

'He hit me back first' logic of the New York Times

by Lev Tsitrin



The *New York Times* is hardly a humorous publication, yet, in the midst of mayhem and destruction that yet gain engulfed Israel and Gaza, the paper offered a rare moment of levity. Consider this summary of what's going on: "Israel launched dozens of airstrikes on the Gaza strip and militants responded with barrage of rockets." Isn't it a rendition of the proverbial, and hilarious, "he hit me back first"?

Yes, your eyes don't deceive you: per *New York Times*, Israel "launched," and the "militants" – which is the *New York Times'* moniker for Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad which have been designated as terrorists by much of the world – "responded."

That's *New York Times'* version of causality. That Hamas missiles fired from Gaza at Jerusalem triggered the current round apparently doesn't count insofar as *New York Times* is

concerned.

It appears that to the *New York Times*, being in the right is not a matter of the factual and legal rightness of one's stand. Rather, it is a function of one's relative strength in a conflict. When it is the poor against the rich, the strong against the weak, the poor and the weak are to be seen as deserving of sympathy, irrespective of the behavior that may have brought misery on them in the first place. If it takes a bit of twisting of facts – why not? After all, if the facts don't fit the theory, too bad for the facts. Moreover, it is not difficult to do: just reverse the sequence of events, and you are all set. Causality is the key. Pretend that the effect is the cause, that "Israel launched dozens of airstrikes on the Gaza strip" causing the conflict – and "militants responded with barrage of rockets" comes as a legitimate response by the downtrodden.

The paper's detailed report