

Harold Coplan (Copey)

Copey was a war-hero with superb people and management skills. He was born in 1922 and enlisted in the army Air Corps. During World War II, he was a bombardier and flew in 34 missions over Western Europe. He was recalled to active duty during the Korean conflict. His plane was shot down in 1952. He was declared missing in action and held by the Koreans and Chinese as a prisoner for eight months under severe conditions. He was considered a hero who, as senior officer, was offered release but refused release without his crew.

Following his return to the US, he continued business management education and became the base operations officer at several major Air Force bases. Copey was devoted to his family and was known as the peacemaker in both his professional and personal lives. His intelligence, education and knowledge of Jewish thoughts and mysticism show throughout this poem

Though Copey was a Kohein (descendent of Priestly class) and raised as an Orthodox Jew, he switched to Reform Judaism later in life. He did continue to perform the rituals of the Kohein when called upon and celebrated the major Jewish holidays in Reform tradition. Due to his untimely death during surgery, we do not know if the questions raised in this challenging thought-provoking poem were a result of this long incarceration and torture by the Koreans and Chinese.