**Translation**

**Rav Avraham Skorka:** Dear, dear brother, the world is tremendously affected by the pandemic. Many people that we have known, have unfortunately passed away from this terrible disease. But this disease also revealed so many of the problems..., I would like to use the word “miseries”, that were afflicting us prior to the onset of this plague. I have read many of your reflections, in the past, about how we are all in the same boat, that we all have to get out of it together, otherwise we will not get out at all... what more can we add? I wrote a book about... you so kindly sent me a letter later published at the beginning of it... what more can be added at this stage?

**Pope Francis:** Basically, it is so original that we always have to repeat the same thing in some other way for us to understand it, don’t we? It is a crisis. A crisis makes us dance, as you said, it shakes us, doesn’t it? It makes us dance so that the best remains. When we enter a crisis it is in order to purify. Well here, we did not enter a crisis, circumstances put us in a crisis, didn’t they? So, from here we have to come out better or worse. We do not get out of a crisis being the same people who entered it, do we? One comes out better or worse. We have to make the choice, don’t we? But a very great danger is to transform a crisis into a conflict. The crisis always gives hope: it purifies you, it makes you [swim]. A conflict always closes you and leads you to a struggle of separation. So we must be careful, not to transform this crisis, the one that we are all suffering from, into a conflict. And we should try to come out better. We will not come out unchanged... we will come out better or worse, won’t we? And, to come out better... and nobody comes out alone, as you said: we all come out or none of us comes out. But the point is not to transform the crisis into a conflict because the conflict is all about itself, it is very selfish and does not allow us to purify the crisis and the crisis implies moving forward. That’s how I see it, right? Either we assume a crisis or we close in on ourselves transforming it into conflict, which is deceitful, very bad. It leads us to fight, to war, to division.

**Rav:** If this plague has a message [it is] precisely that humanity must learn to leave aside particularisms, selfishness and must share... Vaccines were not distributed the way they should have been and so many things that should not have happened, happened… where everyone tried to save their own skin. This time is a time in which all kinds of hatreds appear, again. One hatred, which we have talked about before but which unfortunately is recurrent: anti-Semitism. There are plenty of manifestations of it in the world. Anti-Semitism is once again a topic. What can we say?

**Pope:** It is true, it is true, but also every form of ‘anti’, isn’t it? For example, anti-immigrants... right? That leads us to war. Anti-social justice... that is the... the... using people, workers... see what is happening with precarious work... not only in South... Asia, but also in civilized countries. Precarious labor being used… right? And the... creating enemies, isn’t it? It’s always... and that’s where the ‘antis’ come in. And the anti-Semitism is recurrent and it worries me because here in Europe there are some anti-Semitic centers, isn’t it? And, and it is recurrent. Today it is a cemetery, tomorrow the synagogue, etc. And I think there is something inside not accepting the universality of fraternity. In *Fratelli tutti*, which is where I want to emphasize the universality of fraternity, the first chapter, I try to describe all the situations, all the wrongdoings, all the philosophies that harm us today, right? And from one of those, from some of those, anti-Semitism is born. For me it is… I tried to make an x-ray view of the current damage in the world, ok? What does fraternity lose at this point, right?

Why anti-Semitism? That one is a Christian or a Jew, full stop. But that made dogmatically explicit is tremendous, isn’t it, as an ideology... isn’t it?

**Rav:** Yes, horrible.

**Pope:** And ideologies kill peoples, always.

**Rav:** Yes, because ultimately, ideology is, it’s a matter of... it’s a matter of faith, but destructive faith.

**Pope:** Yes, clearly it is, I would say of distilled faith. If you are thirsty and you drink distilled water, you don’t get thirsty. If you need [have] inner anxiety, to find God and so on, you look for faith, but a distilled faith leads you to this ideology and to [categorize] “good” and “bad", “this” and “that”, and an ideology is a faith that does not allow dialogue, it totally dismisses it: You are my enemy, right, so you go away... and it is making a way, putting enemies aside, or even putting people aside, right?

**Rav:** And the antidote to all this, the way to create the dialogue, that is, the antidote against all this. Because someone who is open to dialogue cannot adhere to a faith that does not allow for dialogue. How can we develop it further? Jewish-Christian dialogue and dialogue in general in the world.

**Pope:** I believe that one must be open to the response of the other. I dialogue with him, but I dialogue as I want to: I monologue. If I am not attentive to the other’s answer and I take it and move on and so on, a little bit like ping pong, right? That is, incorporating the other’s answer (the secret), if I do not incorporate the other’s answer for ulterior elaboration and swing to move on, there is no dialogue, there is ping pong, there is ping pong.

**Rav:** And how do we encourage a dialogue?

**Pope:** L-l-S-T-E-N. Listen. Be gentle. And what happens between ideologies also happens in families, does it not? When we say to the spouses: dialogue between yourselves, please, do not break the dishes before the time, right? Listen to each other. How do you understand this? But how do you get to that? Of course, because I think, without control, dialogue is done slowly, without wanting to take advantage of it for oneself, isn’t it? It is said that dialogue is free of charge. True dialogue is free. When there is interest, it is business, it is no longer dialogue.

**Rav:** This reminds me that when we recorded the program in Buenos Aires, far away and a long time ago… not so far away and not so long ago either, but... many things happened in the middle... what I felt, and I guess it is the same as you felt, is that our dialogue was a projection of the whole Argentine society. After years of lack of understanding, a whole history of misunderstandings between Jews and Christians, here we sit, dis-cus-sing, in the deepest positive sense, and that has to be an example in all fields for Argentina.

Pope: Just like that. Without letting your guard down. [...] to defend myself from the other.

Rav: And to be open, to say things as they are, as we used to say to each other. I plan to share these thoughts in the United States with the University, with the College, the first Jewish College in the United States, where I am a ‘Distinguished Professor’, which is at Gratz College, and with the George Town University, with a community called Temple Beit Hillel, Beit-El, and with… there is an activity prepared in the city of Naples, in the State of Florida, where there is a dialogue group...

Pope: It is important, not to be afraid of dialogue.

Rav: That’s right, and well, we refer then jointly to all these institutions...

Pope: It is important… go ahead. Thank you.

Rav: Thank you.