

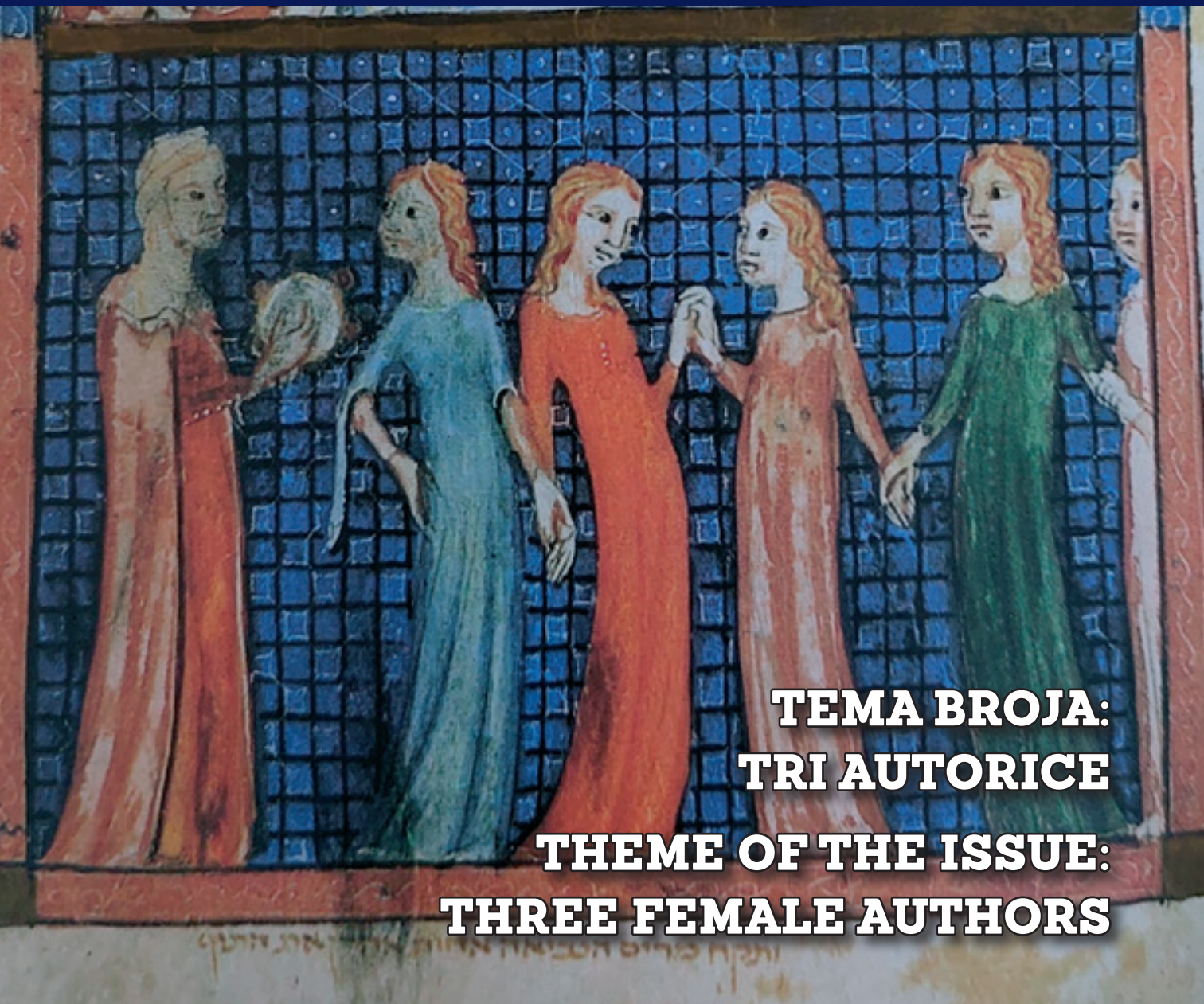


GLASNIK

B'nai B'rith

Gavro Schwartz, Hrvatska

Časopis za židovsku kulturu, civilizaciju i povijest.
Godina 10, broj 38 Zagreb, srpanj 2025. Izlazi četiri puta godišnje.



**TEMA BROJA:
TRI AUTORICE
THEME OF THE ISSUE:
THREE FEMALE AUTHORS**

THE VOICE

of B'nai B'rith



Gavro Schwartz, Croatia

Magazine of Jewish Culture, Civilization and History.
Year 10, No. 38 Zagreb, July 2025. Published quarterly.

Glasnik B'nai B'rith

Časopis za židovsku kulturu, civilizaciju i povijest.

Godina 10, broj 38, Zagreb, srpanj 2025. Izlazi četiri puta godišnje.

The Voice of B'nai B'rith

Magazine of Jewish Culture, Civilization and History.

Year 10, No. 38, Zagreb, July 2025. Published quarterly.



Nakladnik / Publisher: B'nai B'rith, Gavro Schwartz, Zagreb.

Urednik / Editor: Paula Rem

Odgovorni urednik / Editor in Charge: Daniel Benko

Urednički savjet / Editorial Advice: Darko Fischer

Adresa uredništva / Address: Ogrizovićeva 32, 10 000 Zagreb

E-mail: glasnik.bnaibrith@gmail.com

Dizajn i prijelom / Design and layout: Krešendo

Fotografija s naslovnice / Cover photo: motiv iz Sarajevske Hagade: Mirjam i žene plešu nakon prelaska Crvenog mora / motif from the Sarajevo Haggadah: Miriam and the women dance after crossing the Red Sea

Časopis *Glasnik B'nai B'rith* pokrenut je 2016. godine kao digitalni časopis s fokusom na židovsku kulturu, civilizaciju, povijest, kao i aktivnosti židovskih zajednica i pojedinaca te udruge B'nai B'rith u Hrvatskoj. Časopis izlazi četiri puta godišnje u dvojezičnom formatu, na hrvatskom i engleskom jeziku, a svi su brojevi dostupni na <https://www.bnaibrith.hr/hr/>. Svrha časopisa je ukazati na doprinos židovstva u razvoju hrvatske te europske kulture i civilizacije, povezati židovsku i opću javnost, kao i osigurati kontinuitet komunikacije između židovskih zajednica u Hrvatskoj i inozemstvu. Današnji suradnici uključuju judaiste, izraeliste, povjesničare, teoretičare umjetnosti i stručnjake za različita područja iz Hrvatske, Austrije, Indije, Izraela, Amerike, Poljske, Brazila i drugih zemalja.

The Voice of B'nai B'rith was started in 2016 as a digital magazine focusing on Jewish culture, civilization, history, as well as the activities of Jewish communities and individuals and the B'nai B'rith association in Croatia. The magazine is published four times a year in bilingual format, in Croatian and English, and all issues are available at <https://www.bnaibrith.hr/hr/>. The main objective is to point out the contribution of Judaism in the development of Croatian and European culture and civilization, to connect the Jewish and general public, as well as to ensure the continuity of communication between Jewish communities in Croatia and abroad. Today's contributors include scholars from areas of Jewish Studies, Israel Studies, historians, art theorists and experts in various fields from Croatia, Austria, India, Israel, America, Poland, Brazil and other countries.

SADRŽAJ / CONTENTS

Riječ urednice: uz trideset osmi broj <i>Glasnika B'nai B'rith</i>	5
Editorial to the 38th Issue of <i>The Voice of B'nai B'rith</i>	6

U FOKUSU / IN FOCUS

TRI AUTORICE / THREE FEMALE AUTHORS

<i>Vladimira Šimić</i> : Položaj žene u judaizmu: između svetosti uloge i prava na slobodu	7
The Position of Women in Judaism: Between the Sanctity of Role and the Right to Freedom	
<i>Narcisa Potežica</i> : "Izgubljeni kruh" Edith Bruck	21
"Lost Bread" by Edith Bruck	
<i>Jasminka Domaš</i> : Repatrijacija i reintegracija: "Nevidljivi" Anne Marije Gruenfelder	27
Repatriation and reintegration: "The Invisibles" by Anna Maria Gruenfelder	
<i>Jaroslav Pecnik</i> : Autentični europski "štih" u poeziji Jasminke Domaš	31
Authentic European "touch" in the poetry of Jasminka Domaš	

VREMENSKI STROJ / TIME MACHINE

Potovanje kroz vrijeme / Journey through History

<i>Paula Rem</i> : Ima li židovstvo renesansu?	45
Does Judaism have a Renaissance?	

IN MEMORIAM

<i>Darko Fischer</i> : Melita Švob i njeno djelo	53
Melita Švob and Her Work	

ZEMLJA MEDA I MLIJEKA / LAND OF MILK AND HONEY

Eretz Israel

<i>Vladimira Šimić</i> : Am Israel hai: živjeli smo, živi smo i živjet ćemo	63
Am Israel hai: We have lived, we are alive and we will live	

Izjava o odricanju odgovornosti: Činjenice i mišljenja zastupljena u časopisu stavovi su pojedinačnih autora i ne predstavljaju nužno stavove uredništva. Tekstualni i slikovni materijali korišteni su uz dopuštenje autora ili pripadaju javnoj domeni. Sva prava na fotografije zadržavaju njihovi autori.

Disclaimer: Facts and opinions expressed in the magazine are solely statements of respective authors and do not necessarily reflect stance of the editors. Textual and visual materials in this issue are used either with permission of the authors or belong to the Public Domain. All rights to the photographs are reserved by their authors.

Paula Rem, urednica

Uz trideset osmi broj Glasnika B'nai B'rith



Poštovani čitatelji, poštovane čitateljice,

Nakon prethodnog broja posvećenog glazbi, trideset osmi broj “Glasnika” bavit će se ponovno knjigama, a kako i ne bi – kad su knjige tako važne, ne samo za židovstvo, nego i za svaku kulturnu i društvenu skupinu! Konkretno, riječ je o knjigama triju *autorica* – Anne Marije Gruenfelder, Jasminke Domaš i Edith Bruck – koje se bave ekskluzivno židovskim temama. O knjizi povijesne tematike Anne Marije Gruenfelder “Nevidljivi” (2025.) piše Jasminka Domaš, a o zbirci poezije Jasminke Domaš “Bog govori jidiš” (2024.) piše Jaroslav Pecnik. Tu je također roman mađarsko-talijanske autorice Edith Bruck “Izgubljeni kruh” (2023.), na koji se osvrnula naša dugogodišnja suradnica Narcisa Potežica. S obzirom da se temat bavi autoricama, donosimo i esej o konceptu autorstva u židovstvu.

Budući da su – slučaja li! – sve tri knjige u fokusu ovog broja napisale upravo *autorice*, ženama židovstva posvećujemo introspektivan i edukativan tekst Vladimire Šimić, koji afirmira upravo žensku ulogu i motivira nas ispunjavati dalje naš *tikkun olam*! Razdijeljemo između tradicije i modernosti,

što nam uopće preostaje? Pisanje je također vid stvaranja – ne baš u smislu “bara” (ברא), ali barem u smislu “asa” (עשה), činjenja, izrađivanja, unutar već postojećeg svijeta. Nije baš da stvaramo cijeli svijet – premda je čovjek (nefesh) jednak čitavom svijetu prema Talmudu, i premda je svaki tekst i svaka nova interpretacije Tore “stvaranje svjetova živih” prema Zoharu. Zapravo, možda i stvaramo svjetove, cijelo vrijeme?! Dobro, ali ne stvaramo *ex nihilo*, nego iz nečeg što već postoji...

Uvršten je još jedan tekst o istaknutoj ženi koja nas sve, s pravom, motivira. U znak sjećanja na našu istaknutu znanstvenicu i aktivisticu Melitu Švob, donosimo tekst Darka Fischer o njezinom životu i radu, koji završava zaključkom: nadajmo se da će u svakoj generaciji biti osoba poput Melite Švob!

Broj završavamo inspirativnim esejem o značenju pjesme “Am Israel Chai”, koji se osvrće na židovsku prošlost, sadašnjost i budućnost.

Paula Rem, editor

Editorial to the 38th Issue of ***The Voice of B'nai B'rith***



Dear readers,

After the previous issue dedicated to music, the thirty-eighth issue of “Glasnik” will once again deal with books, and how could it not – when books are so important, not only for Judaism, but also for every cultural and social group! Specifically, we are talking about books by three authors – Anna Marija Gruenfelder, Jasminka Domaš and Edith Bruck – which deal exclusively with Jewish topics. Jasminka Domaš writes about Anna Marija Gruenfelder’s historical book “The Invisibles” (2025), and Jaroslav Pecnik writes about Jasminka Domaš’s poetry collection “God Speaks Yiddish” (2024). There is also a novel by Hungarian-Italian author Edith Bruck “Lost Bread” (2023), which was reviewed by our long-time collaborator Narcisa Potežica. There is also an essay on the issue of authorship in Judaism, given that the topic deals with female authors.

Since – by chance! – all three books in the focus of this issue were written by the authors themselves, we dedicate an introspective and educational text by Vladimira Šimić to the women of Judaism. Writing is also a form of creation – not exactly in the sense of “bara” (ברא),

but at least in the sense of “asa” (עָשָׂה), of doing, of making, within an already existing world. It is not exactly that we create the whole world – although man (nefesh) is equal to the whole world according to the Talmud, and although every text and every new interpretation of the Torah is “the creation of worlds of the living” according to the Zohar. In fact, maybe we are creating worlds, all the time?! Okay, but we are not creating *ex nihilo*, but from something that already exists...

Another text about a prominent woman who rightly motivates us all has been included. In memory of our prominent scientist and activist Melita Švob, we bring you a text by Darko Fischer about her life and work, which ends with the conclusion: let’s hope that in every generation there will be a person like Melita Švob!

We end the issue with an inspiring essay on the meaning of the poem “Am Israel Chai”, which looks back at the Jewish past, present and future.

Vladimira Šimić

Položaj žene u judaizmu: između svetosti uloge i prava na slobodu

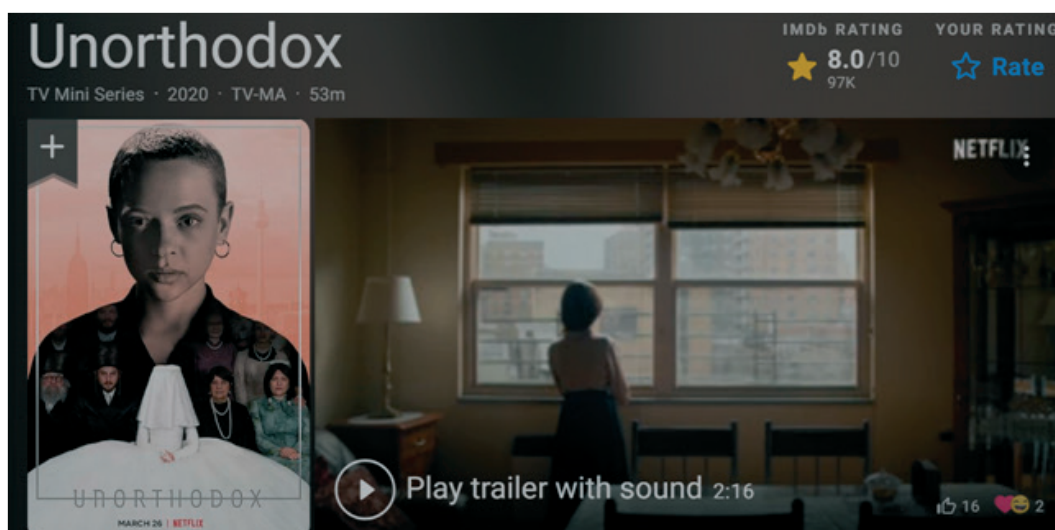
Vladimira Šimić dugogodišnja je novinarka i urednica, danas vlasnica obrta Cyrano komunikacije. Karijeru je započela u Večernjem listu gdje je bila novinarka i urednica dalmatinskog izdanja Večernjaka, a potom je pet godina radila u Doktoru u kući kao novinarka i redaktorica. Posljednjih 10 godina uređuje portal o zdravlju ADIVA.hr te polako razvija web stranicu Zidovski-forum.com. Voditeljica je ureda u židovskoj organizaciji Menora – Chabad Hrvatska kod rabina Pinchasa Zaklosa.

Nakon što je 2020. Netflix lansirao svoju mini-seriju „Unorthodox“, uznemirili su se duhovi na društvenim mrežama i u brojnim člancima, barem kada je riječ o engleskom govornom području. Salva kritika i zgražanja prelila se je u pravcu ultraortodoksnih židovskih zajednica te njihovog odnosa prema ženama, a serija je udarila pečat već postojećem stavu da su Židovke u ortodoksnim zajednicama obespravljene i izolirane. „Unorthodox“ svakako može poslužiti kao

dobar uvod u temu o položaju žena, posebno onih koje bismo nazvali „religioznima“ u judaizmu, a koji je potrebno sagledati iz više dimenzija.

Estina potraga za slobodom

Dakle, glavna junakinja Netflixove drame je Esty Shapiro, 19-godišnja žena iz ultraortodoksne hasidske židovske zajednice Satmar u Brooklynu, koja se osjeća zarobljeno u dogovorenom braku i strogo kontro-



Najava serije Unorthodox (2020)

Izvor: screenshot stranice IMDB

liranom životu, posebno zagorčanom uplitanjem rodbine, ponajprije svekrve, u bračnu intimu. Nesretna, bez mogućnosti izražavanja vlastite volje, odlučuje pobjeći u Berlin. Ondje već živi njezina majka s kojom ima vrlo hladan odnos i koja je zajednici odavno napustila, vjerojatno zbog lezbijskog identiteta i želje da živi po svojim pravilima. Doduše, u seriji nije posve jasno prikazano je li bila formalno izopćena ili je otišla svojom voljom, no očito je da za zajednicu, pa ni za obitelj, nije više postojala. Esty u Berlinu pokušava započeti novi život: upoznaje grupu mladih glazbenika te otkriva svoj glazbeni talent i osobnu slobodu, a ujedno obnavlja vezu s majkom. Paralelno, njezin suprug Yanky i njegov rođak Moishe dolaze u Berlin kako bi je pronašli i vratili u Brooklyn. U konačnici, ona nalazi svoj put te bira novi život.

Priznajem da sam osobno sve epizode pogledala odjednom, provela sam sate pred ekranom. Bilo mi je sasvim jasno da će serija izazvati snažnu lavinu reakcija, a na svoj način i sugerira da su svi ultraortodoksni Židovi ništa drugo, nego „zatucani“. S druge strane, serija ipak nije vjerno prikazala tipičnu religioznu Židovku (pa ni ultraortodoksnu), a pojedine je situacije dovela do razine groteske, iako bez trunke humora. Nažalost, to mogu uočiti samo oni koji s ortodoksima zajednicama imaju doticaj, a takvi u gledateljstvu sigurno nisu u većini.

Što znači u judaizmu biti religiozan?

Neovisno o tome što je riječ o, kako kažu, odličnoj interpretaciji i ekranizaciji istoimenog bestseler, memoara autorice Deborah Feldman koja je opisala svoje iskustvo života i bijega iz zajednice Satmar, serija nipošto ne može poslužiti kao prikaz slučaja tipične religiozne židovske žene. Prije bi se moglo reći da je Esty personifikacija osobne Deborine traume, što ne čini seriju manje privlačnom za gledanje, naprotiv. Rekla bih da je svakako vrijedna gledanja, sigurno kao što je i knjiga vrijedna čitanja, no s nužnim emocionalnim odmakom i bez generaliziranja.

Jer da bi se o životu žena u judaizmu uopće i moglo raspravljati, trebalo bi ponešto znati o ortodoksima, pa tako i o ultraortodoksima židovskim zajednicama, a možda i barem na trenutak napustiti uvjerenje da je ono što se nama čini ispravnim i dobrim, osnovno mjerilo ispravnosti i prihvatljivosti svugdje u svijetu. Istini za volju, trebalo bi zapravo ponešto znati o Židovima općenito, tradiciji, običajima i načinu života, s posebnim naglaskom na obitelj koja je, mogli bismo tako reći, noseći stup na kojem počiva judaizam. Nažalost, vjerujem da nam je svima nakon 7. listopada postalo jasno da je to znanje u javnosti vrlo manjkavo i vrlo površno, uglavnom svedeno na lekcije iz Biblije, a s druge strane obilato zatrovano, što starim mitovima, a što produktima zadivljujuće ratne propagandne mašinerije o kakvoj Goebbels nije mogao

ni sanjati jer tada nije bilo interneta, umjetne inteligencije i društvenih mreža. Tako je Izrael uspješno demoniziran, digitalni je rat odavno izgubljen, a Židove se ponovno tjera u geta, ovaj put virtualna – no o tome više možda nekom drugom prilikom.

U potrazi za odgovorom na pitanje što danas znači biti religiozna židovska žena i kakav je njezin status, recimo nekoliko riječi - onako iskreno - o nama, Židovima općenito, te o našem odnosu s Bogom. Koliko je danas religioznih Židova i što bi taj pojam uopće trebao značiti? Je li religioznost ono što Židova čini Židovom, pa su ortodoksni oni „pravi“, autentični, mjerilo Židovstva, a svi drugi (posebno ateisti) su crne ovce? Jer, ako ćemo iskreno do kraja, Židovi svoj status zahvaljuju vjerovanju da su od Boga izabran narod koji je s Njim sklopio savez i koji se je obvezao ispunjavati Njegove zapovijedi (micvot).

Majka: ključna figura u određivanju identiteta

Iz perspektive halahe, stvar je jasna – Židov po majčinoj strani ima židovsko porijeklo ili je učinio konverziju, a sve ostalo su svjetovne, uglavnom političke rasprave koje nisu podržane važećim židovskim vjerskim zakonom. No matrilinearno određivanje židovskog identiteta uvedeno je tek kasnije, pretpostavlja se negdje u doba Drugog svetog hrama, oko 1. stoljeća pr. n. e., dok je u počecima naše povijesti (dakle, od Abrahama, pa nadalje) bilo

patrilinearno. Da su očevi bili nositelji obiteljskog stabla sasvim je jasno čak i pri površnom čitanju Tore, posebno Knjige Postanka, gdje će mnogi preskočiti dugačke retke genealogije, odnosno beskrajna nabiranja tko je bio sin kojeg oca. Pa čak ni o majci kralja Davida ne znamo zapravo ništa; njezino se ime ni ne spominje u Tori, već su je naknadno nazvali Nitzevet.

Dakle, tko je čija majka, bilo je nevažno iz perspektive određivanja identiteta i to je pravilo kojeg se čak i danas drže neke zajednice, primjerice, Karaiti (Karaimi). Riječ je o židovskoj sljedbi nastaloj sredinom 8 st. n. e. u Babiloniji, a kojih i danas ima oko desetak tisuća u Maloj Aziji, na Krimu, u Egiptu, Poljskoj i Litvi. Za Karaite je karakteristično da odbacuju Talmud i svu usmenu rabinsko-talmudsku predaju te priznaju samo pisanu Toru i iz nje izvedene zakone. No Talmud odbacuju i neke druge sljedbe poput Samarijanaca (Samaritanaca) i Beta Izraela (etiopskih Židova), a od njega su se udaljile i mnoge sljedbe nastale tijekom i nakon židovskog prosvjetiteljskog pokreta (haskale) u zemljama srednje i istočne Europe krajem 18. i početkom 19. stoljeća.

Vidljivo je da se gotovo cijela ta priča vrti oko halaha, odnosno zakona objedinjenog u Talmudu, no i dalje ne objašnjava gdje je tu religioznost? Dugačku teološku raspravu o vjeri i religioznosti Židova može se skratiti na jednu do dvije rečenice – od Židova se ne traži izriekom da vjeruju u Boga,

već se traži da žive prema Njegovim zapovijedima. Zašto? Zato jer je On to tako rekao i tako je zapisano, a Njegovo postojanje trebalo bi biti neupitno, van svake rasprave. I, na kraju krajeva, čim si Židov, podrazumijeva se da je On tvoj Bog, to je lijepo izjavio u prvoj zapovijedi, vjerovao ti u to ili ne. Naravno, ovo je vrlo skraćena i ne baš sasvim potpuna priča, no biti religiozan, pobožan Židov jednostavno podrazumijeva ispunjavati micvot te se držati običaja i tradicije naših predaka. Zato će se za pobožnog Židova i reći da je „šomer Šabat“ - „čuvar Šabata“, onaj koji poštuje Šabat i drži se vezanih zapovijedi, a u širem smislu to znači da se općenito drži svih micvot.

Veličanje žene u tradicionalnom judaizmu

Gdje je u svemu tome položaj i uloga žene? Žena svakako nije samo „stroj za rađanje“, što se ponekad može čuti i što bi se površno moglo zaključiti ako se uzme u obzir da se prema majci određuje naš identitet. U judaizmu žena je i tradicionalno bila daleko više od toga.

Prije svega, treba reći da judaizam smatra muškarca i ženu različitima, ali ravnopravnima. Njihove se obaveze i odgovornosti razlikuju, no sve su jednako važne. I muškarac i žena stvoreni su na sliku i priliku Božju, pa tu treba napraviti još jednu digresiju. Bog nema rod i spol, a činjenica da govorimo o Njemu, a ne o Njoj, jezične je prirode – ni hebrejski ni aramej-

ski jezik nemaju srednji rod. Mnogi se rabini slažu da je „čovjek“ stvoren dvospolan, a tek je kasnije odvojen na muškarca i ženu (da, dobro ste uočili, Židovi vode rodno-spolne rasprave već stoljećima).

Također, prema tradicionalnom judaizmu su žene obdarene većim stupnjem „bima“ (što bi se moglo prevesti kao intuicija, razumijevanje, inteligencija) u odnosu na muškarce. Stoga se pramajke Saru, Rebeku, Rahelu i Leu poštuje kao ravnopravne, pa čak u nekim elementima i superiorne u odnosu na patrijarhe Abrahama, Izaaka i Jakova. Od biblijskih vremena žene su zauzimale poštovane položaje – Mirjam je rame uz rame s braćom Mojsijem i Aronom sudjelovala u oslobođenju naroda iz zemlje Egipatske, na listi sudaca bila je i Debora, sedam od 55 biblijskih proroka su bile žene... Nadalje, žene nisu sudjelovale u idolopoklonstvu zlatnom teletu, pa neki tradicionalni izvori čak sugeriraju da su bliže božjem idealu od muškaraca. Zbog toga se do danas slavi Roš Hodeš, odnosno prvi dan svakog židovskog mjeseca je ženski blagdan u kojem žene trebaju biti oslobođene svakog rada. Dakle, Židovi nemaju Dan žena samo jednom godišnje.

Vrijedi spomenuti i to da iako tradicionalni judaizam ne prihvaća (uglavnom ni danas) žene rabine, uloga rebecin, odnosno supruge rabina smatra se vrlo važnom u savjetodavnom i organizacijskom smislu u okviru zajednice. Spomenimo i Beruriju

(Beruriah) čije se ime spominje u Babilonskom Talmudu te u raznim drugim drevnim i srednjevjekovnim spisima. Pa čak i ako je izmišljena, jer se njezino postojanje ne može sa sigurnošću potvrditi, slavljena je kao žena iznimne mudrosti. Bila je, piše se, kći velikog mudraca Hananije ben Teradiona te je i sama bila učenjakinja. Tako se ističe da je čak i u mladosti njezina inteligencija nadmašivala inteligenciju njezina brata te da je naučila „tristo zakona od tristo učitelja u jednom danu“. Udala se je za rabina Meira, jednog od velikih mudraca razdoblja mišne.

A ako ćemo o pravima žena, u tradicionalnom judaizmu su žene imale daleko veća prava nego u ostatku civilizacije do 20. stoljeća. Mogle su posjedovati svoju imovinu i njome trgovati, sklapati vlastite ugovore, sve ono što žene na našim područjima nisu mogle ni sanjati.

Nema riječi o savršenstvu

No je li sve idealno? Ako je odnos prema ženama tako dobar, zašto je Esty (odnosno Deborah) pobjegla? U odgovoru na ta pitanja, ponovno se moramo vratiti na to tko su Židovi, tko smo mi?

Kao prvo, postojimo tisućama godina, doslovno. Mislim da ne treba gubiti previše vremena na objašnjavanje što to znači kada je riječ o utjecaju vremena i povijesnih prilika na tradiciju i običaje. K tome treba dodati i geografska područja na kojima su Židovi živjeli i još uvijek žive.

A svakako je najvažnije znati da Židovi nisu homogena, već izrazito heterogena skupina. Židovstvo nije centralizirana religija s hijerarhijskom strukturom poput Katoličke Crkve, već postoje različiti pokreti, denominacije i manjinske grupe među kojima granice često nisu jasno definirane.

Danas se uglavnom glavnim pravcima (denominacijama) smatraju ortodoksni, konzervativni, reformski, rekonstrukcionistički i humanistički judaizam, potom su tu već spomenuti Karaiti, Beta Izrael, pa i Samaritanci (iako se oni i ne mogu smatrati Židovima, samo su im slični). Kao što je spomenuto, postoje i unutar denominacija podskupine, posebno kada govorimo o ortodoksnim Židovima poznatim kao haredi. Tu su deseci hasidskih dinastija (Chabad-Lubavitch, Satmar, Vizhnitz, Belz, Breslov...), litvanski (nehasidski) haredi, pa sefardske ortodoksne zajednice (marokanske, perzijske, jemenske...). I svaka od njih može imati svoj pristup halahi i teologiji, svoj stil odijevanja, svoje vođe te, općenito, svoj način života. Nažalost, ne zna se ukupan broj svih tih skupina unutar glavnih pravaca, no pretpostavlja se da je blizu stotinu, možda i više.

Budući da su razlike među tim brojnim zajednicama vrlo značajne, tako se razlikuje i odnos prema ženama.

Satmar, kojoj je pripadala Esty, vrlo je zatvorenog tipa, u potpunosti posvećena vjerskom životu i, među ostalim, sa snažnim naglaskom na ulogu

žene kao supruge, majke i zaštitnice vjerskog života obitelji. Rađanje djece i njihovo odgajanje u duhu vjere smatra se najuzvišenijom zadaćom. Visoka stopa nataliteta u toj zajednici odražava i status majčinstva kao svetog poziva. Žene se obično udaju vrlo mlade (često između 17. i 20. godine), i život im se velikim dijelom odvija unutar domaće sfere. Djevojke pohađaju vjerske škole u kojima se sekularni predmeti podučavaju vrlo ograničeno, a kasnije, ako i žele raditi, izbor zanimanja mora biti u skladu s vjerskim normama koje se odnose na skromnost i ne miješanje spolova. Ukratko, činjenica je da su Satmarke doista u mnogočemu ograničene, barem gledano iz naše zapadnjačke perspektive, no žene unutar zajednice često ne doživljavaju to kao ugnjetavanje, već kao vjerno služenje Bogu kroz tradicionalne uloge.

Pa ipak, problem nastupa u trenutku ako djevojke, odnosno žene odluče napustiti takve zajednice i to je problem pred kojim se ne smije zatvarati oči. Dok će u nekim grupama takva odluka izazvati gorčinu i bol, ali neće dovesti do izolacije, u drugima se s tim ženama prekida svaki kontakt, zabranjuje im se da viđaju djecu (ako su ih imale), govori im se da će propasti ako odu i vrše se drugi slični psihološki pritisci. Stoga su u raznim zemljama i otvorene organizacije koje pružaju podršku i pomoć ženama koje odluče izaći iz haredi zajednica kao što su to Footsteps u SAD-u ili Out for Change u Izraelu.

Umjesto zaključka

Ukratko bi se moglo reći, sve je dobro dokle god postoji sloboda izbora. A posebno – ideja je sjajna, no pitanje je realizacije. Neupitno je, naime, da judaizam ženu stavlja na pijedestal i apsolutno joj pridaje veliku vrijednost. I u zajednicama koje nisu (ultra)ortodoksne žene igraju značajnu ulogu; tako u reformnom judaizmu već desetljećima djeluju i kao rabini, kantori te zauzimaju ravnopravno s muškarcima druge vodeće pozicije u zajednici, već prema interesima i mogućnostima.

A s druge se strane u nekim vjerskim zajednicama (ali nipošto u svim) zaboravlja da je slobodna volja, pa time i sloboda izbora, u temelju našeg vjerovanja. Svi smo slobodni birati između različitih načina djelovanja, kao što smo i odgovorni za posljedice svojih izbora. I to pravo ženi ne smije biti uskraćeno. Deborah je učinila svoj izbor.

Tko će naći ženu vrsnu? Više vrijedi ona nego biserje.

Muževljevo se srce uzda u nju i blagom neće oskudijevati.

Ona mu čini dobro, a ne zlo, u sve dane vijeka svojeg.

Pribavlja vunu i lan i vješto radi rukama marnim.

Ona je kao lađa trgovačka: izdaleka donosi kruh svoj.

*Još za noći ona ustaje, hrani svoje
ukućane i određuje posao sluškinja-
ma svojim.*

*Opazi li polje, kupi ga; plodom svojih
ruku sadi vinograd.*

*Opasuje snagom bedra svoja i živo
miče rukama.*

*Vidi kako joj posao napreduje: noću
joj se ne gasi svjetiljka.*

*Rukama se maša preslice i prstima
drži vreteno.*

*Siromahu dlan svoj otvara, ruke pru-
ža nevoljnicima.*

*Ne boji se snijega za svoje ukućane,
jer sva čeljad ima po dvoje haljine.*

*Sama sebi šije pokrivače, odijeva se
lanom i purpurom.*

*Muž joj je slavan na Vratima, gdje
sjedi sa starješinama zemaljskim.*

*Platno tka i prodaje ga i pojase daje
trgovcu.*

*Odjevena je snagom i dostojanstvom,
pa se smije danu budućem.*

*Svoja usta mudro otvara i pobožan
joj je nauk na jeziku.*

*Na vladanje pazi ukućana i ne jede
kruha besposlice.*

*Sinovi njezini podižu se i sretnom je
nazivaju, i muž njezin hvali je:*

*“Mnoge su žene bile vrsne, ali ti ih
sve nadmašuješ.”*

*(Mudre izreke, 31:10-29 – Jeruza-
lemska Biblija)*

Vladimira Šimić

The Position of Women in Judaism: Between the Sanctity of Role and the Right to Freedom

Vladimira Šimić is a long-time journalist and editor, and today the owner of the Cyrano Communications. She began her career at Večernji list, where she was a journalist and editor of the Dalmatian edition of Večernji, and then worked for five years at Doktor u kući as a journalist and editor. For the past 10 years, she has been editing the health portal ADIVA.hr and is slowly developing the website Zidovski-forum.com. She is the head of the office at the Jewish organization Menora – Chabad Croatia under Rabbi Pinchas Zaklos.

14

After Netflix launched its miniseries “Unorthodox” in 2020, spirits were stirred on social media and in numerous articles, at least in the English-speaking world. A barrage of criticism and outrage poured in the direction of ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities and their treatment of women, and the series stamped its stamp on the already existing view that Jewish women in Orthodox communities are disenfranchised and isolated. “Unorthodox” can certainly serve as a good introduction to the topic of the position of women, especially those we would call “religious” in Judaism, which needs to be viewed from multiple dimensions.

Esty's Quest for Freedom

So, the main character of the Netflix drama is Esty Shapiro, a 19-year-old woman from the ultra-Orthodox Hasidic Jewish community of Satmar in Brooklyn, who feels trapped in

an arranged marriage and a strictly controlled life, especially bitterly interfered with by relatives, primarily her mother-in-law, in her intimacy. Unhappy, unable to express her own will, she decides to flee to Berlin. Her mother already lives there, with whom she has a very cold relationship and who left the community a long time ago, probably because of her lesbian identity and desire to live by her own rules. Although the series does not show it entirely clearly whether she was formally ostracized or left of her own free will, it is obvious that she no longer existed for the community, or even for her family. Esty tries to start a new life in Berlin: she meets a group of young musicians and discovers her musical talent and personal freedom, while also renewing her relationship with her mother. At the same time, her husband Yanky and his cousin Moishe come to Berlin to find her and return her to Brook-



Sarajevo Haggada, Mirjam and women dancing

Source: private photo

lyn. Ultimately, she finds her way and chooses a new life.

I admit that I personally watched all the episodes at once, I spent hours in front of the screen. It was quite clear to me that the series would cause a strong avalanche of reactions, and in its own way it suggests that all ultra-Orthodox Jews are nothing more than “stupid”. On the other hand, the series did not faithfully portray the typical religious Jew (not even an ultra-Orthodox one), and it brought certain situations to the level of grotesque, although without a hint of humor. Unfortunately, this can only be noticed by those who have contact with Orthodox communities, and such people are certainly not in the majority of viewers.

What does it mean to be religious in Judaism?

Regardless of the fact that it is, as they say, an excellent interpretation and screen adaptation of the bestselling memoir of the same name by author Deborah Feldman, who described her

experience of life and escape from the Satmar community, the series can in no way serve as a case study of a typical religious Jewish woman. Rather, one could say that Esty is the personification of Deborah’s personal trauma, which does not make the series any less attractive to watch, on the contrary. I would say that it is certainly worth watching, certainly just as the book is worth reading, but with the necessary emotional distance and without generalizing.

Because in order to discuss the lives of women in Judaism at all, one would need to know something about Orthodox, including ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities, and perhaps at least for a moment abandon the belief that what seems right and good to us is the basic measure of rightness and acceptability everywhere in the world. Truth be told, one should actually know something about Jews in general, their traditions, customs and way of life, with a special emphasis on the family which is, so to speak, the supporting pillar on which Judaism rests. Unfortunately, I believe that after October 7th it became clear to all of us that this knowledge in the public is very deficient and very superficial, mostly reduced to lessons from the Bible, and on the other hand abundantly poisoned, both with old myths and with the products of an amazing war propaganda machine that Goebbels could not have even dreamed of because there was no internet, artificial intelligence and social networks back then. Thus, Israel has been suc-

cessfully demonized, the digital war has long been lost, and Jews are once again being driven into ghettos, this time virtual – but more on that perhaps another time.

In search of an answer to the question of what it means to be a religious Jewish woman today and what her status is, let us say a few words - honestly - about us, Jews in general, and about our relationship with God. How many religious Jews are there today and what is this term supposed to mean at all? Is religiosity what makes a Jew a Jew, so that the Orthodox are the “real”, authentic, standard of Judaism, and all others (especially atheists) are the black sheep? Because, to be completely honest, Jews owe their status to the belief that they are God’s chosen people who have made a covenant with Him and who have committed themselves to fulfilling His commandments (mitzvot).

Mother: a key figure in determining identity

From the perspective of halakhah, the matter is clear – a Jew on his mother’s side has Jewish origins or has converted, and everything else is a secular, mostly political debate that is not supported by current Jewish religious law. However, the matrilineal determination of Jewish identity was introduced only later, presumably sometime during the Second Holy Temple period, around the 1st century BC, while in the beginning of our history (i.e., from Abraham onwards) it was patri-

lineal. That fathers were the bearers of the family tree is quite clear even from a cursory reading of the Torah, especially the Book of Genesis, where many will skip the long lines of genealogy, or the endless enumerations of who was the son of which father. We don’t even know anything about King David’s mother; her name is not even mentioned in the Torah, but she was later called Nitzevet.

So, who is whose mother was was unimportant from the perspective of determining identity, and this is a rule that some communities, for example, the Karaites (Karaim), adhere to even today. This is a Jewish sect that emerged in the mid-8th century AD in Babylonia, and which still numbers around ten thousand in Asia Minor, Crimea, Egypt, Poland and Lithuania today. It is characteristic of the Karaites that they reject the Talmud and all oral rabbinic-Talmudic tradition and recognize only the written Torah and the laws derived from it. However, the Talmud is also rejected by some other sects, such as the Samaritans and the Beta Israel (Ethiopian Jews), and many sects that emerged during and after the Jewish Enlightenment movement (Haskala) in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the late 18th and early 19th centuries also distanced themselves from it. It is evident that almost the entire story revolves around the halakhah, or the law unified in the Talmud, but it still does not explain where the religiosity is in this? A long theological discussion about

the faith and religiosity of Jews can be shortened to one or two sentences – Jews are not explicitly required to believe in God, but are required to live according to His commandments. Why? Because He said so and it is written so, and His existence should be unquestionable, beyond any discussion. And, after all, as soon as you are a Jew, it is implied that He is your God, He beautifully stated this in the first commandment, whether you believe it or not. Of course, this is a very abbreviated and not entirely complete story, but being a religious, devout Jew simply means fulfilling the mitzvot and adhering to the customs and traditions of our ancestors. That is why a devout Jew will be said to be a “shomer Shabbat” - “keeper of the Shabbat”, one who respects the Shabbat and keeps the bound commandments, and in a broader sense this means that he generally keeps all the mitzvot.

The glorification of women in traditional Judaism

Where is the position and role of women in all this? Women are certainly not just “birth machines,” as is sometimes heard and which could be superficially concluded if we consider that our identity is determined by our mother. In Judaism, women have traditionally been far more than that.

First of all, it should be said that Judaism considers men and women to be different, but equal. Their obligations and responsibilities differ, but they are all equally important. Both men and

women are created in the image and likeness of God, so another digression is needed here. God does not have gender and sex, and the fact that we speak of Him and not of Her is of a linguistic nature – neither the Hebrew nor the Aramaic languages have a neuter gender. Many rabbis agree that “man” was created bisexual, and was only later separated into male and female (yes, you noticed correctly, Jews have been having gender-sex discussions for centuries).

Also, according to traditional Judaism, women are endowed with a greater degree of “bim” (which could be translated as intuition, understanding, intelligence) compared to men. Therefore, the foremothers Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah are respected as equals, and even in some elements superior to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Since biblical times, women have occupied respected positions – Miriam, alongside her brothers Moses and Aaron, participated in the liberation of the people from the land of Egypt, Deborah was also on the list of judges, seven of the 55 biblical prophets were women... Furthermore, women did not participate in the idolatry of the golden calf, and some traditional sources even suggest that they are closer to God's ideal than men. This is why Rosh Chodesh is celebrated to this day, that is, the first day of each Jewish month is a women's holiday in which women are supposed to be free from all work. Therefore, Jews do not have Women's Day only once a year.

It is also worth mentioning that although traditional Judaism does not accept (mostly even today) female rabbis, the role of the rebbetzin, or rabbi's wife, is considered very important in an advisory and organizational sense within the community. Let us also mention Beruriah, whose name is mentioned in the Babylonian Talmud and in various other ancient and medieval writings. And even if she is fictional, because her existence cannot be confirmed with certainty, she was celebrated as a woman of exceptional wisdom. She was, it is written, the daughter of the great sage Hananiah ben Teradion and was herself a scholar. It is emphasized that even in her youth her intelligence surpassed that of her brother and that she learned "three hundred laws from three hundred teachers in one day". She married Rabbi Meir, one of the great sages of the Mishnah period.

And speaking of women's rights, in traditional Judaism women had far greater rights than in the rest of civilization until the 20th century. They could own and trade their own property, make their own contracts, all things that women in our areas could not even dream of.

Regarding perfection

But is everything ideal? If the attitude towards women is so good, why did Esty (or Deborah) run away? In answering these questions, we must return to who the Jews are, who we are?

First of all, we have existed for thousands of years, literally. I don't think we should waste too much time explaining what this means when it comes to the influence of time and historical circumstances on traditions and customs. To this should be added the geographical areas in which the Jews lived and still live.

And of course the most important thing to know is that the Jews are not a homogeneous, but an extremely heterogeneous group. Judaism is not a centralized religion with a hierarchical structure like the Catholic Church, but there are various movements, denominations and minority groups among which the boundaries are often not clearly defined.

Today, the main trends (denominations) are generally considered to be Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and Humanist Judaism, then there are the already mentioned Karaites, Beta Israel, and even the Samaritans (although they cannot be considered Jews, they are just similar to them). As mentioned, there are also subgroups within denominations, especially when it comes to Orthodox Jews known as Haredi. There are dozens of Hasidic dynasties (Chabad-Lubavitch, Satmar, Vizhnitz, Belz, Breslov...), Lithuanian (non-Hasidic) Haredi, and Sephardic Orthodox communities (Moroccan, Persian, Yemenite...). And each of them can have its own approach to halakha and theology, its own style of dress, its own lead-

ers, and, in general, its own way of life. Unfortunately, the total number of all these groups within the main directions is not known, but it is assumed to be close to a hundred, perhaps more.

Since the differences between these numerous communities are very significant, so is the attitude towards women.

Satmar, to which Esty belonged, is very closed, completely dedicated to religious life and, among other things, with a strong emphasis on the role of women as wives, mothers, and protectors of the religious life of the family. Giving birth to children and raising them in the spirit of faith is considered the highest task. The high birth rate in this community also reflects the status of motherhood as a sacred calling. Women tend to marry very young (often between the ages of 17 and 20), and their lives largely take place within the domestic sphere. Girls attend religious schools where secular subjects are taught to a very limited extent, and later, if they want to work, their choice of profession must be in accordance with religious norms regarding modesty and non-mixing of the sexes. In short, the fact is that the Satmar women are indeed restricted in many ways, at least from our Western perspective, but the women within the community often do not experience this as oppression, but as faithful service to God through traditional roles.

However, the problem arises when girls, or rather women, decide to

leave such communities, and this is a problem that should not be ignored. While in some groups such a decision will cause bitterness and pain, but will not lead to isolation, in others all contact with these women is cut off, they are forbidden to see their children (if they had any), they are told that they will fail if they leave and other similar psychological pressures are applied. Therefore, organizations are open in various countries that provide support and help to women who decide to leave Haredi communities, such as Footsteps in the USA or Out for Change in Israel.

Instead of a conclusion

In short, it could be said, everything is good as long as there is freedom of choice. And especially - the idea is great, but the issue is implementation. It is indisputable, namely, that Judaism places a woman on a pedestal and absolutely attaches great value to her. Even in communities that are not (ultra)orthodox, women play a significant role; thus, in Reform Judaism, they have been acting as rabbis and cantors for decades, and occupy other leading positions in the community on an equal basis with men, but according to their interests and possibilities.

On the other hand, in some religious communities (but by no means in all) it is forgotten that free will, and therefore freedom of choice, is at the foundation of our faith. We are all free to choose between different courses of action, just as we are responsible for

the consequences of our choices. And this right should not be denied to a woman. Deborah made her choice.

*A woman of valour who can find?
For her price is far above rubies.
The heart of her husband doth safely
trust in her,
And he hath no lack of gain.
She doeth him good and not evil
All the days of her life.
She seeketh wool and flax,
And worketh willingly with her
hands.
She is like the merchant-ships;
She bringeth her food from afar.
She riseth also while it is yet night,
And giveth food to her household,
And a portion to her maidens.
She considereth a field, and buyeth it;
With the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.
She girdeth her loins with strength,
And maketh strong her arms.
She perceiveth that her merchandise
is good;
Her lamp goeth not out by night.
She layeth her hands to the distaff,
And her hands hold the spindle.
She stretcheth out her hand to the
poor;
Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to
the needy.*

*She is not afraid of the snow for her
household;*

*For all her household are clothed
with scarlet.*

She maketh for herself coverlets;

Her clothing is fine linen and purple.

Her husband is known in the gates,

*When he sitteth among the elders of
the land.*

*She maketh linen garments and sell-
eth them;*

*And delivereth girdles unto the mer-
chant.*

*Strength and dignity are her cloth-
ing;*

And she laugheth at the time to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom;

*And the law of kindness is on her
tongue.*

*She looketh well to the ways of her
household,*

And eateth not the bread of idleness.

*Her children rise up, and call her
blessed;*

*Her husband also, and he praiseth
her:*

*'Many daughters have done valiantly,
But thou excellest them all.'*

*(Proverbs 31: 10-29, translation JPS,
1917. [https://biblehub.com/jps/prov-
erbs/31.htm](https://biblehub.com/jps/proverbs/31.htm))*

Narcisa Potežica

“Izgubljeni kruh” Edith Bruck

Mr. sc. Narcisa Potežica (*1947.) završila je studij hrvatskog jezika i književnosti te knjižničarstva. Od 1977. godine do umirovljenja 2012. radila je u Knjižnicama grada Zagreba. Bila je direktoricom Knjižnice Vjekoslava Majera i voditeljicom Knjižnice Novi Zagreb. Danas je aktivna na raznim područjima kulture te objavljuje književne osvrtne, eseje i članke u raznim časopisima. Također je osnivačica Čitateljskog kluba u Židovskoj općini Zagreb.

„Izgubljeni kruh” roman je spisateljice Edith Bruck, koja je preživjela Holokaust. Podrijetlom iz Mađarske, autorica je veći dio života provela u Italiji te piše na talijanskom jeziku. Knjigu napisanu 2021. godine s talijanskog je prevela Snježana Husić i objavio *Bodoni* 2023. godine uz potporu *Centra za knjigu i čitanje* talijanskog Ministarstva kulture. Nedavno, 2023. godine, književnica, prevoditeljica, scenaristica i redateljica Edith Bruck osvojila je prestižnu nagradu Campiello za životno djelo. Prema obrazloženju žirija, njezin biografski i umjetnički put čini ju izvanrednim svjedokom europskog i talijanskog 20. stoljeća i hrabrim prenositeljem njegovih vrijednosti u ovom stoljeću. Autorica je preživjela Holokaust (Šou), a nakon zatočeništva u raznim nacističkim koncentracijskim logorima, posvetila je svoj život i pisanje održavanju sjećanja i razmišljanja o najmračnijoj stranici novije ljudske povijesti, planiranom progonu Židova.

Priznanje za životno djelo autorici je svečano dodijeljeno u kazalištu Gran Teatro La Fenice u Veneciji na 61. izdanju Nagrade Campiello i objavila su sva

sredstva informiranja u Italiji. Edith Bruck rođena je 3. svibnja 1931. godine u siromašnoj i brojnoj židovskoj obitelji u malom mađarskom selu Tiszakarad. Ovaj autobiografski roman u prvom poglavlju „Bosonoga djevojčica” počinje opisom sela sa samo šest kuća i njenog romantičnog sjećanja na djetinjstvo.

Početak Drugog svjetskog rata, sve se mijenja. Židovi u njenom selu doživljavaju različite neugodnosti, a otac male Ditke (Edith) govori da će sve proći kad završi rat i da zlo neće pobijediti, jer Njemačka koja je zatrovala Europu mora uskoro pasti. Ali, jedne travanjske zore 1944., njezinu obitelj tjeraju iz seoske kuće, odvođe u geto i dalje stočnim vagonima u logor Auschwitz. To je opisano u drugom poglavlju pod naslovom „11152”. Tada trinaestogodišnja djevojčica pomišlja kako se želi vratiti u mamin truh i nikada se više ne roditi, dok sa sestrom Judit prolazi strahote u logorima Dachau i Bergen-Belsen.

Oslobođenjem 1945., njihove muke ne prestaju. U trećem poglavlju „Nov život”, opisano je kako djevojke, mršave kao kosturi, lutajući traže sestre Mir-

jam i Saru te brata Davida. Pronalaze ih u Budimpešti, ali tamo ne mogu ostat. Edith tada odlazi iz Marseillesa brodom u Izrael i udaje se, ali taj brak kratko traje. U poglavlju pod naslovom „Stvarnost” opisan je njen život u Izraelu. U to vrijeme, ona počinje tajno pisati. Njezin drugi muž u Izraelu je Tomi Bruck, od kojeg se također rasta je. U vojsku ne želi otići i nositi oružje i kaže „Ratovi donose samo ratove. Ja bih razoružala čitav svijet”. Dugo vremena radi kao konobarica, a kasnije dobiva posao plesačice i odlazi u Atenu. To je već početak novog boljeg života, koji se nastavlja u Istanbulu i Zürichu. Na kraju, dolazak u sunčani Napulj, u pansion Santa Lucia na šetnici uz more za nju je bio raj. Poslije svih lutanja osjeća da je Italija njezina zemlja i posebno je oduševljena Rimom. Uči talijanski i počinje pisati na talijanskom. Udaje se za Nela Risi-ja (1920.- 2015.), talijanskog pjesnika, filmskog redatelja, prevoditelja i scenaristu. Na početku ove knjige „Izgubljeni kruh” citirana je njegova misao:

„Povijest
ona istinska
koju nitko ne proučava
koja je većini danas dosadna
(koja je nebrojene zavila u crno)
jednim te potezom lišila djetinjstva.”

Prva Edithina knjiga izlazi 1959. godine. To je autobiografija „Chi ti ama così” (Tko te tako voli), koja govori o djetinjstvu na obalama Tise i o logorima u Njemačkoj. Zbirku priča „Andre-

mo in citta” (Otići ćemo u grad) objavila je 1962., a njezin suprug Nelo Risi po njoj je snimio istoimeni film. Pisala je i poeziju i romane: „Le sacre nozze” (Sveti brak, 1969.), „Lettera alla madre” (Pismo majci, 1988.), „Nuda proprietà” (Stanarsko pravo, 1993.), „Quanta stella c’è nel cielo” (Koliko zvijezda na nebu), 2009., prema kojem je Roberto Faenza snimio film „Anita B.”, „La donna dal cappotto verde” (Žena u zelenom kaputu, 2012.), „La rondine sul termosifone” (Lastavica na radijatoru”, 2017.), „Ti lascio dormire” (Samo ti spavaj, 2019.).

Djela su joj prevedena na mnogo jezika, a Edith Bruck i sama se bavila prevodjenjem. Prevela je s mađarskog na talijanski djela Attila Jozsefa i Miklosa Radnotija. Također piše scenarije i potpisuje režiju triju filmova. Bavila se i kazalištem, televizijom i novinarstvom. Svoja djela Edith Bruck piše jednostavnim jezikom, piše gotovo uvijek o svom potresnom iskustvu u logoru, o osjećaju otuđenosti od onih koji nisu sve to proživjeli, ali i o potrazi za vlastitim identitetom. Sretna u svojoj drugoj domovini – u Italiji, ovjenčana počastima i nagradama, čak dobiva članstvo u *Mađarskoj akademiji*, ali njoj je najvažnije da opiše svoja sjećanja i pisanjem svjedoči o onom što je proživjela.

Na pet stranica u ovoj knjizi piše „Pismo Bogu” i traži od njega samo sjećanje. Sjećanja su njen kruh svagdašnji jer kako sama kaže – “mora prosvijetliti još koju mladu savjest u školama i fakultetskim dvoranama” gdje kao svjedok pripovijeda čitav život vlastito

iskustvo. Ona u svojim djelima svjedoči o strahotama Holokausta, o patnjama i težini proživljenog iskustva a o tome je pisao i poznati pisac Primo Levi s kojim je kritika često uspoređuje.

Edith Bruck smatra da je njena dužnost da svjedoči i u tekstu „Pismo Bogu” postavlja tri pitanja: vjerujem li u Tebe, praštam li Zlo i mrzim li svoje krvnike. Ona odgovara: „Židov može oprostiti samo u vlastito ime, ali ja zato nisam sposobna jer mislim na druge, zatrte, koji ne bi oprostili. Samo na treće imam nedvosmislen odgovor: samilost da, prema svakome, mržnja nikada, i zato sam spašena. Siroče, slobodna, i na tome Ti hvala, biblijski Hašemu, Adonaju u molitvi, Bože svagdašnji”.

U kratkom tekstu „Napomena” na kraju knjige saznajemo da je kao devedesetgodišnjakinja poslije smrti muža

sama i sada je s njom njena njegovateljica Ukrajinka Olga Uščak koju naziva anđelom čuvarom i koja joj je poput sestre. Edith Bruck i sada još piše rukom i onda tipka na svojoj staroj *Olive-tici* pa ovom prigodom zahvaljuje njoj i mladom pisci Eugeniju Murralliju da su njen rukopis prebacili na računalo.

A kolika je vrijednost njenog djela piše kritičar Paolo D'Angelo, o tome da je Edith Bruck čitav život svjedočila o tragediji židovskog narod i držala živim sjećanje na to što su nacizam i njegovi poslušnici prouzročili u Europi - kako bi prvenstveno mlade naraštaje potaknula da odbace nesnošljivost, fanatizam i rasizam. U svojoj dugoj književnoj karijeri a posebno u knjizi "Izgubljeni kruh" ponovo podsjeća i opominje koliko je važno ne zaboraviti i pripovijedati o najmračnijem dobu 20. stoljeća.

Edith Bruck: "Izgubljeni kruh", 2023., Bodoni, Zagreb.



Promocija knjige „Izgubljeni“. S lijeva na desno: Danijel Vojak, Ljiljana Dobrovšak, Ana Mara Gruenfelder, Jasminka Domaš“. Foto D. Fischer.

Mr. Sc. Narcisa Potežica

“Lost Bread” by Edith Bruck

Mr. sc. Narcisa Potežica graduated in Croatian language and literature and information science. From 1977 until retirement in 2012, she worked in the Libraries of the City of Zagreb. She was the director of the Vjekoslav Majer Library and the head of the Novi Zagreb Library. Today she is active in various fields of culture and publishes literary reviews, essays and articles in various journals. She is also the founder of the Readers' Club in the Jewish Community of Zagreb.

“Lost Bread” is a novel by the writer Edith Bruck, who survived the Holocaust. Originally from Hungary, the author spent most of her life in Italy and writes in Italian. The book, written in 2021, was translated from Italian by Snježana Husić and published by Bodoni in 2023 with the support of the Center for Books and Reading of the Italian Ministry of Culture. Recently, in 2023, the writer, translator, screenwriter and director Edith Bruck won the prestigious Campiello Award for Lifetime Achievement. According to the jury, her biographical and artistic journey makes her an extraordinary witness of the European and Italian 20th century and a courageous transmitter of its values in this century. The author survived the Holocaust (The Show), and after being imprisoned in various Nazi concentration camps, she dedicated her life and writing to preserving the memory and reflections on the darkest page of recent human history, the planned persecution of the Jews.

The author's lifetime achievement award was formally presented at the

Gran Teatro La Fenice in Venice at the 61st edition of the Campiello Prize and was published by all media outlets in Italy. Edith Bruck was born on May 3, 1931, into a poor and large Jewish family in the small Hungarian village of Tiszakarad. This autobiographical novel, in the first chapter “The Barefoot Girl”, begins with a description of a village with only six houses and her romantic memory of childhood.

At the beginning of World War II, everything changes. The Jews in her village experience various inconveniences, and the father of little Ditka (Edith) says that everything will pass when the war is over and that evil will not win, because Germany, which has poisoned Europe, must soon fall. But one April dawn in 1944, her family is forced out of their farmhouse, taken to a ghetto, and then on cattle wagons to the Auschwitz camp. This is described in the second chapter, entitled “11152”. At that time, the thirteen-year-old girl thinks about how she wants to return to her mother's womb and never be born again, while she and her sister Judit endure

the horrors of the Dachau and Bergen-Belsen camps.

With the liberation in 1945, their suffering did not end. In the third chapter, "New Life," it is described how the girls, thin as skeletons, wander around looking for their sisters Miriam and Sara and their brother David. They find them in Budapest, but they cannot stay there. Edith then leaves Marseilles by ship for Israel and gets married, but the marriage is short-lived. The chapter entitled "Reality" describes her life in Israel. At that time, she begins to write secretly. Her second husband in Israel is Tomi Bruck, from whom she also divorces. She does not want to go to the army and carry weapons, saying "Wars only bring wars. I would disarm the entire world." She works as a waitress for a long time, and later gets a job as a dancer and goes to Athens. This is already the beginning of a new, better life, which continues in Istanbul and Zurich. In the end, arriving in sunny Naples, at the Santa Lucia guesthouse on the seaside promenade, was paradise for her. After all the wanderings, she feels that Italy is her country and is particularly delighted with Rome. She learns Italian and begins to write in Italian. She marries Nel Risi (1920-2015), an Italian poet, film director, translator and screenwriter. At the beginning of this book, "Lost Bread", his thought is quoted:

"History
the true one
that no one studies
that is boring to most today
(which has made countless people
black)
in one stroke, it deprives you of your
childhood."

Edith's first book was published in 1959. It is the autobiography "Chi ti ama così" (Who loves you so much), which tells of her childhood on the banks of the Tisa and the camps in Germany. She published a collection of stories "Andremo in città" (We will go to the city) in 1962, and her husband Nelo Risi made a film of the same name based on it. She also wrote poetry and novels: "Le sacre nozze" (Holy Marriage, 1969), "Lettera alla madre" (Letter to Mother, 1988), "Nuda proprietà" (Tenancy Law, 1993), "Quanta stella c'è nel cielo" (How Many Stars Are There in the Sky), 2009, based on which Roberto Faenza made the film "Anita B.", "La donna dal cappotto verde" (The Woman in the Green Coat, 2012), "La rondine sul termosifone" (The Swallow on the Radiator, 2017), "Ti lascio dormire" (I Let You Sleep, 2019).

Her works have been translated into many languages, and Edith Bruck herself has been involved in translation. She translated the works of Attila József and Miklós Radnóti from Hungarian to Italian. She also writes scripts and directs three films. She has also worked in theater, televi-

sion, and journalism. Edith Bruck writes her works in simple language, almost always about her traumatic experience in the camp, about the feeling of alienation from those who did not experience it all, but also about the search for her own identity. Happy in her second homeland - in Italy, crowned with honors and awards, she even receives membership in the Hungarian Academy, but the most important thing for her is to describe her memories and, through writing, testify to what she has experienced. On five pages in this book, she writes a "Letter to God" and asks him only for memory. Memories are her daily bread because, as she herself says - "she must enlighten a few more young consciences in schools and university halls" where she has been narrating her own experience as a witness throughout her life. In her works, she testifies to the horrors of the Holocaust, to the suffering and the weight of the lived experience, and the famous writer Primo Levi, with whom critics often compare her, wrote about this.

Edith Bruck believes that it is her duty to testify and in the text "Letter to God" she asks three questions: do I believe in You, do I forgive Evil and do I hate my executioners. She answers: "A Jew can forgive only in his own name, but I am not capable of that because I think of others, the exterminated, who would not forgive. Only to the third do I have an unequivocal

answer: compassion, yes, towards everyone, hatred never, and that is why I am saved. Orphan, free, and for that I thank You, biblically Hashem, Adonai in prayer, God of all times".

In the short text "Note" at the end of the book, we learn that as a ninety-year-old after the death of her husband, she is alone and now has with her her caregiver, the Ukrainian Olga Uščak, whom she calls her guardian angel and who is like a sister to her. Edith Bruck still writes by hand and then types on her old Olivetica, and on this occasion she thanks her and the young writer Eugenio Murrari for transferring her manuscript to the computer.

And the value of her work is written by critic Paolo D'Angelo, who says that Edith Bruck has witnessed the tragedy of the Jewish people all her life and kept alive the memory of what Nazism and its followers caused in Europe - primarily to encourage the younger generations to reject intolerance, fanaticism and racism. In her long literary career, and especially in the book "Lost Bread", she once again reminds and warns how important it is not to forget and to tell stories about the darkest era of the 20th century.

*Edith Bruck: "Izgubljeni kruh", 2023.,
Bodoni, Zagreb.*

Jasminka Domaš

Repatrijacija i reintegracija: “Nevidljivi” Anne Marije Gruenfelder

Kad govorimo o Holokaustu, prvo pitanje koje se nametnulo uoči čitanja knjige Nevidljivi bilo je: je li Holokaust, Šoa, uništenje, završilo za Židove 9. svibnja 1945. kapitulacijom Njemačkog Reicha ili još ranije 27. siječnja 45. ulaskom Sovjetske armije u Auschwitz? U međuvremenu, dogodili su se krajnje okrutni marševi smrti i na tom putu mnogi su iznemogli, bolesni i gladni izgubili život. Analiza tih godina kao i ono što im je prethodilo pokazuje nam da je sve ono najbolje što se podrazumijevalo pod srednjom Europom uglavnom skončalo u logorima smrti. A fizičke i psihičke posljedice Židova koji su preživjeli rat bile su koliko toliko zatomljene pred snagom volje da se život mora nastaviti. Attine Grossman naziva to razdoblje „vrijeme između“. Ono je, dakako, zahvatilo i jugoslavenske Židove. I kad bi napokon krenuli prema kući, domu, čekale su ih razorene pruge, razrušeni gradovi, a bilo je i pljačkaša koji bi im oteli posljednji komad robe.

Povratak u mirnodopski život bio je traumatičan, jer se trebalo suočiti s činjenicama da najčešće najbliži nisu preživjeli Holokaust, a u stanu ili kući naišli bi na nepoznate ljude koji su tu bili useljeni ili su se sami uselili u njih znajući da su nekada tu živjeli Židovi odvedeni u logore smrti. Što uraditi? Nastojali su biti nevidljivi građani, sumnjajući da je bolje ne govoriti o svojim traumama i proživljenom užasu. Živjelo se potiskujući to u podsvijest, a da ne govorimo o jednom dijelu židovskih povratnika primjerice iz Švicarske ili Njemačke, koji su od komunističkih vlasti bili optuženi kao sumnjivi za špijunažu i pod tom izlikom uhapšeni i odvedeni na Goli otok.

Za historiografiju, jedno ovakvo znanstveno istraživanje objavljeno u knjizi



Naslovnica knjige

Izvor: Historiografija.hr

Nevidljivi izuzetno je važno, kao i pitanje je li moguće nakon oslobođenja početi novi život od nultog dana oslobođenja?

A susjedi? Svega je tu bilo. Onih koji su se borili u partizanima na strani antifašizma, ali i onih koji su bili simpatizeri i pomagači ustaša i nacista i koji su na brzinu nakon završetka rata „prevrnuli kaput“. O Holokaustu se, kako navodi autorica knjige, „govorilo na rate“. Vlast je u međuvremenu otvarala sefove Židova koji nisu pre-

živjeli Holokaust. Nađene vrijednosti u njima nisu ponuđene židovskoj zajednici.

Knjiga je svečano promovirana u svibnju ove godine na Kliofestu u Nacionalnoj i sveučilišnoj knjižnici u Zagrebu (Ljiljana Dobrovšak, Danijel Vojak, Jasminka Domaš, Anna Maria Gruenfelder).

“Nevidljivi”, 2025, Zagreb, Bet Israel / Stajer Graf.

Jasminka Domaš

Repatriation and reintegration: “The Invisibles” by Anna Maria Gruenfelder

Jasminka Domaš has published several poetry collections, five novels and several monographs. Some of her works have been translated into German, English, Italian, Hungarian, Slovenian, Czech... Her books have been presented at fairs in Leipzig, Paris, Jerusalem and Zagreb. She is also known as a screenwriter for documentary films, mostly on the Holocaust. She is a member of PEN and the Croatian Writers' Association. The Croatian National Theatre in Varaždin staged her novel *Kadišl* and the *Sky Travelers*. Jasminka's story *Purimspiel* was included in the American anthology of the best Jewish stories published in the last 25 years. And her story *Omnibus* is included in the anthology of Jewish women writers from 30 countries around the world. She also successfully collaborates with the internationally renowned composer Davor Bobić, connecting music with poetry.

When we talk about the Holocaust, the first question that arose before reading the book *The Invisibles* was: Did the Holocaust, the Shoah, the destruction, end for the Jews on May 9, 1945, with the capitulation of the German Reich, or even earlier on January 27, 1945, with the entry of the Soviet army into Auschwitz? In the meantime, extremely cruel death marches took place and on that journey many exhausted, sick and hungry people lost their lives. An analysis of those years, as well as what preceded them, shows us that all the best that was meant by Central Europe mostly ended in the death camps. And the physical and psychological consequences of the Jews who survived the war were more or less suppressed by the willpower that life must go on. Attine Grossman calls this period “the time

in between”. It, of course, also affected the Yugoslav Jews. And when they finally set off for home, home, they were met with destroyed railways, ruined cities, and there were also robbers who would steal their last piece of goods.

Returning to peaceful life was traumatic, because they had to face the fact that most often their closest relatives did not survive the Holocaust, and in the apartment or house they would encounter unknown people who had moved in there or who had moved in there themselves, knowing that Jews taken to death camps had once lived there. What to do? They tried to be invisible citizens, suspecting that it was better not to talk about their traumas and the horror they had experienced. They lived by suppressing it in their subconscious, not to

mention a part of the Jewish returnees from, for example, Switzerland or Germany, who were accused by the communist authorities as suspected of espionage and arrested under that pretext and taken to Goli otok.

For historiography, such a scientific research published in the book *Invisible* is extremely important, as is the question of whether it is possible to start a new life from day zero after liberation?

And the neighbors? There were all kinds of people there. Those who fought in the partisans on the side of anti-fascism, but also those who were sympathizers and helpers of the Ustashas and Nazis and who quickly

“turned their backs” after the end of the war. The Holocaust, as the author of the book states, was “talked about in installments”. In the meantime, the authorities were opening the safes of Jews who did not survive the Holocaust. The valuables found in them were not offered to the Jewish community.

The book was officially promoted in May of this year at the KlioFest at the National and University Library in Zagreb (Ljiljana Dobrovšak, Danijel Vojak, Jasminka Domaš, Anna Maria Gruenfelder).

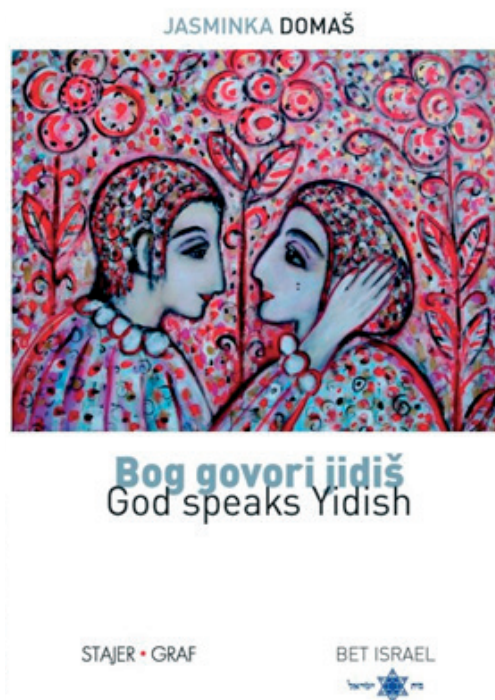
“The Invisibles”, 2025, Bet Israel / Stajer Graf.

Jaroslav Pecnik

Autentični europski “štih” u poeziji Jasminke Domaš

Jaroslav Pecnik (*1950, Osijek) diplomirao je na Filozofskom fakultetu Sveučilišta u Zagrebu, na odsjeku filozofije i bohemistike. Završio je specijalistički studij na Filozofskom fakultetu Karlova sveučilišta u Pragu iz područja *Povijest Srednje Europe* i *Kritike totalitarnih sustava*. U radnom vijeku bio je srednjoškolski i sveučilišni profesor te voditelj nekoliko međunarodnih projekata s područja zaštite ljudskih prava. Autor je stručnih i znanstvenih radova koji su objavljeni u domaćoj i inozemnoj literaturi, objavljuje redovito u domaćem i inozemnom dnevnom i tjednom tisku te u knjigama i zbornicima. Bio je izvjestitelj HHO-a o stanju religijskih prava i sloboda u RH za potrebe godišnjih izvješća International Helsinki Federation, te sudionik i predavač na brojnim seminarima, savjetovanjima, okruglim stolovima, radionicama, međuregionalnim i međunarodnim konferencijama na temu ljudskih prava.

Jasminka Domaš nesumnjivo je vrsna spisateljica i znanstvenica koja se kao sveučilišna nastavnica (Fakultet filozofije i religijskih znanosti u Zagrebu, ranije Filozofski fakultet Družbe Isusove) intenzivno bavi istraživanjima židovske, odnosno judaističke kulture i tradicije. U svakom pogledu radi se o intelektualci europskog „štih“, formata i dometa, a to je iznova, na impresivan način potvrdila najnovijom, do danas svojom možda najzrelijom zbirkom pjesama naslovljenom „Bog govori jidiš“, u izdanju Židovske vjerske zajednice Bet Israel i male, ali već renomirane zagrebačke izdavačke kuće Stajer-Graf, uz napomenu kako se zapravo radi o prijevodu pjesama gđe. Domaš s engleskog jezika („God speaks Yidish“), koje je zavidnom vještinom i s puno osjećaja za ritam i poznavanjem „tananih“ i složenih sadržajnih značenja, prevela Iskra



Naslovnica knjige

Izvor: Ljevak.hr

Pavlović, a kako bi „doživljaj“ bio potpun, pobrinula se slikarica, skulptorica (s preko sto samostalnih i ko-

lektivnih izložbi u RH i u inozemstvu) i književnica Melita Kraus (rođena u Bjelovaru 1954.) koja je instruktivno ilustrirala naslovnicu knjige, likovno sjajno sugerirajući (s)misao i (o)poruku stihova Jasminke Domaš, sa sažetom, ali informativnim pogovorom iz pera Ružice Aščić.

Ali, prije nego li se prihvatim opširnijeg prikazivanja najnovijeg poetičkog uratka gđe. Domaš, moram nekoliko riječi posvetiti njezinoj prethodnoj, nedavno objavljenoj zbirci pjesama „Planina svjetlosti“ (Shura publikacije, Opatija, 2024.), koja je u našoj kulturnoj javnosti, posvema nezasluzeno, prošla nekako nezamijećeno, iako je višestruko značajna, ne samo s umjetničke, odnosno estetske i(li) literarne strane, već posebice s ogledom na aktualni, više nego složeni kontekst međunarodne političke situacije koja prijeti nesagledivom eskalacijom, prije svega ratnih zbivanja na Bliskom Istoku. I upravo s tih i takvih pozicija, traumatičnog kolektivnog i povijesnog iskustva narod i etniciteta kojem pripada, a istodobno i kao članica PEN-a i ranije istaknuta suradnica HHO-a (Hrvatski Helsinški Odbor) posvećena zaštiti ljudskih prava i u najtežim i najbolnijim trenucima suvremene hrvatske povijesti dizala je svoj glas protiv svake vrste nepravde, jasno i otvoreno zagovarajući potrebu dijaloga među sukobljenim stranama kao neku vrstu kulturalne prevencije i pretpostavke njihovog boljeg međusobnog (spo)ra-

zumijevanja. Tako je recimo kao spisateljica inicirala da se i u nas, u RH prevedu najistaknutije poetese (Zelda Schneurson i Lea Goldberg) novodobne izraelske literature, a i sama se istakla suradnjom s uglednom američkom zakladom Vizualna povijest-preživjeli svjedoci Holokaust (čiji je utemeljitelj glasoviti filmski redatelj Steven Spielberg) obavivši brojne razgovore s preživjelim žrtvama Holokausta za potrebe „zvučne“ arhive ove institucije i mogli bi tako još toliko toga nabrajati, ali i ovo je više nego dovoljno. Usprkos svemu, Jasminka Domaš smogla je snaga, svjesna svih mogućih i dobrih i loših implikacija, pisati kako misli da mora i „vremenima usprkos“ oglasiti se temama koje smatra bitnim za sredinu u kojoj živi i djeluje, ali i za svoje stvaralaštvo. Kako mi je napisala, u „agendi“ zbirke „Planina svjetlosti“ nadahnuto je obrazložila zašto se posvetila „perzijskom“ iskustvu i čini mi se kako je upravo sada i ovdje važno citirati barem dio teksta kojeg mi je poslala: „Nema uzaludnog putovanja, bilo mi je važno doživjeti podneblje perzijskih filozofa i sufija. Putujući sam se oslanjala na knjigu poznatog francuskog filozofa, učenjaka i iranologa Henri Corbina, pod nazivom „Grimizni anđeo“...Putujući primjenjivala sam većoma staru židovsku meditativnu tehniku hitbodedut koja znači biti vani, ali istovremeno biti duboko unutar sebe. Ona omogućuje da u nekoliko sekundi vidite puno više detalja nego što bi se na prvi pogled moglo činiti.

Tako se utiskuju, oblikuju i urezuju u duhu prizori doživljenog. Tu zemlju neću pamtiti samo po ljepotama viđenog, po palačama ili perivojima, vodokocima i kristalima, nego u prvom redu po ljubaznosti onih koje sam na putu srela. Samo nekoliko mjeseci kasnije buknuo je rat na Bliskom Istoku...Gotovo da nema vijesti bez da slušamo o ubijanju, razaranju, naoružavanju. Mir se čini utopijom, ali ako ste vi taj mir, on nije utopija... Miru je imanentno razumijevanje, opraštanje sebi i drugima. Mir je život i njegova afirmacija. Pitanje je koliko je u svemu tomu važan glas pjesnika koji su očito i dalje čuđenje u svijetu...Pisci, umjetnici općenito su graditelji, a pjesnici su oni koji i u pustinji svakodnevice pronalaze život. Oni se moraju kretati različitim pravcima u kozmosu kako bi prevladali linije prividnih odvojenosti. Tako je i moje putovanje u Iran bilo dokaz stvaranja ne samo unutar granica jedne zemlje, nego i izvan njezinih granica. Svatko će pjesme iščitati na svoj način; ja tu više ništa ne mogu učiniti, jer jednom kada je knjiga objavljena, ona počinje svoje putovanje, ispisujući svoju sudbinu vašim očima i dušama. I koliko će u vama biti svjetlosti, toliki će biti i plamen ove knjige“. A, to u punom smislu riječi naravno vrijedi i za upravo napisanu zbirku „Bog govori jidiš“.

Razmišljajući kako prikazati poetsko pismo Jasminke Domaš „uneseno“ u njezinu najnoviju knjige i pri tomu listajući podeblju knjižurinu Israbela Steinberga „Jüdische Weisheit

aus drei Jahrtausenden“ (München, 1983.), pomogla mi je misao židovskog filozofa Moše ibn Ezre (1060.-1139.), iz Granade koji je ustvrdio kako su „oči vremena slijepe prema pravim vrijednostima“, jer ih treba znati „uočiti i prepoznati“, budući su „knjige mudrosti i ljepote“, uvijek prošarane skrivenim biserjem riječi i to bi bila, čini mi se, zapravo najpreciznija „odrednica“ njezina svekolikog stvaralaštva. Poetika gđe. Domaš, iako nekako „skrajnuta“ izvan nacionalnog književnog mainstreama, itekakao je prepoznata preko granica Hrvatske, njena su djela prevedena na engleski, njemački, talijanski, ruski, češki, hebrejski, slovenski jezik i daleko je više priznanja dobila na međunarodnoj sceni, nego u zemlji u kojoj je rođena i u kojoj stvara i živi, ali siguran sam: kako vrijeme prolazi njezina poezija (jednako tako i proza) sadržajno i značenjski blistati će sve jačem sjajem, jer riječi njezinih stihoa nalik su nekakvom klatnu koje se slobodno njiše, pri tomu intenzivno, s razumijevanjem sve više dodirujuću „obje strane bitka; stranu mudrosti i stranu ljepote“. Međutim, kako vrijeme prolazi, čini mi se kako se sve više nagnje na stranu mudrosti; pri čemu ne zapostavlja ni ljepotu koja i dalje ostaje neophodan, važan dio cjeline, ali sada više kao ukras, forma kojima se samo „ojačava“ suština izričaja.

Dakle, sve više „strukturalno“ podsjećajući na Talmud, ima svoje originalno značenje, po(r)uku, učenje koje se manifestira posredovanjem alegorija

i simbola, jer kako drukčije iskazati suprotnosti na kojima su sazdan svijet i čovjek, kako dohvatiti moć, dubinu i snagu misli koja živi podjednako ovostrano i onostrano, s tim da „poetsko klatno“, iako se, kako sam već napomenuo, „spušta“ u (s)misao onostranog, u poeziji Jasminke Domaš ostaje poveznicom stvarnosti i snoviđenja, realnosti i imaginarnog. Ili, kako je to analizirajući poetsku kozmogoniju gđe. Domaš, zaključila Šura Dumanić: „S poezijom J. Domaš zaranjamo u nepoznate, bolje reći neotkrivene dubine srca, a onda se propinjemo k udaljenim sferama duše...u mistično, skriveno i neizvjesno putovanje ka promjeni i rastu, duhovnom ispunjenju i sveobuhvatnosti svijeta. Ta nas poezija, najzad, vodi k istinskom rodnom tlu poezije – vjeri/duši, mistici, ljubavi...Stoga je ova poezija univerzalna, pripada svima koji su otvoreni za svijet ispred i iza zrcala“.

Filip David, danas jedan od vodećih srednjoeuropskih pisaca židovskih korijena u svojim književnim zapisima o (ne)stvorenju, pokušavajući objasniti pitanja i probleme židovskog identiteta tvrdi kako „prava, autentična jevrejska kultura postoji uglavnom u dijaspori“. I odmah dodaje, kako je i sam svjestan kontradiktornosti ove konstatacije, ali kako ona upravo logično proizlazi iz „prirode“ židovskog identiteta, koji nije isključivo vjerski, nije dominantno zasnovan na jeziku i izmiče usko shvaćenom

pojmu tradicije. To je, kaže on „maglovit pojam“ i u dobroj je mjeri onim što „drugi“ misle, odnosno što ti „drugi“ prihvaćaju ili odbacuju. Židovska književnost u dijaspori pisana je na različitim jezicima, na jidišu, ladinu, dakle mješavinama različitih jezika koji su židovski, ali na jedan specifičan način, ipak u najvećoj je mjeri pisana na jezicima sredine u kojoj su Židovi živjeli ili i danas žive. David nas podsjeća na poznatu studiju Sander Gilman u kojoj je pokazano zašto je jidiš (kao tradicionalan diskurs Židova srednjo-istočne Europe) bio „odbačen i prezren“ podjednako kod svih onih Židova koji su govorili i pisali na njemačkom i hebrejskom, jer navodno „nije posjedovao njihovu kulturnu vrijednost“ i u tom je kontekstu pokušao i pojasniti položaj židovskog pisca u dijaspori kao neku vrstu prosvjeda protiv outsiderske pozicije koja mu se permanentno nameće. A, ako se traže neke zajedničke odlike književnosti pisane jidišom, to je sklonost onostranom (na jidišu: *yenewelt*), uz obvezan, karakterističan crnohumorni „dodatak“, nekakve „pomjerene veselosti“ koja je više izraz želje kako bi se nadvladalo očajanje, nego stvarna radost i(li) opijenost životom. To je ujedno bio i odraz povijesnih okolnosti (siromaštvo, pogromi, antisemitizam...) u kojima su svojedobno živjeli Židovi istočne i srednje Europe; tamošnje nacionalne države su za njih bile „tjesne“, nepravedne, ugnjetavačke i stoga je njihova nada bila okrenuta iščekivanju i mesijanskoj utopiji o

čemu od 17. stoljeća svjedoče razni pokreti karizmatika, pa preko 18. i 19. stoljeća do pojave „mistično opčinjavajućeg hasidizma“, zaključno s prosvjetiteljskom haskalom, u kojoj su hasidi jednu kabalističku doktrinu u cijelosti preokrenuli prema pojedincu i njegovom susretu s Bogom i tako je nastala jedna „osobena“ jidiš književnost utemeljena na stradanjima i progonima Židova, „skopčana“ s nekom vrstom humora kao vida otpora tegobnim i mučnim uvjetima života. Jer, kako je govorio M.L. Lilienblum (1843.-1910.) židovski prosvjetitelj iz Odese: „U egzilu ne pripadamo sebi, ne pripada nam ni naš život, naš imetak, čak ni naša djeca“, a još prije njega Jehuda Löw Pinsker (1821.-1891.), također iz Odese, kao preteča cionizma je u svojim propovijedima naglašavao: „Židov nije dijete svoje zemlje u kojoj se rodio, on je uvijek i to u apsolutnom smislu, sumnjivi stranac na kojeg se u najmanju ruku gleda s podozrenjem“. Naravno, nisu to bile „originalne“ teze, o njima se daleko prije „razglabalo“ i u „učenjima otaca“ (Pirkej Avot) i u „istupima učenjaka“ („Sof'rim), ali one su bile „pogonsko gorivo“ svekolike kasnije jidiš kulture. I utoliko i kod Jasminke Domaš „Bog govori jidiš“, jer ona je moderno, suvremeno dijete, te i takve kulture; istina ovo je poprilično pojednostavljena slika njezina kompleksnog i univerzalnog stvaralaštva, ali to namjerno činim, kako bih što je moguće više budućim čitateljima njezinih knjiga približio složenost autoričina lika i djela,

odnosno pojasnio zašto je neizostavno vrijedi (pro)čitati. Karakteristika jidiš literature sastoji su u umijeću da se jedna priča „umota“ u drugu priču, pa tako onda i u treću, pa slijedeću itd., kako bi se prožimale, ali zadržale isti okvir svih tih različitih priča. I stoga u moru knjiga koje bi valjalo pročitati, knjige Jasminke Domaš to neizostavno zaslužuju, jer ih krasi jedinstvenost; to su da ponovim knjige u kojima (i) „Bog govori jidiš“.

Posvema ne u pravu autorica pogovora Ružica Aščić kada kaže da su pjesme gđe. Domaš „proznog karaktera“ i kako je svaka pjesma ujedno i jedna manja priča, u pravilu univerzalnog karaktera, „gotovo nalik na bajku“, a često i snažnog simboličkog i identitetskog naboja s referencama na vlastiti prošlost, posebice putovanja, ali i emotivne odnose o kojima je kao prava dama suzdržana u izričaju i(li) daje tek samo ponešto naslutiti. Pjesnički zapisi gđe. Domaš na neki su način i intimistički „odbljesci svskodnevice“, dotiče se tema ljubavi, tuge i radosti života, vjere, pri čemu u gotovo svakoj pjesmi, nad njezinim stihovima „visi Damoklov mač“ tragične i tegobne židovske povijesti, u koju je, pretpostavljam utkana i njezina obiteljska saga, jer drama Holokausta kao da je genetski upisana u fizički i duhovni kod „djece Izraela“ i stoga nikoga ne bi trebalo posebno (za)čuditi zašto su teme progona i pogroma tako nenametljivo, a intenzivno prisutne i u njezinom stvaralaštvu. Oduševljena

poklonica „pisane Riječi“, kao pripadnica „naroda Knjige“, ona otvoreno, ne krijući svoje oduševljenje, bez straha da će joj neko prigovoriti kako se u vlastitom pisanju povodi za uzorima, navodi svoje „literarne inspiracije“, odnosno posvećuje im pjesme, kako bi iskazala svoju zahvalnost Thomasu Stearnsu Eliotu (u istoimenoj „poemi“), Franzu Kafki („Zamak“), Marini Cvetajevoj („Volšebnik“), Amosu Ozu („A. Ozu, ljubavi i tmini“), Baruchu de Spinozi („Amsterdam“); zapravo čitajući pjesme sabrane u ovoj zbirci, nametnula mi se misao kako bi ih valjalo podijeliti u dvije, istina usko povezane, ali ipak odvojene grupe. U prvu bi svrstao pjesme u kojima dominiraju „klasične“, prepoznatljive židovske teme u kojima se izravno ili aluzivno interpretira tegobna povijest židovskog stradanja, često „oslonjene“ na starozavjetne legende i ličnosti i njihove proročanske (ne)moći („Zabluda“, „Homburg“, „Neder-Zavjet“, „Dolazak“, „Neprijatelj je već bio tu“ itd.); dok bi drugu grupu činile one „intimističkog karaktera“ u kojima se očitava svekolika, gotovo barokna raskoš njezinih stihova, snažne emocije i iskrenost izričaja, kao i svojevrsna lepršava, ali ujedno i strogo filozofska upitanost (srećom bez ikakve patetike, jer gđa. Domaš je predobra i preiskusna poetesa, a da bi se dala „uloviti“ u tu staru, banalnu zamku) o (be)smislu vlastitog postojanja. Iako živimo u svijetu koji nas užasava, spašava nas njegoa veličanstvena ljepota u najrazličitijim formama i sadr-

žajima i postupno nas, istina rijetke, vodi mudrosti, kako usprkos svim tim strašnim izazovima koji nas okružju (pre)živjeti. U svojim tekstovima služi se onom tako moćnom, (ne)prikriivenom židovskom (samo)ironijom oplemenjenom mudrim, a opet „vrc-kavim“ humorom koji nam pomaže da se ipak možemo, barem donekle nositi s demonima koji nas opsjedaju izvan i unutar nas. To je i odgovor na „nepodnošljivu lakoću postojanja“, na specifičan, židovski način. Sjajan i efektan primjer su stihovi pjesme „Meni nema pomoći“, ali ništa manje upečatljive su riječi ispisane u radovima kao što su: „Moje najdraže cipele“, „Priznanje“, ili „Na kraju sve će biti dobro“. A, u posebnu bi kategoriju svrstao dva uistinu maestralna pjesnička uratka Jasminke Domaš : „Bog govori jidiš“ i „Camera obscura“ koje u sebi nose antologijski potencijal. Odoliti ću iskušenju i citirati tek pojedine stihove potonje, koja je bez ikakve sumnje nešto najbolje (na)pisano u suvremenoj povijesti hrvatske književnosti: „Nasmiješi se. Ma znaš kako./Onako.../Nasmiješi se kao onaj koji je/izdržao poraze i na kraju pobjedio./Nasmiješi se kao da smrt ne postoji/i kao da te nikada nisam ni na što nagovarao./S očima punim svjetlosti uđi u cameru obscuru/i tako nasmiješen zauvijek ostani“. Sofisticiranog pjesničkog senzibiliteta, nekonvencionalna, inovativna, ali i tradicionalna, Jasminka je Domaš stvorila opus u kojem impresivno povezuje naizgled disonantne, a u suštini harmonično

usklađene stvaralačke forme. S jedne nam strane otkriva metafizičke, ponekad čak nadrealističke elemente kojima naglašava vlastitu „unutrašnju dinamiku“ i „emocionalnu varijabilnost“, ali sve to kroz specifičnu židovsku ikonografiju i emotivni, često melankoličan prosede, koji usprkos tomu nije lišen lepršave radosti života, jer kako je to davno zapisala, u nas već zaboravljena Desanka Maksimović, „ljubav je najljepša dok se čeka“.

Životno i duhovno iskustvo gđe. Domaš obavijeno velovima sna i fantazije, u atmosferi između stvarnosti i iluzija, rezultiralo je knjigom za pamćenje, jer „Bog govori jidiš“ nije samo njezin autoportret, već i svojevrsna legitimacija duhovnosti i po-etičke originalnosti i misaonosti. „Čovjek u snovima vidi svoje misli“, pisao je filozof i leksikograf Sa'adja Gaon (892.-942.), koji se proslavio u sporu protiv antitalmudističke sekte karaima, ali nas je i uputio kako se ostvariti kao cjelovito biće. U konkretnom slučaju gđe. Domaš govorimo o ženi, što valja posebno naglasiti, jer kao i svaka žena u svakodnevnom i poslovnom životu nailazi na niz prepreka koje mi

muškarci ne možemo čak ni zamisliti. A, sučeljavajući u svojoj poeziji san i javu, patnju i želju, stvarnost i mogućnost(i), misaono i mistično, faktično i fiktivno, Jasminka Domaš je suvereno pokazala i potvrdila kako, s pravom, ne priznaje nikakve podjele. I stoga bih ovu „priču“ zaključio riječima, napisanim 1642. godine osobno mi dragog i važnog pjesnika Johna Donne, kojima slavi pisanje i knjigu kao (s)misao života, a koje se u cijelosti mogu aplicirati i na Jasminku Domaš: „All mankind is of one Author, and is one volume; when one Man dies, one Chapter is not torne out of the book, but translated into better language; and every Chapter must be so translated; God emploies several translators; some pieces are translated by Age, some by sickness, some by warre, some by iustice, but Gods hand is in every translation; and his hand shall binde up all our scattered leaves again, for that Librarie where every booke shall lie open to one another“.

“Bog govori jidiš”, 2024., Zagreb, Bet Israel / Stajer-Graf.

Jaroslav Pecnik

Authentic European “touch” in the poetry of Jasminka Domaš

Jaroslav Pecnik (*1950, Osijek) graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb, Department of Philosophy and Bohemian Studies. He completed a Specialist program at the Faculty of Philosophy, Charles University in Prague, in the fields of *History of Central Europe* and *Critique of Totalitarian Systems*. During his working life, he was a high school and university professor and the leader of several international projects in the field of human rights protection. He is the author of professional and scientific papers that have been published in domestic and foreign literature, and regularly publishes in domestic and foreign daily and weekly press, as well as in books and proceedings. He was the HHO rapporteur on the state of religious rights and freedoms in the Republic of Croatia for the purposes of the annual reports of the International Helsinki Federation, and a participant and lecturer at numerous seminars, consultations, round tables, workshops, interregional and international conferences on the topics related to human rights.

38

Jasminka Domaš is undoubtedly an excellent writer and scholar who, as a university teacher (Faculty of Philosophy and Religious Sciences in Zagreb, formerly Faculty of Philosophy of the Society of Jesus)), is intensively involved in research into Jewish, or Judaic, culture and tradition. In every respect, she is an intellectual of European “touch”, format and reach, and she has confirmed this once again, in an impressive way, with her latest, perhaps her most mature collection of poems to date, entitled “God Speaks Yiddish”, published by the Jewish Religious Community Bet Israel and the small, but already renowned Zagreb publishing house Stajer-Graf, with the note that it is actually a translation of the poems of Mrs. Domaš from English (“God speaks Yiddish”), which was translated by

Iskra Pavlović with enviable skill and a great sense of rhythm and knowledge of “subtle” and complex content meanings, and to make the “experience” complete, the painter, sculptor (with over a hundred solo and group exhibitions in the Republic of Croatia and abroad) and writer Melita Kraus (born in Bjelovar in 1954) took care of it, who illustrated the cover of the book in an instructive way, artistically brilliantly suggesting the (s)ense and (o)message of Jasminka Domaš’s verses, with a concise but informative afterword penned by Ružica Aščić.

But, before I begin a more extensive presentation of the latest poetic work of Ms. Domaš, I must dedicate a few words to her previous, recently published collection of poems “Mountain of Light” (Shura publications, Opatija,

2024), which, completely undeservedly, somehow went unnoticed by our cultural public, although it is significant in many ways, not only from an artistic, or aesthetic and/or literary perspective, but especially with its examination of the current, more than complex context of the international political situation that threatens an unforeseeable escalation, primarily of the war events in the Middle East.

And it is precisely from these and such positions, the traumatic collective and historical experience of the people and ethnicity to which she belongs, and at the same time as a member of PEN and a previously prominent associate of the HHO (Croatian Helsinki Committee), dedicated to the protection of human rights, that in the most difficult and painful moments of contemporary Croatian history she raised her voice against every kind of injustice, clearly and openly advocating the need for dialogue between the conflicting parties as a kind of cultural prevention and a prerequisite for their better mutual (understanding). For example, as a writer, she initiated the translation of the most prominent poets of modern Israeli literature (Zelda Schneurson and Lea Goldberg) in Croatia, and she herself distinguished herself by collaborating with the prestigious American foundation Visual History - Holocaust Survivors (founded by the famous film director Steven Spielberg) by conducting numerous interviews with Holo-

caust survivors for the needs of the “audio” archive of this institution, and we could list so much more, but this is more than enough. Despite everything, Jasminka Domaš found the strength, aware of all possible implications, both good and bad, to write that she believes she must, “despite the times”, speak out on topics that she considers important for the environment in which she lives and works, but also for her own creativity. As she wrote to me, in the “agenda” of the collection “Mountain of Light” she inspiredly explained why she dedicated herself to the “Persian” experience, and it seems to me that it is important to quote at least part of the text she sent me right now and here: “No journey is in vain, it was important for me to experience the climate of Persian philosophers and Sufis. While traveling, I relied on the book by the famous French philosopher, scholar and Iranologist Henri Corbin, entitled “The Scarlet Angel”... While traveling, I applied the very old Jewish meditative technique *hitbodedut*, which means being outside, but at the same time being deep inside yourself. It allows you to see many more details in a few seconds than it might seem at first glance. This is how the scenes of what you experienced are imprinted, shaped and engraved in your mind. I will not remember that country only for the beauty of what I saw, for the palaces or gardens, fountains and crystals, but primarily for the kindness of those I met on the way. Just

a few months later, war broke out in the Middle East... There is almost no news without hearing about killing, destruction, and armament. Peace seems like a utopia, but if you are that peace, it is not a utopia... Peace is immanent in understanding, forgiveness of oneself and others. Peace is life and its affirmation. The question is how important the voice of poets is in all this, who are clearly still a wonder in the world... Writers, artists in general are builders, and poets are those who find life even in the desert of everyday life. They must move in different directions in the cosmos in order to overcome the lines of apparent separation. Thus, my trip to Iran was also a proof of creation not only within the borders of a country, but also beyond its borders. Everyone will read the poems in their own way; there is nothing I can do about it, because once the book is published, it begins its journey, writing its destiny through your eyes and souls. And as much light as there is in you, so much will be the flame of this book." And, of course, this also applies in the full sense of the word to the recently written collection "God Speaks Yiddish."

Thinking about how to present the poetic writing of Jasminka Domaš "inserted" into her latest book and leafing through Israel Steinberg's thick book "Jüdische Weisheit aus drei Jahrtausenden" (Munich, 1983), I was helped by the thought of the Jewish philosopher Moshe ibn Ezra (1060-1139), from Granada, who stat-

ed that "the eyes of time are blind to true values," because one must know how to "notice and recognize them," since they are "books of wisdom and beauty," always interspersed with hidden pearls of words, and that would, it seems to me, actually be the most precise "determinant" of her entire work. The poetics of Mrs. Domaš, although somehow "remote" outside the national literary mainstream, is certainly recognized beyond the borders of Croatia, her works have been translated into English, German, Italian, Russian, Czech, Hebrew, Slovenian, and she has received far more recognition on the international scene than in the country where she was born and where she creates and lives, but I am sure: as time goes by, her poetry (and prose as well) will shine with an ever-increasing brilliance in terms of content and meaning, because the words of her verses are like a kind of pendulum that swings freely, while intensively, with understanding, increasingly touching "both sides of being; the side of wisdom and the side of beauty". However, as time goes by, it seems to me that she is leaning more and more towards the side of wisdom; while not neglecting beauty, which still remains a necessary, important part of the whole, but now more as an ornament, a form that only "strengthens" the essence of expression.

Therefore, it increasingly "structurally" resembles the Talmud, has its own original meaning, message, teaching

that manifests itself through the mediation of allegories and symbols, because how else to express the opposites on which the world and man are built, how to grasp the power, depth and strength of thought that lives equally in this world and the beyond, with the proviso that the “poetic pendulum”, although, as I have already mentioned, “descends” into the (s)ense of the beyond, in the poetry of Jasminka Domaš remains a link between reality and dreams, reality and the imaginary. Or, as it is when analyzing the poetic cosmogony of Ms. Domaš, concluded Šura Dumanić: “With the poetry of J. Domaš we dive into the unknown, or rather undiscovered depths of the heart, and then we rise to the distant spheres of the soul... into a mystical, hidden and uncertain journey towards change and growth, spiritual fulfillment and the comprehensiveness of the world. This poetry, finally, leads us to the true native soil of poetry - faith/soul, mysticism, love... Therefore, this poetry is universal, it belongs to all who are open to the world in front of and behind the mirror”.

Filip David, today one of the leading Central European writers of Jewish roots, in his literary writings about the (un)created, trying to explain the issues and problems of Jewish identity, claims that “true, authentic Jewish culture exists mainly in the diaspora”. And he immediately adds that he himself is aware of the contradiction of this statement, but that it logically fol-

lows from the “nature” of Jewish identity, which is not exclusively religious, is not dominantly based on language and escapes the narrowly understood concept of tradition. This, he says, is a “vague concept” and is largely what “others” think, or what these “others” accept or reject. Jewish literature in the diaspora is written in different languages, in Yiddish, Ladino, in other words, mixtures of different languages that are Jewish, but in a specific way, it is still written to the greatest extent in the languages of the environment in which Jews lived or still live today. David reminds us of the famous study by Sander Gilman in which it is shown why Yiddish (as the traditional discourse of the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe) was “rejected and despised” equally by all those Jews who spoke and wrote in German and Hebrew, because it allegedly “did not possess their cultural value”, and in this context he also tried to clarify the position of the Jewish writer in the diaspora as a kind of protest against the outsider position that is permanently imposed on him. And, if one were to look for some common characteristics of literature written in Yiddish, it would be a tendency towards the otherworldly (in Yiddish: *yenewelt*), with the obligatory, characteristic black-humored “addition”, a kind of “displaced cheerfulness” that is more an expression of a desire to overcome despair than real joy and/or intoxication with life. This was also a reflection of the historical circumstances (poverty, po-

grooms, anti-Semitism...) in which the Jews of Eastern and Central Europe once lived; The national states there were "narrow", unjust, oppressive for them, and therefore their hope was turned towards anticipation and a messianic utopia, as evidenced by various charismatic movements from the 17th century, through the 18th and 19th centuries to the emergence of "mystically captivating Hasidism", culminating with the Enlightenment Haskalah, in which the Hasidim completely turned a Kabbalistic doctrine towards the individual and his encounter with God, and thus a "special" Yiddish literature was created based on the suffering and persecution of Jews, "stitched" with a kind of humor as a form of resistance to the difficult and painful conditions of life. Because, as M.L. said. Lilienblum (1843-1910), a Jewish educator from Odessa: "In exile we do not belong to ourselves, neither do our lives, our possessions, not even our children," and even before him, Yehuda Löw Pinsker (1821-1891), also from Odessa, as a forerunner of Zionism, emphasized in his sermons: "A Jew is not a child of the country in which he was born, he is always, and in an absolute sense, a suspicious stranger who is viewed with suspicion, to say the least." Of course, these were not "original" theses, they had been "discussed" much earlier in the "teachings of the fathers" (Pirkei Avot) and in the "statements of scholars" (Sof'rim), but they were the "fuel" of all later Yiddish culture. And so it was with Jasminka

Domaš, "God speaks Yiddish," because she is a modern, contemporary child of that and such a culture; It is true that this is a rather simplified picture of her complex and universal creativity, but I do so intentionally, in order to bring the complexity of the author's character and work as close as possible to future readers of her books, or to explain why it is definitely worth reading. The characteristic of Yiddish literature consists in the art of "wrapping" one story into another, and so on into a third, and then the next, etc., so that they intertwine, but retain the same framework of all these different stories. And therefore, in the sea of books that should be read, Jasminka Domaš's books definitely deserve it, because they are adorned with uniqueness; these are, to repeat, books in which (and) "God speaks Yiddish".

The author of the afterword, Ružica Aščić, is not entirely right when she says that Mrs. Domaš's poems are of a "prose character" and that each poem is also a smaller story, generally of a universal character, "almost like a fairy tale", and often with a strong symbolic and identity charge with references to her own past, especially travels, but also emotional relationships about which, as a true lady, she is restrained in expression or (or) only gives a few hints. The poetic writings of Mrs. Domaš is in a way also an intimate "reflection of everyday life", touching on the themes of love, sadness and joy of life, faith, with almost every song, over her vers-

es, the “sword of Damocles” of tragic and difficult Jewish history hanging over it, into which, I assume, her family saga is also woven, because the drama of the Holocaust seems to be genetically inscribed in the physical and spiritual code of the “children of Israel” and therefore no one should be particularly surprised why the themes of persecution and pogrom are so unobtrusively, yet intensely present in her work. An enthusiastic devotee of the “written Word”, as a member of the “people of the Book”, she openly, without hiding her enthusiasm, without fear that someone will object to her following role models in her own writing, cites her “literary inspirations”, i.e. dedicates poems to them, in order to express her gratitude to Thomas Stearns Eliot (in the “poem” of the same name), Franz Kafka (“The Castle”), Marina Tsvetaje (“The Wizard”), Amos Oz (“A. Oz, of love and darkness”), Baruch de Spinoza (“Amsterdam”); in fact, reading the poems collected in this collection, the thought occurred to me that it would be appropriate to divide them into two, admittedly closely related, but still separate groups. The first group would include poems dominated by “classical”, recognizable Jewish themes in which the difficult history of Jewish suffering is directly or allusively interpreted, often “based” on Old Testament legends and figures and their prophetic (in)powers (“Delusion”, “Homburg”, “Neder-vow”, “Arrival”, “Enemy was already here”,

etc.); while the second group would consist of those of an “intimate character” in which the entire, almost baroque splendor of her verses, strong emotions and sincerity of expression, as well as a kind of fluttering, but at the same time strictly philosophical questioning (fortunately without any pathos, because Ms. Domaš is too good and too experienced a poet to be “caught” in that old, banal trap) about the (meaninglessness) of one’s own existence is evident. Although we live in a world that terrifies us, its magnificent beauty in the most diverse forms and contents saves us and gradually, to be honest, leads us to wisdom, how to (survive) despite all the terrible challenges that surround us. In his texts, he uses that powerful, (un)disguised Jewish (self)irony, enriched with wise, yet “wriggling” humor that helps us to still be able to, at least to some extent, deal with the demons that haunt us outside and inside us. It is also a response to the “unbearable lightness of existence”, in a specific, Jewish way. A great and effective example are the lyrics of the song “I Can’t Help”, but no less striking are the words written in works such as: “My Favorite Shoes”, “Confession”, or “In the End Everything Will Be Alright”. And, I would place two truly masterful poetic works by Jasminka Domaš in a special category: “God Speaks Yiddish” and “Camera Obscura”, which carry anthological potential. I will resist the temptation and quote only a few verses from the lat-

ter, which is without a doubt the best thing written in the contemporary history of Croatian literature: "Smile. You know how./Like that.../Smile like the one who/endured defeats and ultimately won./Smile as if death did not exist/and as if I had never persuaded you to do anything./With eyes full of light, enter the camera obscura/and stay smiling like that forever". With a sophisticated poetic sensibility, unconventional, innovative, but also traditional, Jasminka Domaš has created an oeuvre in which she impressively connects seemingly dissonant, but in essence harmoniously aligned creative forms. On the one hand, it reveals metaphysical, sometimes even surrealistic elements that emphasize its own "inner dynamics" and "emotional variability", but all this through specific Jewish iconography and an emotional, often melancholic prose, which, despite this, is not devoid of the vibrant joy of life, because as Desanka Maksimović, who has long been forgotten by us, wrote, "love is most beautiful while waiting". Ms. Domaš's life and spiritual experience, shrouded in veils of dream and fantasy, in an atmosphere between reality and illusion, resulted in a book to remember, because "God Speaks Yiddish" is not only her self-portrait, but also a kind of legitimation of spirituality and poetic originality and thoughtfulness. "Man sees his thoughts in dreams", wrote the philosopher and lexicographer Sa'adja Gaon (892-942), who became famous in the dispute against

the anti-Talmudic sect of the Karaites, but also instructed us on how to realize ourselves as a whole being.

In the specific case of Ms. Domaš, we are talking about a woman, which should be especially emphasized, because like every woman in her everyday and professional life, she encounters a series of obstacles that we men cannot even imagine. And, by confronting in her poetry dream and reality, suffering and desire, reality and possibility(s), thought and mysticism, fact and fiction, Jasminka Domaš has confidently shown and confirmed that she, rightly, does not recognize any divisions. And so I would conclude this "story" with the words, written in 1642 by the poet John Donne, who is personally dear to me and important, in which he celebrates writing and the book as the (s)ense of life, and which can be applied in their entirety to Jasminka Domaš: "All mankinde is of one Author, and is one volume; when one Man dies, one Chapter is not torne out of the book, but translated into better language; and every Chapter must be so translated; God emploies several translators; some pieces are translated by Age, some by sickness, some by warre, some by iustice, but Gods hand is in every translation; and his hand shall binde up all our scattered leaves again, for that Librarie where every booke shall lie open to one another".

"God Speaks Yiddish", 2024., Zagreb, Bet Israel / Stajer-Graf.

Paula Rem

Ima li židovstvo renesansu?

Budući da se naš temat bavi pitanjem autorstva – kad se našim svijetom širi taj koncept individualnog autorstva i tko je uopće autor u židovstvu? Antička židovska književnost načelno je kolektivna. Čak i ako je autor poznat, u židovskim antičkim tekstovima autorsko “ja” nije jako izraženo. Oni su samo pisci, zapisničari. Fokus je na događajima, a ne na impresijama nekog autora. Neke knjige iz ovog razdoblja kao npr. knjiga Makabejaca (koja nije u Tanakhu) izražavaju konkretnu namjeru autora – ponuditi religijsku interpretaciju povijesnih događaja – ali autor nije eksplicitno imenovan.

Jednom me je studentica pitala – postoji li u židovstvu renesansa. Razmišljala sam o razdobljima na koje je židovsku povijest podijelila judaistika – antika, rabinski period (1.-10. st. n. e.), srednji vijek (11.-17. st. n. e.), novo doba (poslije 18. st.). Tu je Haskala, odnosno prosvjetiteljstvo, ali nigdje se ne spominje renesansa.

Koja su uopće obilježja renesanse, smještene u 15.-16. stoljeće? Kao prvo, pojavljivanje snažnog autorskog “ja”, nakon više stoljeća kolektivne i anonimne književnosti u raznolikim društvenim skupinama. Zatim, afirmiranje antičkogrčkih i rimskih motiva, prvenstveno onih iz mitolo-

gije, ali uz oslanjanje na njihov svjetonazor i filozofiju. Treće obilježje je afirmacija čovjeka kao kompleksnog bića koje se treba jednako obrazovati iz mnogih područja. Četvrto je velika kreativnost i tehnološka inovativnost. Peto je fokus na razvoj znanosti i umjetnosti. Primjer takvog multitalentiranog i široko obrazovanog čovjeka je Leonardo da Vinci, najpoznatiji po slikarstvu, ali također je bio arhitekt, izumitelj, inženjer, što bi se danas reklo, interdisciplinarni znanstvenik.

Drugi primjer je Dante, kršćanski autor koji u svojim tekstovima koristi mnoge motive iz mitologije, naslanjajući se pritom i na antičkogrčki i rimski svjetonazor. To je velika promjena u odnosu na dotadašnje javno mnijenje o antičkoj grčkoj i rimskoj (politeističkoj, predkršćanskoj) kulturi. Načelno je kršćanstvo, ali i židovstvo, negativno portretiralo poganske kulture, koje su ih prethodno ugnjetavale, progonile i u nekim razdobljima čak nastojale iskorijeniti monoteizam. Dolaskom renesanse, ta se percepcija mijenja. Tzv. zapadna civilizacija počinje drukčije promatrati antički grčki i rimski svijet, naglašavajući pozitivne aspekte, kao što je razvoj znanosti i filozofije, zanemarujući aspekte idolopoklonstva, razvratnih javnih manifestacija i tome slično, koji su prethodno bili u cen-

tru. Ovaj pregled vrlo je pojednostavljen, ali cilj ovog teksta nije baviti se poviješću umjetničkih razdoblja.

No, u čemu je stvar s Danteom? Pa, premda se smatra renesansnim autorom, djelovao je u 13. stoljeću, puno prije početka renesanse. Iz toga proizlazi da su razdoblja proizvoljna i ne moraju nužno biti podijeljena na taj način na koji smo navikli.

Relativno gledano, načelno nam nije poznato mnogo predrenesansnih autora, a tek u tom razdoblju afirmiraju se fiksijski književni žanrovi koje danas poznajemo. Marko Marulić smatra se ocem hrvatske književnosti, on je jedan od najranijih koje uopće poznajemo, da su pisali fikciju na hrvatskom jeziku. Osim toga, Marulić je primjer autora koji ravnopravno uz biblijske motive niže poganske motive i događaje iz antičkogrčke mitologije. Pritom se on otvoreno svrstava u judeokršćanski svjetonazor, ali također prihvaća pozitivne elemente iz grčke poganske kulture. Stoga renesansa afirmira snažno autorsko "ja" koje je vidljivo i kod Marulića.

Kako sada tumačiti sve ove podatke u kontekstu židovske povijesti autorstva?

Znamo da je rabinska književnost (1.-10. st. n. e.) naslonjena na kolektivno autorstvo, a čak i u slučajevima kad je autor poznat, taj autor nastoji se ne "petljati" previše u svoj tekst. Yehuda HaNasi u Mišni objektivno iznosi svoja znanja Usmene Tore, trasirana kroz

mnogo stoljeća usmenom predajom, ne namećući pritom svoja osobna mišljenja. Njegovo autorstvo gotovo je neprimjetno. Svrha nije afirmirati mišljenje jednog čovjeka, nego vjerodostojno prenijeti ono što se smatra istinom – i pritom uključiti više perspektiva koje ukazuju na različite mogućnosti interpretacije. Dakako, pritom postoje knjige koje su imenovane svojim autorima – različite Mekhilde itd. – no one ponovno ne stavljaju autora, odnosno pripovjedačko "ja", u centar pažnje, nego veću važnost pridaju sadržajima koji se obrađuju.

Dakako, u 1. st. n. e. istaknuli su se Josef ben Matatijahu, poznatiji pod rimskim imenom Flavius Josephus, za koje povjesničari ni danas ne znaju što je ime, a što prezime – i Philo Aleksandrijski. Oni su bili snažni individualci, autori čije je autorsko "ja" jasno vidljivo i istaknuto, što se objašnjava njihovom heleniziranošću. U grčkoj kulturi, individualni autori poput Homera bili su afirmirani na način na koji to nije bio slučaj u židovskoj kulturi. Philo i Josephus djelovali su u nekim zajednicama koje su se izmakle mainstreamu židovstva. Prema mojim profesorima judaistike, Josephus je prvenstveno svojim Apologijama itd. nastojao "opravdati", odnosno objasniti židovsku kulturu Rimljanima, a danas njegove knjige predstavljaju važan povijesni izvor za židovsku antiku – dok je Philo bio ograničen na kontekst Aleksandrije, gdje je harmonizirao židovsku kulturu s grčkom.

Uglavnom ta dva autora nisu bila pretjerano afirmirana u židovstvu, zbog pretjerane povezanosti s konkretnom okupatorskom kulturom.

No, tko donosi renesansu u židovski svjetonazor? Nakon rabinske literature, koja uključuje ravnopravna mišljenja mnogih rabina, dolazi period židovskog srednjeg vijeka, pri čemu književnost više nije kolektivna, nego se pojavljuju snažniji individualni autori. Pritom je možda najpoznatiji Rashi, francuski komentator (11. st.), koji iz osobne perspektive komentira tekstove Tore i rabinske književnosti. Njegovo autorsko "ja" mnogo je snažnije vidljivo. Premda se i Rashi naslanja načelno na prethodne rabinske tekstove, on se ne ustručava pisati svoje mišljenje na mjestima na kojima ono odudara od uobičajene interpretacije. Rashi se bavi "pšat" analizom jednostavnog značenja teksta i danas je vrlo važan za razumijevanje Tanakha i rabinske literature, koju objašnjava jednostavnim riječima, razumljivim svakome. Njegov doprinos ostao je nenadmašen u tom pogledu.

Da se vratimo na polazno pitanje – renesansu ne donosi Rashi, s obzirom da je njegov fokus na razumijevanju "samoga" teksta, bez uključivanja drugih alata kojima bi se taj tekst mogao interpretirati. U tom smislu, renesansu u židovsku književnost donosi Rambam (12.-13. st.), i danas autoritativni i u mainstreamu afirmirani autor koji uspješno integrira elemente grčke filozofije i judaistički monoteizam, po-

kazujući na koji način su ova dva svjetonazora kompatibilna. Rambamova učenja naslanjaju se na Aristotela, čije učenja on koristi da bi univerzalizirao poante Tore, ali također ih objasnio na racionalan i znanstven način. Rambamov "Vodič za zbunjene", preteča svih današnjih "for dummies" priručnika, metodama prirodnih znanosti i antičkogrčkih filozofija, objašnjava mnoge nejasne dijelove Tanakha. Njegov priručnik uistinu ostaje must-read za sve racionaliste koji se nađu zbunjeni pojedinim dijelovima Tanakha – Rambamovi argumenti vrlo su jasno i logički obrazloženi. On objašnjava metaforičnost antropomorfizama u Tanakhu; ezoterične aspekte Merkabe; ali se također bavi pitanjima nastanka svemira, okrugle Zemlje i svrhe postojanja pojedinih živih bića, ali i svrhe mitzvota. On je uistinu pravi renesansni čovjek, koji integrira pozitivne aspekte grčke kulture (koja je sada dovoljno udaljena u prošlosti da im možemo oprostiti za pokušaje helenizacije u doba Antioha 4.) i židovski, judeokršćanski, ali i opći "abrahamski" svjetonazor. Rambam naime polemizira i s aktualnim muslimanskim filozofima tog vremena, koji su već odavno integrirali elemente aristotelizma i platonizma u svoje interpretacije svijeta. Rambam pritom naglašava aspekte zajedničke svim monoteističkim kulturama (pri čemu i Aristotela smatra monoteistom). Rambam je bio filozof, teolog, logičar, gramatičar, liječnik i prirodni znanstvenik, a posebno je lijep način

na koji integrira znanosti, umjetnosti i religiju u jedan jedinstveni sustav. Danas se najčešće postavlja nekakva opozicija između religije i znanosti, znanosti i umjetnosti, humanistike i STEM-a, itd. Sve je puno nekakvih nepotrebnih opreka. Rambamov renesansni svjetonazor na divan način promatra sve ove aspekte razvoja čovjeka i društva kao dijelove jednog jedinstvenog kompozita. Čak i Bog, argumentira Rambam, nije sastavljen od različitih aspekata, nego svi ti aspekti koje nazivamo različitim imenima, konotiraju jedinstvo. On uspješno razrješava sve kontradikcije i pritom vrlo snažno naglašava svoje vlastito autorsko mišljenje. Svjestan

je svog znanja i ne boji se pokazati ga. Dakako, nakon Rambama, koji je unatoč svojim hrabrim i revolucionarnim stavovima prihvaćen u mainstreamu judaizma, veću popularnost stječu i druge dotad zatvorene grupacije. Prethodno u malenim krugovima poznata ezoterijska učenja i tekstovi, neki od kojih imaju i dodirnih točaka s Platonovim učenjem, krajem 13. stoljeća eksplodiraju u Španjolskoj, a zatim i drugdje. Kabala postaje šire prepoznatljiva i poznatija, no to se ne bi dogodilo da Rambam prethodno nije otvorio percepciju židovske javnosti u tom smjeru. Toliko o renesansi u židovstvu...

Paula Rem

Does Judaism have a Renaissance?

Since our topic deals with the question of authorship – when did this concept of individual authorship spread to our world and who is “an author” in Judaism at all? Ancient Jewish literature is fundamentally collective. Even if the author is known, in ancient Judaism, the authorial “I” is not very pronounced. They are only writers, recorders. The focus is on events, not on the impressions of an author. Only the book of Maccabees (which is not in the Tanakh) expresses the specific intention of the author – to offer a religious interpretation of historical events – but the author is still not explicitly named.

A student once asked me – is there a Renaissance in Judaism. I was thinking about the periods into which Jewish history has been divided by Judaism – antiquity, the rabbinical period (1st-10th century CE), the Middle Ages (11th-17th century CE), and the modern era (after the 18th century). There is the Haskalah, or Enlightenment, but the Renaissance is not mentioned anywhere.

What are the characteristics of the Renaissance, located in the 15th-16th centuries? First, the emergence of a strong authorial “I”, after several cen-

turies of collective and anonymous literature in diverse social groups. Then, the affirmation of ancient Greek and Roman motifs, primarily those from mythology, but with reliance on their worldview and philosophy. The third characteristic is the affirmation of man as a complex being who needs to be equally educated in many areas. The fourth is great creativity and technological innovation. The fifth is the focus on the development of science and art. An example of such a multi-talented and broadly educated man is Leonardo da Vinci, best known for his painting, but he was also an architect, inventor, engineer, what we would say today, an interdisciplinary scientist.

Another example is Dante, a Christian author who uses many motifs from mythology in his texts, while also relying on the ancient Greek and Roman worldview. This is a major change from the previous public opinion about ancient Greek and Roman (polytheistic, pre-Christian) culture. Christianity, but also Judaism, had a negative portrayal of pagan cultures, which had previously oppressed, persecuted, and at times even sought to eradicate monotheism. With the ad-

vent of the Renaissance, this perception changed. The so-called Western civilization began to view the ancient Greek and Roman world differently, emphasizing the positive aspects, such as the development of science and philosophy, while ignoring the aspects of idolatry, debauched public manifestations, and the like, which had previously been the focus. This overview is very simplified, but the goal of this text is not to deal with the history of artistic periods.

But what is the matter with Dante? Well, although he is considered a Renaissance author, he worked in the 13th century, long before the beginning of the Renaissance. It follows that periods are arbitrary and do not necessarily have to be divided in the way we are used to.

Relatively speaking, we are not generally aware of many pre-Renaissance authors, and it was only during this period that the fictional literary genres we know today were affirmed. Marko Marulić is considered the father of Croatian literature, he is one of the earliest writers we know of who wrote fiction in the Croatian language. In addition, Marulić is an example of an author who, along with biblical motifs, uses lower pagan motifs and events from ancient Greek mythology. In doing so, he openly identifies with the Judeo-Christian worldview, but also accepts positive elements from Greek pagan culture. Therefore, the Renaissance affirms a

strong authorial “self” that is also visible in Marulić.

How can we now interpret all this data in the context of the Jewish history of authorship?

We know that rabbinic literature (1st-10th centuries CE) is based on collective authorship, and even in cases where the author is known, that author tries not to “mess” too much with his text. In the Mishnah, Yehuda Ha-Nasi objectively presents his knowledge of the Oral Torah, passed down through many centuries by oral tradition, without imposing his personal opinions. His authorship is almost imperceptible. The purpose is not to affirm the opinion of one man, but to authentically convey what is considered the truth – and to include multiple perspectives that indicate different possibilities of interpretation. Of course, there are books that are named after their authors – various Mekhiltas, etc. – but they again do not put the author, or the narrative “I”, in the center of attention, but rather attach greater importance to the content being discussed. Of course, in the 1st century AD, Joseph ben Matathiahu, better known by his Roman name Flavius Josephus, for whom historians still do not know which is his first name and which his last name – and Philo of Alexandria, stood out. They were strong individuals, authors whose authorial “I” is clearly visible and prominent, which is explained by their Hellenization. In Greek cul-

ture, individual authors like Homer were affirmed in a way that was not the case in Jewish culture. Philo and Josephus worked in some communities that had escaped mainstream Judaism. According to my Jewish studies professors, Josephus primarily sought to “justify” or explain Jewish culture to the Romans with his Apologies, etc., and today his books represent an important historical source for Jewish antiquity - while Philo was limited to the context of Alexandria, where he harmonized Jewish culture with Greek. For the most part, these two authors were not overly affirmed in Judaism, due to their excessive connection to the specific occupying culture.

But who brings the Renaissance to the Jewish worldview? After rabbinic literature, which includes the equal opinions of many rabbis, comes the period of the Jewish Middle Ages, during which literature is no longer collective, but stronger individual authors appear. Perhaps the most famous of these is Rashi, a French commentator (11th century), who comments on the texts of the Torah and rabbinic literature from a personal perspective. His authorial “I” is much more strongly visible. Although Rashi also relies on previous rabbinic texts in principle, he does not hesitate to write his opinion in places where it differs from the usual interpretation. Rashi deals with “pshat” analysis of the simple meaning of the text and

is very important today for understanding the Tanakh and rabbinic literature, which he explains in simple words, understandable to everyone. His contribution has remained unsurpassed in this regard.

Let us return to the initial question - the Renaissance was not brought by Rashi, since his focus was on understanding the “text itself”, without including other tools with which that text could be interpreted. In this sense, the Renaissance was brought to Jewish literature by Rambam (12th-13th century), an authoritative and mainstream author who successfully integrates elements of Greek philosophy and Jewish monotheism, showing how these two worldviews are compatible. Rambam’s teachings draw on Aristotle, whose teachings he uses to universalize the points of the Torah, but also to explain them in a rational and scientific way. Rambam’s “Guide for the Perplexed”, the forerunner of all today’s “for dummies” manuals, uses the methods of natural science and ancient Greek philosophies to explain many obscure parts of the Tanakh. His manual truly remains a must-read for all rationalists who find themselves confused by certain parts of the Tanakh - Rambam’s arguments are very clear and logically explained. He explains the metaphorical nature of anthropomorphisms in the Tanakh; the esoteric aspects of the Merkabah; but he also deals with the issues of the origin of

the universe, the round Earth and the purpose of the existence of individual living beings, as well as the purpose of the mitzvot. He is truly a true Renaissance man, who integrates the positive aspects of Greek culture (which is now far enough in the past that we can forgive them for their attempts at Hellenization during the time of Antiochus IV) and the Jewish, Judeo-Christian, but also the general "Abrahamic" worldview. Namely, Rambam also polemicizes with the current Muslim philosophers of the time, who had long ago integrated elements of Aristotelianism and Platonism into their interpretations of the world. In doing so, Rambam emphasizes aspects common to all monotheistic cultures (and considers Aristotle to be a monotheist). Rambam was a philosopher, theologian, logician, grammarian, physician, and natural scientist, and the way he integrates sciences, arts, and religion into one unified system is especially beautiful. Today, some kind of opposition is most often set up between religion and science, science and art, humanities and STEM, etc. Everything is full of some kind of unnecessary opposi-

tion. Rambam's Renaissance worldview wonderfully views all these aspects of human and social development as parts of one unique composite. Even God, argues Rambam, is not composed of different aspects, but all these aspects that we call by different names, connote unity. He successfully resolves all contradictions and in doing so very strongly emphasizes his own authorial opinion. He is aware of his knowledge and is not afraid to show it. Of course, after Rambam, who, despite his courageous and revolutionary views, was accepted into the mainstream of Judaism, other previously closed groups also gained greater popularity. Previously known in small circles, esoteric teachings and texts, some of which have points of contact with Plato's teachings, exploded in Spain at the end of the 13th century, and then elsewhere. Kabbalah became more widely recognized and better known, but this would not have happened if Rambam had not first opened the perception of the Jewish public in that direction. That is all for now regarding Renaissance in Judaism...

Darko Fischer

Melita Švob i njeno djelo

Darko Fischer (*1938., Osijek) je osnivač i dugogodišnji urednik Glasnika B'nai B'rith. Rođen u sekularnoj židovskoj obitelji, Holokaust je preživio u progonstvu i skrivanju u Bosni i Mađarskoj. Osnovnu školu i gimnaziju završio u Osijeku. Diplomirao, magistrirao i doktorirao je na FER-u (nekada Elektrotehnički fakultet) u Zagrebu iz područja elektronike i računalnih znanosti. Radio je u Osijeku u Kemijskom kombinatu Saponia i na Ekonomskom i Elektrotehničkom fakultetu. Umrovljen 2003. u zvanju izvanrednog profesora. Židovski je aktivist od studentskih dana i predsjednik Židovske općine Osijek od 1988. do 2004. Urednik je nekoliko povijesnih knjiga o Židovima Osijeka i Vinkovaca i autor zbirke kratkih priča na židovske teme „Crtice iz dijasporae“. Dobitnik je židovskih priznanja „Megila – zahvalnica“. Čest je učesnik i predavač na raznim židovskim konferencijama. Predsjednik židovske nevladine organizacije B'nai B'rith u Zagrebu 2015-2019. Živi u Zagrebu od 2010.

O osebujnoj, vrijednoj i svestranoj osobi, kakva je bila Melita Švob, moglo bi se mnogo napisati. No ja ću se samo kratko osvrnuti na osnovne podatke iz njene biografije do njenog umirovljenja 2000. godine, dok ću posebno i opširnije opisati njenu svestranu, marljivu i upornu, ponekada i beskompromisnu, djelatnost u židovskim udrugama u Zagrebu, Hrvatskoj, Europi i svijetu.

Melita Švob, rođena Steiner, rodila se 17. 7. 1931. godine u Zagrebu. Otac Ladislav Steiner bio je trgovac, dok se majka zvala Elza Vajić (njeni predci izvorno su se zvali Weiss). Oboje su bili iz vrlo bogate trgovačke obitelji. No taj se brak brzo raspao i Melita je nastavila živjeti u Zagrebu s majkom, bakom i ujacima. Školovanje koje je započela u Zagrebu Melita je morala prekinuti, jer se za vrijeme Drugog svjetskog rata morala skrivati po selima u blizini Zagreba. U dva navra-



Naslovnica knjige Melite Švob

Izvor: CENDO

ta obitelj Melitine majke živjela je i skrivala u selu Gornja Dubrava, danas dio Zagreba, a oko godinu dana porodica se skrivala u selu Blato, danas također dijelu grada Zagreba. Majka se ponovo udala za osobu koja nije

bila židovskog porijekla, ali je Melitin očuh bio suradnik antifašističkog pokreta. Tako je obitelji prijetila stalna opasnost s dvije strane, kao osobama židovskog porijekla i suradnicima antifašističkog pokreta. Strah od uhićenja bio je stalno prisutan i na Melitu, djevojčicu od 10 godina, ostavio dubok trag, što ju je mnogo godina kasnije motiviralo da se bavi i pomaže sličnim stradalnicima.

Nakon rata Melita je najprije pohađala Partizansku gimnaziju u Zagrebu, školu koja je omogućila polaznicima da donekle nadoknade izgubljene godine školovanja tokom rata. Nakon toga završila je redovnu gimnaziju i studirala biologiju u Zagrebu. Po završetku studija imala je kao biolog bogatu znanstvenu i akademsku karijeru u nekoliko gradova bivše države (Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Split, Zagreb).

Znakovito je za Melitu Švob, ovu vrijednu, upornu i prodornu ženu, da je, kada je prestala raditi i sa 70 godina otišla u mirovinu, tada tek počela raditi! Svoj interes za sudbinu preživjelih Holokausta pokazala je još ranije, početkom devedesetih, kada je među tom populacijom napravila anketu o uvjetima pod kojima oni žive. Melita je za tu aktivnost vjerojatna bila potaknuta svojom vlastitom sudbinom i traumama koje su ju pratile i nakon Holokausta zbog sjećanja na ta grozna vremena. Prihvatila se poslova vezanih za Židove i židovske zajednice u Hrvatskoj, ali se povezala i sa židovskim institucijama u Europi i

svijetu. U njima je stekla značajan ugled i bila na utjecajnim položajima. Koliko mi je poznato, za nju su to bili gotovo sasvim novi poslovi, u kojima se ona, zahvaljujući svom dominantnom temperamentu, izvanredno dobro snašla. Nismo je slučajno zvali “generalica”!

O njenoj aktivnosti u udrugama židovskih žena malo toga znam. Neka od njenih tadašnjih suradnica mogla bi opširnije prikazati i to područje njene djelatnosti. Iz biografskih tekstova nekoliko autora može se tek saznati da je bila članica nekih međunarodnih židovskih udruženja žena i predsjednica Unije židovskih žena Hrvatske te organizator nekoliko skupova tih udruženja.

Njen interes za demografske probleme pokazao se već u devedesetim godinama prošlog stoljeća kada je Melita Švob radila u Zagrebu u Institutu za migracije. Slijedom tih aktivnosti sve se više bavila židovskom populacijom, stradalima i preživjelim u Holokaustu. Upravo od 2000. godine intenzivno se bavila tom problematikom.

“CENDO”, istraživački i dokumentacijski centar značajna je ustanova koju je osnovala Melita Švob još 2000. godine. Centar djeluje u sastavu Židovske općine Zagreb gdje se nalazi(o) i ured ove ustanove. Centar je osnovan s ciljem suradnje i poticanja znanstvenih i stručnih radnika i članova Židovske zajednice u Hrvatskoj, na očuvanju i



Melita Švob

Izvor: CENDO

istraživanju dokumenata i svjedočanstava o Židovima u Hrvatskoj, prikupljanju dokumenata od osoba koje su preživjele Holokaust, demografskih istraživanja židovske populacije u Hrvatskoj, izdavanjem radova i knjiga na te teme i suradnji sa sličnim ustanovama u Hrvatskoj, Europi i svijetu.

Iako već na pragu treće životne dobi, Melita Švob imala je ispravnu viziju kako usmjeriti djelatnost dokumentacijskog centra, kako koristiti modernu digitalnu tehnologiju i kako naći suradnike koji su znali njenu viziju provesti u djelo. Vrlo neobično za osobu starije životne dobi! Tako su nastale WEB stranice udruga koje je Melita vodila i vrlo redovno upotpunjavala novim podacima. Radila je to doslovno do posljednjeg dana, umrla je 2. svibnja 2025, dok je njen zadnji zapis na WEB stranici objavljen 24. travnja! Napravljena je u suradnji sa Zoranom Mirkovićem i baza podataka žrtava i preživjelih Holokausta u Hrvatskoj. Na temelju ove baze načinjena je i tiskana verzija tih podataka.

CENDO je razvio i značajnu izdavačku djelatnost. Melita Švob napisala je nekoliko knjiga u kojima je obradila podatke o stradanjima Židova u Hrvatskoj za vrijeme Holokausta. Značajna njena djela su „Migracije i promjene u židovskoj populaciji“, (Zagreb 1997) „Jews in Croatia, Holokaust victims and survivors“ (Zagreb 2000). i „Židovska populacija u Zagrebu i Hrvatskoj (Zagreb 2010). Podatke iz tih knjiga preuzimali su i citirali mnogi renomirani povjesničari i istraživači. Posebno je dobro primljena njena knjiga „Židovska populacija u Hrvatskoj prije za vrijeme i nakon Holokausta“. Knjiga je izašla 2023. godine i prema riječima autorice namijenjena je prvenstveno nastavnicima osnovnih i srednjih škola koji podučavaju mlade naraštaje o Holokaustu. S razmjerno malo teksta na oko 80 stranica, s mnoštvom, fotografija, tabela, grafikona i dijagrama, knjiga daje sveobuhvatan pregled o prosperitetu židovske zajednice do Drugog svjetskog rata, o katastrofi koja ju je zadesila u Holokaustu, ali i naporima da se ta zajednica, koja je izgubila 85% svoje populacije, i dalje održi na životu.

Djelotvorna i možda najznačajnija aktivnost Melite Švob bila je briga o preživjelim Holokausta. Procjenjuje se, da se u Hrvatsku 1945. godine vratilo oko 4500 Židova koji su na razne načine preživjeli Holokaust. Dobar dio te populacije, oko polovica, iselila se nakon osnutka države Izrael u svoju pradomovinu, no u Hrvatskoj je po-

četkom 50-ih godina bilo oko 2500 Židova, preživjelih razdoblje stradanja u Holokaustu. U vrijeme socijalističke Jugoslavije, pogotovo prvih decenija te države, nije se izričito govorilo o stradalnicima Holokausta, već su se oni ubrajali u žrtve fašizma kao i ostalo stanovništvo na prostorima bivših Jugoslavija (kraljevine do 1941 i socijalističke od 1945). Vremenom se ipak podizala svijest o stradalnicima Holokausta kao zasebnoj vrsti stradalnika, proganjanih zbog rasističke politike nacističkih režima u Njemačkoj i od nje pokorenih zemalja Europe. Na temelju rasnih zakona stradalo šest milijuna Židova, a rijetko preživjeli, njih oko 15% osjećali su i osjećaju traume stradanja do današnjih dana ili do kraja svojih života. Zbog toga je još 1951. osnovana židovska ustanova skraćeno nazvana „Claims conference“ s uredima u New Yorku, Izraelu i Njemačkoj, koja brine o financijskoj i humanitarnoj pomoći preživjelima Holokausta. Velika zasluga Melite Švob očituje se i u tome, da je pomoć od „Claims Conference“ doprla i u Hrvatsku. Židovske općine Hrvatske, zahvaljujući pretežno Meliti, danas imaju socijalnu službu koja radi vrlo efikasno i pruža raznovrsnu pomoć preživjelima Holokausta.

Melita Švob osnovala je i postala predsjednica udruženja preživjelih Holokausta u Hrvatskoj te je u okviru te udruge u suradnji sa sličnim židovskim udrugama kao što su ženske sekcije i kulturna društva po općinama organizirala za preživjele Holokausta

razne manifestacije, susrete izlete i boravke po odmaralištima.

Prema podacima svjetskih židovskih organizacija u svijetu živi još oko 220000 preživjelih Holokausta. Polovica ih živi u Izraelu, oko 16% u SAD. Od toga je 61% žena i 39% muškaraca. Godine 2015. u okviru aktivnosti dokumentacijskog centra CENDO i u suradnji s „Claims conference“ Melita Švob provela sveobuhvatnu analizu preživjelih Holokausta s posebnim naglaskom na još žive osobe, koje su kao djeca preživjeli Holokaust. Rezultati tih istraživanja objavljeni su na WEB stranici CENDO centra i javno su dostupni. Prema tim podacima za osobe rođene nakon 1928. u Hrvatskoj je tada bilo još 788 preživjelih, 449 ženskog i 339 muškog spola. Koliko od njih je danas 2025. još živo, nije mi točno poznato, prema podacima „Claim conference“, procjenjuje se da nas ima još oko 220. Bilo bi vrlo korisno, kada bi nasljednici Melitinog rada proveli istraživanje o brojnom stanju te populacije i u ustanovili razliku u odnosu na stanje prije 10 godina.

Tradicionalna i kroz niz godina održavana djelatnost udruge preživjelih Holokausta bila je (i nadamo se, ostati će) sedmodnevni boravak članova udruge u nekom odmaralištu na jadranskoj obali. Najčešće je to bilo u poznatoj Opatiji ili slikovitom Selcu na sjevernom dijelu hrvatske jadranske obale. Održava se to tradicionalno u proljeće, početkom ožujka. Do ove godine bilo je ukupno 20 takvih susre-

ta. Program tih boravaka bio je uvijek raznovrstan, bogat i zanimljiv sudionicima. Ovdje je Melita pokazala sve svoje vještine oko toga da sakupi sredstva, uključi brojne suradnike, organizira koncerte izložbe i predavanja. Svaki put je organiziran i neki izlet u neko od zanimljivih okolnih mjesta. Tradicionalno je petkom navečer uvijek bila svečana Šabat večera, na koju su dolazili renomirani gosti: veleposlanik države Izrael, predstavnici međunarodnih židovskih organizacija, lokani čelnici, rabin Hrvatske, predsjednik koordinacije židovskih općina Hrvatske, predsjednici većih židovskih općina u Hrvatskoj (Zagreb,

Rijeka, Split, Osijek). Tokom godina, kako se broj preživjelih Holokausta smanjivao, pokazalo se korisnim omogućiti i boravak potomaka preživjelih, takozvane „druge generacije preživjelih“. Za održavanje ove manifestacije financijsku pomoć Melita je uspijevala dobiti od „Claim conference“, od Savjeta za nacionalne manjine u Hrvatskoj i od Židovske općine Zagreb.

Melita Švob preminula je u Zagrebu 2. svibnja 2025. godine. Nadamo se da mlađe generacije Židova u Hrvatskoj nastaviti njeno djelo. Melita Švob to zaslužuje!

Darko Fischer

Melita Švob and her work

Darko Fischer (*1938, Osijek) is a founder and longtime editor of *The Voice of B'nai B'rith*. Born in a secular Jewish family, he survived the Holocaust in exile and hiding in Bosnia and Hungary. He finished elementary school and high school in Osijek. He graduated and obtained Master's and Doctoral degree at the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing (formerly Faculty of Electrical Engineering) in Zagreb in the field of Electronics and Computer Science. He worked in Osijek at the Saponia Chemical Plant and at the Faculty of Economics and Electrical Engineering. Retired in 2003 as Associate Professor. He has been a Jewish activist since his student days and the president of the Jewish Community Osijek from 1988 to 2004. He is the editor of several historical books about the Jews of Osijek and Vinkovci and author of a collection of short stories on Jewish themes "Sketches from the Diaspora". He obtained the Jewish award "Megillah". He is a frequent participant and lecturer at various Jewish conferences. He was a president of the Jewish NGO B'nai B'rith in Zagreb 2015-2019. He lives in Zagreb since 2010.

58

A lot could be written about the unique, valuable and versatile person that Melita Švob was. However, I will only briefly review the basic information from her biography until her retirement in 2000, while I will describe in more detail her versatile, diligent and persistent, sometimes uncompromising, activity in Jewish associations in Zagreb, Croatia, Europe and the world.

Melita Švob, née Steiner, was born on July 17, 1931 in Zagreb. Her father, Ladislav Steiner, was a merchant, while her mother's name was Elza Vajić (her ancestors were originally named Weiss). They both came from a very wealthy merchant family. However, that marriage quickly fell apart and Melita continued to live in Zagreb with her mother, grandmother and uncles. Melita had to interrupt her education, which she began in Za-

greb, because during World War II she had to hide in villages near Zagreb. On two occasions, Melita's mother's family lived and hid in the village of Gornja Dubrava, now part of Zagreb, and for about a year, the family hid in the village of Blato, now also part of the city of Zagreb. The mother remarried a person who was not of Jewish origin, but Melita's stepfather was a collaborator of the anti-fascist movement. Thus, the family was constantly threatened by danger from two sides, as people of Jewish origin and collaborators of the anti-fascist movement. The fear of arrest was constantly present and left a deep mark on Melita, a 10-year-old girl, which motivated her many years later to engage in and help similar victims.

After the war, Melita first attended the Partisan Gymnasium in Zagreb, a school that enabled students to make



Cover of the book by Melita Švob

Source: CENDO

up for the years of education lost during the war. She then graduated from regular gymnasium and studied biology in Zagreb. After graduating, she had a rich scientific and academic career as a biologist in several cities of the former state (Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Tuzla, Split, Zagreb).

It is significant for Melita Švob, this hardworking and persistent woman, that when she stopped working and retired at the age of 70, she had only just begun to work! She had shown her interest in the fate of Holocaust survivors even earlier, in the early 1990s, when she conducted a survey among that population about the conditions under which they lived. Melita was likely inspired by her own fate and the traumas that accompanied her even after the Holocaust due to the memory of those terrible times. She accepted jobs related to Jews and

Jewish communities in Croatia, but she also connected with Jewish institutions in Europe and the world. She gained a significant reputation in them and held influential positions. As far as I know, these were almost completely new jobs for her, in which she coped exceptionally well, thanks to her dominant temperament. It was not by chance that we called her “the general”!

I know little about her activities in Jewish women’s associations. Some of her former associates could provide a more detailed account of this area of her work. From the biographical texts of several authors, we can only learn that she was a member of some international Jewish women’s associations and the president of the Union of Jewish Women of Croatia, as well as the organizer of several meetings of these associations.



Melita Švob

Source: CENDO

Her interest in demographic problems was evident as early as the 1990s when Melita Švob worked in Zagreb at the Migration Institute. As a result of these activities, she increasingly dealt with the Jewish population, victims and survivors of the Holocaust. She has been intensively involved in this issue since 2000.

“CENDO”, a research and documentation center, is a significant institution founded by Melita Švob in 2000. The center operates as part of the Jewish Community of Zagreb, where the office of this institution is also located. The center was founded with the aim of cooperating and encouraging scientific and professional workers and members of the Jewish community in Croatia to preserve and research documents and testimonies about Jews in Croatia, collect documents from Holocaust survivors, conduct demographic research on the Jewish population in Croatia, publish papers and books on these topics, and cooperate

with similar institutions in Croatia, Europe, and the world.

Although already on the threshold of her third year, Melita Švob had the right vision of how to direct the activities of the documentation center, how to use modern digital technology and how to find collaborators who knew how to put her vision into practice. Very unusual for a person of her age! This is how the WEB pages of the associations were created, which Melita managed and regularly updated with new data. She did this literally until her last day, she died on May 2, 2025, while her last entry on the WEB page was published on April 24! A database of victims and survivors of the Holocaust in Croatia was created in collaboration with Zoran Mirković. A printed version of this data was also created based on this database.

CENDO has also developed a significant publishing activity. Melita Švob has written several books in which she processed data on the suffering of Jews in Croatia during the Holocaust. Her significant works are “Migration and Changes in the Jewish Population” (Zagreb 1997) and “Jews in Croatia, Holocaust victims and survivors” (Zagreb 2000). and “The Jewish Population in Zagreb and Croatia (Zagreb 2010). Data from these books were taken over and cited by many renowned historians and researchers. Her book “The Jewish Population in Croatia Before, During and After the Holocaust” was particularly well received.

The book was published in 2023 and, according to the author, is intended primarily for primary and secondary school teachers who teach the younger generation about the Holocaust. With a relatively small amount of text on about 80 pages, with a multitude of photographs, tables, graphs and diagrams, the book provides a comprehensive overview of the prosperity of the Jewish community until World War II, the catastrophe that befell it in the Holocaust, but also the efforts to keep this community, which lost 85% of its population, alive.

Melita Švob's most effective and perhaps most significant activity was caring for Holocaust survivors. It is estimated that around 4,500 Jews who had been to various way of surviving the Holocaust. A good part of this population, about half, emigrated after the establishment of the state of Israel to their ancestral homeland, but in Croatia at the beginning of the 1950s there were about 2,500 Jews who survived the period of suffering in the Holocaust. During the socialist Yugoslavia, especially in the first decades of that state, the victims of the Holocaust were not explicitly mentioned, but they were counted among the victims of fascism like the rest of the population in the former Yugoslavia (kingdoms until 1941 and socialist since 1945). Over time, however, awareness of the victims of the Holocaust as a separate type of victims, persecuted due to the racist policy of the Nazi regimes in Germany and the

European countries conquered by it, rose. Six million Jews were killed on the basis of the racial laws, and only a few survived, about 15% of them felt and continue to feel the trauma of the suffering to this day or until the end of their lives. In addition, in 1951, a Jewish institution was founded, abbreviated as the "Claims Conference", with offices in New York, Israel and Germany, which provides financial and humanitarian assistance to Holocaust survivors. Melita Švob's great merit is also evident in the fact that assistance from the "Claims Conference" also reached Croatia. Jewish communities in Croatia, thanks largely to Melita, today have a social service that works very efficiently and provides various assistance to Holocaust survivors.

Melita Švob founded and became the president of the Association of Holocaust Survivors in Croatia and, within the framework of this association, in cooperation with similar Jewish associations such as women's sections and cultural societies in municipalities, organized various events, meetings, excursions and stays at resorts for Holocaust survivors.

According to data from world Jewish organizations, there are still about 220,000 Holocaust survivors living in the world. Half of them live in Israel, about 16% in the USA. Of these, 61% are women and 39% are men.

In 2015, as part of the activities of the CENDO documentation center and in cooperation with the "Claims

conference”, Melita Švob conducted a comprehensive analysis of Holocaust survivors with a special emphasis on still living people who survived the Holocaust as children. The results of this research were published on the CENDO center’s website and are publicly available. According to this data, for people born after 1928, there were still 788 survivors in Croatia at that time, 449 female and 339 male. I do not know exactly how many of them are still alive today in 2025, but according to the “Claim conference”, it is estimated that there are still around 220 of us. It would be very useful if the successors of Melita’s work would conduct a study on the numerical state of that population and establish the difference compared to the state 10 years ago.

A traditional and over the years maintained activity of the Holocaust survivors’ association was (and we hope will remain) a seven-day stay of the association’s members at a resort on the Adriatic coast. Most often, this was in the famous Opatija or the picturesque Selce on the northern part of the Croatian Adriatic coast. It is traditionally held in the spring, at the beginning of March. Until this year, there were a total of 20 such meetings. The program of these stays was al-

ways diverse, rich and interesting for the participants. Here, Melita showed all her skills in raising funds, involving numerous collaborators, organizing concerts, exhibitions and lectures. Each time, an excursion to one of the interesting surrounding places was also organized. Traditionally, on Friday evenings there was always a festive Shabbat dinner, attended by renowned guests: the ambassador of the State of Israel, representatives of international Jewish organizations, local leaders, the rabbi of Croatia, the president of the Coordination of Jewish Communities in Croatia, and the presidents of larger Jewish communities in Croatia (Zagreb, Rijeka, Split, Osijek). Over the years, as the number of Holocaust survivors decreased, it proved useful to also allow the descendants of survivors, the so-called “second generation of survivors”, to stay. Melita managed to obtain financial support for this event from the “Claims Conference”, the Council for National Minorities in Croatia and the Jewish Community of Zagreb.

Melita Švob passed away in Zagreb on May 2, 2025. We hope that the younger generations of Jews in Croatia will continue her work. Melita Švob deserves it!

Vladimira Šimić

Am Israel hai: živjeli smo, živi smo i živjet ćemo

Nakon što su 15. travnja 1945. savezničke trupe oslobodile nacistički koncentracijski logor Bergen-Belsen u Donjoj Saskoj, zatekle su strašan prizor. Dočekalo ih je oko 60 tisuća zatvorenika, uglavnom teško bolesnih, a tisuće mrtvih tijela ležalo je nepokopano na prostoru logora. Među prvim novinarima koji su ušli u logor bio je BBC-jev reporter Patrick Gordon Walker. Bio je to peti dan nakon oslobođenja, petak uoči Šabata, a otprilike polovica preživjelih zatvorenika bili su Židovi. Britanski rabin Leslie Hardman koji je bio sa saveznicima, tog je dana u logoru na otvorenom održao šabatnu molitvenu službu. Walker je pritom snimao svoju reportažu za radio čija se snimka i danas može poslušati online (<https://www.isracast.com/hatikva-singing-in-bergen-belsen/>).

„Okolo nas ležali su leševi koje nije bilo vremena ukloniti, čak ni nakon pet dana. Četrdeset tisuća ili više ih je očišćeno, ali još ih je bilo tisuću ili dvije uokolo, a ljudi su još uvijek ležali i umirali usred bijela dana pred našim očima“, izvještavao je Walker. „Tijekom službe, nekoliko stotina okupljenih ljudi otvoreno je jecalo, od radosti zbog oslobođenja i od tuge zbog sjećanja na roditelje, braću i sestre koji su im oduzeti, ubijeni plinom i spaljeni.



Prva godišnjica oslobođenja
Bergen-Belsensa

Izvor: Wikimedia (javna domena)

Ovi ljudi su znali da ih se snima. Željeli su da svijet čuje njihov glas. Uložili su ogroman napor koji ih je prilično iscrpio.“ U nastavku jedne od najemotivnijih reportaža koje možemo poslušati čuje se pjesma preživjelih, današnja himna Izraela, Hatikvah, a po završetku i glas rabina Hardmana: „Am Israel hai! Djeca Izraelova još su živa!“

Svetost života

Kada je riječ o vjeri, u judaizmu se život čuva pod svaku cijenu, ali ne zbog nas samih, da spasimo sebe. Život se, naime, smatra Božjim darom, svatko ima svoju važnu ulogu u svijetu i sto-

ga je svaki život izuzetno dragocjen i svet. Mi ga ne posjedujemo, već smo njegovi čuvari. Ni duša, kao ni tijelo nisu naši; život i smrt u Božjoj su nadležnosti. Ovo vjerovanje najviše dolazi do izražaja na području medicine - tako su s ciljem spašavanja života dozvoljeni svi medicinski postupci, od transfuzije krvi do transplantacije organa, dok eutanazija, primjerice, nije, niti će biti dozvoljena.

I riječ hai (חַי), odnosno „život“, nosi veliku snagu. Ta dva hebrejska slova – het (ח) i jud (י) – često se izrađuju kao privjesak za lančice ili se općenito umjetnički prikazuju na razne druge načine. Vjeruje se, naime, da donose sreću, dug život te su podsjetnik da treba živjeti punim plućima i birati dobro u svemu. U kabali riječ hai nije samo simbol, već zapravo predstavlja i pojam povezan s Božanskom prisutnošću u fizičkom svijetu te Njegovom voljom. Smatra se najnižom ili, točnije, materijalnom svijetu najbližom Božjom emanacijom.

Zanimljiva je i povezanost riječi hai s brojem 18. Naime, prema židovskoj gematriji, numerička vrijednost riječi hai je 18. Upravo zato se u mnogim židovskim zajednicama daju cedaka i ostali novčani darovi u iznosima od 18 i njegovim višekratnicima (npr. 18, 36, 52 i više eura). Time simbolički izražavamo želju za dobar i dug život.

Za život!

Ima nešto posebno i u našoj zdravici „lehim!“ koja sadrži riječ hai, a čiji

prijevod doslovno znači „za život“. Zdravice, ako ćemo iskreno, nisu samo židovski običaj. Vino je stoljećima prisutno u raznim religijama, a nazdravlja se i povodom gotovo svih važnih životnih događaja koji uključuju slavlje. No u vremenu kada je ubacivanje otrova u piće bilo vrlo popularno kao, na primjer, u antičkom Rimu, čekalo se je domaćina da nazdravi i otpije gutljaj vina te na taj način potvrdi da je vino sigurno za piti, dakle – za život.

Kada je pak riječ o nama, Židovi su od početka svoje povijesti svjesni mogućih štetnih posljedica opijanja koje su opisane i u Tori, od Noe koji je nakon potopa posadio vinograd, opio se vinom i zaspao gol, do Lota kojeg su opile njegove kćeri, pa je s njima zgriješio. Stoga se je konzumaciji vina pristupalo s velikim oprezom, a tek je s rabinom Akivom (velikim mudracem iz razdoblja mišne koji je živio negdje na prijelazu iz prvog u drugo stoljeće n. e.), zaživio običaj nazdravljanja riječima „lehim“.

Zanimljiv je i detalj iz povijesti kojeg opisuje midraš, a odnosi se na proces suđenja negdje u doba Drugog hrama. Nakon što bi suci sanhedrina raspravili o slučajevima koji su uključivali smrtnu kaznu, obratili bi se posljednji put onima koje su poslali da ispituju svjedoke. Zatražili bi njihovo mišljenje – ako bi im oni odgovorili da tuženi treba živjeti, rekli bi „lehim“, dakle, „za život“, a ako bi smatrali da tuženi zaslužuje smrt, odgovor bi bio

„lemitah“, odnosno „za smrt“. Onome kojeg bi sanhedrin osudio na smrt davali su posebno jako vino kako bi se umanjila bol pri izvršenju kazne. Stoga, kad danas poželimo „lehaim“, želimo da to vino bude za život, a ne poput onog jakog vina kojeg je pio osuđenik prije pogubljenja.

Živi smo usprkos svemu

I da se napokon vratimo na čuvenu frazu „am Israel hai“. Njezin doslovni prijevod je „Narod Izraela živi“ ili „Izrael živi“, no pravu težinu tih riječi teško je shvatiti izvan ovog našeg plemena. Istina je da te riječi ne potječu iz Tore ili nekih drugih svetih spisa, već su sasvim sigurno novijeg datuma. Osim što je ostalo zapamćeno da ih je izgovorio rabin Leslie Hardman u logoru Bergen-Belsen, pamti se i da ih je klicalo oko 50.000 Židova koji su 1948. godine dočekali Goldu Meir, tadašnju veleposlanicu Izraela, u velikoj sinagogi u Moskvi.

No fraza je postala posebno popularna i raširena zahvaljujući istoimenoj pjesmi „Am Israel hai“ koju je skladao „pjevujući rabin“ Shlomo Carlebach (1925.–1994.). Naime, 1964. godine

Carlebachu se je obratio Jacob Birnbaum, osnivač pokreta „Studentska borba za sovjetske Židove“, tražeći pjesmu koja bi nadahnula aktiviste na velikom prosvjedu zakazanom za travanj 1965. ispred sovjetske misije pri Ujedinjenim narodima u New Yorku. Carlebach mu je ispunio želju, pjesma je postala himnom studentskog pokreta te se je nastavila pjevati na gotovo svakom političkom skupu Židova u desetljećima koja su uslijedila.

Am Israel hai pjeva se i danas, tim se riječima potpisuju gotovo sve objave vezane uz rat u Izraelu. Fraza je ostala simbol prkosa, otpora svakom neprijatelju koji nas je pokušao uništiti. Ma koliko su nas ugnjetavali i proganjali, ulagali beskrajne napore u pokušaje našeg istrebljenja, preživjeli smo, živimo i živjet ćemo. Tim riječima se i hrabrimo, gajimo nadu u mračnim vremenima poput ovih kojima svjedočimo. One su ujedno i potvrda našeg identiteta, pozivaju na zajedništvo naroda Izraela svugdje u svijetu. Pa kako bi se drugačije i mogao zaključiti ovaj tekst nego s – am Israel hai, ma što netko htio ili mislio o tome.

Vladimira Šimić

Am Israel hai: we lived, we are alive and we will live

After Allied troops liberated the Nazi concentration camp Bergen-Belsen in Lower Saxony on April 15, 1945, they found a terrible sight. They were greeted by some 60,000 prisoners, mostly seriously ill, and thousands of dead bodies lying unburied in the camp grounds. Among the first journalists to enter the camp was BBC reporter Patrick Gordon Walker. It was the fifth day after the liberation, the Friday before Shabbat, and about half of the surviving prisoners were Jewish. British Rabbi Leslie Hardman, who was with the Allies, held an open-air Shabbat prayer service in the camp that day. Walker was recording his radio report, a recording of which can still be heard online today (<https://www.isracast.com/hatikva-singing-in-bergen-belsen/>).

“All around us lay corpses that there was no time to remove, even after five days. Forty thousand or more had been cleared, but there were still a thousand or two around, and people were still lying dying in broad daylight before our eyes,” Walker reported. “During the service, several hundred people gathered openly wept, with joy at the liberation and with sorrow at the memory of parents, brothers and sisters who had been taken from

them, gassed and burned. These people knew they were being filmed. They wanted the world to hear their voices. They had made a tremendous effort that had quite exhausted them.” The rest of one of the most emotional reports we can listen to includes the song of the survivors, today’s national anthem of Israel, Hatikvah, and at the end, Rabbi Hardman’s voice: “Am Israel hai! The children of Israel are still alive!”

The Sanctity of Life

When it comes to faith, in Judaism life is preserved at all costs, but not for our own sake, to save ourselves. Namely, life is considered a gift from God, everyone has their own important role in the world and therefore every life is extremely precious and sacred. We do not own it, but are its guardians. Neither the soul nor the body is ours; life and death are in God’s jurisdiction. This belief is most evident in the field of medicine - so all medical procedures are permitted with the aim of saving life, from blood transfusion to organ transplantation, while euthanasia, for example, is not, and will not be permitted.

The word hai (חי), or “life”, also carries great power. These two Hebrew

letters - het (ה) and jud (י) - are often made as pendants for necklaces or are generally artistically depicted in various other ways. Namely, it is believed that they bring happiness, a long life and are a reminder that one should live life to the fullest and choose the good in everything. In Kabbalah, the word hai is not just a symbol, but actually represents a concept associated with the Divine presence in the physical world and His will. It is considered the lowest or, more precisely, the closest emanation of God to the material world.

The connection of the word hai with the number 18 is also interesting. Namely, according to Jewish gematria, the numerical value of the word hai is 18. This is precisely why in many Jewish communities, tzedaka and other monetary gifts are given in amounts of 18 and its multiples (e.g. 18, 36, 54 and more euros). In this way, we symbolically express our wish for a good and long life.

To life!

There is also something special in our toast “lehai!” which contains the word hai, which literally translates to “to life”. Toasts, to be honest, are not just a Jewish custom. Wine has been present in various religions for centuries, and toasts are also made on the occasion of almost all important life events that include celebrations. But in times when putting poison in drinks was very popular, such as in

ancient Rome, the host was expected to toast and take a sip of wine, thus confirming that the wine was safe to drink, that is, for life.

As for us, since the beginning of our history, Jews have been aware of the possible harmful consequences of drunkenness, which are also described in the Torah, from Noah who planted a vineyard after the flood, got drunk on wine and fell asleep naked, to Lot who was drunk by his daughters and sinned with them. Therefore, wine consumption was approached with great caution, and it was only with Rabbi Akiva (a great sage from the Mishnah period who lived somewhere at the turn of the first to the second century CE) that the custom of toasting with the words “lehai” came into being.

An interesting detail from history is also described in Midrash, which refers to the trial process sometime during the Second Temple period. After the judges of the Sanhedrin had deliberated on cases involving the death penalty, they would address those they had sent to question the witnesses for the last time. They would ask for their opinion—if they answered that the defendant should live, they would say “lehai,” or “for life,” and if they felt that the defendant deserved death, they would say “lemitah,” or “for death.” Those sentenced by the Sanhedrin to death were given a special strong wine to lessen the pain of the execution. So when we say “le-

haim” today, we want the wine to be for life, not like the strong wine that the condemned man drank before his execution.

We are alive despite everything

And finally, let us return to the famous phrase “am Israel hai”. Its literal translation is “The people of Israel live” or “Israel lives”, but the true weight of these words is difficult to understand outside our tribe. It is true that these words do not originate from the Torah or any other holy scriptures, but are certainly of a more recent date. In addition to being remembered as having been uttered by Rabbi Leslie Hardman in the Bergen-Belsen camp, they are also remembered as having been cheered by about 50,000 Jews who welcomed Golda Meir, the then Israeli ambassador, in the great synagogue in Moscow in 1948.

But the phrase became particularly popular and widespread thanks to the song of the same name “Am Israel hai” composed by the “singing rabbi” Shlomo Carlebach (1925–1994). Namely, in 1964, Jacob Birnbaum, founder of the “Student Struggle for Soviet Jews” movement, approached

Carlebach, looking for a song that would inspire activists at a large protest scheduled for April 1965 in front of the Soviet mission to the United Nations in New York. Carlebach fulfilled his wish, the song became the anthem of the student movement and continued to be sung at almost every political gathering of Jews in the decades that followed.

Am Israel hai is still sung today, almost all announcements related to the war in Israel are signed with these words. The phrase has remained a symbol of defiance, resistance to every enemy who tried to destroy us. No matter how much they oppressed and persecuted us, invested endless efforts in attempts to exterminate us, we survived, we live and will live. These words are what encourage us, we nurture hope in dark times like the ones we are witnessing. They are also a confirmation of our identity, they call for the unity of the people of Israel everywhere in the world. So how else could this text be concluded than with – am Israel hai, no matter what anyone wanted or thought about it.