

Fools and Their Folly

Last week the Jewish Telegraph drew attention to an article published in *The Dubliner*, written by Justin Keating, a former minister in the Irish Government. In it he said, amongst other inanities, that:

There is no link between the Jews of the Bible and Jews today.

Most Jews today have no connection to those who went into exile two thousand years ago.

That Jews invented their God.

That Israel is responsible for the deaths of Catholics in Northern Ireland, etc.

The editor, defended the article on the grounds that it encouraged debate. I find it fascinating that Ireland professes to be a staunchly Catholic nation, and the Catholic Church is now the Christian denomination most favorably disposed to the Jews and Israel. It was not always that way. For most of the Twentieth Century it was the Protestants who were our allies. Now the tables have been turned. But clearly the news has not reached parts of the Emerald Isle.

How should one respond to this pathetic nonsense? I am sure the boring worthies of Anglo Jewry will mutter something about quiet diplomacy, contacts behind the scenes, not taking it too seriously, being careful not to exaggerate, reasoned responses and cold logic. Well it hasn't worked in the past and it won't work now.

The way to fight fire is with fire. Let anyone attack us and we will give as good as we get.

Let me illustrate. I was once headmaster of what was, at the time, an exceptional Jewish school called Carmel College on the banks of the River Thames. It gave a rigorous academic education to a wide range of pupils of mixed academic, social and national backgrounds. It emphasized a rounded cultural education that included first class sport, music, art and drama. Its Jewish curriculum offered advanced Talmud for those who wanted, it in addition to basic Jewish education, language and history. Its atmosphere was religiously observant and the Jewish teachers used their homes and families as teaching aids and influences. I am exceedingly proud of what we achieved under difficult financial conditions.

Our sportsmen went out to compete against some of the best schools in the land and held their own. Soon after I took over, the captain of the soccer team asked me how he should deal with non-Jewish teams where both Catholic and Anglican kids would regularly curse and call our players "f*****g Yids", etc.

It's not only Christians who are exhorted to "turn the other cheek"! The Talmud is rather keen on our doing it too. But the Talmud is also in favor of standing up for one's rights.

But what was I to say? Under no circumstances would I condone taking a swing. If for no other reason than that it might damage our chances of winning if a key player was sent off. But, seriously, I would never consider violence an appropriate response unless there is no other option. And to try reasoning? Why even anti-Semitic academics, who swear they are not, are impervious to logic or sweet reason and seem incapable of honesty, fair comparisons or proportionality. No, we are, after all, dealing either with visceral endemic hatred or simply with fear or mistrust of "the other", the stranger, the outsider. In either case, an argument is irrelevant. No, I simply said, "Call him a 'f*****g Christian' back. See how he likes it!" And, in fact, after a season the abuse stopped.

Now I have many Irish friends who are the nicest people I know and I wouldn't hurt them for all the world, so if they are reading this and have had a bad day then perhaps they should skip the next paragraph! But this is how I would reply to Mr. Keating:

He's the one with the problem. The Celts were late arrivals on the Irish scene having massacred the indigenous locals when they sailed in from the North. Then a later importation of aggressive missionary invaders, after (so called Saint) Patrick led the way, imposed a cruel violent religion based on Middle Eastern myths reworked to incorporate local the pagan deities. With a policy of slaying heretics and torturing innocents, they imposed their vicious religion as a way of subjugating and impoverishing the island. The result was the creation of a violent, murderous and drunken primitive population that used religion to suppress and sexually abuse women and children, which indeed has continued right up until our times. It is only when the Irish leave their original homeland and are civilized by coming into contact with more advanced peoples that they become capable of contributing positively to normal societies—when they are not killing each other, drug running, supporting world terrorism and drowning in Guinness.

Ah! Now that feels a lot better! Of course, it's not just Mr. Keating. A fascinating article in the New Republic describes the volume of anti-American publications and rhetoric in France today (and indeed ever since the American Revolution). Many French intellectuals are so eager to cover up France's appalling record under Vichy Fascism that they try deflecting criticism by blaming Jews and Americans of being in league to destroy the beautiful caring paradise of a world that French revolutionary ideals have established. Yes! Tell that to the arsonists of the Parisian suburbs.

The president of Iran now adds to his primitive rants against Israel by declaring that the Holocaust never happened. Indeed! And Mohammad never existed and Islam is really a kind of Reform Judaism. And Alexander the Great killed off all the Persians, and those people living there today are really all Greeks!

None of this is an excuse for our faults and errors. I am not hesitant in

pillorying our own false gods. But it is sad that ideologies prevent honest discussion, biases and hatreds prevent honest analysis and they distort comparisons. Sometimes one just wants to scream because short of giving the idiot a dose of his own medicine, what else is there?

Oh yes. Don't get even, get ahead. And thank goodness economically, intellectually and spiritually that is precisely what Judaism in general (of course, admitting all the exceptions) is doing. Thank goodness, because if we don't take care of ourselves no one else will.

If you think I've gone off the rails, just remember it is the good book of Proverbs that says, "Answer a fool according to his folly."

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