

## Sorrow Song

## זֶמֶר נוֹגָה

Lyrics: Rachel Bluwstein מילים: רחל בלוּבְשְׁטַיִן

Will you hear my voice, my distant one,  
will you hear my voice, wherever you are -  
A voice calling strong, a voice crying silently  
And above time, commanding blessing?

הַתְּשַׁמַּע קוֹלִי, רְחוּקִי שְׁלִי,  
הַתְּשַׁמַּע קוֹלִי, בְּאֶשֶׁר הֵנֶךְ -  
קוֹל קוֹרָא בְּעֵז, קוֹל בּוֹכָה בְּדַמִּי  
וַיַּמְעַל לְזַמְנוֹ מִצְוָה בְּרָכָה?

This world is wide with many paths.  
They meet narrowly, part forever.  
A man seeks, but his feet fail,  
He cannot find what he has lost.

תָּבֵל זֶה רַבָּה וַדְרָכִים בָּהּ רַב,  
נִפְגָּשׁוֹת לְדַק, נִפְרָדוֹת לְעַד.  
מִבְקֵשׁ אָדָם, אַךְ כּוֹשְׁלוֹת רִגְלָיו,  
לֹא יוּכַל לְמַצֵּא אֶת אֲשֶׁר אָבַד.

Maybe my last day is already near,  
already near, the day of tearful parting,  
I shall wait for you until my life dims,  
As Rachel awaited her lover.

אַחֲרוֹן יָמַי כְּבָר קָרוֹב אֹלֵי,  
כְּבָר קָרוֹב הַיּוֹם שֶׁל דְּמַעוֹת פְּרֻדָּה,  
אַחֲכָה לָךְ עַד יִכְבוּ חַיִּי,  
כְּחֻכּוֹת רַחֵל לְדוֹדָהּ.

The great Israeli poet Rachel Bluwstein, 1890–1931, known in the Israeli public as just “Rachel”, wrote this well known love poem out of the sorrows (romantic and health related) of her life.

Although the biblical text focuses on the years Jacob worked for his father in law until he was married to Rachel.

”וַיַּעֲבֹד יַעֲקֹב בְּרַחֵל שִׁבְעַת שָׁנִים וַיְהִי בְּעֵינָיו כִּי־יָמִים אֶחָדִים בְּאַהֲבָתוֹ אֹתָהּ:”

“So Jacob served seven years for Rachel and they seemed to him but a few days because of his love for her.” Genesis 29:20,

Rachel the poetess devotes her attention to the years of anticipation Rachel endured until she was united with her loved one, Jacob. However the poem has taken on a much larger meaning within Israeli society, and was interrupted as a poem about longing, unrequited love, yearning for a loved one who is no longer around.

