

M. D. Shafrir-Stillman

Interpretations

Biblical Verses & Meditative Poems

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For my beloved family

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Introductory Poems



Who Is the Poet?

You may not know it, but the poet
Must be a sort of diver,
Diving into the depths of the soul,
Trying to expose the corals of feeling amid the shoal.

He may not show it, but a poet
Is a man who has the urge and the passion to be heard
Till his voice echoes and flies like a bird
And merges to be one with the spirit of his fellow man.

But I think that the writing of a poet
Is created simply because –
Without it he cannot doze,
As it makes him immerse in his thoughts
And not leave them and collapse
In a frenetic dance till he loses his senses
Or flies high, like Icarus,
Rises sky high-
Melted, dissolves in the heat of the sun,
Or leaps out of his mind, running like a fool
Into the vale of tears of the soul.

The Destiny of the Poem

"Come up with me into my lot...and I likewise will go with thee into thy lot."

THE BOOK OF JUDGES (CHAPTER 1:3)

To be written on the ice,
 To be melted from solid state to water,
 To be evaporated in the turbulent wind,
 To be read in the shapes of the clouds,
 To be heard surprisingly by the rain,
 To be merged in the roots of the grass,
 To be drained to the stream of the river,
 To be dissolved among the waves of the ocean, or
 To be permeated into the ground water of oblivion.
 And if indeed this is the destiny of my poem
 Then I will say directly to him:
 I likewise will go with you into your lot.

What is a True Poem?

Although some say that the best poem is deception,
I wish to write an authentic poem.

Will this poem actually be so?

And if it is a true and honest thing,

- How will we know?

I have another question, I must admit:

If it really is thoroughly true

Which truth is it?

Is this preferable truth?

One that must

Exist in this poem,

As it flows pleasantly,

Moderately and sensibly,

Or must this poem

Be born out of a storm of emotions

And gales in the depths of the soul?

And though I write the poem on a computer

- I don't trust it, and I rewrite it later,

Since I write it at night,

When I'm really drunk with words

And I get up the next morning with a hangover,

And I suffer all day, feeling drowsy and confused,

And if I write it by hand,
On pure white paper, am I to understand
That everything written in ink
Is actually where the truth begins?
And does it correctly convey
The truth anyway?

The World between Its Reality and Its Appearance

Not so, it is not actually so,
As each person differs from his brother
- Even though it seems to be so,
Even if they appear to be alike.

And thus the eyes are blocked and could not see,
And the minds are blocked from observing.
The real world is not so
Even though it seems so.

For between the real world
And the world of false impressions,
There is a chasm which will never
Be bridged over the waters.

And there is still darkness over the waters of the deep,
And the Spirit of God still moves upon the face of the waters.

Poetry Celebrates

(Written after the battle against Hamas in the Gaza strip - Summer 2014)

The cannons fire and poetry is silent.
All the waves are high, the storm continues.
All the flags are taken down, the war is over.

The soldiers all return to their worried families.
And those badly wounded – their healing continues.
All our feelings rise for a longed-for healing.

All the seagulls fly and the fish are frightened.
All the dogs bark at a passing procession,
But the procession passes and poetry celebrates.



Biblical Verses



The Creation of the World and of Man

(Poem for Yom Kippur, Day of Atonement)

In the beginning, God created
The heavens and the earth.
And then he created the rest by proclamation:
The first thing to be created was the light of day,
Which was differentiated from the darkness;
The second thing was the firmament, which then became a sky,
Which separated waters from waters;
The third thing to be created by proclamation was the land,
Which appeared from the same waters.
And so on and so forth did our great
Lord continue to create...
Thus, the creator made more things in His universe,
All created out of chaos
(Meaning lack of form or order
In some wilderness or emptiness)
And from this disorder in the universe
He created and made some order.

And if all things in the world
Were created by proclamation of God,
It is only man that He made
In His image, in His likeness,
As humans are superior to all other animals.