

SUPPLEMENT

Modern technology provides educators with unparalleled opportunities to present their students with material that they would not normally include in their lesson plans. One example is the power to search through electronic libraries. The following excerpts are from a book entitled: **THE YOM KIPPUR ANTHOLOGY** by Philip Goodman which was published by the Jewish Publication Society of America in 1971. The book can be found at www.questia.com. Using that website, it is possible to find material, copy it and put it into presentable form in a very short time.

YOM KIPPUR IN MANY LANDS

YOM KIPPUR IN THE DAYS OF THE SECOND TEMPLE

SOLOMON IBN VERGA

This purported account of the entrance of the high priest into the sanctuary and his departure from it, by Marcus, Roman consul and justice of the Jews, who held office in Jerusalem during the days of the Second Temple, is found in Shevet Yehudah (c. 1550), which is attributed to Solomon ibn Verga, a Spanish historian.

Seven days before the special day called Yom Kippur, the most important of their holidays, they would prepare a space and chairs to sit on in the house of the high priest, for the head of the court, the patriarch, the high priest, the prefect of the priests, and the king, besides seventy chairs of silver for the seventy members of the Sanhedrin. Then the eldest of the priests would stand up and address the high priest with these words of admonition and exhortation:

"Look before whom you are about to enter, and know that if you fail to concentrate on what you are about to do, not only will you at once fall dead but the atonement of Israel will be lost as well. Lo, the eyes of all Israel are hanging upon you, so search your ways; perhaps you have committed a transgression, however slight, for one transgression may balance off many good deeds, and the scale is in the hands of the God of knowledge. Also search the ways of your brother priests and purify them; remember always that you are about to come before the King over all kings, who sits on a throne of justice and scatters all evil before Him with His eyes. Then how shall you come before Him, the enemy being with you?"

Then the high priest would say to them that he had already searched his deeds and repented for every transgression that was apparent to him, and that he had also called his brother priests together into the court of the Temple and had adjured them by Him who rested His Name there, that each of them was to reveal the evil which he was aware of in

his fellow and the evil which he was aware of in himself, in order that the high priest might give them the correct penance for each transgression.

The king too would speak warmly to the high priest and assure him that he would honor him when he came out of the sanctuary in peace. After this, they would announce that the high priest was going out to his chamber in the sanctuary, and then the people would go out to accompany him, and go before him in perfect order. And this I have seen with my very eyes: first to go before him would be all those who were of the seed of the kings of Israel (for the more important a man, the nearer he stands to the high priest); after them went all those who were descended from the kings of the house of David, all in their proper order, one following another. A herald would go before them crying, "Give honor to the house of David!" After them came the house of Levi, and a herald crying, "Give honor to the house of Levi!" There were thirty and six thousand of them, and all the prefects wore clothing of blue silk, and the priests, of whom there were twenty-four thousand, clothing of white silk. After them came the singers, and after them those who played upon instruments, and after them the trumpeters, and after them the guards of the gate, and after them the incense-makers, and after them the curtain-makers, and after them the watchmen, and after them the treasurers, and after them a class called *kartoftlos*, the chair-bearers, and after them all the workingmen who worked in the sanctuary, and after them the seventy of the Sanhedrin, and after them a hundred priests with silver rods in their hands to clear the way, and after them the high priest, and after him all the elders of the priesthood, two by two. And the heads of the academies stood at vantage points and cried, "Lord High Priest, may you come in peace! Pray to our Maker to grant us long life that we may engage in His Torah."

When the procession reached the foot of the mountain of the sanctuary, they would there pray for the continuance of the kingship of the house of David, and after that for the priests and for the sanctuary, and the noise was so great, because of the great number of the people crying Amen, that the birds flying overhead fell to the earth. Then the high priest would bow to all the people and turn aside in tears and awe. And the two prefects of the priesthood would lead him to his chamber, and there he would separate from all his brother priests. So much for his entrance.

But when he came out the honor was doubled, for all the people that were in Jerusalem passed before him, most of them carrying torches of white wax, and all of them dressed in white clothing; and all the windows were garlanded with embroideries, and lit with candles. Priests have told me that often the high priest could not reach his home before midnight, because of the press of the people passing before him, and because of the great numbers, for although all the people were fasting, they did not go home until they had seen whether they could not reach the hand of the high priest and kiss it. The day afterward he would make a great feast and invite friends and relatives, and declare a holiday because he had come out of the sanctuary in peace.

Afterward the high priest would order a smith to make a gold tablet, and engrave upon it these words: "I [so and so] the high priest, son of [so and so], the high priest, have served in the high priesthood in the grand and holy house in the service of Him who rested His Name there, and it was such and such a year after the creation. May He who found me worthy of this service find my son after me worthy to serve before the Lord."

DAY OF ATONEMENT IN VITEBSK, RUSSIA

CHAGALL, BELLA, *Burning Lights*, trans. by Norbert Guterman, Schocken Books (New York, 1946), pp. 82-95.

A quite different air, heavy and thick, pervades the night of Yom Kippur.

All the shops are long closed. Their black shutters are locked as though forever. The sky too is black, as if God himself heaven forbid -- had deserted it. It is terrifying to walk in the streets. Perhaps God metes out punishment instantly, and one will sprain an ankle. I shudder at hearing laughter somewhere in the distance. The *goyim* are not afraid at all. They laugh even on the Day of Atonement.

My head is still throbbing with the clamor that came from father's white *kapparah* rooster.

A black-garbed, scrawny-looking *shobet* slunk into our courtyard late in the evening. From the folds of his coat a long knife flashed. He chased Father's cock; the cock shrieked, shaking the courtyard with his, din. Other cocks ran after him with excited cries.

The cook seized a cock by the leg, but the cock wrenched himself free. The courtyard was littered with feathers.

It sounded like a thousand gongs clanging for a fire: the courtyard reechoed with the crowing of the cocks, with their embattled uproar. But gradually they spent their strength. The yard grew quieter and quieter.

Mother's and my own white chicken hid in a hole in their fear. One could only hear them clucking low and crying.

The cook caught both chickens at the same time and put them at the *shobet's* feet. Blood poured over the whole balcony. When I came to myself, all the cocks and hens lay on the ground. From their necks ran threads of blood. Blood had spattered their white feathers. They were left to cool off in the dark night.

I remember how my little chicken quivered in my hands when I held it upraised for the rite. I too was quivering. My finger recoiled at once when I touched the chicken's warm belly. The chicken uttered a shriek and tried to fly over my head, like a little white angel.

I raised my eyes from the prayer book, I wanted to look at the chicken. It cried and clucked

as though begging for mercy of me. I did not hear the passages that I was to repeat. And I was suddenly seized by fear that the chicken, as I held it up high, might befoul my head.

Mother is calling me. From a distance I see her eyes gleaming, her hands moving quietly as though preparing to embrace someone. She tells me to hold the skeins of thread before the large wax candles that will burn in the *shul* at the cantor's reading stand. She pulls out the first thread.

"For my beloved husband, for Shmul Noah -- may he be healthy and live to his hundred-and-twentieth year." She draws out the thread, slowly weaves a benediction into it, sprinkles it with her tears, and passes a big piece of wax over it, as though trying to rub it full of good wishes.

"Hold fast to the end of the thread, Bashke," Mother says to me.

"For my son, for Itchke-may he be healthy and live in happiness and joy till his hundred-and-twentieth year!" She draws out the second thread and rubs it too with wax.

"For my oldest daughter, for Hannah."

Names are slowly intoned, threads are drawn, now yellow with wax and tears. I can hardly hold all the ends that remain free of wax. They slip from the tips of my fingers. I hold them with all my strength.

Mother prays a long time for each child, each relative. I no longer know what she is saying. With every name a tear drops on the thread and at once is imbedded in the wax like a little pearl. One heavy candle is now ready. Mother tackles the others.

"May all of us live long. For my deceased father, Barukh Aaron Raishkes-may he rest forever in paradise. My father, pray well for us, for me and my husband and my little children. Entreat from God good health and good fortune for all of us." Now mother weeps aloud. She almost cannot see the threads shaking in her hands.

"May all of us live long. For my deceased mother, Aige-may she pray well for us. My mother, do not forsake your only daughter, Alta," Mother prays over the thread she has drawn out. Apparently she would like to linger with her mother as long as possible; she moves the wax slowly and does not let the thread go from her hands.

"May all of us live long. For my deceased little son, Benjamin." Mother begins to weep again.

At this point I can check myself no longer. I weep too over my little brother who was one year old when he died and whom I never saw.

Mother glances at me through her tears, catches her breath, and blows her nose. The skein of threads grows thicker and thicker. Dead relatives, members of closely and distantly

connected families, come as on a visit to us. For each one Mother sheds a tear; it is like sending a greeting to every one of them. I no longer hear their names; I might be walking around an unfamiliar graveyard. I see only stones, I see only threads. I am even filled with fear at the thought of how many dead relatives have been drawn forth and entwined among Mother's threads. Will we, the living, burn in the same way, like the souls of the dead?

I am glad when at last the *shammash*, who is waiting for the candles, carries them to the shul. Exhausted, I go to bed.

Next day we are prompted from early morning on. We are given a special snack, in order to fortify us before the fast, and to give us opportunity to say another prayer. We are trying to do good deeds. My brothers apologize to one another.

"Abrashke, you're not angry with me?" I rush to my brother I recall that I have not always done things he wanted me to do.

Mother goes down to the courtyard. There is a neighbor with whom she has quarreled. She begs him earnestly to forgive her.

My brothers change clothes, make ready to go to *shul*. They almost do not speak. They do not even jostle one another. They seem to have been seized with awe.

They wait at some distance while Mother slowly blesses her candles. Then they come first to Father, next to Mother, wishing them both a good year. My parents place their hands on each of them and speak a blessing upon each head. Even the grown sons and daughters look like little children under the outspread hands of their parents. I, the youngest, go to them last. Father, with lowered eyes, touches my head, and I immediately choke with the tears that mount to my eyes. I can hardly hear the benedictions that he pronounces over me. His voice is already hoarse.

I fancy that I am already burning on the big twisted candle that mother has prepared. Sanctified, I leave the circle of its light -- to me it is like white warm hands shining behind the benedictions and tears -- and stand under my mother's shaking hands.

When I am near her, I quiet down a little. I feel more at ease when I see her tears. I hear her simple, heartfelt prayers. I do not want at all to come out from under her hands. And actually I begin to feel cold as soon as the murmur of the benedictions ceases over my head.

Everyone is in haste to go to *shul*.

"*Gut yom tov!*" Father quietly approaches Mother and shakes hands with her.

"*Gut yom tov!*" Mother answers with lowered eyes.

I remain alone at home. The candles burn on, holy and warm. I take my place at the wall to

say the Silent Prayer at once.

The benedictions that father has spoken over my head still sound in my ears. I beat my chest while reciting the Confession of Sins. I am afraid, for I probably have committed more sins than are enumerated in the prayer book.

My head grows hot. The letters of the sacred writing begin to spread in height and width. Jerusalem sways before my eyes. I should like to hold up the Holy City with the thick prayer book that I clutch tightly with both hands.

Alone I cry to God and do not leave the wall until I can no longer think of anything to pray for.

The children now return from *shul*. The house is deserted, the table empty. Only the white tablecloth gleams dimly under the stumps of the half-burnt candles. They smoke. We do not know what to do with ourselves. So we go to sleep.

Next morning when I wake up, everyone has long since gone to *shul*. Again I am alone in the house. I remember everything that I am supposed to do. I only pour water over my fingers, I do not even brush my teeth, and with parched mouth I begin to pray. Gentile schoolmates come in; they want to do their homework with me. I do not move from the spot until I have finished praying.

I run to see my grandfather. He is old and sick and he too has remained alone at home. The rabbi of Bobruisk (Grandfather is a follower of his) has ordered Grandfather not to fast. He must take a spoonful of milk every hour. So I go to my grandfather to give him his milk.

Grandfather is praying. He does not even glance at me and bursts into soft weeping. The spoon with the milk shakes in my hand, my fingers are splashed. Grandfather's tears drop into the spoon, mingle with the milk. He barely wets his pale lips and weeps more copiously under my tending. Heavy-hearted, I return home.

"Bashutke, come and have a bite!" Our Sasha begs me to come to the kitchen and eat a piece of cold chicken with her. "You must surely be starved!"

I am angry at myself because I am not yet fasting through the whole day. Every year I beg Mother to permit me to fast. I cannot eat after witnessing Grandfather's tears, and after seeing Father come home with his pale, drawn face. He comes from *shul* to rest a little. With his white lips, his white *kittel*, and his white socks he looks -- God forbid -- as though he were not alive at all. I fancy that his soul has already become very pure and that it shines through his white garments. I begin to pray more fervently. I want to be at least in some small measure as pious as Father.

Mother stays at the *shul* through the whole day. Before *Musaf* I go to see her to ask how

she is. The cantor can no longer be heard. The men's section is half empty. Some have gone home to rest, others sit on benches, their eyes on their prayer books. Boys play in the *shul* courtyard; some have apples to eat, some have pieces of *ballab* with honey. But the women's section is full of stifled weeping. In every corner a woman sighs and laments.

"Lord of the Universe, Lord of the Universe!" The chant resounds on all sides.

Mother is weeping quietly. She can scarcely any longer see the little letters of her prayer book through her clouded spectacles.

I stand at some distance and wait. Mother catches her breath, raises her weeping face, and nods to me to tell me that she is feeling well, although she resumes her weeping at once. I come closer to her. I do not know what to do among all these weeping mothers. I look down into the men's section. The cantor's white *kittel* and white skullcap are still. I look among the rows of tall candles for our two. They are burning among all the other candles, burning high into the air at either side of the holy ark.

Suddenly a humming and a clamor rise over the *shul*. It becomes full of men. There is a bustle, the air grows hot. Men throng around the cantor. The heavy curtain of the holy ark is drawn aside. Now there is silence, the air has become motionless. Only the rustle of prayer shawls can be heard. The men hurry toward the holy ark. The shining scrolls of the Torah, like princesses awakened from sleep, are carried out from the ark. On their white and dark red mantles great stars gleam -the shield of David embroidered in silver and gold. The handles are mounted with silver, encrusted with mother-of-pearl, and crowns and little bells hang from them.

Light glows around the scrolls of the Torah. All the men in the *shul* are drawn toward them. The scrolls are surrounded, escorted. The men crowd after the scrolls of the Torah, trying at least to catch a glimpse of them, send a kiss to them from a distance. And they, the beautiful scrolls of the Torah, tower high above the heads of the worshipers, above all the outstretched hands, and move slowly through the *shul*.

I can hardly keep myself behind the handrail of the women's section. I should like so much to jump down, to fall straight into the embrace of the holy Torahs, or at least move closer to them, to their quivering light, at least touch them, kiss their bright glory. But the scrolls are already being carried back, back to the holy ark. From both sides of it the tall candles twinkle at them. The velvet curtain is drawn, darkness comes to my eyes.

As though to drown the sadness, the men begin at once to pray aloud.

I remain standing at the window. I am attracted by the men's section, its clamorous air, filled with white *tallitim*, like upraised wings surging through the *shul*, covering every dark spot. Only here and there a nose or an eye peeps out. The *tallit* stripes sway like stairs above the covered heads.

One *tallit* billows up, emits a groan, and smothers the sound within itself. The *shul* grows dark. I am seized by fear. The *tallitim* bend, shake, move upward, turn to all sides. *Tallitim* sigh, pray, moan. Suddenly my legs give way. *Tallitim* quiver, drop to the ground like heavy sacks. Here and there a white woolen sock sticks out. Voices erupt as from underground. *Tallitim* begin to roll, as on a ship that is sinking and going down amid the heaving waves.

I do not hear the cantor at all. Hoarse voices shout one another. They pray, they implore, asking that the ceiling open for them. Hands stretch upward. The cries set the lamps shaking. At any moment now the walls will crumble and let Elijah the Prophet fly in.

Grown-up men are crying like children. I cannot stand it any longer. I myself am crying more and more. I recover only when I perceive at last a living, weeping eye behind a crouching *tallit*, when I hear trembling voices saying to one another: "*Gut yom tov! Gut yom tov!*"

I run home, for soon everyone will be back from *shul*, and I must set the table. "Sasha, hurry, hurry, prepare the samovar!" I cry to the maid.

I drag the tin box of pastry from the cupboard. I empty it all out on the table -- cakes, cookies, gingerbread, wafers, all sorts of buns. There is no room left even for a glass of tea.

Sasha lights the lamp and carries in the cheerfully humming samovar. Even the samovar seems glad that it has survived, that it has been remembered. Now the voices of my brothers can be heard. They rush in like hungry animals, one after the other.

Mother, looking worn, enters with a soft smile on her face and says to everyone: "*Gut yom tov!*"

"*Gut yom tov!*" says the cook. She runs in from the kitchen and smiles a pale smile.

We are waiting for Father. As always, he is the last to come from *shul*. In high spirits we fall upon the food. Glasses of tea are poured and drunk.

We have saved ourselves. We are no longer hungry. May God give His seal upon a good year for all of us. So be it, amen!

THE TWO-DAY YOM KIPPUR IN JAPAN

Kranzler, David, *The Jewish Community of Shanghai, 1937-1945*, unpublished doctoral thesis, Yeshiva University, 1970.

During World War II a situation developed wherein a group of refugees in Kobe, Japan, observed the Sabbath for *two* days (i.e., on Saturday and Sunday in Japan) and fasted a full forty-eight hours on Yom Kippur. The unusual circumstances occurred when two thousand Jews from Nazi-occupied Poland found a temporary haven in Kobe, after having

traversed Siberia. Among these Polish refugees was a group of about five hundred rabbinic students and teachers, more than half from the famous talmudic college of Mir, Poland. Here questions were raised about the proper day for observing the Sabbath, Yom Kippur, and other Jewish holy days. These doubts were due to the problem of the location of the "Jewish Date Line."

What is presently the universally accepted position of the International Date Line is the arbitrary, almost uninterrupted hypothetical line measuring 180 degrees longitude from Greenwich, England, passing along most of its length through the Pacific. This line was found to be the most convenient place for mariners to change dates, since the farther eastward one travels without adjusting his watch, the shorter the length of the day -one hour per 15 degrees -- as measured from noon to noon. Traveling westward one will find a corresponding increase in the length of the day -- traveling twenty-four hours for 360 degrees. Thus, for example, a traveler going west from San Francisco to China loses one day when crossing this date line, while gaining a day going in the opposite direction.

As early as the medieval period differences arose as to the location of the "Jewish Date Line." This issue achieved prominence during the early months of 1941 as the rabbinical students and scholars poured into Kobe, and it became crucial with the approach of Yom Kippur that year. For the purpose of resolving the doubts raised by the rabbinic students concerning this holiest of Jewish days, an assembly of rabbis was convened in Jerusalem in September 1941 under the leadership of Chief Rabbi Isaac Halevy Herzog. After much learned discussion, the assembly concluded that neither the Sabbath nor Yom Kippur should be changed from the calendar observed in Kobe, although the reasoning for this decision differed among the authorities. A telegram was sent by Rabbi Herzog to the refugees in Kobe on behalf of the rabbinical assembly, advising them not to make any change from Wednesday for the local observance of Yom Kippur.

Indeed, along similar lines, the old-time Jewish community of Kobe, comprised of about fifty families of Sephardic as well as Russian Ashkenazic origin, relied upon the decision of Aaron Moshe Kisseloff of Harbin, Manchuria, chief rabbi of the Far Eastern Jewish communities, who also advised that they refrain from making any change in the locally established days.

One lone voice of dissent reached Kobe, stating categorically that the refugees were "to eat on Wednesday" -- the local Yom Kippur -- and "fast on Thursday." So wrote Rabbi Avraham Yeshayahu Karelitz (better known as the Hazon Ish), considered one of the greatest Torah authorities of the past generation, who disagreed with the conclusions of the rabbinical assembly. His views were based primarily upon the interpretation of a talmudic discourse on the intercalation of the "New Moon," by Judah Halevi in his *Kuzari*, and Rabbi Zerachia Halevi (*Baal Hamo'ar*) who placed the change of a day six hours (i.e., 90 degrees) east of Jerusalem. Since Japan was located beyond this "Date Line," Hazon Ish ruled that the refugees change the day for both the Sabbath as well as Yom Kippur.

It was due to the deference on the part of most of the yeshiva scholars and students to the authority of the Hazon Ish that the unique situation of a dual Sabbath and a forty-eight-hour Yom Kippur was observed. In practice, most of the yeshiva students observed the normal local Saturday as the Sabbath in full detail. For the second day (i.e., Sunday) they observed all the biblical injunctions and were more lenient with respect to the rabbinic ordinances. Thus, on Sunday while they performed no work they wore phylacteries during prayers (normally worn only on weekdays), though omitting the usual benedictions.

Though the problem of Yom Kippur was the more pressing issue -- one for which the above-mentioned assembly gathered in Jerusalem -- it affected a much smaller number of refugees than did the related issue of the Sabbath. This was because by Yom Kippur a majority of the refugees, who had been unable to secure visas to any other country, had been sent to Shanghai on the orders of the Japanese authorities who were already preparing for war. The relatively small group of yeshiva students still in Kobe during Yom Kippur observed the fast in the following manner: those physically able fasted on Thursday as well as Wednesday and the others who were unable to fast two days fasted on Wednesday and ate on Thursday only in piecemeal quantities of less than the minimum measure (slightly less than an average-sized egg) for which one was culpable on Yom Kippur. The usual Yom Kippur prayers, however, were omitted on the second day as well as the *Yaale veYavo* in the Grace after Meals recited by those unable to fast for two days.

KOL NIDRE IN THE DACHAU CONCENTRATION CAMP

LEVI SHALIT

High Holy Days Program, Mizrahi Women's Organization of America, September-October, 1954, pp. 8-10; translated from *Munich Unzer Velt*, October 12, 1948, p. 3. The author was an inmate of the Dachau concentration camp.

How did they, the eight thousand Jews in that particular Dachau camp, get to know that the next day would be Yom Kippur?

Cut off from the flowing of time, insulated from the living world, not knowing even the place where they found themselves, caught up in a mad macabre dance of death, having long ago lost count of days -- yet here, to the eight thousand men and women walled up behind electrified wires, came the quiet whisper carried from lip to lip: "Yom Kippur!"

The sun sets on the blood-red horizon, on the distant snowcovered mountain tops. Emaciated faces, staring eyes, look far into the sunset. Now one would be in the synagogue.... Bygone Yom Kippur days leap to the memory. Torturing thoughts tire the enfeebled brain.

Are we really "more guilty than other peoples?" Worse than all the other peoples on earth?

Why such a decree last year? What decree this year? Will a happier year be inscribed-a year of life? But all around is death. How many have, even today, breathed their last? How many will be brought back dead from work today? And the mind flares up in rebellious heresy: No! There is no judge and no justice! But the heart is so desperately eager to believe; no good philosophizing, when the thought aches to lean on something -- on God.

Someone wipes a tear from his eyes. The thud of feet drowns the weak groan. Now they pass the bean field where ripe fascicles of beans stand ready. Every day, passing here, dozens of men jump out of the line to try and snatch a few beans. The warders know this and wait for it in order to divert themselves with floggings and the setting on of the dogs. Today no one runs toward the field, and the warders remark to each other, "Their fast today." They also grow quieter. The oppressive silence of the captive always overwhelms the guard. The mute forbearance of a prisoner is often the best weapon against his keeper.

Eight thousand lie or stand, scattered over the large camp area, preparing for the fast with moldy bread crumbs and watery soup. And when the sirens shriek and the dogs begin to bark they run, with the last mouthful hardly swallowed, to the place of roll call. From here, the day workers go to their barracks, the night workers to their work....

At our place of work the overseers are waiting. They look at the gang and wonder. Somehow today the Jews allow themselves, with constrained indifference, to be pushed into every kind of work wherever they are taken. Always there is a stampede from the lines; everyone struggles to get to "his" work, makes an effort to be among those who work under a roof, runs to "his" master, claims to be an artisan. Today they all stand as if frozen, letting themselves be taken like sheep.

There is the usual hum among the laborers. The German firm MAL is building an underground refuge here in the forest for the bombed Messerschmidt airplane factory. Thousands of skeleton figures are ministering night and day to hundreds of concrete mixing machines. Locomotive whistles pierce the air. Trains rush from the whole of Europe to bring building material. Everything moves at a feverish pace to save the near-toppling Germany. Night falls-cold, murky, inky black. In the midst of the brightly lit forest thousands of workers go to and fro, linking one job with the other, bringing iron, timber, machine parts -and also covert messages. Yes, there will be divine service soon during the meal break in the middle of the night. And when the sirens signal the rest pause, shadows glide stealthily to prearranged spots, right in the forest.

Someone takes his stand near a tree, leans as if at the holy ark, and in the midst of fear and silence begins: "In the heavenly court.... Kol Nidre...."

We gather closer to the *bazzan*, a young Hungarian lad. Here stands Warsaw's last rabbi, his face yellow, hairless, wrinkled, his aged body bent; his hands are rocking like reeds in the wind; only the eyes, sparkling stars, look out toward the cold sky above, and his lips, half-open, murmur softly.

What does he say now, how does he pray, this last of the rabbis of Warsaw? Does he lovingly accept for himself and for all Israel the pain and suffering, or does he, through the medium of his prayer, conduct a dispute with the Almighty, asking him the ancient question: Is this the reward for the Torah?

Huddling to the *hazzan* stands Alter -- the Kovno cab driver. His broad shoulders lean against a young tree and his mouth emits staccato sounds as if they were hummed out of his insides. No, he does not beg; he does not pray; he demands! He demands his rights, he calls for justice: Why were his children burnt by the Nazis, why was his wife reduced to ashes? He hums mutely, without words. He does not know the words because he is not capable of saying all the prayers by heart. Does the Lord require words? He requires the heart. Where, then, is His hearty, divine mercy? Since Alter the cab driver can't find this mercy, he hums in revolt against the Almighty. It is probably the strongest prayer that was ever heard since the days of Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev.

Here stands Consul Naftel, of Memel, his face drawn and worn. With his bowed head his figure reminds you of a bent thorn. Why does he cling so closely to the *hazzan*? Why doesn't he want to miss a single word? Has he become so pious?

I remembered a remark made by the Lubavitcher Rebbe when he passed through Kovno. He said: "Jews are believers, always; under the hail of bullets in the besieged Warsaw I saw it even more clearly. In the air raid shelters I heard Jews crying, *Shema Yisrael*."

Is it really so? Have the Jews of Warsaw or of Dachau-has Consul Naftel called unto God out of piety, or...?

This question is of no importance. What difference does it make why and how Jews called out unto God near the crematorium of Dachau? The prayer was in any case the greatest and the deepest, even though Consul Naftel took poison on the day after Yom Kippur....

Lips murmur after him -- quiet, quiet, muffled words hardly manage to pass, remain sticking in the throat.

Then -- a stream of tears and sobs burst from the throat, the heart eases. There is sudden relief as if one has rolled something heavy away. What was it that brought this relief? Faith? If so, then of this -- of faith at such a time -- even the Baal Shem Tov could have boasted. To how many of those worshipers at the little tree in the darkness of the Bavarian forest was it vouchsafed to live another year?