assuage their terror and protect against it.

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Free Associations on Anti-Semitism, Israel, and Objectivity

Jamshid A. Marvasti—Psychiatric Practice

The causes of anti-Semitism are frequently a focus of studies, but it is also important to examine the reactions of those who are targets of anti-Semitism. What happens psychologically to those who are the target of hate? Do victims of trauma/hate develop a sense of entitlement, privilege, defensiveness, over-protectiveness, paranoia, and obsession with cumulative trauma? Do victims contribute to their victimization? Or, do they identify with their aggressors and eventually become offenders? Does the historical evidence support these psychological reactions of victims?

I focus on anti-Semitism, which is actually about hate, but I also explore the issue of love, of being in total love with Israel, which may mitigate objectivity.

Shortcomings in Psychoanalytic Explorations

Psychoanalytic literature reveals a number of theories about the causes of anti-Semitism. However, none of them are *scientifically confirmed* or sufficiently helpful to under-

standing and overcoming it. The problems with identifying causes of these psychological phenomena can be traced to a few shortcomings:

1) The element of objectivity (or lack thereof). This problem is caused by many writers' strong feelings, pro or con, about the subject, based mainly on their heritage.

2) Writers relying heavily on psychoanalytic principles of individual behavior, and using the same principles for group psychology, which may not be appropriate.

3) The lack of delineation between "search" and "research," which are not the same. For example, if a researcher has the sense that anti-Semitism is the result of jealousy, projection, and scapegoating, he may find them in his research if he purposefully searches for them. On the contrary, if one has an impression that the behavior of a group has contributed to negative feelings toward them, he may also confirm that in his research if he searches for it.

4) The psychoanalytic literature about anti-Semitism indicates complex multi-factorial elements contributing to its development.

My impression is that there may also be a very simple explanation for anti-Semitism in some people: parental suggestion. Children listen to their parents and develop a negative feeling toward a group by following their parents' examples. In Iran, many parents have told their children to avoid Gypsies because the nomads may steal them. Therefore, even though many Iranian children have never met a Gypsy, they may still develop anti-Gypsy-ism.

Israel as a Psychological Symbol

Israel, as the heart of Jewish culture, psychologically represents a culture that has been victimized for centuries. Israel also represents a symbolic entity for compensation of past abuse and displacement. Pro-Israel behavior could be interpreted as a defense mechanism against years of humilia-

tion, persecution, and racism, since Israel symbolically represents the realization of a dream of the slaves in the Egyptian Empire, of wandering Jews throughout Europe, and of those who survived the Holocaust.

Israel offers Jews the realization of visions of attaining long-held personal and cultural goals. It has been perceived to be a medication to soothe collective pain because its very existence reverses centuries of trauma and indignities. Such idealized visions, though, remain sacred and free from sin or deficiencies.

For those who say that they are in love with Israel, there is no place left for discrepancy, as love is blind. However, there are those who were in love with Israel but then got "married" to Israel and changed their minds. As the popular phrase goes, "Love is blind, but marriage is an eye opener." In this sense, those who are married to Israel have open eyes, and like at the end of the honeymoon phase, one must deal with the reality rather than with an idealized vision of the perfect partner. Unfortunately, many individuals claim that opposing Israel's government is "de-legitimizing" it, and that all must stand with Israel or be considered anti-Semitic.

The Victim's Reaction to Victimization

Psychologically, victims of trauma and persecution feel helpless, powerless, and vulnerable. One reaction to such a perception is to reverse and overcome the victimized environment in order to gain a sense of authority over one's own destiny. In this sense, a group may need to become powerful and fully in control of its environment in order to feel safe. Overemphasis on dominating the region may appear to offer a sense of protection and survival.

Is it also possible that some of the Israeli government's behavior could be analyzed on the basis of psychological reaction of Jews to a cumulative and collective trauma of victimization/powerlessness/persecution? For

those who view Israel as a pristine state, something beyond mere sanctuary, the very act of criticizing the Israeli government for its anti-Palestinian behavior tends to violate their hopes and fantasies of a perfect society. Israel is thus viewed as a symbolic "mother" figure, inviolable and without shortcomings. Those who are in love with Israel cannot, therefore, see anything wrong because of their blind love for it. Self-defense, survival, and preventing another Holocaust are their justification for many unacceptable actions, including, for example, an alliance with the apartheid regime of South Africa, the routine use of torture on Palestinians in Israeli prisons, recent war crimes in Gaza, and the killing of humanitarians on board a Flotilla aid ship.

The Need for an Enemy

Another cause of anti-Semitism is the idea that every group or nation needs a scapegoat and enemy. Nations can split and project unwanted parts of themselves onto another group who eventually becomes the enemy and scapegoat. In that way, Jews may have been the receptacle for many unwanted characteristics for centuries. Howard Stein linked resurgent anti-Semitism in Eastern European countries to their need for boundaries, self-definition, and national identity. Stein explained that the decay of ethnic identity suppression by communism created an intense search for identity, which required an image of an ethnic enemy who would serve as a reservoir for all of the negated and externalized aspects of the ethnic group. He referred to Vamik Volkan's work on the large group's unconscious need for enemies, explaining that in many instances Jews were designated as the enemy, even in countries like Poland, where there were virtually no more Jews. There are reports that members of nationalist regimes in Eastern European countries felt guilty about the negative aspect of communism and for what their people did to the Jews during the Holocaust. They then ultimately "reversed" this guilt and blamed the Jews for their peoples'

sufferings.

Rejection of Jesus by Jews, Splitting, and Projection

There are psychoanalytic theories derived from the historical allegation that Jews rejected Jesus as a Messiah. Some explain that this rejection was one of the original causes of Christian anti-Semitism. Interestingly, the Prophet Mohammed moved from Mecca to Medina and was initially welcomed by the Jews, but they eventually became disappointed in him because he accepted Jesus as a prophet.

Israeli criminologist Shalomo Shoham attributed anti-Semitism and the Holocaust to the conflict between Germanic and Jewish myths: The Germanic people were aggressive and materialistic while the Jews were self-sacrificing and spiritual. The Jews were ideal victims because they refused to accept Christianity; therefore, their foreignness and powerlessness encouraged demonization and scapegoating.

There are numerous psychological theories of anti-Semitism that limited space does not allow me to delve into and cite. Here I will summarize several without attribution. It could be a projective interpretation by Christian society of its own evils, branding the Jews as scapegoats. To another, the roots of anti-Semitism lay in the unconscious castration fear of the uncircumcised. An envy of alleged Jewish political and sexual superiority, as well as an interpretation of contemporary history as the rise of Jewish influence, was also exemplified in Disraeli's influence over Queen Victoria. It is also speculated that the transition of Christian anti-Semitism ranged from right-wing European fascism to "Islamic leftism." Perhaps anti-Semitic European Catholics conflated the modern "Zionist" with the ancient Jews who reportedly crucified Christ and identified the Palestinian with the suffering Christ on the cross.

The following list summarizes my free associations on the subject and explains three different opinions regarding

anti-Semitism:

1) Anti-Semitism is increasing independent of the action of Israel.
2) Israel's violent behavior and occupation of Palestinian territories is the catalyst for anger toward Israel, and there is not an increase in anti-Semitism.
3) Anti-Israel sentiment is a disguise for anti-Semitism.

In my opinion, all three groups are both right and wrong. This situation reminds me of the story of the four blind men who were touching an elephant and trying to explain what the elephant looked like. All were right yet wrong as they felt only part of the elephant and not the whole animal, because that's what they perceived. The "whole elephant" must include the suffering of tortured Palestinians in Gaza and West Bank, which should remind the world of the Jews' similar past experiences and agonies.

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"A State within a State": Freud's Disavowal of Anti-Semitism

Jay Geller—Vanderbilt University

Freud undertook his most significant discussion of