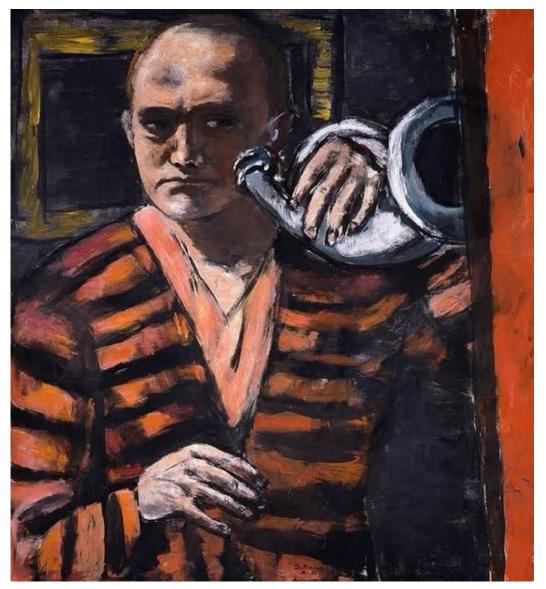
The Day of Atonement

by <u>Jeffrey Burghauser</u> (April 2025)



Self Portrait with a Horn (Max Beckmann, 1938)

It is a widespread custom in most of the Diaspora of Israel to recall the souls of one's fathers and relatives who went to their eternal world, on Yom Kippur after the reading from the Prophets, and to donate to charity for the recollection of their souls. [...] Whether he be young or old, everyone whose father and mother are still alive goes outside during the Memorial Prayers, to avoid the

Tenor

May God remember all the souls
Of those whose names comprise the rolls
Of the slain—
By means of bullet, fire, spear,
Or truncheon, turned into a mere
Thickened stain.

May God remember all the men
Reduced into a slurry when
Lethal glee
Inspired incoherent brutes
Of Spain, Majdanek & Kibbutz
Be'eri.

Without descending to allow Myself an irreligious vow (Vows imply A power over forces kept Obscure to everyone except Adonai),

And may their souls receive from Thee
The everlasting unity
Justice marks

For those who die in Heaven's bright Esteem, and all the Israelite Patriarchs.

Echo

But what if Martyrdom had found
The panting Jew on Christian ground,
Having run,
Indignant, after seeing a
Repulsive curse in being a
Father's son?

[*] Days of Awe: A Treasury of Jewish Wisdom for Reflection, Repentance, and Renewal on the High Holy Days. Schocken Books Inc., 1965. p. 235.

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Jeffrey Burghauser is a teacher in Columbus, Ohio. He was educated at SUNY-Buffalo and the University of Leeds. He currently studies the five-string banjo with a focus on pre-WWII picking styles. A former artist-in-residence at the Arad Arts Project (Israel), his poems have appeared (or are forthcoming) in Appalachian Journal, Fearsome Critters, Iceview, Lehrhaus, and New English Review. Jeffrey's booklength collections are available on Amazon, and his website is www.jeffreyburghauser.com.

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