

Act IV, scene i – lines 170 - 214

PORTIA
DUKE
PORTIA
SHYLOCK
PORTIA

Which is the merchant here and which the Jew?
Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.
Is your name Shylock?

Shylock is my name.

Of a strange nature is the suit you follow,
Yet in such rule that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed.

- You stand within his danger, do you not?

Ay, so he says.

Do you confess the bond?

I do.

Then must the Jew be merciful.

On what compulsion must I? Tell me that.

The quality of mercy is not strained,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes.

'Tis mightiest in the mightiest, it becomes
The thronèd monarch better than his crown.

His scepter show the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway.

It is enthronèd in the hearts of kings,

It is an attribute to God himself,

And earthly power doth then show likest God's

When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,

Though justice be thy plea, consider this:

That in the course of justice, none of us

Should see salvation. We do pray for mercy,

And that same prayer doth teach us all to render

The deeds of mercy. I have spoke thus much

To mitigate the justice of thy plea,

Which if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,

The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Is he not able to discharge the money?

Yes, here I tender it for him in the court,

Yea, twice the sum; if that will not suffice,

I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er

On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart.

If this will not suffice, it must appear

That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you

Wrest once the law to your authority;

To do a great right, do a little wrong,

And curb this cruel devil of his will.

ANTONIO
PORTIA
ANTONIO
PORTIA
SHYLOCK
PORTIA

SHYLOCK
PORTIA
BASSANIO

Comment [N1]: Questions – attempt to ascertain all necessary knowledge; leaves nothing to assumptions / prejudice

Comment [N2]: Calls him by name – blind to religious discrimination and prejudice?

Comment [N3]: Very proud tone employed; short sentences suggest dignity, pride and haste to achieve his goal

Comment [N4]: Further emphasizes how she acknowledges that Antonio is bound to him – possessive pronoun

Comment [N5]: Possibility to escape harm still exists; danger is conditional

Comment [N6]: Short sentences and few words suggest a defeatist attitude – emphasizes Shylock's sense of pride and confidence in contrast

Comment [N7]: Portia reverts to calling Shylock "jew" ; emphasizes religious tension

Comment [N8]: Imperative and aggressive tone; reflects challenge to Christian society

Comment [N9]: Lengthy monologue, confidence and preaching tone presents Portia as a moral enforcer, encouraging peace

Comment [N10]: Simile almost deifies quality of mercy

Comment [N11]: Superlative language and personification

Comment [N12]: Metaphor for physical, social and economic power

Comment [N13]: Greatest manifestation of will power

Comment [N14]: One may be a king in heart and mind if not necessarily society – persuasive technique used to convince Shylock?

Comment [N15]: Mercy presented as divine; almost superior to man? Suggests mercy overcomes the traditional hierarchy of God, Kings, men. Common allusions to Christianity and Judaism bridges religious gap

Comment [N16]: Plural pronouns removes emphasis from Shylock; not singled out and so not discriminated against – persuasive technique

Comment [N17]: Imposing Christian religious doctrines? "do unto other what you would have done unto you"

Comment [N18]: Suggests moderation and compromise: "seasons" not "replaces", and "mitigate" not "revoke" – Portia is not naïve nor idealistic

Comment [N19]: Exclamation mark – sense of haste

Comment [N20]: Almost bloodthirsty

Comment [N21]: Structure of Portia's argument: offers Shylock the chance to not demand mercy through persuading him of its quality and then offering the money

Comment [N22]: Repetition of "my" emphasizes willingness to sacrifice; alliteration fo 'h' creates rhyme; asyndeton suggests impatience, worry and also contributes to rhyme

Comment [N23]: Repetition of conditional and almost identical sentences suggests sense of helplessness

Comment [N24]: Almost using personification; creates very powerful and scathing imagery as it refers to Shylock being the source of this malice

Comment [N25]: Further emphasizes the idea of sacrifice apparent throughout the play eg. Antonio seems at first to do a little wrong in borrowing money for Bassanio; breaking Venetian laws here seems like the same situation.

Comment [N26]: Highlights religious animosity – recurring metaphor used to describe Shylock