

מגילת השואה

The Shoah Scroll

A Holocaust Liturgy



כנסת הרבנים
The Rabbinical
Assembly



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The publication of *Megillat Hashoah* marks a milestone in the transformation of *Yom Hashoah* into a sacred day within the cycle of the Jewish year, taking its rightful place as a day of mourning and religious commemoration. As early as the late 1960s, I called upon the Rabbinical Assembly to begin the work needed to make this day one that would be observed in appropriate ways by every synagogue and, indeed, by every individual Jew. My feeling then, as now, was that unless *Yom Hashoah* is marked by appropriate liturgical formulations within the *Siddur* to be recited on 27 Nissan, it would not outlast the lives of those who experienced the horrors of the *Shoah*. In the 1980s, the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel pioneered this effort by issuing a *Siddur* for *Yom Hashoah*, which was later incorporated into *Siddur Va-ani Tefilati*. The Rabbinical Assembly's new edition of *Siddur Sim Shalom* contains a slightly revised version of that service. *Megillat Hashoah* now caps that endeavor by supplying us with a Hebrew text with translation, which will be read at services on *Yom Hashoah* year after year, a text that tells the story of the *Shoah* in brief but powerful passages that can and must become part of the collective memory of the Jewish people. This repetition, year after year, from generation to generation, will become the liturgical foundation for commemoration of these terrible events that must never be forgotten. Of course, these brief chapters cannot and are not intended to tell the whole story, but they can serve as a goad to learn more and more. *Yom Hashoah* now has its own *megillah*. Having one central text, shared by Jews wherever they live, will unite us and make possible the perpetuation of the story. It will help us to fulfill what has become the new imperative of Jewish life: We must

all view ourselves as if we had personally experienced the *Shoah*. The emphasis here is on the words “as if”, since no one who was not there can possibly understand what it was like, though we can identify with them and their suffering.

As one who lived in the United States and was as far from the *Shoah* as one could be, it is paradoxical that I have always felt compelled to contrast my life with that of those in Europe, and in that way to identify with them. I was born the year that Hitler came to power. When I was a young child, the Nazi persecution of the Jews began and laws were promulgated against my people. I started school when *Kristalnacht* took place. I was studying in the United States together with children of different races and religions when Jews in Germany were being prevented from attending German schools and when concentration camps were being built. I had not yet reached the age of Bar Mitzvah when ghettos were created throughout Europe and children younger than I were scratching through garbage heaps to find a scrap of food and Jews were being slaughtered in Nazi gas chambers and shot at the edge of mass graves throughout eastern Europe. By the time of my Bar Mitzvah, it was all over – men, women and children had been annihilated in numbers humanity had never experienced before. Nothing stood between me and the *Shoah* but the fateful decision of my grandparents to leave Europe and come to America at the beginning of the twentieth century. All of us were potential victims of the *Shoah* and we must never forget that.

The *Shoah* arouses feelings within us that are difficult to bear and questions to which we have no answers. It demands a response, but it is difficult to know how to respond. We want to understand, but there is no possibility of understanding. It challenges our faith in God, in religion and, most of all, our faith in humanity. Centuries ago our Sages had no answer to the question: why was Cain

permitted to kill Abel? In a daring midrash based on the verse “The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground” (Genesis 4:10), Rabbi Shimon bar Yohai told this parable: It may be likened to two gladiators striving with one another before the emperor. If the emperor wished, he could have separated them. But he did not wish to do so, so one overpowered the other and killed him. As he was being slain, the gladiator cried out, “I demand justice from the Emperor!” Thus, “The sound of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground!” (Genesis Rabbah 22).

The voices of six million cry out before God for justice. We have no answer but the sound of silence. And yet we must never say or teach that the *Shoah* represented the will of God, that the *Shoah* was God’s punishment, or that it was justified because it was followed so soon by the creation of the State of Israel. We may not have answers to the mysteries of the *Shoah*, but there are some answers that must be rejected completely for the honor of our people and for the honor of God. Such thoughts stand in complete contrast to Judaism’s teaching that God is the God of mercy and righteousness. As Abraham Joshua Heschel once remarked, “History is the arena in which the will of God is defied”. It is the place where God commands us to respect and even to love other human beings, and yet Cain slays Abel. Such a slaying is in complete contradiction to God’s express desires, but is consistent with the fact that we are all granted free will.

Regarding the enslavement of the Israelites in Egypt, the rabbis taught that when we were enslaved, God too was enslaved – as it were – and was freed only when Israel was redeemed (see *Mekhilta Pisha* 14). So too we can say that when Israel was sent to the camps and the gas chambers, the Holy One was with them. God identifies with those who suffer, with the persecuted, not with the persecutors. We may not have the answers, but at least we can tell the story.

With the publication of *Megillat Hashoah* we express the depth of our mourning for our brothers and sisters who were destroyed in this terrible Holocaust. We pledge ourselves to keep their memories alive forever and to dedicate ourselves to the proposition that *Am Yisrael Hai* – we shall continue to live and to proclaim the greatness of the Jewish people and its way of life.

Rabbi Reuven Hammer
President, The Rabbinical Assembly
Jerusalem
Kristalnacht 5763

The Jewish people is an *am olam*, an eternal people, with a historic memory thousands of years old. It has always succeeded in commemorating major historic events with the aid of religious rituals.

When David Ben-Gurion appeared before the UN Commission Regarding the Partition of Palestine in the summer of 1947, he said:

About 300 years ago a ship named the “Mayflower” set sail to the New World. It was an important event in the annals of England and America. Yet I wonder if there is even one Englishman who knows exactly when that ship set sail, and how many Americans know how many people were on that ship? And what type of bread did they eat when they left England? And yet, more than 3,300 years ago, before the Mayflower set sail, the Jews left Egypt. And every Jew in the world – even in America and Soviet Russia – knows *exactly* on which day they left: on the 15th of Nissan. And everyone knows *exactly* what kind of bread the Jews ate: *matzot*. And until today Jews all over the world eat this *matzah* on the 15th of Nissan – in America, in Russia and in other countries – and... recount the Exodus... And they open [the *Seder*] with two statements: “This year slaves, next year free men; this year here, next year in Eretz Yisrael”. This is the nature of the Jews. (Noam Zion and David Dishon, *A Different Night*, 1997, p. 39)

In other words, Ben-Gurion emphasized that on Pesah we *remember* the Exodus from Egypt by a *religious act* – the *Seder* – in order to remember and to relive the Exodus once a year. As a result, every Jew in the world is well-versed in this seminal episode in the history of our people.

The same applies to the Destruction of the Temple. As we learn in the tractate of *Bava Batra* (fol. 60b):

...The Sages said: A man plasters his house and leaves a little bare... a man prepares a festive meal and leaves out one small portion... a woman puts on all her jewelry and leaves off one small item... as it is written: "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither. Let my tongue stick to my palate if I do not remember you, if I do not keep Jerusalem in mind even at my happiest hour" (*Psalms* 137:5-6). ... What is meant by "my happiest hour"? Rabbi Isaac said: this is symbolized by the burnt ashes, which we place on the head of a bridegroom...

This passage was codified by Maimonides and the Shulhan Arukh and these practices were actually followed by many Jewish communities throughout the Diaspora. Similarly, since the fourteenth century we break a glass under the wedding canopy in order to commemorate the Destruction of Jerusalem at our happiest moments (*Kol Bo, Hilkhos Ta'anit*, 25d and *Minhagey d'vey Maharam*, p. 82).

In other words, we remembered the victory of the Exodus through *religious acts*; and the failure of the Destruction of the Temple through *religious acts*.

Indeed, tragedies which befell our people were remembered in three different ways:

First of all, we decreed public fast days. In addition to Tisha B'Av and the other fast days connected to the Destruction of the Temple, we decreed public fast days in order to commemorate other disasters.

For example, on the 23rd of Shvat, January 18, 749 a terrible earthquake struck the Land of Israel, destroying many cities and killing thousands of Jews and Arabs. We learn from a *genizah* fragment of a *Siddur* from Eretz Yisrael that the 23rd of Shvat was declared a *Ta'anit Tzibbur* (public fast day) which was observed in *Eretz Yisrael* for hundreds of years (*Tarbitz* 29 [5720], pp. 339-344).

On the 20th day of Sivan, 4931 (May 26, 1171), thirty-two Jews were burned at the stake in Blois, France, as a result of a blood libel, the first in continental Europe. As a result, the

20th of Sivan, 4931, was accepted voluntarily by all the communities of France, the English Isles, and the Rhineland, as a day of mourning and fasting. This was also the command of Rabbeinu Tam, who wrote letters informing them that it was proper to fix this day as a fast for all our people and that this fast must be greater than the Fast of Gedaliah... (A.M. Haberman, *Sefer Gezeirot Ashkenaz V'zarefat*, Jerusalem, 1945, p. 126)

Exactly 477 years later, a Jewish tragedy of much greater proportions began in Poland. On the 20th of Sivan, 5408 (June 10, 1648) Bogdan Chmielnicki and his pillaging Cossacks destroyed the flourishing Jewish community of Nemirov, Poland. During the course of the next six months, these mobs wantonly tortured and murdered approximately 50,000 innocent Jews and destroyed a large number of Jewish communities. In 1650, the Council of Four Lands

decreed a public fast day on the 20th of Sivan for the entire kingdom of Poland for generations, on the very day on which... the massacre of Nemirov occurred. That was the first community which died for the Sanctification of God's name... (*Y'vein Metzulah*, ed. Halprin, 5726, p. 78).

Indeed, this is the reason that a group of teachers and students at the Schechter Institute hold a public fast day every year on *Yom Hashoah*.

Second, we have remembered tragedies by designating periods of mourning on the Hebrew calendar, such as the Three Weeks between the 17th of Tammuz and Tisha B'av and the Sefirah Season between Pesah and Shavuot.

Third, we have composed *megillot* (scrolls) and *kinot* (elegies). For example, *Megillat Eikhah* (the Scroll of Lamentations) commemorates the Destruction of the First

Temple. The great earthquake in the year 749 was commemorated in a series of liturgical poems. The blood libel of 1171 was commemorated by liturgical poems and chronicles. And the well-known *posek* (halakhic authority), Rabbi Shabetai Hacoen, the Shakh (1621-1662), composed a scroll named *Megillat Afa* (see *Zekhariah* 5:1-2) as well as elegies about the massacres of 1648-1649, which were printed in Amsterdam in 1651. Those elegies and others, reprinted many times, were recited in Eastern Europe on the 20th of Sivan for 300 years until the Holocaust.

Indeed, some writers have suggested writing a *megillah* in order to commemorate the Shoah. In 1970, Binyamin West wrote: "I wish to suggest to the Yad Vashem directorate that it announce a prize for a scroll of the Holocaust. We need an *Eikhah* of the Holocaust, something short and strong, that will have an effect on believers and non-believers alike" (*Yad Vashem News* 2 [1970], p. 7).

In 1981, Rabbi Meir Amsel, a Haredi rabbi and Holocaust survivor, published an article in *Hamaor* (Vol. 33 [Sivan-Tammuz 5741], p. 17) where he stated:

Therefore, now that it is 36 years after the terrible disaster, the leaders of the people, the *admorim* (Hassidic rabbis) and the rabbis should gather together with the heads of *Yeshivot*, to confer and to set a fast day, to lament and to eulogize the great destruction which happened to the people of Israel ...and to enact a *megillah* like the *Scroll of Eikhah*, that will be read on this day, and to transmit it to future generations, until the arrival of the Messiah who will avenge the blood of our slain brethren.*

Megillat Hashoah – The Shoah Scroll – fills the need described by Rabbi Amsel. But, you may ask, why do we

* Regarding all of the above, see David Golinkin, *Conservative Judaism* 37/4 (Summer 1984), pp. 52-64 and *Eit La'asot* 3 (Summer 5751), pp. 37-54.

need to compose a Shoah Scroll right *now*? There are three answers to this question:

First of all, the survivors are disappearing, and with them the living testimonies. Rabbi Pesach Schindler, one of our committee members, is a survivor. Prof. Avigdor Shinan – the author of the scroll – is the son and nephew of survivors. Dr. George Savran is the son-in-law of survivors. I am the nephew of survivors. But in one generation's time, no survivors or children of survivors will remain to testify about what happened. We must determine the methods of commemoration *now*, when there is still a living connection to the *Shoah*.

Second, as already mentioned, historic events are remembered in Judaism only if they are anchored in *religious* rituals. The kindling of six torches by survivors in the courtyard of Yad Vashem is a meaningful ritual, but will it last when there are no living survivors?

Third, we are witnessing a growing phenomenon of Holocaust deniers. Therefore, it is our difficult mission to educate our children and the whole world about the Holocaust, a unique event in the history of mankind.

We hope that this scroll will be accepted by *Klal Yisrael* (the collective Jewish people) as a meaningful religious way to commemorate the memory of the Holocaust for generations, just as we were successful in commemorating the Exodus, on the one hand, and the Destruction of the Temple, on the other. If we succeed, we shall have fulfilled the adage attributed to the Ba'al Shem-Tov:

הגולה נמשכה מהשכחה, ובזכירה סוד הגאולה

The Diaspora was prolonged by forgetfulness,
and remembrance is the secret of redemption.

Rabbi David Golinkin
President, The Schechter Institute
Jerusalem
Kristalnacht 5763

Loss of memory is scary whenever and to whomever it occurs. But to Jews – in particular, to Jews of our times – it is terrifying. We have a great deal to remember, including memories that the rest of the world would rather see forgotten. We fear for ourselves when we realize that each year to come means fewer survivors of the Holocaust left to remind us and the world of what happened, of what human beings are capable of doing to each other. We fear for the millions who will be wiped out of all earthly record, if not for our determined effort to insure that they are remembered and revered until the end of time.

We know that the memories of the previous generation which the next generation carries into the future are imperfect at best. They are a mere echo of the events, times, feelings and conditions described. This is all the more reason for us to listen as well as we can to the witnesses of events that preceded us, for in the next generation, it is *we* who become witnesses to the witnesses. It is our testimony, one, two or ten generations removed from actual events, that will help set the tone of the Jewish future.

The Jewish calendar has aided our memory process throughout our long history. *Sukkot* commemorates our ancient wilderness wandering, following the Exodus from Egypt, which we remember through the *Pesah* festival. *Shavuot* reminds us of the Sinai Revelation of Torah. *Hanukah* and *Purim* commemorate the Hasmonean victory over the Hellenist assimilationists and the Greek-Syrian Empire, and our being saved from evil intent in ancient Persia. Fast days along the map of our calendar remind us of the various stages in the Destructions of the Ancient Temple in Jerusalem.

Remembering the Holocaust, though, has been challenging, on a religious level. It is relatively so soon after the events, that we have not yet even come close to uniformity as a people, in figuring out how to put our memorializing the Six Million into a religious context.

Several years ago, Alex Eisen, a prominent member of the Toronto community and of my congregation, and a Holocaust survivor, raised the idea of producing a *Megillah* to be read on *Yom Hashoah*, just as *Eikhah* is read on *Tisha B'Av*, and *Esther* on *Purim*. He felt, correctly, that a consistent approach to *Yom Hashoah* was necessary, that a *Megillah*, to be read in synagogue on *Yom Hashoah*, would provide the day a unifying structure, and lead to *Yom Hashoah* being observed by more Jews and more Jewish communities, in a serious spiritual way.

Not long after Alex proposed the *Megillah*, I brought the idea to Rabbi Seymour L. Essrog שליט"א, then President, and Rabbi Joel Meyers, Executive Vice-President of the Rabbinical Assembly, both of whom warmly endorsed the project. All that remained was the writing of the project, an effort which was aided by a happy coincidence. For many years, Rabbi David Golinkin, President of the Schechter Institute in Jerusalem, has served as Auxiliary High Holiday Rabbi of Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am, my congregation, and has been hosted by Alex Eisen. Alex discussed the idea with Rabbi Golinkin, leading the Schechter Institute to become an active partner in the project with the Rabbinical Assembly. It was under Rabbi Golinkin's guidance that the final document came to be, written in a magnificent Hebrew by Professor Avigdor Shinan, and beautifully translated into English by Rabbi Jules Harlow. Ms. Tova Strauss corrected the vocalization and supplied the cantillation. Mr. Donny Finkel of Leshon Limudim Ltd. typeset the book and saw it through the press.

Megillat Hashoah would not have achieved fruition, were it not for the tireless fundraising efforts of Alex Eisen,

and the generosity of donors acknowledged elsewhere in this booklet.

Remembering the Six Million needs to enter the synagogue in a structured and consistent manner. It is our hope that *Megillat Hashoah* will be read on *Yom Hashoah* every year in synagogues and communities throughout the world.

It is through the perspective of memory, both immediate and ancient, that we are better able to prepare ourselves for the challenge of a vibrant Jewish future. May we prove equal to the challenge of transmitting those memories into tomorrow's world.

Rabbi Philip S. Scheim
Toronto, Ontario
Kristalnacht 5763

סֵדֵר תְּפִלָּה לְעֶרֶב יוֹם הַשְּׁוֹאָה

מתפללים תפילת מנחה.

ארוֹן הַתּוֹרָה, אֲרוֹן הָאֱמוּנָה, עוֹמֵד בּוֹדֵד שְׁכוּל.

בְּאֵנוּ לְזִכֹּר אֶת אֱלֹה שְׂאִין לְשִׁכְחָם.

בְּאֵנוּ לְדַבֵּר עַל דְּבַר שְׂאִי אֶפְשֶׁר לְדַבֵּר,

אֲבָל אֵין לְהַשְׂאִירוֹ בְּלִתי נֶאמֵר.

בְּאֵנוּ לְהִזְכִּיר לְעֲצֻמְנוּ אֶת אֲשֶׁר נַעֲשֶׂה

וְאֵת אֲשֶׁר לֹא נַעֲשֶׂה.

בְּאֵנוּ לְשַׁאל אֶת הַשְּׂאֵלוֹת שְׂאִין לְהֵן מַעֲנֶה -

אֲבָל אֵין לְהַשְׂאִירָן לֹא שְׂאֵלָה.

יִוְדָעִים אָנוּ כִּי־צַד לְזִכֹּר אֶת אֱלֹה שְׁהַפְּרָנוּ וְאֵינָם.

יִוְדָעִים אָנוּ לְהַעֲלוֹת זְכוֹרוֹ שֶׁל אָדָם אֶחָד.

אֲבָל כְּלָנוּ אֲבָלִים, כְּלָנוּ מַעֲלִים זְכָרָם

שֶׁל שֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת רְבוּא - וְלֹא רַק שֶׁל אֶחָד בְּלִבְד

לֹא רַק אֱלֹה שְׁהַפְּרָנוּ,

אֲלֹא אֱלֹה שְׂאִישׁ אֵינוּ מְכִירָם...

הרב ראובן המר

Commemorative Ritual for Yom Hashoah Eve

The Service begins with the recitation of *Minhah*.

The ark of Torah, of faith, of learning,
stands empty and bereft.

We have come here to remember
those who cannot be forgotten.

We have come to speak of that which cannot be spoken
but must not be left unsaid.

We have come to remind not others but ourselves
of what was done and what was not done.

We have come to ask questions that cannot be answered
but cannot be left unasked.

We know how to remember the dead we have known.

We know how to commemorate the death of one person.

But all of us are mourners;
all of us recall not one but six million ones.

Not only those we have known,
but those no one can know,
the names that are forever lost.

Rabbi Reuven Hammer

שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל,
שְׁמֹר שְׂאֲרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל,

וְאֵל יֹאבֵד יִשְׂרָאֵל
הָאוֹמְרִים: שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל.

שׁוֹמֵר גּוֹי אֶחָד,
שְׁמֹר שְׂאֲרֵי עַם אֶחָד,

וְאֵל יֹאבֵד גּוֹי אֶחָד
הַמְיַחֲדִים שְׁמֶךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֶחָד.

שׁוֹמֵר גּוֹי קְדוֹשׁ,
שְׁמֹר שְׂאֲרֵי עַם קְדוֹשׁ,

וְאֵל יֹאבֵד גּוֹי קְדוֹשׁ
הַמְשַׁלְּשִׁים בְּשִׁלֹּשׁ קְדָשׁוֹת לְקְדוֹשׁ.

מִתְרַצָּה בְּרַחֲמִים וּמִתְפִּיֵס בְּתַחֲנוּנִים,

הַתְרַצָּה וְהִתְפִּיֵס לְדוֹר עָנִי כִּי אֵין עוֹזֵר.

יִשְׁכְּנוּ גַם בְּכִינוּ בְּזַכְרֵנוּ אֶת אֲחֵינוּ

שֶׁנִּטְבְּחוּ וְשֶׁנִּשְׁרְפוּ וְשֶׁנִּחְנְקוּ בִּימֵי עָנִינוּ.

אָבִינוּ מִלְכֵנוּ,

חֲנֹנוּ וְעַנְנוּ כִּי אֵין בְּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים.

עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ.

Guardian of Israel,
guard the remnant of Israel;

and preserve the people Israel, who proclaim:
Sh'ma Yisrael.

Guardian of a unique people,
guard the remnant of that people;

and preserve that people who affirm:
Adonai is our God, *Adonai* alone.

Guardian of a holy people,
guard the remnant of that holy people;

and preserve that holy people
who chant in praise of the Holy One:
Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh.

O God, moved by prayer and reconciled by supplication,
accept the prayers amid the supplication of our
afflicted generation, for there is no one else to help.

We have sat and wept as we recalled our kin
who were slaughtered, suffocated and burned to ashes
in the time of our deepest distress.

Avinu Malkenu,
have mercy on us and answer us,
for we are devoid of good deeds.

Treat us with mercy and kindness, and save us.

The *Ma'ariv* Service is recited. מתפללים תפילת מעריב.

Megillat Hashoah, The Shoah Scroll, may be read at this time. The lighting of six candles may take place before reading the Megillah, or one candle may be lit at the conclusion of each of the six chapters of Megillat Hashoah. Ani Ma'amin may be sung or the melody played during the candle-lighting.

Ani Ma'amin

אֲנִי מְאֲמִין

I believe	אֲנִי מְאֲמִין
with perfect faith	בְּאֵמוּנָה שְׁלֵמָה
In the coming of the Messiah,	בְּבִיאַת הַמָּשִׁיחַ
I believe.	אֲנִי מְאֲמִין
And even though he may tarry	וְאֵף עַל פִּי שִׁיתַּמְהִימָה
Nonetheless, (do) I believe.	עַם כֹּל זֶה אֲנִי מְאֲמִין.

פרק א

ראשית דבר

אמר פותב דברי הימים:

1 ארפות הן תולדותיו של עם-עולם, אלפי שנים, ובהן
 2 שנות טובה ושנות רעה, שנים שלווה ושנים אימות:
 3 בארצו ובנכר, בין האמות וכעם חפשי, זכה לימים רבים
 של נחת, ובמהלכן תרם מפוחותיו לאחיו בני האדם,
 4 והעניק להם את האמונה באל אחד ואת יום השבת, את
 ספר הספרים ואת מוסר הנביאים: אך בימים אחרים,
 5 קשים וחשוכים, נאנק תחת עלם של פושעים
 ומשעבדים: נפשו ענתה במלחמות דת וגזרות, שרפות
 6 על המוקד, דחיקה לגטאות, פוגרומים ועלילות דם,
 גרושים וגליות, השפלה ולעג: לא שקט העם ולא שלו,
 7 ומפלצת שנאת ישראל פערה שוב ושוב את פיה ועמדה
 עליו בכל דור ודור לבלותו: ועם כל זאת חרק העם את
 שניו, הצדיק עליו את הדין, נתן גוו למפים, ופעמים אף
 פשט את צוארו על גבי המזבח, נדד ונרדף ותר לו
 מקום מקלט עד יעבר זעם:

CHAPTER I

IN THE BEGINNING

1 So spoke the Chronicler:
2 Long is the history of the eternal people, extending for
3 millennia, including good years and bad years, tranquil
4 years and dreadful years. In its own land and in
5 Diaspora lands, among the nations and as a free people,
6 it enjoyed long periods of repose during which it
7 contributed of its endowments to fellow mortals,
8 bestowing upon them the Sabbath and faith in one
9 God, the Book of books and the teachings of the
10 prophets. At times, however, in darkened and difficult
11 days, it struggled under the burdens imposed by
12 vanquishers and subjugators. It was afflicted, body
13 and soul, by religious wars and persecutions, burnings
14 at the stake and being crowded into ghettos, blood
15 libels and pogroms, expulsions and exiles, degradation
16 and derision. The people had neither serenity nor
17 tranquility; and the monster of Jew-hatred again and
18 again threatened to swallow it whole, rose up against it
19 in every generation attempting to destroy it. Never-
20 theless, the people gritted its teeth, accepted the
21 heavenly judgment and, groaning, even at times
22 stretched its neck on the sacrificial altar. Homeless
23 and hunted, it sought a safe haven, a refuge for resting a
24 while until the time of wrath had passed.

[מכאן ועד סוף הפרק יש לקרוא במנגינת "איכה".]

8 אַךְ מֵה־שְׂאֲרֵי־לוֹ לְעַם יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאִירוּפָּה הִנְאִיִּיתִי, אֵין לוֹ
 שֵׁם וּמֵה־שְׁעָלֶתָה לְבָנָיו וּלְבָנוֹתָיו אִי־אֶפְשֶׁר לָפֶה
 9 לְפָרְשׁוֹ: אֵין־סֵפֶר בְּנֵי־אָדָם הַגְּלוּ מִבְּתֵיהֶם נִקְרְעוּ
 10 מִמִּשְׁפַּחֹתֵיהֶם הִשְׁפְּלוּ עַד־עֶפֶר וְשִׁעְבְּדוּ עַד־מוֹת: שִׁשָּׁה
 מִלְּיוֹן בְּרוּאִים בְּעָלֶם נִחְנְקוּ נִשְׂרְפוּ אוֹ נִוְרוּ נִקְבְּרוּ חַיִּים
 11 אוֹ־מֵתוּ בְּרָעַב בְּצָמָא וּבִקְרָ: הַפֶּעַם פְּעָרָה הַמִּפְלָצָת
 אֶת־פִּיהָ לְבָלִי חֹק בְּצוּחָה מִקְפִּיאָה דָם וּבִקְשָׁה לַעֲקֹר
 12 אֶת־הַכֹּל: בְּלֹא רַחֵם יֵצְאָה לְהַשְׁמִיד לַהֲרֹג וּלְאַבֵּד
 אֶת־הָעַם כֹּל מִן־הַבָּאִים בַּיָּמִים וְעַד לְעַבְרִים שְׂבַמְעֵי
 13 אֲמִתֵּיהֶם: רַבּוֹת אֵין־סֵפֶר דִּהְרוּ דְחוּסוֹת אֶל־הַמַּחְנוֹת
 וְעָשׂוּ הָאֲרָבוֹת הַתָּמָר אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִים אַךְ הַשָּׁמַיִם הֵיוּ
 14 נִחְשֵׁת וְהִרְקִיעַ בְּרוּזֹל: שִׁקְשׁוּק גְּלָגְלֵי הַקְּרוֹנוֹת הַתְּעַרְב
 בְּנִבְיחוֹת הַכְּלָבִים וְאֶל־טְרִיקַת דְּלִתוֹת הַבְּרוּזֹל הַצְּטַרְף
 15 רַעֲשׂ הַנְּעָלִים הַמְּסַמְרוֹת: פְּתוּזְמֶרֶת עֲנָק דּוֹרְסָנִית
 הַחֲרִישׁוּ כֹל־אֱלֹה אֶת קוֹל הַדְּמָמָה הַדְּקָה אֲשֶׁר בָּקַע
 מִלְּבוֹת מְתֵי הַמַּעֲט חֲסִידֵי אֲמוֹת הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר־נִגַּע בָּהֶם
 16 דִּבַּר הָאֱלֹהִים: זְכֹרָה לָהֶם | אֱלֹהִים זֹאת לְטוֹבָה:
 17 הֲרַבָּה כְּבֹר רְאִיתִי וְהֲרַבָּה עוֹד אֲרֹאֶה אַךְ מֵה־שְׁנַגְלָה
 18 לְעֵינַי שֵׁם לֹא אוֹכַל לָשׁוּב וּלְרְאוֹת: כֹּל־הַמְּלִים שֶׁנִּבְרְאוּ
 וְשִׁיבְּרְאוּ בְּכֹל־הַשְּׁפוֹת כֹּלֵן לֹא־יֵצְלִיחוּ לְתֹאֵר וְלוֹ מַעֲט
 19 מִמֵּה־שְׁנַגְלָה לְעֵינַי: וְאֵף זֹאת אֲדַע לֹא אוֹכַל לְשַׁבַּח
 וְלֹא־יְהִי־בִי הַפּוֹחַ לְהַבִּין:

[From here to the end of the chapter is chanted in the mode of *Eikhah*.]

8 What befell the people Israel in Nazi Europe, however,
9 is beyond classification, and what confronted its sons
10 and daughters defies description. Untold numbers were
11 forced out of their homes, torn from their families,
12 trampled in the dust, worked to death. Six million
13 created in the divine image were strangled, cremated,
14 shot, buried alive; they died of starvation, of thirst, and
15 of the cold. This time the monster stretched open its
16 mouth beyond bounds, with a blood-curdling shriek
17 and with stinking breath, and sought to eradicate
18 everything. Without mercy it set out to destroy, to
19 slaughter, and to lay waste the entire people, from those
nearing the end of their days to embryos in their
mothers' wombs. Countless trains stuffed with human
cargo sped to the camps, where from chimneys smoke
ascended to God; but the heavens were brass and the
firmament iron. The click-clack of boxcar wheels
blended with the barking of dogs, and the clank of
iron doors merged with the stomping of hobnailed
boots. Like a gigantic thundering orchestra, all of these
sounds silenced the thin, small voice bursting out of the
hearts of the precious few, the righteous of the world's
nations who had been touched by the word of God.
May God recall their deeds in their favor.
So much have I seen and so much have I yet to see, but
what was revealed to me there I never could see again.
All of the words in the world, created and yet to be
created, in every single language, will never be able to
describe even a small part of what was displayed before
my eyes. And this too do I know: Never will I be able to
forget, and never will I have the power to understand.

פרק ב

מלא כל-הארץ תהו ובהו

1 מתוך יומן מסע אל עולם אחר:
 2 חבר הייתי במשלחת הקטנה של עתונאים אשר
 3 התגנבה אל הגטו כדי לראות מה מתרחש מאחורי
 4 חומותיו: שמנה שעות שהיתי שם ובהן זקנתי בעשר
 5 שנים: בדרפנו עצרנו להתפלל בכנסיה, שהרי היה זה
 6 יום ראשון: כשנדם אחרון צליליו של העוגב האזנו
 7 לדברי הכמר: הוא דבר על יסורים וסבל, על אהבה
 8 ורחמים, חמלה וחסד, ושלח אתנו לדרפנו בברפת "יהי
 9 האלהים עמכם": אך כשחלפנו על פני ביתני השמירה
 10 אשר בחומה המקיפה את הגטו, נותרו עמנו היסורים
 11 והסבל, והם בלבד:
 12 עם פניסתנו יצאה למולנו עגלה ושלשה אנשים מושבים
 דוחפים אותה: גזיות גרומות נערמו עליה, ראשן
 המטלטל בקצב מהמורות הכביש פאלו נד לנו לשלום:
 כך נפגשנו לראשונה עם בן בריתו של המות, עם
 הרעב: אי אפשר היה שלא לחוש בו בכל פנה, והוא
 שהניע בלא תכלית נחילי אדם ברחובות, חסר אונים
 ויאוש על פניהם: ובכל אשר תביט מראות פלצות:
 גופת מת, פניה מכסים בעתון, וגבר מסיר בחפזה את
 המעיל אשר עליה ומחטט בכיסיה בתקוה; ילדה

CHAPTER II

**THE EARTH IS FILLED
WITH CHAOS AND CONFUSION**

1 From the journal of a journey to another world:
2 I was part of a small delegation of journalists that stole
3 into the ghetto in order to see what was happening
4 behind its walls. I stayed there for eight hours, during
5 which I aged ten years. On our way there, we stopped
6 at a church to worship, since it was Sunday. When the
7 last notes of the organ had faded, we listened to the
8 words of the priest. He spoke of suffering and affliction,
9 of love and compassion, of pity and kindness, and sent
10 us on our way with the blessing, "May God be with
11 you." But when we passed the guardhouses placed in
12 the wall surrounding the ghetto, we were left with the
suffering and the affliction, them alone.

8 As we entered, a cart was coming toward us, pushed
9 and pulled by three men. Bloated corpses were heaped
upon it, their heads bouncing to a rhythm determined
by muddy ruts in the road, as if they were greeting us.

10 Thus for the first time we met death's partner, famine.
11 It was impossible not to feel its presence in every
corner, and it was the force endlessly propelling
streams of weakened people through the streets, their
12 faces filled with despair. Wherever you looked, terrify-
ing sights: a dead body, its face covered by a
newspaper, and a man hastily removing its overcoat
while digging in its pockets with anticipation; a young

ובחיקה אחותה התינקת המיבבת ברעבונה באפס
 כוחות, ספק גוססת ספק ישנה; ישיש עטור תפלין פושט
 יד רפויה ובעיניו השלמה עם הנזרא מכל; נער שנסה
 להבריח קלפות של תפוחי אדמה אל הגטו מכתר
 בקבוצה צוהלת של אנשי משמר, המלוים בצחוק גם
 את הפשטתו קדם שיבה עד מות:

14 13 קבוצה של צעירים התגודדה למול לוח מודעות: אחת
 15 מהן, כתובה ביידיש, משכה את תשומת לבני הספר
 לנו שזו הודעה על קונצרט שיערך בו ביום, מקהלה
 16 קטנה וכנר בודד: מודעות אחרות ספרו על שעורי תורה
 17 והרצאות בעניני דיומא: האם היה בכוחם של אלה
 להשתיק, ולו לרגע, את הרעב המנסר או לחנק את
 18 האימה מפני העתיד? מנין שאבו היהודים את הפוח
 להביט כך בעיניו של המלאך המשחית?
 19 פגשנו גם באנשי היודנראט, ראשי הקהל, אמללים אשר
 בידם הפקדו חיי אחיהם ואחיותיהם מבלי יכלת
 20 להושיעם: שוב הטל עליהם לארגן טרנספורט של
 אנשים, ומנועי המשאיות כבר רעמו בפפר המרכזית:
 21 בדחיפות וצעקות נדחקו אמהות וילדיהן, קשישים
 ומשענותיהם בידיהם, חולים ונכים ותשושים אל פיה
 22 הפעור של המשאית, ובעיני כלם אימה מסיטת: בדרך
 אל תחנת הרפבת הסמוכה, הותירו אחריהן המשאית
 זעקה אלמת מהולה בעשן שחר, וידיעה ודאית כואבת,
 כי גם מחר וגם מחרתים יחזר מחזה זה על עצמו, עד
 נשימתו האחרונה של הגטו:

girl, holding tightly her infant sister who was weeping out of hunger listlessly, maybe dying, maybe sleeping; an elder crowned with *tefillin* stretching out a feeble hand, his eyes reflecting the peace he had made with the most dreadful of all; a boy who had tried to smuggle potato skins into the ghetto surrounded by a group of guards reveling with coarse laughter as they stripped him before he was beaten to death.

13 A group of young people was assembled around a
14 bulletin board. One of the announcements, written in
15 Yiddish, drew my attention. It was explained to us that
16 this was an announcement about a concert to be held
17 that very day, a small choir and a violinist. Other
18 announcements told about Torah instruction and
19 lectures on current events. Did these have the power,
20 even if momentary, to silence gnawing hunger or to
21 stifle the dread of what the future held? Whence did
22 this nation draw the strength to stare into the eyes of
the destroying angel?!

19 We also met with members of the *Judenrat*, community
leaders, those unfortunates into whose hands were
entrusted the lives of their brothers and sisters without
the power to save them. Once again they were forced to
organize people for a *transport*, while the motors of the
trucks already were roaring in the central square. With
shoving and shouting, mothers and their children were
forced – along with the elderly holding their canes, the
ailing and the crippled and the feeble – into the
cavernous maws of the trucks, and all their eyes were
filled with nightmarish terror. On their way to the
nearby train depot, the trucks left behind them a silent
scream shrouded in black smoke, and the painful
certain knowledge that tomorrow and the day after
tomorrow this scene would be repeated until the
ghetto's last breath.

- 23 התזרה אל רחובה הראשי של העיר, על המונה ושאוניה
 ומסחרה וצחוקה, העבירה אותי באחת מעולם לעולם:
- 24 גדר דקיקה וכמה שערים הפרידו בין עולמות כה שונים:
- 25 מה יודעים דרי העולם האחד על שכניהם שבעולם
 האחר? ואם אספר - היקשיבו? ואם יקשיבו - היוכלו
 להאמין? ואם יאמינו - האם לא ינסו להסביר או לטהר
 את מצפונם בטעמים שונים ומשנים? ובשישאלוני למה
 ארע ליהודים כל זאת - מה אשיב?

23 The return to the city's main street, with its traffic and
tumult, crowds and carousing, brought me at once from
24 one world to another. A narrow wall and a few gates
25 separated worlds that were so different. What do the
dwellers of one world know about their neighbors in
the other one? And if I were to tell, would they listen?
And if they were to listen, could they believe? And if
they were to believe, would they not attempt to explain,
or to cleanse their consciences, with scores of different
and differing rationalizations? And if they were to ask
me why all of this befell the Jews, how would I answer?

פרק ג

החשך הפרוש על הכל

- 1 נכתב על דף קרוע שנמצא בין שתי מטות עץ:
- 2 3 גרטרוד שמי: הרבה גרטרוד היו בעירנו, אך בעריף
- 4 הארץ והקר הזה אין עוד גרטרוד מלבדי: יש כאן
- אנושקה שבאה מאוקראינה וגיטל מפולין, הלנה
- מגרמניה וגראציה מיון, ועוד שורה ארבה של מי שהיו
- 5 פעם נשים: איזה מגנט נזרא ובלתי מוחש שאב אותנו
- מכל קצוי היבשת לכאן, ויצק את בלנו בדמות אחת:
- 6 קבקים של עץ ושמלת בד גם, שמיקה אחת לכסות
- את גופנו בקר שאינו יודע רחס, וגם קערה של פח וכף
- שמעולם לא היה בהן כדי להשביע את הרעב המנוקר
- 7 בלא הרף: העבר הולך ומטשטש ובמקומו באים רק
- ההוה, היום, השעה, הרגע, מכונת התפירה, מנת
- המרק הדלוח, המסדר שבו מתמוטטות אחדות מאתנו
- ואחרות נשלפות מן השורה ונעלמות, כשהן מלוות
- בצוחות ובכלבים, ואיש אינו יודע אל אן:
- 8 9 ההוה ממלא את כל הויתנו: על העתיד אין איש מדבר,
- 10 ובקשי אזכר את העבר: הוי, כמה קצרי ראי ותמימים
- 11 היינו: את ההצעה לעזב את המולדת ולהגר אל המזרח
- הנדה דחינו, מן הכתובות "אין פניסה ליהודים"
- התעלמנו, ואת אזנינו אטמנו מלשמע את נאומי

CHAPTER III

THE DARKNESS SPREAD OVER ALL

1 Written upon a scrap of paper found between two
 wooden beds:

2 3 Gertrude is my name. There were many Gertrudes in
 our town, but in this long, cold barracks there is no
4 Gertrude but me. There is an Anushka here who comes
 from the Ukraine, and Gittel from Poland, Helen from
 Germany, and Gratzia from Greece, and a continuing
5 long list of those who once were women. What cruel,
 callous magnet drew us here from all corners of the
6 continent, and cast all of us into one mold: wooden
 shoes and a dress of coarse fabric, a blanket to cover our
 body in a cold that knows no mercy, and a tin plate and
 a spoon that never could hold enough to satisfy the
7 incessant gnawing hunger. The past is becoming
 blurred, replaced only by the present, today, right
 now, this moment, the sewing machine, a portion of
 foul soup, the lineup where some of us collapse and
 from which others are plucked away to disappear,
 accompanied by shrieks and dogs, and no one knows
 where.

8 9 The present fills all of our existence. About the future no
10 one speaks, and with difficulty I remember the past. O,
11 how shortsighted and innocent we were! We rejected the
 advice to abandon the homeland, to emigrate to the distant
 east, and we hid ourselves from the signs, "No Jews
 Allowed." Our ears we sealed from hearing the hateful

השטונה, שהרי רק מלים היו, ומה כבר יכולות מלים
 לעשות?! בכל מאדנו רצינו להאמין, שאם רק נכפף
 קומה לזמן קט, תעבר הסופה ואיננה: גם לאחר הלילה
 שבו נשרפו בתי הנסות, והרחובות הוצפו בבדלח
 הזכוכיות המנפצות, המשכנו לקוות לטוב, שהרי רע
 יותר כבר לא יוכל להיות, וכלנו אחרי הכל בני תרבות
 אנחנו:

אוי לו לשוטה העור, שלא ידע מה צופן העתיד: היה זה
 יום ששי בערב: ישבנו בסלון, ומנפרד, אבי הנכה בכסא
 גלגלים, הצטרף לשירת המקהלה שהשמעה ברדיו:
 לפתע נפרצה הדלת והם נכנסו, שחרי בגד ומצחצחי
 מגף: את אבא דחפו לחדר הסמוך ועלינו צווי לארוז
 מזודה בתוך עשר דקות: "אתן יוצאות למקום מוגן
 ובטוח", אמרו, "מהר, מהר!": ולאחר מכן רק תמונות
 חטופות וקולות מקטעים: יריה בודדת, מבטיהם
 החלולים של השכנים, כפר העיר הקפואה, זעקת
 הפרדה של אמא המשאית המצחינה, הרקבת שאין בה
 טפת אור לנשימה, הצריף הארץ שרק מטות עץ בו,
 והקאפו חמוצת הפנים:

את שערותינו גלחו כשהכנסנו לצריף, ובמקום הפוכב
 הצהב המששה, צרבו על ידינו מספר כחל: ומאותו רגע
 רק לתפר ולתפר, מבקר עד ערב, ללא מנוח, יום אחר
 יום, פובעים, מעילים, חלצות ומכנסים שיתאימו למגף
 המצחצח: בתחלה עוד שאלתי "למה?". למה אני? למה

12 speeches, for they were just words and what can words
13 really accomplish? With all our might we wanted to
14 believe that if only we would humble ourselves a short
15 while, the storm would pass and be no more. Even after
16 the night of the burning synagogues, when the streets
17 were covered with shattered glass, we continued
18 hoping for the best, since nothing worse could come
19 to pass and, after all, everyone was cultured there.

20 Alas for the blind fools who did not know what the
21 future held. It was on a Friday night. We were sitting in
22 the salon and my crippled, wheelchair-bound father,
23 Manfred, was singing along with the choir being
24 broadcast on the radio. Suddenly the door was broken
down and they entered, black uniforms and shining
boots. They shoved father into an adjoining room, and
they commanded us to pack a suitcase within ten
minutes. "Where you are going is safe and sheltered,"
they said. "Hurry! Hurry!" Later, only interrupted
images and fragmented sounds: an isolated rifle shot,
the vacant stares of the neighbors, the frozen city
square, a mother's farewell cry, the filthy truck, the
boxcar with not a breath of fresh air, the long barracks
with nothing but wooden beds, and the sour-faced
Kapo.

Our hair they shaved when they brought us into the
barracks, and in place of the six-pointed yellow star
they burned a blue number into our arms, and from
that moment only sewing and sewing from morning to
night, without rest, day after day, hats, coats, shirts, and
trousers appropriate for the shining boots. At first I still

- 25 אֲנַחְנוּ? לְמָה עִבְשׁוּ? אֵךְ חֲדַלְתִּי מִלְשָׂאֵל: הַשְּׂאֵלָה
מִכְּאִיבָה יוֹתֵר בְּאֵין לָהּ תְּשׁוּבָה:
- 27 26 הַלֵּילָה יִקְחוּ אֶת כְּלָנוּ לְמָקוֹם אַחֵר: כֶּךָ סִפְרָה הַקֶּאֱפוֹ,
28 וְלֹא הוֹסִיפָה דְבָר, אֵךְ פְּנִיָּה קִדְרוּ: אֲנִי פוֹתֶבֶת כָּל זֹאת
29 עַל דֶּף הַנְּיָר: וְאִם יִמְצֵא אוֹתוֹ אֵי פַעַם בֶּן אָנוּשׁ, אוֹלֵי
יְהִיָּה בְּבוּחוֹ לְשָׂאֵל עַל מָה שְׂלֵא

25 asked "Why?" Why me? Why us? Why now? But I
stopped asking. The question is more painful when
there is no answer.

26 27 Tonight they will take all of us to another location. This
is what the Kapo told us, and she did not add another
28 word, but her face was gloomy. I am writing all of this
29 on scraps of paper. And if a human being should ever
find them, perhaps he will have the strength to ask for a
reason why there was no

פרק ד

אֵל מוֹל פְּנֵי הַתְּהוֹם

1 מְלוֹתַי הָאֲחֵרוֹנוֹת שֶׁל יַעֲקֹב דָּוִד בֶּן יוֹאֵל צָבִי הֲלוֹי:
 2 אַרְבַּע פְּעָמִים נוֹלַדְתִּי וּפְעַם אַחַת כָּבַר מְתִי: לְרֵאשׁוֹנָה
 נוֹלַדְתִּי לְקוֹל מִצְהָלוֹת הַזֹּרֵי וּשְׁמוֹנֵת אַחֵי וְאַחִיוֹתַי
 כְּשִׁבְאַתִּי לְעוֹלָם בְּעִזְרַת יי יתְבַרַךְ לִפְנֵי כַּעֲשָׂרִים וְחָמֵשׁ
 4 שָׁנָה: שְׁלֹשׁ פְּעָמִים נוֹסְפוֹת נוֹלַדְתִּי בְּעֶשֶׂר הַשָּׁנִים
 5 הָאֲחֵרוֹנוֹת, וּבָהֵן גַּם מְתִי כָּבַר פְּעַם אַחַת: אַחֲרֵי הַמּוֹת
 הַהוּא לֹא יִפְחִיד אוֹתִי עוֹד שׁוֹם מוֹת:
 6 בַּשָּׁנָה נוֹלַדְתִּי בְּלֵיל הַסֶּלֶקְצִיָּה, כְּשֶׁאֶסְפוּ אוֹתָנוּ, כָּל
 7 הַגְּבָרִים שְׁבַעֲיָרָה, אֵל הַכֶּכֶר הַמְרֻכָּזִית: הַפּוֹכְבִים
 נִסְתַּלְקוּ לָהֶם וְרַק הַטְּלָאִי הֵצֵאב הַבְּלִיחַ בַּחֲשֻׁכָּה:
 8 נִדְרָשָׁנוּ לְהִסְתַּדֵּר בְּשׁוֹרָה אַרְכָּה וְלַחֲשֹׁף אֶת פְּלֶג גּוֹפְנוֹ
 9 הָעֲלִיּוֹן: בְּזֶה אַחַר זֶה עִבְרָנוּ לְאוֹרָה שֶׁל מְנוֹרַת שֶׁמֶן בְּהַה
 לְיַד שֶׁטֶן לְבוֹשׁ שְׁחוּרִים, שֶׁהוֹרָה בְּתַנּוּעַת יָד לְיָמִין אוֹ
 10 לְשִׁמְאֵל: מִיַּד הַבְּנֵי כִי לְצַד זֶה נִשְׁלָחִים הַחֲזֻקִים
 11 וְהַחֲסוּנִים וְלָשֶׁם הַקְּטַנִּים וְהַזְּקֵנִים: בְּמַהִירוֹת מִלֵּאתִי אֶת
 נְעֻלֵי בְּעַפְרָ וְכֹךְ גִּבְהַתִּי בְּכַמָּה סְנַטִּימֵטְרִים, נִפְחַתִּי אֶת
 חֲזִי וְאֶף צַעֲדָתִי עַל בְּהוֹנוֹתַי בְּעִבְרֵי לְיָדוֹ; נִשְׁלַחְתִּי עִם
 12 הַחֲסוּנִים: מֵאַחַר יוֹתֵר שָׁמַעְנוּ אֶת הַיְרִיּוֹת וַיִּדְעַתִּי כִּי חֵי
 נִתְּנוּ לִי בְּמַתְנָה. יתְבַרַךְ שְׁמוֹ:

CHAPTER IV

CONFRONTING THE ABYSS

1 The last words of Yaakov-David Ben Yoel-Tzvi Halevi:
2 Four times was I born, and once already have I died.
3 My first birth was accompanied by the joyful voices of
4 my parents and my eight brothers and sisters when I
5 came into the world, with the help of God, may He be
6 blessed, twenty-five years ago. I was born three other
7 times over the past ten years, during which time I also
8 died once. After that death, no death could ever
9 frighten me.

6 The second time, I was born on the night of the
7 Selection, when they gathered us, all the males in town,
8 to the central square. The stars had disappeared and
9 only the yellow patches flickered in the darkness. We
10 were told to form a long line and strip to the waist. One
11 by one we passed by the light of a dim oil lamp near a
12 devil dressed in black who with the wave of a hand
13 directed to the left or to the right. At once I realized that
14 the strong and the sturdy were being sent to one side,
15 and the young and the aged to the other. Hastily I filled
16 my shoes with dirt, to gain a few centimeters in height.
17 Swelling my chest, I even walked on my toes as I
18 passed by him. I was sent with the sturdy. Later we
19 heard the shots and I knew that my life had been given
20 to me as a gift. Blessed be His name.

13 בשלישית נולדתי כאשר נלקחו אלף מאתנו לצעד לפני
 14 הצבא בשדות המלחמה: השטח נתמלא במוקשים רבים
 15 ואנו היינו פחומה חיה לפני המחנה: בכל יום ויום
 התמעט מספרנו כשאנו מותירים אחרינו חברים שסועים
 16 למאכל עוף השמים וחיות היער: שבעים ושמונה מאתנו
 17 שרדו את המסע: חשתי כי נולדנו מחדש כשהגענו בסוף
 היום אל המתבן שבו זכינו למנת המרק הדליל היומי.
 ברוך יי יום | יום:

19 18 ברביעית נולדתי עוד באותו לילה: יצאתי לרגע מן
 המתבן אל החצר האחורית, ועוד הספקתי לראות את
 20 הגפרור הנצת ואת החייד המחליא של המציית: החומה
 21 החיה עשתה את שלה ושוב אין בה צדף: המתבן העלה
 באש וכל חברי עלו על המוקד השמימה, קרבן עולה
 לאלהים יתברך:

22 מי שנולד ארבע פעמים לא ימות פעם אחת בלבד:
 23 מותי בא עלי לאחר שברחתי ממקום השרפה, נתפסתי
 בידי מקומיים וצרפתי אל רכבת שיצאה אל העבודה
 24 המשתחררת: תזמרת קבלה את פנינו וכלנו הובלנו, סבון
 25 ומגבת בידינו, לשטף את גופנו המיוזע: ריח של בשר
 שרוף הטריף את חושינו; הסבון בער בידינו, והתזמרת
 26 מנגנת: ברחמי האל עלי, נשלפתי ברגע האחרון מן
 השורה ולא הצטרפתי אל ההמונים הערמים שנדחפו
 27 אל החדר בפראות: הדלת נטרקה ברעש אדירים ומן
 החדר בקע קול אשר השפה איננה יודעת לתארו:
 28 שריקת זרימתו של גז צורח לוטה בבליל של "שמע
 ישראל" ו"מאמעלע", "יי אלהינו" ו"מדרה מיא", "יי

13 The third time I was born when one thousand of us
14 were taken to walk in front of soldiers on a battlefield.
15 The area was full of mines and we formed a living wall
before the troops. Each and every day our number
diminished as comrades ripped apart were left behind
as food for the birds of the heavens and the beasts of the
16 17 field. Seventy-eight of us survived the march. I felt that
our lives began anew when we finally reached the barn
where we were favored with our daily portion of thin
soup. Blessed be the Lord each day.

18 19 The fourth time, I was born later that night. I had left
the barn for the yard behind it, where I managed to
catch sight of a spark from a match and the sickening
20 smile of the one who had lit it. Since the living wall had
21 fulfilled its mission, it was no longer needed. The barn
went up in flames and all my comrades soared
heavenward on the flaming pyre, a sacrificial offering
ascending to God, may He be blessed.

22 Whoever has been born four times will not die only
23 once. My death came to me after I had fled from the site
of the fire. I was captured by locals and forced into a
24 boxcar on its way to the place where "work makes one
free." An orchestra greeted us, and all of us were led,
25 holding soap and a towel, to wash our sweat-covered
bodies. The smell of flesh on fire confused our senses.
The soap seemed to be burning in our hands, and the
26 orchestra was playing. Thanks to God's mercies for me,
I was removed from the line at the last moment, and
did not become part of the naked mass shoved into the
27 room so savagely. The door slammed with a deafening
noise and from the room burst forth sounds that no
28 words can adequately describe: the howling hiss of gas
streaming in accompanied by a mingling of faint and
feeble cries: "*Sh'ma yisrael*" and "*mameleh*," "the Lord

- אָחַד" וְ"טֹאטעלע", צוּחוֹת דּוֹעֵכוֹת וְשׁוֹקטוֹת וְקוֹל דְּמָמָה
 דְּקָה: כָּאֵן הִתְחִיל תּפִּקִידִי: לְסַלֵּק אֶת הַגּוֹפּוֹת, לְעַקֵּר 29
 אֶת שְׁנֵי הַזְּהָב, לְדַחֵס אֶת הַמֵּתִים אֶל פִּי הַתְּנוּרָה:
 כְּשֶׁעֲקַרְתִּי אֶת שְׁנֵי שָׁל אַחֵי לֵיִזֵּר, שְׁלֹא רָאִיתִי כְּמָה 30
 שְׁנַיִם, מֵת לְבִי בְּקֶרְבִּי גּוֹפֵי הַמְּשִׁיךְ לַחַיּוֹת, וְאֲנִי מֵת
 מְהֵלֵךְ. יִי נָתַן לִי חַיִּים וְיִי כִבֵּר לְקַחֵם, יְהִי שֵׁם יְיָ מְבֹרָךְ:
 כְּמָה עָמַל רְבוּנוֹ שֶׁל עוֹלָם כְּדֵי שְׁנֹאבֵד אֶת אֲמוֹנְתֵנוּ בּוֹ, 31
 אֲךָ עַל אַפּוֹ וְעַל חֲמָתוֹ לֹא עָשִׂינוּ זֹאת:
 כְּשִׂאמוֹת בַּפֶּעַם הַנוֹסֶפֶת, אֵל תִּקְרְעוּ עָלַי וְאֵל תִּתְאַבְּלוּ, 32
 שְׂאִין מוֹת אַחַר מוֹת: אֵל תִּהְיֶנוּ גַם לְשֹׂאֵל לְמָה. מֵה 33
 שְׁלֹא עָשִׂיתִי אֲנִי אֵל יַעֲשׂוּ אַחֲרַיִם בְּגִלְלִי:

29 our God” and “*madre mia*,” “the Lord is One” and
“*tateleh*,” followed by a low, murmuring sound. Here
30 my task began: to remove the bodies, to pull out gold
teeth, to shove the dead into the oven. When I pulled
out the teeth of my brother Lazer, whom I had not seen
for years, my heart died within me. My body continued
to live, but I became one of the walking dead. The Lord
gave me life, and the Lord took it away, may the name
31 of the Lord be blessed. How the Master of the Universe
has taken such trouble to ensure that we would lose our
faith in Him! Yet, in spite of His wrath and His rage,
we have refused to succumb.

32 When I die again, tear not your garments; mourn not,
33 for there is no death after death. Do not even attempt to
ask why. What I have not accomplished for myself, let
others not try to accomplish on my behalf.

פרק ה

בת קול מרחפת ואומרת

[את הפרק כולו יש לקרוא במנגינת "איכה", להוציא הפסקה האחרונה.]

- 1 בת-קול משמים מרחפת ואומרת על-אלה אני בוכיה:
- 2 על-הוריה של-גרטרוד שנקרעו זה-מזה בפראות
קהל: על-אלה אני בוכיה:
- 3 על-גרטרוד ואנושקה וגיטל והלנה וגראציה, שכלה כוחן
במחנות העבודה קהל: על-אלה אני בוכיה:
- 4 על-אנשי היודנראט ועל-הקאפו היהודיה שנדרשו
למלא תפקיד שאין אדם יכול למלאו
קהל: על-אלה אני בוכיה:
- 5 על-יעקב־דוד בן-יואל-צבי הלוי שמת פעמים ונולד
ארבע קהל: על-אלה אני בוכיה:
- 6 על-תשע-מאות עשרים-ושנים חבריו שעלו השמימה
בשדות המוקשים קהל: על-אלה אני בוכיה:
- 7 על-שבעים ושבעה הנצולים שאפרם צבור במתבן
קהל: על-אלה אני בוכיה:
- 8 על-לייזר שאף במזויעים שבחלומותיו לא ראה את-
אחיו עוקר את-שני הזהב מגופתו
קהל: על-אלה אני בוכיה:
- 9 על-אלה אני בוכיה ועל המיליונים הדחוקים בגטאות
ובמחנות המעבר: על-המשוטטים ביערות ועל-
10 המסתתרים במרתפים ובכוכים על-מיי שמצא מקלט

CHAPTER V

A HEAVENLY VOICE, HOVERING, CRIES OUT

[This chapter, except for the final passage, is chanted in the mode of *Eikhah*.]

- 1 A heavenly voice cries out: For these do I weep.
- 2 For Gertrude's parents, who were torn away from each other
Congregation: For these do I weep.
- 3 For Gertrude and Anushka, Gittel, Helen, and Gratzia, whose vitality came to an end in labor camps
Congregation: For these do I weep.
- 4 For members of the *Judenrat* and for the Jewish Kapo, who were asked to fulfill a task that no human being could fulfill
Congregation: For these do I weep.
- 5 For Yaakov-David ben Yoel-Tzvi Halevi who died twice and was born four times
Congregation: For these do I weep.
- 6 For nine hundred and twenty-two comrades who from mine fields ascended the heavens
Congregation: For these do I weep.
- 7 For the seventy-seven who were saved, whose dust was gathered in the barn
Congregation: For these do I weep.
- 8 For Lazer, who in his most terrifying nightmares never saw his brother pulling gold teeth from his corpse
Congregation: For these do I weep.
- 9 For these do I weep, and for the millions crowded in
10 ghettos and in detention camps; for those wandering in forests and those hidden in attics and in underground bunkers, for those who found refuge in the bosom of

- 11 בחיק דת-אחרת או אבד את-אלהיו: על-מי שנתן
 לנסויים בידי חיות-טורף ששם רופא ומדען נקרא עליהן:
 12 על-מי שמת ברעב ובצמא נחנק למות ברפכת משא או
 13 בתאי הגזים נורה נקבר חי או נשרף: על-מי שהוצא
 להורג בתליה למען יראו וייראו על-מקדשי שם-שמים
 ושם ישראל שסרבו להכנע ונלחמו עד-מות על-מי
 14 שאבד את-ביתו וכבודו ותקותו: על-מי שנותר בחיים
 לחיות את-הזעזע מחדש יום | יום ורגע | רגע:
 15 על-אלה אני בוכיה על-עוללים שלא למדו להגות
 "אמא" על-ילדים וילדות שנעוריהם נגזלו מהם והם
 16 קמלו טרם פריחה: על-עלמים ועלמות שלא נתברכו
 מתחת לחפה על-זקנים שלא זכו לשיבה של-חסד:
 17 על-התזמורות ועל-המוזיקה ועל-כל-יפי העולם
 שאבדה לו צבעוניותו וכלו רק-תום ואפר ושחר
 על-כל-אלה אני בוכיה:
 18 כמה התחבטתי לפני הפרגוד לפני חנון ורחום רב-חסד
 19 ואמת, בקשתי והתחננתי ורציתי להבין: האם נודע
 הדבר במרומים? הכך גזר אל מלא רחמים? זו אמה וזו
 20 שברה? והנה, אין קול ואין עונה, רק דממה זעופה: יושב
 22 בסתר עליון ובצל הדממה יתלונן: עמקים ונסתרים
 ונוראים הם הדברים; איש לא יבינם, גם לא בנות קול
 משמים:

11 another faith or who lost their God; for those who were
12 given over to experiments at the hands of wild beasts
called doctors and scientists; for those who died of
13 hunger and of thirst, smothered to death in freight
trains or in gas chambers, shot, buried alive or
cremated; for those who were brought out to be killed
by hanging so that they would be seen, and for those
who sanctified God's name and the name of the people
Israel, refusing to be subdued, fighting to the death. For
14 those who lost their homes, their dignity, and their
hope, and for those left alive to live the horror anew,
day after day, moment after moment.

15 For these do I weep, for infants who never learned to
say "Mommy," for boys and girls whose youth was
stolen from them, who withered before coming to
16 blossom; for young men and women who never were
blessed beneath the wedding canopy, for the elderly
denied the privilege of a gracious old age; for the
17 orchestras and for the music, and for all the world's
beauty whose rainbow of colors was lost, replaced by
only brown and gray and black. For all these do I weep.

18 I struggled so hard before the veiled curtain, before the
merciful and gracious One, of great kindness and truth.
How I pled and how I begged, how I wanted to
19 understand. Was all of this known on high? Was this
the decree of God who is filled with compassion? This
20 was the reward of such a nation? But there was no
sound and no response, only an exasperating silence.
21 The Most High abides in secret, God dwells in the
shadow of silence. Deep, hidden, and awesome are the
22 events; no one understands them, not even echoes of
the heavenly voice.

פרק ו

עוד יהי אור

- 1 שב ואמר פותב דברי הימים:
- 2 בפאתי הלילה נכרו נגזרות ראשונים של קרני השחר:
- 3 אלו האירו על שרידי אדם בבגדי פסים שבהו על
- 4 סביבותיהם בעינים מתות: כבר שכחו איך לשמח וגופם
- 5 דחה את האכל שהצע להם: דחפורים סלקו אל בורות
- ענק אלפי גויות ערמות ודקיקות, שנפלו זו על גבי זו
- ברפיון איברים:
- 6 במחנות של עקורים סבבו בורות של נחילי אדם, כשהם
- מחפשים נאשות את בני משפחותיהם, והרי הם פוחדים
- 7 לקוות פן תפזב תקותם: אמללים שנסו לשוב אל
- בתיהם מצאו בהם גם שכנים עוינים, ולא פעם נצלו רק
- 8 בנס מהרג אחר הרג: אנשים אשר לא ידעו או אשר
- בקשו לא לדעת, אשר סרבו להאמין או אשר אסרו
- להאמין, עמדו בעינים קרועות ולא ידעו לאן יפנו את
- מבטם וכיצד יטהרו את מצפונם:
- 9 אך אט אט שבו אנשים לבתיהם ובני משפחה התאחדו;
- 10 אנשים שבו ונשאו וילדים נולדו: גלים אחר גלים שטפו
- הנצולים אל המזרח, מדינה גאה קמה ומרפוי יהדות
- 11 פורחים ברחבי תבל: רפבות שוב נוסעות אל אתרי

CHAPTER VI

LET THERE BE LIGHT AGAIN

1 Again did the chronicler speak:
2 At the edges of the night, the first rays of dawn could be
3 discerned. They shone upon the remnants of human
4 beings in striped clothing who stared at their surround-
5 ings with dead eyes. They have forgotten how to be
6 happy, and their bodies reject any food offered them.
7 Bulldozers thrust into gigantic pits thousands of thin,
8 naked corpses that fall, one atop the other, their limbs
9 withered.
10 In camps of the uprooted circled human streams,
11 searching in despair for members of their families,
12 and they were afraid to hope lest their hope be lost. The
13 unfortunates who tried to return to their homes found
14 in them hostile neighbors from time to time, and more
15 than once they were saved only by a miracle from
16 murder following murder. People who did not know or
17 who had sought not to know, who refused to believe or
18 who forbade believing, stood with tearful eyes, not
19 knowing where to direct their gaze or how to cleanse
20 their conscience.
21 Slowly, slowly, people returned to their homes, and
22 family members were reunited. People married again,
23 and children were born. Wave upon wave poured into
24 the East and the State of Israel arose, and centers of
25 Jewish life flourished throughout the world. Trains
26 traveled to resorts once again, and orchestras were

- 12 הנפש ותזמורות צוהלות בכל קצוי הארץ: ומי יודע,
אולי כך בקשו מן השמים שתמצא לאבלים ולסובלים
נחמת מה:
- 13 גלווי גבורה של עזי הנפש העלו על גם ו"קדיש" נאמר
על המתים, ספרי זכרונות נכתבו ואנדרטאות הוקמו,
ולאבלים נמצא סוף סוף מקום לבפות בו את מתייהם:
14 פושעים באו על ענשם, נכי גוף או נפש זכו לעזרה, אך
בכל אלה לא היה כדי לכבל את מלאך החלומות,
הממשיך להבעית את הנצולים לילה אחר לילה, ולא
כדי להשתיק את קול המצפון, המנקר ותובע הסבר
15 לרשעות השטנית ולאטימות הלב: ושלל השאלות –
רבנו של עולם, למה? למה? למה דוקא אנחנו? למה
דוקא הם? למה עכשו? למה כך? – נותרו תלויות בחללו
של עולם, מרחפות מעל כל מעשי אנוש, ומענה – אין:
- 16 ימים יגידו מה למדנו; רק הזמן יגלה אם הקשבנו באמת
לקולו של דם הנרצחים הצועק אלינו מן האדמה:
- 17 אל תתאבלו יותר מדי, אך אל תשקעו בשכחה
של אדישות; אל תניחו לימי החשך שישובו,
כבו וגם מחו את הדמעה; אל תמחלו
ואל תסלחו, אל תנסו להביז;
למדו לחיות ללא מענה:
18 בדמינו חיו!

12 making joyous music in all corners of the land. Perhaps
this is the way in which Heaven sought some
consolation for those who suffered and mourned.

13 The heroism of courageous resisters was revealed and
proclaimed, and Mourner's Kaddish was recited for the
dead, memorial books were written, monuments were
erected so that finally mourners could find a place
14 where they could weep for their dead, criminals were
punished, and those who were afflicted in body or soul
received help. Nevertheless, it was impossible to
restrain the angel of dreams who continues to terrify
the rescued night after night, impossible to silence the
gnawing voice of conscience, which demands an
explanation for satanic evil, and for apathetic hearts.
15 Such questions "Why, God, why? Why us? Why them?
Why now? Why in that way?" are left suspended in
midair, hovering over all human deeds, and there is no
response.

16 Time will tell what we have learned; only time will
reveal whether we truly have listened to the voice of the
blood of the slaughtered crying out from the earth.

17 Do not mourn too much, but do not sink into the
forgetfulness of apathy. Do not allow days of darkness
to return; weep, but wipe the tears away.

Do not absolve and do not exonerate,
do not attempt to understand.

Learn to live without
an answer.

18 Through our blood, live!

יִזְכֹּר לַיּוֹם הַזֵּכֶר וְיִזְכֹּר לְשׂוֹאֵה וְלַמֶּרֶד

לְזִכֹּר אֶת אַחֵינוּ וְאֶת אַחֵינוֹתֵינוּ,
 אֶת בְּתֵי הָעִיר וְאֶת בְּתֵי הַכֶּפֶר,
 אֶת רְחוֹבוֹת הָעִירָה שְׁסָאֵנוּ כְּנִהְרוֹת
 וְאֶת הַפְּנֵדֶק הַבוֹדֵד עָלֵי אֶרֶץ:
 אֶת הַיִּשִּׁישׁ בְּקִלְסֵתָר פָּנָיו,
 אֶת הָאִם בְּסוּדְרָה,
 אֶת הַנְּעִירָה בְּצַמּוֹתֶיהָ,
 אֶת הַטָּף;
 אֶת אֲלֵפֵי קְהֵלוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל
 עַל מִשְׁפַּחוֹת הָאָדָם,
 אֶת כָּל עַדַּת הַיְהוּדִים
 אֲשֶׁר הִכְרַעָה לְטַבַּח עַל אֲדַמַּת אֵירוּפָּה
 מִיַּדֵּי הַכּוֹרֵת הַנָּאצִּי;
 אֶת הָאִישׁ שֶׁזָּעַק פֶּתָאִם
 וּבְזַעֲקוֹ מֵת;
 אֶת הָאִשָּׁה שֶׁחֲבָקָה תִּינוּקָה אֶל לְבָהּ
 וְזֵרוּעוֹתֶיהָ צָנְחוּ;
 אֶת הַתִּינוּק שֶׁאֲצַבְעוֹתָיו מְגַשְׁשׁוֹת אֶל פֶּטְמַת הָאִם
 וְהִיא כֹּחֶלֶה וְצוֹנְנֶת;

Yizkor for Yom Hashoah

We shall remember our brothers and our sisters,
the city houses and the country houses,
the *shtetl* streets rushing like rivers
and the lonely inn on the country road —
the aged man and the features of his face,
the mother in her kerchief,
the young girl with her braids,
the child,
the people Israel in thousands of communities
among all the human families,
the entire assembly of Jews
brought down to slaughter on the soil of Europe
by the Nazi destroyer,
the man who suddenly screamed
and while screaming died,
the woman, clutching her infant to her breast,
whose arms gave out,
the infant groping for his mother's nipple
that was blue and cold,

אֶת הַרְגָּלִים,
 אֶת הַרְגָּלִים שֶׁבִקְשׁוּ מִפְּלֹט
 וְלֹא הָיָה מְנוּס עוֹד;
 וְאֵת שֶׁקֶפְצוּ יְדֵיהֶם לְאֶגְרֹף
 הָאֶגְרֹף שֶׁחָפַן אֶת הַבְּרוֹזֶל,
 הַבְּרוֹזֶל שֶׁהָיָה לְנֶשֶׁק הַחֲזוֹן,
 הַיְאֹוֶשׁ וְהַמְּרֹד,
 וְהֵם בְּרֵי הַלְּבָב
 וְהֵם פְּקוּחֵי הָעֵינַיִם
 וְהֵם שֶׁהִשְׁלִיכוּ נַפְשָׁם מִנֶּגֶד
 וַיִּדְּם קֶצֶרָה מְלֵהוֹשִׁיעַ;
 נִזְכָּר אֶת הַיּוֹם,
 אֶת הַיּוֹם בְּצַהֲרֵיו, אֶת הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ שֶׁעֲלָתָהּ
 עַל מוֹקֵד הַדָּמִים,
 אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם שֶׁעֲמָדוֹ גְּבוּהִים וּמַחְרִישִׁים;
 נִזְכָּר אֶת תְּלֵי הָאֶפֶר
 אֲשֶׁר מִתַּחַת לַגְּנִיזִים הַפּוֹרְחִים.
 יִזְכָּר הַחַי אֶת מִתְּוֹ
 כִּי הִנֵּה הֵם מִנֶּגֶד לָנוּ
 הִנֵּה נִבְטוּת עֵינֵיהֶם סְבִיב־סְבִיב
 וְאֵל דָּמִי, אֵל דָּמֵי לָנוּ,
 עֲדֵי יִהְיוּ חַיֵּינוּ רְאוּיִים לְזִכְרָם.

the feet,
the feet that sought refuge
though flight was no longer possible,
and those who made their hands into a fist,
the fist that gripped the iron,
the iron that became the weapon of vision,
of despair, and of rebellion,
and those, the pure of heart,
those whose eyes were opened,
those who risked their lives,
though they lacked the power to triumph.
We shall remember the day,
the day in its brightness, the sun that rose
over the bloody conflagration,
the lofty, silent heavens.
We shall remember the mounds of dust
beneath the gardens in bloom.
The living shall remember their dead
for they are forever before us.
Look! Their eyes dart round and about,
allowing us no peace, no peace
until our lives become worthy of their memory.

Abba Kovner, translated by Jules Harlow

אֵל מְלֵא רַחֲמִים שׁוֹכֵן בְּמְרוֹמִים. הַמְצֵא מְנוּחָה נְכוֹנָה
 תַּחַת כַּנְּפֵי הַשְּׁכִינָה. בְּמַעְלוֹת קְדוּשִׁים וְטְהוּרִים כְּזֹהֵר הַרְקִיעַ
 מְזֵהִירִים אֶת נַשְׁמוֹת כָּל אַחֲנוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁנִּטְבְּחוּ בַשּׁוֹאָה,
 אֲנָשִׁים נָשִׁים וְטָף, שֶׁנִּחְנְקוּ וְשֶׁנִּשְׂרְפוּ וְשֶׁנִּהְרְגוּ, שֶׁמָּסְרוּ אֶת
 נַפְשָׁם עַל קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם, בְּגֵן עֵדֶן תְּהֵא מְנוּחָתָם. אָנָּה בְּעַל
 הַרְחָמִים, הַסְתִּירָם בְּסִתָּר כַּנְּפֵיךָ לְעוֹלָמִים, וַצָּרָר בְּצָרוֹר
 הַחַיִּים אֶת נַשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם, יְיָ הוּא נִחַלְתָּם, וַיְנוּחוּ בְשָׁלוֹם עַל
 מִשְׁכְּבוֹתֵיהֶם. וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן.

קְדִישׁ יְתוֹם

יִתְגַּדֵּל וַיִּתְקַדֵּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא,
 בְּעֵלְמָא דֵי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ וַיְמַלִּיף מְלֻכוּתָהּ.
 בְּחַיִּיכוּן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוּן וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
 בְּעַגְלָא וּבְזִמְן קָרִיב, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:
 יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמָא וְלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא:
 יִתְבָּרַךְ וַיִּשְׁתַּבַּח וַיִּתְפָּאֵר וַיִּתְרוֹמֵם וַיִּתְנַשֵּׂא
 וַיִּתְהַדָּר וַיִּתְעַלֶּה וַיִּתְהַלֵּל שְׁמֵהּ דְקִדְשָׁא בְרִיף הוּא.
 לְעֵלְא מִן כָּל בְּרַכְתָּא וְשִׁירְתָּא
 תְּשַׁבְּחָתָא וְנַחֲמָתָא דְאִמְרִין בְּעֵלְמָא, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:
 יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,
 וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:
 עוֹשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמְרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל
 יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן:

EXALTED, COMPASSIONATE GOD, grant infinite rest in Your sheltering presence, among the holy and pure, to the souls of our brethren who perished in the Shoah – men, women, and children of the House of Israel who were slaughtered, suffocated and burned to ashes. May their memory endure and inspire deeds of charity and goodness in our lives. May their souls thus be bound up in the bond of life. May they rest in peace. And let us say: Amen.

MOURNER'S KADDISH

Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei raba,

b'alma di'vr'a khir'utei, v'yamlikh malkhutei

b'hayeikhon u-v'yomeikhon u-v'hayei d'khol beit Yisrael,

ba'agala u-vi-z'man kariv, v'imru amen.

Y'hei sh'mei raba m'vorakh l'alam u-l'almei almaya.

Yitbarakh v'yishtabah v'yitpa-ar v'yitromam v'yitnasei,

v'yit-hadar v'yit'aleh v'yithalal sh'mei d'kudsha, b'rikh hu,

l'ela min kol birkhata v'shirata

tushb'hata v'nehamata da'amiran b'alma, v'imru amen.

Y'hei sh'lama rabba min sh'maya, v'hayim aleinu v'al kol Yisra'el, v'imru amen.

Oseh shalom bi-m'romav, hu ya'aseh shalom, aleinu v'al kol Yisra-el, v'imru amen.

אונדזער שטעטל ברענט

ס'ברענט! ברידערלעך, ס'ברענט!
אוי אונדזער אָרעם שטעטל נעבעך ברענט!
בייזע ווינטן מיט ירגזון
רײַסן, ברעכן און צעבלאָזן
שטאַרקער נאָך די ווילדע פּלאַמען,
אַלץ אַרום שוין ברענט!
און איר שטייט און קוקט אַזוי זיך
מיט פאַרלייגטע הענט,
און איר שטייט און קוקט אַזוי זיך -
אונדזער שטעטל ברענט!

מרדכי גבירטיג

Undzer Shtetl Brent

S'brent, briderlech s'brent!
Oi unzer orem shtetl nebech brent
Beize vintn mit yirgozun
Reisn brechn un tzeblozn
Shtarker noch di vilde flamen
Altz arum shoin brent
Un ir shteit un kukt azoi zich
Mit farleigte hent
Un ir shteit un kukt azoi zich
Unzer shtetl brent!

It is burning, dear brothers, it is burning!
Our poor little town is burning!
Angry winds whip the flames.
Everything is on fire!
And you stand helplessly
With folded hands and stare
While the flames grow higher
And our little town burns.

Mordechai Gebirtig

זאָג ניט קיין מאָל

זאָג ניט קיין מאָל, אַז דו גייסט דעם לעצטן וועג,
 כאָטש הימלען בלייענע פאַרשטעלן בלויע טעג,
 קומען וועט נאָך אונדזער אויסגעבענקטע שעה,
 ס'וועט אַ פויק טאָן אונדזער טראָט - מיר זיינען דאָ!

פון גרינעם פאַלמענלאַנד ביז ווייטן לאַנד פון שניי,
 מיר קומען אָן מיט אונדזער פּיין, מיט אונדזער וויי,
 און ווו געפאַלן ס'איז אַ שפּריץ פון אונדזער בלוט,
 שפּראַצן וועט דאָרט אונדזער גבורה, אונדזער מוט.

ס'וועט די מאַרגנזון באַגילדן אונדז דעם היינט,
 און דער נעכטן וועט פארשווינדן מיטן פּיינט
 נאָר אויב פאַרזאַמען וועט די זון אין דעם קאַיאָר -
 ווי אַ פאַראַל זאָל גיין דאָס ליד פון דור צו דור.

דאָס ליד געשריבן איז מיט בלוט און ניט מיט בליי,
 ס'איז ניט קיין לידל פון אַ פויגל איוף דער פּריי,
 דאָס האָט אַ פאַלק צווישן פאַלנדיקע ווענט
 דאָס ליד געזונגען מיט נאַגאַנעס אין די הענט.

טאָ זאָג ניט קיין מאָל, אַז דו גייסט דעם לעצטן וועג,
 כאָטש הימלען בלייענע פאַרשטעלן בלויע טעג,
 קומען וועט נאָך אונדזער אויסגעבענקטע שעה,
 עס וועט אַ פויק טאָן אונדזער טראָט - מיר זיינען דאָ!

הירש גליק

Zog Nit Keyn Mol

Never say that there is only death for you
Though leaden skies may be concealing days of blue
Because the hour we have hungered for is near;
Beneath our tread the earth shall tremble: We are here!

From land of palm-tree to the far-off land of snow
We shall be coming with our torment and our woe,
And everywhere our blood has sunk into the earth
Shall our bravery, our vigor blossom forth!

We'll have the morning sun to set our day aglow,
And all our yesterdays shall vanish with the foe,
And if the time is long before the sun appears,
Then let this song go like a signal through the years.

This song was written with our blood and not with lead;
It's not a song that birds sing overhead.
It was a people, among toppling barricades,
That sang this song of ours with pistols and grenades.

So never say that there is only death for you.
For leaden skies may be concealing days of blue
Yet the hour we have hungered for is near;
Beneath our tread the earth shall tremble: We are here!

Hirsh Glick, translated by Aaron Kramer

הַתְּקוּוּהָ

כָּל עוֹד בְּלֵבב פְּנִימָה
נֶפֶשׁ יְהוּדֵי הוֹמִיָּה
וּלְפִאֲתֵי מִזְרַח קְדִימָה
עֵין לְצִיּוֹן צוֹפֶיָה
עוֹד לֹא אָבְדָה תְּקוּוֹתֵנוּ
הַתְּקוּוּהָ בֵּת שְׁנוֹת אֲלֵפִים
לְהִיּוֹת עִם הַפְּשִׁי בְּאַרְצֵנוּ
אֶרֶץ צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם.

HATIKVAH

*Kol ode balevav penimah
Nefesh yehudi homiyah
Ulfatay mizrach kadimah
Ayin l'tzion tzofiah
Ode lo avdah tikoateynu
Hatikoah bat shnot alpayim
Lihiyot am hofshi be-artzaynu
Eretz tzion viyirushalayim.*

The Rabbinical Assembly, founded in 1901 and located in New York City, is the international association of Conservative/Masorti rabbis. The Assembly actively promotes the cause of Conservative/Masorti Judaism and works unceasingly to benefit *Klal Yisrael*; publishes learned texts, prayerbooks and works of Jewish interest; and administers the work of the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards which serves as the halakhic guide for the Conservative Movement. It serves the professional and personal needs of its membership through publications, conferences and benefit programs, and administers the Movement's Joint Placement Commission. Rabbis of the Assembly serve throughout the world, in congregations, on the campus, as educators, hospital and military chaplains, teachers of Judaica, and officers of communal service organizations.

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