb; a leopard will relax alongside a kid goat” (Isaiah 11:6).

Maimonides interprets Isaiah’s prophecy of coexisting creatures as foretelling the extinction of antisemitism: Jews existed for millennia as a lone lamb cornered by hostile forces, but eventually, peoples formerly bent on annihilation or harm will live harmoniously with us.

Despite impressive strides in tolerance and equality, Isaiah’s vision of coexistence remains somewhat otherworldly. Recent surveys of American Jews demonstrate that antisemitism is a clear and dominant concern. A survey of British Jews found that 42 percent considered leaving the UK, and 85 percent of those cited antisemitism in politics as their motivation. Antisemitism remains a global hot topic in news, politics, social media, and in schools and on college campuses.

Amid a world of confusion and occasional despair, The Rohr Jewish Learning Institute saw the need for a systematic course on the topic. We have therefore produced *Outsmarting Antisemitism*, a revolutionary four-week public offering geared to help participants beat antisemitism with purpose, positivity, and pride. The course—suitable for the individual and the policy maker, for the leader and layperson alike—enlists historical analyses, Talmudic sources, Jewish mysticism, and contemporary expert analysis to provide insight, perspective, practical direction, and personal reassurance.

Outsmarting Antisemitism examines the roots of this ancient hatred, and probes productive strategies for reducing antisemitism, best practices for dealing with prejudiced public individuals, tools for coping with personal fears triggered by antisemitism, and the role of faith in these areas. The course investigates the modern fire-breathing dragon—anti-Israel focused antisemitism—and highlights methods of forestalling Jewish youth from unwittingly lending their voices to antisemitic agendas. The learning experience will be informative, empowering, and, at the same time, motivational and supportive.

It is our fervent hope that these currently indispensable methods of coping and handling become rapidly obsolete. We pray that this course soon be reshelved in the history department rather than persist as a contemporary social instrument—with the speedy realization of Isaiah’s vision of global harmony, mutual understanding, and genuine goodwill.

LESSON ONE

THE ETERNAL PEOPLE

By taking another look at the statistics, studying our people’s remarkable perseverance, and exploring the concept of Providence, we can find eternal cause for confidence and optimism while we implement plans to secure ourselves and our communities.

LESSON TWO

NO APOLOGIES

We look at some of the explanations for antisemitism that have been offered throughout the ages to emerge with an important principle: the problem with hating Jews lies not with the Jews but with the haters. Internalizing this hate is not a healthy response.

LESSON THREE

THE PROMISED LAND

Today, hatred of Jews commonly manifests itself as antagonism toward the Jewish State. This class distinguishes all-out antisemitism from some more nuanced sub-strains. It also examines what Jews are taught—and should be taught—about Israel education and the very nature of Jewish nationhood.

LESSON FOUR

CHANGE OF HEART

Psychology, neuroscience, and recent history show us that neither friend nor foe should ever be taken for granted. With a bit of subtlety and conviction, and always with trust in G-d, we find that the dark days of the past are no cause for pessimism ahead.