



Elie Wiesel

Confronting the Holocaust

The Impact of Elie Wiesel

Edited by Alvin H. Rosenfeld
and Irving Greenberg



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toward heaven. And there emerged the figure of a hand which received the keys from them. Whereupon they jumped into the fire.⁶¹

Wiesel's Midrash attempts to recapture the keys surrendered by those who perished in the Holocaust. With these keys he has begun to open a door that links past to present. In so doing, to use Wiesel's own words, "he only tries to wrest from death certain prayers, certain faces, by appealing to the imagination and the nostalgia that made man listen when his story is told."⁶²

self
biography
survival

collective
history
theodicy

- 1) Indiv. perspectives not invented by European post-Holocaust writers; whole Impressionist school
- 2) History not an anathema to normative Judaism
- 3) Exot. European tradition includes Rudinow, Casfeld
- 4) Specker vs. Schwarz-Bart

Sidra Ezrahi

The Holocaust Writer and the Lamentation Tradition: Responses to Catastrophe in Jewish Literature

Most of the European literature of the Holocaust focuses on the individual in his struggle for survival, or on the degrees of his acquiescence to the concentrationary system. The self in its anomy is, then, the primary reference, personal survival is the ultimate goal, and death, disintegration of the self, or submission to the system is the ultimate defeat.¹

In this context certain writers appear unique in that they rely not on biography but on Jewish history to infuse their work with the structural continuity between past, present, and a possible future. The historical vision that anchors the meaning of the self in the fate and the cultural resources of the group, and that places theodicy rather than the struggle for survival at the center of its exploration of the concentrationary universe, generates symbolic responses that are profoundly different from the existentialist perspective. The writers I am about to consider reflect and draw upon a literary and philosophical tradition in which centuries of persecution and a codified system of beliefs have generated specific cultural responses to collective catastrophe and the absorption of "facts" and historical "events" into an inherited valua-

tional framework. The Hebraic lamentation tradition derives from biblical sources and can be traced through two millennia of Hebrew texts.

Not unlike the writers for whom the self is the primary arbiter of experience, the Holocaust survivors writing within the Hebraic tradition are motivated at least in part by the need to convey and legitimate their own sufferings and to commemorate the lives and deaths of their companions. Additionally, they are responding to the imperative to link their own fate to the destiny of Israel, wherein the self, even in death, is submerged and retained in the collective consciousness—to locate the Holocaust along the spectrum of Jewish suffering. In some cases, they also commemorate the way of life and the cultural values that were extinguished along with those who held them.

Those European writers who share this perspective, such as Elie Wiesel, Manès Sperber, André Schwarz-Bart, Nelly Sachs, and Paul Celan, should be read with reference to Hebrew and Yiddish writers, all of whom draw upon a vocabulary that has been incorporated into the lexicon of Jewish martyrology. Adolf Rudnicki, a non-Jewish Polish writer, wrote in one of his stories that “no other nation has so many synonyms for suffering as have the Jews. . . . Everybody knows that what the Germans did during the Second World War has no equivalent in history, yet it was all contained within the Jews’ ancient vocabulary.”² The works of writers who can be located within this tradition seek resonance, then, within an identifiable constituency of readers, and invite judgment not only as reflections of the creative ability of the artist or even as authentic versions of reality but also, or especially, in terms of the ways in which, as Maurice Samuel put it, “the event is establishing itself in the Jewish people.”³

The term “constituency of readers” should be used advisedly: the decimated, displaced survivors of the Holocaust in the Diaspora can no longer be regarded as constituting a cultural unit capable of absorbing, judging, and preserving the works of its artists. As the Yiddish writer Rabi has observed, what has replaced the “Jewish public” as a heterogeneous but still organic community is the “mass media,” which arbitrates Jewish literature for Jews.⁴ Outside of Israel, anyway, acclaim

and censure are no longer an internal process but a derivative one, by which Jewish readers are guided largely by standards of the non-Jewish community. André Schwarz-Bart and Nelly Sachs reached Jewish readers in large numbers only after they had received the Prix Goncourt and the Nobel Prize, respectively. Nevertheless, these writers draw upon a common heritage and may be regarded as performing specific cultural tasks as witnesses to the slaughter not of six million individuals but of one third of the Jewish people.

Whether or not the individual survivor succeeds in isolating and containing his experience in the camps and in rebuilding a post-Holocaust life for himself—and most of Holocaust fiction testifies to the failure of such efforts—the Hebraic writer cannot regard the Nazi epoch as unrelated to, or isolated from, the issue of both social and metaphysical continuity. What is at stake here is not only the belief in divine justice, which had been the ultimate reference for generations of persecuted Jews, but the entire fabric of society and culture that upheld that faith. Here it may be necessary to recall, perhaps, that we are studying constructs of literary response that are derivative from but not necessarily mimetic of the reactions of the actual victims to the actual persecutions—that is, they are meant to be in some way instructive in a post-Holocaust future. Ultimately there came a moment in the life of nearly every inmate of the ghettos and camps when all supports collapsed and life came to mean nothing but the struggle for a crust of bread. In an autobiographical fragment, Elie Wiesel writes that this “miserable crust of moldy bread came to contain more truth, more eternity, than all the pages of all the books put together.”⁵ There are writers—powerful, compelling writers like Tadeusz Borowski—who have concentrated on that struggle. But the writers I would like to discuss are those who *have*, after all, attempted to put the pages of the book back together—to absorb the agony into the collective consciousness of the surviving remnant. And that is achieved, especially in the case of Wiesel, Sperber, and Schwarz-Bart, not primarily through realism but through a kaleidoscope of history, a contemporaneity or simultaneity of events that places Auschwitz within the context of centuries of martyrdom. As Sperber writes in his novel . . .

Than a Tear in the Sea, Hitler was "none other than Haman whom they knew so well from the Book of Esther."⁶

These writers, then, still conceive of themselves and are received as public scribes, as the heirs of the prophets and elegists of what Sachs calls "Das Leiden Israels" (the suffering of Israel).⁷ Although direct lines of influence cannot always be drawn between their poetry and fiction and lamentational literature, they should be studied with reference to that tradition.

The massacres, forced conversions, Crusades, expulsions, and pogroms that punctuate Jewish history from the time of the destruction of the First Temple till modern times have been commemorated in a chain of liturgical elegies—"selihoth" and "kinoth"⁸—and in folktales or "midrashim."⁹ When we consider the paucity of historical records of the time,¹⁰ the mnemonic function of such poems and stories becomes even more apparent. Of course historiography as we know it—secular history—had no place in a society in which study of and commentary on the Torah, rather than on the vicissitudes of human fortunes, were meant to reveal eternal and recurrent truths.¹¹

Lamentation literature helped to preserve sacred communal memory in a number of ways. In a community in which a mythic view of history prevailed, the kinoth provided the footnotes to update the biblical revelation of divine purpose. The poems take not only their historical analogues but also their form and idiom from biblical elegy, especially from the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations. Many of the kinoth are written in variations of the alphabetical acrostic of the book of Lamentations, a form common to much of the poetry of the Middle Ages.¹² The purpose of the poems is generally twofold: to commemorate the martyrs and to praise and petition God. The names of important persons and of whole communities are woven into the verses, as well as other details, such as the date ("on the Sabbath day, the eighth of Iyar";¹³ "in the year 1391"¹⁴) and even the means of torture ("their feet and hands they severed / and cut the corpse in half"¹⁵) and the various forms of desecration of the Scriptures.¹⁶ On the whole the paytanim (liturgical poets) demonstrated more passion than poetic talent; many of these poems have simple, almost ludicrous

rhyme schemes governed by a greater commitment to selected facts than to form.¹⁷ A. M. Haberman admits that the community did not always inquire as to the poetic quality of the kinoth; many of these poems exercised their power over the people not because of their aesthetic merit but "by dint of the truth in them."¹⁸ An occasional elegist did, however, produce verses of lasting power, which were incorporated into the liturgy.¹⁹ It is of course an ancient bardic method of preserving communal memory to recite names and historical events in verse, but in the medieval and postmedieval Jewish communities the kinoth and selihoth served the additional and more immediate purpose of providing the information that could enable survivors to recite the Kaddish for their dead on the proper day.²⁰ And specific poems were often integrated into the prayer service of local communities—for instance, one selihah that commemorated the local victims of the Chmielnicki massacre was incorporated into the Lithuanian selihoth liturgy and contributed over the years to a unique sense of continuity of place.²¹

Occasionally a single act of bravery took on mythic proportions in midrashim or poetry, and in its variation one can trace the growth and uses of legend. Such, for example, is the story of the woman—variously called Miriam or Hannah—whose seven sons refused to eat swine, or, in another version, to bow down to idols, and were tortured and killed. The story is related, with different details and emphasis, in the apocryphal Second Book of Maccabees, in Lamentations Rabba, and in other contexts.²² Through the literature such stories were transformed into paradigms of the agony and heroic faith of the entire community and were meant to provide instructional models for the victims of future persecutions. Writing within such a well-defined normative framework, the paytan was careful to avoid mention of acts of betrayal or cowardice on the part of the martyrs.²³

Although the paytan often wrote in the first person and described particular events, his poems, as specific or autobiographical as they might be, usually illuminated one of two fundamental axioms: that Israel was suffering because it had erred²⁴ or because certain innocent persons or communities had been singled out to sanctify God's name through martyrdom.²⁵ There were also frequent and impassioned pe-

titions to God for vengeance and numerous instances of desperate and even defiant indictments of divine silence or indifference.²⁶ Nevertheless, the poet spoke with a prophetic or collective voice and concluded his lament with an affirmation of faith. The kinah, then, was both a poetic reflection of and a constitutive response to history. As a sustained literary genre it is, according to Haberman, unique among comparative literatures: "the community of Israel, which had forgotten what celebratory poetry was, raised up its voice in one terrible kinah—a long and bitter shout which incorporated the sorrow and the tears of the generations."²⁷

Even the diffusion of the Enlightenment ideology and the erosion of monolithic religious beliefs did not significantly alter the image of the poet in the eyes of the people. Struggle as he might against the summons to a public, prophetic voice, a poet like Haim Nahman Bialik could not escape into an exploration of his private soul so long as his people needed him as comforter, chastiser, and national poet.²⁸ But already Bialik represents the lamentation tradition in transition. He was no longer strictly bound by the religious authority of the tradition or by the formulas with which it had confronted historic crises. His God is elusive and many-faceted: in some poems God has turned a deaf ear to man;²⁹ in others it is man who has lost the way to Him.³⁰ Bialik's elegies are far more complex than the traditional kinah, not only in their theodicy but also in their exploration of the responses of the victims. In the long poem "In the City of the Slaughter," written in 1905 as a response to the Kishinev pogrom, the speaker displays neither pure piety nor unmitigated compassion; he is as repelled by the cowardice of the victims as by the brutality of the victimizers. In this poem it is human behavior, as well as divine providence, that is being tested.³¹ Yet Bialik registered his protest not by a retreat from but by subtle inversions of the traditional responses to catastrophe; by retaining familiar symbols and constructs yet altering their context and significance, he succeeded in conveying the ambiguities and complexities of a new spiritual reality while satisfying the community's need for an elegist.³²

When the Jews in the Nazi ghettos and camps looked for a writer

who would bear witness to their catastrophe they again looked for an elegist. Even as meticulous an historian as Haim Kaplan felt that historical record alone could not provide the kind of commemoration that a dying people wanted to leave behind. If we consider the social dimensions of elegiac literature, even in an increasingly secular community, the poem that is invested with mythical or ritualistic functions can also provide a contemporaneity that historiography, in its remoteness, cannot:

Our forefathers [Kaplan wrote in his Warsaw Diary], who were experienced in adversity, immortalized their sufferings in lamentations. . . . The national splendor inherent in religious poetry is not expressed in newspaper reports. . . . A catastrophe that becomes part of poetry, even non-religious poetry such as Bialik's "The City of Slaughter," which commemorated the Kishinev pogrom, spreads among the people and is transmitted to future generations. A poet who clothes adversity in poetic form immortalizes it in an everlasting monument.

Who will write of our troubles and who will immortalize them?
Poet of the people, where art thou?³³

One man who might have become—given the time and tranquility needed to perfect his craft—the "poet of the people" was the Yiddish poet Yitzhak Katzenelson. By the time he perished in Auschwitz he had already written his monumental "Song of the Murdered Jewish People." He was regarded, even by secular resistance fighters such as Mordecai Tenenbaum, as the one who could immortalize the agony and the struggle: "All that we thought, felt, or imagined, he wrote about," Tenenbaum wrote in a letter from Bialystok to his sister in Palestine. "We furnished him with the debris of our misery, and he made it eternal, sang of it, it was our common property."³⁴ The terror of Katzenelson's poetry is not only in the atrocities he relates, some of which are even surpassed in their gruesome details by poetic accounts of medieval pogroms, but in that it reflects a world that has lost its center, a world from which God has receded and the community of worshippers who might have found their way back to Him has been destroyed, root and branch. The echoes of phrases from lamentation literature appear all the more terrible in these poems because the ulti-

mate source of meaning and consolation that informed the interpretation of catastrophe throughout the generations has been withdrawn. In the Midrash, as in the Bible, all of nature, all of the cosmos, participates in the suffering of Israel. One Midrash recounts that when the Temple was burning and the Jews were being slaughtered, Moses reprimanded the sun for shining on such devastation. The sun replied, in sorrow and shame, that it was forced by higher powers to shine.³⁵ Compare this with Katzenelson's poem of the stars whose indifference twinkles at the poet in his everlasting night.³⁶ The outside world—nature, the cosmos, Divinity—appears either as a memory or a mockery. Although a defiance that borders on apostasy accompanied the response to catastrophe in nearly every generation, never, I believe, in the lamentation literature does man's loneliness appear so vast and implacable or the desolation of his world so total. In Katzenelson's poetry, as in the Yiddish poetry of many of the survivors, tradition founders like a boat whose course was charted long ago but which has lost its compass—and its crew.

And yet these themes continue to reverberate through Yiddish poetry—to whom, to what force can the Jewish poet appeal other than to the God of his fathers, even in the hour of His eclipse: "In whom can I believe, / If not in Him, my beloved God of Cataclysm," asks Aharon Zeitlin in his poem "Ani Maamin." "I am a Jew, as He is God."³⁷ And Ya'acov Glatstein seems to answer him in his poem "Ohn Yiddn": "Without Jews, there is no Jewish God."³⁸

Hebrew literature has undergone a somewhat different development. A long chain of literary precedents and the historic consciousness of the only socially coherent and articulate community of Jews left in the world generated the expectation that Hebrew poetry would produce the "definitive" elegy that could encompass and assign meaning to the latest and most terrible chapter in the chronicle of Jewish suffering. The Jews of Palestine, sharing with other Jews the same heritage and the same regard for the evocative power of poetry under critical circumstances, removed from the continent on which the annihilating hosts were gathering—though not from the global conflict that threatened to engulf Palestine as well—responded variously to the condition

of their European brothers. In the years preceding the war, a surprising number of Hebrew writers had warned of impending disaster in a series of poems and stories that can, perhaps, be read not only as clairvoyant but also as reflections of the ideological bias of a community disengaging itself from the ways and the fate of the Diaspora. Some of the major poets, including Zalman Shneur before World War I and Shaul Tchernikovsky in the thirties, invoked grotesque images of medieval torture and mass murder to suggest through an analogous and cyclical reading of history the imminent encroachment of the forces of destruction upon the world in general and the Jews in particular. Even Uri Zvi Greenberg, who later became European Jewry's chief Hebrew elegist, was one of the most prominent prophets of its destruction in the thirties, referring to himself as a creature not quite dog and not quite jackal, "who sniffs out disaster and barks in time."³⁹

During the war itself a fairly large number of poems appeared that expressed the sense of helplessness and horror that the Jews in Palestine were experiencing. The tone of much of this poetry was strident and declamatory, uneven in quality and nourished by both unfounded hopes and the trickles of real news that filtered slowly into public consciousness. Attentive not necessarily to aesthetic standards, but to a tradition of public poetry in times of national crisis, a large segment of the community reproached its poets for not sufficiently fulfilling their role as spokesmen. Much of the unease expressed in the community issued from a pervasive sense of the disparity between the relative security enjoyed by Palestinian Jewry and the nightmare that raged in Europe.

The post-Holocaust generation of Hebrew writers continued to struggle with the elegiac mission against constraints that they shared with other Jewish writers as well as circumstances peculiar to their own historical situation. A number of writers who had survived the war immigrated to Israel, but their influence, and the impact of the events themselves, began to be felt among the younger writers only in the early sixties; the Eichmann trial proved to be a watershed in Israeli perceptions of the Holocaust. In the years between the war and the trial, the impact of secularization, the preoccupation with nation build-

ing, and the identification of the Holocaust with the remote condition of "exile," as well as what Robert Alter has called the increasing "concentration on private and quotidian experience,"⁴⁰ may account in part, at least, for the initial resistance of Israeli writers to the summons to become the vessels of collective Jewish commemoration. Nevertheless, the subject has engaged an increasing number of writers; the voice they adopt is frequently that of the spokesman, and the themes and symbols derive from the motifs and imagery that prevail in lamentation literature. Uri Zvi Greenberg, in his epic poem *Streets of the River*, participates in the lamentation tradition through the same kinds of echoes and inversions of the conventional formulas and concepts that we have come to recognize as characteristic of both the ancient and the modern *kinah* and Midrash. Yet the personal voice is not lost even in this literature, as the speaker or narrator usually strains to find the meeting ground—or the point of departure—between his present and the past he is seeking to recover. Even where a writer, such as Abba Kovner, may not ostensibly assume a public stance, his very language reverberates with national memories and attitudes toward destruction and redemption. As Kovner himself admits, "I inherited many things from my ancestors. One is the teaching that a man should not say his own prayer before the prayer of all the people. In the Talmud it was stated that a man should always participate with the community. This is a moral code in creating art."⁴¹

An Hebraic writer such as Elie Wiesel, writing in a European language (although *Night* was written originally in Yiddish,⁴² Wiesel chose early in his career to become a French writer) cannot avail himself of the resonances inherent in Hebrew or Yiddish and must make other compromises with tradition in order to be accessible to a wider audience. Nevertheless, writers like Wiesel, Sachs, Schwarz-Bart, and Sperber associate themselves deliberately with the tradition and can be discussed in terms of it. It should be emphasized that the use of historical values in the search for signification does not ensure the continued reaffirmation of those principles, but it does, at the very least, inform the quest.

Wiesel works from within two literary traditions—the lamentation

tradition and the genre of the modern French novel—and those readers who make a direct leap from ancient Midrash to Wiesel's fiction tend to oversimplify the complexities of religious or religious-oriented responses in a secular world and in a genre that has rarely accommodated the issues of theodicy and collective destiny. The contradictions between the literary tools and perspectives that were his pre-Holocaust heritage and the medium of the modern novel in which he has chosen to write are the source of both the unique power and the weaknesses in Wiesel's writing.

Wiesel's fiction is grounded in fact, yet its value is primarily spiritual rather than documentary. Unlike some of the lamentation literature cited above, Wiesel does not choose to dwell on the sordid facts, as if the aesthetic forms he is using and the religious categories he is probing cannot stand on a substructure of atrocity. What emerges as significant, then, is not the events per se but their function in raising questions and generating legends. The role of the witness or transmitter of collective Jewish experience is to establish at least a degree of verisimilitude and then to interpret and explore the event and to assign it a place in Jewish history. Yet the balance between reality and legend is a very tenuous one, and Wiesel's narratives are often in danger of being subverted by too much or too little realism.⁴³ There must be constant reminders that, as in Midrash, the theatre is the human arena but the drama is cosmic. As Wiesel writes in one essay:

Without God, the attempted annihilation of European Jewry would be relevant only on the level of history—another episode in another inhumane war, and what war is not inhumane? and would not require a total revision of seemingly axiomatic values and concepts. Remove its Jewish aspects, and Auschwitz appears devoid of mystery.⁴⁴

Yet the traditional rationale for martyrdom is hardly applicable: neither purpose nor meaning can be assigned to Auschwitz, Wiesel keeps insisting—neither in religious terms (for the sake of our sins . . .), nor in terms of a dialectic of Jewish history by which reconstruction follows destruction. In this conviction Wiesel differs from a poet like U. Z. Greenberg, who claims a kind of causal relationship between the

Holocaust and the establishment of the State of Israel.⁴⁵ In his own version of an ancient Midrash in *Ani Maamin*, Wiesel deliberately alters the rabbinic conclusion in which Rachel's pleas to God prevail and He agrees to return the people to Zion.⁴⁶ Avoiding the temptation to link recent historical events through a claim of redemption that would assign some sort of design or purpose to the suffering of the Holocaust victims, Wiesel concludes his Midrash with the pitiful gestures of a God who can only commiserate with His people in their suffering.⁴⁷

Even without these traditional supports, Wiesel perseveres in his attempt to reveal the links by which the individual can continue to orient himself to the collective destiny. These are, ironically, among the few instances in Holocaust literature where the survivor does not have to "invent" the historical or moral coordinates by which the events can be scrutinized and transmitted. He proceeds by a method of transmutation and chastisement reminiscent of the powerful inversions, petitions, and rebukes of the rabbis and paytanim in Midrash and in lamentation poetry. In *Night*, when the kapos come into the barracks at Auschwitz to collect any new shoes that the inmates may have brought with them, Eliezer's own pair of new shoes are so coated with mud that they are not noticed: "I thanked God, in an improvised prayer, for having created mud in His infinite and wonderful universe," he says, in a prayer that comes out sounding like a curse.⁴⁸ In *Ani Maamin*, Isaac invokes his own willingness to be sacrificed against the sacrifice of the Jews of Eastern Europe:

You made me climb, then descend
Mount Moriah—
Crushed and silent.
I did not know, my Lord, I did not know
It was to see my children,
Old and young,
Arrive in Majdanek.⁴⁹

Such writing, which in the magnitude of the task Wiesel has set for himself leads to occasional excesses and redundancy, is nevertheless

a persistent effort to transmute reality into legend that can abide within the canon of lamentational literature. It attempts to convey in secular fiction the manner of thought and the literary modes practiced by believing Jews who perished—to apply, that is, to the most cataclysmic event of all the internal methods by which the Jews of Eastern Europe traditionally grappled with and assimilated collective tragedy—while revealing the strains that both the modern mind and the enormity of the evil impose upon the tradition.

Manès Sperber is another writer who, especially in . . . *Than a Tear in the Sea*, reveals the tensions generated by the Holocaust in the inner fabric of Judaism. The essence of this writer's novel is the challenge to the ultimate significance of martyrdom posed by such an unprecedented threat to the body as well as the soul of the Jew—and the struggle for the proper Jewish response to an opportunity for resistance. It is, in other words, the drama between the traditional summons to martyrdom for the sanctification of God's name—Kiddush haShem—and the call to arms, which is both an ancient and modern alternative to self-sacrifice—what one rabbi during the Holocaust called *Kiddush ha-hayyim*.⁵⁰ The lesson that the protagonist, an assimilated Jew named Edi Rubin, ultimately learns from a young rabbi with whom he fights against the Nazis is that "one must understand events as parables."⁵¹ What emerges, then, is a story that is, in the Midrashic tradition, a clash of spiritual attitudes *in history*, under the aspect of eternity.

For a writer like Nelly Sachs, it is also a version of history that provides both the precedent for and the response to martyrdom. Biblical, Hasidic, and Kabbalistic themes and symbols are woven into Sachs's poetry and drama, but they are for the most part *sources* rather than *traditions* serving the search for an attitude towards death. Unlike what we find in the writing of Wiesel and Sperber, it is *death*—the enormity, the mystery, the place of death—that is at the center of Sachs's poetry. When Wiesel and Sperber do concentrate on dying, it is more for the legacy that the manner of dying leaves to the living than for the repulsive—or redemptive—power of death itself. The Bible and Jewish history appear here not as the epic of a living people en-

gaged in a dialogue with God, but as a kind of compendium of the signs of martyrdom that will furnish the references for future sacrifice. In that sense there is no *history* in Sachs's universe—there is rather a recurrence of archetypal events and relationships. Jewish existence becomes a series of reenactments of the pageant of death, which takes place not in a civilization but in a barren landscape of screams. There is a kind of inexorable relationship between victim and victimizer, which is destined to be reenacted in every generation. In this pageant the Nazis remain anonymous, often becoming no more than the dismembered instruments of a transcendent will. A recurrent synecdoche in the poetry is the “fingers of the killers”: in the play *Eli* each finger represents a different form of death (one finger strangles, another administers injections, etc.⁵²), and in the poem “O the Chimneys” the “fingers” are the agents that build the chimneys for Israel’s “Smoke.”⁵³ Compare this with the image of “fingers” that appears in a Midrash in which Jeremiah returns from captivity to Jerusalem and finds the fingers of the dead exiles on a mountaintop. These are the limbs of the body of his beloved Israel, whom he chastises even as he mourns: “He collected them, embraced, fondled and kissed them, placed them in his cloak, and said to them, ‘My children, did I not warn and tell you, Give glory to the Lord your God, before it grow dark, and before your feet stumble upon the mountains of twilight.’”⁵⁴

Death in Sachs’s universe is, somehow, consecrated by divine will, but not by the God of revelation and covenant, not by the God who is called into dialogue with man. Wiesel’s poem, quoted earlier from *Ani Maamin*, bears a striking resemblance to one of Sachs’s poems, in which Moriah and Majdanek are also linked.⁵⁵ But whereas Wiesel links the two events in bitterness and irony, as if in an effort to force God to honor His covenant with His people as they have honored theirs with Him, in Sachs’s poem God is unreachable and unaccountable, and the recurrence of martyrdom is accepted as part of a transcendental synthesis. In a manner that recalls the seventeenth-century metaphysical poet, Sachs lifts the real historical properties, the artifacts, of Israel’s martyrdom—such as the numbers engraved on their arms—and assimilates them as components of an organic universe:

When your forms turned to ashes
into the oceans of night
Where eternity washes
life and death into the tides—

there rose the numbers
(once branded into your arms
so none would escape the agony)

there rose meteors of numbers
beckoned into the spaces
where light-years expand like arrows
and the planets
are born
of the magic substance of pain—
numbers—root and all
plucked out of murderers’ brains
and part already
of the heavenly cycle’s
path of blue veins.⁵⁶

Sachs’s poems are, then, a volume of *consolation* that seeks refuge in a Divinity whose ways are inscrutable and in a humanity that fulfills its tragic mission in death.

Paul Celan uses many of the same images and invokes many of the same associations as Sachs, yet he constructs a world as bleak and rudderless as hers is whole and mysterious. Sachs’s repeated invocation of the dust of martyred Israel—the dust of ancient sacrifices and the ashes of contemporary incinerations—is echoed in repeated poems of Celan’s, but whereas for Sachs the dust of today’s sacrifice mingles with the sand of Sinai and the wisdom of Solomon and finds its resolution in the eternal process by which “the fingers” (of the murderers) that “emptied the deathly shoes of sand” will tomorrow “be dust / In the shoes of those to come,”⁵⁷ Celan can offer no consolation in the cosmic design, or even in the artistic reconstruction of the event:

There was earth in them, and
they dug.
They dug and dug, and thus

Their day wore on, and
 their night. And they did
 not praise God,
 - Who, they heard, willed all this,
 who they heard, knew all this.

They dug and heard no more;
 they did not grow wise, nor contrive any song
 or any kind of language.
 They dug. . . .⁵⁸

The God whom they "did not praise" is the God of the covenant, the God who must be held accountable for the operations of history. In another poem the victims' silence, their refusal to pray, is transformed into a prayer of defiance that strains the lamentation tradition to the breaking point:

No one kneads us again of earth and clay,
 No one incants our dust.
 No one.

Blessed art thou, No-one.
 For thy sake we will bloom
 Towards
 thee.⁵⁹

Celan acknowledges directly the gap between Sachs's quiet faith in an inscrutable Deity and his own angry prosecution of an accountable God, in a poem dedicated to Nelly Sachs:

The Talk was of your God, I spoke
 against Him, I
 let the heart that I had,
 hope:
 for His highest, His deathrattled, His
 angry word—⁶⁰

Yet whatever his brief against God, Celan casts his lot with the folk of Israel. When he speaks of the victims he usually speaks in the first person plural, and his identification with the suffering lot of his

people is nowhere more apparent than in his masterpiece, "Todesfuge": "Coal black milk of morning we drink it at evening / we drink it at noon and at daybreak we drink it at night."⁶¹ Celan's legacy is not a consolation or a resolution but a confrontation and a defiance.

A pattern begins to emerge from a comparative study of the most visible of the Hebraic writers—a pattern that may be surprising but that derives from the immeasurable trauma that the Holocaust wrought not only in the flesh of Israel but also in its spirit, and that finds expression in the poetry and prose of its lamentation. For those writers such as Wiesel—and Celan and Sperber in their Holocaust works—who remain within the bounds of the tradition, the attempt to recreate the Holocaust in terms of its collective legacy is accompanied by the risk of exposing the ruptures, the challenges, and contradictions in the fundamental codes of Jewish faith and conduct. A different kind of resolution is reached by a writer such as Nelly Sachs—and here I would add, parenthetically, André Schwarz-Bart, whose *Last of the Just*⁶² may appear to belong to the tradition of the chronicles of Midrashim of catastrophe, a kind of latter-day fictional *Emek ha Bacha*, but whose designation of Ernie Levy as a self-proclaimed expiatory martyr in the context of some sort of communal redemption is essentially Christian in origin and presents Jewish history as an adjunct to or whipping boy for Christian history. As in Sachs's poems, the roles of victim and victimizer appear in *The Last of the Just* as preordained, the Nazis become the latest in the necessary succession of executioners, and their partners in this passion are the willing victims, the Just Men. The lyrical element of reconciliation wrought by pity and of the transcendental harmony that concludes this novel is absent in writers such as Wiesel, Sperber, and Celan and is extrinsic to a tradition in which no man can relieve the sins or the suffering of another. Writers like Schwarz-Bart and Sachs, who would "conquer" the Holocaust by seeking in the abyss the sparks of redemption or consolation, have done so by going beyond the tradition, beyond the covenantal relationship between God and Israel, and beyond the internal literary and philosophical dialogue through which Israel has confronted catastrophe throughout the ages.

Gabriel, Kathriel, Michael. Man's redemptive capabilities draw from the divine element within him. The Kabbalists, beginning with the sixteenth century, stressed the divine element in man. No longer intimidated by Christian polemics, they asserted the possibility of a divine "part" within man. The great Jewish mystic of sixteenth-century Prague, Judah Loew (Maharal), even asserted the possibility of the incarnation of God and man in the personage of Moses, the redeemer of Israel from Egypt. Loew calls Moses the man-God; see his *Tiferet Yisrael*, chapter 21. Hence, Wiesel's messianism is not humanistic but Kabbalistic. One should read Wiesel's work, specifically *Beggar*, in Kabbalistic terms.

In Kabbalistic parlance, certain personalities symbolize various *sefirot* or divine emanations. References to these personalities are to be read on two levels: literal and symbolic. In *Beggar* Kathriel represents the upper emanation *Kether*, David the emanation *Tiferet*, and Malkah the lowest emanation, the female aspect of God—*Malkut* or the *Shekinah*. Thus, Kathriel and David's relationship with Malkah has not only a human but also a divine referent. When union occurs between the human couple, it effects a union in the divine realm of the *sefirot*. Redemptive acts below—on the human sphere—reflect above into the divine realm. *Beggar* is therefore not only a novel but a modern attempt at Kabbalistic discourse.

52. T, 10, 135.

53. J, 4, 94; G, 225.

54. A, 42.

55. T, 49. Despite Wiesel's restatement of notions rooted in Jewish mystical messianism, some commentators on Wiesel's Midrash claim that his story has eliminated the Messianic hope from the Jewish story. Some critics claim that Wiesel "asserts that it is too late for the Messiah," that he rejects the Messianic advent. (Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History*, pp. 88, 78.) Yet Wiesel does not reject the Messianic idea. While he does not eliminate the idea of the individual Messiah, he stresses the Lurianic notion of a collective Messiah over the role of an individual Messiah. The same text that has been used to illustrate Wiesel's rejection of the Messiah can be used to validate his opting for a collective Messiah. Wiesel writes: "The Messiah is not coming. He's not coming because he has already come. This is unknown, but he is neither at the gates of Rome nor in heaven. Everybody is wrong. The Messiah is everywhere. . . . The Messiah, he used to say, is that which makes man more human, which takes the element of pride out of generosity, which stretches his soul toward others. . . . We shall be honest and humble and strong, and then he will come, he will come every day, thousands of times every day. He will have no face, because he will have a thousand faces. The Messiah isn't one man,

Clara, he's all men. As long as there are men there will be a Messiah." (G, 32–33, 42–43; G, 225; S, 189).

Prophetic literature contains both notions, an individual as well as a collective Messiah. Rabbinic literature strongly opts for an individual Messiah. See sources noted in Joseph Klausner, trans. W. R. Stinespring, *The Messianic Idea in Israel* (New York: Macmillan, 1955), pp. 214, 217; Solomon Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (New York: Schocken, 1961), p. 101, n. 2; Steven Schwarzschild, "The Personal Messiah," *Judaism* 5:2, pp. 123–35. On the question of Wiesel's relationship to classical Jewish messianism, see my aforementioned essay (n. 29) "Jewish Messianism and Elie Wiesel."

56. See OGA, 165–75.

57. John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), p. 371.

58. L, 6; see OGA, 43.

59. OGA, 67; see OGA 11, 257.

60. *Avodah Zara* 18a.

61. *Taanit* 29a; see also *Avot d'R. Nathan* ch. 4; II Barukh 10:18; *Leviticus Rabbah* 19:6. Compare OGA, 44.

62. S, 259.

Ezrahi: The Holocaust Writer and the Lamentation Tradition

1. See the novels of Ilona Karmel, Anna Langfus, Zdena Berger, Elzbieta Ettinger, Michel del Castillo, Ladislav Fuks, and Arnošt Lustig for examples of the struggle to maintain the integrity of the self as part of the struggle for survival, and the fiction of Edgar Hilsenrath and Tadeusz Borowski for explorations of degrees of disintegration of the self and submission to the concentrationary system.

2. Adolf Rudnicki, "Ascent to Heaven," in *Ascent to Heaven*, trans. H. C. Stevens (London: Dennis Dobson Ltd., 1951), p. 23.

3. Maurice Samuel, "The Story that Must Build Itself," in *Mid-Century*, ed. Harold U. Ribalow (New York: The Beechurst Press, 1955), p. 233.

4. W. Rabi, "Vingt Ans de Littérature," in *D'Auschwitz à Israel: Vingt Ans Après la Libération*, ed. Isaac Schneersohn (Paris, 1968), p. 361.

5. Elie Wiesel, *One Generation After*, trans. from the French by Lily Edelman and the author (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1970), p. 82.

6. Manès Sperber, . . . *Than a Tear in the Sea*, trans. from the French by Constantine Fitzgibbon (New York: Bergen Belsen Memorial Press, 1967), p. 9.

7. Sachs's play *Eli* is subtitled "Ein Mysterienspiel vom Leiden Israels." In *O the Chimneys* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967).

8. The "selihoth" are prayers recited during the month of Elul and variations on the dirge "El Maleh Rahamim." The "kinah" was originally recited when an important person had died (Jer. 22:18, Gen. 23:2); later it was recited over a whole community that had suffered catastrophe. The Book of Lamentations is referred to in rabbinic literature as "kinoth." The Talmud preserved many of the early kinoth. The first collection of kinoth, in the Ashkenazic tradition, was published in 1585. Since then many versions have been published. In 1923 Shimeon Bernfeld published the three-volume Hebrew anthology *Sefer HaDema'oth* (The Book of Tears), which included representative stories and poems generated by the major catastrophes that the Jews had endured since the days of Antiochus Epiphanes. As an aside, one may note the rather intense interest in martyrology among German Jewish scholars in the 1920s and 1930s, especially when compared to the relative lack of interest by American Jewish scholars in the subject. Bernfeld strikes an ominous note when he writes, in the introduction to his work, "we are fearful that what will come after us will be more terrible than that which we have witnessed" (*Sefer HaDema'oth*, Vol. I [Berlin: Eschkol Publishers, 1923], p. 77).

9. The historiographical function of the Midrash as well as of the kinah can be discerned even in the etymology of the word "Midrash," which, as translated in the Septuagint, suggests "an account," "the result of inquiry . . . of the events of the time" (Moshe D. Herr, "Midrash," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 11, p. 1508).

10. Simon Dubnow, in his monumental *History of the Jewish People*, attests to the fact that "the Middle Ages have bequeathed us no systematic chronography; our horrifying tragedies have found no competent annalists" (quoted in Jacob Lestschinsky, "For a Survey of the Jewish Tragedy," *The Chicago Forum*, Vol. 4, No. 3 [Spring, 1946], p. 151). A few fledgling historians did overcome this resistance to historiography. But for the most part they too shared the poet's vocabulary and sacred perspective on history (see, for example, *Shevet Yehuda*, *Emek HaBachah*, and *Yeven Metzulah*, accounts of Jewish persecution written in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries). It was not until the pogroms of 1903-1905 in Russia that thorough documentation provided reliable sources for secular historical evaluation of collective Jewish catastrophe.

11. A glance at some of the discussions among medieval rabbis and scholars on the subject reveals the extent to which the aversion toward historiography was a matter of principle, not of oversight. Chronicles of the deeds of men may, it is argued, be enlightening for the Gentiles, "who have not seen the light of Torah and must stumble through the darkness of human records" to find some sparks of virtue after which they may pattern their lives (Azaria Min HaAdumim, *Meor Einayim*, ed. Yitzhak Ben-Ya'acov, Vol. I [Vilna: n.p., 1863], p. 254).

12. This structure and formulaic phrases like "shever bat-ami" ("disaster [has befallen] my people"—Jer. 14:17 and Lam. 2:14) appear in a representative poem lamenting the auto-da-fé of twenty-four Marranos in the Papal city of Ancona in 1556 ("The Heavens are Desolate," by Shlomo Hazan Yatzav, in Bernfeld, *Sefer HaDema'oth*, Vol. II, pp. 347-50; see also "There is No King and No Governor in Israel," *Ibid.*, Vol. III, pp. 169-72).

13. "The Heavens are Desolate," *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 347.

14. "Listen All Ye Nations, to my Grief," poem by David Yehuda ben David ibn Yechiah lamenting the massacre of Spanish and Portuguese Jews, Bernfeld, Vol. II, p. 219.

15. Selihah prayer by R. Shabbetai Cohen Ba'al Hashah commemorating the victims of Chmielnicki, in Bernfeld, Vol. III, p. 172.

16. In devising forms of desecration of Scriptures, the Nazis, it turns out, were not always original; a seventeenth-century Italian poet, recounting the brutal acts committed by Chmielnicki's Cossacks, describes how "the Torah came into their hands / They made of it shoes for the soles of their feet" ("May the Heart of Man be Sickened . . ." by R. Ya'acov Bar Moshe Halevi, in Bernfeld, Vol. III, p. 167). The desecration of the Holy Scrolls was a recurrent theme in the most impassioned lamentations of the Middle Ages.

17. One example of the priority of "documentation" over artistic quality is a kinah on the destruction of Spanish Jewry; "Adat kodesh Barzelona / Harugei herev shmena" (a liberal English equivalent might be: "The holy community of Barcelona / Its dying let out a great moan—ah!"). ("I will Keen and Wail Bitterly," anonymous, in Bernfeld, Vol. II, p. 224.)

18. A. M. Haberman, ed., *Sefer Gezereth Ashkenaz V'Tzarefat* (Jerusalem: Tarshish Books, 1946), p. x.

19. The Spanish paytanim were among the most distinguished; as Israel Zinberg has put it, whereas "in other lands . . . it was the muses of terror and misfortune that inspired lamentations and religious poems," in Spain the paytanim were often also blessed with considerable poetic

talent (*A History of Jewish Literature*, trans. and ed. Bernard Martin [Cleveland: The Press of Case Western Reserve, 1972], Vol. II, p. 24).

20. In this respect, as in others, the so-called historical chronicles served the same purpose in prose. Nathan Hanover elucidates this in his introduction to *Yeven Metzulah* (*The Abyss of Despair*), which was perhaps the most significant history of Jewish persecution, published in 1652: "I recorded all the major and minor decrees and persecutions; also the days on which those cruelties occurred, so that everyone might be able to calculate the day on which his kin died, and observe the memorial properly" (trans. from the Hebrew by Abraham J. Mesch [New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1950], p. 25).

21. Selihah prayer by R. Shabbetai Cohen Ba'al Hashah, in Bernfeld, Vol. III, p. 172. The same was true of the kinoth written in commemoration of the martyrs of Ancona, which were recited for generations thereafter as part of the Tisha B'Av service in the local community.

22. See Second Book of Maccabees, 6:21-7:41; Lamentations Rabbah, I:16; and a Sephardic kinah for Tisha B'av in Bernfeld, Vol. I, pp. 91-95. For a discussion of the versions of this legend in the contemporary martyrological literature, see Gershon David Cohen, "Ma'aseh Hanna v'Shivat Baneha b'Sifrut HaIvrit," in the *Mordecai Kaplan Jubilee Volume*, Hebrew section (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1953), pp. 109-22.

23. For a discussion of the general climate of consensus out of which the paytan wrote, see Itzhak Be'er's introduction to Haberman, ed., *Sefer Gezerot Ashkenaz V'Tzorefat*, pp. 1-7.

24. "Israel neglected the good; her enemies will pursue her until the debt is paid" ("There is no King or Governor in Israel," in Bernfeld, Vol. III, p. 101). In repeated Midrashim on the destruction of the Temple the disaster is attributed to the unworthiness of and the fraternal strife among the Jews themselves: "Had you been worthy, you would be dwelling in Jerusalem, uttering songs and praises to the Holy One, Blessed be He; but now that you are unworthy, you are exiled to Babylon where you utter lamentations. Alas!" (Proem XIX to *Midrash Rabbah: Lamentations*, trans. and ed. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon [London: Soncino Press, 1939], p. 24.)

25. See again "The Heavens are Desolate," a lamentation by Shlomo Hazan Yatzav on the burning of twenty-four Marranos in Ancona in the sixteenth century:

"Oh God, Lord of mercy and compassion,
Have mercy on the remnant of Israel

Through the merit of these martyrs we plead
... that you will build the House of Ariel"

(Bernfeld, Vol. II, p. 350).

26. See, for example, the phrase, "who is like unto Thee among the speechless, O God, / Who can be compared with Thee in Thy silence?" in the twelfth-century kinah by Menahem ben Jacob ("Allelai Li," published in *Kovetz Al Yad* and quoted in Zinberg, *A History of Jewish Literature*, Vol. II, p. 26). The antecedents of this inversion ("who is like unto Thee among the mighty"—*elim*—into "who is like unto Thee among the speechless"—*ilmim*) are Tannaitic (see *Mechilta de-Reb Ishmael*). For a further elaboration of this theme in Midrashic literature, see the essay by Byron Sherwin, "Wiesel's Midrash: The Writings of Elie Wiesel and Their Relationship to Jewish Tradition," in this volume.

27. Haberman, intro. to *Sefer Gezerot Ashkenaz V'Tzorefat*, p. x.

28. Bialik's struggle is reflected in numerous poems such as the following:

"My soul bowed down to the dust
Under the burden of your love ...
Not a poet, nor a prophet,
But a hewer of wood am I"

("Shaha Nafshi" [My Soul Bowed Down], in *Kol Kitvei Bialik* [Tel Aviv: Dvir Publishers, 1971], p. 61).

29. See "HaMatmid" (the Scholar) and "B'ir Haharegah" (In the City of the Slaughter) in *Ibid.*, pp. 89, 98.

30. See "Achen Hatzir Ha'Am" (Surely the People is Grass) and "Lifnei Aron HaSefarim" (In Front of the Bookcase) as well as "Al HaShehitah" (On the Slaughter) in *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18, 54-55, 41.

31. See "B'ir Haharegah," especially the scene in which the women are raped while their men cower in dark corners, watching, and then run to the rabbi to inquire whether they are allowed to sleep with their defiled wives (*Ibid.*, pp. 95 ff.).

32. See, for example, his invocation of the ritual act of animal slaughter in the context of human massacre—an inversion that is an indictment of the divine powers that would countenance such slaughter ("Al Hashehitah," in *Ibid.*, p. 41).

33. *The Warsaw Diary of Chaim Kaplan* (originally published as *The Scroll of Agony*), trans. and ed. Abraham I. Katsh (New York: Collier Books, 1973), p. 79.

34. Quoted by Leon Poliakov in *Harvest of Hate* (London: Elek Books, 1956), pp. 232-33.

35. See Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, for a recounting of this Midrash (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1946), Vol. IV, pp. 303 ff.

36. Yitzhak Katzenelson, "Lieder fun Kelt," from *Dos Lied fun Oisgehargetn Yiddishn Folk*, in *Lieder fun Hurbn*, ed. Kadia Maladowska (Tel Aviv: I. L. Peretz, 1962), p. 40.

37. Aharon Zeitlin, "Ani Ma'amin," in *Lieder fun Hurbn*, p. 190.

38. Ya'acov Glatstein, "Ohn Yiddn," in *Ibid.*, p. 96.

39. Quoted by Hillel Barzel in his introduction to *HaShoah B'shira Halvrit*, ed. Natan Gross (Tel Aviv: HaKibbutz Hameuhad, 1974), p. 7.

40. Robert Alter, "A Poet of the Holocaust," *Commentary*, November 1973, p. 57; see also Alter's "Confronting the Holocaust," in *After the Tradition: Essays in Modern Jewish Writing* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1971), p. 164.

41. From a speech delivered in San Francisco, January 20, 1972. See, for example, "Ahoti K'tana" (My Little Sister), trans. Shirley Kaufman and Nurit Orchan, in *Abba Kovner and Nelly Sachs: Selected Poems* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1971). Even in the fiction of a writer like Aharon Appelfeld, an unexpected dialectic emerges between traditional and alternative forms of confronting the Holocaust; see his story, "K'Ishon Ha'Ayin" (The Apple of his Eye) in the collection of his short stories, *K'Meah Eydim* (Tel Aviv: HaKibbutz HaMeuhad, 1974).

42. *Un di Velt Hot Geshvign*, 1956.

43. On stylistic grounds, Wiesel's occasional lapses into a kind of staccato, journalistic realism are startlingly intrusive (see, for example, *The Town Beyond the Wall*, trans. from the French by Stephen Becker [New York: Avon Books, 1964], p. 73; *The Oath*, trans. from the French by Marion Wiesel [New York: Random House, 1973], p. 11; and *A Beggar in Jerusalem*, trans. from the French by Lily Edelman and the author [New York: Random House, 1970], p. 170). On the other hand, his attempts to embrace and commemorate a world that was lost by typologizing and duplicating its characters, often divested of specificity, occasionally lead him to sacrifice the "histoire" to the legend. And just as an overdose of realism can dispel the aura of legend, so an attenuation of realism can betray the ground of legend (see, for example, "Dialogues I" in *One Generation After*, pp. 31-32).

44. *One Generation After*, p. 166.

45. See, for example, the concluding stanza of U. Z. Greenberg's "Keter Kinah l'Chol Beit Yisrael," which places Israel's martyrdom within

a normative framework in which those who follow the "laws" attain the "kingdom"; it is "because of them," the martyrs, that their heirs have inherited the "Land" (p. 62).

46. See *Lamentations Rabbah*, Proem XXIV.

47. Wiesel, *Ani Maamin: A Song Lost and Found Again*, trans. from the French by Marion Wiesel (New York: Random House, 1973), pp. 93, 97, 103, 105.

48. Wiesel, *Night*, trans. from the French by Stella Rodway (New York: Hill and Wang, 1960), p. 47.

49. *Ani Maamin*, p. 33.

50. Rabbi Isaac Nissenbaum, one of the leaders of Polish Jewry, is reported to have told his people: "This is a time of *kiddush ha-hayyim*, the sanctification of life, and not for *kiddush ha-Shem*, the holiness of martyrdom. Previously the Jew's enemy sought his soul and the Jew sacrificed his body in martyrdom; now the oppressor demands the Jew's body and the Jew is obliged therefore to defend it, to preserve his life." (Quoted by Shaul Esh, "The Dignity of the Destroyed," *Judaism*, Vol. XI, No. 2, pp. 106-107.)

51. Sperber, . . . *Than a Tear in the Sea*, p. 89.

52. Sachs, *Eli*, in *O the Chimneys*, pp. 368-70.

53. Sachs, "O the Chimneys," in *Ibid.*, p. 3.

54. *Lamentations Rabbah*, proem XXXIV, p. 64.

55. Sachs, "Landscape of Screams," in *O the Chimneys*, pp. 127, 129.

56. Sachs, "Numbers," in *Ibid.*, p. 71.

57. Sachs, "But Who Emptied Your Shoes of Sand," in *Ibid.*, p. 9.

58. Paul Celan, "There was Earth in Them," in *Speech-Grille and Selected Poems*, trans. from the German by Joachim Neugrochel (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1971), p. 173.

59. Celan, "Psalm," in *Ibid.*, p. 183.

60. Celan, "Zürich, Zum Storchen," in *Ibid.*, p. 179.

61. Celan, "Todesfuge," trans. Karl S. Weimar, in "Paul Celan's 'Todesfuge,' Translation and Interpretation," *PMLA*, Vol. 89, No. 1 (Jan., 1974), p. 85.

62. André Schwarz-Bart, *The Last of the Just*, trans. Stephen Becker (London: Secker & Warburg, 1961).

Neher: Shaddai: The God of the Broken Arch

1. See André Neher, "Job, the Biblical Man," *Judaism*, Winter 1964; "The Motif of Job in Modern Literature," *Dor-le-Dor*, Fall 1974; *L'Exil de la Parole, du silence biblique au silence d'Auschwitz* (Paris: Ed.