

Nagars Nacht
Chapter 1 pp 8-31
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A narrow street in Holon in the industrial suburbs of Tel Aviv. A short, rotund man, in his early seventies or maybe older, steps out of one of the small houses huddled below blocks of high-rise flats. He is wearing a black coat, white shirt and black trousers. A carefully trimmed white beard frames his weathered face, there's a black cap perched on the back of his head and white curls hang down from his temples. He is holding a small suitcase in his right hand. The dark eyes are alert; the old man looks around cautiously before he closes the door, he walks down the path cautiously, and cautiously opens the gate. Once he's on the pavement, he is filled with unease. He scampers down the street with hurried steps, looking over his shoulder all the time, stepping into the road, then back on the pavement. In the end he starts running sideways like a crab trying to keep an eye on what is ahead or behind at the same time, as if he dare not turn his back on anyone or anything.

He is on his way to the outskirts of the quarter. When he gets there, he is distressed and exhausted and doesn't calm down until he sees the sheep pen in front of him. He sets down the suitcase and wipes sweat from his brow. As he turns around one more time, his eyes scour the cypresses and palm trees, the run-down huts at the foot of the hill, the fences made of corrugated iron.

Everything is as it should be. The old man goes to a shed beside the pen, made from rough planks of wood. He swaps his black coat for a blue overall hanging on a nail. Then he puts on a blue apron, opens the suitcase and takes out a pair of thick rubber soles, a towel and a wooden box. He ties the soles to the bottom of his shoes.

He opens the latch of the gate. The animals know his voice and he talks to them while he holds one back and pushes the others away. The chosen sheep is forced to the ground and its legs are tied together with two bits of rope. Then it is heaved into a wheelbarrow. The body hangs over the side, the tied legs stick out. The animal is calm. It stares at the old man, as if it has been stunned. He opens his wooden box, takes out a knife and a whetstone, slides his thumb along the blade, holds it up to the light and then starts sharpening it with rhythmic movements. The sheep watches. His skilled hand makes the steel ring; again and again the old man tests the blade, there's not a single nick left to be felt or seen, but he carries on sharpening the knife. There are nicks a human eye can't see, a human thumb can't feel. Nicks from tongues of flame and dark wings. Away with them! The law insists on purity; of spirit, not steel, sharpened beyond the blade.

The old man takes hold of the sheep's head, gently lays its ears across its eyes.

He says a prayer.

He cuts the animal's throat; separates arteries, veins, wind-pipe and gullet in a single stroke.

On the other side of the compound, a man is pushing someone in a wheelchair. They are on their way to the meeting place, an improvised space in between the chicken huts and back yards with a fire for cooking meat and making tea, a wooden counter, a plain wooden table, folding chairs. It has a makeshift roof, planks supported by seven poles which would hardly withstand a heavy shower. The man in the wheelchair is pushed to the table. He doesn't move his head and his pinched features stand out. He is clean-shaven, his grey hair's cut short and he's wearing a checked scarf around his neck to keep him warm. The other man, sturdy, with a beard, puts a hand on his shoulder, then goes to the fire where he sets a saucepan of water to boil.

When he returns, he is carrying three mugs of steaming-hot tea. He pulls three pears and a knife out of his coat pocket, slices the fruit and sets pear-halves beside each mug before he

slips the knife back in his pocket. Then he sits down on one of the folding chairs. The sounds of the chickens, ducks and geese surround them - a rising and falling antiphony to confirm the birds are there.

The sturdy man's chair is too small; he keeps changing his position, as if he would rather be standing. The man in the wheelchair hardly moves at all. His legs are paralysed and his other movements are restricted. He can't lift his hands up high or turn his head very far.

The old man arrives still wearing his overalls and the blue apron which is now stained with blood. He sings as he walks and then starts to hum when he reaches the meeting place, he hums when he touches the sturdy man's shoulder and the man in the wheel chair. Then he sits down between the two of them and starts drinking his tea.

All three of them are wearing the kippa, the flat cap that covers the back of the head, and signifies fear of God. The old man is the only one with forelocks. He takes another sip of tea, leans back, folds his hands on his chest and starts to tell his story: How was I supposed to know who Eichmann was? Adolf Eichmann. I never heard that name before.

The old man is Shalom Nagar. The sturdy one is my friend Ben. The man in the wheelchair is me, Moshe.

Nagar brought Eichmann back. I had nearly forgotten about him. The folders where I kept the newspaper cuttings about him and the trial lay in a corner of my shelves, buried beneath scores of music. Books about his crimes are sealed with cobwebs, books that I used to keep at my fingertips and studied for such a long time. At some stage I just left them lying there. Why? I don't know the answer. Maybe because I didn't understand; maybe because I'd lost sight of what I was trying to understand. Eichmann went away.

He returned when Ben took me to see a film. The film was a documentary called 'The Hangman', It was about Shalom Nagar - prison guard, kosher butcher, healer – Eichmann's

executioner. Later we heard that Nagar had been invited to attend the film, but he hadn't shown up.

I know him, Ben said. He lives here in Holon, not far away from you. We can visit him, if you like. I didn't know if I wanted to. Eichmann, I thought, if he were Eichmann, I would want to meet him. Alone. But did I want to meet Eichmann's hangman?

Ben picked me up the next day. He pushed me past Nagar's little house, pushed me to the outskirts of our quarter, he pushed me past the sheep pen and over to the meeting point.

There was the old man, looking just like he did in the film, sitting there as he'd done in the film.

Shalom, this is Moshe, Ben said. An old friend of mine. He would like to meet you.

Nagar looked at me with dark restless eyes, nodded and started to speak, said what he'd said in the film, introduced himself with his story, the text that has become a part of him: How was I supposed to know who Eichmann was? Adolf Eichmann, I never heard the name before. I came from Yemen when I was just a boy, you see, thirteen maybe fourteen years old. They'd told us about the war, not about all those other things. Eichmann? Who was he? I didn't find about him until I had to guard him.

Eichmann's hangman? There are doubts. Was it really Shalom Nagar who pressed the button on the 31st of May, 1962, which opened the trap door through which Adolf Eichmann fell with a rope around his neck? And during that night, was it Nagar's hands which pushed Eichmann's body into the oven, to burn him to ashes?

Nagar insists this is the case; he is possessed by this person. Eichmann is still there, he believes. Eichmann is out to get him. He, Shalom Nagar, Eichmann's hangman will be the final victim. Because there is one missing. Nagar believes Eichmann wasn't done. There is a Jew still left on his list.

How was I to know who Eichmann was? Adolf Eichmann, I had never heard the name. I came from Yemen as a boy, you see, thirteen, fourteen years old, we'd been told about the war, but nothing about the other stuff. Eichmann? Who he was? I didn't find out who he is until I started to guard him. Now I know him, he is here every day, I know everything –

Who is here every day?

Eichmann!

Eichmann is dead, Shalom.

I was his bodyguard, Ben. I was with him in his cell. There were three guards, one in the cell, one in the entrance hall, one in the next room. I was with him in his cell. I went with him everywhere, even to the toilet. I had to.

You had to smell his stench?

No, no. The Germans are clean, Ben. So clean! They are evil. Eichmann was evil, too. When he went to the toilet the first thing he did was pull the chain. There was water running the whole time, while he did his business. He did not want me to smell anything. Then he stood up and closed the lid and washed his hands, twice, three times. If I hadn't known who he was, I'd have thought: what a saint.

They've caught a saint. He never did anything wrong. He thanked me for everything, gracias, gracias he said. That is Spanish for thank you.

Do you speak Spanish?

No. How could I? We communicated with our hands. It was the only way - he couldn't speak Hebrew, I couldn't speak German. But we understood each other. I had to fetch Eichmann's food. I always put it on a special tray with a lid which had a lock. I had to make sure that it stayed closed all the way from the kitchen to his cell. So that no one could put anything in it. They could have paid someone to put poison into his food.

Who is 'they'?

People who wanted revenge. And the ones who didn't want him to talk. Everything had to be secure. Eichmann poisoned in prison! Imagine the scandal. It was an international trial after all, the whole world was watching. I went into his cell with the tray. But before I was allowed to give him the food, I had to test it first. He said you must test it first Shalom!

Who said?

Merhavi, the Commander. Once I asked him: Why do I have to test his food? Why can't someone else do it? He said, listen Shalom, if we lose a Yeminite, that's not a problem. Many Yeminites have died. But Eichmann mustn't die. It was an international trial.

If you spend a long time looking out for someone, you get close, familiar. You start to feel sorry for him. I could never have hit him. I never struck a prisoner ever. Merhavi came to me after the sentence was announced, Eichmann was supposed to be hanged, but he had done something – he didn't want to accept the judgement.

He appealed?

Yes, and no one knew how long it was going to take. Merhavi came to me and asked: Shalom when it is time, would you be prepared to press the button? I told him that I didn't want to. Everyone else wanted to, I was the only one who didn't. In the end we drew lots. And Merhavi said: this is an order, Shalom. You won, you have to do it. When the day came – I had the day off that day – they came to fetch me. I was out for a walk with Ora and our little son, and then a car stopped next to us; the door was opened, the commander pulled me inside and we drove off to the prison. Eichmann was going to be hanged that evening.

Everything went very quickly. We lowered the rope, put the noose round his head and I – I went to over to the table. I pressed the button. And the trap door opened and he dropped.

I was twenty-six years old at the time, not really an adult yet. What did I know? I had never seen a man hang before. I saw his face as soon as I entered the chamber, white as a sheet. If

you are strangled, the blood stops flowing to your head. And the eyes get forced out of their sockets. They came out.

His eyes had fallen out?

Bulged out. As if they were trying to touch you. And his tongue hung out of his mouth down to here.

To his chest? His tongue?

To his chin. His tongue hung down past his chin, I don't know why. It was all bloody. That was from the pressure of the noose on his throat. The mere sight of it made me ill. I hid behind my colleagues, so the commander wouldn't call me. But then Merhavi shouted: Nagar come here! I said: leave me alone, boss, I can't bear it, I can't look at him. He said: Get over here now Shalom, no discussion. This isn't a game.

So I climbed onto the gallows to pull Eichmann up so that Merhavi could remove the rope. Eichmann hung there with his head to one side, watching, he almost touched me with his eyes. I started to shake. And then he said something.

Who?

Eichmann!

How could he? He was already dead.

He had said something before he died. It's like the radio. When you pull out the plug, it carries on playing for a moment before it stops. When people die talking, the same thing happens. Their last words stay with them when they die, and if they can, if there is any air left, they still have their say.

That's what happened with Eichmann. I didn't know his stomach was full of air, so I grabbed him round his belly and out it all came. I couldn't understand the actual words, but it was a curse. He cursed me. And all the blood shot out of his mouth with the words. He spat in my face. The Commander was safe behind me. All the blood hit me. The little Yemenite.

And then –

That's enough for today Shalom. Moshe needs to get home.

No. Wait Ben, I want to finish the story. You know this is a real story, it's not rubbish. One guard on either side and Eichmann in the middle. That was the order. When his defence lawyer came, if he was allowed onto the roof, whenever he went to the toilet: I tied him up.

His arms or his legs?

Arms and legs.

How on earth could he go to the toilet then?

When we got there I removed the ties. That's how it was, one guard on either side, and Eichmann in the middle. And then when I went back to work, it was me who had to be guarded!

What do you mean Shalom? Why did they guard you?

They protected me! After – after that night I was given three days off - to recover – and then I was supposed to go back to my duties. But I couldn't. I could hardly manage to climb the stairs. I didn't dare go to the second floor where his cell had been, Eichmann's apartment, we called that wing. I was sure he was waiting for me there. That's why they gave me the guards: two colleagues who walked on either side of me when I did my rounds. The Commander didn't like it, of course. My colleagues were needed elsewhere. It was very embarrassing. But what could I do. I couldn't get Eichmann out of my head.

Week after week, month by month, I still needed the guards. A year went by. A whole year of fear and nightmares every day. Because of Eichmann, because he spat that blood all over me.

When I was awake I was afraid he might appear, when I was asleep, he haunted my dreams.

When the year was over, I went to Merhavi and said. This has got to stop, chief, let me do my rounds on my own again. I want to get over this. He agreed.

It seemed all right at first. No problems on the ground floor, or on the first floor. I felt fine. But then, when I was on my way up to Eichmann's apartment - I was nearly at the top of the stairs – I heard his voice.

Eichmann's?

Yes! Quite clearly.

How?

I don't know how – it was just there, Ben. I was on the stairs when I heard him. I walked on, slowly because my knees had turned to jelly. I'm walking along the corridor and can't hear anything. I reach the first door and take the keys out of my pocket. My hands were shaking. I could hardly fit the key into the lock. I unlock the door. Everything is quiet. I unlock the second door and walk into the entrance hall. Just a couple more steps to his cell door. The flap was open. One step. My legs don't want to move. Another step. I can't go any further. I stand on tiptoe. The light from the hallway shone into the cell through the hole in the door - a bright square at an angle to his bed.

And there he stood, staring at me, like this, with his head on one side.

I felt giddy, couldn't find my keys, managed to get out of there somehow, ran through the corridor. When I reached the stairs I heard him shouting, 'Gracias, gracias,' and then – I woke up in hospital. I had fallen down the stairs, broken my leg and cut my head. Merhavi wanted to know what had happened. I told him everything. You saw your shadow Shalom, he said.

He only feels safe when he's at the shed beside his sheep, his hens and geese, the animals he takes care of, feeds and kills. Eichmann doesn't come here, he says. Why not? Ben asks. He's happy to give Nagar the prompts he needs to weave his story. Why not?

He can't stand the sight of blood, Ben. When the prison doctor wanted to take blood, he always lay down, otherwise he would have fainted. One time when he visited a bull fight he

really did faint. His bosses didn't care. They sent him to the East. It was his job to report on – how the Jews were being murdered. They were shot. Hounded into pits, naked, and then the Germans shot them. Eichmann couldn't bear to watch. He looked away and waited until the pits were full and covered with mud. At one of these shootings, his black leather coat got splattered with blood. He took it off straight away even though it was freezing. It was no use. They drove back past the pits. They were sealed with a layer of mud so Eichmann thought he could risk taking a look, and then a fountain of blood shot up right next to his Mercedes.

Shot up, how?

I don't know, I wasn't there, and Eichmann didn't explain. Maybe too many bodies were piled on top of each other and pressure built up. A jet of blood shot out –

Onto Eichmann's Mercedes?

Or just next to it. Eichmann felt sick, the driver wanted to stop, but couldn't because of all the blood. They had to keep going. I'd had enough, I was exhausted, Eichmann said. I felt as if I'd been beaten. I do not have the required robusticity of feeling.

The what?

Robusticity – he used words like that.

Did he say that during the trial?

No, to me.

How do you know what he said? You can't speak any German.

He said it in Spanish.

But you can't speak Spanish either.

But he thought I could because I'm from Yemen, I'm a Sephardic Jew and the Sephardim come from Spain. That's what he thought.

Nagar makes it up as he goes along. I was tired when Ben took me home. Tired but filled with a strange kind of energy. Eichmann, Eichmann, Eichmann was back.

A couple of days later, Ben took me back to the meeting place. Nagar wasn't there. Ben made three mugs of tea, fetched three pears out of his coat jacket. There was no sign of Nagar.

A storm was on its way. Lighting struck somewhere; then it started to pour. There were puddles and streams everywhere, including where we were sitting. Ben stood up to keep a lookout for Nagar. He didn't catch sight of him at first, but then he saw him standing under the porch of his sheep shed where it wasn't too wet. Ben signalled to me, grabbed the wheelchair and started pushing me along as fast as he could.

In some places there were huge puddles blocking our way, while in others the ground was so saturated, the wheels got stuck. Ben pushed, pulled, steered this way and that. Somehow he managed to keep the speed up. The wheelchair slid and lurched all over the place but I enjoyed the wild ride. It was the price we had to pay to get to Nagar's safe shelter – or so it seemed to me. I held on to the armrests and egged Ben on, shouting instructions as if we were trying to win a race. Two old men behaving like children.

We reached the shed soaked through and laughing. Nagar was just drying his hands. A bed-sheet had been fastened to the wall, and a plucked chicken hung on a string in front of it.

Ben was still charged with energy and stared at the chicken for a moment before he gave it a little push which set it gently swinging to and fro while pale red liquid dripped from its slit-open gut.

Nagar was not amused by his antics. He didn't approve. He grabbed the chicken and held it tight. He sounded ceremonious all of a sudden. Usually he went from complaining to crowing or mocking and back. Now, he rallied his voice in a darker tone: A woman from the neighbourhood is ill, Ben. She won't eat or speak, no one knows what is wrong with her. The doctors can't help. They are relying on me. I have healed people before. They say: You have

the gift, Shalom. I don't know about that. I take a chicken, wrap it in a sheet, and wave it above the head of the person who is ill. I pray, and they get well. What did I do? Not much. I prepared the chicken, no more, no less. It has to be drained of blood. That is the main thing. The soul lives in the blood, it needs to get away, must not be touched. The chicken has to be completely drained of blood. That is what Shalom does. That is how he heals. The words and the way they were said had the desired effect. Ben didn't say anything; he felt ashamed. And even Nagar seemed moved by the scale and significance of what people believe he can do. They are all in awe of Nagar the healer.

It wasn't pouring as much it had done, but large drops of rain still smacked the ground and pelted the iron roof of the shed. Thick, dark clouds were everywhere and there was no sign of it getting any lighter. Ben looked at the sky anyway; Nagar stood beside him, his arms folded across his chest. It is always raining in Germany.

That is not true Shalom. What makes you say that?

When the Romans tried to conquer Germany, they got stuck in the mud. And the Germans, what were they called in those days –

Teutons?

The Teutons took their chance. They charged out of the woods and defeated the Romans. Every Teuton carried a weapon, men, women, children, even the elders, everyone. The Teutons always kept their weapons within easy reach. It was a question of honour. It was all that mattered. Honour! The Germans are evil. Eichmann –

What does this have to do with him?

Wait. Eichmann followed orders. Always carry a weapon. The Teutonic code. Of course Eichmann obeyed. He was always armed with a gun.

Even in bed?

He kept one in his bedside table. And he had secret drawers in his desk where he hid loaded weapons. The thought of actually having to shoot someone disturbed him, though. So he was constantly giving his guns away. His adjutant got one, so did his driver, even visitors were urged to take a gun from him. Here, take my gun. I insist. Yes, Herr Obersturmbannführer! Jawohl! But every time he gave one away, he was given two more. And there was a gun cabinet in his Mercedes packed with anything you can imagine, pistols, hand grenades, machine guns –

But he didn't shoot?

Never! He was too scared. He never shot anyone in his whole life. He couldn't. He can't stand the sight of blood, he can't shoot a thing.

I don't believe you. He was in the war, he must have shot people.

He was in his office! He was responsible for transports, he ordered Jews onto trains. Trains, railway lines, timetables – that was Eichmann's world, Ben. He didn't have to shoot. Later on, he would moan, I wasn't allowed to be a soldier, I was never a commanding officer, I never got to see the front. Actually, it was what he wanted because he was scared. I still can't understand it.

What can't you understand?

How can someone who's evil be afraid?

You'll have to ask Moshe, Shalom. He thinks about that kind of thing, not me.

Nagar turned round and looked at me. He seemed to hesitate. So far he had only talked to Ben or into the space between us, as if there was another, greater audience out there somewhere. He had never spoken to me directly. Perhaps he was shy, or it could be a precaution. Ben was someone he knew. Ben fed him cues, Ben allowed him to make things up and go his own way. But who was Moshe? The man in a wheelchair who listened in silence, never showing any kind of reaction to Nagar's stories? Nagar knew nothing about me and couldn't know

that, in a different way, I was as close to Eichmann as he was. Or did he suspect something and that was why he ignored me? Could he sense that my thoughts were like music accompanying his stories, critical comments, corrections, detours, enhancements? Some of Nagar's words would open whole memory banks in my head. In his office! Did Nagar know that Eichmann's office was nothing more than a briefcase in the beginning? A newsman needs to be agile, pop up all over the place. Eichmann was a newsman when he started out; he collected news about Jews straight from the Jews. He couldn't line them up in front of his desk because he didn't have one. So they met on the stairs, going up, going down, Eichmann listened, Eichmann asked the right questions, Eichmann learned, Eichmann took notes, created a position for himself as the expert on Jewish questions. He was given an office and it was as familiar to me as if I'd been in and out of it every day. As if I had walked the long diagonal from his desk to the door. It was a gargantuan desk and he liked to sit behind it, leaning back into the shadows while his desk lamp lit up the person opposite him. He wrote his transport orders at this desk, forced Jews into trains - a hundred, a thousand, hundreds of thousands - with one stroke of his pen. But one time - was it just the once? - he sent someone into a new life, set him free, didn't shout him down; instead, he shook his hand. Called him comrade, not half-caste or a pig. That was just as evil. An angel can fall, but a devil can't rise. There was no way back for Eichmann.

Nagar came over to me without saying a word. He leaned forward and studied my face, as if he were searching for traces of the words he could sense in my gestures but couldn't hear. How can an evil man be afraid? The answer?

I didn't have an answer.

Nagar turned away, winked at Ben and shook his head in mock disappointment: Moshe's not saying anything.

Moshe is tired, Shalom. We are going to go now, even though it is raining. You should go, too. Ben pointed at the chicken still hanging in front of the white sheet. Your neighbour will be waiting.

She has been waiting all her life, Ben. She is a lonely woman. Everyone is dead. Her husband, her sons and still she waits. I will go to her.

Nagar took the chicken down and undid the string. Hold the sheet, Ben, but be careful. Don't let it touch the ground. It has to be clean without any stains.

Ben held the sheet while Nagar wrapped it round the chicken and then tied the bundle up with string. I'll tell you a story.

We are going now, Shalom. Moshe needs to get home. It is raining far too hard. I'll tell you a different story.

Not too long?

No, no a short story. What do you say, Moshe? One last short story?

I raised my hand to stop him, but either he misunderstood the gesture, or else he simply ignored it.

In the prison in Ramleh, the prisoners were supposed to clean their own cells. They were given a cloth and bucket each. Most of them never bothered. They didn't mind the dirt. But when Eichmann arrived in Ramleh, he said he would need two cloths. One to mop the floor and one to wipe it dry. And I would ask you to change the cloths once a week, he said. That's how neat and tidy he was! He swept the cell floor from corner to corner, wall to wall, every day. You could see your reflection in the tiles. Every morning he made his bed, shook out the blankets, folded them up and put them one on top of the other. Once a week, he beat the mattress and turned it over. Twice a week, always on the same day, he washed his clothes, his shirts first, then his socks and vests, and finally his pants. He hung them up to dry on the bars

of the window in the bathroom, always the same way. Before he sat down at the table to write or read, he dusted the table top and the chair with his handkerchief.

He was pedantic.

He is German, Ben. Germans are like that. They won't tolerate filth. They want it gone. It has nothing to do with them, it should not be there. Away, away! Be gone! Eichmann had a project, what was it called –

Deportation?

No. No. Before that. Nisko! The Nisko Project. That was a place somewhere, I don't know where, an awful place in the middle of nowhere. The Jews were filth for the Germans, so they were sent to a filthy place. Eichmann collected thousands of Jews, builders, carpenters, mechanics and transported them there. When they arrived, they had to march for miles and miles. Then he made a speech. They were to build a camp with wooden barracks. But be careful, he said. Don't use the local water. There is typhoid and cholera in this area, the water in the wells is contaminated. You'll have to dig new wells. Get fresh water at all costs. Or else – and then he paused and smiled: or else you will die. That is how evil he was. That is why he liked things to be clean. Everyone had to be clean. The Germans think they are saints. White people!

He wasn't really white, Shalom. He was darker than most.

Yes, but he liked to have everything as white as possible. During the war he had an affair with a noble lady who only wore white dresses and white hats. After the war, he kept white chickens. Then he bred angora rabbits, each generation whiter than the last. And still it wasn't enough. The Commander showed me a photo of Eichmann in Argentina. A barren landscape, covered in stones and dust, but Mr Eichmann is wearing a white shirt and trousers. And sitting on a white horse! And then –

Shalom stop!

That was a few months ago. We still visit Nagar at the meeting place or in his shed. Ben picks me up once or twice a week. Every time he takes me home, I think: That's it. I've had enough! Nagar can't stop, we know now. As long as we go to see him he will tell us his stories. And if we don't visit him he will tell someone else.

Shalom Nagar is laden with tales of Adolf Eichmann – they come pouring, splashing, spouting out, never ending, never stopping. Eichmann, Eichmann, Eichmann. Nagar has lived with him for fifty years. His life revolves around him. He's always repeating or contradicting himself, his stories are full of gaping holes. But it doesn't matter. He doesn't care. He's trying to protect himself. Nagar needs to spill blood to wash away Eichmann's blood, he needs to talk about Eichmann to drown Eichmann's curse. Blood for his blood, words for his words, it's how he lives with what happened on the 31st of May 1962, the night that will never end.

He upsets me, fascinates me, he poses a challenge. Nagar talking about Eichmann - the way he talks about him - feels like a reproach. What did I do instead? I hid Eichmann behind a white sheet. I made myself pure, I thought I was holy! All lies. I didn't forget Eichmann – that's another lie. I kept him secret!

I can't play the violin like my father or Eichmann anymore, so I compose music. I write themes that don't remind me of Eichmann, choose time signatures that distance me from him, and tones that sound nothing like what I heard in the court room during all those hours. How many hours? Hundreds, perhaps, while I watched Eichmann, saw his mouth twitch, studied his bearing when he rose to answer a question from the prosecutor or the judge.

And then along comes this little old man, folds his hands across his chest and starts telling his stories.

This morning I took my file of newspaper cuttings from the shelf, wiped the dust and cobwebs off my Eichmann books. I am going to write. I am going to write about Eichmann. About Eichmann and Nagar, about the trial and everything else. The gallows, the rope, the prison

director, the preacher, the president. The furnace. I have no idea where this will take me. Perhaps I will begin to understand something that can't be understood. Perhaps not. But there is something out there that I have to face. It is getting closer, it's closing in. The noise is destroying my music. I've run out of notes.