

***Yom Kippur Afternoon Readings 5772***  
***Jewish Congregation of Brookville***

*"Olive Tree"*  
*by Agi Mishol*

shafted, stuck among three coconut palms  
in a layer of gravel from the Home Depot  
in the middle of a junction turned overnight  
into a square.

Motorists hurrying home  
see it perhaps  
through clay pots tilting over,  
but they have no time for the twisted story  
that rises from its trunk or the flat top of the tree,  
trimmed with a building contractor's sense of humor.

Nor can they fathom their roots groping  
in foreign soil  
clutching mother earth  
like provisions from home  
since the soldiers cut them down.

The olives, offered and unwanted, blacken  
my face  
and no miniature roses will divert my heart  
from the shame.

## *“The Enemy”*

*A Legend about Rabbi Shmuel Horowitz (Shemlke of Nikolsburg)*

A rich and distinguished man in Nikolsburg was hostile to Rabbi Shmelke and tried to think of some way to make him seem ridiculous. On the eve of Yom Kippur, he came to him and begged him that on this day, when each man forgives his neighbor, they too might become reconciled with each other. He had brought the rabbi a jar of very old and strong wine, and urged him to drink, for he thought that since the tzaddik was unused to drinking, he would become drunk and appear before his congregation in this condition. For the sake of reconciliation, Rabbi Shemlke drank one glass after another and the rich man thought he had accomplished his purpose and went home well-satisfied.

But when evening fell, and the hour of prayer drew near, the shudder of the day of judgment took hold of the rabbi, and in a moment every vestige of the effect of the wine had left him. After the evening prayer, Rabbi Shemlke remained in the House of Prayer all night, in the company of the other devout people. Just as every year, he sang the psalms and the congregation joined in. When, in the forty-first psalm, he came to the verse: “By this I know that You delight in me; my enemy will not triumph over me,” he repeated it over and over, and translated it, but not in the usual way but freely and boldly: “By this I know that you delight in me; my enemy will suffer no ill because of me.” And he added: “Even though there are people who are hostile to me and try to make me an object of ridicule, forgive them, Lord of the world, and them not suffer because of me.” And he said this in a voice so full of power, that all those who were praying, burst into tears, and each repeated his words from the bottom of his heart. But among them was that rich and distinguished man. In this hour he turned to God and all his malice dropped from him. From this time on, he loved and honored Rabbi Shmelke above all other people.

*Martin Buber, Tales of the Hasidim: Early Masters*

**Rabbi Steven Moskowitz**  
**[www.rabbmoskowitz.com](http://www.rabbmoskowitz.com)**