

Geulas Yisrael 133

Putting the Jews on Trial

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It happened before and it is happening again. Jewish victims of antisemitic violence are being accused of the very same heinous crimes committed against them. For the first time in history, our people have the military capability to defend ourselves and to respond to a barbaric pogrom. Despite our heroic and concerted efforts to limit civilian suffering, we are being indicted in the Hague on fabricated charges. The lopsided claims and imbalanced half-truths are at once comical, but also maddening. What is happening to our people and what is happening to our world? How could there be so much moral confusion in a supposed *enlightened* modern world?

In truth, Yeshayahu already predicted this moral chaos, and this isn't the first time that his prediction came true. In chapter 54, Yeshayahu maps out two different antisemitic strategies:

כל כלי יוצר עליך לא יצלח וכל לשון תקום אתך למשפט תרשיעי

He assures us that all *weapons* (כלי) hurled against us will fail. Additionally, all *tongues* which tussle with us in “judgement” (לשון תקום אתך למפשת) will be defeated. Yeshayahu forecasts a perennial two-pronged assault against our people – one with weapons of violence and one with venomous tongues.

The Rambam's letter to Yemen

In the latter half of the 12th century the Yemenite Jewish community faced severe religious persecution coupled with ferocious pressure to convert to Islam. Within this turmoil, a false Messiah arose, promising the Jewish community a speedy Messianic resolution. His exposure as a fraud sunk the Yemenite community into even deeper despair. Disheartened and confused, they sought the Rambam's counsel.

In his legendary response, known as the Iggeret Teiman or Petach Tikvah, the Rambam cited this verse in Yeshayahu, while explaining that, throughout history, our enemies always attempted to discredit our religious belief system. Jealous that we were chosen by Hashem, they endlessly sought to rebut Jewish faith and religion.

Writing this letter in the 12th century, the Rambam's words were ominously prescient. Twice in the 13th century Judaism would be put on public trial in Christian lands. In 1240 in Paris, the Talmud was put on trial, whereas in 1263 in Barcelona, Judaism itself was publicly debated, as the Ramban valiantly defended our religion. These are two infamous events during a dark period marred by relentless attempts by both Christians and Moslems to mock and discredit Jewish faith. While Christianity and Islam flourished and dominated much of the civilized world, Judaism was in a constant state of decline. Attempts to discredit Jewish faith were part of a larger ploy to psychologically humiliate Jews and Jewish religion, to encourage Jews to convert to other, more popular religions.

Citing Yeshayahu, the Rambam assured the Yemenite community, that all efforts to theologically discredit us would fail.

The Language of Darwin

As history shifted, the verbal assaults didn't end, they were just modified to reflect contemporary cultural trends. In a modern world which witnessed the collapse of organized religion, theological attacks were no longer relevant, and a new strategy of verbal assaults was required. The intellectual milieu of the 19th century provided a new basis for the continuing verbal attacks against our people.

Darwin illustrated that Nature was an evolutionary system which selected out stronger creatures from weaker ones, to preserve the sustainability of the overall Natural order. *Social Darwinists* adapted this theory, asserting that *society* as well, was composed of stronger and weaker races. Weaker components of society must be periodically purged to insure the overall health of mainstream society.

Jews were soon cast as a sub-Aryan or inferior race, a threat to a superior enlightened European society. These theories, cited by Hitler in Mein Kampf, would, ultimately, launch his full-scale attempted genocide. In the past, our

religion was attacked but in the first part of the 20th century our racial identity was under fire. It was just a different example of Yeshayahu's original ominous prophecy.

Distorting Colonialism

After a violent 20th century, terrorized by Fascist regimes which caused death and destruction to hundreds of millions, it was no longer culturally acceptable to assign superior or inferior races. Jew haters required a new story to perpetuate their verbal assault. They found new material in the woeful story of European colonialism. During a dark 400-year period beginning in the 16th century, mighty European powers colonized weaker countries, sapping their resources and subjugating their freedom. Fortunately, colonialism and its oppressive programs were largely abolished after WWII.

However, this 400-year tale of injustice and repression provided an easy narrative for modern verbal assaults against our people. Simplistically adapting colonialism to Jewish history, our enemies have falsely accused us of the nefarious by-products of colonialism, such as genocide and apartheid. Of course, no claim could be further from the truth. We are not foreign invaders, but have returned to our ancient homeland, with no intention to colonize or abuse any other population which desires to live alongside us in peace.

Just as Yeshayahu predicted, the false verbal assaults continue. At the tail-end of history we are living through the worst and most literal fulfillment of the prophecy. We are being tried in the international Court of the Hague. Yeshayahu's prophecy has never been more true. This is the first time we are literally being prosecuted in a court of law or, as Yeshayahu predicted תָּקוּם אֵתֶךָ לְמִשְׁפָּט. Luckily we know the end of the pasuk. This assault, as previous ones, will also fail.

Naïve Expectations

The show trials in the Hague reflect an ancient prophecy of Yeshaya, but also showcase the folly of modern culture. In past centuries the concept of an international court would have been unthinkable. The world was mired in endless war and was sharply divided by antagonistic rivalries. The thought that an entire

world would recognize the authority of one common court of law was unimaginable.

The post WWII era created a false mirage, raising unrealistic hopes that humanity had reached a post-war state of international harmony and global consensus. International bodies were established to promote international cooperation and maintain global peace and security. The United Nations was the showcase of this new world of harmony.

Instead, the UN became a mockery, being hypocritically manipulated by interest groups. As a result, its resolutions have become hollow and duplicitous, carrying no meaning or validity in the international arena.

Similarly, this show trial may have the same degrading effect upon the integrity of International Court at the Hague. South Africa is a corrupt country, scarred by graft and mismanagement, and suffering soaring crime rates, including horrific levels of gender based violence against women. Their galling prosecution of our people on spurious charges is a travesty which turns the entire notion of an international court into a parody. No court in the world should be validating this case or should be allowing it to proceed.

This farcical trial underscores the futility of our hopes for complete global cooperation and harmony. Despite our greatest efforts, international harmony can only be delivered from above, not from below. One day the world will be fully united in its recognition of Hashem as the one G-d who chose us as His children to inhabit his city in Yerushalayim and provide prosperity and inspiration to an entire world.

Distorting a divine trait

Finally, this sham trial is perverting one of the core divine traits of Hashem. Hashem is the מלך המשפט , who desires justice and law and who endowed these instincts to humans, as part of their package of divine-like traits called tzelem Elokim. He wants us to create societies of justice and law enforcement modeled after His concern for justice. Human courts which pervert justice vandalize the image of Hashem in our world. The charade trial in the Hague isn't just a historical travesty, it is also a divine tragedy. Courts are meant to uphold morality, not to

facilitate immoral agendas of hate. This wreckage of justice defaces the presence of Hashem.

We daven that we can help restore Hashem's presence:

וצדקינו במשפט , ברוך אתה ה' מלך אוהב צדקה ומשפט