

YITGADAL V'YITKADASH¹

by Shalom ASZ

(with thanks to Shai Zontag and family for their great help in the translation).

To my town, Kutno.

When the Gestapo men brought Itsche-Meir to the courtyard of the Jewish community in Praga Warsaw², it aroused excitement, attention, noise, one might say, even joy among the other Gestapo men, who happened to be in the great courtyard at that time. The camp commander himself, a young man in his twenties, with a small black mustache and small cast-bronze and fossil eyes, came out of his office to greet Itsche-Meir. Since the Gestapo established the community place for Jews in an empty brick building of a school in the middle of a large courtyard, their eyes have seen Jews of all kinds brought here, taken from the street or out of their homes, in order drag them to work. Among them were Jews who wore shorts as a European custom and cleanly shaved beard, masquerading as Aryans and there were kosher Jews with long capotes and shaved beards. However, their eyes had not yet seen such a "Jude" from top to bottom. Judaism yelled out from the whole being of Itsche-Meir in a loud voice. His beard was full, thick-black, glistening with radiant Jewish forces. Its black sidelocks, curling in long braids, were shaking upon the beard of the thick cheekbones. His eyes were big and black, restless. Glittering. And the very thing about his clothes: a shiny atlas silk coat torn, tied with a belt and the main thing – the traditional white socks, which peeked out of two cracks in his long capote. The Gestapo people stood around him, mostly pleased without knowing what to do with him. They wondered about this fat piece, trembling out of joy. Even the camp commander, his hands stuck in his trouser pockets, looked at Itsche-Meir – and his stubborn severe face was wrapped with a thin smile of contentment that hovered over him. Everyone's eyes were full of pleasure, at the sight of their victim standing in front of them.

— What's your name, *Jude*?, one of them asked.

— Itsche-Meir Rosenkranc.

— Itsche-Meir Rosenkranc? Nice name!

"Rosenkranc³!", the Gestapo men laughed.

— And what's your trade, *Jude*?

— A Rabbi.

— A Rabbi! Fine trade! And who are you?

Itsche-Meir, who from the moment the Nazis caught him, had closed his account with this world and was ready for anything, was at peace with himself. There was no sign of nervousness in him. Even his sparkling, lively eyes froze in their white-yellowish pools.

— A *Jude*, of course, replied Itsche-Meir to the question, whose need he did not understand.

— A *Jude*. of course! That's great!, the Gestapo men continued to laugh.

Only the camp commander refrained his laughter. Again, his face wore severity. He wanted to put an end to the play, but "*Jude*" is such a best-seller, a real treasure, that he could not control his mind and prevent his eyes from bathing in the Jewish face for another moment. Now the camp commander's face became as serious as a cat's face, grasping a mouse with its paws and examining it with its penetrating gaze. What was missing here, however, was the fear of death peeking out of the mouse's eyes! The Jew showed no fear, no distress. His eyes did not blink, his high stature did not move, his lips did not tremble. He stood as a stone-pillar. The Jew's lack of fear bothered the camp commander in his gazing at the victim, his gazing-pleasure, and made him nervous. Suddenly he reached out his hand and in an instant his fingers grabbed the mid-face hairs of the Jew, clinging to his sidelocks, part of his mustache and the edge of his cheek beard, which abounded and filled his large palm.

— Say: "*Jude schwein – habe keine ehre!*"⁴", shouted the camp commander.

Itsche-Meir repeated after him: "*Jude schwein – habe keine ehre!*"

— Speak louder!

— *Jude schwein – habe keine ehre!*

— Speak even louder!

— *Jude schwein – habe keine ehre!*, exclaimed Itsche-Meir loudly. Then, the camp commander pulled his hand. The hair, however, stood firm in Itsche-Meir's flesh and did not break.

— Damned, said the battalion commander and he pulled harder. The hair was still resisting.

— This is a real *Jude*! This is a Jewish beard!, said the camp commander out of ridicule to those standing around him, a little embarrassed that the Jewish beard did not surrender to him easily, he put his foot on the Jewish belly, and pulled with all his might.

This time the beard surrendered to him, and the camp commander's hand held the end of a detached sidelock, a part of the mustache and thick tuft of the broad-cheeked beard of the Jew.

— Well, you, please try!, the camp commander pointed to one of his gang at the Jew's beard.

And God forbid, the thing happened again.

¹ From the "*Book of the Ghetto War – Between the Walls, in the Camps, in the Forests*", edited by Yitzhak Zuckerman, Moshe Basok, Published by Kibbutz HaMeuchad, The Yitzhak Katznelson Ghetto Fighters' House, 1954. The author dedicated the above story to his hometown – Kutno.

² TN: name of the Jewish quarter, north of Warsaw.

³ TN: "Rosenkranz" is German for "Rosary".

⁴ German, "Yid pig – I have no honor!"

A confrontation of forces began on the Jewish beard. Some of them managed to pull out a handful of hair in two or three strokes but one of them, a Gestapo dwarf, won the competition: one strong pull and his palm was full of a new strand of hair from Itsche-Meir's beard.

Itsche-Meir was still standing on the spot on his white-clad feet. The skin of his flesh peeked through the holes in his torn shoes. In his beard, which was just before full, growing and radiant, large bald spots were visible. The beard was now made of single, scattered sheaves, connected by jets of liquid blood from the wounds, which the uprooted skin and hair-pulling had made on its face.

Itsche-Meir's beard was no longer a beard. It had become a damp lump, like a rag glued to a person's face. Itsche-Meir's eyes, however, were as they were before. And even his whole appearance was what it was. And worst of all – only now did the Gestapo realized that – the "Jude" totally forgot the main thing: to shout while his beard was torn. The camp commander could not decide whether to consider the behavior of the Jew as a manifestation of courage and character, or of Jewish impudence and arrogance. For the former, he was willing to give the Jew credit, but for the latter he wanted to teach the Jew such a lesson that he would forget his Jewish pride. So, he asked Itsche-Meir:

— Did it hurt you?

— A little, sir, replied Itsche-Meir.

The Jew's answer softened the camp commander a little. However, he wanted to be more confident:

— And who are you?

— *Jude schwein – habe keine ehre!*, said Itsche-Meir aloud.

— A decent Jew! Pleasant Jew!, said the camp commander pleased.

— Well, now let's see what you can do. Tie him up to the cart!

They led Itsche-Meir to a freight cart parked in the yard. The cart had a man-harness: ropes tied to its sides and leather straps at their ends, as was the custom of Warsaw porters. Itsche-Meir was attached to the cart, and some Gestapo men jumped on and off it. One of them sat on the "stand", a whip in his hand, and started pounding on Itsche-Meir:

— Come on, *Jude*, come on!, said the owner of the whip, whipping him.

Itsche-Meir stuck out his high neck out of his unbuttoned shirt and capote. His neck with its large protuberance stretched like the neck of an ostrich. All his big head on the top of his neck seemed, because of the ragged beard, oversized, cumbersome. And like an ostrich he presented and spread his legs with socks, thin as sticks. Itsche-Meir's sandals remained stuck in the muddy ground, his footsteps sinking beneath him. A sweat of fear now flowed from his forehead, and more than that – from his long neck and his protruding bony nape. He did his best to pull and move the cart, which sank because of the heavy load of the Gestapo men on it, with its wheels in the damp ground. But the more Itsche-Meir kept on pulling, the more the cart refused to move. Itsche-Meir tried to change

his footing: he once extended his left foot, once his right foot, forward. Here he tried to pull once on one shoulder and tried again on the other. He absorbed the whipping from his lashers, exerted all his strength to pull the cart, but yielded nothing more than the outbursts of laughter aroused by his efforts: the cart did not move from its place.

— Give him another pig to help him!, exclaimed the camp commander, who stood with his hands in his pants' pockets, watching the play. The silent smile of satisfaction that illuminated his face before had disappeared: his face was now wrapped with melancholic seriousness.

From somewhere, they found and took out a second Jew, much older than Itsche-Meir; a man with red eyes from lack of sleep and his beard shaking. They harnessed the Jew on the other side of the carriage. The whiplash now landed on the heads of the two Jews. The old Jew held the harness on one side and Itsche-Meir on the other. Itsche-Meir changed his stance. With all his will, with all the forces that resided in his chest protruding forward, he pulled on the cart. The old Jew tried to do his thing. But the cart did not move.

— Let them feel the lashes!, exclaimed the camp commander.

The whip reached out his hand, and again the lashes fell on Itsche-Meir and the old Jew suits. Itsche-Meir's absorbed the lashes and remained silent, but the old Jew, at each blow that hit his head, shouted: "Oy vey, father in heaven! Oy, oy, mother", and this stimulated the hunger for laughter of the Gestapo men:

— *Vey Vey, aba'le! – Oy, Oy ima'le!*, the Nazis mocked, imitating the Jew.

And suddenly Itsche-Meir did it. Hearing the laughter of "*aba'le-ima'le*", he right away stretched his neck and nape again through the harness, gripped the carriage with his bony fingers, exerted one pull abruptly with his chest, his whole body mobilizing all the forces that were stored in him into his limbs, legs stuck in the ground and sent the body forward – and the cart moved. Itsche-Meir ran, and pulled the old Jew with him.

— The Jew can do it! The Jew can do it!, exclaimed the Gestapo men stamping their feet on the bottom of the cart that was now in motion.

— A decent Jew!, said the camp commander. Let him go!

They released Itsche-Meir from the cart. The torn atlas silk capote was completely wet and where the leather strap of the cart was, a wet streak of horrors appeared, scratched on his chest.

— A decent Jew, an obedient Jew! Group "A", beard trimming! Let him go, for today!, the camp commander yelled to his men, and he went out of the yard to his office, hands in his trousers' pockets, and did not cast a single glance at Itsche-Meir.

Itsche-Meir was taken and placed against a wall. Immediately afterwards, one of the captive Jews was taken out to him. He, a young man entrusted with this role, trimmed with large dark scissors, the rest of Itsche-Meir's beard, sidelocks, mustache, head hair and laid a complete series of "stairs". And Itsche-Meir without a beard, feeling

as if his soul had been taken away from him and his humanity transmigrated to a beast, was lowered to the prison camp which was underground, a kind of cellar, and here, between damp and mossy walls, he found some of his brothers, some lying and some sitting on sacks of hay, who were taken on the same day from the street and were brought to the crowd-places for work.

Dusk of a precocious autumn day. Lots of Jews were now brought in to the basement room, returning "home" from work. Some young, some elderly: Jews clean-shaven and short-clothed, Jews in long capotes, wearing black Warsaw hats with thin visor. Some of them were, like Itsche-Meir, with plucked and frayed beards and heads trimmed in "stairs"; for others they forgot to trim their beards; while for some, beards had already begun to grow again, others had absolutely no sign of it. The Jews, as they were, threw themselves on the ground. Their faces and clothes were filthy, stained by mud soaked in sweat dripping from their flesh. The Jews lay soundless, only a few of them breathing heavily and loudly, and the loud exhalation sound was even quieter and more stagnant than the silence. Not everyone lay down. Some of them rose and sat, and stayed put. The sitting people all took off their shoes, boots, sandals, and held their feet in their hands. Feet were swollen, wounded, bumped, scarred. As if they had traveled hundreds of miles, climbing mountains, hitting stones. They were inflamed red and as if steam would rise from them. It seemed that these people lying and sitting here, had turned into only legs and feet: they lost every interest in life other than this, forgot their own existence. All the hardships were all gathered in one hotspot, in one great pain, that throbbing pain in their legs. And it was as if the personalities of the people were gathered from all their bodies, from all their souls, and went down, concentrated, attacked, gathered in the swollen feet, conquering all the senses and all the emotions.

Suddenly a voice is heard: *Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei raba!*

Heads straightened, faces tilted. Immediately, the "feet" were forgotten, as if the people have been torn out of a deep sleep by this "*Yitgadal*," which is so well-known, so engraved in the heart, and here so far away, so rare to be heard. They saw a Jew in a filthy, torn atlas capote, a Jewish hat on his head, tied with a colorful handkerchief, as if he had a toothache, standing by the wall, moving in his prayer.

And it was as if the people were recalled by Itsche-Meir's "*Yitgadal*" into their world that they already thought they had left forever. Over there, on the other side of the fence, while being transferred here; a few among the captive Jews jumped up from their place, releasing their feet from their hands, went to the corner where Itsche-Meir stood, and began to pray with him, swaying. Some remained seated, staring anxiously at the door. Sounds of voices, one, then two:

— Hurry up and finish!

— Fast, fast, before they come!

Quickly, in a hurry, they said the "*Kedushah*" prayer together, and they went through the last three steps of the "*Shemoneh Esreh*" prayer before any of them opened his mouth.

Suddenly, a long whistle went through the space above the heads in the full, crowded basement. The people sitting let go their legs out of their hands and, as much as they could, hurried, snatched and put on their shoes, wore rags to their wounds, got up and went out in arranged columns, two by two, each one with his tin plate. They walked like soldiers, up to the pump in the big yard. They drew water, bathed, wiped their faces and hands with the wings of their capotes, then marched, army-style, to the large, temporarily erected wooden awning with long-arranged benches. Here was the kitchen, where Jewish men and women were preparing big pots of potato soup. Everyone was given a plate of soup with a piece of bread and sat down to eat.

Itsche-Meir, with the bandages on his cheeks, walked around like a trained soldier, as if he had been here for ages, so that the Gestapo man, who was having an eye on him, found no excuse to harass him.

Before Itsche-Meir took his slice into his mouth, he blessed it. The beginning of the blessing was swallowed up in his mouth and only its end was heard: "*hamotzi lechem min haaretz*."⁵

The Jews who pounced with the thin spoon like hungry wolves on the meal, for which they had longed the entire day, swallowed the spoon with a gaping mouth. Itsche-Meir's blessing reminded them of something. They growled after him, stopped eating. Some of them contented themselves with saying a mere "*Amen*," who was growled from their mouths. The Gestapo men, who were standing by the makeshift kitchen, watched as something happened here, but it passed so quickly that they could not realize what it was; the "world" had already dined as always, washed their tin plates – and Itsche-Meir among them.

The next day, before the gray morning went through the inside cellar hatch, the oppressed Jews woke up not to the whistle of the Gestapo man, but to the "*Yitgadal v'yitkadash*" of Itsche-Meir.

Some got up and did like Itsche-Meir; others waited for the Gestapo man to whistle.

Itsche-Meir was lining up in the courtyard, the rolled-up wings of his cracked capote stuck in his belt and, along with the "A" group, he was taken to work.

They led the group a long way out of town, until they reached a field, where they paved a road. There, Itsche-Meir found already other Jews, who worked in groups under the supervision of the Gestapo.

The road was being paved. One group of Jews dug a pit, others wheelbarrowed the excavated dirt and dumped it on the paved road. A whole line of Jews, naked from their trousers upwards, carried stones on their bare chests that they had taken with their bare hands from a large pile,

⁵ TN: end of the benediction of the bread.

brought them up to the paved road, and unloaded them there. Other Jews, younger, were hitched to a huge iron steamroller that rolled over the discarded stones to a furnace. Itsche-Meir joined the group dragging stones from the pile to the road.

The Gestapo man ordered him to take off his capote, like the rest of the Jews. He did so. He was ordered him to take off his robe, his "four wings," his shirt. He obeyed immediately; only when he reached the "four wings", he lingered for a moment, as one who settles in his mind. The look of the Gestapo man, however, reminded him. He undressed, remained standing only in his trousers, which were attached by a ribbon over his bare shoulders, and his face was still bandaged with a colorful tie-scarf. The Gestapo man ripped it over his head, altogether with the hat it was on. Itsche-Meir's face was revealed in its entirety. Bearded-faces look totally naked once being removed from their frame. They look wild, inhuman, as if the shadow of the beard was accompanying them. Itsche-Meir, who only yesterday aroused such excitement among the Gestapo men in his strong, shiny beard, here today, without his beard, seems like a half-shaven doomed prisoner, a robber sent to a forsaken land, of dust and ashes. The Gestapo man could not see how he could be entertained with Itsche-Meir, inasmuch as it wasn't possible to even grab his beard. He stood, kicked his boot in his Jewish belly and sent him to work.

At work, however, the Gestapo man did not find a shadow of a defect in Itsche-Meir. Itsche-Meir did his job perfectly, even generously, as if he desired to do it. He loaded as many stones on his arms and chest as he could carry, walked in a row with diligent steps, brought the stones into place and unloaded them there. He did not allow himself any moment of rest, any pause.

That early-autumn day was hot. The sun blazed on Itsche-Meir's shaved head; The sweat ran down his forehead and softened the thin blisters that had begun to dry on his plucked facial skin. Jets of blood began to flow from them, mingling with the jets of sweat dripping from his hair. Now they were dripping together on his chest, his neck and his shoulders, all wet and drenched in sweat. But Itsche-Meir did his thing. He went back and forth, with no breaks. Only occasionally did he soak his damp neck with his bare hand. His hand, however, was not often free; At all times it embraced heavy-weight stones. Well, Itsche-Meir let the jets, mixed with blood and sweat, drain over his half-naked body – and he did his job with such perfection, that it even satisfied his guard, the Gestapo man:

— Good *Jude*, obedient *Jude*! After all, there's a decent *Jude*. What are you?

— *Jude schwein – habe keine ehre!*, yelled Itsche-Meir aloud.

— Good *Jude*, obedient, decent *Jude*.

The half-hour given to them for the afternoon rest was used by Itsche-Meir this time as all the others – he held his feet in the palms of his hands.

By the evening, when the group of Jews was seating in their place, Itsche-Meir and the other Jews saw, on the

other side of the low fence that surrounded the brick building, the gathering of a crowd of people. When he came closer to the gate could see that a tall pillar towered in the yard above the fence, and three corpses, with long, stretched, naked legs swinging below them, whose boots had been removed. The crowd outside watched the executed that the hangmen let hanging in order to frighten the population. Two Christian women knelt on the stones, and prayed with their eyes closed. Others stood petrified and silent.

— Oy, Neta-Moshe was hanged, growled to himself one Jew, Itsche-Meir's friend to the column.

— *Baruch Dayan HaEmet!*, whispered Itsche-Meir.

— He objected. I told him, don't object. "Violation of discipline" they call it, the Jew growled to himself.

— We are all in the hand of God, Itsche-Meir replied with a growl.

This time the sitting Jews were dumbstruck. They were even deprived of the courage to talk about the event when they were already in the basement, and they knelt and fell on the sacks of hay, or sat with their feet in their hands. The black wings of death, which hovered over all, gathered the Jews in their shadow. They feared even to exhale heavily, as they always did. They just sat, their feet in their hands.

— *Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei raba!*, this time Itsche-Meir's voice was louder and more assertive.

— What does he ask for? To bring a Holocaust on our heads?, some protesting voices were heard.

— Hasn't he seen what is being done here!

This time, Itsche-Meir was found to have fewer companions. Instead, more voices were heard:

— Well, fast... fast... be brief and finish...

— *Ve'ahavta 'et Adonai Elokeicha, bechol levavcha, uvechol nafshecha, uvechol me'odecha*, Itsche-Meir stressed the words.

— Well, enough already, enough..., said fearful voices from every corner.

Itsche-Meir swallowed the rest of the words.

So, a whole week passed. Itsche-Meir was excellent in diligence, discipline, obedience, voluntary action, submission. He became the "amusement boy" of the Gestapo. They presented him as an example to the rest of the Jews: "After all, there is a decent Jew," they even joked that they would make him a "camp leader" for the Jews. He did his job with such perfection that not a single muscle was relieved in protest or reluctance.

That was the case until Friday. When Friday afternoon arrived, the Gestapo noticed a restlessness in Itsche-Meir. Every time he came to the pile to load stones on himself, he paused for a moment and peeked to the sky, to see where the sun was. The Gestapo had already awoken him from his dreams several times by whipping him with a whiplash on his head. Itsche-Meir, however, was still restless: his large, frightened eyes did not stop peeking upward.

And then they were finally being led "home" from work. Itsche-Meir hurried, as if trying to get ahead of the whole group, but with difficulty, another column fellow

Jew stopped him. Thank God, they had already returned to the crowd place before any star could be seen, which Itsche-Meir was looking for in the sky. The minute they went into the basement inside, Itsche-Meir approached the wall, breathless, and began to say:

"*Yitgadal v'yitkadash sh'mei raba!*"

— Faster, fast, fast!

This time Itsche-Meir was in no hurry. When he had finished reading the whole "*Shema*," he took out of his pocket a slice of bread, wrapped in paper, which he had concealed with him, swung the slice, and began to sanctify:

"*Yom hashishi vaychulu hashamayim vеха'aretz vechol tseva'am...*"

Thank God! Everything went smoothly, without interruption.

But the next morning, when Itsche-Meir awakens the world with his "*Yitgadal v'yitkadash*," he remained standing by the wall. The long whistle had already been heard, everyone had already hurried to line up and leave – and Itsche-Meir was still standing by the wall and swaying.

— Itsche-Meir, come on!, someone urged him.

Itsche-Meir did not react and did not stop swaying.

— Itsche-Meir!

— Pull him!

Itsche-Meir does not let himself be dragged out of his place. He continued and swayed.

— He is risking his life! Come on!

— Itsche-Meir!, said one last voice.

All marched and got out. Itsche-Meir remained standing near the wall.

Soon a rain of whiplashes fell on him and he heard a screaming voice, as if demons were dancing around him.

— You, bloody *Jude*!

Itsche-Meir let the lashing rain flow on his head and kept swaying.

A hit on a rib, and destruction. He stood face-to-face, in front of fire-spitting eyes, in front of white, sharp, protruding teeth. A punch wrecked his face.

— Out!

— Merciful Lord! Today I cannot. Today is a day of rest, says Itsche-Meir, trying to show a comely, friendly face, out of his swollen nose, blood flowed.

— What!

— Today is Shabbat for us, today is a day of rest, today I cannot.

The Gestapo man did not strike again. He grabbed him by the neck, took him out of the basement, and brought him to the camp commander's office. Snapping his heels, he extended his arm:

— Heil Hitler!

— Heil Hitler, what happened?

— Violation of discipline!

The commander's tiny eyes got even smaller, his face became more serious. He pondered for a moment. He knew him. Indeed, this was the Jew with the long big beard. He had a report about this Jew: "obedient." As much as he was educated and experienced in his profession, as

much as his heart was empty of emotion, this was the Jew – whether because of his behavior for all that time, or because the play with the beard made him feel good – there was the Jew who evoked in him a last ray of humanity. He sought to save *this* Jew among these Jews. He got up, walked over to the Jew, who was standing in front of him indifferently, with a wily smile on his bleeding face. He took the whip from the hand of the Gestapo man, passed it on to the head of the Jew, and asked:

— Who are you?

— *Jude schwein – habe keine ehre!*, exclaimed Itsche-Meir, shouting with all his might.

— Now go to work, *Jude*!, exclaimed the camp commander.

— Merciful Lord, today I cannot, today is a day of rest.

— Take him out!, exclaimed the camp commander.

— Heil Hitler!

— Heil Hitler!

The camp commander picked up the phone. However, he felt something inside. He hung up the phone again and called the Gestapo man, who had already taken out Itsche-Meir.

— Stand up! Show him the gallows!

They took Itsche-Meir to the place of hanging, showed him the pole.

— Do you know what it is, *Jude*?

— Yes, I saw it... a place where people are hanged, Itsche-Meir replied.

— You'll be hanged, if you do not go to work.

— Merciful Lord, I already told him. Today I cannot. God forbid, I cannot. Today is Shabbat. Day of rest.

They informed the camp commander.

The camp commander phoned to the higher authorities. He was instructed "to hang the Jew Itsche-Meir Rosenkranc, on this very day, at six o'clock in the evening, together with two other members of the Catholic religion."

When Itsche-Meir was led to the gallows, he did not stop mumbling a Shabbat *mincha*. The hanging pole did not bother him. One thing bothered him and because of that he looked continuously at the sky, to know whether the Shabbat was already coming out. Seeing that it was still the holy day, he turned to the supervisor who accompanied him to the hanging.

— Merciful Lord, I have a request for you. You were really so good to me.

— What is it, *Jude*?

— Please wait until the first stars are seen in the sky – and he pointed his finger upwards. Today is a day of rest.

For a moment the supervisor was astonished to hear the Jew's strange request, and then he smiled:

— So be it, *Jude*. The others will be hanged first.

The two Catholics who were sentenced to die at the same time as Itsche-Meir, were hanged first. But it was his turn before he finished the Shabbat *mincha*.

"*Atah echad v'shimcha echad*," Itsche-Meir added, growling to himself, as the rope was placed around his neck.

By evening, when the group of Jews were returning from work, people were once again in front of the gate. Beyond the brick fence they had already seen, Itsche-Meir's thin body swaying over the hanging pole, along with the other two. His bare feet, from which the sandals had been removed, lengthened and stretched. Most of the Jews kept their eyes on the ground, lest they should see, and choked a sigh in their hearts: Itsche-Meir was also gone.

Most of them were silent. But when they came into their basement, they did not throw themselves on the wooden planks. They did not take their feet in their palms. Soon, one popped up and backed up near the basement wall, started swaying and exclaimed aloud:

— *Yitgadal v'yitkadash*.

No one hurried him again: "Fast, fast." They raised and grouped one after the other behind the cantor, and they all started swaying together:

"*Yitgadal v'yitkadash*."

Itsche-Meir had won and they continued in his way.