

# Treatment of Antisemitism and New World Order in the Finkler Question by Howard Jacobson: an Analytical Study

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**Abstract:** *Jews are always persecuted as religious, national, or racial strangers. Jews are left with only two choices i.e. complete assimilation or return to Israel. They are considered as exotic other. Every individual yearns to live a happy and peaceful life. Even the fundamental rights of constitution allow people to have all the prerequisites. However, Jews were deprived of such freedom. Throughout the world Jews were treated as heretics and swindler. They are not allowed to survive serenely. They are considered as the Dhimi members of the society. Even the New World Order is failed to change such prejudices against Jews. They are always unwelcomed in gentile society. Julian Treslove tried to assimilate in the Jewish society but faced antisemitic hostility. The study is an attempt to understand the problems of British Jews. This study will try to explore hostility done to Jews. It will try to explore issues of antisemitic prejudice and its consequences on Jews and New World Order.*

**Index terms:** *Antisemitism, New World Order, Oneness, Other, Hostility.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Judaism or Judah (in Hebrew) refers to the religion, philosophy or the way of life of the Jewish people. It is one of the oldest monotheistic religions. There are about 15 million followers of Judaism who are called Jews. Antisemitism is a prejudice against Jews or hatred of Jews. It includes the antagonistic dealings and favoritism against Jews. People who possess such feelings are called 'Antisemites'. Antisemitism can be considered a form of racism. It tries to project the Jews as inferior to other people. In 1879, German journalist William Marr coined the term 'Antisemitism'. It denotes the hostility to or hatred of Jews. It also talks about the hatred of various liberal, multinational and international political inclinations of the 18th and 19th centuries often associated

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with Jews. Jerome Chanes in his book *Anti-Semitism: A Reference Handbook* identifies six stages in the historical development of antisemitism. Antisemitism is easily classified historically as pointing to at least half a-dozen varieties. (1) The pre-Christian anti-Jewish activity in the ancient Greco-Roman world, most of which was not what we would call "anti-semitism," was primarily ethnic in nature. (2) There is the classic Christian antisemitism of antiquity and the middle ages, which was religious in nature and which extended into modern times. (3) Traditional Muslim antisemitism is—at least in its classical form—highly nuanced in that Jews are *Dhimmi*, members of a protected class. (4) There is the political, social, and economic anti-semitism of Enlightenment and post Enlightenment Europe, which laid the groundwork for racialist anti-semitism. (5) There is the racial anti-semitism that arose in the nineteenth century out of Enlightenment thinking and that culminated in Nazism. (6) Finally, the contemporary anti-semitism of Israelophobia and "Zionism Equals Racism," a relatively new phenomenon, is what many characterize as the new anti-semitism. (Chanes 06) Early Christians considered Jews to be responsible for the crucifixion of Jesus. Such dogma has brought the horrible consequences for the Jews. The Holocaust is the most heinous act of antisemitism. It is also known as the final solution, a mass devastation which happened between 1933 and 1945. Jews faced countless harassments and brutalities. They were forcefully segregated from their land. The Jewish minority achieved some rights after the Enlightenment in Europe. Lots of violence occurs aiming Jews and Jewish institutions in the world. Holocaust is an example of antisemitic prejudice against Jews. It took place because of the moral and societal failures of Germans. Jews around countries nations felt unsafe for such hostilities. In the words of Jerome Chanes, "Anti-Semitism presupposes that the Jews are radically 'Other', fundamentally different from the mainstream population—different, therefore deviant." (03) The New World



Order falls under the category of conspiracy theory.

It talks about a new period of history. It aims to bring a major change in the world and also tries to balance the world power. The concept of New World Order tries to engage selective people who believe in ruling the world through a single system of government. In an article "Guidelines for a New World Order" author Raghunandan Swarup Pathak discusses that the basic idea of this New World Order is to have a world which is free from wars and political conflict. Author says that it focuses to eradicate poverty, disease, and hunger from the world. The prime concept is to fulfill the requirements and expectations of mankind. It aims to have peace and prosperity in the world. From the earliest times, the concept of a World Order has engaged world leaders and statesmen, jurists and philosophers.

Alexander sought to impress upon his Asian Empire the institutional values and social ethos of Greek society. Imperial Rome left a more permanent imprint from Asia Minor to Boadicea's Britain, and Roman law became its legacy to the civilized world. In the centuries that followed, empires rose and fell, each aspiring to mold the world in its own image. (429)

Twentieth century brought significant a change in the world history. The end of World War II constructed perfect concept of a World Order. In the words of Pathak, New world order is "a concept of states welded into a global family, working out their individual destinies in an ethos of common concern, mutual cooperation and general prosperity. It means the supersession of old prejudices by a fresh objective approach to international problems. It means a radical change in state and individual attitudes in favor of united global brother hood. The international system must be put back on the rails, so that states can once again move forward in equal freedom on the course of development and progress" (430). In the article "Guidelines for a New World Order" author Raghunandan Swarup Pathak mentions, in building a New World Order, three important principles need to be kept in mind.

First, in as much as the UN Charter continues to govern the nations and peoples of the Earth, the values of the New World Order should conform broadly to the fundamental goals enshrined in the Preamble to the Charter. The New World Order is a global society in the making, and its ordering must be inspired by those noble objectives. The second principle is that the New World Order, as its name suggests, is an order for the whole world. The world is essentially a pluralistic society? Multiethnic, multireligious, multilingual and multicultural; thus, the New World Order cannot be sculpted in a single image. It must allow for the enormous range of pluralism and diversity representing the different personalities of mankind and forms of civilization. This principle is enshrined in the UN Charter itself, and is necessarily implied in the philosophy and value content of its several provisions.

An instance is the mandate, in the Statute of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) to the Charter, that in that judicial body "as a whole the representation of the main forms of civilization and of the principal legal systems of the world should be assured." The third principle that should guide the New World Order is the removal of the gross imbalances in economic and social levels among different peoples and in different regions. The New World Order must be rooted in justice. Political, economic and social justice so that it can develop in conditions of stability and promote the ideal society mankind strives for. We have long heard it said that international peace and international prosperity are indivisible. (Friday, April 3: 431)

Howard Eric Jacobson is one of the most eminent English novelists. Jacobson was born on 25 August 1942 in Manchester in Lancashire. He was brought up in Prestwich. Jacobson is a British writer. He is well-known for writing comic novels. He is a Man Booker Prize winner for the book *Finkler Question*. Jacobson wrote *Coming From Behind* (1983). It is a campus comedy. His novel *The Mighty Walzer* is about a teenage table tennis champion. Jacobson received the 2010 Man Booker Prize for *Finkler Question* (2010). Jacobson also wrote *Zoo Time* (2012); *J a novel* (2014) and *Shylock Is My Name* (2016). His novel *The Finkler Question* deals with the concept of Jewishness and also discusses love, loss and male friendship.

*The Finkler Question* (2010) is a fascinating novel Jacobson has ever written. It is a novel about three friends. The book discusses the existence of Jews in an antisemitic world. Central character of the novel is Julian Treslove. He is a former BBC radio producer. Another character Sam Finkler is a writer and television personality. Both of them had different lifestyles but they were good friends too. It is projected in the novel that once they had dinner at Labor's residence in central London. That evening Treslove was attacked when he was going back to his home. He felt that he was attacked by a lady who whispered the phrase "You Ju". Treslove considers that attacker was calling "You, Jew". Treslove was in a relationship with Hephzibah. She was the great-grandniece of Labor. It was depicted in the book that he was preoccupied with his traitorous affair with Tyler. She was the wife of Finkler. Finkler was not happy with his status of being Jew. So, he joined an ashamed organization which favored the Palestinians over the Israelis. The Novel discusses about concept of Jewishness and antisemitic prejudices against Jews.

Antisemitism is hostility towards Jews. From the time of Alexandria till present era Jews are always considered as exotic other. People of worldwide have stereotypical fixed notions about Jews. Jews are considered as heretics, Christ killer, swindlers. They are even seen as hostile, cunning, vindictive and cowardice. Stereotypical notions

associate with Jews are trickery and deceitful. Eminent figures like Martin Luther said that people are at fault for not slaying Jews. Various authors make an attempt to project the conditions of Jews in the world. Howard Jacobson in his award winning novel

*The Finkler Question* depicts the condition of Jews from the point of view of a gentile. Jacobson confess that he feels like Treslove in *The Finkler Question*, "I am still a bit of gentile looking with my nose pressed against the window of Jewishness, thinking, How fantastic! What great jokes they make! Look how warm they are! Look how deeply they love, and so on!" (NPR 2010:3)

The book deals with the concept of Jewishness and its meaning. The question it hoists is about the identity of Jews. Who or What was/is one in reality? It talks about the importance of history and background of an individual. The story moves around Julian Treslove. One night he was assaulted by a lady who called him 'You Jew'. Treslove believed that it was an act of antisemitism. After this incident he was obsessed with the question of Jewishness. Treslove was attracted to cultural standpoint of Jews instead of religious. He tried to understand the mannerisms of Jews life, their sarcasm and body language. He is clearer about the Jews' problems.

He could see because he was outside it. He could afford to see what they - his friends, the woman he loved - dared not. The Jews would not be allowed to prosper except as they had always prospered, at the margins, in the concert halls and at the banks. End of. As his sons said. Anything else would not be tolerated. A brave rearguard action in the face of insuperable odds was one thing. Anything resembling victory and peace was another. (166-67)

Treslove wanted to live his life like a Jew whereas his friends Finkler and Lenin tried their best to hide their identity as Jews. They wanted to live the life of a gentile. Sometimes character in the book tries to reverse the circumcision. "It was a password to madness. Jew. One little word with no hiding place for reason in it. Say 'Jew' and it was like throwing a bomb." (185-86)

It is pertinent to note that by using humour as a weapon Jacobson tried to get rid of the pains of antisemitism by making fun of Finkler and ashamed Jews. Jacobson has created Finkler to disclose his inner self. It is the archetype of all Jewish unconsciousness. Jacobson invented Finkler to project reality and actuality of Jews-"There are a lot of Sam Finklers . . . which is why I invented him - I invented him out of what I saw" (NPR 2010: 2)

Not only Finkler but Finkler's son also witnessed antisemitic hostility. He explained to his father-"And then I knocked his 'You knocked a Jew s hat 'Is that so terrible?' 'Jesus Christ, of

course it's 'Least of all a Jew! What? bulldoze Palestinian villages. Did you hurt him?' 'Not enough.' 'This is a racist assault, Immanuel.' 'Dad, how can it be a racist 'I'm not even going to answer 'Do I look like a racist? Look at me.' 'You look like a fucking little anti-Semite'. 'How can I be an anti-Semite? I'm a Jew.'" (189-90)

Antisemitic prejudices against Jews were shown through the characters of Hephzibah. Hephzibah worried about the consistent growth of antisemitism--

It had started again, anyway. Her emails streamed reported menace and invective. Thrown through a window of the museum. An Orthodox man in his sixties was a bus stop in Temple Fortune. Graffiti began to appear again on synagogue walls, David crossed with the swastika. The internet bubbled and boiled with madness. She couldn't bear to open a newspaper...(2010a: 282)

It was a collective unconscious fear shared by most of the British Jews: "An anxiety had settled has settled like a fine dust on everything she did and everyone she knew- They too were looking for askance... but too were bitterly uncertain future which bore fearful resemblances to an only certain past. Paranoia, was it? She asked herself. The question itself had become monotonous to her." (257)

At the end of *The Finkler Question* Treslove started to his life as a celebrity. He left Hephzibah who was mourning for both Libor and Treslove. Finkler started praying three times a day for those who were already dead and also for Libor, Tyler and Treslove. Despite of having all the changes in their lives the characters are preoccupied with the terror of antisemitism. However, New World Order believes in acceptance of additional cultures and their ideals and principles. The main motto of New World Order is to create sense of unity among the natives who are using the common language. The basic idea of such concept is oneness. It focuses on use of a 'single currency'. It also wants to have unity in politics, religion and moral values. Conspiracy theorists deem to have one monarchy in the world. It aims to have one government that can bring worldwide peace and to eliminate all political unrest. Contrary to this idea one can witness the antisemitic prejudice and hostility to Jews in *The Finkler Question*. Jacobson has the notion to unite gentiles and Jews. He has witnessed the terror of difference. Therefore, he made Finkler and Treslove friends in the novel. Society contains antisemitic prejudice is full of hatred and prejudice. It has no essence of new world order. No feelings of oneness, universal brotherhood will be available there. Similar environment is found in the book. Jews often strive for identity. But in the book it is described that Finkler wanted to forget their origin as Jews. As a protest he joined some ashamed group.

New World Order aims to have oneness in religion, moral values and universal peace and prosperity. Deviating from the concept of new



world order in the novel Finkler, Libor and Hephzibah were forced to countenance antagonistic activities. They were never allowed to have feeling of equality. That is why, Finkler never wanted to reveal his identity as a Jew. "Jew. One little word with no hiding place for reason in it. Say 'Jew' and it was like throwing a bomb." (185-86).

Thus, we can sum up that antisemitic prejudice kills the essence of new world order. It prevents to have feeling of universal brotherhood. Such preconceived prejudices deprived Jews from sharing the feeling of world-wide peace by eliminating all political and social unrest. Writes like Jacobson wanted to eliminate the anti-Semitic attitude from society by highlighting all the problems through their writings. It is only possible if people of current era understand and admire the New World Order and help government to reach the goal of the same. Individual should be ready to omit all pluralism and differences to create a single order for the whole world. Here, terms like I or they should be replaced with we and they. Concept of Othering should be thrown into the garbage bin. All the religious, political, racial and ethnic differences should be sidelined and all the preconceived prejudices should be eliminated to celebrate an ideal society.

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