

## "THE PARADE OF THE FALLEN"

by **Hayim Heffer**

Translation: **Meir Sherman**

They come from the mountains, from the valley, from the desert,  
They come — names, faces, eyes — and stand for the parade,  
They come in a masculine step, strong and sunburnt  
They emerge from the shattered planes and from the burnt tanks,  
They rise from behind the rocks, from across the dunes,  
from connecting ditches,  
Brave as lions, tough as tigers, swift as eagles  
And they pass one by one between two rows of angels  
who feed them candy and place flowers around their necks  
and I look at them, and all of them are happy  
These are my brothers, these are my brothers.

And they meet one another, black eyes and blue and brown  
and they remind each other of names, and weapons, and places  
and pour each other cups of coffee and tea  
and burst suddenly together shouting: Hi boy!  
and they meet in the large assemblage, friends and comrades  
and officers slap the privates' shoulders  
and the privates shake the officers' hands  
and they burst in song and clap hands  
and all the dwellers of heaven listen to them besides themselves  
and the get-together last a day and a night and a day and a night  
because such bunch has not yet been above,  
and then suddenly they hear familiar voices cry  
and they look homeward at father and mother,  
at the wives, children and brothers  
and their faces are silent and they stand perplexed  
and then someone quickly whispers: forgive us, but we had to  
we won the battles and now we are resting  
these are my brothers, these are my brothers

And so they stand, the light on their faces  
and the Lord alone passes among them  
with tears in His eyes He kisses their wounds  
and He says in a trembling voice to the white angels  
These are my sons, these are my sons.

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