

THE SHOAH SEDER

JEWISH RESPONSES TO CATASTROPHE

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(Leader of service stands, points to seder plate) This is our new seder plate, the "plate of our affliction." Here are the symbols of our Exodus from the world of Nazi oppression. Six symbols, one for each million, the six million that did not make it to a promised land. Six symbols for the six years of death and destruction that every survivor lived through. Here is our seder plate, may it help us to remember, so that none can forget, the destruction that almost symbolized the death of our people.

I FEEL LIKE MAKING A PRAYER

I feel like making a prayer -- to whom, I don't know.

He who once gave me comfort gives me no ear now.

To whom, then?

It holds me like iron.

I should perhaps ask a star: my distant friend,

I've lost my word; come, be its stand in.

But the good star,

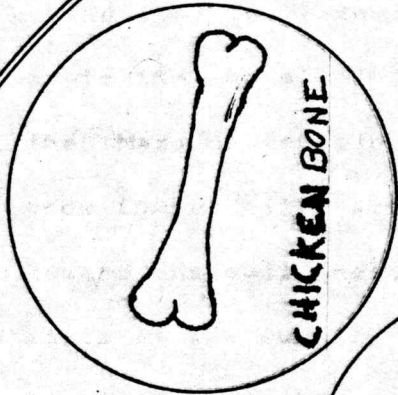
It too won't hear.

I must make a prayer. Someone very near
tortures himself in my soul, insists on the prayer.

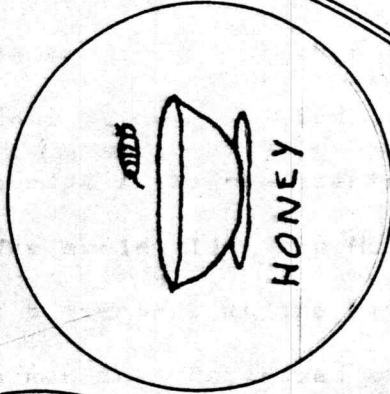
Making no sense, then,

I'll babble 'til dawn.

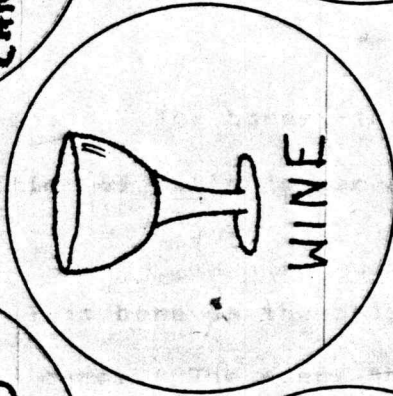
Abraham Sutzkevar
Vilna Ghetto, 17 January 1942



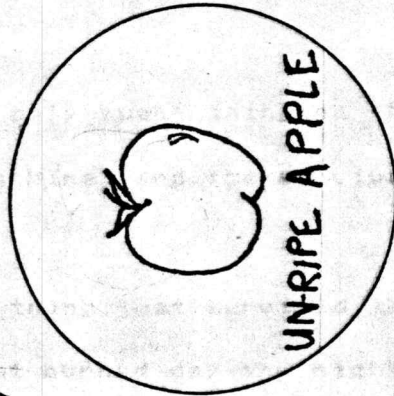
CHICKEN BONE



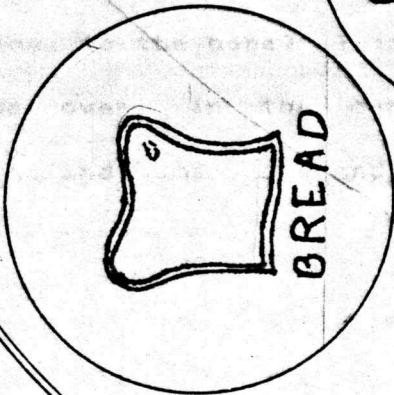
HONEY



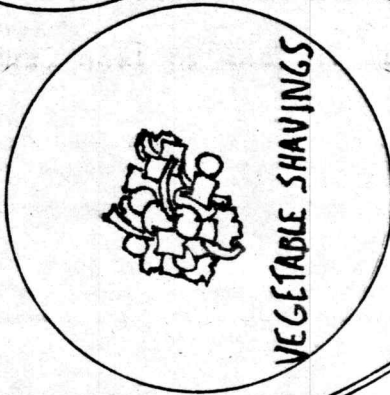
WINE



UNRIPE APPLE



BREAD



VEGETABLE SHAVINGS

(Pointing to bread) This bread is the "matzah" of Bergen-Belsen. The Jews of the camps had no means to make the ritual foods for Pesach and were forced to eat hametz to survive. For this reason we eat bread to remember those who did not live to eat matzah, the old bread of affliction.

(Pointing to the vegetable peels) "We remember those Jews in the Holocaust who were forced to eat moldy bread unfit for human consumption and watered down soup. Through these scraps we remember their bitterness at oppression, and their will to continue living." (Rabbi Yehiel Poupko)

(Pointing to the apple) This un-ripe apple represents the youth that died during the Nazi destruction. The apple, like the Holocaust children will never grow to maturity, and its bitterness is the bitterness that we should feel toward the evil ones, the men that destroyed our children, the scholars and sages of the future.

(Pointing to the honey) The honey, the only sweet thing on the seder plate, is the destruction of Hitler's war machine, and the survival of the Jews as a people.

(Pointing to the bone) This bone is the only thing that survived the heat of the ovens in the camps. The ovens that burned day and night, cremating man and woman, old and young, healthy and sick without caring or discriminating between them.

(pointing to the wine) In the center, wine, representing the one thing that was the center of everything during the Shoah. This "blood" is the blood of the camp and ghetto Jews. Blood that was wiped off of nightsticks, spilled on the ground, walls, everywhere. This wine is the blood of the new "pascal lamb," one that beckoned to and called for the Angel of Death.

(Leader slices apple for each person, leaving core on plate) We now eat the apple dipped in honey to taste the sweetness of hope that the Jews had for survival. The bitterness of the apple is used to taste of the bitterness that life imposed on even the sweetness of the dreams for tomorrow.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

Blessed are You, HASHEM, our God, King of the universe, Who creates the fruit of the tree.

Eat Apple And Honey

(Now the Leader breaks the bread in half and puts the smaller half aside.)

Holding the bread, he says:

"Our Father in Heaven, behold, it is evident and known to You that it is our desire to do Your will and to celebrate the festival of Pesah by eating *matzah* and by observing the prohibition against *hametz*. But our hearts are pained that the enslavement prevents us from doing so, and our lives are in danger. Behold, we are ready to fulfill Your commandment. 'And you shall live by them and not die by them.' Therefore, our prayer to You is that You may keep us alive and save us and rescue us speedily so that we may observe Your commandments and do Your will and serve You with a perfect heart. Amen."

אֲבִינוּ שֶׁבְשָׁמַיִם, הִנֵּה גְלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לִפְנֵיךָ שְׂרָצוֹנֵנוּ
לְעִשׂוֹת רְצוֹנֶךָ וּלְחַוֵּג אֶת חֵג הַפֶּסַח בְּאֲכִילַת מַצָּה
וּבְשִׂמֵרַת אִיכּוֹר חֶמֶץ. אֵף עַל זֹאת דָּאַבָּה לְבָנוּ
שֶׁהַשְּׂעִבּוֹר מַעֲכָב אוֹתָנוּ וְאִנְחָנוּ נִמְצָאִים בְּקִבְנַת
נַפְשֵׁי. הִנְנוּ מוֹכְנִים וּמוֹמְנִים לְקִיּוֹם מִצְוַתְךָ: וְחִי
בָהֶם וְלֹא שְׂנִימוֹת בָּהֶם, וּלְזָהָר מֵאֲזָהָרָה, הִזְהָר לָךְ
וּשְׂמוֹר נַפְשֶׁךָ מֵאוֹד, וְעַל כֵּן תִּפְלֹתָנוּ לָךְ שֶׁתַּחֲיִינוּ
וּתְקַיְמוּנוּ וְתִגְאָלְנוּ בְּמַהֲרָה לְשִׂמּוֹר חוֹקֶיךָ וּלְעִשׂוֹת
רְצוֹנֶךָ וּלְעִבְדֶּךָ כְּלֶכֶב שָׁלֵם. אָמֵן.

THE ONE QUESTION

Friday, [April] 30 [1943]. Passover is over. There were sederim in the K kosher Kitchen....At the second seder I spoke briefly.

"A year ago some intellectual circles in the ghetto searched for an answer to the question: What is a Jew or who is a Jew? Everybody was tremendously preoccupied with this question. Formerly the majority of these people had never given much thought to this question. They felt that they were Jews. Some more so, others less. Some, perhaps, did not feel so at all. And if someone suffered because of his Jewishness, he somehow found a remedy for it and, in general, occupied himself with other more substantial matters, rather than speculate about such an 'abstract' matter. Now these diverse people were herded together and imprisoned within the narrow confines of the ghetto. People of diverse languages, diverse cultures, diverse interests and beliefs, of diverse and, at times, conflicting hopes and desires were assembled together in one category; Jews. Confined as if being punished for that; that is, they committed a crime and the crime consisted in being a Jew. Many of them actually did not know what to say about the 'crime.' They did know what it means 'to be a Jew.' To be truthful, practically nothing resulted from all these speculations and reflections, It was impossible to find a clear and definite answer to the question: Who is a Jew nowadays? For only now, in

our generations, on the past 150 years, has the concept of Jew assumed so many meanings. Earlier, 'Jew' was a clear concept that only had one meaning. A Jew was one who observed Jewish law and belonged to the Jewish community. Now various kinds of people are considered and consider themselves Jews, even such as do not observe Jewish law or even respect it, or have no idea what Jewishness is. But also in this case I obtained an answer to the question 'who is a Jew' from a child in the ghetto. The truth of the verse 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings has thou found strength,' was again confirmed. A teacher of religion in the ghetto school told me the incident, from his own experience. Children attend who are totally alienated from Jews, who had never heard at home, in school, in the street, anything of the Jewish past, of Judaism. Now in the ghetto many of these children listen eagerly to the stories of ancient sacred history, of the Bible. One such child, who had once attended a Polish school and spoke Polish at home, studied with great interest the stories of the Bible. When, in the weekly portion of Toledot, they studied the story of Jacob and Esau, this child suddenly called out: 'Teacher, we are indeed the descendants of Jacob and they (i.e., those who do evil to us) the descendants of Esau. Isn't that so? It's good that way. For I really want to belong to Jacob and not to Esau.' I reflected on this story and discovered that I could deduce from it a method to decide who is a Jew. This is how: Man's imagination is after all free, no bonds can confine it. A ghetto person can then sometimes imagine that he has freedom to choose: He can divest himself of his fallen and defeated Jewish identity and assume the identity of the ruler over the ghetto. Now I ask: What would he do? If he wanted to change, if he was eager to assume the identity of the ruler, we could suppose that he is not a Jew. But if by free choice he decides to remain a Jew, then he is a Jew. Reflecting further: the Jewish child instinctively chose to be a Jew. He naturally feels at home among Jews. As for the adult who I imagine chooses freely to be a Jew, is instinctual feeling a sufficient ground or are there rational motives?

"I think so. To be a Jew means in every instance to be on a high plane. The temporary suffering and blows that descend upon the Jew have a meaning, are not merely oppressions, and do not degrade the Jew. For a Jew is part of the sacred triad: Israel, the Torah, and the Holy One, blessed be He. That means the Jewish people, the moral law, and the Creator of the Universe. The sacred triad courses through history, It is a reality that has been tested countless times. Our grandfathers clung to the triad, lived by its strength. And now too: the Jew who does not cling to this triad is to be pitied. He wanders in a world of chaos, he suffers and finds no explanation for his suffering; He can be severed from his people, that is, he can wish to change his identity. But the Jew who clings to the sacred triad needs no pity. He is in a secure association. To be sure, history rages now, a war is waged against the Jews, but the war is not only against one member of the triad but against the entire one: against the Torah and G-d, against the moral law and the Creator. Can anyone still doubt which side is the stronger? In a war it happens that one regiment is defeated, taken into captivity. Let the ghetto Jews consider themselves as such prisoners of war. But let them also remember that the army as a whole is not defeated and cannot be defeated. The Passover of Egypt is a symbol of ancient victory of the sacred triad. My wish is that together we together we shall live to see the Passover of the future."

Zelig Kalmanovitsh

The Six Plagues: Four wine into glass for each plague

דָּם -

-Blood of the Jews spilled during the War.

בָּנִים

-Lice in the camps and ghettos that made life unbearable.

עָרוֹב

-the Wild Animals that G-d set upon us.

דָּבָר

-The Jews that were Killed Like Cattle, instead of men.

חֹשֶׁךְ

-The Years of Darkness and pain that the Jews lived in.

מַכַּת בְּכוֹרוֹת

-Death Of The First Born, our children and future denied us by Hitler.

(Leader) says: Now we drink the wine of remembrance so that these plagues never happen again.

We bless You, HASHEM our God, King of the whole world, Who creates the fruit of the grapevine. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הַגֶּפֶן.

(Leader) says: Before we begin our meal, we partake of the "Ghetto Feast," lifting the vegetables:

We bless You, HASHEM our God, King of the whole world, Who creates fruit that grows from the ground. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְרֵי הָאֲדָמָה.

(Leader) says: With the breaking of bread, we start our meal.

We bless You, HASHEM our God, King of the whole world, Who brings bread out of the ground. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

(During meal, Kids hide "Afikomen" representing the scarcity of food and the parents search for it. It is eaten at the conclusion of the meal, and then Birkat Hamazon is said.)

This is a song that the Levites used to sing as they walked up the steps of the Bais Hamikdash [Holy Temple]: When HASHEM sends Mashiach to bring us back to Eretz Yisrael, it will seem like a dream. Our mouths will be filled with happy laughter and our tongues will sing glad song. The gentile nations will exclaim, "What great things HASHEM has done for these Jews!" Yes — HASHEM will do great things for us, and we will rejoice. HASHEM — please bring back all the Jewish captives, and make us flourish like a desert that becomes full of flowing brooks. Let Your servants be like farmers who cry when they plant, but will sing for joy when they harvest their crops. Your servants will be like people who cry because they have only a few seeds to plant, but who will come back home joyously, carrying bundles of grain.

שִׁיר הַמַּעֲלוֹת, בְּשׁוֹב יְהוָה אֶת שִׁיבַת צִיּוֹן, הֵייוֹנוּ בְּחֻלְמִים. אִזּוּ יִמְלֵא שְׂחוֹק פִּינוּ וּלְשׁוֹנֵנוּ רִנָּה, אִזּוּ יֵאמְרוּ בְּגוֹיִם, הַגְדִּיל יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת עִם אֱלֹהֵי. הַגְדִּיל יְהוָה לַעֲשׂוֹת עִמָּנוּ, הֵייוֹנוּ שְׂמֵחִים. שׁוֹבָה יְהוָה אֶת שְׁבִיתָנוּ, בְּאִפְיָקִים בְּנִגְב. הַזֹּרְעִים בְּדַמְעָה בְּרִנָּה יִקְצְרוּ. הַלוֹף יִלֵּךְ וּבִכְה נִשְׂא מִשֶּׁךְ הַזֶּרַע, כִּי יָבֵא בְרִנָּה, נִשְׂא אֶלְמִתָּיו.

Gentlemen, let us bless together.

לְבַרְכּוֹת יְהוָה

The others respond:

Blessed is the Name of HASHEM, now and forever.

יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבָרָךְ מְעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

The leader continues:

Blessed is the Name of HASHEM, now and forever.

יְהִי שֵׁם יְהוָה מְבָרָךְ מְעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם.

With the permission of everyone here,
let us bless Him [our God],
Whose food we have eaten.

בְּרִשּׁוֹת מְרַגְּנוֹ וּרְבִנּוֹ וְרַבּוֹתֵינוּ
נְבָרְךָ [אֱלֹהֵינוּ] שְׂאֵבְלָנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ.

The others respond:

We bless Him [our God] for we have eaten
His food and we live through His goodness.

בְּרוּךְ [אֱלֹהֵינוּ] שְׂאֵבְלָנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ
וּבְטוֹבוֹ חַיֵּינוּ.

The leader repeats:

We bless Him [our God] for we have eaten
His food and we live through His goodness.

בְּרוּךְ [אֱלֹהֵינוּ] שְׂאֵבְלָנוּ מִשְׁלוֹ
וּבְטוֹבוֹ חַיֵּינוּ.

[He is blessed and His Name is blessed.]

[בְּרוּךְ הוּא וּבְרוּךְ שְׁמוֹ.]

There are four blessings in *Bircas Hamazon*.
In the first blessing we thank God for giving us food.



We bless You, HASHEM our God, King of the whole world, Who feeds the entire world in His goodness — with love, kindness, and mercy. He gives food to all people, because His kindness lasts forever. Because of His great goodness, we have never lacked food; may He never let us lack food. Why do we ask for this? — so that we can praise His Great Name, because He is the merciful God, Who feeds and supports everyone, and does good to everyone, and Who prepares food for all His creatures that He has created. We bless You, HASHEM, Who feeds everyone.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הַזֶּן אֶת הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ, בְּטוֹבוֹ, בְּחֵן
בְּחָסֵד וּבְרַחֲמִים. הוּא נָתַן לָחֶם לְכָל בֶּשֶׂר,
כִּי לְעוֹלָם חָסֵדוֹ. וּבְטוֹבוֹ הַגָּדוֹל, תָּמִיד
לֹא חָסַר לָנוּ, וְאֵל יַחְסַר לָנוּ, מִזֶּן לְעוֹלָם
וְעַד. בְּעִבּוֹר שְׁמוֹ הַגָּדוֹל, כִּי הוּא אֵל זָן
וּמְפָרְנֵס לְכָל, וּמְטִיב לְכָל, וּמְכִין מִזֶּן לְכָל
בְּרִיּוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, הַזֶּן
אֶת הַכֹּל.

In the second blessing we thank God for giving us Eretz Yisrael.



We thank You for many things, HASHEM our God: for giving Eretz Yisrael to our ancestors as our own land — a fine, good, broad land; for taking us out of Egypt and saving us from slavery; for the *mitzvah* of *bris milah*; for the Torah that You taught us; for the *mitzvos* that You made known to us; for the life, love, and kindness that You graciously gave us; for the food with which You always feed and support us every day, every season, and every hour.

נוֹדָה לָךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, עַל שֶׁהִנְחַלְתָּ
לְאַבוֹתֵינוּ אֶרֶץ חֲמֻדָּה טוֹבָה
וּרְחֵבָה. וְעַל שֶׁהוֹצַאתָנוּ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם וּפְדִיתָנוּ מִבֵּית עַבְדִּים, וְעַל
בְּרִיתְךָ שֶׁחֲתַמְתָּ בְּבִשְׂרָנוּ, וְעַל תּוֹרַתְךָ
שֶׁלְמַדְתָּנוּ, וְעַל חֻקֶּיךָ שֶׁהוֹדַעְתָּנוּ, וְעַל חַיִּים
חֵן וְחָסֵד שֶׁחֻנַּנְתָּנוּ, וְעַל אֲכִילַת מִזֶּן
שֶׁאַתָּה זָן וּמְפָרְנֵס אוֹתָנוּ תָּמִיד, בְּכָל יוֹם
וּבְכָל עֵת וּבְכָל שָׁעָה.



For all this we thank You and bless You, HASHEM, our God. May Your Name always be blessed by everyone forever, as it is written in the Torah: "You will eat and be satisfied, and then you will bless HASHEM your God for the good land that He gave you." We bless You, HASHEM, for the Land and for the food.

וְעַל הַכֹּל יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֲנַחְנוּ מוֹדִים
לָךְ, וּמְבָרְכִים אוֹתְךָ,
יְתַבָּרְךָ שְׁמֶךָ בְּפִי כָל חַי תָּמִיד לְעוֹלָם וְעַד.
בְּפִתּוֹב, וְאֲכַלְתָּ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ, וּבִרְכַתְּ אֶת יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֶיךָ, עַל הָאֶרֶץ הַטֹּבָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לָךְ.
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, עַל הָאֶרֶץ וְעַל הַמִּזֶּן.

In the third blessing we pray for the rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Have mercy, HASHEM our God, on Israel, Your people; on Jerusalem, Your city; on the Temple Mount, the place of Your Glory; on the kingdom of the family of David, Your anointed king; and on the great and holy *Bais Hamikdash*, which is called by Your Name. O God, our Father — take care of us, feed us, support us, supply our needs, and make our lives easier. HASHEM our God, give us speedy relief from all our troubles. Please, HASHEM our God, don't make us need the gifts or loans of other people; let us get all our needs only from Your hand, which is full, open, holy, and generous. Then we will never feel ashamed or be embarrassed.

רַחֵם (נא) יהוה אֱלֹהֵינוּ עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל
עַמֶּךָ, וְעַל יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִירֶךָ, וְעַל
צִיּוֹן מִשְׁכַּן כְּבוֹדְךָ, וְעַל מַלְכוּת בֵּית דָּוִד
מְשִׁיחֶךָ, וְעַל הַבַּיִת הַגָּדוֹל וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ שְׁנִקְרָא
שְׁמֶךָ עָלֵינוּ. אֱלֹהֵינוּ אָבִינוּ רַעְנוּ וּזְנַנּוּ
פְרַנְסָנוּ וְכַלְכַּלְנוּ וְהִרְוִיחֵנוּ, וְהִרְנוּחַ לָנוּ יְהוּה
אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִהֲרָה מְכַל צְרוּתֵינוּ. וְנֹא אֵל
מִצָּרֵינוּ יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, לֹא לִידֵי מִתְּנַת
בְּשָׂר וָדָם, וְלֹא לִידֵי הַלְוָאָתָם, כִּי אִם לִידֵיךָ
הַמְּלֵאָה הַפְּתוּחָה הַקְּדוּשָׁה וְהַרְחֵבָה, שְׁלֹא
יִבוֹשׁ וְלֹא יִכְלֵם לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.

On the Sabbath recite this paragraph:

May it please You, HASHEM our God, to make us healthy through Your *mitzvos* and through the *mitzvah* of this great and holy Shabbos. Because to You, this is a great and holy day, to rest on it and be calm on it lovingly, as You have commanded us. Please, HASHEM our God, let us be calm, so that there will not be trouble, sadness, or moaning on this day of our rest. HASHEM our God, let us see Zion, Your city, being comforted, and Jerusalem, city of Your holiness, being rebuilt — because only You have the power to help and to comfort.

רִצָּה וְהִחַלְצֵנוּ יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּמִצְוֹתֶיךָ,
וּבְמִצְוֹת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּתֵי הַגָּדוֹל
וְהַקְּדוֹשׁ הַזֶּה, כִּי יוֹם זֶה גָּדוֹל וְקָדוֹשׁ הוּא
לְפָנֶיךָ, לְשַׁבֵּת בּוֹ וּלְנוּחַ בּוֹ בְּאַהֲבָה בְּמִצְוֹת
רְצוֹנָה, וּבְרְצוֹנָה הִנִּיחַ לָנוּ יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ, שְׁלֹא
תֵהָא צָרָה וְיִגוֹן וְאִנְחָה בְּיוֹם מְנוּחָתֵנוּ, וְהִרְאָנוּ
יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּנִחְמַת צִיּוֹן עִירֶךָ, וּבְבִנְיַן
יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קְדְשֶׁךָ, כִּי אַתָּה הוּא בָּעַל
הַיְשׁוּעוֹת וּבָעַל הַנְּחֻמוֹת.

Qur God and the God of our forefathers, we beg that the following thoughts rise, come to You, reach You, be seen, be pleasing, be heard, be considered, and be remembered. The thoughts are: memories of ourselves; memories of our ancestors; of *Mashiach*, the descendant of Your servant David; of Jerusalem, Your Holy City; and of Your entire nation, the Family of Israel. May You think of all these things to save us all and to be good, gracious, kind and merciful to us, to give us life and peace on this day of the *Yom Tov* of Matzos. Remember us today, HASHEM our God, for good; think about us for blessing; and help us to have a good life. And regarding help and mercy — please have pity, be gracious, be merciful, and save us, because we look to You for help, since You are the generous and merciful God.

אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, יַעֲלֶה, וְיָבֵא,
וְיַגִּיעַ, וְיִרְאֶה, וְיִרְצֶה, וְיִשְׁמַע,
וְיִפְקֹד, וְיִזְכֵּר, וְזָכְרוּנוּ וּפְקֻדוּנוּ, וְזָכְרוּן
אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, וְזָכְרוּן מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד עַבְדְּךָ,
וְזָכְרוּן יְרוּשָׁלַיִם עִיר קְדְשֶׁךָ, וְזָכְרוּן כָּל עַמֶּךָ
בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל לְפָנֶיךָ, לְפִלִיטָה לְטוֹבָה לְחַן
וּלְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים, לְחַיִּים וּלְשָׁלוֹם בְּיוֹם חַג
הַמִּצּוֹת הַזֶּה. וְזָכְרוּנוּ יְהוּה אֱלֹהֵינוּ בּוֹ
לְטוֹבָה, וּפְקֻדָנוּ בּוֹ לְבִרְכָה, וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ בּוֹ
לְחַיִּים (טוֹבִים). וּבְדַבַּר יְשׁוּעָה וּרְחֻמִּים חוֹס
וְחַנּוּן וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ, כִּי אֵלֶיךָ
עֵינֵינוּ, כִּי אֵל חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם אַתָּה.



May You rebuild Jerusalem, the Holy City, soon in our lifetime. We bless You, HASHEM, Who rebuilds Jerusalem in His mercy. Amen.

ובנה ירושלים עיר הקדש במהרה
בְּיָמֵינוּ. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה, בּוֹנֵה
בְּרַחֲמָיו יְרוּשָׁלַיִם. אָמֵן.

In the fourth blessing we thank God for His goodness.



We bless You, HASHEM our God, King of the whole world, the Almighty, our Father, our King, our Master, our Creator, our Redeemer, our Maker; our Holy One, the Holy One of Jacob; our Shepherd, the Shepherd of Israel; He is the King Who is good and Who does good to everyone. Every single day, He did good, He does good, and He will do good for us. He gave us very much, He gives us very much and He will give us very much forever – with love, kindness, and mercy; giving us relief through rescue, success, blessing, help, comfort, livelihood, support, mercy, life, peace, and all good things. May He never keep us from having all good things.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
הָאֵל אָבִינוּ מִלְכֵנו אֲדִירָנוּ בּוֹרְאָנוּ
גּוֹאֲלָנוּ יוֹצְרָנוּ קְדוֹשֵׁנוּ קְדוֹשׁ יַעֲקֹב, רוֹעֵנוּ
רוֹעֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל, הַמֶּלֶךְ הַטּוֹב וְהַמְּטִיב לְכָל,
שֶׁבְּכָל יוֹם וַיּוֹם הוּא הַטֵּיב, הוּא מְטִיב, הוּא
יִיטֵיב לָנוּ. הוּא גִמְלָנוּ, הוּא גּוֹמְלָנוּ, הוּא
יְגַמְלָנוּ לְעַד, לֶחֶן וּלְחֶסֶד וּלְרַחֲמִים וּלְרוּחַ
הַצְּלָה וְהַצְּלָחָה, בְּרָכָה וְשׂוּעָה נְחֻמָּה
פְּרֻנְסָה וְכִלְכִּלָּה וְרַחֲמִים וְחַיִּים וְשָׁלוֹם וְכָל
טוֹב, וּמְכַל טוֹב לְעוֹלָם אֵל יַחֲסֶרְנוּ.



May the Merciful God always be our King.
May the Merciful God be blessed in heaven and on earth.
May the Merciful God be praised in every generation; and may He always be proud of us and forever be honored by the way we act.
May the Merciful God support us with honor.
May the Merciful God break the yoke of suffering that is on our neck and may He lead us proudly to our land.
May the Merciful God send us much blessing in this house and on this table where we have eaten.
May the Merciful God send us Elijah the Prophet, who is remembered for doing good, to bring us good news, to save us and comfort us.

הַרְחֲמֵנוּ הוּא יְמַלֹּךְ עָלֵינוּ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד.
הַרְחֲמֵנוּ הוּא יִתְבָּרַךְ בְּשָׁמַיִם
וּבָאָרֶץ. הַרְחֲמֵנוּ הוּא יִשְׁתַּבַּח לְדוֹר דּוֹרִים,
וְיִתְפָּאֵר בָּנוּ לְעַד וּלְנִצְח וְנִצְחִים, וְיִתְהַדַּר
בָּנוּ לְעַד וּלְעוֹלָמֵי עוֹלָמִים. הַרְחֲמֵנוּ הוּא
יִפְרֹנְסֵנוּ בְּכָבוֹד. הַרְחֲמֵנוּ הוּא יִשְׁבּוֹר עָלֵנוּ
מֵעַל צְנֹאֲרָנוּ, וְהוּא יוֹלִיכֵנוּ קוֹמְמִיּוֹת
לְאַרְצָנוּ. הַרְחֲמֵנוּ הוּא יִשְׁלַח לָנוּ בְּרָכָה
מְרֻבָּה בְּבֵית הַזֶּה, וְעַל שֻׁלְחָן זֶה שְׂאֲבָלָנוּ
עָלֵינוּ. הַרְחֲמֵנוּ הוּא יִשְׁלַח לָנוּ אֶת אֱלִיָּהוּ
הַנָּבִיא זְכוֹר לְטוֹב, וַיְבַשֵּׁר לָנוּ בְּשׂוֹרוֹת
טוֹבוֹת וְשׂוּעוֹת וְנְחֻמוֹת.

The Talmud gives the following text for a guest to recite for his host:



ay it be God's will that this host not be shamed nor embarrassed either in This World or in the World to Come. May he succeed in all his dealings. May his dealings be successful and convenient. May no evil rule over his work, and may no sin or evil thought attach itself to him, from now and forever.

יהי רצון, שלא יבוש ולא יבלם בעל הבית הזה, לא בעולם הזה, ולא בעולם הבא. ויצליח בכל נכסיו, ויהיו נכסיו מוצלחים וקרובים לעיר. ואל ישלוט שטן במעשה ידיו, ואל יזדקק לפניו שום דבר חטא והרהור עון, מעתה ועד עולם.

Someone eating at his own table recites the following and includes the words in parentheses that apply.

May the Merciful God bless me (and my wife/husband and my children) and all that is mine,

הרחמן הוא יברך אותי (ואת אשתי/בעלי. ואת זרעי) ואת כל אשר לי.

Someone eating at another's table recites the following. Children at their parents' table add the words in parentheses.

May the Merciful God bless (my father and teacher) the head of this house, and (my mother and teacher) lady of this house — may He bless them, their home, their children and everything they have,

הרחמן הוא יברך את (אבי מורי) בעל הבית הזה, ואת (אמי מורת) בעלת הבית הזה. אותם ואת ביתם ואת זרעם ואת כל אשר להם.

All continue here:

us and everything that we have — just as our forefathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were blessed in everything, from everything, and with everything. In the same way may He give all of us together a perfect blessing. Let us say: Amen!

אותנו ואת כל אשר לנו, כמו שנתברכו אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב בכל מכל כל, בן יברך אותנו פלנו יחד בברכה שלמה. ונאמר, אמן.



n Heaven above, may both they and we be found deserving of peace. May we get a blessing from HASHEM and charity from God Who saves us, and may our acts be considered loving and wise by God and by people.

במרום ילמדו עליהם ועלינו זכות, שתהא למשמרת שלום. ונשא ברכה מאת יהוה, וצדקה מאלהי ישענו, ונמצא חן ושכל טוב בעיני אלהים ואדם.

On the Sabbath recite this paragraph:

May the Merciful God let us inherit the Shabbos of the World to Come, which will be a complete rest day forever.

הרחמן הוא ינחילנו יום שכלו שבת ומנוחה לחיי העולמים.

At the Seder recite the words in parentheses:



ay the Merciful God let us inherit the day that is completely good (the day that lasts forever, the day when righteous people will sit with crowns on their heads and enjoy the glow of God's Presence — and may we be among them).

הרחמן הוא ינחילנו יום שכלו טוב. (יום שכלו ארוך. יום שצדיקים יושבים ועטרותיהם בראשיהם וננהנים מזיו השכינה, ויהי חלקנו עמם.)



ay the Merciful God give us the honor of living until the days of *Mashiach* and the life of the World to Come. God is a tower of help to His king and shows kindness to His anointed one, to David and his children, forever. Just as God makes peace in His heaven, may He also bring peace upon us and upon all Jews. Now answer: Amen.



ou holy people of HASHEM — you should fear HASHEM, because those who fear Him do not lack anything. Even strong young lions may go hungry, but those who try to be close to HASHEM will not be missing anything that is good. Give thanks to HASHEM for He is good, because His kindness lasts forever. O God — You open Your hand and give every living thing what it desires. Blessed is the person who trusts HASHEM — then HASHEM will protect him. I was young and I became old, but I never saw a righteous person who was all alone and whose children had to beg for bread. HASHEM will give strength to His nation, HASHEM will bless His nation with peace.

הַרְחַמֵּן הוּא יִזְכְּנוּ לִימֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ
וְלַחַיֵּי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא. מְגִדוּל
יְשׁוּעוֹת מַלְכוּ, וְעֲשֵׂה חֶסֶד לְמִשְׁיחוֹ, לְדָוִד
וְלְזַרְעוֹ עַד עוֹלָם. עֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו,
הוּא יַעֲשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם עָלֵינוּ, וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל.
וְאָמְרוּ, אָמֵן.

יִרְאוּ אֶת יְהוָה קְדוֹשׁוֹ, כִּי אֵין מִחְסוֹר
לִירְאָיו. כְּפִירִים רָשׁוּ וְרָעִבוּ,
וְדֹרְשֵׁי יְהוָה לֹא יִחְסְרוּ כָּל טוֹב. הַדּוֹד
לִיהוָה כִּי טוֹב, כִּי לְעוֹלָם חֶסֶדוֹ. פּוֹתַח אֶת
יָדָהּ, וּמִשְׁבִּיעַ לְכָל חַי רָצוֹן. בְּרוּךְ הַגֹּבֵר
אֲשֶׁר יִבְטַח בִּיהוָה, וְהָיָה יְהוָה מְבַטְחוֹ. נָעַר
הַיִּתִּי גַם וְזָקַנְתִּי, וְלֹא רָאִיתִי צָדִיק וְעֹזֵב,
וְזָרְעוֹ מְבַקֵּשׁ לֶחֶם. יְהוָה עֹז לְעַמּוֹ יִתֵּן,
יְהוָה יְבָרֵךְ אֶת עַמּוֹ בְּשְׁלוֹם.

BIRDS ARE DROWSING

Birds are drowsing on the branches.
Sleep, my darling child.
At your cradle, in the field,
A stranger sits and sings.

Once you had another cradle
Woven out of joy,
And your mother, oh your mother
Will never more come by.

I saw your father fleeing
Under the rain of countless stones,
Over fields and over valleys
Flew his orphaned cry.

Leah Rudnitsky
Vilna Ghetto
Circa 1942

DREMLÉN FEYGL AF DI TSVAYGN

Moderato



Dremlen fey-gl af di tsvaygn, Shlof, mayn tay-er kind.



Bay dayn vi-gl af dayn na-re Zitst a frende un. zinet,



Bay dayn vi-gl af dayn na-re Zitst a frem - de un



zinet: lyu - lyu, lyu - lyu, lyu.

SONG OF HUNGER

Come out, my dear, on to the street,
Come and die on the street,
On the hard sidewalk.
Bring our pale children.

Bring the eldest,
Bring the middle one.
Our third is very young yet
But like a grown Jew
Is able to die of hunger on the street.

Come on to the street
Come on to Karmelicka
Here we fit in well.
Some fall, some stay sitting.
There is a hubbub on the Karmelicka.

Come out, oh leave the house
The empty house.
I'd be ashamed
To lie there in a living grave.
A starving man
Should not die lonely in his home.

No cause for shame on the street.
People go out, lie down
Swollen, tight-belted.
A whole legion dies together.
They are dying wholesale, wholesale.

We too, we'll lie down on the sidewalk.
No, not lie down - we'll fall.
No, no, not fall - lie down,
Heart to heart
And die,
Die with the rest.

Yitzhak Katzenelson
Warsaw ghetto
26 May 1941

XV

IT'S ALL OVER

1

Exod. 13:21-22 The end. At night, the sky is aflame. By day the smoke coils and at night it blazes out again. Awe!
Like our beginning in the desert: A pillar of cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night.
Then my people marched with joy and faith to new life, and now — the end, all finished...
All of us on earth have been killed, young and old. We have all been exterminated.

2

Why? O don't ask why! Everybody knows, all gentiles, good and bad,
The worst helped the Germans the best closed one eye, pretending to be asleep —
~~No, no, nobody will demand a reckoning, probe, ask why.~~
Our blood is ~~cheap~~, it may be shed. We may be killed and murdered with impunity.

3

Among the Poles they looked for freedom fighters, only for those suspected
Of patriotism... They murdered many Russians in villages and towns —
"Partisans." Among us, they killed babies in their cribs, even the unborn.
They led us all to Treblinka and before killing turned to us and said:

Get undressed here. Put your clothes in order, shoes in pairs, leave your belongings.

You'll need your clothes, shoes and other personal effects. You'll soon be back!

you just arrived? From Warsaw? Paris? Prague? Saloniki? Take a bath!"

A thousand enter the hall... A thousand wait naked until the first thousand are gassed.

5

Thus they destroyed us, from Greece to Norway to the outskirts of Moscow—about seven million.

Discounting Jewish children in wombs. Only the pregnant mothers are counted.

And if Jews remain in far-away America and in nearby Eretz Israel — demand these children too from them

Demand the murdered unborn children. Demand those gassed in their mothers' wombs. World. Demand.

6

Why? No human being in the world asks why, yet all things do: Why?

Each vacant apartment in thousands of towns and cities asks: Why?

Listen, listen: Apartments will not stay vacant and empty homes will not remain empty.

Another people is moving in, another language and a different way of life.

7

Rising over Lithuanian or Polish towns, the sun will never find

A radiant old Jew at the window reciting Psalms, or going to the synagogue.

On every road peasants will welcome the sun in wagons, going to market.

So many gentiles — more than ever, yet the market is dead. It is crowded, yet seems empty.

8

Never will a Jew grace the markets, and give them life.

Never will a Jewish *kapota* flutter in markets on sacks of potatoes, flour, porridge.

Never will a Jewish hand lift a hen, pet a calf. The drunken peasant

Will whip his horse sadly, return with his full wagon to the village. There are no more Jews in the land.

9

And Jewish children will never wake in the morning from bright dreams,

Never go to *heder*, never watch birds, never tease, never play in the sand.

O little Jewish boys! O bright Jewish eyes! Little angels! From where? From here, yet not from here.

O beautiful little girls. O you bright pure faces, smudged and disheveled.

10

They are no more! Don't ask overseas about Kasrilevke, Yehupetz. Don't.

Don't look for Menachem Mendels, Tevye the dairymen, Nogids, Motke thieves. Don't look —

They will, like the prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea and Amos from the Bible,

Or you from Bialik, speak to you from Sholem Aleichem and Sholem Asch's books.

Kasrilevke, Yehupetz - fictional towns in Sholem Aleichem's oeuvre
Menachem Mendel, Tevye - Sholem Aleichem's major fictional characters.
Motke the Thief } fictional characters in the work of Sholem Asch.
Shloyme Nogid }

1
Never will the voice of Torah be heard from *yeshivoth*, synagogues, and pale students,
Purified by study and engrossed in the Talmud... No, no, it was not pallor but a glow,
Already extinguished... Rabbis, heads of *yeshivoth*, scholars, thin, weak prodigies,
Masters of Talmud and Codes, small Jews with great heads, high foreheads, bright eyes

— all gone.

2

Never will a Jewish mother cradle a baby. Jews will not die or be born.
Never will plaintive songs of Jewish poets be sung. All's gone, gone.
No Jewish theater where men will laugh or silently shed a tear.
No Jewish musicians and painters, Barcinskis, to create and innovate in joy and sorrow.

13

Jews will fight or sacrifice no longer for others.
They will no longer heal, soothe someone's pain, forgetting their own.
O you foolish gentile, the bullet you fired at the Jew hit you too.
O who will help you build your lands? Who will give you so much of heart and soul?

4

And my hot-headed Communists will no longer bicker and argue with my Bundists,
Nor will they wrangle with my liberty-loving, devoted and conscientious Halutzim
who offered themselves to the world, not forgetting their own woe.
I watched the disputes and grieved... If only you could continue to argue and stay alive!

5

Woe is unto me, nobody is left... There was a people and it is no more. There was a people and it is...
What a tale. It began in the Bible and lasted till now. A very sad tale. (Gone...)
A tale that began with *Amalek* and concluded with the far crueller Germans...
O distant sky, wide earth, vast seas. Do not crush and don't destroy the wicked. Let them destroy themselves!

5-16-17.11.1944

Hanoch Barcinski - painter and illustrator; killed in 1942.

Doves on wires

... My child, on a cold and frosty day, with an evil wind blowing and shaking man and earth, your father dragged himself along, tired, in search of himself. He wandered through the streets, past buildings and people.

Instead of himself, he found wires—barbed wires that cut through the street and cut it to pieces. On both sides of the wire people walked up and down. Poverty and hunger drove them towards the fence through which one could see what went on on the other side. Jews, the badge of shame on their arms, walked on one side and Christian boys and girls on the other. When from the other side a loaf of bread was thrown over the fence, boys on this side tried to catch it. Police in jack-boots, armed with rubber truncheons, beat up a child. The child cried and German soldiers, looking on, shook with laughter. When a Jewish girl sang a song, begging, pleading—"I am hungry and cold," policemen drove her away, and the soldiers smiled, when they saw the loaf of bread, rolling on the ground.

People walked up and down. And your father stood there and looked over the fence. Suddenly a flight of doves came down, driven from somewhere out of the blue. Silently they settled on the wires and began quietly to coo. I felt the pain of their sadness and sorrow, I listened to their weeping hearts and understood the anguish of the freezing doves.

And yet, my child, how greedy man is! With his heart he feels sympathy, while his eyes are filled with envy. The doves have wings, and if they want to, they can fly, on to wires or up to roof-tops, off and away!

Your father stood there, dreaming. And a policeman came and knocked him on the head.

Ashamed he began to move on, but he wanted to look once more at the doves. And, then, my child, your father saw something terrible:

The doves were still there, on the barbed wires, but . . . they were eating the crumbs, out of the hands of the soldiers! . . .

My child, your father grew very sad, and sad he still is: not about the doves on freezing wires, and not because they have wings and he has not, but because now he hates the doves, too, and he warns you: Keep away from them, as long as the innocence allows itself to be fed by murderous hands . . .

G-D OF MERCY

O God of Mercy
For the time being
Choose another people.
We are tired of death, tired of corpses,

We have no more prayers.
For the time being
Choose another people.
We have run out of blood
For victims,
Our houses have been turned into desert,
The earth lacks space for tombstones,
There are no more lamentations
Nor songs of woe
In the ancient texts.

God of Mercy
Sanctify another land
Another Sinai.
We have covered every field and stone
With ashes and holiness.
With our crones
With our young
With our infants
We have paid for each letter in your Commandments.

God of Mercy
Lift up your fiery brow,
Look on the peoples of the world,
Let them have the prophecies and Holy Days
Who mumble your words in every tongue.
Teach them the Deeds
And the ways of temptation.

God of Mercy
To us give rough clothing
Of shepherds who tend sheep
Of blacksmiths at the hammer
Of washerwomen, cattle slaughterers
And lower still.
And O God of Mercy
Grant us one more blessing—
Take back the gift of our separateness. ◊

Kadia Molodowsky