

# A New Poem By Jay Ungur

written by breslov.org

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*There is no heart of darkness.*

This impossible challenge-  
as I continue to fail  
and free fall;  
to **see** You even here,  
in this place, the darkness, in the failure,  
in the "blotte" the mud, the self-pity and self-absorption  
a lustful and angry place.

Why do I only **connect** with You in times of crisis  
when I've nowhere else to go  
no One else to turn to;  
and in times of plenty, **forget** You so fast!  
Like the Book of Judges never went out of fashion!  
Not having learned their lesson!  
Those Israelites repeat the cycle of intimacy and rejection  
I follow in similar fashion.

Help me **feel** You even now-  
when all the world's literati rage against You  
and the film makers write without You in mind  
where the facts of history betray only Your absence;  
Your silence in the face of mechanized slaughter and violence.

In both the Hurban of modern history "out there"  
as well as the psychic drama of the wasteland within  
I **hear** You not-  
only the linguistic trace of You is left-  
Your absence is palpable, like the darkness of the plague in  
Egypt  
the gaping hole in culture and thought;  
of what was once Your Presence  
this vacuum, now filled with rage and violence.

In this space I now inhabit-all those possibilities exist in me too,

I no longer fool myself that it too, could not take place here, now, within me.

Once torn between Rav Kook's idealism (or maybe wish fulfillment) and Kubrick's nightmarish landscapes, Celan and Leonard Cohen awash in the foreground,

the Churban out there is now mirrored within.

Half man, half computer, man's inhumanity to man

played out in all sorts of subtle ways-

even in the benign and benevolent institutions

like hospitals and hospices let alone schools and prisons-

even where we conspire to be good,

in the not-so- subtle forms of violence to the person.

My steel syringe plunges daily into the flesh as my patients lose sleep for the sake of vital sign documentation for reimbursement's sake and all in the name of medicine, of course.

Yet in this inner vacuum (chalal hapanui)

a grey dark field of used machines,

broken prostheses, spare parts,

shells of once utility-filled technology

where safe emotions have no place

and fear and dread are the only currency

Precisely in this place Rabeinu demands we see You.

inviting us into the most difficult task of **worshipping and celebrating**

Your Presence and vitality in the desire of all that is present in its very absence.

This paradoxical state must occur in history as well as within,

**touching** the Presence even with the absent self

the wounded child groping inside

despite the feeling of absence or maybe because of it.

Having reached the bottom of the cave there is no further

descent  
the surface feels smooth and cold in the darkness  
and here Your **presence** lifts me  
and in the cool waters of the Mikveh I remain suspended like  
in the womb  
of the Great mother.

Where I can no longer even initiate a movement from below  
I must await His grace from above  
suspended as I am in this in-between space.  
Still unable to make that initial gesture  
paralysed by the past.

Lifted by these waters I begin to feel  
a power beyond me  
and no longer in control I surrender once more  
to reality as it is  
the way things happened  
the past  
the inability to change the self  
to this power.

Nothing is suddenly made to have meaning  
no great insight arrives  
that might explain His silence  
and the absolute fact of His toleration of the unspeakable  
or even my inner violence;  
Nothing new emerges  
just the felt Presence  
and that will have to do  
for now.

By Jay Ungar