

*“Eileh Ezk’ra: The slaying of the Har Nof sages”*

By Jeffrey M Cohen

*This poem should only be circulated in full and without alteration or abbreviation.  
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*Eileh ezk’ra: The slaying of sages,*

Since Roman times,  
And down the dark ages,  
Has been an objective  
Of those who view war  
Against those committed  
To Torah law  
As an enterprise  
To prioritize,  
And The Chosen People  
To cut down to size.

Our nation’s survival,  
Even they perceived,  
Lies in that law  
At Sinai received,  
And handed down,  
With oral explanation,  
From teacher to pupil,  
To our own generation;  
Each adding its insights  
And distinctive voice

To a covenant,  
Making our Maker  
Rejoice.

So their particular targets  
Have been our sages;  
Custodians of mysteries  
Underlying the pages  
Of Holy Writ and oral tradition,  
Masters of piety  
And erudition.  
And for those that live  
The Zionist dream –  
Their loathing for them  
Has been most extreme.

Islam, especially, has a view  
That land it has once controlled  
Is a gift from Allah,  
Sacrosanct;  
For no one else  
To hold.  
So Israel is *ḥarām*,  
A *nakba* disgrace;  
In the Arab world,  
They have no place.

Hence, terror  
Is not just justified,  
But viewed as an act  
To inspire pride.

Their God,  
They assert,  
Takes great delight  
In the blood of deniers  
And those who incite  
Hatred, violence,  
Dehumanisation,  
Wars, Intifada –  
No negotiation –  
Suicide bombing,  
The human shield,  
Tunnels of terror,  
Those with knives  
To wield;  
Thousands of rockets,  
Indiscriminately aimed;  
Rejoicing when Jews  
Are killed or maimed;  
The use of cars to run over  
Women with prams;  
The Bombing of buses

And light-railway trams;  
The mouthing of peace  
    To the media,  
For foreign consumption,  
    But, in Arabic, calling  
    For warfare's  
    Resumption.

They brain-wash their children  
    That Jews are scum  
Who'll murder their father  
    And rape their mum;  
And if they wish to attain  
    Heaven's reward,  
All they need is to put  
    Jews to the sword.

*Libbi, libbi, lechallelei Yisrael –*

For my people's martyrs  
    Do I wail;  
For sages and students,  
    For those at prayer;  
For parents and children,  
    My heart,  
    I lay bare.

O, sages of Israel,

And men of good will -  
Unrivalled in  
Analytical skill,  
At whose erudition  
Crowds would thrill;  
Scions of dynasties,  
For scholarship,  
Famed;  
Authors of works,  
Widely acclaimed –  
Use your persuasion  
Before the heavenly court,  
To bring the redemption,  
So desperately sought.

Like the Berdichev saint,  
Express your defiance;  
Insist that, with Israel,  
God renew His alliance.  
Demand that your blood,  
In synagogue, shed -  
While enwrapped in tefillin,  
Tallit on your head –  
Is redeemed by a promise  
To come to our aid.  
Recompense for our sins,  
O, how we've repaid!

Father of mercy,  
Who dwells on high,  
Remember fondly  
Those who lie  
In holy soil,  
In martyrs' rows,  
Innocent victims,  
Felled by blows;  
Men of faith  
And righteous rigour,  
Fulfilling Your word  
With love and vigour,  
Cut down in an instant  
By men of blood,  
Kinsmen of Satan's  
Brotherhood.

O, hasten the day  
When men will say,  
'The taking of life  
Is a crime;  
And no longer will we  
Send our youth  
Into war,  
While in their prime.'

O, send the anointed  
To save our world,  
Spinning out of control.

Let him apply  
Your soothing balm,  
To heal us  
In body and soul.

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18<sup>th</sup> November 2014