

Look in the mirror

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We have watched in horror and dread as rabid mobs have chanted “Death to Jews.” We had presumed that our modern and enlightened culture would not tolerate such hatred and unabashed bigotry.

The monster of Jew hatred just will not die.

These violent protests are also bewildering. Islamic and Arab protesters are vehemently supported by average, run-of-the mill college students. Why are unaffiliated university students so angry at our people and so opposed to our rights to our homeland?

Astonishingly, the protests also include a broad range of minority groups such as Black Lives Matter and LGBT supporters. Their betrayal is stinging. For years, Jews spearheaded social justice movements and campaigned to protect their rights and their dignity. Now that we need their support, they have turned their backs on us.

How did these seemingly unrelated groups get dragged into this consortium of hate? Why are they so passionately opposed to our rights to live and breathe in our homeland? Why are they shamelessly and falsely accusing us of committing genocide?

Part of the answer is the powerful doctrine of intersectionality permeating modern culture. This ideology globalizes moral calculus by asserting that all forms of oppression or discrimination are interdependent. Because all discrimination overlaps, all marginalized groups with grievances must support one another in their respective battles for justice. The battle for equality of an African-American woman has become fused to the war in Gaza. Thus, any group struggling against any form of discrimination must vigorously protest against Israel’s right to security.

By asserting that all aggrieved parties share a common enemy – recently termed “the constellations of power,” which systematically discriminates against the weak – intersectionality internationalizes social justice.

This warped cultural narrative creates the ludicrous scene of gay people supporting Hamas murderers, even though Hamas terrorists would gladly toss them off a roof and drag their bodies through the street. But to people blinded by intersectionality, facts don’t matter. The culture of intersectionality raises numerous moral challenges and threatens our religious values. By stressing grievances, it promotes a culture of victimhood and encourages competition for rights and benefits. The best way to triumph is to insist others recognize your past disadvantage. The group that in the past has been most victimized possesses superior virtue and deserves a larger piece of

the pie.

The politicalization of victimhood demands that society acknowledge grievances and offer compensation for collective past suffering.

Victimhood becomes a power play.

Additionally, by casting themselves as passive, feeble targets of injustice, victims easily deflect personal accountability for self-improvement.

Moreover, intersectionality rapidly escalates resentment into fury.

Once discrimination is viewed as systemic, chronic violence is easily justified. If the system is stacked and inherently unfair, any and by all means necessary become an acceptable response.

Perhaps the most troubling aspect of intersectionality, though, is that it paints the world in very dark colors as an ongoing power struggle.

This view of the world is very Marxist. According to Marx, history is driven by a class struggle between the bourgeoisie, or management, and the proletariat, or working class. The tensions and contradictions emerging from this struggle shape society.

By replacing one class struggle with another, intersectionality has become the modern version of Marxism. Instead of centering the struggle between the working class and management, it portrays a wholesale conflict between privileged white males and victimized underclasses. By stressing power dynamics and systems of control, it portrays society in a perpetual state of conflict and envisions the world as sharply divided between oppressors and victims.

This pessimistic view of a society encourages confrontationalism and contentiousness, rather than cooperation and collaboration. It perpetuates rage and promotes cycles of retaliation.

Religious people don't view the world through belligerent and militant lenses. We don't assume that conflict is necessary for progress.

Society isn't shaped by class warfare but by mutual respect, cooperation, compassion, education, and, of course, religious and moral spirit. Class warfare or social conflict isn't essential for societal improvement.

The ideology of intersectionality is what accounts for college students joining these protests of hate, as this generation was raised on intersectional belief. This ideology also accounts for minority groups joining rallies in support of murderers, since they believe they are campaigning for broader global justice. No crime is unpardonable in the heroic battle against a global system of discrimination.

Intersectionality is also responsible for inflaming the fanatical anger and rage of these protests. Flag burning, school lockouts, road closures, blockading airports, hyperbolic use of language, rioting, and, of course, threats of violence and actual violence.

Look in the mirror

Does any of this sound familiar? Turn the clock back a year. Many of these ugly scenes unfolded in our very own country, in the streets of Jerusalem, the intersections of Tel Aviv, and the highways of Ayalon. Absurdly and ironically, there was an intersectional dynamic fueling our own recent year of social discontent.

There are many fault lines that divide Israel. We are in the process of a historic project to assemble Jews from across different ethnic, racial, religious, political, and ideological lines. An ambitious project of this magnitude has never been attempted.

The protests surrounding judicial reform felt intersectional. People took positions based on religion and ideology rather than logical assessment of facts. People were checking boxes. Most politically right-wing, traditional, religious Jews supported this reform. Most nonobservant, politically left-leaning Jews were strongly opposed. Judicial reform is an important issue which will affect the shape of our future democracy. Support or opposition should be based on dispassionate assessment of the pros and cons and should not be hinged on religion or political affiliation. The radicalization of the debate and the ensuing protests reflected the intersectionality of Israeli society and how we have begun to cluster unrelated issues. It shouldn't be this way. We should consider important issues on their own without allowing preconceived religious or political leanings to dictate our opinions.

Violent speech

Not only were the protests surrounding judicial reform intersectional, but they incited violent speech, eerily similar to, though not as vicious as, the current verbal violence of anti-Israel rallies. Violence of speech and of print quickly turn into violence of blood. Over the past few decades, the US has allowed a climate of hateful speech to flourish, and that climate is now emboldening anti-Israel protesters to support rapists and baby-murderers and to threaten the lives of Jews. Language has spiraled out of control.

During last year's protests we were careless with our own use of language and too often defaulted to vile demagoguery. Judicial reform opponents were unfairly cast as anarchists, while supporters were marked as fascists. How did a political debate about the selection of Supreme Court jurors become a war between fascists and anarchists?

My own saddest memory from the year of protests was the horrible use of the term "Nazi" to describe other Jews. I hope that after Oct. 7 no Jew will ever again commit this hideous crime against Jewish history. Any Jewish mouth that defames another Jew with that odious

label doesn't deserve to pray or to study Torah.  
I don't know God's will and why Oct. 7 happened. I don't know why we continue to face this revolting and abhorrent hatred. No one does. One thing I do know: these angry anti-Israel protests hold up a mirror to some of our own ugly and terrible behavior of a year ago. Face the horror of that behavior and that dark period and don't shirk responsibility for the way we acted and spoke. Pledge to yourself to never fall into that animosity and contempt. Never again.

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