

SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

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Iyar II

The 67th Psalm and the Centuries of the Crusades—Should we Delete the Sefirah Prayers?

For a very long time no land of our own has produced crops of our own. But when we count the days and weeks leading up to the festival of the giving of our Law, we begin on the night in which the first sickle was once swung on our own soil and on our own plowed field. All during the Sefirah period—after the nightly count has been tolled—it is the tradition of the Fathers to arouse our souls with these thoughts of the Psalms:

... אֱלֹקִים יִחַגְגּוּ וַיִּבְרְכֵנוּ. יֵאָר פָּנָיו אֲתֵנוּ סֵלָה: לְבַעַת בְּאֶרֶץ דְּדָבָר. בְּכָל-אֵימָה
יִשׁוּעָתְךָ: יוֹדוּךָ עַמִּים אֱלֹהִים יוֹדוּךָ עַמִּים כָּל־עַם: יִשְׁמְחוּ וַיִּרְגְּנוּ לְאֲמִים.
כִּי-תִשְׁפֹּט עַמִּים מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וּלְאֲמִים בְּאֶרֶץ תְּנַחֵם סֵלָה: יוֹדוּךָ עַמִּים אֱלֹקִים. יוֹדוּךָ
עַמִּים כָּל־עַם: אֶרֶץ נְתַנָּה יִבְוֹלָה לְבָרְכֵנוּ אֱלֹקִים אֱלֹקֵינוּ: לְבָרְכֵנוּ אֱלֹקִים.
וַיִּירָאוּ אוֹתוֹ כָּל-אֲפִסֵי אֶרֶץ:

God, Who causes the sternness of His rule in Galuth to be such a bitter cup for us, “. . . will once again turn His mercy toward us and bless us and cause His Countenance to shine among us. . . .

So that we recognize Your Way in the world,
Your salvation among all nations,
So that nations shall pay homage to You, God,
So that all nations shall pay homage to You one day.
Nations will be glad and rejoice
That You judge peoples in uprightness
And lead nations on earth, Sela.
One day nations will pay homage to You, God!
One day all nations will pay homage to You.
Then the earth will have yielded its produce,
And God, our God, will bless us.
God will bless us,
And all the ends of the earth shall fear Him.”

Let us reflect on these words which are so well suited for making us aware of the significance of our counting of the weeks! What reflections they awaken in us especially when we consider the circumstances and the frame of mind our fathers were in when they spoke these very words throughout the night of the Sefirah-centuries!

Even when we still swung the sickle over our own plowed fields on our own national soil, we had to count the days and weeks from the festival of our freedom until the festival of our Torah, from *זמן חירותנו* to *זמן מתן תורתנו*. And we started counting at the first swing of the sickle. We had to take to heart the fact that our perfect salvation is to be found not in freedom and land, but rather in the Law—the Law of God. We had to remember too that freedom and soil for us are rooted only in the Divine Law and have worth and meaning for us only through the Divine Law.

This was true when Judea was still a nation among the nations, and Jewish existence was sustained by possession of its own land.

How much more poignant has this treasure become,—this Sefirah-counting which serves to elevate the Torah, the Divine Law, above all else—now that Israel had lost its land and soil! Since then, in ways which are visible even to the casual onlooker, this Divine Law has remained the only bond that ties the sons of Israel together in the greatest dispersion. It has remained the only ground, the only property upon which the sons of Israel stand. And it has proven itself as that benefit which has miraculously compensated its possessors for the loss of all other benefits.

Indeed, every year that passed added new splendor to the aura of this Law, and caused those who embraced it to impress it ever more deeply upon their hearts as the unique treasure of life.

Torah has ready a soothing balm for every new distress, a transfiguration for every new joy. As time passed, and experiences accrued to the Jewish People on their long journey, new meanings for ancient text became illuminated. Israel would feel even more clearly with every step the difference in value between Torah on the one hand and land and freedom on the other.

The land was lost and its freedom had wasted away, but Torah, the Divine Law, had remained. And Torah had become for the people the soil upon which the blossoms of an ever fresh youthfulness unfolded. Torah had become sword and lance, helmet and suit of armor, which helped them to gain and preserve the proudest freedom amid all outer humiliation.

And they now looked around and drew comparisons. How greatly the value of the Torah increased when compared to everything else around which the life of the nations revolved. Century after century, the Jewish People wandered like their first fathers once wandered, "from nation to nation, from kingdom to kingdom." The peoples around our Fathers possessed freedom and land but were without the freedom and grounding of the Godly Law.

Alone in the midst of these peoples who were proud of their political freedom and powerful in their possession of land, the scattered flock of Israel had a Divine Law but no freedom or land. Yet what flourishing of the humane, which ennobles and blesses man, did they see among these free nations, strong in the possession of their land, when compared with the flowering that this Divine Law produced in them?

This humaneness flourished in the Jewish People even in times when their right to a spot of earth whereon to set the cradles of their children and prepare the graves of their parents was disputed, and they were permitted only as much justice and freedom as benefited the interests of the local government in the particular foreign country where they found themselves dispersed.—Were they not right when they clung with a doubly fiery ardor to their unique Divine Treasure, which protected them from barbarism and degeneracy which they saw proliferating everywhere? Were they not proved correct in their devotion when Torah produced in them a fresh spiritual life, a clear-sightedness, a moral purity, a mellow nature, a blissful family life, an upright brotherhood, of which the scoffing world of the nations had no inkling?

They saw how easily nations suffered the loss of their political freedom, and with it their land. Then, along with both, they immediately lost their existence as a people altogether, and disappeared like bubbles of soap, carrying with them all their power and dreams of glory.

And Israel—with only the Torah in its arms—pressed even farther toward its eternal dawn of rejuvenation, through night and mist, over the ash-filled urns and ruined tombs of the nations. Should then Israel have discontinued the counting of days and weeks from the festival of its freedom to the festival of the Torah?

Their freedom had withered away very painfully since the time when Jews had swung the sickle over their own land, which lived on only in their memory.

But the Torah remained the eternal and lasting possession, which compensated them for the absence of freedom and land during the centuries of night. Because of Torah and for Torah, freedom and land were once again in store for them one day on the great morrow of rejuvenation.

When they counted the days and weeks before God, well might they express the wish that it still "may be His holy Will to build His Sanctuary once more, in our days, and to cause us to find our full share in His Torah!"

Yes, for good reason was it the practice of the Fathers to attach to this counting the hope that "God might one day again turn His favor toward us, give us His blessing, and cause His Countenance to shine among us." Have we not forfeited this favor and lost this blessing only because we had forgotten this very counting, the counting from freedom and land to the festival of the Torah? Did God not for precisely this reason turn away His shining Countenance from us?

Every page of the history of our national downfall testifies to the fact that we forfeited freedom and land only because we conceived of freedom and land as the final and highest purpose. We counted our days and weeks not from freedom and land to the Law, but rather from the Law to freedom and land.

We did not value freedom and land according to Jewish Truth, under which they should be valued only to the extent that they afford us the means to an ever more complete fulfillment of the Godly Law. Instead, in accordance with the popular delusions, we saw the Godly Law as being meaningful to us only in that it afforded, secured, and protected freedom and land for us.

However, where we thought we could better and more independently secure and increase freedom and land through other means, acceptable everywhere else, we thoughtlessly exchanged the Godly Law as an impediment which had become useless, antiquated and stale. But this exchange was always a deception; and in the meantime we lost the single condition which permits us to hope for freedom and land.

The experience of the centuries will one day bear its fruit. We will grasp forever the true, eternal, and inalienable worth of the Godly Law so that we can truly count from freedom and land to Torah. Only then may we trust "that God will again graciously bless us and again cause His Countenance to shine among us!" We therefore will not

yearn for the recovery of freedom and land as ends in themselves, in order to be redeemed by freedom from the drudgery of servitude, and by land from the humiliation of dependency. Rather, the purpose will be: *שיבנה בית המקדש במהרה בימינו ותן חלקנו בתורתך*, that the Divine Sanctuary might rise again, and we might do our duty in complete fulfillment of His Law.

And then when *ארץ נתנה יבולה*, the land will have yielded its produce, and the sickle will again be put to work on our own soil, then we will not mistakenly see in the ownership of land the sole means of attaining healing and blessing. Rather we will then hope for the Divine blessing, *יברכנו אלקים אלקינו*, that God as our God, may bless us through all the worldly goods that He will have given to us. We will use all the rich abundance only in His service, and serve only God as our God, in every way and with everything we have, and bring His Law to its exaltation in fulfillment.

We see now, however, in what a wide, wide perspective these Psalm-reflections celebrate Israel's return to life. Far beyond the narrow confines of Jewish nationality, they include all peoples at once in the same hope. God's Way on earth and His salvation will be recognized among all nations, as all peoples render homage to God "and the nations rejoice in this homage." Only through this homage, and in it alone, will the solution finally be found: how to establish permanently the salvation of nations on earth. The solution, hinted at in the Psalm, consists in regulating the order in which everyone and everything will feel and move: *במישור*, "at a moderate level"—neither too high nor too low—rather in exactly such a position that most closely corresponds to everyone's own nature and results in the benefit of all.

"Then the Kingdom and the leadership of the nations on earth will have risen to God—". We hear this, and we visualize under what conditions these thoughts of our fathers were expressed in the Sefirah nights of the darkest centuries. Then we have a picture before us that in its greatness can scarcely be rivalled by any other.

Indeed it was during the dark nights of the centuries of the Crusades, in which nations and lands persecuted Israel without any trace of justice and peace on earth, that our fathers first instituted the saying of this visionary Psalm relating to the future of all mankind. A blind, bloody mania had taken hold of the nations, to spill the blood of the brothers of their "god" in a frenzy of murder and proselytism.

Even when the leopard³ had overcome me and desecrated
 my Sanctuary,
 And boasted that he would destroy me inwardly and
 outwardly,
 You sent ruin to his armies when I cried out to You,
 You threw down his legions and helped me and my people.
 But all of this is over-towered by the power of the wild
 boar from the forest,⁴
 Who scornfully and blasphemously raised himself to the
 stars,
 Who tread me underfoot, tore me to pieces, imagined that
 he could destroy me,
 Who destroyed Your Dwelling-Place and dared to
 demolish it to the foundation,
 Who had the audacity to decide what should be true,
 And obscured the triumphant truth of my Faith,
 Who ordered me to deny my people's belief in the one God.
 He said:
 "Could your God stand before *me*?
 His Sanctuary lies trampled underfoot by me,
 And I—I am still here in my unscathed greatness!"
 You hear their blasphemy—be not silent in my quarrel,
 Pour a seven-fold measure into the bosom of mine enemy,
 Hasten my redemption, be You Friend to me, be You near
 to me,
 Help speedily and quickly, let me find my guarantor in
 You!

אוֹתָךְ כָּל הַיּוֹם קוֹיֵנוּ. לְשִׁמְךָ וּלְזִכְרֶךָ אוֹיְנוּ. אַתָּה ה' אֱבִינֵנוּ: בֶּן כְּבוֹדְךָ הִתְחַתּוּ.
 לְמָה לְנִצּוֹחַ שְׂכַחְתּוֹ. וְלֹא תִשׁוּב לְקַחְתּוֹ. וְעַד מַתִּי ה': גֹּלֵשׁ מִבֵּית חֲדָרָיו. מוֹצֵא
 מִכְּלַל הַדְּרָיו. וְהִרְלֵת סִגְרֵי אֲתָנָיו: דְּחַי וְשׁוּב לֹא נִרְאָה. נִשְׁבַּר וְנִדְרָה וְנִכְאָה.
 נִשְׁבָּה וְאִין רוּאָה. וְעַד מַתִּי ה': הִיִּיתִי כְּמוֹסָר מִתְּנוּדָה. שְׂדוּד כִּינֵר שׂוֹדֵד. הִיִּיתִי
 כְּצִפּוֹר בּוֹדֵד: וְנִסְתִּי כָּל הַיּוֹם נִרְבָּה. בְּרוּחַ עֲרִיצִים נִשְׁבָּה. וְקוֹל עֲלֵה נִבָּה. וְעַד
 מַתִּי ה': זָמְמוּ וְנִפְשִׁי לְקַחְתּוֹ. וּמִפֶּחַ יוֹקֵשִׁים בּוֹרְחָת. עֲלֵתָה נֹצֵה וְהִיא כְּפִרְחָת:
 תִּרְבֶּה סֵלָה שְׂאֵפִי. וְמָה אֲשִׁיב דְּבַר חֲרָפִי. קְדִי שְׂמַתִּי לְמוֹ פִי. וְעַד מַתִּי ה':

3. The Greeks

4. The Romans (Daniel 7, 5–7 and Psalms 80, 14)

We wait for You every day,
 Our yearning is for Your Name, Your remembrance,
 You are our Father, God!
 Your first-born, cast out,
 Have You forgotten him forever?
 Will you never again receive him with favor?
 How long, O God?!
 Driven away from his Glory,
 Expelled from his homeland,
 The door shut behind him!
 Cast out, never to return,
 Broken, bent, injured, expelled without protection—
 How long, O God?!
 Shaken by Your chastisement,
 A prey to every robber,
 Frightened away like a little bird,
 Always in flight, always hunted,
 Bled by the greed of those in power,
 Like a crackling dry leaf—
 My soul, for which they hunt,
 Fleeing from the snare of the tempter,
 Puts forth buds, and is in blossom before You—
 But my persecutor slanders me,
 And what do I say to my slanderer?
 I put my hand over my mouth—
 But how long, O God?!

אלקים באזונינו שמענו אבותינו ספרו לנו. פעל פעלת בימי קדם למענו...
 יותר מאלף שנים בגזון ובאנחה. ותנוח משלום נפשנו בפרץ וצנחה. כי עליך
 הרגנו כל היום נחשבנו כצאן טבחה: ומן אחר זמן נפשנו חסחה. וארץ הקץ
 נארוכה לא עלתה. חשבון רנו ליגלב חפיו ישע בעתה. קנה לשלום ואין טוב
 לעת מרפה ונהה בעתה: טוב קוינו והנה אפל ואשכנים... יחדו נוצצו גוי עו
 שנים. אזי עבר על נפשנו המים הזיזונים: פחרות אפם בנו חיים בלעונו. טף
 וגשים כצאן לשבחה התיקינו. להכרית עולל מחוץ גחורים מרחבותינו. פני
 כהנים לא נשאו וזקנים לא חננו: מקול מחרף ומגדף מפני אויב ומחנאם.
 ממה להפרישנו סוג ארחחיד לעקם. נפשנו נבהלה מפני חמת המעקם. הצל
 אלה לא תפקד גם ולא תחנקם: [הרג רב יום סבות בתחנו נזורה גורה. ונהרגו
 קהלות הקדש בועם ועברה וצרה. וכן וקחור ובחולה ערומים נמשכו לקבורה.
 קפורות מלאות גלדים וילדות וקלמדי התורה: טרם היה אורחי פורו יחידו

לְעֵקֶבָה. לְשִׁמְעוּהוּ מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם אֵל תִּשְׁלַח יָדְךָ לְהַשְׁמִידָהּ. בְּפֶה עַתָּה וְשִׁחַטִים
 בְּנִים וּבָנוֹת בְּיְהוּדָה. לֹא הָשׂוּ לְהוֹשִׁיעַ טְבוּחִים וְשִׂדְרָפִים עַל מוֹקְדָהּ: מִתֵּן אָמוֹן
 שֶׁעָשׂוּעִים סִפְרֵי חוֹרוֹת יְדוּעִים גְּטוּעִים לְאֶהֱל פְּרוּעִים עָלֵי מוֹטוֹת רְקוּעִים.
 סוּף עָשְׂאוּם בְּחַי שׁוֹקִים לְמִנְעַל רִגְלֵי מְצַרְעִים. עַל אֵלֶּה אָנִי בּוֹכֵה וְעֵינַי
 וְעֵינַי בְּמַיִם נוֹבְעִים]. . .

God, we have heard what our Fathers have related to us,
 Concerning what You did for us in the early times—. . .
 Now, however, after more than a thousand years in sighing
 and heartache,
 Our soul has forgotten, because of rift and lamentation,
 how to think about happiness,
 Because we are strangled for Your sake, and are considered
 as sheep to be slaughtered.
 Century after century our hearts pined,
 But the end remained far away, and healing would not
 come.
 We calculated that in the cycle "RANU"—
 our salvation was coming.*
 We hoped for happiness—and the worst came.
 We hoped for a time of healing—and horror overtook
 us. . .
 Taking counsel together, with a glare hard as stone, the
 masses of nations
 Burst upon us like frothing flood-tides,
 Their raging fury wished to devour us alive.
 They carried children and women to the slaughter,
 They strangled boys on the street, young men in our
 narrow lanes.
 They did not respect the face of teachers, they had no pity
 for the aged.

* Note. The persecutions of the Jews during the Crusades took place partially in the 256th cycle of the 19-year comprehensive adjustment cycles (מחזור) of the Jewish calendar. In particular, the year the persecutions began, 1096 according to the usual time reckoning, or 4856 by Jewish reckoning, (because of which these persecutions are called among Jews תּחַנּוּי נורא), belongs to this cycle. The number 256 in the numerical value of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet is equivalent to רנו, rejoice. The poet plays upon these numbers and word meanings by alluding to the Scriptural quotation: רנו ליתקב שמחה (Jeremiah, 31, 7), and, with reference to the year תּחַנּוּי, to the quotation: גאולה תחנו לארץ (Leviticus 25, 24).

Because of the scream of mockery and blasphemy,
 Because of the vengefully fuming enemy,
 Who tear us loose from You,
 Who wish to entice us to desert Your Path,
 Our soul grows numb, dismayed because of the conversion
 mania.
 And should You not have avenged this,
 Also should You not have arisen as avenger because of it?

It was the year four thousand eight hundred fifty-six,
 A time of slaughter and of disaster,
 Holy communities strangled in fury and rage,
 Old people, young men, young women, dragged naked to
 the grave,
 Pits full of the bodies of boys and girls and slain Torah
 youths—
 When Abraham once wished to sacrifice his only son,
 A voice called from heaven: Lay no injuring hand upon
 him!
 How much will the sons and daughters in Yehuda be
 slaughtered now,
 And no one rushes here to our aid—there they lie
 slaughtered, and burned at the stake—
 And the treasure of our culture, of the joy—our renowned
 scroll of the Law,
 Stretched out for tents, spread over stretchers,
 Finally cut apart for stockings and shoes for lepers—
 Concerning this I cry!
 And a flood of tears pours from my eyes— . . .

The surrounding world was a bloodthirsty wild animal, and Israel was its prey. Amid such experiences, the fathers nevertheless counted their Sefirah from the Freedom which had become a dream and from the Land which they had lost unto the Torah, for which they were dying. For the Torah, they saw their homes in flames, their children slaughtered, their wives murdered. For the Torah, they saw dungeons and torture and death at the stake.

And yet—they calmly counted out their days and weeks until the festival of this Torah. No sacrifice was too great to make for it, so

great is its inalienable worth. It was at this time that they etched the supreme value of the Torah in the Chronicle of Humanity with their heart's blood.

And the spirit of this Torah raised their souls phoenix-like out of the flames of death blazing around them. It raised them to such a height, that they could find no solace in the mere thought of their coming rejuvenation. But more than that, they saw beyond the deepest, blackest darkness then gripping the hearts and minds of the peoples—to a new dawn breaking for mankind on the horizon.

That era was so awesomely depraved that the spirit of mankind and of humaneness despairingly shrouded its head. Israel saw, nevertheless, "God's Way on earth and His salvation among all the peoples." Whilst curses against the Jewish God howled through their streets, they raised their eyes in rapture to Him and rejoiced at the "homage that one day all nations would bring to Him."

They saw the nations everywhere goaded by a spirit of madness, brutality, bloodthirstiness, and greed. Enslaved by this spirit the nations degenerated, and everywhere the Jewish people found themselves bleeding as the first victim. Still they found solace in the certainty that this mania would eventually vanish. They knew that in spite of bloodthirstiness and greed, brute force and injustice, the good, the humane, and the Godly in the human breast would work their way through.

The nations at last would learn to grasp the truth of the Jewish perception of God, and of the Jewish reverence for the Divine Law as the only safeguard against universal brutality. Under dominion of Divine Law, an impoverished humanity, groaning under its own errors, will at last find the healing and peace which it vainly thinks it can capture by other means. The Jews of that day foresaw that princes and nations would one day "Hail God." Under His guidance, the nations too will finally share joyfully in the happiness, healing, and peace, which can flourish only within the happy, serene earnestness of a dutiful mankind honoring the Law of God.

Thousands upon thousands of our ancestors succumbed to the fanatical brutality and violence of that era, and countless "communities, all of them holy, died sanctifying God." They silently bared their necks to the barbarism and fanaticism of their time.

Suppose they arose now from their graves after three quarters of a

millenium have passed in the history of nations. If they arose again in our time they would see how much of that mania has already vanished, how much of that barbarism had disappeared. They would discover that a much more humane civilization, a much more enlightened culture has surfaced. Respect for what is right and for the truth, for human dignity and freedom, have become rooted in the minds of men. Our fathers would witness what mighty victories the godly truths have already gained.

They would discern harbingers of the approaching dawn in all of the buds of truth and goodness which, however timidly, are already beginning to show themselves. They would call out to these forerunners *מה נאוו על ההרים רגלי מבשר*, "How beautiful are the steps of the herald on the mountains, the herald of peace, the proclaimer of good and of healing, who speaks to Zion: The kingdom of your God is beginning!"

But most of all they would seek their own descendants in this bright, better era. They would seek their ghettos that have disappeared. The yellow badges that are no more. They would search for their children and find them amidst the commercial life of the nations, in the Citizens' Council, in the mainstream of science and art, industry and education. They would find them everywhere in the first ranks of those who exercise an effective influence upon the spiritual enlightenment and ethical ennoblement of man.

But alas, they would also find them where they never would have thought to seek them: They would see that the offspring have cast off the practices of their ancestors, those practices which in previous generations were the pride and happiness of life. They would find that their descendants have denied the Law of their God, for which their fathers had sacrificed their lives.

Yes, they see their children, who no longer know them. They ask: what about the Torah?—they are laughed at. They return to their graves once again and sigh.—Will Eliyahu soon come again, he who leads the heart of the children to the fathers, and the heart of the fathers to the children?

Jewish "Reform," en clothed in robe and hat, celebrates its cheap triumphs by declaring war on Piyutim and Yotzeroth. It promotes its homeopathic wonder-cures for spiritual malaise on the flea market. The prescription for creating devotion? Delete prayers! The Sefirah

Yotzeroth are surely the first which must fear the red pencil of theological "Reform."

"What good are these remembrances of an extinct era? In the sunshine of the present era of entitlement and freedom, what is the need for these moanings from the medieval night of oppression and persecution? What place does this melancholy Galuth-dissonance have amid the 19th century symphony of rejoicing?"

Shall we allow these prayers to be deleted from our liturgy, even if we were entitled to make deletions in the first place? Is it thoughtful consideration or thoughtless license and insecurity which here takes in hand the liturgical red pencil? Has such an era of brightness come to Israel everywhere among the nations, that these prayers of lament no longer have a place in the synagogue?

Do we consider political freedom and political rights to have been the highest goal of our fathers so that, with their attainment in our present age, we need no longer hear in our synagogues the expressions of yearning contained in Piyut and Yotzer?

Truly, the fate of our fathers would have been less tragic had they forsaken their loyalty to Torah to obtain relief from oppression. The fanaticism that swung the whip over the Jews would then have easily accomplished its objective. Before the first pyre was constructed to be used for burning a Jew at the stake, Jewry would have sacrificed their Judaism. They would have bought freedom and equal rights among the nations solely by means of this sacrifice.

And what man with humaneness in his heart would have reproached them for that? Would such a man have believed himself capable of a greater heroism—the courage to see his infant children choked, his wife and daughters violated and strangled rather than abandon a religious Law? Would he give over his own body to the most agonizing tortures and sufferings rather than desert this Law?

Yes, what wise observer would not have retrospectively praised the intelligence and insight of the fathers for having recognized the hint of Providence. The rage of a universe and of a century had been unleashed against the Jewish Law. Was it not obvious that the time had come to relinquish the "Jewish stubbornness" and to exchange the Jewish Law for the cross or the crescent?!

And the fathers? What was their response?

אֱלֹקֵי יְמֵי שְׁנוֹתַי בְּלוּ בְּאֶרֶץ גְּלוּתִי. קָלָא וְלֹא אֲצִיא מֵעַר לְרַחֲמֶיךָ. עֲזוּב וְלֹא
 עֲזוּר וְאֵין בִּי עֲזָרְתִּי. גּוֹלָה וְאֵין גּוֹלָה סוּד קֶץ תְּשׁוּעָתִי. מִתְּנוּדָד בְּלִי מַעֲוֹד
 מֵאִשְׁפַּח תְּרַפְתִּי. רִבַּת עִם אֲשַׁמֵּע וּמוֹסַר בְּלִפְתִּי. בְּאָמַר לִי אֵיךְ אֶפֹּא תִקְוִתִי.
 אֲבֹן בְּלִי יוֹם זֹאת הִיא שִׁיחַתִּי. חִלְקִי וְצוּר לִבִּי וְתוֹכְתִי מִנְתִּי. אֲחִיל וְלֹא אֲחַל
 דְּבָרוֹ עַד הַיּוֹתִי. אֲצַפֶּה וְלֹא אֲרַפֶּה וְלֹא אֲצִיִּתִי. אֲמַר לֵה' מִחֲסִי וּמִצּוֹדְתִי
 אֱלֹקֵי: עַמִּי, וְנִחַלְתִּי שְׁמַחִי בְּיַד עוֹבְרֵי רְצוֹנִי. בְּפִשֶׁע יַעֲקֹב זֹאת אָמַר צוּר קוֹנֵי.
 לִי צוּר וְתִקְצַר רֹחִי לְעַם עֲנִי. קִלְגִּי מֵרֵאשִׁי וּמִזְרוּעֵי קִלְגִּי. וְאָנֹכִי בְּרֵאשִׁי אוֹי לִי
 מֵעוֹנִי. וְאֲנִקְמָה מֵאוֹיְבֵי וְאֲכַרִּיתֶם בְּיַד יְמִינִי. אֶסְפִּיד עֲצַת גּוֹיִם וּמִתְשַׁבּוֹתֶם
 אָנִיא. יְזַמּוּ וְהִעֲרִימוּ עָצָה וְלֹא מִנִּי. נִטַּע אֲזֹן הֵלֵא קוֹל שְׁמֵעָה אָזְנִי. יִצַּר עֵינַי הֵן
 כֹּל כְּרִאתָה עֵינִי. כָּאֵה כְּאִתִּי אֶת־עֲנִי עַמִּי: אֱלֹקֵי, סִבְרִי בְּדִ שְׁמִי, וּמִתִּי מִתְּאֵנֹת
 נַפְשִׁי וְאֵין דוֹרְשִׁי, וּבִלְבָבִי מִכּוֹת אֵשׁ עַל הַר קָרְשִׁי שְׁשֻׁמָם. יְנֹת בֵּית קֶץ אֵין לֵה
 אֲמַלְלָה דְנוֹת, לִי זְרִים אוֹמְרִים בְּגִדְל וּבְגָאוֹת רִימִי, עַל רִיחַ תִּבְסָחִי וְתוֹנְתֵרִי
 בְּשִׁבְרִי בְּצָבִי מִדָּחַ, וּמֵה תִקְוֹת עִם גְּעוּנָה, אֲעִנֶה עַל דְּבַר אָמַת וְעֲנֹת צָדֵק וְעַל
 עֶשֶׂר דָּת וְכֹל־דָּקָר שְׁנוֹת, אֵל תִּרְבּוּ תִבְכְּרוּ אֵלֵי בְּנֵי גְעוּת, סוּרוּ מִמִּנִּי מִרְעִים
 וְאֲצַדֵּה מִצּוֹת אֱלֹקֵי: עַמִּי פְּנִיחִי עֲנִיתִי אֶל־תִּפְלַת הָעַרְעָר, וְאָם ה' לִישְׁכָּאֵל
 אֶתְבַּחֲתִי גְעַר, וְעַר זְקוּנָה אֲנִי הוּא אִם מוֹכּוֹת נֵעַר, אַנְדַּע בִּי יִבְכְּדוּ וְאֲבִין בִּי יִצְעַר,
 עֵינֵי בְּכָל־עוֹיְנָיו וּמִשְׁטִיבָיו אֲנַעַר, לְהַר שְׁעִיר אֲסַעִיר וְעַרְעַר יִתְעַרְעַר. לֹא לָהּ
 חוֹיֵר יֵעַר, כְּבוֹד בֵּית הַיֵּעַר, צֹא אִישׁ הַדְּמִים מֵעַמִּים נִבְעַר, לְתַרְפוֹת עוֹלָם
 לְחִמָּה וּלְצַעַר, אֶל־תִּבּוֹא כְּשַׁעַר עַמִּי:

My God! My years are coming to an end in the land of my
 banishment,
 In the prison of the ages, with no exit from tribulation into
 freedom,
 Abandoned, accepted by no one, unable even to help
 myself
 I wander—and no one knows the secret time of my final
 salvation!
 Fleeing ceaselessly, with no one to mitigate my humilia-
 tion,
 Must I hear the curses of the nations and the reproach
 which reviles me?
 Which asks me, incessantly asks me, where then, where is
 my hope?
 But just as incessant is this my daily thought:
 My spiritual heritage and my heart's shield and my Law,
 that is my portion!
 Therefore I wait and desecrate not His Word so long as I
 live,

I wait and grow not slack and lift up my eyes to God,
 And I speak to Him: You are my Protector and my
 Stronghold, God!

He answers:

“You remain My people, you remain My legacy!
 —The hand into which I gave you, is transgressing My
 Will—very greatly—

Yet you have caused this, Jacob,” so speaks my Shield, so
 speaks my Master,

“But for Me Myself it is painful and for Me it is dismal
 regarding you, unfortunate people!

Is your head in pain, does your arm hurt you?

The head is Mine, Mine is the arm that suffers—

And I shake the head along with you, and I feel pain along
 with you concerning your guilt—

And I send vengeance upon My enemies, destruction with
 the Right Hand of My Salvation,

The thwarting of their plans, the failure of their thoughts.

What they contemplate, what they cunningly desire, is not
 from Me,

I have formed the ear, I know well how to listen,

I have trained the eye, I know well how to see,

And I have seen, I have seen the suffering of My unfor-
 tunate people!”

My God! My hope is in You, and I am dying from the
 pining of my soul.

Who concerns himself about me? And in my heart there is a
 fiery hot burning

For my holy mountain, desolate, and for the Mistress,
 who lies ever downcast and languishing.

Strangers speak with proud haughtiness to me:

“You are placing your trust in the wind! You remain driven
 about like a frightened deer!

What hope have you, tortured nation?”

I say: “My hope is in the word of Truth, in Justice, which is
 offended; in the Foundation of my faith,

Before which all values vanish!

Do not talk with me so much anymore, you children of the
 wrong path!

Depart from me, you evildoers! I remain with the commandment of my God!"

"My people! I have turned toward the one who has become most lonely, I have heard his prayer."

So speaks my God,

"I have loved him in his youth and am still the same in his old age—

His merit still being slight, I know it will increase,

And I know it when he suffers!

My eye is toward those who are jealous of him,

My reproach is to his defamers,

My storm is over his enemies,

And the storm rages for this reason!

The honor of My house is not for you, brutality!

Away, barbarism—outlawed even by the nations—

Away perpetual ignominy,

And enter not the gate of My people!"—

And now that this hope of old is being fulfilled, and nations are rejecting the barbarism practiced by their ancestors—is the Jewish ideal for which the fathers bled more secure because of it? Or have new dangers loomed before us? And who knows whether these are not more pernicious than previous ones? Might not the effort needed to deal with these new dangers require that the eternal strength of this divine ideal be put to the test?

It is no longer strangers who threaten.—Is betrayal by our own sons less cause for weeping, or less lamentable? There are those among our people who wish to remain true to the godly Law in spite of the ridicule they receive from their own brothers, in spite of the fanatical ostracism of their own brothers. Do they not need the uplifting and encouraging example of the steadfastness of the fathers under the bitterest ordeals?

Numerous attempts by un-Jewish Jews to tamper with authentic Jewish values have given rise to dangers, if not for Jewry, then for Judaism. Are these dangers less significant than those with which we were formerly faced? Do they not cut all the more deeply into the core of our Jewish Calling? The milder the reform, the more it serves to separate the Jewish people from Judaism. Do not these tamperers cut all the more deeply, the more they succeed in giving the impression

that here a wholly autonomous, wholly voluntary destruction of Judaism by Jews is being carried out?

Did the times of the Crusades witness Jewish schools with Jewish teachers for Jewish sons and daughters who are taught there to repudiate and abrogate the Jewish Law? At that time did there exist Jewish schools whose principal teachers resolutely did their very best to desecrate the Sabbath openly and transgress the dietary laws, inviting their pupils to be their guests and serving them ham?

And did those times see Jews who quite calmly allowed such a betrayal to take place in their midst? Were there Jews then who would have supported such schools with their own resources? Was there a Jew then who would have responded to all of these questions with hardly a shrug of his shoulders, as if the answers were self-evident?

In the period of the Crusades, were there shoctim who themselves ate treifa? Were there butchers who publicly profaned the Sabbath? Were there Jewish central authorities, with the power to manipulate the Jewish religious affairs of entire countries, whose members, with few exceptions, had totally forgotten Judaism in their own lives?

Moreover, were there at that time edicts and consistorial decrees which ruined Jewish congregations; which destroyed the autonomy of the Kehilloth and restricted severely the rights of individuals; which converted Jewish community life, that living vehicle of the Torah, into a lifeless body?

Were there, at the time of the Crusades, Jewish men who, making no attempt to conceal the fact, committed adultery with the wives of other men? Who demanded religious validation with Chuppa and Kiddushin for this adultery? And were there Jewish communal leaders who permitted such a farce, or Jewish "rabbis" and preachers who performed such a ceremony? And—Jewish "congregations" which calmly tolerated all this?

Truly, were we what we should be—and we refer here not to the brothers who have fallen away from the Divine Law, but to ourselves, the נאנחים ונאנקים על אבן דתנו—we would not counteract the deletion of the Sefirah prayers. Rather, we would add to them the national outcry of our own time and sound the alarm over the dangers of our own Galuth. We would learn from the fathers to stand in the breach for Torah, sacrifice ourselves for Torah, take refuge in God with His Torah.

And our lives would be an example to our descendants, of courage,

steadfastness, vigor, and self-sacrifice for God and His holy Law. We would bequeath to them the Sefirah Yotzeroth in the same spirit that our fathers bequeathed them to us, as prayers which reflect the fears and struggles of our time. And just as we recount the story of the so-called יָמֵי מַסָּעֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ massacres of our fathers, our descendants might possibly find in the Yotzeroth a corresponding reference to the years in which rabbis among us publicly conferred about—how—in a respectable manner—Torah and mitzvoth could be buried. . . .

Suppose, even, that there were none of this in our time, that it were already the happy time toward which we are certainly striving. Suppose that, under the bright radiance of freedom and right, Jewish spirit and Jewish life had unfolded in an undreamed of manner, then—and then most of all—would not these prayers of remembrance have their place? Would they not then, more than ever, fulfill their purpose for all time? They would remind the descendants of the struggles and sorrows, the sacrifices and exertions which their fathers had to suffer in order to rescue Torah and mitzvoth. Will there ever be a time in which it would be good to forget the sweat and blood that were part of almost every mitzvoh that we managed to save for ourselves through the centuries of outer and inner Galuth?

Could there possibly be a time when Jews would not admire the shining example of those who

Were beloved and treasured by God in their life,
And even in death did not separate themselves from Him,

Who were lighter than eagles, stronger than lions
To fulfill the will of their Master and the wish of their
Guardian? . . .

This "eagle" lightly soars up to God above all earthly troubles and anxieties, above all earthly allurements and fascinations. This lion-like courage energetically and forcefully meets all resistance and all dangers. These qualities will be indispensable to us in every era for the fulfillment of Torah and mitzvoth if our descendants are one day to bless *our* memory, look back upon *us*, and include *us* in their remembrances as—

הנאהבים והנעימים כחייהם
ובמותם לא נפרדו
מנשרים קלו ומאריות גברו
לעשות רצון קונם וחפץ צורם
יזכרם אלקינו לטובה עם שאר צדיקי עולם.