

Can One Forget Not To Remember?

By Marion Polusky-Nakash

Can one remove the stones of history?

How can we utilize them to build a-new?

Can the knowledge of the past correct the faults of the future?

My eyes are closed

I block my ears

I hear their pitiful prayers

And their tortured shrieks

Voices young and old

I feel their agonized hearts cry out in vain

I see fists thumping against bolted doors

I smell the stench of gas

I see the flames licking their human shapes

Myriads stripped of every human dignity

Limbs entangled, interwoven in a maze

Shaven heads, rotting flesh, flies drinking blood like wine

Worms blissfully grazing at our race

Dead bodies crumpled in death's welcome clasp

I try to lock my heart

Still their insufferable pain

Pulsates, penetrating my soul

Their nightmares haunt my dreams

I'm trapped as well!

A hole, a bubble of air will do

A drink, even from a sewer

My skin is tautly glued

My knees are weak

I am chained to wonder
How can man stoop to such inimical lengths?
For what - a lock of hair, a golden tooth?
Or is endless death an integral part of "Jewishness"?
Did some survive only to relate this monstrous tale?
Were others spared to relive the moment of death's agony?
Are we the living Jews stronger than the pain and fire
That consumed our brethren.
Where were you, you and I
When those fires ate our friends?
Where were we when the flames grew dense?
Where were we when babes were balanced on bayonets?
Where were we throughout the inquisitions, pogroms, and the holocaust?
Yes, we were born too late
The voice - it called again
Could it be mine?
I cannot sleep, I toss and turn
My eyes so burn
They tried to run; they faced the barrel of a gun!
My G-d why did you create a race of ordinary men?
When we live in such a complex world full of frauds!

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Written by Marion Polusky-Nakash after Oct 7th, 2023

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