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Anti-Semitism, Sexual Abuse, and The Jewish Community

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Over the years there have been many reasons why the Jewish Community kept silent about sexual crimes committed by individuals in our community. To this day there is a legitimate reason why we may want to remain silent. We have to remember that there is a large number of hate groups that would love to promote their propaganda by posting information about Jews who molest on their web pages and publications. Their eagerness is a reminder that anti-Semitism is alive and thriving.

Since the beginning of time, Jews around the world have been watched as if we were under a microscope. We can't ignore this fact. The question is what should we do? Can we afford to expose our vulnerabilities and show the rest of the world that we are also human? The truth is that we have a choice. We can choose to live in fear, or we can allow survivors of childhood sexual abuse a voice, so that we can take steps to make the necessary changes to heal our community.

When it comes to sexual abuse in any community (Jewish or non-Jewish), "silence is NOT golden." Things will never change unless we bring attention to the problem and work as a community to come up with solutions. In the secular world there is often talk about all sorts of issues (i.e. civil rights, anti-Semitism, hate crimes, and other forms of violence). We need to remember that whenever anyone wants to make a difference, make changes to the status quo, there will always be someone or a group of people who will attempt to destroy the efforts. Look at slavery, women's rights, democracy. Without taking risks, nothing would have changed. Without taking risks, our children WILL continue to risk sexual abuse from within our community.

When it comes to child molestation, we need to say and believe in our hearts --"NEVER AGAIN!" We need to do this in a public venue. It's the only way for things to change. Yes, anti-Semitic groups have, and will continue to use any information they can get their hands on to promote hate. Yes, they have used some of the information posted on The Awareness Center's web page. When this occurs, The Awareness Center's policy is to make reports to the FBI (<http://www1.ifccfbi.gov/index.asp>), and to encourage others to do the same. Don't forget—hate is a crime in the United States, as in many other countries. Hate is a topic we need to speak out publicly about, just as we do about childhood sexual abuse. We need to do our part by reporting all forms of violent behavior, including hate crimes on the Internet.

So yes, hate groups will wave their supposed "proof for Jewish perversion." They will wave a twisted reality of our efforts. Still, we need to have faith that the rest of the world's communities have to deal with similar issues to our own (e.g. problems in the Catholic Church, issues of domestic

violence in the Islamic world). That people of hate aren't everyone. We cannot let individuals who promote hate prevent us from healing our community.

As Jews, we strive to live by the teachings of compassion and courage. Would we allow intimidation and other forms of violence to keep us silent? By keeping the secret that Jews are not immune to abusing their children, whose agenda would we be following? What opportunities for growth would we be missing?

When Jews talk about sexual abuse within our community, you can bet that extreme Islamic groups, the Ku Klux Klan, and other Aryan groups will use this material for their benefit. However, keeping in mind the righteous attitude that most hate groups flaunt, one can still wonder about what the statistics are for the same various hate groups when it comes to sexually victimizing their own children. Until they show otherwise, there is no reason to believe that they are any more immune than any other group of people, any more immune than we are.

The question for us is what do WE do? Do we continue to keep our eyes closed in hope that if we don't see something is wrong, others won't see it, either? Should we continue to force our children who were sexually abused to be silent? Or do we take a risk and expose sexual abuse in our midst, knowing full well that it will be used by some sick individuals to promote their agenda of hate?

Let us remember the words of David Hamelech:

"When evil men advance against me to devour my flesh, when my enemies and my foes attack me, they will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear, though war break out against me, even then I will be confident...for in the day of trouble Hashem will keep me safe...then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me... Teach me your ways, Hashem, lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors. Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false witnesses rise up against me, breathing out violence. I am still confident of this: I will see the goodness of you, Hashem, in the land of the living. Wait for Hashem, be strong and take heart and wait for Hashem." (Psalm 27)