

Spiritual Resistance During the Holocaust

G-d

(1) Rage

(2) Redemption

Nazis

(3) Living

(4) Creativity

(1) G-d: Rage

*Esh Kodesh - Holy Fire, Inspirational Wartime Speeches by R. Kalonymus Kalman Shapira
The Piasezner Rebbe - 1889-1943, Rebbe of Piaseczno, Poland. Parashat Chukat, 1942.*

רבי קלמן קלונימוס שפירא, אש קודש, דרשה לשבת חוקת תש"ב (עמ' קפז)

ובאמת פלא הוא איך העולם עומד אחר כל-כך הרבה צעקות, ואילו בעשרה הרוגי מלכות נאמר שצעקו המלאכים זו תורה וזו שכרה וענתה בת קול מהשמים, אם אשמע קול אחד אהפוך את העולם למים. ועתה ילדים תמימים, מלאכים טהורים, אף גדולים קודשי ישראל הנהרגים ונשחטים רק בשביל שהם ישראל שהם יותר גדולים מהמלאכים ממלאים את כל חלל העולם צעקות ואין העולם נהפך למים, רק עומד על עומדו כאילו לא נגע לו הדבר ח"ו

"It is indeed incredible that the world exists after so many screams. We are told that, regarding the Ten Martyrs, the angels cried, "Is this the Torah, and this its reward?" Whereupon a voice answered from heaven, "If I hear another sound I will turn the world back to [primordial] water." But now innocent children, pure angels, as well as adults, the saintly of Israel, are killed and slaughtered just because they are Jews, who are greater than angels. They fill the entire space of the universe with these cries and the world does not turn back to water, but remains in place as if, God forbid, He remained untouched?!"

The Trial of God, a fictional play where God is put on trial after a pogrom in Shamgorod in 1649, inspired by real trial witnessed in Auschwitz, written by Elie Wiesel. Translated from French into English by Marion Wiesel.

Berish: You want to leave Him out? Turn Him into a neutral bystander? Would a father stand by quietly, silently, and watch his children being slaughtered?

Sam: By whom? By his other children!

Berish: All right, by his other children! Would he not interfere? *Should* he not?

Sam: You are using images, let me add mine. When human beings kill one another, where is God to be found? You see Him among the killers. I find Him among the victims.

Berish: He- a victim? A victim is powerless; is He powerless? He is almighty, isn't He? He could use His might to save the victims, but He doesn't! So- on whose side is He? Could the killer kill without His blessing- without His complicity?

Sam: Are you suggesting that the Almighty is on the side of the killer?

Berish: He is not on the side of the victim.

Sam: How do you know? Who told you?

Berish: The killers told me. They told the victims. They always do. They always say loud and clear that they kill in the name of God.

Sam: Did the victims tell you? (Berish *hesitates*) No? Then how do you know? Since when do you take the killers' word for granted? Since when do you place your faith in them? They are efficient killers but poor witnesses.

Berish: You would like to hear the victims? So would I. But they do not talk. They cannot come to the witness stand. They're dead. You hear me? The witnesses for the prosecution are the dead. All of them. I could call them, summon them a thousand times, and they would not appear here before you. They are not accustomed to taking a walk outside, and surely not on Purim eve. You want to know where they are? At the cemetery. At the bottom of mass graves. I implore the court to consider their absence as the weightiest of proofs, as the heaviest of accusations. They are witnesses, Your Honor, invisible and silent witnesses, but still witnesses! Let their testimony enter your conscience and your memory! Let their premature, unjust deaths turn into an outcry so forceful that it will make the universe tremble with fear and remorse!

(2) God: Redemption

Av haRachamim - Memorial prayer ~early 12th C.

אָב הַרַחֲמִים שׁוֹכֵן מְרוֹמִים. בְּרַחֲמָיו הָעֲצוּמִים הוּא יִפְקֹד בְּרַחֲמִים הַחֲסִידִים וְהַיְשָׁרִים וְהַתְּמִימִים. קֵהֲלוֹת
הַקֹּדֶשׁ שֶׁמָּסְרוּ נַפְשָׁם עַל קִדְשׁתְּ הַשֵּׁם. הַנְּאֻהָבִים וְהַנְּעִימִים בְּחַיֵּיהֶם וּבְמוֹתָם לֹא נִפְרְדוּ. מִנְּשָׁרִים קָלוּ
וּמֵאֲרִיּוֹת גָּבְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹן קוֹנֵם וְחַפֵּץ צוּרָם. יִזְכְּרֵם אֱלֹהֵינוּ לְטוֹבָה עִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקֵי עוֹלָם. וַיִּנְקוּם לְעֵינֵינוּ
נִקְמַת דָּם עֲבָדָיו הַשְּׁפוּרָךְ. כִּפְתוּב בְּתוֹרַת מֹשֶׁה אִישׁ אֱלֹהִים. הֲרַנִּינוּ גּוֹיִם עִמּוֹ כִּי דָם עֲבָדָיו יִקּוּם וְנִקָּם יֵשִׁיב
לְצָרָיו וְכִפֵּר אֲדַמְתּוֹ עִמּוֹ: וְעַל יְדֵי עֲבָדֶיךָ הַנְּבִיאִים כְּתוּב יֵאמֶר. וְנִקִּיתִי דָמָם לֹא נִקִּיתִי וְהָ שָׁכַן בְּצִיּוֹן: וּבְכַתְּבֵי
הַקֹּדֶשׁ נִאֶמַר לָמָּה יֵאמְרוּ הַגּוֹיִם אִיֶּה אֱלֹהֵיהֶם. יוֹדַע בְּגוֹיִם לְעֵינֵינוּ נִקְמַת דָּם עֲבָדֶיךָ הַשְּׁפוּרָךְ: וְאוֹמֵר, כִּי דוֹרֵשׁ
דָּמִים אוֹתָם זָכַר לֹא שָׁכַח צַעֲקַת עֲבָדָיו: וְאוֹמֵר, יְדִין בְּגוֹיִם מִלֵּא גּוֹיּוֹת מִחַץ רֹאשׁ עַל אֶרֶץ רַבָּה. מִנְּחַל בְּדֶרֶךְ
יִשְׁתָּה עַל כֵּן יָרִים רֹאשׁ:

Father of mercy, who dwells on high, in His great mercy will remember with compassion the pious, upright and innocent. The holy communities, who laid down their lives for the sanctification of His name. They were loved and pleasant in their lives and in death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles and stronger than lions to carry out the will of their Maker, and the desire of their steadfast God. May our Lord remember them for good together with the other righteous of the world and may He redress the spilled blood of His servants. As it is written in the Torah of Moses the man of God: "O nations, make His people rejoice for He will redress the blood of His servants. He will retaliate against His enemies and appease His land and His people." And through Your servants, the prophets it is written: "Though I forgive, their bloodshed I shall not forgive as God dwells in Zion." And in the Holy Writings it says: "Why should the nations say, 'Where is their God?'" Let it be known among the nations in our sight

that You avenge the spilled blood of Your servants. And it says: "For He who exacts retribution for spilled blood remembers them. He does not forget the cry of the humble". And it says:"He will execute judgement among the corpse-filled nations crushing the rulers of the mighty land; from the brook by the wayside he will drink then he will hold his head high."

*Shfokh Chamatcha, a prayer for Divine justice found in traditional text of the Hagadah.
Composed from Biblical verses and added to liturgy in the Middle Ages.*

Pour out Your wrath on the nations that do not acknowledge You, and on the kingdoms that do not call on Your name. For they have devoured Jacob and laid waste his habitation. (Psalm 79:6-7) Pour out Your indignation upon them, and let Your fierce anger overtake them (Psalm 69:25). Pursue them in wrath and destroy them under the heavens of the Lord (Lamentations 3:66)

The Kaddish of R. Levi Yitschak from Berdichev - memorial prayer composed by R. Levi Yitzchak during late 1700s.

Good morning to You, Lord, Master of the universe,
I, Levi Yitzhak, son of Sarah of Berdichev,
I come to You with a Din Torah from Your people Israel.
What do You want of Your people Israel?
What have You demanded of Your people Israel?
For everywhere I look it says, "Say to the Children of Israel."
And every other verse says, "Speak to the Children of Israel."
And over and over, "Command the Children of Israel."
Father, sweet Father in heaven,
How many nations are there in the world?
Persians, Babylonians, Edomites.
The Russians, what do they say?
That their Czar is the only ruler.
The Prussians, what do they say?
That their Kaiser is supreme.
And the English, what do they say?
That George the Third is sovereign.
And I, Levi Yitzhak, son of Sarah of Berdichev, say,
"Yisgadal v 'yiskadash shmei raboh-
Magnified and sanctified is Thy Name."
And I, Levi Yitzhak, son of Sarah of Berdichev, say,
"From my stand I will not waver,

And from my place I shall not move
Until there be an end to all this.
Yisgadal v'yiskadash shmei rabok-
Magnified and sanctified is only Thy Name."

(3) Living

(4) Creativity

Foreword by Elie Wiesel to Mir Zaynen Do - We Are Here, collection of Yiddish Holocaust songs compiled by Eleanor Mlotek and Malke Gottlieb.

In kheyder long ago we learned: "And then Moses sang." And so Moses, our teacher, and the children of Israel, while standing by the sea began to sing.

Since that time, the Jewish song has accompanied the history of the Jewish people. Everything is said in song: Song of Songs and Psalms, Hymns and Lamentations, longing and survival.

Songs of joy, songs of sorrow, songs of mourning; the expression of the soul of our people is in their song, more correctly: **is** their song.

Jews on the way to the slaughter chambers and they sang; they dreamed about redemption and sang; rocking their children they allowed themselves to be carried away by the magic of old-new melodies.

Mighty is the melody, eternal is the song: the temple of song is close to the throne of glory.

Was the heart heavy? Have the eyes become swollen with tears? The answer was a simple one: one sang in order to fall into ecstasy, then one sang with ecstasy. Forgotten was the punishment of exile. On the wings of song one soared high, high, most high, if not still higher.

Even in the dark years of devastation, Jews found strength and inspiration to impart their spirit, their despair, their heroism in Jewish song.

Read this collection- no: listen to its sounds and you will suddenly apprehend life behind the ghetto gates. Despairing mothers rocking their dying children. Forsaken homes. Moments of incomprehensible hope. Heartrending variations of remembered pastoral like motifs.

How does one lull to sleep a little orphan? One tells him, "I have seen your father running under hails of stone; flying over fields there echoed his desolated moan."

How does one comfort Jews going to their death? One reminds them that "I believe, I believe with complete faith," is the foundation of Jewishness; Messiah has been delayed, but come he will.

Motele from the Warsaw Ghetto and Itsik Vitnberg from Vilna, Babi Yar and Treblinka, the silence of Ponar, the red skies over the infinite graveyard of European Jewry. Even history is understood, more fully comprehended, through the power of Jewish song. "Under the little green Polish trees, no more at play are Moyshelekh, Shloymelekh:" listen to this poem, and you

will feel the tragedy that was ours more than turning the pages of books filled with dry statistics or listening to sentimental speeches.

This collection is, therefore, a most important contribution to everything that has a connection with Jewish consciousness; it should be found in every Jewish home.

Not because it is an obligation to cry, but because it is a duty to sing.

Because this is the way they taught us in kheyder: “V’oz yoshir Moyshe” in the future tense, meaning: not then did Moses sing, but then shall he sing.

The secret of the Jewish song is found in this; thanks to it the past is tied to the future, the ordinary week day with Sabbath, Kadish (the prayer of mourning) with hope; if Jews amid collapsing buildings sang out their sorrow and their stubbornness, can we allow ourselves to be deaf to their song?

Yisrolik - Little Israel Yiddish song written by Leyb Rozental in the Vilna Ghetto, performed at the 2nd public theatre performance in the ghetto in February 1942. Composer: Misha Veksler.

I.

Hey, buy my cigarettes!
Get your saccharin here!
Merchandise is worth little nowadays.
A life for a nickle,
A crummy cent is what I earn..
The ghetto handler; you heard of me?

II. *CHORUS*

I’m called Yisrolik
That kid from the ghetto
I’m called Yirsolik- a wild and reckless kind of youth
Though I’m left with absolutely nothing
I still carry on with a whistle and a song.

III.

A coat without a collar,
Shorts made from a sack
I’ve got galoshes.. ain’t got the shoes.
And whoever finds this funny,
whoever dares to laugh,
Well, I’ll just show him what I’m made of!

IV.

Don’t think I was born out here
On the homeless, abandoned streets
I also had a mom and dad.
I lost them both.
Don’t think it’s a joke!
I was left alone, like the wind, in a
field.

V.

I’m called Yisrolik
And when no one’s looking
I quietly wipe a tear from my eye.
But it’s better not to speak
of my sadness-
Why remind yourself and make the
heart heavy?

Wandering by Hermann Goldfarb, 1942. Nothing is known of Goldfarb except that he lived in Shanghai during this period.

I.
Wander Jew, wander, roam,
For you only a shabby tent.
Nowhere is a peaceful home,
Move on, wander in the world.

II.
Condemned to ramble
Even in the hoary past.
Remember the Egyptian gamble,
You lost and fled in the Red sea.

III.
And later when the sword of Rome
Destroyed your state,
You set forth once more to roam,
From land to land.

VII.
Open your eyes at last,
New world that's civilized.
Release us from suffering vast,
Bring us the calm we need.

IV.
Never more will you find rest,
Ever onward you must move.
Always only as a guest,
No use trying to remain.

V.
Wander Jews, roam afar,
These the words that greet you.
Under moon and under star,
Go on roaming go away.

VI.
How much farther need they range,
Over oceans and through states,
To endure what's odd and strange,
Why submit to hardship thus?

The Night is Still - Shtil Di Nakht - Yiddish song by Hirsh Glik, written after the first successful sabotage act against the Nazis by the Vilna Jewish partisans, after Vitka Kempner, a Partisan, blew up a German convoy of trucks, killing 200 German soldiers.

Shtil di nakht iz oysgeshernt
Un der frost hot shtark gebrent
Tsi gedenkstu vi ikh hob dikh gelernt
Haltn a shpayer in di hent.

A moyd, a peltsl un a beret
Un halt in hant fest a nagan
A moyd mit a sametenem ponim

Still the night is full of stars
And the frost burned us
Do you remember how I taught you
To hold a revolver?

A girl wearing a sheepskin and a beret
And in her hand she holds a gun.
A girl with a face as smooth as velvet

Hit op dem soynes karavan

Keeps watch of the enemy's caravan.

Getsilt, geshosn un getrofn
Hot ir kleyninker pistoyl
An oyto a fulinkn mit vofn
Farhaltn hot zi mit eyn koyl

Aimed, shot and right on target.
Her little pistol.
A car packed with ammunition
Was stopped with just one bullet.

Fartog fun vald aroysgekrokh
Mit shney girlandn af di hor
Gemutikt fun kleynikn nitsokhn
Far undzer nayem frayen dor.

At dawn, she crept out of the woodlands.
With snowy garlands in her hair
Encouraged by her little victory
For our new, free generation.

Der Hoyfzinger fun Varshever Geto - words by Reuven Lifshutz. The melody a popular street tune. The Street Singer of the Warsaw Ghetto.

A good morning, dear people!
Throw us a piece of bread!
And then God will bless you!
And you'll never know from need.

A gut morgn liber mentshn
Varft undz a shtikele broyt
Derfar vet Got aykh bentshn
Nisht visn vet ir fun keyn noyt.

Gehot a tate-mama
Un sheyninke shvesterlekh dray
Avek mitn roykh un flamen
Geblibn bin ikh yetst aleyn.

I once had a father, mother
And three beautiful sisters
Disappeared, in smoke and ashes
And I am left alone.

I turn the barrel organ
And play today for you with courage
For tomorrow in Treblinka
We may become a heap of ash.

Ikh drey di katerinke
Un shpil haynt far aykh mit kurazh
Vayl morgn, kon zayn, in Treblinke
Vet vern fun undz a barg ash.

Hunger is a misery.
With the dead the road is paved
Oy, Jews, children of mercy.
I want to live another day!

Der hunger iz a tsore
Mit toyte farzeyt iz der bruk
Oy, yidn, bney rakhmonim-
Es vilt zikh nokh lebn a tog.

Fun hertser broyzt a fayer
Genug undz gekoylet vi shof
Oy yidn nemt di shpayers
Un kumt, lomir makhn a sof!

A fire rages within our hearts
Enough of being slaughtered
Jews, take arms
Come, let's make an end of it.

So, I turn the barrel organ	Drey ikh di katerinke
Playing our pain and distress	Farshpil undzere leydn un noyt
For better than going to Treblinka	Vayl eyder tsu geyn in Treblinke
Is falling in battle, dead.	Iz beser in kamf faln toyt.

Di Letzte Mohikaner - The Last of the Mohicans by Shmerke Kacerginski

From these ghetto prison walls	Fun di getos tfise hent
Into the free forests	In di velder faye
Instead of chains on my hands,	Anshtot keytn af di hent
I carry a new rifle	Kh'ahlt a biks a nayem
From this day on	Af di oyfgabes mayn frant
I am one with my weapon.	Kusht mikh haldz un aksl
	Mitn biks bin ikh fun haynt Fest tsunoyfgevaksn.

We are few in number	Veynik zenen mir in tsol
but we count for millions	Drayster vi milyonen
We explode bridges, brigades	Raysn mir af barg un tol
The fascist will tremble	Brikn eshalonen.
When Jews, Partisans storm from under the earth.	

Dem fashist fartistert vert,
 Veyst nit vu fun vanen
 Shtrumen yidn fun unter der erd
 Yidn partizanen.

S'vort nekome hot a zin	A word like revenge has meaning
Ven mit blut farshraybst im	When you're willing to write it with blood.
Far dem heylikn bagin	We strike before sacred day's dawn.
Firm mir di shtraytn	
Neyn! Mir veln nit keynmol zayn	And no, we shall never become
Di letste mohikaner	The Last of the Mohicans
Brengt di nakht der zunenshayn	We bring sunshine to the night!
Der Yid der partizaner!	Jews, Partisans!

Di Partizaner Hymn - written by Hirsh Glik. The song became the rallying anthem of the Jewish underground, spreading to the forests. It was even sung among some of the first fighters for Israeli Independence.

Never say this is the final road for you,
Thought leadened skies may cover over days of blue.
As the hour that we longed for is so near.
Our step beats out the message -- we are here!
From lands so green with palms to lands all white with snow.
We shall be coming with our anguish and our woe,
And where a spurt of our blood fell on the earth,
There are courage and our spirit have rebirth.
The early morning sun will brighten our day,
And yesterday with our foe will fade away.
But if the sun delays and in the east remains--
This song as password generations must remain.
This song was written with out blood and not with lead,
It's not a little tune that birds sing overhead,
This song a people sang amid collapsing walls,
With grenades in hands they heeded to the call.

Zog nit keynmol az du gayst dem letzten veg,
Chotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg;
Kumen vet noch undzer oysgebenkte sho,
Es vet a poyk tun undzer trot - mir zaynen do!
Fun grinem palmenland biz land fun vaysen shney,
Mir kumen un mit undzer payn, mit undzer vey;
Un voo gefalen iz a shpritz fun undzer blut,
Shspritzen vet dort undzer gvure, undzer mut.
Es vet di morgenzun bagilden undz dem haynt,
Un der nechten vet farshvinden mitn faynt;
Nor oyb farzamen vet di zun in dem ka-yor,
Vi a parol zol geyn dos leed fun door tzu door.
Geshriben iz dos leed mit blut und nit mit bly,
S'iz nit keyn leedl fun a foygel oyf der fry;
Dos hut a folk tzvishen falendi-ke vent,
Dos leed gezungen mit naganes in di hent.

Moments of Faith - Minutn fun Bitokhn, Yiddish song written in the style of an upbeat Hassidic niggun, by the legendary Yiddish folk poet Mordkhe Gebirtig, Cracow 1940.

Yidn, zol zayn freylkeh!
Shoyn nisht lang, ikh hof,
S'ekt bald di milkhome,

Jews, be happy!
Won't be long, I hope.
The war will soon be over.

Es kumt bald zeyer sof.
Freylekh, nor nit zorgn
Un nit arumgeyn trib,
Hot geduld, bitokhn..
Un nemt alts on far lib!

Their end is in sight.
Cheerful, don't you worry.
And don't go around so sad.
Have patience, faith
and don't take it all to heart.

Nor geduld, bitokhn,
Nit lozt aroys fun hant
Undzer alt kley zayin,
Vos halt undz gor banand.
Hulyet, tants talyonim!
Shoyn nit lang, ikh hof-
Geven a mol a Homen-
Es vart af aykh zayn sof.

Only patience, faith
 Don't let them go from your hand
Our old weaponry
that binds us all together.
Revel, dance, you hangmen!
Won't be long, I hope!
There once was a Haman
His end awaits you too.

Hulyet, tants talyonim,
Laydn ken a yid.
S'vet di shverste arbet
Undz keyn mol makhn mid.
Kern? Zol zayn kern!
Kol-zman ir vet zayn!
Iz umzist dos kern-
S'vet do nit vern reyn.

So revel, dance, hangmen!
Jews can take pain.
 The most difficult labor
will never make us tired.
Sweep? So, we'll sweep.
As long as you live
The sweeping is in vain;
It'll never become clean here.

Vashn? Zol zayn vashn!
Kayin's royer flek,
Hevl's blut fun hartsn
Dos vasht zikh nit avek.
Traybt undz fun di dires,
Shnaydt undz op di berd!
Yidl, zol zayn freylkeh.
Mir hobn zey in drerd!

Wash? We'll wash.
Cain's red mark
The blood from Abel's heart
You can't wash that away.
Chase us from our homes
Cut off our beards
Jews, let us be cheerful
Let them go to hell.

Bar Mitzve Speech - written by orphaned 13 year old boy in DP camp.

I ask that my father and mother look down from Heaven and see that I am becoming a bar mitzveh today and I want them to know that through everything my sister and I remained good Jews and we will always be so - Ikh bet az der tateh un der mameh zoln arunter fun himl un zeh vi ikh ver a bar mitzveh haynt un zoln zey visn az di shvester un ikh zenen geblibn gute yidn di gantse yorn un mir veln imer azoy blaybn.