# The Great Privilege of Being a Jew

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by Douglas Altabef

Let's face it: the raging debate about Jews having white privilege is a bit absurd.

Jews are basically a historical Rohrschach depiction of a People. In other words, we take the form, we are regarded through the eyes of those who perceive us.

For most of the past two millenia, Jews were certainly not regarded as being like other people. In Europe, we were first the Christ-rejectors/killers, who per Augustine, were being kept around in order to bear witness to our own degradation and supersession by the Church.

Not too much privilege there.

Come the Enlightenment, and we became the great chameleons of civilization. We could be morphed from usurious capitalists to stateless communists in the blink of an eye. We were vermin, who were still managing somehow, thanks to the Rothschilds, to control the world.

Pretty exhausting, if you ask me.

Jews were a subhuman race, who threatened the purity of the Aryans. But we also threatened the peasantry of Poland and Russia. And after the Enlightenment, we were a threat by virtue of the fact that many Jews sought to convert to Christianity in order to gain access to the higher reaches of their society.

In Muslim countries, we were tolerated as *dhimmis*, second class citizens. We couldn't wear the same clothes as others, nor walk on the same sidewalk if it meant inconveniencing a passing Muslim.

So where is the privilege from? It comes from the now dirty word called "achievement."

Jews who fled pogroms, death sentence conscriptions in the Tsar's or the Sultan's armies, who typically came to America with nothing, worked hard and saw their children and grandchildren rise.

Jews sacrificed, educated their children, embraced America and the American dream and vision, and they succeeded.

Somehow, that has a sinister ring to it. Somehow, to a great many people today, that cannot explain what Jews are about. There must be some secret sauce, some hidden card that has made it all possible. Could that be our latent privilege?

Or is privilege what happens when you work hard and succeed? Besides achieving material success, and social acceptance, can you achieve privilege?

Well, allow me to let you all in on a little secret. I, a proud Jew, am wildly privileged. Not because I might or might not be white, but because through no work of my own, by happy Providence, I was born into a Jewish family of two wonderful Jewish parents and was raised to be the next link of the Jewish chain.

I was shown that, despite the mind-boggling persecution, disdain, vulnerability, powerlessness, instability and uncertainty of what it meant for thousands of years to be a Jew, I was somehow, nevertheless, a card carrying, bona fide Jew.

Meaning, that against any and all odds of historical endurance, I was allowed to come into the world as a Jew. I was privileged to stand on the shoulders of generations of ancestors who had decided, against all good common sense, to stay as Jews.

I had ancestors who were expelled from Spain rather than take the easy way out of kissing a cross and letting it all go.

I had ancestors who toiled in poverty and constant uncertainty in Galicia, and in the Ottoman Empire, yet who believed that they had been endowed with something worth keeping.

So yes, I am enormously privileged. Because I have had the privilege to validate the struggles and sacrifices of those who enabled me to do all of that.

And to top it all off, I packed up my privileged self and, together with my privileged wife and one of our privileged children, moved to Israel, which has to be the most privileged place on earth.

We moved to a place that for almost 2000 years was a dream, an idea, a memory, a yearning. But not really a place.

But through the will power, fueled by the suffering of all those generations who were - let's be candid here - hated, despised and loathed by most everyone around them - of Jews who refused to give up the fraught privilege of being Jews, the place that was a dreamy memory, became a gritty reality.

And the gritty reality survived against the same kind of odds that Jews have been facing for close to forever. So, this place, Israel, succeeded, and of course by doing so, it must be guilty of unspeakable crimes against - you fill in the blank -because that is what it means to be a Jew.

You do things that shouldn't be able to be done. You endure things that shouldn't be put up with. That is part of the existential job description of what it means to be a Jew.

And I cannot imagine a greater privilege than the opportunity to be part of it all.