

*70 years after the Temple had been destroyed and the Shekhinah had gone into exile, all the angels went into mourning for Her, and they composed dirges and lamentations for her. So too did all the upper and lower realms weep for Her and go into mourning. Then God came down from heaven and looked upon His house that had been burned. He looked for His people, who had gone into exile. And He inquired about His bride, who had left Him. And just as she had suffered a change, so too did Her husband-His light no longer shone, and He was changed from what He had been. Indeed, by some accounts God was bound in chains.<sup>1</sup>*

### **Psalm: Paul Celan**

No one moulds us again out of earth and clay,  
no one conjures our dust.

No one.

Praised be your name, no one.

For your sake  
we shall flower.

Towards  
you.

A nothing  
we were, are, shall  
remain, flowering:  
the nothing-, the no one's rose.

With  
our pistil soul-bright,  
with our stamen heaven-ravaged,  
our corolla red  
with the crimson word which we sang  
over, O over  
the thorn.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Howard Schwartz, *The Tree of Souls: The Mythology of Judaism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) 58, Pesikta De Rav Kahana 13:9, 15:3, Zohar I:182a

<sup>2</sup> Translated by Michael Hamburger

She longs for Him,  
 she, through our collective self, keeps longing for the absent lover  
 in the dark night of this apparent exile  
 despite the yellow glowing lights on the Jerusalem walls,  
 the yellow badges haunt our dreams  
 despite the Profit Sharing Plans for retirement in Florida,  
 all contemporary luxury feels guilty,  
 all remains not well.

In our absent gazes,  
 She too is not present, in us  
 She too has gone, disgusted by the self-bloating  
 Holier-than-Thou'ness of current religious pretensions to piety  
 so we play games as if...  
 the rituals of daily life and learning had meaning inside  
 as if...  
 nothing had happened some 70 years ago  
 a lover's spat some would say!  
 others would make even more outrageous theological claims (harping to Nietzsche)  
 yet others would put blame on us! on the very victims!!  
 as if...

Has He ever not been bound in chains?  
<sup>3</sup> *the king bound in the trestles.* מֶלֶךְ, אֶסוּר בְּרֶהֱטִים.  
 did the Song to end all Songs not tell us?  
 the king bound in his trestles  
 outside the garden of delight  
 watching and waiting for his beloved,  
 yet kabbalistically also bound  
 in the trauma of this very creation  
 in the only way the finite could trap the infinite in its grip.  
 Bound in the chains of the barbed wire trestles  
 He watches his beloved starved and tortured  
 played with and humiliated by German/Ukrainian/Polish soldiers  
 the women defiled in ways that left permanent etchings in the flesh, a scarring,  
 living corpses who could never again make love...  
 handsome smart uniforms smoking all the while with leather gloves  
 so as not to defile themselves.

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<sup>3</sup> Song of Songs 7:6 "Your head upon you is like Carmel, and the hair of your head like purple; a king is caught in its tresses."

Bound in the excremental deterioration of the self and humanity  
as if...  
the divine wished to experience such degradation  
a pervert Greek experiment ordered by the Pantheon for the amusement of the gods.

Awakening from this traumatic nightmare  
now 70 years later  
like those Rabbis of old  
looking at the Hurban  
the broken Jerusalem walls,  
the "fox running across the Temple Mount"<sup>4</sup>-  
we have no Rabbi Akiva to laugh.  
We languish amid the normalcy of daily life  
as if... it never took place.  
And we, the children of those who survived  
whose parents' silences  
deafen the living rooms of London, NY, Tel Aviv  
what are we to believe?  
who are we to believe?

You who survived gave us nothing to believe!  
despite your comings and goings to shul  
and the lips chattering alongside the songs of the chazzan  
we saw through that, even as children,  
to the dark emptiness inside you all  
and realized slowly, slowly  
the legacy of Die Niemandrose<sup>5</sup>  
and the Psalm to No-Body.

Please help us  
before you depart this world  
please show us how to  
believe!  
show us how to hold on to our lost faith  
even as you slowly drowned in your memories and lost ones.

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<sup>4</sup> Lamentations 5:18 "For the mountain of Zion, which is desolate, (even) foxes walk upon it."

<sup>5</sup> Paul Celan: Die Niemandrose (The Nomansrose / The No-One's-Rose, 1963)

In connecting to you  
we at least have a physical representation  
of your lives here  
of your embodied trauma  
of the blue etchings in your forearms  
of your survival  
we can hug and embrace your frail bodies  
like a talisman  
to ward off the evil curse that is our people.

But what will you leave us when you have gone?  
what blessing will you bestow upon us  
as you move away  
into the memory of our loss?  
Please don't leave  
please do not leave us alone  
in this wilderness  
in this new modern Hurban  
please give us a hint  
at some messianic dream you still hold on to  
some secret you have withheld until now  
some divine word you received over there  
in the hell of enlightened Europe.

Hold us close  
hold us to your hearts  
squeeze us tight please  
never let go.  
For without you  
we fear,  
we fear  
we will lose all faith  
like the Klauzenberger Rebbe claimed  
in the first *al chet* on Kol Nidre 1946  
***"our only חַטָּאת הָיְתָה שֶׁאֵין לָנוּ מַצְיָוֶה לְפָנֶיךָ יְיָ"***  
without you  
present  
to hold us close  
we fear  
being alone in this nightmarish world  
where people go about their normal lives  
as if...  
as if...  
it never happened.

