

"And I will imagine - for the end has come; my soul has found its homeland" - The immigration narrative of the poet Elisheva: its implications and reception in literary circles

Sivan Sarid-Goldfisher, Levinsky College of Education

Abstract

This essay deals with the poet Elisheva Bichovsky, (Elizaveta Zhirkova) (1888-1949) who was born in Riazan in Russia to an Irish-Catholic Mother and Pravoslav (Russian Orthodox) Father, was interested in Jews and their culture and immigrated to Eretz-Israel in 1925, but she never converted. Her immigration motives as were expressed in her poems were void, detachment, and lack of roots in the origin homeland and it's cultural. Therefore, loneliness, estrangement and alienation were the fundamental issues in the poems that she had written in Russia. Even the move to Eretz-Israel did not cause her to overcome these feelings, hence in an early stage she accepts the fact that she feels no sense of belonging to either one of her homelands. For this reason, there is no territory on earth that can embrace her in its boundaries, and finding such a territory means the end of her life search travel. As a consequence, the narrator creates itself a new place in her imagination, a fiction autonomous homeland. Lacking a sense of belonging, already in the early stages of her poetry, the hero of her poems is the soul while the scarce landscape that is described in the poems, that is almost does not grasp real things, serves only as scenery to the soul's happenings. The poet's legitimate response as a woman, an immigrant, and a stranger, as was expressed in the image of the narrator, is her "other" and "distinct" other. Eventually, this representation, in a period that sanctified the physical linkage to the country, is one of the main reasons that brought about the disappearance of the poet from the literary circles.