

Rabbi's Message
"Sucker Sermon"
January 10, 1974
Tevet 16 5734

A tragedy occurred many, many, years ago. The son of Shechem wronged Dinah, the daughter of Jacob. The wrong was committed against our forebears but somehow we Jews have suffered as if we had done the wrong. From the time that Dinah was raped the world read the story in the Bible and could only see in that tale an ugly image of the Jew — the image they wanted to see. They saw Jews as conniving, blood-thirsty, conspirators, who always clamor for vengeance. The world read the story and concluded that Jews are forever like Simon and Levi, who, in order to avenge the honor of their sister, make a peace treaty with the people of Shechem and then take advantage of the illness of the people of the city to massacre them while they convalesce from the circumcision that had been imposed upon them by the treaty. The world opined that this was typical of Jews throughout the years. We were a species that could always be guilty of the preemptive strike. We first weaken our enemies, cause them to lie ill on their beds, and then go out and slaughter them. The Jew Avas the classic sneak. Alas, that is being told to us again today. Israelis are always the assassins, the aggressors, the expansionists. Israelis are like Simon and Levi, the villains of the piece. Mind you, two brothers only tried to avenge their sister's honor and the result was that the world can see only evil in the deed of Simon and Levi, and they read that evil into everything that Jews have ever done since.

What happened on the holiest day of our year was that a rape was committed against us and once again all the world seems to be bowing low to pay honor to the rapist, to do everything that it can to assuage the feelings of those who committed the wrong with no regard for the victims, and the families of the victims. This is our present situation. Dinah gets raped and not her rapist bears the malice of mankind — only her family suffers it. And so it is with Israel. Israel is raped. And she — the victim — is to blame.

But let us read more of the story. What Avas it that the brothers sought to do? Were they really wicked men who entered into an agreement to kill for

the sake of revenge alone? Let us not forget that Jacob too was aware of the agreement that they made. Why did he permit it to be consummated?

As one reads the story carefully, one discovers a number of remarkable points. First it is apparent that all the time that Jacob and his children were negotiating with the people of Shechem, all the time that they were talking about a treaty of peace — and that is the situation in which we find ourselves now — there is presently talk about negotiations and peace in the Middle-East — all the time that Jacob and his children were negotiating with regard to living together in harmony, all that time Dinah was still a prisoner of the man who raped her, precisely as Israelis are now prisoners of war in Syria. Syria even refuses to reveal their names. The United Nations continues to ignore this fact. They are not interested in what is happening to the prisoners of war in Syria. Nor have they done anything about the brutal treatment of the Israeli prisoners of war by both Egypt and Syria. To them Israeli blood does not matter, and Israeli rights are of no concern. Precisely as it happened in the case of Dinah. The sister remained in the hands of her rapist, and her brothers were expected to be gentlemen, kind, compassionate, and forget that their beloved was in the hands of a brute. What else should the brothers have done other than to plot to get her out of her imprisonment? What was wrong with their conniving to achieve their sister's freedom?

Yet, let us go one step further and examine the details of the negotiations and the double-talk that came out of the mouths of the people of Shechem. Read the text carefully and you will discover that when they spoke unto Jacob and his sons they spoke in such friendly terms. "We shall get together. We shall intermarry. We shall become one people." What is more, the Bible tells us that they offered the sons of Jacob an opportunity to become truly seized of the land. The Hebrew word for that implies that the sons of Jacob would really become citizens and equal partners. However, when these same negotiators went back to their own people they reported on the negotiations quite differently. To their own people they said, "Let us make a treaty and it will not be long before we will own the cattle and the property that belong to the sons of Jacob." Indeed, everything that Jacob and his sons had would be taken by the people of Shechem. And this is precisely what is happening now. I do not know what Egypt or Syria or anyone else told Mr. Kissinger — but I do know what they are telling their

own people and what they are telling their own people is exactly what they told them twenty-five years ago and fifteen years ago and ten years ago and five years ago and that is that Israel has no right to exist under the sun. For the western world they don the cloak of righteousness but for their own people they still engage in the same sabre rattling.

Thus what happened in the case of Dinah is happening all over again. We are the people who are raped. We are the victims of the double talk. And yet we are the ones who have to be apologetic. We have to apologize for the family of Dinah of yesteryear and we have to apologize now also for being victims of aggression. This time we didn't even make the preemptive strike. And yet our fellow citizens in the United States, and even Congressmen and the President who are loyal to us, are only asking Israel all the time — What will Israel yield! Why don't they reverse the question! What is the other side ready to yield? Has there been one statement that has come thus far from either Egypt or Syria or any one of the Arab countries that would give Jews a modicum of assurance that they mean to live in peace with Israel, that they mean to recognize Israel! Up until now there has not been one solitary statement to that effect. It is only we who are being asked what we will give up — what we will yield. The demands are still that we shall take back all the Palestinians and that Israel shall become a Palestinian state in which the Jews can be a minority. They would probably give us the right to live as a minority, the kind of right we have in Iraq, for example, with the assassination of Jews every day. Or as we have it in Syria with the decapitation of Jewish prisoners. This is all the other side is offering us. They regard us as the aggressors, as the bandits, as the murderers.

And yet we are the ones who must always prove the justice of our cause. We have to plead before the world that we and our cause are just. And yet never, never, in the history of humanity have I ever come upon a single cause which was, and is, so committed to justice as the cause of Zionism! Everything Zionists have done in the last seventy-five years was done with justice. Before World War I, and after World War I, and after World War II, we were decent and fair to everyone and respected every rule of law and equity. We contributed to the health of the Arabs, we contributed to their economic rehabilitation. And what we did for the Arab citizens of Israel, we also did for their prisoners. We healed the wounded. We abided by every

provision of the Geneva convention. And all of that should have made the world realize that on the one hand they have a just people, while on the other hand they have nothing but a hoard of assassins. Aye, never was there a cause so just as the cause of Zionism. The other side doesn't have a scintilla of right on its side. The Golan Heights never belonged to Syria. It was raped by Syria during the War of Independence. Jerusalem was raped by Jordan during the War of Independence. It was never a part of Jordan. Sinai was never even a part of Egypt. None of the legal arguments are available to the other side. Yet in the eyes of the United Nations it is we who are the usurpers. We are the culprits at whom the finger of guilt is pointed. That is what I mean when I always refer to the painful loneliness of our people. To have been so consistently just and yet always to be marked as the one that has committed the breaches of international peace and international justice is simply too much to bear. And woe unto us, that England, France, and the Communist world, do not have the courage and the decency to speak up in the name of justice and refuse to be terrorized into committing injustice!

Such is our existential situation today. The story of the "Rape of Dinah" is reenacted before our very eyes. May God help us!