

Shylock then goes on to say “for suff’rance is the badge of all our tribe” in reference to the way that all Jews had been mocked and condemned as a whole race, rather than individual people. He is also referring to the long history of Jews being persecuted for their religion. At the time the play was written, Jews had already been exiled in England, and Shakespeare refers to that here. Shakespeare pointed this out as he wanted to draw attention to the prejudice and injustice thrown towards all Jews.

On the next line, Shylock says “you call me misbeliever, cut throat-dog” which brings light to how all Christians thought that Jews believed in the ‘wrong’ religion. Christians disliked Jews because they thought that their religion was superior, and looked down on them for believing in the incorrect thing. The use of the expression “cut-throat dog” also shows how Christians tended to dehumanise Shylock, and disregard him. They called him an animal, as they saw him as one, compared to them. It also shows how they thought of him as merciless and violent, much similar to a wild dog – chaotic and unable to control himself. Shylock also says “spit on my Jewish gabardine” which is the ultimate sign of disrespect for a Jew. It is a “Jewish gabardine” which suggests that they were metaphorically spitting on his ‘Jewishness’.

Shylock then says “and all for use of that which is mine own” which is his way of saying that how did they have the authority to question him. His money, his job, his clothes – why did they have the authority to criticise the way he lives? He also says “well then, it now appears you need my help” in reference to how they spat on him and called him names, but asked for his help when they were in need of it. Shylock was pointing out how hypocritical it was of them, and how they have a strong double standard. They were only ‘pleasant’ to him when they wanted something.

Next, Shylock states “go to, then, you come to me and you say, ‘Shylock, we would have monies’” which is clearly to be read in a sarcastic and mimicking tone. It is his way of mocking their double standards against him, and being able to call them out on it and make fun of them. He says “you say so, you did that you’ll your rheum upon my beard” that emphasises the fact that they are the ones who went to him for help, with the repetition of the word “you” in the quote. It is him reminding Antonio and Bassanio that *they* changed their minds and went to him, but only once it suited them. It is also paints them in an even more disgusting and disrespectful light. This scene shows that Shylock is skilled at manipulating other people’s feelings; he is attempting to make Antonio feel shame and embarrassment, and even guilt towards how he treated Shylock.

Shylock says how they “spurn a stranger cur” which was an expression for kicking away a stray mongrel or a worthless dog, as they did to Shylock. As before, they are calling Shylock a dog, as if he was a wild and chaotic animal. Though, in a person, “cur” was also slang for a mean or cowardly person, which was how the Christians saw him. He then says “over your threshold” which shows how Shylock does not believe that he belongs, and how segregated he feels from the Christians.

Continuing his speech, Shylock says “what should I say to you? Should I not say ‘hath a dog money? Is it possible a cur can lend three thousand ducats?’” in, clearly, a very sarcastic tone. He is throwing all of their arguments back against them. He asks “shall I bend low, in a bondman’s key, with bated breath and whisp’ring humbleness” that paints an idea of submission. It could also show how the Christians treat Shylock as if he were a slave, and less than he was; almost like they were trying to oppress him. His tone is very sarcastic and bitter towards them, and is determined to go against them.