

# "benish the darkness"

## A front against racism

"Do we not all have one father? Were we not created by one God?" (Kings 2:10)

"Its ways are ways of tranquility and all of its paths are peace" (Mishley 3:17)

### Position Paper on "The King's Torah (*Torat Hamelech*)"

In September of 2009, the book "The King's Torah: Laws between Israel and other Nations" came out. The author of the book is Rabbi Yitzchak Shapira, head of the "Od Yosef Chai" Yeshiva, and Rabbi Yosef Elizur, who teaches at the same yeshiva. According to them, the book deals with "clarifying *halacha* (Jewish law) issues pertaining to kingdoms and wars." An in-depth reading of the book reveals that "The King's Torah" is 230 pages on one subject: "Laws between Israel and other Nations," or, in other words, the circumstances under which is it permitted for members of the Jewish nation to kill gentiles. The book has six chapters: Forbidding the killing of gentiles; Killing a gentile who broke the seven commandments; Eternal devotion on murder; The Jewish soul versus the gentile soul; Killing gentiles in war; and Intentional harm of innocent bystanders. The book is full of racist statements against any person that is not Jewish.

Excerpts from the book:

#### **The call for individuals to act:**

"There is no need for the nation to officially decide to permit the killing of a different nation, it is also permitted for individuals of the attacked nation to harm the other; for Simeon and Levy are not the official authority but individuals in the house of Jacob (that resist their acts), and yet it was permitted for them to kill the people of Shechem since that nation has harmed another nation, and it is not the official decision of the attacked nation that allows them to go on the offensive."

The conclusion of the editors is singular: it is not only necessary and permissible to kill men, women and children, but individuals are also permitted to take the law into their own hands in order to harm and kill their enemies – the gentiles.

#### **Legally defining attackers (*Din Rodef*):**

"A civilian who encourages our struggle empowers the king and his troops to fight on. Therefore, every civilian in the rival kingdom who encourages the warriors or shows satisfaction from their actions is considered a threat, and it is permissible to kill him. Likewise, anyone who weakens our kingdom in speech or in deed is considered a threat."

It is clear from this passage that it is permissible to call any person who shows support or neutrality toward any act against Israel an enemy, even if it is only in words. This comes from the idea in the *halacha* of *din rodef*, which allows one to kill a person who they see attacking another person. Fourteen years ago, there were some who claimed that *din rodef* applied to Yitzhak Rabin, because he signed a

# "benish the darkness"

## A front against racism

peace treaty with the Palestinians. The *din rodef* judgment placed on Yitzhak Rabin essentially led to his death.

### **Killing children, babies and innocents:**

On page 207 of the book, the editors refer to the killing of children and innocents in the following passage:

"There is a reason to kill a child if it is clear that they will grow to harm us; in such a situation the attack should be directed specifically at them."

The claim that all gentile children are raised to hate Israel, and in the future will act against it, is racist. The editors are giving official permission to kill children as revenge or a pressure tactic.

We would like to illuminate several points:

A democratic society cannot permit nor tolerate such a breach of its citizens' civil rights in practice or in the form of these sorts of racist proclamations. Democracy is based on the participation and agreement of the citizens of a democratic country, with no regard to their religion or nationality. This type of book, which divides people by blood on a moral and legitimate basis, is reminiscent of insidious regimes. This contradicts the very essence of the State of Israel as represented in its Declaration of Independence:

"...it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions"

"We must relate to members of other nations living among us as equal citizens alongside Jewish tradition."

**"The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God. Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure." (Leviticus 19:33-34)**

This verse reminds us that as Jewish people we were taken out of the land of Egypt, where we were foreigners living there. The fact that the book is written in the language of the *halacha* should not mislead one to the presumption that only readers well-versed in *halachic* language will read it. All people and citizens who value life, religious or secular, should cry out against this publication in the name of their nation and tradition. We do not recognize the book, its authors, or the Rabbis who agree with it to be authorities on *halacha*, morality, or spirituality. We view this book as bringing the affliction of racism upon Judaism in "nice" and poisonous language. It is unnecessary to point out the public outcry that would occur if only ten percent of its contents were published in German under the title "Directed Attacks on Innocent Jews". Alternately, if this book were presented in a research institution in the world as "The Real Essence of The Jewish People," it would be denounced as blatant anti-Semitism. The government of

# "benish the darkness"

## A front against racism

that country would be demanded to try the writers of the book on the grounds of racism and anti-Semitism.

The book "The King's Torah" is just one example of the rise in recent processes of division and polarization of different groups in Israeli society.

A society that legitimizes publication of such derisive words of this kind cannot call itself a democratic society. A society in which the public is silent regarding these words is a society whose silence approves the book, its ideas, and its writers. Such a society cannot be one that seeks peace within itself or with its neighbors.

**The Organization "Banish the Darkness"** is the initiative of a number of religious and secular organizations to create a front against the racism and incitement that corrode Israeli democracy. All of the organizations agree that we must draw a line against such incitement and racist publications presented above.

**The Organization "Banish the Darkness"** was established with the understanding that a society in which such racist publications appear, which encourage murderous actions, cannot call itself a just society. Such a society cannot be a democratic society that struggles for equal rights for all of its citizens.

**"Banish the Darkness" aims to create a public space that actively defies spiritually, educationally, legally, and politically racist processes, publications, and opinions, which act to poison and establish Israel and Judaism as violent, racist and immoral.**

**"Banish the Darkness"** sets as its aim to negate all publications and statements that incite towards racist acts of this kind in the name of the Jewish People, and those who strive for a democratic essence of the State of Israel, which is the state of the Jewish People.

We call on the Attorney General to open a legal investigation of the publication of this book, its authors, and its supporters.

We call for the seizure of the book and the banning its distribution.

We call for the investigation of the Rabbis who wrote the book, on the grounds of incitement and publication of racist statements.

We call for the cessation of the allotment of funds from any government body to the "Od Yosef Chai" Yeshiva.

**Contact us at e. mail: [lolagizanooot@gmail.com](mailto:lolagizanooot@gmail.com)**