To Exploit

by Max Erin James

Because the white Jewish often presents their religious background as a justification of their exploitation, and claim that one who was once oppressed, and still oppressed in other parts of the world, is incapable of demonstrating the same oppression, people of color respond with contempt, frustration, and irritation to the white people. The white Jewish people choose to interpret this as an attack on their faith. In response, people of color grow impatient with the discourse that leads to no resolution, critiquing the victimization, which is translated as anti-Semitism. James Baldwin words this misunderstanding much better than I could without regurgitating his sentiments:

The root of anti-Semitism among Negroes is, ironically, the relationship

of colored peoples—all over the globe—to the Christian world. This is a

fact which may be difficult to grasp, not only for the ghetto’s most

blasted and embittered inhabitants, but also for many Jews, to say

nothing of many Christians.

Xenophobia of any sort is never justified and leads to more division and harm to those involved or associated. Baldwin makes a better effort to explain this as disappointment in the Jewish community to submit to the Christian’s history and continued abuse of its own philosophies to marginalize so many others. It is equated with anti-Semitism such as the mass genocide by the Third Reich, when in reality “the Negro is really condemning the Jew for having become an American white man.” Judaism is perceptively a white religion in the western world, even with many brown and black people who are devout but not presented the same platforms as their white peers; meanwhile Christianity is adopted by the colonizer, the oppressor, the judicator, to justify its followers’ violence on the people of color and those who do not devote themselves to the same fate, establishing a prejudice to the Jew, the Muslim, and the Israelite, among others of less recognized beliefs. Devotion may not be enough if the colonizer, seldom any race but white, refuses to agree with or accept the people of the land they hope to populate. I separate “people of color” from “those who do not devote themselves” because to be Christian is never enough for the white man who preaches to us so often the words of their Bible, the word of their god, the scripture that emphasizes peace, unity and love. The white man must find logic, even where there is none— reason, even when it is from devious origin—to justify their oppression onto others; the white man must explain their abusive actions onto communities that have not demonstrated any ill intent; the white man must create a divine purpose to fulfill, exclusively involving taking control of other regions outside of their government's current jurisdiction and control; religion has shown to be enough as most of the world followed different philosophies, most living isolated but in peace and unbothered. When it was not enough, it miraculously became the "white man's burden" to civilize the African people, the Negro, to introduce them to scripture and how to truly live; to save them from savagery and dated living; to pass their genes onto their children for their superior bloodline to pass onto the inferior beings. All ideations of spreading white European genetics and white philosophy has been incorporated by white men who seem in one respect or another to be tied to the Church. Christianity or Catholicism presented values these people claimed to implement into their way of life.

My ignorance, although recognized within much of my writing, is not paralleled with naiveness. There are thousands, likely millions of brown and black people who are a part of the Jewish faith. It is arguable, there are just as many who devote themselves to this philosophy as they do any other. Because, however, white supremacy prospers in our society, and so many Jewish people happen to be white (not at their own volition) in the western world, Christians have allowed Judaism to be marketed as a legitimate, although still second class, religion, while the others are labeled primitive and savage, otherwise rebranded as myths. This is due to the lack of support and conversion of the white man into such ideologies. Therefore, the Black Israelite is but a community of well-wishers who are not taken serious; the Jehovah’s Witness is but a community of predominantly black doormen who dress in nice suits, which makes them more approachable to the white man; the Muslim is a misguided nomad from a world far away following an outdated approach on life. The Egyptians, Greeks, Norsemen, amongst so many others faced a similar fate with their faiths being degraded to be only myths. Latter-day Saints (which refused to ordain black men until the late 1970s) and Scientology, both started in the United States by white men, are more respected and recognized by the Christian because of the predominantly white following, and so the two are more protected than the Native American who has had their land stripped from them and continues to lose what is left of their home and their natural rights to a government whose representatives so often preach to us from their Christian book what is right and wrong.

Christians have throughout history taken the side of the Jewish, specifically white Judaism, and has used this manipulative allegiance to attack any question of their actions. Because of this perceived acceptance of the Jewish faith, the white Jewish man takes the side of the oppressor, ignorant to the clear exploitation they are experiencing for the benefit of the agenda. When questioned of their alliance, the white Jewish man explains they cannot be prejudice for they have experienced hardships, and their people have been marginalized and experienced a genocide, that is clearly too large to fathom. These actions, although true, led to the exodus to the west. Here, in America, the Jewish (if white) have a voice, much louder than the black man’s ever was allowed to be. Refuge and sanctuary was offered. No government has demonstrated an effort to release the black people in America from their four hundred years of bondage. No nation has shown interest or intent to cease any oppressive system that has immediate negative affects on the people of color (it is important to note immediate as all oppression eventually hurts all and is a debilitating factor to any form of government). The black man can convert from one faith to another, then back, but the nature of his environment remains the same, with obstacles in place for the one thing he cannot move out of, for what he is unable to change, for what remains a permanent tag. The white man may choose to follow Islam and not receive the same disgusted looks from white peers. From any peers for that matter. It is no surprise the indoctrination of Christian influenced government has led to a prejudice within our own communities. With my own eyes, the discomfort of my own people when they see a Muslim woman in her al-amira has been noticed. When a white woman, whether Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, or even Pious Jew wears a head covering it is adored, seen as “ethnic” or culturally attuned. The white man is given passage to navigate and “explore” ideologies without recourse. This figurative passport of faith has been handed to the Jewish community—as well to the Latter-day Saints, and surely to Scientologists soon—to move through life unharmed, if they are white. The Jewish respond to our disappointment in them with the notion they pulled themselves up and other minorities should be capable of accomplishing the same. One does not approach me knowing my faith, but certainly recognizing the color of my skin. As a white Jewish man, born and living in America, climbs up the corporate ladder, he attributes his success only to work, ignoring his skin color because of his faith. The oppressive system that keeps my people stagnant should not be the excuse as to why so many of us remain at the starting line according to this man. He has pledged allegiance to the Christians who casted his people out from many homes centuries ago. The same faith of the leaders who never followed their promise of land in the twentieth century. The same faith that considers the Jew a cursed being. The same faith that had blamed, for thousands of years, the Jewish for killing their savior. The same faith followed by neo-Nazis and the Ku Klux Klan, both devout Christian organizations that would rather see the Jewish man fall than to share space with them. It is the welcoming arms for the white skin that blinds the Jewish from the true intentions of the Christian. The Christian faith that was so well appropriated and colonized itself…by the white man.