

► What is Jewish Pride?

Sunday's "No Hate, No Fear" solidarity march in New York City was the organized Jewish community's response to the alarming spate of anti-Semitic attacks in the New York area and elsewhere. The estimated 25,000 participants who joined in the highly promoted march across the Brooklyn Bridge sought to convey the message that American Jews are concerned, and were willing to take to the streets to demonstrate just how much. The gathering was impressive, and its impact was meaningful.

Among other things, the thousands of marchers sent a clear message to public officials that a key constituency and its allies are worried about public security for the Jewish community. That was an important message, as it is government that is responsible for the safety of our streets and houses of worship.

In addition, to the extent the march provides motivation for politicians, law enforcement, and opinion writers to focus efforts on combating anti-Semitism, that is

clearly a good thing. And if it also motivates civil rights leaders to denounce those who either fail to condemn violence against Jews or who whitewash it with talk about relative suffering, that will be an added bonus.

We hope that the striking turnout and resulting news coverage of the march makes clear to the haters that anti-Semitism and violence against Jews will not be tolerated, and that people of goodwill are committed to making it stop.

The day after the march, AJC issued a different kind of response to the spate of anti-Semitic incidents with a #JewishandProud social media campaign, for which Jews were encouraged to "wear your Judaism with pride! Whether a kippah, a necklace with a Jewish symbol, a T-shirt written in Hebrew or anything else identifiably Jewish." Like the march, this campaign was also about visibility, with the added specificity of encouraging Jewish pride in particular. While the campaign is a fine starting point, it does not go far enough.

We are not fighting anti-Semitism to make Jews feel good. We are fighting anti-Semitism to ensure the safety of Jews. Given all the problems with online hate, which have been thoroughly documented by the ADL, it's hard to imagine how hashtags and photos on social media will make a serious difference. And while it plays on the rosy notion of Jewish pride, it's a simplistic interpretation.

Real Jewish pride does not come from the display of symbols — it comes from embracing Judaism and Jewish observance. We can live our Jewish pride every day by celebrating Shabbat, joining a synagogue, studying Jewish texts and history, donating money to good causes, seeking to make the world a better place based upon deeply developed Jewish values.

Symbols may make us feel better temporarily. But without a deeper, more nuanced commitment to our Judaism — the kind that lasts beyond the hashtag of the moment — we don't stand a chance against the anti-Semites. Jr