

Snapshots: Medieval Jewry's Confrontation with Christianity

1. Arstcroll Machzor, Yom Kippur- U'Netaneh Tokef prayer

THE ARK IS OPENED.
Congregation and chazzan:
And so, the Kedushah prayer shall ascend to You, for You, our God, are the King Who pardons and forgives.
Congregation and chazzan:

וְנִתְּנָה הַתְּקֵף *Let us now relate the power of this day's holiness, for it is awesome and frightening. On it Your Kingship will be exalted; * Your throne will be firm with kindness* and You will sit upon it in truth. * It is true that You alone* are the One Who judges, proves, knows, and bears witness; Who writes and seals, (counts and calculates); Who remembers all that was forgotten. * You will open the Book of Chronicles – it will read itself, and everyone's signature is in it.* The great shofar* will be sounded and a still, thin sound* will be heard. Angels will hasten, a trembling and terror will seize them – and they will say, 'Behold, it is the Day of Judgment, to master the heavenly host for judgment!' – for they cannot be vindicated* in Your eyes in judgment. All mankind* will pass before You like members of the flock. Chazzan— Like a shepherd inspecting his flock, making sheep pass under his staff, so shall You cause to pass, count, calculate, and consider the soul of all the living; and You shall apportion the fixed needs of all Your creatures and inscribe their verdict.*

Congregation then chazzan (in some congregations this is recited only by the chazzan):
בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה *On Rosh Hashanah* will be inscribed and on Yom Kippur will be sealed how many will pass from the earth and how many will be created; who will live and who will die; who will die at his predestined time* and who before his time; who by water and who by fire, who by sword, who by beast, who by famine, who by thirst, who by storm,* who by plague, who by strangulation, and who by stoning. Who will rest and who will wander, who will live in harmony and who will be harried, who will enjoy tranquillity and who will suffer, who will be impoverished and who will be enriched, who will be degraded and who will be exalted.*

Congregation aloud, then chazzan:
FAST VOICE MONEY
But repentance, prayer and charity* remove the evil of the decree!

THE ARK IS OPENED.
Congregation and chazzan:
וּבְכֹן יִלְךְ הַמַּלְאָה קְדוּשָׁה, כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ מוֹטֵל וְסוֹלֵם.
Congregation and chazzan:

וְנִתְּנָה הַתְּקֵף *קְדוּשַׁת הַיּוֹם, כִּי הוּא נוֹרָא וְאִיוִם. וְבו תִּשְׁאֵא מַלְכוּתְךָ, הִכּוֹן בְּהִסְדָּתְךָ וְנִשְׁבַּע עָלָיו בְּאֵמַתְךָ. אֵי אֵמַת כִּי אַתָּה הוּא יְדוֹן וּמוֹכֵיחַ, וְיִוָּדַע נֶגְדְךָ, (כּוֹתֵב וְחוֹתֵם) וְסוֹפֵר וּמוֹנֵן, וְתוֹבֵר כָּל הַמְשַׁבְּחֹתַי. וְתִפְתַּח אֶת סֵפֶר הַזְכוּרוֹת, וּמֵאֵלָיו יִקְרָא, וְחוֹתֵם יָד כָּל אָדָם בּוֹ. וְכִשְׁפָּר דְּדוּלֵי יִתְקַע, וְקוֹל דְּהַמָּחָה וְדִקְרֵי יִשְׁמַע. וּמֵלְאָכִים יִתְפַּזֵּן, וְהֵיל וְיִרְעָדָה יֵאֲחָזֵן, וְיֵאֲמָרוּ הַיָּהּ יוֹם הַדִּין, לִפְקוּד עַל צְבָא מְרוֹם בְּדִין, כִּי לֹא יִזְכְּוּ בַעֲיָיִךְ בְּדִין. וְכָל בְּאֵי עוֹלָם יַעֲבֹרֵן לִפְנֵיךְ בְּכַנֵּי מְרוֹן. כִּי בְּבִגְדֵי רֹחֵץ עֲבִירֵן, מַעֲבִיר צֵאֲנוּ מִתַּח שִׁבְטֵךְ, כֵּן מַעֲבִיר וְתִסְפּוֹר וְתִמְנֶנֶה, וְתִמְקוֹד וְנָשַׁךְ כָּל חַי, וְתִחַתֵּן קֶצֶבָה לְכָל בְּרִיּוֹתֶיךָ, וְתִכְתּוֹב אֶת גּוֹר דִּיכֶם.*

Congregation then chazzan (in some congregations this is recited only by the chazzan):
בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה *וְתִתְּבוֹן, וְיִבֹּס צוּם כְּפֹר יִתְמַוֵּן, כְּמֵה יַעֲבִירֵן, וְכִמְה יִבְרָאוּן; מִי יִחַיֵּה וּמִי יָמוּת, מִי בְּקָצוֹ וּמִי לֹא בְּקָצוֹ, מִי בְּקוּם, וּמִי בְּאֵשׁ, מִי בְּתַרְבֵּי, וּמִי בְּחַיֵּה, מִי בְּרָעַב, וּמִי בְּצָמָא, מִי בְּרַעַשׁ, וּמִי בְּמַגָּפָה, מִי בְּחַנְיָקָה, וּמִי בְּסִקְלָה, מִי יָנוּחַ וּמִי נִינָע, מִי יִשְׁקֵט וּמִי יִשְׁרָף, מִי יִשְׁלֹוּ וּמִי יִתְשָׁר, מִי יִצְנֵי וּמִי יִצְשָׁר, מִי יִשְׁפֵּל וּמִי יָרוּם.*

Congregation aloud, then chazzan:
עוֹם קוֹל מוֹסֵף
וְתִשְׁבַּח וְתִפְלֵה וְיִבְרָכָה
מַעֲבִירֵן אֶת רַע הַדְּעָרָה.

וְנִתְּנָה הַתְּקֵף / Unesaneh Tokef

This prayer is one of the most stirring compositions in the entire liturgy of the Days of Awe. Written by Rabbi Amnon of Mainz, Germany, about one thousand years ago, it has become one of the highlights of the chazzan's repetition of the *Mussaf Amidah* on both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This is the story behind it (as related in *Or Zarua*):

The bishop of Mainz insisted that his friend and advisor, R' Amnon, convert to Christianity. In order to buy time, R' Amnon asked for three days of grace to meditate upon the question. Upon returning home he was distraught at having given the impression that he even considered betraying his God.

R' Amnon spent the three days in solitude, fasting and praying to be forgiven for his sin, and did not return to the bishop. Finally the bishop had him brought and demanded an answer. R' Amnon replied that his tongue should be cut out for the sin of saying he would consider the matter. Furious, the bishop said that the sin was not in what he said, but in his legs for not coming as he had promised. He ordered that R' Amnon's feet be chopped off, joint by joint.

They did the same to his hands. After each amputation R' Amnon was asked if he would convert, and each time he refused. Then the bishop ordered that he be carried home, a maimed and mutilated cripple, together with the amputated parts.

When Rosh Hashanah arrived a few days later, R' Amnon asked to be carried to the Ark. Before the congregation recited *Kedushah*, he asked to be allowed to sanctify God's Name in the synagogue as he had in the bishop's palace. He recited *Unesaneh Tokef* and then died.

Three days later, R' Amnon appeared in a dream to R' Klonimos ben Meshullam, a great Talmudic and Kabbalistic scholar of Mainz, and taught him the text of *Unesaneh Tokef*, and asked him to send it to all parts of Jewry to be inserted into the Rosh Hashanah liturgy. R' Amnon's wish was carried out, and the prayer became an integral part of the Rosh Hashanah service. Some time later it was included in the Yom Kippur service in most communities.

On it Your Kingship will be exalted. The recitation of the verses of Kingship, Remembrance, and Shofar in the Rosh Hashanah liturgy serves to exalt God's sovereignty.

2. Rambam Laws of Forbidden Foods, Ch. 11

7 ...With regard to any gentile who does not serve false deities, e.g., the Arabs: It is forbidden to drink his wine, but it is permitted to benefit from it...With regard to those who worship false deities, by contrast, it is forbidden to benefit from their ordinary wine.¹

3. Rambam Laws of Avoda Zara, Ch. 9

4 The Canaanites are idol worshippers, and Sunday is their festival. Accordingly, in Eretz Yisrael, it is forbidden to conduct transactions with them on Thursday and Friday each and every week, and, needless to say, on Sunday itself, when transactions with them are forbidden everywhere.²

¹ Translation from www.chabad.org. "Our translation follows the standard version of the *Mishneh Torah*. The uncensored text reads: "Christians, by contrast, are idolaters. It is forbidden to benefit...."

² See also Rambam commentary to the Mishna Avoda Zara 1:3, and Moreh Nevukhim 1:50

4. Shulchan Arukh (R. Yosef Karo, Tzfat, 1488-1575), O”C 156:1

Rama: And some are lenient with partnering with Kusim these days because the Kusim of these times do not swear by idol worship. And even though they mention the foreign idol, nevertheless their intention is to the Creator of heaven and earth, except that they join the name of Heaven and (foreign gods) [*shituf*]. And we do not find that there is in this (a violation by the Jew of) "Before a blind person you shall not place a stumbling block," because the kusim are not enjoined regarding partnership (of God with idols).

5. Shu”t Rashi (R. Shlomo b. Yitzchak, France, 1040-1105), #171

הנני החתום משיב לשואלוני: על דבר קדושי - העלמה שנתקדשה לשנים, ושניהם היו אנוסים לעבור על תורת - משה על ידי גוים, וגם העדים כיוצא בהם היו: רואה אני שהיא צריכה גט. שאף ישראל משומד לרצונו שקדש, קדושין, שנאמר "חטא ישראל, אע"פ שחטא, ישראל הוא". וכ"ש [האנוסים שלבם] (לבם) לשמים.³

6. Shu”t Rashba (R. Shlomo b. Aderet, Spain, 1235-1310), VII, #292

לרבינו האי ז"ל וששאלתם ישראל משומד אם יורש אביו דבר תורה כך הראונו מן השמים דמשומד אינו יורש אביו ישראל דכיון דמשומד הוא נפק ליה מקדושת ישראל ומקדושה דאבוה ואשכחן דלא הויא ירושה אלא לבר ישראל דמיחס בתר אבוה דכתיב ונתתי לך ולזרעך אחריו מי שזרעו מיוחס אחריו יצא משומד שאינו מתיחס אחר אביו ישראל ושוב מצינו באברהם אבינו דכשומר לו הקב"ה ידוע תדע כי גר יהיה זרעך בארץ לא להם אע"פ שהיה לו ישמעאל ויצחק לא פרט אלא יצחק שנאמר כי ביצחק יקרא לך זרע...

4

7. A brief history of Blood Libels



The case of Anderl von Rinn, 1462
Caption reads: They (the Jews) cut the throat of the martyr and take all the blood from him



Antisemitic flyer in Kiev before Beilis trial, 1913
Caption: Orthodox Russian people, commemorate the name of the youth Andrei Yustchinsky who was martyred by kikes! Memory eternal! Christians, guard your children! On March 17, the Pesach of kikes begin.

1255, Lincoln, England- The “ritual murder” of Hugh

From that time forward these Jews conspired to chase this innocent child from the earth's face. Down a dark alley-way they found and hired a murderer who owned that secret place; and as the

³ אעפ"כ, הרמ"א ביו"ד רסח:יב פוסק: "ישראל מומר שעשה תשובה, א"צ לטבול; רק מדרבנן יש לו לטבול ולקבל עליו דברי חבירות בפני ג'.

⁴ הערות-וכיון דיליף דבר זה מקרא נראה דס"ל לרבינו דמה"ת אינו יורש ודלא כהש"ע בסי' רפ"ג שפסק כהרמב"ם והרא"ש דרק מצד קנסא אינו יורש

boy passed at his happy pace this cursed Jew grabbed him and held him, slit his little throat and cast him in a pit.

~Geoffrey Chaucer, excerpt 'The Prioress's Tale' in *The Canterbury Tales*, late 14th century.

8. Shulchan Arukh (R. Yosef Karo, 15th c.); Taz (R. David Segal, 16th c.) O" C 472

It is a *mitzvah* to seek out red wine [for the Passover Seder] (והאידינא נמנעו מליקח) (יין אדום מפני עלילות שקרים בעו"ה)

9. Soncino Haggadah (Cecil Roth), pgs. 53-55

We are told by the romantic school that this (custom of opening the door) became usual in the worst period of medieval persecution, when the blood-accusation was rife, in order to manifest conclusively to the outside world that the body of a Christian child was not concealed about the house. But assuredly the opening of the door would have given the Gentile mob the ideal opportunity (if so desired) of introducing evidence of the crime. Moreover, such procedure might well have been taken as proof of guilt rather than of innocence... for it is obvious that the proper time to demonstrate that Christian blood was not necessary for the Passover celebration was before the meal rather than after it.

10. Shu"t Yabia Omer (R. Ovadia Yosef, Israel, 1920-2013), O" C I, #24

והרה"ג ר' יו"ט ישראל ז"ל בס' מנהגי מצרים כתב וז"ל: (אחר שכ' מה שהעלה הרדב"ז הנ"ל), והן כהיום שאינו נמצא ישראל שיתעסק, נהגו שאף בלישה ועריכה וקטיפה הכל ע"י גוים, אלא שישראל עומד ע"ג, להיות שא"א בענין אחר... ונ"ט למנהג שהוא מחשש עלילת דם, וכיון שיד הגוי באמצע יבאו מהם ויעידו בהם, ואם נסלקם במצת מצוה, ניתן יד לפושעים לחשוד בנו, כי כל העלילה היא על מצת מצוה, וחמירא סכנתא. עכת"ד.

11. Yalkut Divrei Asaf (R. Alexander Feuerstein, London, 20th c.), pgs. 149-150

כה) והשיב להם הרב מוא"ה זצ"ל
הלא ראו תראו⁶ לעת כואת
שיהודי אחד ויחיד עומד למשפט בתוך
רוסיא, וכיחד עמו קמה ונצבה כל היהדות
כאחד באנגליא באמריקה ובכל קצווי תבל,
שמבלי להכירו אישית הם דואגים ורועדים
לגורלו, ולבכם חרד למשפט שיחרץ עליו,
ואילו גוי שעומד למשפט, מה אכפת לו
לגוי אחר שבקצה העולם, ולזה כוונו חז"ל
אתם קרוים "אדם", שעם ישראל הם כקומה
שלימה וכחטיבה אחת, שאם הוא יקבל
מכה בראש כל אבריו ירגישו בהכאב.

כד) בעת עלילת הדם המפורסמת ברוסיה
נגד מנרל ביילים בתחילת המאה
ועשרים לספירתם, העלילו מלומדי שונאי
ישראל באומרם - הלא אמרו חכמי הגמרא
בתלמוד "אתם קרוין אדם ואין אומות
העולם קרוים אדם" (יבמות סא, א), הרי
שהחכמים השוו אומות העולם לבהמות
וחיות שהותר רציחתם.

12. Kovetz Ma'amarim (R. E. Wasserman hy" d, Lithuania, 1874-1971), pgs. 88-89

ז. הנה ידוע, כי כלל ישראל סובל תמיד משני דברים:
א) מבחוס, מעלילת דם, אשר הוא דבר נפלא מאד, כי הרי הכלל
הוא שכל שקר שאין בו קורטוב של אמת, אינו יכול להתקיים.
השקר הזה של עלילת דם, אין בו אמת אפילו משהו ובכל זאת

הוא מתקיים זה אלפי שנה בכל העולם עד היום הזה, וזהו מפלאי
ההשגחה ודבר ברור הוא, כי בודאי העונש הזה על כלל ישראל
הוא מכון מדה כנגד מדה, בעד איזה עון שנפרעין עבורו בכל
הדורות. ולולי שאינני כדאי, הייתי אומר, כי הוא מכון נגד העון
של „ויטבלו הכתנת בדם“, ואם שגיתי, ה' יכפר בעדי. (ב) מבפנים.

13. Ahad Ha'am (Asher Ginzburg, Ukraine, 1856-1927) pub. in Hamelitz, October 1982

Every Jew, who has been brought up among Jews knows as an indisputable fact that throughout the length and breadth of Jewry, there is not a single individual who drinks human blood for religious purposes. 'But' – you ask – 'is it possible that everybody can be wrong, and the Jews right?' Yes, it is possible: the blood accusation proves it possible. Here, you see, the Jews are right and perfectly innocent.

14. The Massacre of the Jews of York, England in 1190



15. Jewish Encyclopaedia, Vol. VII

YOM-TOB BEN ISAAC OF JOIGNY (called also ha-Kodesh): Tosafist and liturgical poet who suffered martyrdom at York, England, in March, 1190, as has been proved by Grätz. The Jews of York sought refuge in the fortress from the fury of the populace; and after offering a vain resistance for several days the most of them, on the advice of Yom-Tob ben Isaac, joined him in voluntary death. Yom-Tob was a pupil of R. Tam, and was prominent as a tosafist, being frequently mentioned with the epithet "ha-Kodesh" (= "the Holy" or "the Martyr"). He also was a Biblical exegete and a liturgical poet. His best-known productions are Omnam Ken, a hymn sung on the eve of the Day of Atonement.

16. Bereishit Ch. 9; Da'at Zekeynim

5 But your blood, of your souls, I will demand [an account]; **Da'at Zekeynim:** This is a warning against suicide. The word "but" comes to teach that at a time of religious persecution, one can take their own life. We saw that Saul took his own sword and fell on it; this is the word "but" that if one is fearful that the enemy will bring upon them harsh suffering that could not be endured and pass the challenge, one may take their own life. From here we have a proof of slaughtering babies at the time of a harsh decree. There were those who argued and said Chananya and his friends are not a proof because they were going to die anyway, and Saul acted improperly against the will of the sages.

17. Talmud Bavli, Gittin 57b

There was a boat with 400 boys and girls who were being taken for sexual exploitation. They realized this. Girls: If we drown ourselves in the sea (to avoid this), will we come to the world to come? Oldest boy: Yes. Upon hearing the answer, the girls jumped into the sea. The boys made a *kal vachomer*...we are being taken for homosexual exploitation...

18. Tosefot, Sanhedrin 63b

R' Blass: The context is not having a business partnership because if you get into a fight, he will swear to AZ, so you will transgress *lifnei iver*- if a person is not supposed to be in business with a non-Jew and of course the swearing is forbidden. R"t says you can accept the oath from them *bizman hazeh*, because Christianity today is *shituf*- their idea of God is the same idea as we have, but there are other forces as well- and this *shituf* is not AZ. R' Blass- he is saying that Christianity is not in its essence AZ and all of the issues that apply to this in halacha. Not so simple- there is a debate how to interpret this- *Nodah B'Yehuda*- *Tosefos* really means that Christianity is AZ but only in the context of a swear, he has in mind *l'shem shamayim* God, but in every other capacity it is AZ. There is a proof to this understanding from 8th perek of *Sanhedrin*- is a *ben noach chayav* in *kiddush hashem*- quoted there is a discussion between *Na'aman* and *Elisha* in *Melachim II*, *Na'aman* who was cured from *tzara'as* decides he will leave AZ, but when I come to the Temple as king I have to bow down once a year to this idol and *Elisha* says go in peace- the *acharonim* (*Sha'ar Ephraim*) say that this is the proof for this *Tosefos* that *shituf* is AZ- when *Na'aman* was coming he was thinking about *HBH* but he had this one other element of AZ yet he still needed permission to be *makir* it even though it was only *shituf*- we see that even when you have *shituf* it is AZ. But most people understand *Tosefos* *k'peshuto* that *shituf* is not AZ. The third approach is the *shita* of *Tosefos* in AZ- *shayla* based on *Mishna* AZ- all the holidays 3 days before you can't do business with the pagans of that time- there is also a *shita* that says every Sunday was a pagan holiday- *Tosefos* asks how could you ever do business with a pagan holiday Thursday and Friday and there is an opinion that says one week before you can't do business- you can never do business! *Tosefos* says there is a *heter* involved of *mishum eivah*- we don't want to cause other conflicts- it goes by the wayside to allow business- *Tosefos* rejects this and says *mishum eiva* only allows someone who is in a 'forced' situation to do that action when one is stuck, but to be pro-active about the business this wouldn't be allowed- the real reason- the Christians around us, just like the average Jew out there is no longer committed to Judaism, so too the average non-Jew among us (Christians) are not true *Aku"m*- therefore Christians *bizman hazeh* do not have this status anymore. This is apparently the opinion of the *Meiri* as well.

Halakhic issues- going into a church- *Rambam* spoke most strongly against this- *Rambam* *perush mishnayot* (have to look in the *Kapach* edition for full unedited quote)- says if you have a city that is full AZ you can't pass through there, then how much more so, you can't go into a church and the *Tur*, *S"ta*, *Rama* all say you can't go into the church and *Rama* even

says not to go to the courtyard- poskim talk about for a funeral and mishum eiva- but it's pointed out that this sevara only helps you get out by R' Ovadia/R' Moshe that it's not a permitted practice- R' Soloveitchik was quoted not even to watch a funeral because its a religious ceremony. R' Moshe was asked about opening a school which had no money and needed to rent space in a church in a side room, and he was critical not because of AZ but because of the going in and out.

Stam yeynam- is there an issur hana'ah bizman hazeh? Many poskim invoke Tosefos that it has different status