FILTH AND VILENESS ON THE YIDDISH STAGE IN NEW YORK

Sholem Asch's play "*El nekomes*" ["The God of Vengeance," a phrase from Psalms 94:1], poorly translated as "*Der got fun nekome*" [a Yiddish version of that phrase] is a disgrace for the Jews and represents the worst kind of vileness directed against Jews.

DEBAUCHERY AND DEPRAVITY

In the House of Israel I have seen a horrible thing; there harlotry is found in Ephraim, Israel is defiled. (Hosea 6:10)

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Sholem Asch has gathered together all that is filthy, all that is terrible, all that is depraved, all that is disgusting and ugly to every nation, and has thrown it upon the Jew, spilled it out on him from overflowing buckets, and presented it to the world, just as if he had called out to everyone and said to them: "See how terrible, how lazy, how depraved the Jew is. Run from the Jew as from the plague. The best Jew, the most pious Jew, runs a whorehouse, and when he wishes to protect his daughter from such filth, he cannot, because all Jewish women are filthy and depraved."

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I would like to question further, is this [play] drawn from Jewish life? Is it a Jewish character trait to run whorehouses? No anti-Semite, until now, has dared to claim such things. I have heard the famed Jew-baiter Herr [Hermann] Ahlwardt [1846-1914, a German politician who speechified about the evils of world Jewry] spew fire and brimstone against the Jews. He has written that Jews are swindlers, deceivers, that their money is worth more to them than their honor. But he has never dared to say that Jews lead filthy lives and run whorehouses.

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How low, how frightfully low, has the Yiddish theatre sunk, when such a piece of filth is called a "drama" and when its strongest bit of acting is [said to be] a scene of Sodom and an act of Gomorrah! What a low level of morality and human dignity these men and women stand on, who can see such a performance and perhaps even applaud! How depraved are the actors and actresses, who roll around in such stinking filth in order to attract an audience even filthier than themselves.

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"God of Vengeance"! Yes, vengeance – bitter and terrible vengeance against everyone who so drags the Jewish reputation in filth, and everyone who teaches depravity, and everyone who disgraces and debases Jewish family life! God of vengeance!

A. Tanenboym

שמוץ און נידערטרעכטינקייט אויף דער אידישער ביהנע אין ניו יאָרק

שלום אש'ס פיעסע „אל נקמות", און א שלעכטער איבערזעצונג „דער נאָט פון נקמה" איז א שאנדע פאר אידען און דיא נרעסטע נידערטרעכטינקייט נעגען א אידען.

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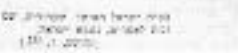
א. טאנענבוים.