Vintage Jewels



Layee Lerner
Briendy Katz

The Life and Impact of Sima Baila Landau

Vintage Jewels



BY: LAYEE LERNER
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Acknowledgements

As the editors, we are grateful to the contributors: sisters, aunts, cousins, and friends. Individually and as a group, you have entrusted us with your personal stories, vignettes, poems, prayers and sermons. They have made us cry and laugh and feel and think more deeply. Our only hope is that you, the reader, will savor each contribution on its own, and let it touch your soul. Writing has had a healing and clarifying effect. In a time of losses, we have a sense of mortality breathing down our necks. We are ever conscious of the preciousness of each day and the sheer good luck of waking up in the morning. Just as Bobby has, we will all leave our imprint, and we have the here and now to work on how that imprint will look and the images it will evoke.

Bobby, your leave-taking has also been a leave giving. You have left us the Tree of Life, and we find you when we least expect it - in our words, our gestures, and with the years in the mirror. You paved the way for us to follow, and you are our inspiration. Thank you, Bobby!

A special thank you goes to our uncle, Aaron Landau, for placing so much faith in this undertaking. You generously shared your life experiences with us, and truly impressed upon us the *chashivus* of our family lineage. Although it was painful, you had the fortitude to recount anguished wartime memories in vivid detail. You have truly fulfilled the commandment of giving over the *mesorah* to the next generation.

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We are grateful to Chana Ruchie Hoffer who unstintingly helped with typing parts of the manuscript, and editing. Thank you for your limitless dedication to this project. An honorable mention to Leah Freidman and Surie Sturm, for assisting with proofreading. Your thoroughness and availability is much appreciated.

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We owe a debt of thanks to Mrs. Pessie Spira for her support and infectious enthusiasm. It is to your credit that the dream of printing this book became a reality.

This journey would have not been completed without the support and encouragements of our husbands, R' Yosef Chaim Lerner and Eli Katz. Thank you for the many sacrifices that you made allowing us to complete this book.

Layee and Briendy

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Dedication

The following chain of events leads us to believe that we Yidden cannot simply live by the axiom "History repeats itself." We say, rather, "Ma'asei avois simen labunem." The path our grandparents have paved for us is waiting to be trodden with our own footsteps, and so history repeats itself.

Bobby often repeated how reverent was the derech eretz bestowed upon parents *in der heim*. She was very fond of telling us that when her Bobbeh passed away, her youngest aunt, Chana — a mother of ten children — moved in with the Zeida Hertzfeld.[1] Though his quarters were cramped and inadequate for her large family, she felt it was only proper to move to his house, where he could be the *ba'al habayis* and she the guest. She extended herself above and beyond her call of duty, and yet this was considered not only customary but obligatory. Every motzei shabbos (*Shpeisz tzu Nachts*), all of his sons and sons-in-law accompanied Zaide Hershala home from shul. The family entourage was warmly greeted by a happy group of *einikelach* who had gathered, eagerly anticipating their arrival. After the Zaide's *havdula*, family news was exchanged, and grandchildren of all ages shared the personal accomplishments of the past week. Only then, after wishing the Zaide a "*Gutta Voch*," did they all go to their respective homes. Such was the deference bestowed upon elders.

We, at the present time, are unfortunately faced with a similar situation. With Bobby Landau's passing, Zaidy has become the focus of our loving attention. From caregiver to cared-for, from cared-for to caregiver, life has come full circle.

1. The title of an elder is prefaced with the preposition "the" to denote respect for his/her revered status in life.

Let us pay tribute to a wonderful and loyal family who have, with much self-sacrifice, devoted their time and effort on Zaidy's behalf. Chana Ruchie Hoffer, a grandchild, the oldest daughter of Naftule and Rivky Landau, initially accompanied Zaidy to his daily shiur. Their second daughter and her husband, the Fleishman family, moved in with a family of four into Zaidy's cramped apartment. For the first few months, the devoted Fleishmans created and lovingly sustained a pleasant environment, which is still extant today. They were Zaidy's lifesavers, seamlessly picking up where Bobby left off, providing his needs and wants to the nth degree, thus echoing the deferential footsteps of our Tante Chana from Kross two generations ago. Thank you both, for paving the way for us all to follow.

We are sure that our *Zeidas in himmel* are proudly saying, *"These are the fruits of the seeds we have planted."* May Hashem repay you all manifold.

Yeshalam Hashem Pa'aleim!

On behalf of the entire Landau / Safern Family

There are no words that can adequately express the profound gratitude we have to the people whose heart and soul were set on creating an everlasting masterpiece.

We stand in awe of your dedication, perseverance, and above all-your exemplary midos.

Briendy & Layee, you have gone far beyond the call of duty. You worked unlimited hours and have gone through extensive research to bring our rich legacy to life.

Hashem sends good through messengers he values, and you are one of them. You have the Zechus of making the family aware of what an unusual and unique grandmother we were Zoche to have.

Bobby O"H will be so proud if we continue to follow the treaded path. She will make to be a good advocate for you, and to all of us-her loving family.

We thank you Briendy and Layee ever so much for bringing our feelings to reality!

Part One

A Legacy in the Making

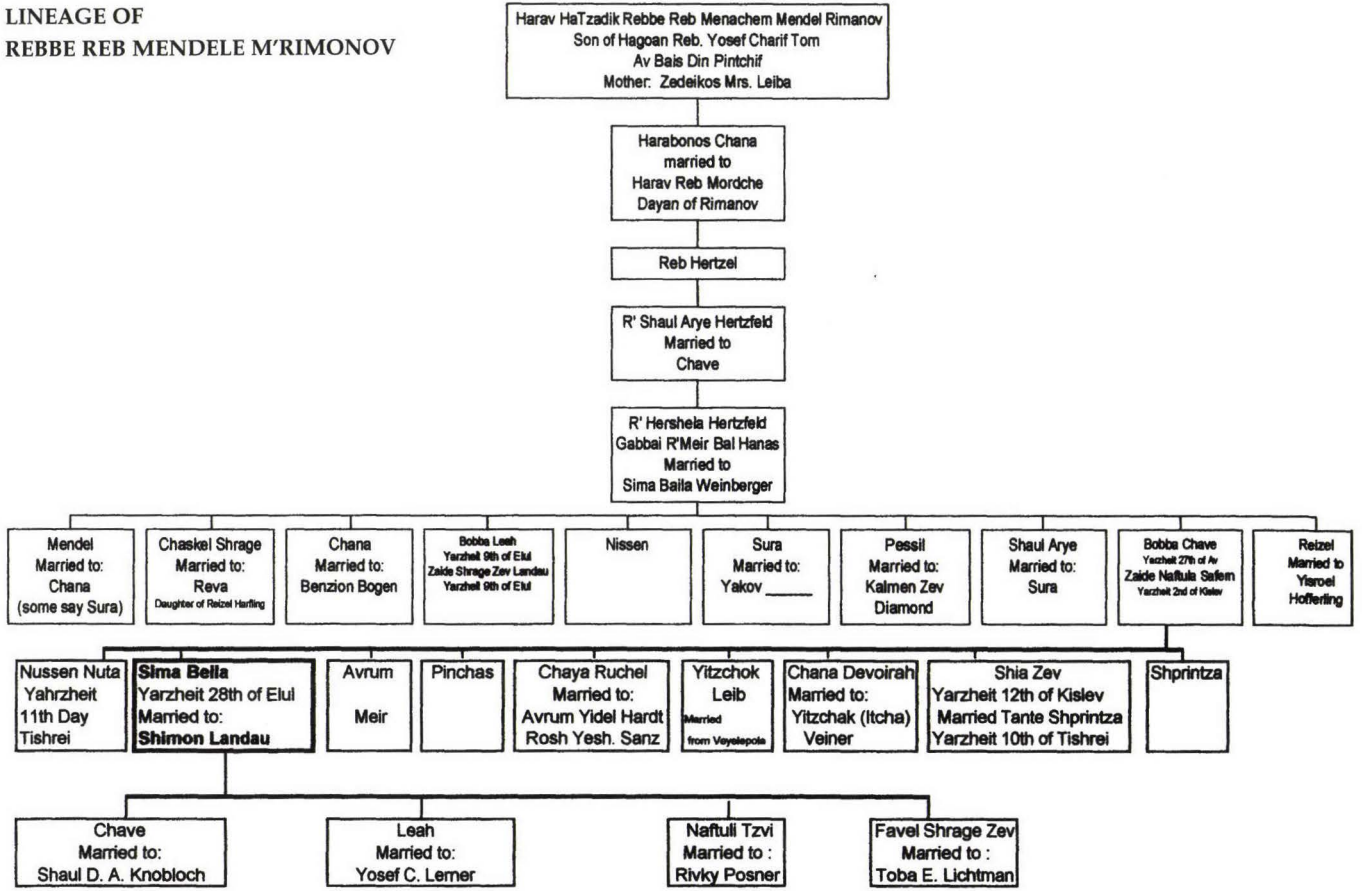
Sima Baila Landau (Safern) A"H

12TH DAY OF TEVES, 5683 – 28TH DAY OF ELUL, 5762

Her identity,
and therefore ours,
plays a significant role,
for it forges the
links of the glorious,
golden chain of our heritage.



LINEAGE OF
REBBE REB MENDELE M'RIMONOV



Chapter One

The Roots of a Legacy

A Great Tzadik is Born: Reb. R' Mendela of Riminov[2]

"I have a secret to tell you," the German nobleman told his friend Reb. Yosef Torem. "I've gotten tangled up in something illegal, and I must flee the country. I have only a few days to liquidate my assets.

"After much deliberation, I decided that you are the only person I can really trust. You are the first person I've told, and I'm hoping you'll grab the opportunity to buy me out.

"For one hundred thousand gold coins, which is minimal when you consider how much you will get for it, I will sell you my assets in this country. This includes fields, forests, vineyards, livestock and more. My only condition is that you come up with the entire sum within a week."

Reb Yosef returned home, his mind racing. While Heaven was clearly sending him an opportunity to attain fantastic wealth, how could he come up with the money in just one week?

Before doing anything, Reb Yosef consulted his pious, modest wife, who ran his business affairs. Unfortunately, the couple had not been blessed with children, so she was able to devote herself to helping her scholarly husband, enabling him to learn as much as possible.

2. Story taken from Hamodia

"The truth is," Reb Yosef said to wife, "what do we need so much property for? Didn't our Sages teach us that more possessions only lead to increasing anxiety? And since we haven't been blessed with children, for whom will we be gathering all this wealth?"

"Everything you say is true," his wife replied softly. "Still, what if we are later judged for ingratitude to *Hakodosh Baruch Hu*? We don't know why Heaven is granting us this wealth. Perhaps it is so that we can donate to charity, or perhaps there is another great mitzvah in store for us. Why should we interfere with Heavenly plans?"

Reb Yosef bowed his head in thought. Finally he said, "Your argument is more in keeping with our principles of *emuna* and *bitachon*. The offer is indeed a gift from Heaven, and we should not reject it. But how will we find the money?"

His wife waved her hand dismissively. "Business is business. We will sell everything we own and borrow whatever else we need. With Hashem's help we will repay our debts. By selling even just one of the nobleman's farms, we can buy everything we need anew."

During the next few days, Reb Yosef's home hummed with activity. Various merchants marched across his property, surveying the inn, the farm, the handsome furniture, and even the diamond-studded jewelry.

Faster than he had thought possible, between sales and loans, Reb Yosef had the money he needed. He hadn't been able to come up with the entire sum just from his assets alone, but he had borrowed the rest.

His head awhirl, Reb Yosef left his house, clutching the thick packet of money. He gazed dreamily into the distance his heart pounding with anticipation.

A blood-chilling wail snapped Reb Yosef out of his reverie. "Someone is in trouble," he murmured.

His previous plans were forgotten completely. All he could think about were the heartrending cries that were growing louder every moment. Reb Yosef ran in the direction of the sound and soon came

upon a tottering hovel at the outskirts of the city. Unhesitatingly, Reb Yosef pressed down on the doorknob and entered.

In the center of the rancid room lay the man of the house, who had just died. Around him were his weeping wife and seven children. All of them looked starved.

He rushed outside and ran in the direction of town, calling out to Jews he passed along the way to partake in a true *chessed shel emes.*

His merciful brethren hurried to obey his orders. One summoned the *chevra kaddisha,* another called the doctor, and a third went to buy food. The others accompanied him back to the hovel to comfort the bereaved family in the desperate hour.

While the *chevra kaddisha* took charge of the deceased, Reb Yosef occupied himself with the living. Like a compassionate father, he fed them, gave them to drink and comforted them as best as he could.

The house grew quieter. Then the widow's hysterical shouts gave way to bitter sobbing.

"Woe is me! He has gone to his resting-place and left me with seven orphans and terrible poverty that can't possibly get any worse. I have not one copper to buy bread or pay rent for this wretched shanty. Tomorrow we will find ourselves in the streets! I haven't one relative or friend on this earth — only You, Ribbono Shel Olam, Father of orphans and widows!"

Reb Yosef felt as if his heart was bursting. The other Jews near him, poor men themselves, exchanged helpless glances. Though their hearts were torn, none of them had the means to help the widow.

A wild idea flashed through Reb Yosef's mind. Only now did he remember why he had left his house that morning in the first place. It didn't take him long to make the decision.

"Calm yourself," he called to the widow. "There is hope."

The widow wiped her eyes and stared at the thick packet of money he placed near her. Instead of thanking her savior, she began to curse him. "Wicked man! Couldn't you find anyone else to mock but a wretched widow who has just buried her husband?"

"Do not judge so hastily," Reb Yosef pleaded. "The money is truly yours. It should be more than enough to enable you to raise your children and even marry them off when the time comes."

When there was no reply, Reb Yosef took his leave, hoping that when the widow was alone, she would realize that she wasn't imagining things.



When Reb Menachem Mendel of Riminov told this story, he would explain, "A huge commotion broke out in Heaven after Reb Yosef handed over his money. What sacrifice!

"The Heavenly Assembly came to a unanimous decision. While the true reward for a mitzvah could indeed be earned only in the World to Come, such rare sacrifice deserved some compensation on earth as well.

"But then Satan entered. 'When a person is to receive such a large reward from Heaven,' he countered, 'he should first be put to a test, so that he will be even more deserving.'

"When Eliyahu Hanavi saw that the Heavenly Assembly agreed with Satan's claim, he said, 'I will go down to test him, I, and no other.'"



It was late at night when Reb Yosef returned to his anxious wife. She listened quietly as he recounted his experiences, wiping away her own tears as he spoke.

Finally she said, "How fortunate are you, my dear husband that such a great mitzvah came your way and you fulfilled it with your whole heart. May I only have a part in it."

After some discussion, Reb Yosef looked around. "We cannot stay here. The house does not belong to us anymore."

That night, Reb Yosef and his wife packed the few possessions that had not been sold. The next morning, they visited their creditors and promised to return the borrowed sums as soon as possible.

The following night, Reb Yosef and his wife reached a Jewish settlement. The scholarly Reb Yosef was soon drawn inside the beis medrash, while his wife found a place to rest in the women's section above.

"Shalom Aleichem!" Reb Yosef looked up to see an elderly, distinguished-looking Jew.

The old man asked Reb Yosef about himself and would not desist until he heard Reb Yosef's breathtaking tale. When Reb Yosef finished speaking, the old man jumped up. "I swear, I have never heard of such sacrifice, I am certain that your mitzvah pierced the Heavens.

"Listen to me carefully," he continued. "I will give you one hundred thousand gold coins right now, and you will once again be able to attain your anticipated wealth. However, I have one condition: the mitzvah becomes mine."

Reb Yosef's head began to spin. Finally, he shook his head. " I will never agree to such a thing!"

"But why not?" the old man cried.

"A mitzvah like this comes one's way maybe once in a lifetime. I will not sell it for money, nor for anything in this world."

The old man tried again. "Then let us be partners. I will pay you the money, and I will get the reward for half the mitzvah."

Reb Yosef smiled. "What value will the mitzvah have if you pay me for it?"

"Hmm...," the old man murmured, "there is something to what you say... Here's another proposition. I will get the reward for half the mitzvah, but I will pay you for only half of it."

Reb Yosef thought hard, then shook his head again, but the old man wasn't ready to give up, and he outlined various proposals. Reb Yosef stood staunch in his decision, but even he found the last offer hard to refuse: The old man would pay the amount Reb Yosef owed others, and in return earn only a small part of the mitzvah.

More than anything, Reb Yosef was distressed by his debts. At first he hesitated, but he did not waver long. "No!" he shouted. I will accept none of your offers. A mitzvah is not a business matter. I will spend the rest of my life repaying my debts if I have to, but not through you. That's my final word."

A dazzling, enigmatic smile suddenly lit up the old man's face. "I am Eliyahu Hanavi," the old man said softly, "and I was sent from Heaven to test you! You withstood the trial.

"Within a year, a son will be born to you — not just any child, but a great and sacred son that has been waiting hundreds of years to illuminate the world with his Torah and service to G-d."

A year later, a son was born to Reb Yosef and his wife. He was none other than the tzaddik, Reb Menachem Mendel of Riminov, who did indeed light up the world with his presence.

Eight generations ago, our family dynasty was founded with the birth of the Rebbe R' Mendele of Rimonov. The illustrious R' Mendele is a famous legendary figure. As a Chassidic Rebbe in Galicia in the early 18th century, he won the respect of all. He was renowned then and is still remembered for his awe-inspiring greatness and unending piety.

We, the current Landau generation, descendants of this holy man, are proud to trace our roots to this awe-inspiring tzaddik. The Tree of Life planted by R' Mendele has spread its comforting shade and sweet fruits over his many progeny. Its roots are deeply implanted as it continues to blossom. May the fruits we bear continue to keep the tree alive in all of its splendor.

As we Yidden know, *zechus avos* can be relied upon when favor is to be found in Hashem's eyes. We are sure that R' Mendele's judicious life weighs positively on our behalf, accruing merits that balance Heavenly judgment in our favor.

Zchisei yugon aleinu.

Neicha dam Shidduch: A Safern vignette

It was clearly time to begin looking for a shidduch for Bobby's older sister, Chaya Ruchel. Uncle Volf, her oldest brother, immediately suggested an excellent bochur, Aaron Yidel Hart from the Yeshiva in Bobov, as a suitable match. When this shidduch was presented to the Bobover Rebbe, the Rebbe sent a message stating that Aaron Yidel Hardt was his talmid mivhak, clearly destined to greatness. As such, the Rebbe chose to be personally involved in the bochur's shidduch. The Rebbe, R' Benzion Halberstam, sent two chassidim from Bobov to Krosno which was an arduous half day's journey away. The two chassidim arrived at Bobbeh Chave's store,

where Miss Chaya Ruchel Safern was graciously serving customers. The shelichim were very impressed with her gentle and modest manner and returned to the Rebbe with a glowing report. The Rebbe sent the bochur off with his blessings.

Aaron Yidel Hardt presented himself at the door of 10 Ordenacka Street, the Safern residence, to meet his bride-to-be. As Chaya Ruchel readied herself for the event, the Bobbeh Chavtche suggested that instead of an in-house visit where they would have no privacy, the boy and girl should take a walk. (The Safern home contained all of one room, which served as kitchen, dining room and sleeping area for eleven family members.) And so, Chaya Ruchel and the bochur took a stroll through the town of Kross, all the while discussing their future and their ideals, and getting acquainted with one another.

The girl and boy returned from their walk with a *tnoyim* plate. The parents were astounded; the twosome had decided to get engaged!



Picture of Reb. Mendela's kever

Bobby's mother, renowned for her wisdom, did not get hysterical. In a calm and composed manner, she ordered the couple to go to the nearby cemetery of Rimanov. Zaide and Bobbeh accompanied the two to the *tzion* of the Rebbe R' Mendele of Rimanov. To their dismay, the outer gate to the *ohel* was locked. The cemetery's caretaker was nowhere to be found. In despair, the Bobbeh Chavtche raised her hands heavenward and exclaimed loudly, "If the shidduch is *nicha dem zeiden,* then let the gates open!"

Lo and behold, the gates opened. Henceforth, there was no doubt in anyone's mind that this shidduch was meant to be.

Aaron Yidel Hart later became the Bobover Rosh Yeshiva in Sanz.

Chapter Two

Prologue

History is primarily a tale of bygone generations. Following is the backdrop to the ensuing family saga, connecting the chain of yesteryear to the present and beyond.

We journey back to a country in Eastern Europe, small in physical dimension but great in stature: Poland. This is the birthplace of our illustrious ancestors, encompassing the members of the Landau and Safern families.

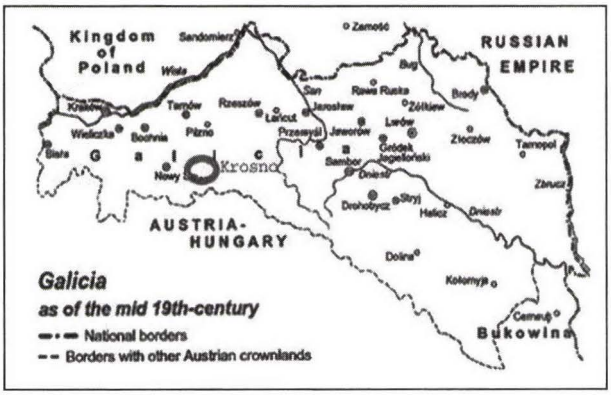
Our story is based in the area of Poland known as Galicia. Prior to World War II, Poland in general and Galicia in particular was the bastion of Yiddish intellectualism, and home to vast armies of prominent *talmidei chachamim* and sages beyond compare from all walks of *chareidi* Yiddish life. The following Landau/Safern tale is set in the historically rich city of Krosno, which is located in southeastern Poland.

CITY OF KROSNO — BACKGROUND*

The city of Krosno, located east of Krakow, was founded in 1324 on lands belonging to the crown. Its then thriving weaving industry contributed to its name of "Krosno" — loom in Polish. The city was also an important trade center for Hungarian wines. With the passing of the Magdenburg laws, in 1348, Krosno attained the official city status. Somewhat later, Krosno was granted the right

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Bibliography credits: Yad Vashem Archives, Holocaust Encyclopedia, Interviews with Krosno survivors



Map showing the city of Krosno

to hold an annual fair that became well known. This commercial boost and the protection of a city wall enabled Krosno to flourish.

In the 15th century, the first Jews settled in Krosno. They were the brothers Nechemia and Lazar from Regensburg, Germany who had received special permits from the Polish King, Wladyslaw Jagiello. Yet there was no continuity of Jewish life in the city. Intermittently, a Jew was permitted to reside within the city walls — but there is no record of organized Jewish community life at that time. Anti-Semitism was rampant.

In 1569 Krosno was a recipient of a harsh edict from the crown. The "*de non tolerandis Judaeis*" barred Jews from residing and trading within the city walls. Jewish traders living in nearby townships of Korczyna, Rymanow or Dukla were frequently jailed and their wares confiscated for attempting entrance to the city. However, Jewish merchants from nearby towns maintained contact with Krosno. The property census of 1851 indicates that there were then three Jewish families in Krosno: Loje Grusnspan, Mojzesz Grunspan and Schije Dym.

Lovingly known to the Jewish inhabitants as Kross, Krosno became an important industrial, trade and craft center in the 16th century. It was home to about 250 artisans, organized in 10 guilds. The total population exceeded 3000 people. The established city, attracting many artists and craftsmen became known as "little Krakow". Ensuing wars, invasions and partitions brought a halt to

the growth of the city thereafter. Business industry in Krosno remained dormant until the second half of the19th century.

Community life in Jewish Kross was beneficially affected with the Austrian annexation of Galicia. In 1867, the new Constitution granted all citizens equality before the law. Previous limitations on Jewish marriages were lifted, professions were opened to Jews, who were then free to purchase land and reside in the city.

These bylaws encouraged and stimulated Jews to leave their tiny villages and hamlets for larger cities, which offered huge opportunities. Krosno was no exception, fifty families settled in the city between 1859-1890. Another 32 families arrived in the next ten years. To these official statistics we must add the unrecorded arrival of single people who lodged with families and frequently used the family name as their own until things were settled and they obtained jobs or positions.

THE POPULATION OF KROSNO (ESTIMATED)		
YEAR	POPULATION	JEWS (estimated)
1870	2132	26
1880	2461	113 (127)
1890	2839	327 (567)
1900	3276	567 (961)
1910	4353	961 (1559)
1914	5521	1558
1921	6287	1725

The above figures depict the extreme rapid growth of the Jewish population in Krosno, which outpaced the general overall growth of the city. When oil was discovered in the area, outside investors were quick to cash in on the opportunity. Within no time the oil industry was developed. The railway, linking Krosno with Jaslo and Europe, followed in 1884. It was then that other industries began to develop, especially weaving. Krosno was in the midst of an economic boom. Buoyed with self-confidence and newfound fortune, Yidden streamed beyond the confines of their city. Some even relocated to the distant continent of North America.

On January first, 1900, the governor of Galicia granted the Jews of Krosno the right to organize their kehillah. The elected leaders then proceeded to organize various local services such as assistance to the penniless and orphans. Religious schooling and other needs of the thriving Jewish community, which had not been addressed earlier, were now attended. The building of the cemetery and the creation of a burial society were effected. (Previously, all deceased were transported to the city of Rymanow.)

In 1904, the kehillah selected the first and only Rabbi of Krosno — Rabbi Shmuel Fuhrer — who had earlier served as Rabbi in Milowka and Krakow. He was the appointed head of the Jewish judicial council of the city of Krosno.



Rabbi Shmuel Fuhrer

At this time, the growing Jewish population created the need to open specialty Jewish stores such as butcher shops, fish stores and bakeries. In 1906 there were two established bakeries run by Selig Findling, and Chaim Oling. Fulka Breitowitz, Moses Breitowicz and Volf Mahler owned Jewish slaughterhouses. Sender Fessel, Jacob Grunspan and Tobiah Nagiel owned butcher shops. The metal industry was led by Dawid Mehl, Chaim Korba, Jakub Pinkas and Jonasz Steifel. Schije Dym and Isaac Hertzig led the spirit industry. Mr. Schmerel Citronenbaum owned a tavern in the town square.[3] Mr. Hershpring, a Gerrer chassid, supervised the Gerrer

3. At the behest of the first Bobover Rebbe the Citronenbaum's opened the tavern. With the Rebbe's blessing the tavern gained momentum and brought the family much prosperity.

Shteeble. He also served as President of Agudath Yisroel. Pinia Taller sold bottled soda water. Max Griffel owned the town's gas station. Tax collections were in the hands of Hersh Wasserstrum and the Dym family. Jewish tailors, barbers, glaziers, shoemakers opened stores or workshops. Hebrew Melamdim found employment in the city. The Jews expanded the commercial base of the city. Though few Jews served in the town's administration or public sector, Jews predominated in the commercial sphere.

From 1914-1918, (the years of WW I) the Russian army occupied the city of Kross. Russian soldiers relentlessly looted Jewish stores and apartments, leaving the Jewish people poverty-stricken. Epidemics broke out and many Yiddish families fled the city only to return at the end of the war. The once thriving Yiddish shtetel life was now in shambles. The American Joint Organization and the Krosner landsmanshaft in the USA {former Jews of Krosno} financially aided in the revitalization of the Jewish community when the war ended. Jewish life was revitalized. Slowly, the city resumed life and with it — the Jewish residents. The Polish residents of the city resented the spurt of Jewish economic growth and boycotted Jewish stores. The anti-Semitic campaign intensified with time and hastened the advent of the winds of World War II, the war to end all wars.

The military airport based in Krosno, Poland was bombed on September 1, 1939, the first day of the war. The Germans entered the city a week later. A proclamation was issued immediately ordering all Jews to leave Krosno. Fearing the worst, many Jews in the city went into hiding. Others crossed the river Bug into an area that the German Army had left unoccupied. Gradually, between the years of 1939 and 1942 some Jews reappeared in the city. All Krosno Jews were ordered to don white armbands with an inscribed blue star. Jews were forbidden to enter parks or public institutions; however they continued to reside in Kross and run their businesses. The Germans formed two Jewish groups. The first group was chartered with selecting men to work for various needs of the invading Germans. The second group, a council of Jews called *"Judenrat"* provided facilities for Jewish refugees that arrived from Lodz.

In June of 1941, the Judenrat published a list of 2072 names — the estimated Jewish population living in Krosno at that time.

Editors' note: We were able to locate members of the Jeruchem (Landau) family. We were also able to locate members of the Safern family on the Judenrat list. The family number allotted to them is #459.

Hunger, misery and fear were the daily lot of the impoverished Jews in Krosno. The Nazis played on Jewish hopes and fears during the long deportation process, assuring their victims that they were being relocated to the east to work. They let Jewish families pack a suitcase of belongings to create the illusion of normalcy. These illusions quickly dissolved as the Jews arrived to the railway station. Stripped of their carefully packed cases, which the Germans "sent ahead", Jews were packed into cattle cars. They died by the dozens in the cramped and reeking cattle cars carrying them to almost certain death.

On August 9th, 1942 posters appeared ordering all Jews to assemble 9:00 the following morning at the Targowa railway station each limited to a 10-kilo suitcase. On August 10 the selection was held. Old and sick were taken to the forest and shot; the young and able-bodied, spared. Approximately one thousand Yidden were pushed onto a train heading for the death camp of Belzec; where they all perished. Throughout the day, the Germans searched the city for hidden Jews, shooting them upon discovery. That same evening, a small ghetto, consisting of four buildings (suitable for 75 families) was created to house 500 Jews. There, under overcrowded, and impoverished conditions they remained for the next four months. On December first, 1942, they were all transported to the ghetto of Rzeszow, or Reishe. The city was clear of Jews, with the exception of a select few hidden in Polish homes.

Three years later, in 1945 the war ended. Krosno was liberated at last! The city became a center for assembling Jewish survivors. They were then sent across the border to Rumania from where they sailed to Palestine. This semi-legal base was in operation until the borders were closed. At that time Jewish officials along with most remaining Jewish residents left Krosno never to return. As late as 1990 there

was one surviving Jew living in Krosno. Thus, ends the Jewish presence in the city.*

"Bei Untz Inderheim"

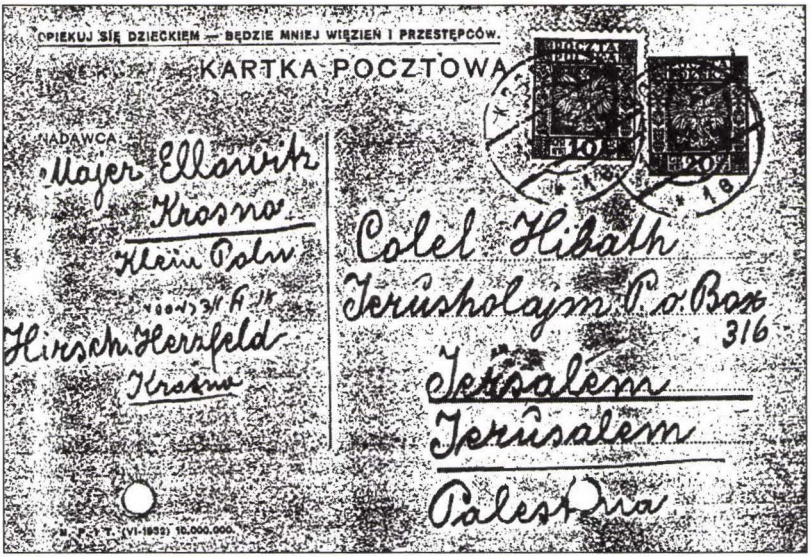
SHTETEL LIFE IN KROSNO

It was a cold, blustery morning in the town of Kross. The pale winter sun shone feebly as a slight young man slipped and slid his way to shul, picking his way around the most treacherous patches of ice. In his arms, he clutched a huge velvet tallis bag that looked almost bigger than himself. A group of young boys passing by laughed, "Yingala, yingala, why are you walking around with such a big tallis bag?" With a good-natured grin, the young man replied, "It's not mine, it's my father-in-law's." This young man, known for his bright wit and quick mind, was none other than our Zeide, Reb Hershele Hertzfeld. R' Hershela Hertzfeld, was the nucleus and reigning monarch of his large extended family living in Kross, revered and adored in his role as titular head. He married our Bobbeh Sima Baila at the tender age of sixteen.



Bobbo's store is on the right

*Safern family members visited the lone Krosno Jewish survivor and can testify that the elderly man was concerned as to who would give him a Jewish burial.



Donation from Zaide Hershela to Rav Meir Baal Haness

Shortly thereafter, they were blessed with a child. Soon enough another baby joined the ranks.[4] Despite the increasing demands of his growing family, R' Hershela Hertzfeld found the time and energy to get involved with Kupas R' Meir Baal Hanes, a noted charitable organization. A recent perusal of records from Meir Bal Hanes' headquarters located in Eretz Yisroel confirmed that Zaide Hershela was one of its chief organizers.

In his early years, the Zaide Hershela was a chassid of the Shinover Rav. With the passing of the Shinover Rav, his son, the Tcheshinover Rav, and later his grandson, the Kolishitze Rebbe, took his place at the helm of the Rabbisva. Many Shinover Chassidim, among them the Zaide Hershela, became ardent followers. As was common among Chassidim *in der heim,* with the onset of Chodesh Tishrei, young and old would flock to their Rebbes. For many, this entailed leaving their wives and children behind for weeks on end. Spending the High Holy Days with their esteemed

4. In his later years, Zaide Hershela would tease his eighteen year old grandsons, "At your age I would procure two bilkelach from the Shinover tish." At the tender age of 18, he already had the responsibility of providing for his two young children.



רשימת המתנדבים לקופת רבי מאיר בעה"נ זיע"א לשם כולל חבת ירושלם

לעדת גאליציעו באה"ק ת"ו

List of Krosno donors to Rav Meir Baal Haness

Rebbe enveloped the Chassidim in a spiritual aura that carried them throughout the year.

The Kolishitzer Rebbe, with his deep perception, would survey the crowd and single out the young fathers. He would motion to the gabbai to order the young Chassidim to travel back to their hometowns and spend *Succos* with their families. Reluctantly, one by one they took leave of their beloved Rebbe.

One year, on the first night of *Succos*, the Rebbe and his entourage entered the *succah* in a festive mood. As Chassidim swayed to the sweet melody of the *zmiros*, the Rebbe raised his head with a searching glance. The *gabbai* rushed to his side. "*Vee is Reb Hershela Hertzfeld?*" asked the Rebbe. The *gabbai* reminded the Rebbe that it

was his instructions that sent Reb Hershela back home to his family. The Rebbe's face was crestfallen. "*Hershela is duch mein noiy suckah,*" he said. That was the last year Reb Hershela spent *Succos* with his family in Kross. From then on, Reb Hershela spent the entire month of Tishrei with his holy Rebbe.

The Zaide Hershela is remembered for his love of learning. When asked, townspeople describe him as a pious man sitting at a table learning "*Chuk*". For years, people remember him walking down the cobblestone street, *sefer* in hand, alongside his *chavrusah,* R' Itcha Eisenberg.

Together, they spent the better part of the night immersed in Torah discussions. On Shabbos, the Zaide would learn the *sefer Divrei Yechezkel,* a compilation of the Shinover Rav's *torahs.*

In its heyday, the Hertzfeld family consisted of ten siblings. Each child grew up, married, and provided R'Hershela and Sima Baila with the utmost *nachas.* "*Hershela fin die potchena,*"[5] as he was called, was blessed with so many *eineklach,* that as their numbers swelled it was increasingly difficult for him to identify the individual faces. On Fridays, the tale is told, he would stand in front of the arcade in the village green and lovingly hand a *groshen* to each of his *eineklach.* All the grandchildren would line up before him as he patted each kid on the shoulder and gave him or her a *groshen.* Every so often, he would ask the next in line with raised eyebrows, "*Die bist oichet mein einekel*?" Once in a while, enterprising neighborhood children, who were no relation of his, would sneak in and get their *groshen,* too. In a recent interview with a Krosno survivor, the woman attested to the fact that she was one of the aforementioned freeloaders!

Of prime relevance to this saga is the fifth Hertzfeld sibling, our grandmother, Chave. As a young child, she was given the appellation "*Shvartze* Chave" to denote the beauty of her dark olive skin and piercing, obsidian eyes. She was brilliant, and at the appropriate time she married her intellectual equal, the noted *Talmud Chachum,* R' Naftule Safern.

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5. Polish for "arcades"

The Zicherman family lineage data is courtesy of Mr. Abraham Joseph, a family member residing in Williamsburg. The family tree was adapted from Mr. Chaim Spring's book "The Zicherman, Soffer, Intrater, Reiss Family Tree", published in 1976. Mr. Spring resides in Rechovot, Israel.

In Baligrod, a small Chassidic town, lived three Zicherman brothers. The oldest, R' Nuta, was referred to as the "crown" of Baligrod. He served as the Baligroder Dayan over a span of 60 years. The Gaon Rabbi Yosef Shaul Natanshon, the Rabbi of Lemberg, ordained him. He was a Dynover chassid, who knew Rebbe Hirsh Elimelech well. He used to visit his son, R' Dovid, and later the "Tzvi Latzadik," the Blazover Rebbe.

A second brother, R' Tzvi Elimelech, was a learned scholar who spent his days immersed in Torah study. The third brother, R' Yehoshua Volf, was a merchant of *naphtah* and candles. He was well known as a pious Jew and was a man of truth. Although it would have been acceptable among the Jews of his community, Yehoshuya Volf did not sue any of his debtors, since doing so required that an oath be taken in gentile court, and Yehoshua Volf would refrain from entering a courthouse. Many unscrupulous people took advantage, and left large balances unpaid. Yehoshua Volf adhered stringently to his beliefs, even in the face of great financial loss.

The three brothers, R' Nuta, R' Yehoshua Volf, and R' Hirsh Melech were orphaned at a young age. R' Shia Volf, a successful entrepreneur, had a *Yesoscher Z'vullen* partnership with his two brothers. Shia Volf supported their families' financial needs while R' Nuta and R' Hirsh Melech learned undisturbed. They lived in harmony and loved one another.

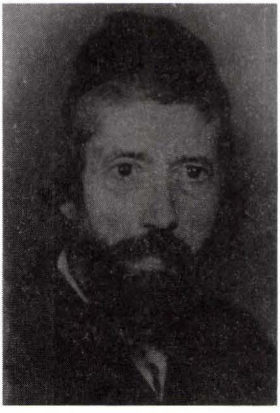
One of Yeshua Volf's seven daughters, Shprintza, married Pinchas Safern and settled in Dinov. They had five children: Ruchel, Yakov, Avrum Meir, *Naftule* and Chaya. The untimely death of both parents,

Shprintza and Pinchas, left the bereaved children at the mercy of their elder sister. Ruchel, already married at the time,[6] tended to her siblings with nurturing, loving care. She raised them as if they were her very own. When the two boys, Yakov and Avrum Meir, were drafted, Ruchel risked her life sending kosher food to their army base.

Yakov (Uncle Jake) deserted the army with the help of his brother, Avrum Meir. He had arranged for passage on a ship sailing to America. There he met his fiancé Anne, originally from Goliga. In 1927, they were married and had three children, Shirley, Eleanor and Pinny.

The third brother, Naftule, spared from the army, was introduced to R' Hershela Hertzfeld's daughter Chave. They were married in Kross, and soon became the proud parents to nine beautiful children, including our very own Bobby Sima Baila Landau.

Our Zaide Naftule, a noble, learned man of stature, possessing a pair of wise, sunken eyes, was held in high esteem in the town of Kross. As a young bochur, Naftule Safern had already been referred to as the Tuna *Ille* (his Yeshiva had been based in Tuna). Throughout his life, learning was of paramount importance, and he was constantly seen immersed in a *sefer*. His eldest son, R' Shia Volf, a noted *Talmud Chachum* himself, once commented, "I never saw my father sleeping. When I retired for the night, and when I awoke, sometimes as early as the crack of dawn, he would be sitting by the table, bent over a *sefer*, with a soft glowing candlestick at his side. If this scene was not being enacted at home, it was being played out in the Bais Medrash nearby." Thursday nights, *layil shishee*, Zaide Naftule would remain in the Bais Medrash all night long. The children would take turns carrying his supper tray, lovingly preparing by Bobbeh Chave, to the shul's entrance.



Zaide Naftule

On occasion, when the shul was heavily populated, Zaide *Naftule* set up a table at

6. Ruchel married Yitzchok Thaler, our very own Tante Shprintza's parents.

the side of the shul entrance. Thereupon he offered seforim for sale. Men who stopped by the makeshift stand were attracted by his distinguished countenance. Those who could afford it would purchase a *seferel* or two. However, the minimal proceeds could not cover even basic family expenses.

A true aishes chayil, his wife, the Bobbeh Chavtche Safern, singlehandedly provided for the growing family's financial needs. It is to her credit that the Zaide *Naftule* was able to sit in Bais Medrash from dawn to dusk learning with peace of mind, knowing that the *uhl* of *parnasah* had been removed from him.

Headed by their noble mother, the young growing Safern daughters helped assume and share the responsibilities of running the busy household. They also helped maintain and run the family store — located in the village square — thus enabling the Safern men folk to spend their time and effort in pursuing Torah study.

The ideal Yiddish home is built on a solid foundation of Torah, *Chochma* and love. The strong influence of the Zaide Naftule's Torah learning, coupled with Bobbeh Chavtche's sagacity and warm loving care, served as a sound foundation for their home. These very attributes serve us, their descendants, in the homes we continue to build today.

The Safern family in Kross resided at 10 Ordenacka Street, located in the center of town. A leather goods store, owned by Yecheskiel Stein, situated in the front of the house. The back room was rented to the Safern family. Their living quarters consisted of one large room. At the right far-off corner was a kitchen with an oversized black primus (an old-fashioned stove) where the Bobbeh Chavtche cooked using kerosene coal. This old-fashioned stove also provided much-needed heat in the frigid cold of the Polish winter. An icebox, which needed to be refilled daily, was kept in the opposite corner. Standing near the icebox was a ladder as well as a pole each leading to the attic. This loft served many purposes in daily shtetel life.

Indoor plumbing was non-existent for the poor and middle class. Members of the family would fetch water from a cistern located on the rooftop of a nearby building. Primitive outhouses were located outside. Living quarters were cramped, yet the family thrived.

Materialism was lacking, but the warmth of a loving family life superceded all else.

The year 5683 ushered in an extremely cold and bitter winter. At that time, the Safern family was comprised of the aforementioned parents, and their six, lively children. It was on December 20th, when a strong raging blizzard blanketed the sleeping town. Dark clouds roiled in the ominous sky, and sonorous cracks of thunder echoed deep within the treacherous depths of the distant storm. A wicked, angry wind suddenly surged from a dark wall of ominous clouds in the distance. The intense rains whipped around the mighty gusts, while the Krosno inhabitants, awakened by the howling winds, huddled around their stoves, waiting for the brutal winds to subside. Yet the Safern household, oblivious to storm rattling their windows, was feverish with excitement. A vibrant little baby girl had just been born to her doting parents, Naftule and Chave Safern. The infant was named Sima Baila after her deceased maternal grandmother. With her birth, a radiant aura permeated the Safern household. Life as her family had known it would never be the same again. Farewell, dullness and boredom!

Now the Safern family consisted of seven siblings: Shia Volf, Chana Devoirah, Avrum Meir, Itcha Leib, Chaya Ruchel, Pinchus, and the new baby Simala. They were later joined by Nuta and Shprintza'la.

Bobby, Sima Baila Safern, a born storyteller, would often punctuate her conversation with little anecdotes of personal shtetel life experiences. To many a question fielded by her from the new generation of young Americans, she would preface her response with, *"Bei untz in der heim ..."*

Her enraptured audience would sit spellbound as she spun tales of yesteryear. With the vivid strokes of a verbal paintbrush, she literally transported her eagerly listening audience back into the early 1920's, into the center of Krosno. The vibrant picture she'd paint, coupled with the resonant warmth in her voice, would make the town of her youth come alive.

Bobby, armed with an ever-present twinkle in her eye, was always the spice of life. She had to be! Growing up as the seventh of

nine children, Simala quickly learned that she had to call attention to herself in order to be noticed. From early childhood her affable nature was apparent. She was keen at building solid relationships, lending an attentive ear, all the while bringing humor into an otherwise humdrum everyday life. Bobby's unique personality endeared her to all. Though life never handed her anything on a silver platter, she confronted each new challenge with a merry smile and determined perseverance.

Editors note: Hindu Freund, currently residing in New Jersey, was glad to share some shtetel news. In retrospect, she thinks most people of Krosno forty years later would look much younger than they did then! She commented that on a recent trip to Krosno, she was shocked at the size of the Rynek (townsquare). As a child growing up in Krosno, it looked so overpowering and huge. "Is it possible that it shrunk?" she laughed.

She recalls that Bubba Chavtche's sons were tall and thin. Most wore their payes gakrazeled down to their shoulders. They wore black velvet kapolitchen, and perochasels (dickeys), short pants and black socks completed their attire.

A TYPICAL DAY IN THE SAFERN RESIDENCE AS SEEN THROUGH THE EYES OF SIMA BAILA, AGE 8

It is winter. The snow-covered town of Kross is asleep. Bing Bong! The grandfather clock chimes. It is 6:30 in the morning. The vivacious subject of our narrative slowly opens her huge brown eyes, eagerly anticipating the new day's adventures. They take in the gleaming snow-white expanse visibly shining through the single window in her corner. "Goody! Snow today! Maybe I'll have the time to go sledding!"

Shivering, she breaks the ice covering the water in the negel vasser basin. She quickly washes her hands, says Modeh Ani, and kicks off the heavy down-filled comforter. Jumping out of bed, she reaches over to the bedside stool and grabs the warm clothing prepared the night before. Clothes in hand, she races to the warm

glowing coals of the family primase. Maybe, just maybe, this time she's the first one up. If she is, she'll surprise her mother by setting the table for three, and succeed in having her loving parents all to herself, a rarity to be relished. Already imagining the taste of the warm soothing milk while basking in her parents company, she quickly scampers to the stove.

To her disappointment, her father is already gone. (He has long disappeared into the walls of Bais Medrash.) The kitchen area is abuzz with activity. Her mother has already arisen. She is busily dividing her energies, delegating the new day's household duties. In addition, she is addressing the burgeoning responsibilities the new day has heralded at the family Shpitzarei[7] store, the only one of its kind, located in the center of town.

One of her older unmarried sisters is serving breakfast to the younger children. Simala eats a hurried breakfast. She remains fidgeting in her seat, as her sister Chana Devoirah deftly braids her hair, a skill she has mastered at a very young age while helping her mother bake challos l'kovod Shabbos. Hurriedly, Simala dons her waterproof boots, only to be reprimanded by her sister, role-playing as mother, for not wearing an extra pair of warm socks. Grudgingly, she complies and then quickly puts on her winter coat (a hand-me-down from her sister Chaya Ruchel), gathers her schoolbooks (more hand-me-downs), and with a mischievous, anticipatory grin on her face, speeds off to school.

On her way to school, she greets young and old alike with a cheery "good morning". But the smile is quickly replaced with a serious demeanor as she approaches the school building. Education was a serious matter, not to be taken lightly! Sima Baila had a serious side, which drove her to excel in school, but her lively nature always shone through. Every boring lesson was interspersed with Sima B.'s witty remarks, pertinent yet comical. As a smile would slowly form on the stern face of her teacher, Sima Baila knew her mission to enliven the mood of the classroom was accomplished.

Clang! Clang! The dismissal bell is greeted with a sigh of relief. As the students pile out of their classrooms, our subject is already link-

7. assorted food and staples

ing her arms with a group of jovial girls. Together, they skip out of the school building.

All the way home, they pelt each other with icy snowballs. To her dismay, upon her arrival home, Sima B. realizes that her schoolbag is not in her possession. She runs back, stopping along the way to chat with the late stragglers who were coming home from school. She spots a worn piece of brown leather protruding out of a mound of snow. Stooping down, she clears the snow with her mittened hands. To her delight, her schoolbag declares its presence. Then, on impulse, she decides to take a detour and visit her mother at the family store.

Our lively subject is warmly greeted by her mother. She regales her mother with the day's events. The older woman's face beams when she hears that her little daughter has once again been awarded a certificate for outstanding scholastic achievements. As customers fill the little booth, though, Sima Baila is sent homeward. With a pat on her cheek and a quick reminder for her to do the household chores, the hard-working mother gives her a hot pretzel and sends the little girl off on her merry way.

Her sister, Chaya Ruchel, greets her with a quick hello, pointing at the same time to the mending basket standing in the corner. After a couple of reminders, our subject settles down to the mending pile. She pulls the worn sock over the darning egg.[8] With a thick thread she skillfully hand-weaves (*tzeret*) the sock. Presto! The sock was good as new.

Suddenly, there is a knock on the door. In a rush of excitement, two little boys fly through the door and race up to the attic. Nuta Safern and his next door neighbor and best friend, Sender Bialows, are hard at work playing. Soon peals of laughter are heard coming from above. Our Sima Baila, sitting at the stool immersed in her mending, can't resist the temptation much longer. She carefully lays the few mended socks on top of the pile and sneaks up the ladder to join in the merrymaking.

"Nachtmuhl! Nachtmuhl! De Tatte hut zich shoin gevashen." The games come to an abrupt stop. Sima Baila is the first to shimmy

8. An egg-shaped piece of ceramic or wood used as a base for darning socks

down the pole. The others slide down right behind her. They quickly wash up and respectfully take their places at the table. Supper consists of shleim soup,[9] chicken, kasha and potatoes. During the course of the meal, the Safern matriarch discusses the day's events. New stock to be ordered for the Shpitzarei gesheft was also a topic of discussion. Every so often, she would turn to 'de tatte' and ask "*Tzuah dus iz a gita eitzah*?" He would nod his head in agreement. Thus, the children were certain that it was Father who was making the smart and entrepreneurial business decisions, while Mother simply followed his lead. Not for naught was she called the "Kliger Chavtche."

Supper is over and the family disperses. Oh no! It was that part of the night again. Chore time! There was no way out of doing the nightly chores. Chaya Ruchel was in charge of washing the dishes, Chana Devoirah swept the floor, while Sima Baila, self-pityingly, was put to work wiping the dishes.

At this point, our shrewd, enterprising eight-year-old arms herself with two *schtzerkahs*[10] from the cupboard. Using one to conceal a book she is in the middle of reading, she holds the other in her hand in preparation for wiping the dishes. The book is sneaked into the utensil drawer. She pretends to wipe the dishes, while all the while she is thoroughly wrapped up in a fascinating tale. When she hears approaching footsteps, she quickly shuts the drawer and takes another dish from the dish rack. Trouble! Sima Baila is caught red-handed! Chana Devoirah grabs the dishtowel from her hand, exclaiming, "No wonder it takes you an hour to wipe a few dishes. Here, I'll finish it off myself." Guess who is more than glad to hand over her responsibilities?

Simala happily skips off to prepare for bed. Curling up cozily with the aforementioned enthralling book, snug in her warm bed, she can hear the howling winds busily thrashing against the window. Another happy, fulfilled day has passed. Tomorrow will bring new excitement — leave it up to her!

9. farina cooked in chicken soup

10. dish towels

AROUND THE RYNEK

IN THE SHPITZAREI GESHEFT ....

The Rynek, the circular village green, plays an important role in our story, taking on a veritable character of its own. It possesses a strong dominant personality and contributes a picturesque colorful background.

The Rynek consisted of a huge sphere of concrete encircled by grass, bounded on all sides by stucco houses painted in warm, pastel colors. For as long as Sima B. could remember, Yidden owned all the houses surrounding the Krosno Rynek.

Many years earlier, in the times of the Rebbe R' Mendele, Krosno was fully inhabited by Poles. Jewish presence was not encouraged. As the great Tzaddik of Rimanov traveled through the Rynek, an audacious Polish youth aimed a stone at the passing carriage. The Rebbe's traveling companions ducked for cover. The Rebbe, poised in his seat, fearlessly stuck his head out the window, pointing to the houses encircling the Rynek. In a firm voice he declared, "In due time, these very houses will all be owned and inhabited by Yidden."

Thus it came to pass! Many generations later, in Sima B.'s youth, the city council wanted to decorate the town square with its seasonal ornaments. However, they could not execute their plan. Yidden now owned all the houses in the Rynek and would not grant permission to the council to attach ornaments to their homes.



With the exception of one four-story building, the tallest houses in the town were three stories high. The outlines of two dry wells could be seen in the center of the Rynek. The wells, originally functional, were later desiccated by the city council when it was discovered that the water was poisonous. Scattered benches around the village green, present to this day, beckoned tired shoppers, busy homemakers, and weary passersby who wish to pass time at the shtetel's center. Thus relaxing, a stressed individual stopping at the warm inviting bench could duly drink in the tranquil scene laid out before his eyes. In this manner, the onlooker would be filled with a sense of inner peace that could not be readily achieved elsewhere.

Completely surrounding the Rynek were numerous continuously attached buildings. Each building front had several open archways or *putchenas*,[11] as they were called. In these centrally located arcades, stands were erected where town merchants sold their goods throughout the week. Monday was weekly market day for neighboring villagers who would then come and hawk their wares. Once a month, a *Yar Mark* was held wherein business was done on an even larger scale.

> *Editors Note: To this very day, the Krosno Rynek is a tourist attraction. In fact, one of its buildings serves as the base for the U.S. Peace Corp affiliated with Poland.*

All six of Zaide Hershela's daughters owned businesses in Kross. Several Hertzfeld family businesses were centrally located around the Rynek. Sura nee Hertzfeld (married to Saul Weinberger) operated a hotel and restaurant. Reizel, another daughter, sold chocolate and homemade sweets on the main street, Sienkiewicza. Riva, a daugher-in-law who had married Yecheskel Hertzfeled, her uncle,[12] dealt in diamonds. Daughter Chana, married to Benzion Bogen,[13] ran a grocery. Pessil, married to Kalman Volf, sold homemade honey

11. shade in Polish

12. Yechezkel & Riva changed their last name to Diamond upon emigrating to Belgium

13. Chana had her tenth child during World War II and named him after R' Mendel M'Rimonav.

and nut nuggets. She was also well-known for her delicious halva.[14] Passersby tended to stop on their way elsewhere to buy various nuts and sesame candies, which would be polished off in no time. A recipe for one of her unique concoctions follows:

Sesame Candies Makes 16-20 Candies

1/4 cup Sugar
2 C. Sesame Seeds
3/4 tsp. Lemon Zest
3/4 cup sweet Honey
Scant 1/4 tsp. ground Cinnamon

Grease a large baking sheet with a little oil.
Combine ingredients in saucepan and place over medium heat. Stir continuously until sesame seeds turn golden, about twenty minutes.
Pour mixture into the greased baking sheet.
With spatula spread to a 1/2 inch thickness.
Cool, and then cut into medium diamond shape or sticks.
Serve at room temperature or store in an airtight container.

Daughter Leah, married to Favel Landau, managed a dry goods store under the Putchena.[15] Chavtche ,married to Naftule Safern, Sima's illustrious mother, ran a Shpitzarei Gesheft, which sold food and staples.

It seems that Zeide Hershele's children definitely added their share to Krosno's economic prosperity!

The Tcheshinover Rav Zt"l would often tell the Zeide Hertzfeld, "*Deina Kinder zenen vie de Bnos Tzelofchod.*" Six daughters, all of them very bright and learned, each worked to earn a living while their husbands diligently sat and learned Torah.

To continue our story, we move the spotlight to the right hand corner of the Rynek. There, Chavtche had established her famous shop which sold food supplies such as flour, smoked fish, oil, sugar,

14. Mr. Biawlos (a Krosno survivor) used to frequent her little stand in the Rynek. Till this very day he attests to the tantalizing taste of her mouth-watering confections.

15. Leah and Favel are the parents of Zaidy Shimon Landau (in-laws of Sima B. Safern).

chicory for coffee, some fruit, and cigarettes. Chavtche attracted many customers. Her listening ear and brilliant advice served as an added attraction to her customers. So, come they did!

Chavtche Safern was often referred to as "*Chavtche fun de putchena*". During those times, most people were not called by their last names. They were nicknamed either for their professions, for the location of their dwellings, their parents' names, their physical appearance, or for their family's origin. (For example, Zaidy Shimon Landau's paternal grandfather, Zaide Shlome, was referred to as Shlome Moshe Mala's. But that's a whole other story.)

The Bobbeh Chavtche was loved by all. She was lovingly called Chavtche, a surname added with love. When the goyim in town would ask each other, "*ge'tchu*? — by whom did you buy this?" The townspeople would answer, "*Chav'chu*". Some landsleit interviewed recently still remember Mrs. Chavtche Safern vividly. She was described as a petite matron seen wearing a brown sheitel during the week. As for Shabbos, she had a special *pellene*r (artificial ellura hair), adorned by three strands of pearls.

The people of Krosno in general, and the Saferns in particular, were hardworking, frugal, and made do with little. At that time, saving for a daughter's dowry was a constant, nagging concern. Suffice it to say that possession of a sufficient dowry was the only way of attaining a suitable shidduch!

As a matter of fact, Chana Devoirah, Sima Baila's older sister, acquired her own dowry with acute sagacity. As a young teenager, she would replace her mother from time to time at the helm of the store. After each customer had paid for his purchase, she would deposit a small amount of coins into a tin she had obscurely hidden. With time, the change, whose presence was unknown to all but her, was replaced by bills.

Years later, when the first shidduch was proposed to her, she surprised her parents with a wrapped present box. They were confused. Why the gift? Why now? To their utter disbelief their daughter handed them a bundle of cash, enough to complete her dowry. Their excitement was quickly replaced with pride — they would not accept money from others. They would rather struggle,

scrimp and marry their children from their own meager income. They told their daughter to return the cash to the anonymous donor. Chana Devoirah shrugged her shoulders and smiled. "Tatte, Momma, this is your own hard-earned money. I saved it, one *groshen* at a time from the change received from customers. For every hundred *groshen* I put into the cash box, I secretly stashed away ten *groshen*."

The parents were left speechless. What foresight!

Chana Devoirah was not the only one in the family who lived by her wits. Her younger brother Nussen Nuta was also a very clever lad. Even as a toddler, he was already entertaining his family audience with his cute and timely antics. He was always on the ball. As a twelve-year-old lad, Nuta was slightly built and short for his age. As was common for young boys, he was always strapped for pocket money. Legend has it that once, disregarding his penurious state and wishing to travel across town, he jumped onto a train without purchasing a traveling ticket. When the conductor spotted him he barked gruffly, "Did you pay your fare?" "I am eight years of age and so am eligible for a free trip," was the quick response. The conductor gave him a stern, disbelieving look. Nuta pulled out his Tzitzis and said, "We, the Jews, wear a garment that has fringes commensurate to our age. Here, count the threads of my Tzitzis and you'll see for yourself how old I am." The official counted the fringes, which we all know, are never more than eight. With that, the train pulled out of the station and Nuta got himself a free ride.

Not everybody in town was fortunate enough to be able to solve their own financial setbacks. Indeed, extreme poverty was not unheard of. One such example was Funia Ganov, whom survivors of the village recall to this very day. Although he lacked money, he did have a plentitude of daughters. Everyday Funia Ganov would send his daughters to collect food from the townspeople. One family would donate a slice of fish, another a bilka, a third a *pulka* from a chicken, and so they collected until they had their daily meals supplied.

Other Krosno natives were more fortunate. The Citronenbaums, whose public tavern was situated across the Safern Shpitzarei, were well-to-do citizens. Meals of duck and geese were not unheard of in

their household. Beds were covered with linens of silk and lace. The Platners, a struggling family, became rich when company ditch diggers fortuitously struck an oil well right there in Kross.

But for most people, these were penny-pinching times. For those with larger families, like the Safern home, as soon as one fiscal problem was resolved, a new one was already rearing its head.

Excitement was in the air! The city Jaslo, which neighbored Krosno, was celebrating a groundbreaking for a new Yeshiva. The Bobover Rav made a special trip to Jaslo for the Aven Hapina ceremony. Large crowds gathered. The entire town of Jaslo had accompanied the Rebbe and was on hand to witness this special ceremony. Chassidim from surrounding towns made the journey to participate in the groundbreaking. The townspeople, along with curious onlookers dressed in their Shabbos finery, watched as the Rebbe laid the cornerstone of the foundation.

Bobbeh Chavtche traveled to Jaslo as well. She had a dual itinerary: first, to participate in the Aven Hapinah ceremony and second, to have an audience with her eldest son's Rebbe, the Bobover Rav. Her intentions were to complain to the Rav that her son, Shia Volf, was spending too much of his hard earned money on frequent trips to Bobov. She hoped the Rav would convince him to limit his costly trips. As she approached the room, the Rav asked his Gabbai, "Who is this pious woman?" The Gabbai responded, "This is none other than R' Shia Volf's mother." Automatically and respectfully, the Rav immediately stood up for her. Ascertaining that this was indeed the mother of Shia Volf Safern, the Rav commented with a complimentary blessing, "*Ashrei Yeladitoiy*"![16] Awestruck, Bobbeh Chavtche handed over a kvitel.

Shia Volf's frequent trips to Bobov no longer irked her; on the contrary, they now seemed essential.

Our Bobbeh Chavtche was also known as the "K*liga Chavtche.*" She was brilliant! Her wisdom was much sought after by young and old alike. Her beauty was a reflection of her inner self. A woman of valor, she was known to do much chessed and mitzvohs. But she was "*tzu gut and tzu lat.*" As much as her fellow

16. Lucky is she who gave birth to such a mortal.

yidden acknowledged her fine qualities, the Polish gentry equally valued her opinions. The noblemen came to her shop with their questions. They left with answers that satisfied them. Why not? They had received guidance from the smart Jewish woman. The mayor himself tended to stop by her store, on occasion to discuss world politics with her.[17]

During the pre-war era, Krosno commerce rules dictated that shopkeepers had to declare their goods. Summonses were issued to those who sold unlisted items. Inspectors would make their rounds, as it was common practice to sell wares on the black market. Bobbe Chavtche, standing behind her stand, noticed the inspector coming around the bend. Composed, she carried on her business as usual. When the inspector came into close proximity she lightheartedly quipped, "You are not the cause of my fears. I know you are kind-hearted; it is that pencil nestled behind your ear that causes me to bristle in fear." With that, the inspector tipped his hat and was off with a slight smiled curved at the corner of his lip. Her wit had come through once again.

One sunny wintry day, a valuable clock was delivered to Chavtche's store. The face of this beautiful timepiece was inlaid with precious gold. Its numerals were of semi-precious stones, as were its dials. It was a present to "Chavtche of the Potchena" from one of her steady gentile suppliers in honor of their holiday.[18]

The smart storekeeper called Shia Volf, her son, home from Yeshiva. She wrapped the beautiful clock in magnificent paper and added an assortment of delicacies she had on hand. Thus packaged, she sent the gift off to the town's chief commanding officer, using her oldest son as messenger.

Gossiping heimishe townspeople were somewhat critical. Why would Chavtche call her son home from Yeshiva, disturb his learning, his *seder*, to deliver a present to a non-Jew?! Couldn't she have taken it herself, or sent one of the younger children, or taken hired

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17. Dora Citronenbaum, originally of Krosno, has confirmed that both mayors Magistrate Yadreyed, and Magistrate Bergman(who owned a brick factory in town as well), used to stop by the Bobba Chavtche's store 'tzu zich adorchshmeisen' with her.

18. Story taken from the Saf Sez, by Chavie Rieger

help? The conceivable choices were numerous and yet, they wondered amongst themselves, why did she opt to send her eldest son, a learned scholar, instead of a delivery boy?

Time passed and the incident with the clock was long forgotten.

One day, months later, a draft notice was sent to the Bobbeh Chavtche's house. Shia Volf, her eldest son, was being to serve his country. There were clear instructions for him to show up at the town hall where he was to be inducted into the army.

The Bobbeh Chavtche gathered her family and together they sat and said Tehillim, while the eldest son left the house to the town hall. When he arrived, he saw a long line of assembled boys, non-Jewish lads as well as Yiddishe boys. The line seemed endless; but all too soon his name was called. With one quick glance, the commanding officer pronounced, "Unfit for the army," and sent him home.

This commanding officer was none other than the recipient of the beautiful jeweled clock. He had recognized the boy and returned the favor.

When Shia Volf arrived home, his family embraced him and gave *Shevach V'Hoduah* to Hashem. The miraculous news quickly spread through town. This then was the outcome of the 'delivery boy' story! The "Kliger Chave" was vindicated and thereafter heralded.

SHTETEL TIDBITS

Life in the Shtetel had a special spark as the Yidden prepared for Shabbos. Thursday night, the village children would fall asleep to the heady, yeasty fragrance of their mother's homemade challah. Enticing odors of fish prepared l'kovod shabbos as well as chicken soup cooked with parsley and parsnip (*farbruckachts*) permeated the air. Passersby going about their business sniffed the air with obvious delight, getting an adrenal high from the smells wafting through the cobbled streets.

Friday afternoon, the streets took on the special aura of Erev Shabbos. Yidden were seen assiduously preparing for the Seventh day. Men folk were rushing to the *mikvah*, and polishing their *shteivel* to a lustrous shine. In a frenzy, harried shopkeepers began

locking up. People were seen scurrying about doing their final Shabbos preparations.

The Herztfeld family had an added priority on Erev Shabbos. Taking care of the town's poor was on their weekly agenda. Every Erev Shabbos, the Zaide Hershela would call upon Sima and her cousins Mala Landau (Zaidy Landau's sister) and Sura Diamond. The threesome would don their half aprons, collect their satchels and begin their rounds. The first part of the route brought them to the homes of the generous and kindhearted townspeople who had fresh challah or bilkahs to spare. They would then trudge about town, distributing the challah amongst the poor. With the last bit of energy, empty satchels hanging from their shoulders, the girls quickly dispersed homeward. With only a few minutes to *lecht tzinden,* Sima quickly performed her Shabbos ablutions and then fell into a deep sleep. Week in and week out, her mother would have to wake her to hear her father's kiddush.[19] In the later years, when Simala would tell stories of those hectic late Friday afternoons, exhaustion was audible in her tone of voice.

It was only a couple of minutes to sundown. The atmosphere in Yiddish Krosno slowly took on a new ambiance. The pre-Shabbos tumult dissipated, and calm and peace descended. From every corner, Yidden could be seen in their Shabbos finery, adorned with fur shtreimlach on their heads, rushing to the town Bais Hamedrash with their youngsters tramping behind them.

The Bais Hamedrash was divided between the Rav, Reb Shmuel Fuhrer and the Rebbe, Rabbi Moshele Twerski. The upper *shteibel* was for the *Baale Batim* headed by Reb Shmuel Fuhrer, while the *untershter* shteibel, designated for Chassidim, was headed by Rebbe Moshele Twerski. Zeide Naftule, being a chassid of the *Bluzheve Rebbe,* davened with the chassidim. Zaide Hershala, among the most honorable congregants in that shul, was seated up front at the

19. Editors' note: Mrs. Dora Aaron nee Citronenbaum, a native Krosno, remembers Bobby running around town with a satchel filled with bilkas. Another survivor recalls an incident when Bobby walked out of the town's vicinity to give challahs to a sick old man. She did not return in time for Shabbos. There was a great commotion. A search party was dispatched to look for the missing girl. Suddenly, out of nowhere, they spotted a forlorn girl wearing a half apron making her way back to town.



Reb Moshele Twersky is standing second from the left.

Mizrach Vant. Reb Moshele Twersky would *Fir Tisch* Friday night.

As for Shabbos morning, it seemed, that on average, every second week there was something out of the ordinary taking place. One Shabbos, the Bobover Rebbe, R'Benzion Halberstam had come to town. The chassidim eagerly awaited the Rebbe's arrival at the train station in town. They carried him all the way to his lodgings at Rabbi Twersky's house. The popular Bobover niggen *"Kol Rina Vishua"* was heard throughout the town, as the singing and dancing Chassidim escorted the Rebbe to Shul. This particular visit was both unique and memorable, and Krosno survivors remember and treasure it to this very day.

The Koloshitzer Rebbe also crowned the shtetel with a visit. An *eruv* was set up around the center of town. The Rebbe's Tish left a lasting impression on many. Shaul Weinberger (Bobby's uncle – see family tree) had the honor of hosting the Rebbe.

Chasunahs were a major event in the shtetel of Krosno. The Chupa was usually held outside on Erev Shabbos. Extended family and close friends were invited to join in the Friday night seudah at the bride's house. Singing and dancing lasted through the night. Motzei Shabbos, a Melave Malka spread was prepared. In honor of Choson Kallah, borscht and kreplach were served to the attending guests. Wealthy *machutunim* would serve delicacies made of dark

turkey meat. The local population as well as visiting relatives reveled in each and every family simcha. It was the topic of discussion for the following weeks, until the next occasion came along. Traditionally, plebeian families celebrated Sheva Brachos with a simple Shabbos seudah. Celebrating weekday Sheva Brachos was a luxury afforded only to Rebbeshe families.

On occasion, *chassunahs* were celebrated during the week. Throughout the morning, family members and hired help could be seen emptying the contents of their house into neighboring backyards. With most of the furniture out of the way, the neighbors would eagerly donate their steady chairs. Tables were decked and all sorts of delicacies prepared. A celebratory atmosphere descended. A special suitcase was prominently displayed near the main entranceway. As the guests arrived, they would deposit their wedding gifts into the suitcase. Gifts consisted of a dozen spoons, an iron, embroidered kerchiefs, and other household items. Prior to the *mitzvah tantz* the suitcase was brought to the head table where the *badchan* would present one item at a time, announcing the gift's donator. The young couple looked on with delight, as these very staples would be used to set up their new home.

Bar Mitzvahs were celebrated on Shabbos, limited to a "L'chaim" given in Shul. Vodka and cake, crowned with many a blessing, tended to be the extent of the celebration. The few rich townspeople would serve *eiyer kichel* and herring, as well. When it came time for Bobby's oldest brother, Shia Volf's bar mitzvah, his father[20] wrote a *peshetel* so profound that the Krosno Rebbe, Rabbi Shmuel Fuhrer, asked the Bar Mitzvah boy to repeat it on Shabbos in Shul in the presence of the entire congregation. It left an indelible impression on many.

Some of the Shabbos *kiddeishem* were not pre-planned. A town vignette tells about a member of the shul, Avraham Platner, who was on the verge of bankruptcy. Difficult times seemed to be ahead. As a last ditch effort, he hired two workers to begin digging for oil wells.[21] After weeks of digging and many dashed hopes, one late Friday af-

20.As heard from Uncle Aaron Landau. Another version has it that the thirteen year old genius wrote the Peshetel himself.

21. Oil - *nafta* in Polish.

ternoon they struck gold in the form of a spouting geyser of oil. Mr. Platner's nephew clearly remembers how one Friday night during davening, two Polish workers suddenly appeared at the shul's entranceway. Their faces smeared with dirt, their clothing ragged, they proudly held up a small jug. They had come to share the good news with their boss, Mr. Platner. They had hit the jackpot and found an oil well on the very outskirts of town! Mr. Platner gave an impromptu kiddush in shul that week. Take a wild guess as to which one stop Shpitzarei provided the gourmet food selected for this grand kiddush?

Later that week, while digging deeper, they suddenly hit a reserve, which caused an oil spill that leapt one hundred meters into the air. It took weeks to stop that spill. The well was named "*NaJaya,*" which means hope. Unfortunately, Avrohom Planter would not enjoy his good fortune. Two months after the well was discovered, the Germans occupied Poland, forcing him to flee.

As for Sima Baila's Shabbos agenda, her erev Shabbos tiredness, as previously alluded to, was alleviated by a sound, restful sleep on Friday night. By Shabbos morning, Sima Baila was back on a high, ready to take on the world!

And just in time! As part of her weekly routine, she babysat her cousins while their mother went to shul. (Young girls were not accustomed to attend davening.) Two pleasant hours would lapse by, as she played and entertained the children. These very cousins would later become her sisters-in-law.

Then came the morning seudah. As the men folk sang the *zemiros,* Sima Baila could not refrain from humming along. Her brothers would often tease her, but that did not deter her in the slightest.

After a hearty meal, Zaide Naftule and Bobbeh Chave would retire, instructing the children to awake them promptly one hour later. The children settled down quietly. When the hour elapsed it was time to awake their parents. However, since it is deemed disrespectful to wake one's parents they could not bring themselves to do so. As one child appealed to the other to wake their parents, time was quickly passing. It was getting late. Yet, nobody volunteered. Respecting and honoring their parents was a fundamental principal.

While the rest of the siblings were still arguing, an idea flashed through Sima Baila's mind. Why not raise my voice in song? As her melodious voice echoed through the house, her parents awoke, just in time for Zaide Naftule to make it to shul before his Shabbos chavrusah arrived. (During the week, when one of the parents would ask to be awakened at a pre-set time, one of the boys would play his fiddle to a *lebidiga niggun*. Thus, the parents always awoke to resonant sounds of music.)

Sima B. sped to Bnos, where, with her dynamic energy, she proved a vivacious and spirited leader. At that time, since Krosno had a diversified Yiddish population, many levels of frumkeit were prevalent. There was a Bnos for Heimishe girls, and separate Oneg Shabbos gatherings formed for Misnagdim, Agudath Yisroel, Modern Orthodox and Zionist / Mizrachi organizations. Each group vied to attract newcomers.

The seeds of Zionism were beginning to sprout in Europe. Krosno itself was home to many organizations founded by Zionism. Many Heimishe, frum, naïve girls were lured into the net of Zionism at that time.[22] Yiddishe Poland, as mentioned earlier, was comprised of intellectual people. However, there was a huge intellectual void extant in the feminine part of the family. Fortuitously, Sarah Schneirer saw this lack of spiritual clothing for the bereft *neshamos* and started the Bais Yakov movement at that time. Thus she saved the future generations of Klal Yisroel. In a warm, positive, and *ehrlich* environment, the young girls were taught to be proud of yiddishkeit and respect Torah and the learning of it. This learned appreciation fueled the burning goal of girls to this very day, which is the aspiration to build a solid foundation of a Yiddish home, *B'derech Yisroel Saabah.*

When a Bais Yakov teacher was delegated to set up a fledgling school in Kross, Sima Baila was one of the first to attend. As a matter of fact she was to play a pivotal role in a major Bais Yakov production, which never came to fruition due to pre-war tension.

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22 Bobby's interest in Israeli politics, which lasted throughout her lifetime, was sparked in Kross.

AROUND THE YEAR IN KROSNO

Yomim Tovim were the spice of Yiddish life. Everyone, young and old, anticipated each Yom Tov with much excitement and enthusiasm. Rosh Hoshanah and Yom Kippur, at the helm of the yearly cycle, were approached with spiritual awe and trepidation. Tales told of *yemai slichos* illustrate and underscore the tangible fearfulness. In the dark, silent pre-dawn hours of *yemai slichos*, the local *shamash* would wend his way to each and every Yiddish abode in town. With steadily growing enthusiasm, he would fervently intone the famous shtetel chant, a propos to that time of year, *"Yiddelach, Yiddelach, teiara, feina, zisa, lechtiga Yiddelach, shteitsz auf, shteitsz auf, tzie avodas Haborah!"*

Yom Kippur evening, promptly at the zman, flocks of earnest white-clad yidden could be seen hurrying shulward. The streets gradually emptied as the Krosno shuls and shteiblach were filled. The fearful silence prevailed, beckoning to all to repent and do *Teshuva*. During the fast, each Yid fervently prayed to be inscribed in the Book of Life for the year to come. As they left the sheltering walls of the Bais Medrash, they would wish one another a *"Gut Yur"*. If only their prayers were accepted in *Shomayim* (striking a bargain, so to speak, with the *Bashefer*), they solemnly promised to fulfill yet another year with many good deeds.

Once the tearful prayers of *Yomim Noroim* were behind them, the Yidden were assured of a promising year ahead. The heaviness in the air lifted. *Succos* was fast approaching. Communal *succos* dotted the town. Children eagerly volunteered with *Succos* preparations. *Succah* decorations became their favorite pastime. The most beautiful decorations were the *shteren*, made with a variety of decorative papers collected throughout the year. The younger children spent hours cutting and pasting festive Yom Tov chains to hang in the *succah*. With a Lulav and Esrog carefully selected, *Succos* was welcomed at last. On *Hoshana Rabah* the town Yidden fervently davened for the forthcoming year. On this day, womenfolk donned white tichlach to denote the seriousness of their heartfelt prayers.

"Ah Git Kvittel" wishes were uttered throughout the day.

The Krosno Rebbe's *Hakufis* were the highlight of Yom Tov. Young and old piled into the small shul to watch the splendid, awe-inspiring *Hakufis*. The Rebbe, decked in his Yom Tov regalia, completely enveloped in a Tallis, fervently clutched R' Mottela Chernobeler's ancient, treasured *Sefer* Torah to his heart. The Krosno menfolk would form a circle around the Rebbe and clap along to the *Hakafa Niggen*. Everyone in the Shul, which included the female population of the village, was caught up in the spirit of the Yom Tov. A wooden bench right off the men's section provided a bird-eye view for the young girls. The very walls of the Shul spontaneously reverberated in the sheer *Ruchniasdig* happiness of each *Hakufa*.

Winter months brought heavy snowstorms across town. As the freezing winter chill of Kislev set in, the children knew Chanukah was not too far away. On the first night of Chanukah, Zeida Naftule was seen standing joyously in front of the tall, erect, brightly glistening menorah proudly surrounded by all family members. As he lifted the *shamos* to light each wick of the menorah, a warm glow collectively engulfed the entire family. Lively singing of the Chanukah zemiros ensued. This was duly followed by Bobbeh Chavtche's delicious potato latkes. Then each child stood in line to receive Chanuka gelt which, while nominal in essence, was highly treasured by each recipient. Games of Dreidel sometimes lasted late into the night. Each day the children raced home from school eager to rejoin the Chanuka spirit kindled the night before. The Yom Tov of Chanukah was a welcome oasis during the long, cold Polish winter months.

The next break in the long, dreary, bone-chilling winter came in Adar. On Purim, all Yiddish inhabitants, from the oldest to the babes-in-arms, welcomed Purim's festivities and gaiety. Bubba Chavtche baked delicious *bilkalach* for the home seudahs as well as to distribute for Meshloach Manos. She also included homemade *nuent*, Haman Tashen, and other sweets garnered from the Shpitzarei. The children, meanwhile, dressed in costumes, danced impatiently as each *Shaloch Manos* plate was carefully arranged. Costumes consisted of mothers' old sheitlech and kerchiefs, fathers' worn shtreimlach and *kapolitchen*, with make-up- to match. The chil-

dren were the ones entrusted with delivering the *Shaloch Manos* to kinfolk and friends.

After the Seudah, the boys would attend a big *Tish* held by the Rebbe, the highlight of their day. Merriment and joy lasted into the wee hours of the night, carrying into *Shishan Purim*.

Onward ho! Pesach preparations were in full swing! Every member of the household had a list of duties. This was the one time of year when any and all laggards could not get away with contrived excuses. The little children were given scrub brushes that were tied to their shoes. While loudly and lustily singing *"V'hee Shaumdu,"* they would romp about the room scrubbing the parquet floor from corner to corner. This was one chore, as Sima B. personally attested to in later years, the children thoroughly enjoyed.

The older girls were assigned to help with the Yom Tov cooking. Water was pumped from the cistern and stored in the back of the house. The water was then covered with a cloth and strained into a clean jug. Thereafter, it was stored and sealed off *l'kovod* Pesach. During Pesach, the family would only use the purified water. How careful they were not to waste even one drop of this precious water!

The Zaide Naftule would receive grain, carefully selected by his sister, the *Meema* Ruchel, a tzedakes living in Dinov. He would grind the grain himself with a hand-mill owned by their neighbor and good friends, the Biawlows. Each family had its turn at the communal bakery. Matzo baking was a major family event. One family member poured the water; the other added flour to it. Thus a large lump of dough was formed. Within moments, all present were handed little *teiglach*. While singing *hallel*, they quickly rolled out the dough and ran a *Redle* through it,[23] thus ensuring that the dough wouldn't rise. With a cry of *"matzohs in oiven arein"*, the *sheiber* quickly inserted the dough into the special oven. The sight of the finished product, round crisp matzohs, to be wrapped later in brown paper, was a beautiful one to the hard-working *matzah chavreya*. Once wrapped, the matzahs were taken home and placed well out of reach. *"L'Kovod Yom Tov!"* rang throughout the house.

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23 A *Redle* is a utensil with small protruding edges which punctures the dough at measured intervals. This effectively causes the dough to bake in a flat form.

After all that arduous cleaning and intense preparation, the Yom Tov Pesach was finally ushered in.

Spring rains entered the scene right after Pesach. Green shrubs pecked their way through the *blutte*.[24] They bloomed just in time for Shavuous, when greenery was used to decorate the house.

On Shavuous night, the men would gather in Shul and learn into the wee hours of the morning. The women, meanwhile, enjoyed a much-needed rest. They had spent the previous nights preparing hearty family Seudahs, as well as Milichige delicacies for the Shavuous Kiddush.

As spring turned into summer, a change of wardrobe was direly needed. Clothing stores were virtually non-existent! Clothes had to be custom tailored. If the mother or daughters weren't gifted with nimble hands for sewing, the only alternative would be to hire a costly seamstress. Shoes were expensive as well. They had to be made to order at Chaskel Shtein's leather shop. No wonder shoes were passed down from child to child!

Laundry, in shtetel life, was a daunting, endless task. A special maid was hired to wash the laundry. Mondays, she would trek down to the river with sacks of dirty, often muddy clothes. The maid would proceed to scrub and re-scrub each article of clothing on a wooden washboard. The wet laundry was then taken home and left to soak for a day or two. Thereafter, the aforementioned maid would trek back down to the river with the wet clothes to rinse them. The laundry was assiduously wrung until most of the water was out. The children assigned to help with this task always found distracting playtime activities at this point,[25] and the hired maid was the lone soul upon whose shoulders this back-breaking labor rested. (Don't waste your sympathy on her! She was often fed more delicacies than the children, because she needed the extra energy for such a formidable task.)

The white clothes were then re-rinsed with a special bluing dye, giving the laundry a fresh white color. It was then spread out on the

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24. *Blutte* is Polish for mud.

25. The one time Sima B. took charge of the laundry, her inexperience in this field was readily apparent, as will be noted later on.

grass to dry. During the winter months, the laundry was laid out in the attic. The windows would be opened to let the fresh scent in.

And then, there was all that ironing to do. You can imagine how creased the clothes were after all that hand rinsing, wringing and air drying. When the ironing was done and another week had flown by, it was Monday, time to begin laundry anew. (*How dare we complain about throwing in a load!)*

When school was out, the Krosno Rebbetzin would teach the girls how to inspect karp fish and leafy vegetables for worms. Girls were taught at a young age, which enabled them to help out with the cooking while their mothers ran the family businesses or tended to the younger children.

During Sima B.'s school days, education was regimented, not to be taken lightly. Perfect attendance and utmost diligence were mandatory. Extra-curricular activities were frowned upon by the Council of Education. The slightest hint of mischief on the part of any student was severely punishable. Strict discipline reigned.

Every morning, Yiddishe kinder were forced to sing a universal prayer. The class would then line up in a row to have their nails, shoes and hair inspected. Warm-up calisthenics followed. Personal hygiene was part of European discipline. Girls and boys attended separate schools. The local government required every school-aged child to attend school through Grade Four, after which most ultra - Orthodox boys were taken out of school. *Mr. Biawlows, who lived next door to the Saferns in Kross, is a World War II survivor currently residing in Arizona. He has filled us in on many informative details on Shtetel life in Krosno. He recounted the following incident.*

A Hands-on Lesson

One day, Mr. Biawlows remembers, the teacher gave a literature lesson. They were reading about a Polish author who had traveled to America. In his article, the author described an exotic fruit, "grapefruit" in English. The teacher asked, "By a show of hands, how many students have ever eaten a grapefruit?" A single hand was raised. Never mind eating one, nobody else in the class had ever seen a grapefruit. The

teacher summoned Mr. Biawlows and told him, "Go to Chavtche's store and buy a grapefruit — she would definitely carry at least one specimen of this exotic fruit." The lad lost no time and within a couple of minutes, he was back with the prized possession. The teacher put the grapefruit on display, then cut it into thin slices and passed it around. The boys relished the bittersweet taste in their mouths- this was their first experience with grapefruit!

Polish studies were of very minute importance in the Yiddishe home. There is a story told and retold about the Bobbeh Chavtche and a letter, written in Yiddish of course, which she sent to her son learning in Bobov. Not being conversant in the Polish language she addressed the envelope as follows: "To Shia Volf zun Naftule-Bobowa." The baffled Bobower postmaster, upon receipt of the missive, immediately returned the envelope to its city of origin, Krosno. The postal workers, who were acquainted with the astute Chavtche fun die Potchena, were surprised at her lack of basic written formal education. However, Yiddish being the only language spoken at home was standard practice in every single Heimishe family. The boys attended school in the morning, and after a sumptuous lunch were off to cheder. The shtetel cheder was situated on top of a hill not far from the shul. A local citizen, Moshe Favel, was the melamed.

Sima Baila was a model student. However, her teacher, a true anti-Semite, would not mention her excellent academic record in her presence. At home, therefore, her diligence at school was vastly discounted. At one P.T.A., when Sima was in the sixth grade, her mother overheard the prim somber-faced teacher chiding one of the gentile mothers. "Your daughter should take an example from Sima Safern- she is a model student." The proud Mrs. Safern was duly floored. She had always known that her daughter was shrewd and bright, and now to discover her academic genius!

The principal urged Mrs. Safern to allow her daughter to continue her studies at a nearby campus, geared to gifted students. The principal even went so far as to arrange for someone to take the en-

trance exam on Sima's behalf, since the exam date fell on a Shabbos. But though Sima had a thirst for learning, she had her priorities in place. She knew that her place was first and foremost at home, surrounded by a heimeshe frum environment.

Oh, how Sima Baila cherished those days when school was closed! During the winter, Sima Baila and her friends frolicked in the snow covered grounds. They sleighed down hills, ice-skated on a nearby frozen lake and made amusing prints in the snow-filled rynek.

When the last bell chimed, announcing that school was out for summer break, in unison, the class erupted in a sigh of relief. The heavy school pressure dissipated as a sense of tranquility took its place. The very air held the pungent smell of summer. The blossoming daisies, orange daffodils, and green grass were inviting. As



Sima Safren and Shprintza Thaler

a matter of fact, in Sima Baila's eyes, the long stretch was hardly long enough. She had plans for every day; books to read, places to go and people to visit. This was also her time to catch up with her dear cousin and friend Shprintzla Thaler from Dinov.

The beckoning outdoors kept the playful neighborhood children duly occupied. Bobby's brother Nuta and his friend, Sender Biawlows, would mold assorted figures out of clay, and then put them in the attic to dry. They would then sell them to the other children for a few *groshen*.

The Safern children spent some time at a popular beautiful resort every summer in Ivonitz, which was six miles south of Kross. R' Moshela Twersky was one of the many Yidden who went there as well. Both young and old returned from their much-needed rest, refreshed and rejuvenated, ready to take on the year ahead.

A FAMILY SIMCHA

Mazel Tov! A simcha in the family! Shia Volf, the oldest Safern son, was engaged to Gitcha Rubinfeld from Illitch. Her fine character and pious, righteous deeds were renowned. The family was beside itself with excitement. Father and son went off to Bobov where the *ufroof* would take place. Erev Shabbos, they came to take shalom from the Bobover Rebbe. The Rebbe asked Zaide Naftule, "*Mit vus handeled ihr*?" Without missing a beat he replied, "*Mit peiros.*" He pointed to his son, Shia Volf, and said, "*Dus is mein ershta peira.*"

One of the pre-nuptial agreements was that Shia Volf would move to Illitch, where he would be supported by his father-in-law, a furrier who was reputedly well-to-do. A few blissful years slipped by. One season, the wheel of fortune turned, and business took a turn for the worse. Unfortunately, Shia Volf's father-in-law was no longer able to support him. The young Safern family was forced to relocate to Krosno. To support his growing family, Shia Volf became a proprietor of a Pension (inn) in a building across the Krosno bridge. There he catered to visiting Chassidim.

Entrepreneurial Shprintzala, a mere ten years old, the youngest child of Bobbeh Chave, provided her brother Shia Volf with much needed help in his new business venture. Daily, she stood at the train station, eyed disembarking passengers, and approached them. She would sweet talk them into staying the night at her brother's motel. Little Shprintzala would then run ahead to notify her brother that impending lodgers were arriving. She would instruct him to go back to his learning, while she and her sister-in-law Gitcha would attend to the guests' comfort. What a warm reception the overnighters received! No wonder they would return time and again.

Their shared interests in the budding motel created a special affinity between Shia Volf, a father of six, and his little ten-year-old sister, Shprintzala. Later, during his time in Auschwitz, Shia Volf risked his life for his sister. From his vantage point 50 yards away, he thought he recognized his sister, Shprintzala, as part of a group of girls being lead to the crematoria. He yelled out her name as he ran towards the group to try to save her from the gas chambers. It was with mixed feelings of relief and sadness that he realized that the girl only resembled his sister. In fact, the real Shprintzala was not amongst this group.



THE WINDS OF WAR

Pre-war ominous clouds broke onto the European horizon, presaging the complete and utter destruction of Jewish life on the European continent. Zaide Naftule and Bobbeh Chavtche were one of the few to sniff the potentially grave danger which lay ahead. They realized that Poland in general and its Jews in particular were slated for dark, vicious turmoil. They conferred together and addressed their burgeoning family thus: *"Hurchts ois. M'kan keinmul nisht vissen vus vat gashein in dee kimandige zeit. S'ken zein mir vallen varen farshpreit nisht villindig. Gedankts etz huts mishpucha in Amerriceh. Chazetz ank ein die addresse fin Uncle Jek in Tante Anne Safern – Empire State Building New York . In a tzeit fun noit vat as tzi nitz kuman"*

"Listen carefully. The future is unknown to us. The rumors of war cannot be ignored. We must face the fact that one day we may need to disperse either voluntarily, or we may be separated. It is of utmost importance to remember that we have family in America, our dear Uncle Jake and Tante Anne. Memorize their address: Empire State Building, New York. When in dire need of a safe haven look them up in America."

Quickly and decisively, Bobbeh Chavtche packed and sent off her husband, her youngest son, Nuta, and Sima Baila to Siberia. This locale was then believed to be a safe haven.

Chapter Three

September 1939 – WWII

The suspicions of the Safern parents were quickly confirmed. In September of 1939 the German army attacked Poland and began to turn Europe into an inferno of death. WWII had sprung a frightening trap that would ensnare millions of European Jews and deliver them into the hands of the Nazis.

What follows is the sad saga of how a warm, united, loving family was brutally torn apart by the tragic events that stemmed from the infamous, sadistic leader, Adolf Hitler, *yemach shemoiy,* in his quest to make the world "Judenrein."

The once happy Safern family which, until now, consisted of Zaide Naftule, Bobbeh Chave, Shia Volf, Chaya Ruchel, Chana Devoirah, Itcha Leib, Pinchas, Avrum Meir, Sima, Nusen Nuta, and Shprintzala would within the next few years be almost totally eradicated. One by one the sturdy limbs of the flourishing Safern family tree were torn off by the winds of war.

BOBBEH CHAVE

One chilly Krosno morning, a loudspeaker summoned all Jews to a clearing in the woods near the Targowa railroad station. They were instructed to pack their essentials, limiting them to a 10 kilo suitcase. Fearing for the lives, most of the Jewish population quickly assembled. This was the first selectia- aktzion initiated by the Germans.

The Yidden were divided into two large groups. Males aged 16-

35 were labeled as "able-bodied" and fit to work. On the left side, elderly men, women and young children were grouped together. These were labeled "useless," destined to die. This group was herded onto silver-gray cattle trucks and deported to an open clearing in the nearby woods, where they were later ruthlessly shot to death. Some were even buried alive.

Amongst these ill-fated victims stood Bobbeh Chavtche, cradling her grandson (Chaya Ruchel's son) in her arms. Nearby stood her son Pinchas and her dear sister Sura. Standing in line, the realization hit her: she, along with those summarily gathered, were destined for a dismal end. Bobbeh Chavtche quickly stepped out of line (an infraction punishable by painful death) and called out to her son Shia Volf, who was standing on the right side among the able-bodied. She pleadingly asked him to take the little boy from her arms.

Upon seeing his mother's troubled face, Shia Volf ran over quickly. Sighing deeply, Bobbeh Chave queried tremulously about the doubtful future of her husband, son and little daughter Simala in Siberia.[26] Her son, Shia Volf, reassured her as best he could and with a parting glance took the child and went back to his place on line.

When the two big German cattle-cars arrived, Bobbeh Chave cast one last longing look at her family. Then, without being officially commanded to do so, she squared her shoulders determinedly and made her way onto the truck. She led the way for others to follow. Her brave, bold demeanor left a lasting imprint on the remaining family members: *"They can break my body, but they will never break my spirit. I depart from this world a proud and undaunted Yid."*

SHIA VOLF'S SAGA

Shia Volf, strong and able-bodied, selflessly chose to stand within the left group, alongside his wife and children. However, he was personally singled out by the commanding officer

26. Details of their odyssey will follow.

in stentorian didactic German. "*Kummen Zie Arois!*" He was summarily ordered to move over to the right side.

Not wanting to leave his family behind, he claimed to be older than 35. Again, the Nazi brusquely commanded, "*Uber Kummen Zie Arois!* (You must move to the other side)." Shia Volf obeyed. When the officer turned his back, however, he quickly and quietly succeeded to sneak his wife, children and sister Shprintzala to the right group as well. Later, as previously mentioned, when his mother asked him to take Chaya Ruchel's son, he handed the child to Shprintzala, who gladly accepted the role of surrogate mother.

Shortly thereafter, a large army vehicle arrived to transport the able-bodied to an airbase. Despite his heroic efforts, his wife and children were cruelly gassed in Reisha.

Uncle Aaron Landau, an eyewitness to this *Selectzia,* recounted the details of that day down to each family member's reaction and facial expression. To this day, he points out the enormity of the open *nes, chitz lederech hatevah,* which occurred as Uncle Volf, standing amongst thousands, was singled out to join the able-bodied, and destined to live. Uncle Aaron was fortunate enough to stand near his aunt, our Bobbeh Chavtche, who wisely advised him to sneak over to the other side. She told him to stand erect and he would pass for 16, although he was only a mere 14 years of age.

> Mr. A. Bialows recounts...
> When the Krosno ghetto was liquidated on December 4, 1942, Mr. Biawlows (a former Safern neighbor) was sent to the airbase. The scene before his eyes was chaotic. As he looked on in horror, all of the captured woman and children who had been temporarily assigned to the airbase were being rounded up to be transported to a death camp.
>
> Completely shattered, Mr. Biawlows proceeded to his assigned room. He opened the door to his quarters and immediately stepped back, startled! Imagine his surprise upon finding a landsman standing in the corner, davening. He recognized the man immediately as our very own Uncle Volf

Safern, whose unfortunate family was amongst the group headed for death.

It was Friday, the first night of Chanukah, and there he was, wrapped in his tallis, tearfully davening Shmonai Asrei. The room was filled with a heavy, tortured silence. Intense pain was tangible. Mr. Biawlows was shocked beyond belief at the unfolding scene. "How could a broken and shattered heart pray to Hashem at such a critical point? What super-human presence of mind did this man possess!" he thought.

Mr. Biawlows attempted to speak to Uncle Volf, but he wouldn't respond. He continued to pray and pray for a long time. When Uncle Volf finished davening, he wiped his tears and did not utter a single word of complaint.

Editor's note: Uncle Aaron recently recounted the following story which transpired four months prior to the onset of World War II on Motzei Shavuous. Uncle Volf was waiting in line to take leave of the Bobover Rebbe. When his turn came, the Rebbe turned to him, his staunch and beloved chassid. To the astonishment of the other chassidim waiting in line, the Rebbe asked, "What is your name? What is your wife's name? What are the names of your children?" (Why was the Rebbe asking him for his name?) Grasping his hand firmly, the Rebbe put his head down on the table and held it there for quite some time. When he finally picked up his head, the onlookers saw a changed Rebbe. His face had turned pale and frightened. Mysteriously the Rebbe uttered, "We don't know for whom we need to be mispalel." He then let go of his hand and motioned to the next chassid in line.

Unbeknownst to all concerned, this was the last time Uncle Volf would see his exalted Rebbe.

Months later, when his wife and children were taken from him, never to return, it suddenly became clear to Uncle Volf that the Bobover Rebbe had been referring to this future immense loss, long before anyone envisioned such tragedies.

As further recounted by Mr. Biawlows, the two roomed together, along with Mr. Biawlow's father and one other stranger, until the end of 1943. During this time, Uncle Volf received a

bottle of schnapps from a German officer. He instinctively hid the bottle to be used for kiddush every Shabbos.

One Shabbos the bottle was found empty! Mr. B. was sure the fourth roommate had taken the schnapps. When the men left to work that day, he searched the suspect's bed. He smelled the schnapps, which had been transferred to another jug. Quickly, Mr. B. poured the schnapps back into the original bottle and filled the jug with water. Uncle Volf was delighted to be able to perform the mitzvah of Kiddush once again.

Mr. B. chuckles as he continues with the story. After Uncle Volf made kiddush, they waited for the roommate to return. They had decided to avoid direct confrontation, and to let the scene unfold on its own. They waited for the guilty party to say something, but that never happened. The man took out his jug and drank. He tried to hide his shock, realizing only too quickly that he had been caught red-handed.

Being at the airbase allowed Uncle Volf the liberty to enjoy a sense of freedom for a short while. On Sundays, along with thirty other Yidden, he would make the two-hour trek back to the Krosno Ghetto. Along the way he would purchase two bags of apples, one of which he would present to his grandfather, Zaide Hershela, and the other bag he would give to the Krosno Rav. He shared a special relationship with the Rav and would take advantage of those Sunday afternoons by conversing in learning. One Sunday he met Uncle Aaron in the ghetto and asked him to deliver the bag of apples to their grandfather. Uncle Volf was eager to meet the Rav to continue his weekly learning sessions. When Uncle Aaron handed the bag of apples to Zaide Hershela he exclaimed, "From all my grandchildren Shia Volf is now my only consolation." The Zaide Hershela had the utmost respect for Shia Volf.

Throughout the war, Shia Volf had several encounters with death. It was clearly with divine providence that he survived the labor camps and Auschwitz. Mr. Sprei, a Bobover Chassid, a fellow laborer in the camps, recounts the following: "It was at the very tail end of the war. The long torturous years left the people physically broken and

dispirited. The surviving Yidden were once again being transported, only this time it was to freedom. The starved skeletal figures staggered to their feet and slowly made their way to the railway wagon. The journey to freedom would not come easily. Overcrowded conditions and the lack of food, coupled with their ebbing strength, caused hundreds to collapse right there in the wagon. As corpses were beginning to pile up, the vision of freedom seemed to slowly slip away.

"Panic-stricken, I suddenly realized that Shia Volf, who originally boarded alongside me, was nowhere in sight. I began shoving corpses and pushing people around until I came upon what seemed to be a corpse with a familiar face. Instantaneously, I recognized Shia Volf and felt for a pulse. I breathed a sigh of relief when I realized that there was still a weak thump. I pushed my way to the rear of the wagon, and broke off an icicle that had formed on the roof. With my temples throbbing, I pressed the icicle to his lips, and began massaging his face."

"When Shia Volf at last opened his eyes he mumbled, "*Farvus vakstei meech oaf? Ich bin azoiy git geshlufen*?" This was the second time I had saved him from death. Shia Volf lived to a ripe age, and until his final parting would refer to me as his savior.

CHANA DEVOIRAH

Chana Devoirah, her long awaited, unborn child, and her only daughter Roizale were heartlessly tortured and killed by the Germans. Roizale is lovingly remembered by family survivors as a vivacious six and a half year old child with beautiful black long hair and a set of deep, piercing eyes.

ITCHA LEIB

On that fateful day, Itcha Leib, a son-in-law to a distinguished Veyelepola family, was amongst the fortunate ones to stand at the right side. He, along with Uncle Volf, was sent to an airbase.

From there he was transported to Mielic, where he worked in a salt mine and was later transferred to Flosenberg Lagger.

Due to malnutrition and overwork, Itcha Leib's health began to fail. He was sent to the Lagger Hospital where they nursed him back to health. However, on his designated discharge day they inoculated him with a poisonous vaccine, killing him instantly. His inmates, worried about the welfare of their friend, bribed one of the hospital workers to inquire about Itcha Leib's condition. They soon learned the bitter truth. Before long, word was out: the Lagger Hospital was to be avoided at all costs. The sick inmates preferred to suffer in silence rather than risk the perilous vaccine. Many of them mustered their last bit of strength and survived the war.

CHAYA RUCHEL HARDT

Late one cold blustery night, Bobbeh Chave was suddenly awakened by insistant knocking at her door. She was alarmed to see her very own daughter, Chaya Ruchel, who lived in Sanz at that time, standing in the doorway with what seemed to be two heavy bundles in her hands. Bobbeh Chave quickly ushered her in. To her surprise, she watched her daughter uncloak two small children ages three and four years. Chaya Ruchel gave her mother a quick rundown of the harsh conditions and poverty level in Sanz. She begged her mother to keep her little children, as she was afraid they would die of starvation in her hometown. With a silent prayer and a warm hug she left the two little ones with a promise to return when conditions improved. The children would never see her again. A mere two months after she bid them farewell, she was transported along with the rest of the Jews in Sanz to a death camp.

PINCHAS

Pinchas, a dashing young man, was engaged to Shprintza Thaler from Dinov. (She later married Uncle Volf, her chosson's brother, and so she remained our beloved Tante Shprintza.) With

the threat of war hovering, the wedding was postponed. It was common belief that those employed would be spared, or at the very least be in a position at the onset of war. With that very thought in mind, Bobbeh Chava sent Pinchas to Dikla. He received working papers and was employed at the 'shteinbroch' organized by the Germans. The laborers would break boulders with sledgehammers to clear the way for paved streets. They received a small stipend in exchange for their backbreaking labor. Bobbeh Chave used to send Pinchas food parcels to supplement the meager meal he received as part of his wage.

One day, while digging, a large stone pinned Pinchus's foot, injuring it badly. His mother sent for him at once. At home, the foot was bandaged and balms were applied to the wound. Pincus was bedridden for two weeks. To his dismay, and to that of all of his loved ones, when he arose after a prolonged bedrest, he realized that the foot was maimed. Pinchas would never be able to walk unaided.

Weeks later, when the Germans rounded up boys between the ages of 16 and 35, Pinchas, who was using a cane, asked Uncle Aaron to try to hide his foot. The German officer noticed that he had a stick and pulled him out of line. Pinchas showed the commanding officer his working papers, but the obvious limp sealed his fate. Pinchas was ordered to remain on the left side. There, along with the elderly men, woman, and little children, he was sent to be gassed.

AVRUM MEIR*

One dark and ominous night, when Bobby and her brothers were hiding in Uncle Volf's in-laws attic, (they ran to Illitch, thinking that they were safer on the Russian side of the border), a German officer darted right through their door. As he ran through the house, pointing his rifle in search for prey, he chanced upon Avrum Meir, Bobby's older brother, attempting an escape to the attic. The German commanded him to freeze and raise his hands above his head. Frightened, the poor lad quivered. Sadistically the

*Editors' note: Details of this story have been confirmed by an Illitch survivor, Tante Feige Fasten, as well as Uncle Aaron Landau.

Nazi snapped, "Here, let me help you." With that, he approached Avrohom Meir and rested two spears under his arms. The boy raised his eyes upwards, and silently began saying vidiu. The German shot him once, then twice to make sure he was dead. The villainous murderer was not yet sated. At gunpoint he forced Uncle Volf to bury his brother in a neighbor's front yard. As Uncle Volf was digging into the ground, uncontrollable tears streamed down his face. The Nazi, yimach shemoi, berated him, "Stop crying, you cursed Jew. Speed it up!"

When the townspeople were fleeing Illitch, the Rosh Hakuel approached Itzik Lamm, a local resident, and promised him *Alom Habah* if he would bring Avrum Meir's corpse to *Kever Yisroel*. Itzik Lamm unearthed the body from the front yard and buried the corpse in Tirova Valoska Cemetery near the Sanz River, on the outskirts of Illitch.

SHPRINTZALA

Shprintzala's stay at the airbase with Uncle Volf's family was curtailed by new *commandos* ordering a transport of all women and children to Flossenberg. From there she was once again brutally uprooted, this time to Dancig. Upon her arrival, she was rounded up along with 800 girls and loaded onto a big ship sitting in the harbor. Passage to yet another working camp! To the bystander's horror, the big ship exploded before their eyes. The ship did not even leave port. Our dear Shprintzala, the youngest of the Safern siblings, was drowned and swallowed by the ocean waters, *al kiddush Hashem.*

ZAIDE NAFTULE, NUTA, AND SIMALA

The story of Bobby's five-year odyssey and how she miraculously outwitted the Nazis spans three continents, four languages, the Trans-Siberian railroad, and happily concludes in the United States in 1948.

In 1941, dark clouds were looming ahead. The barbaric Germans began shooting innocent Jewish civilians at random. Bobby and her brothers ran to find refuge in the town of Illitch. The Thalers, Uncle Volf's in-laws, opened their home to the Safern refugees.

Their sense of security was short lived. On that fateful day, as a Nazi, *yimach shemoi*, raged through the Thaler residence, he chanced upon Avrum Meir. In a frenzy, he pulled the trigger and fired several shots. While Bobby heard the round of gunshots, she was panic-stricken and leapt from a nearby window.

Barefoot and scantily clad in a thin nightgown she ran for her life, never once looking back. Midnight was steadily approaching. The eerie sounds of the forest, along with the thump of her racing heart accompanied her as she breathlessly ran through the woods. Suddenly, she chanced upon two lone missionaries resting on a tree stump. Her hapless state needed no explanation. The missionaries offered to take her to the local priest, assuring her that he would attend to her needs. From the frying pan to the fire! Shaken to the core, the frightened Simala followed along at their behest.

To her relief, the benevolent priest was sympathetic and invited her in. He offered her a bowl of piping hot soup and gave her a private room for the night. For some added assurance, he stationed two men outside her door to stand vigil throughout the night. At daybreak, the two guards accompanied her all the way back home.

Bobby and her brothers resolved to keep the tragedy of Avrum Meyer's death from their parents. Why cause them additional anguish? This painful memory continuously loomed before Bobby's eyes. As much as she tried to block it, that dreadful memory overshadowed her. Bobby returned to Kross, as she realized Illitch was no longer a safe haven. A few days later, as she stood beside her mother in the store, in walked that very same German assassin. He had come to buy some odds and ends. As he looked her in the eyes, Bobby began shaking uncontrollably, and the blood from her face drained. Her mother noticed and asked what had transpired. Bobby didn't answer. Her dreadful secret was well hidden. In her heart of hearts she vowed to leave town, thinking that by fleeing Krosno she would leave misery behind.

The Odyssey begins..

As the Bobbeh Chavtche packed, Zeide Naftule, little Simala and Nuta were told to put on an extra set of clothing. The Zeide said, "One never knows how long the war will last, and we need to prepare ourselves." Never in his wildest dreams did he think that the war would last as long as it did and attempt to annihilate our entire nation.

On Erev Rosh Hashanoh, Shabbos Kodesh, they left home. The Zeida took along Challos, baked chicken prepared L'kovod Yom Tov, some bare essentials and his holy Tefillin. The Bobbeh Chavche stayed behind. She was called the "Kliga" (smart) Chavche. The family was sure that she would outsmart the *r'shaim*. Bobby's extended family brought their children to her while they escaped, thinking that surely she would figure out some way to save the children.

Many people were running for their lives, fleeing to the unknown. Bobby was young and vulnerable. A conniving stranger befriended her and asked if he could sew a manuscript of sentimental value into the lining of her coat. Being good-natured, Bobby complied. Little did she know that she had risked her life. Those people sewed large amounts of money and diamonds, literally smuggling treasures, only to retrieve their valuables once the border was crossed. Had the guards inspected her coat, as they did to many others, and found valuables, they would have shot her on the spot. Bobby was dismayed. How could a Yid risk another Yid's life?

.....*Yet her persistence prevailed.*

Bobby's good nature came through once again. While on the run, she and her father found refuge in a barn. Their new makeshift home was terribly depressing. Bobby quickly tidied up the place and the family settled in. The very next day a family of strangers forcefully entered, demanding that the Zeide share his limited space. Bobby welcomed them in and hung up a curtain to separate the barn into two rooms. As they settled down for the night amid the dirt and stench, a loud wailing cry was heard from the other

side. The lady began to yell, "*Dus meidel, Simale, hut mich baganvatd! Meina zilbana lefelach- Ich hub ess behalten tzvishen dee shtroiy, in ut ess iz nisht due. Dus Meidel iz a roiber.* The girl Simale stole the silver spoons which were hidden in the hay!"

Bobby was shocked. How could anyone accuse her of stealing from another Yid? Since she was unable to prove her innocence, Zaide Naftule and Bobby were forced to leave in shame. As they wandered on looking for a roof over their head, the woman was standing outside the barn with her hands on her hips hurtling accusations at our innocent Bobby.

.....Piety personified.

Settling into far off Siberia, the frigid winter was their constant companion. The Zeide was invited to learn with a Rav that lived nearby, while Bobby was left to feed the hungry mouths. In the beginning, Bobby received occasional letters and packages from her mother. These she read and reread every single day, sometimes even a couple of times a day just to get a warm feeling from a loved one. She found a local public library where she became a regular visitor. In the lonely walls of the library she pored over Russian dictionaries and taught herself the language. At last she was able to read Russian literature, devouring book after book.

Due to malnutrition, Bobby developed chicken blindness, a condition where one's vision fails in the dark. She would often wend her way to the well to fetch water by letting her hands do the walking, groping in the dark all the way to and fro. She simply couldn't see.

One night Bobby was burning with a high fever. Despite the feverish chills, she made her way to the well to fetch water. As she groped her way, shivering in the sub-zero cold, she felt that these were her final moments. She worried that she was not going to make it back to her father. She finally reached the well, only to feel that the water was frozen. Oh, how she shivered!

.....Yet her persistence prevailed.

Bobby banged and thwacked until the top layer of ice gave way. With her senses rushing she hastily filled the pot with water. Mission accomplished. Suddenly her fever tremors returned. She began shiv-

ering and as a result dropped the pot of water. With a sudden splash the pot fell deep into the well. Her precious water was gone.

.....Yet her persistence prevailed.

As a young teenager, a mere fifteen years of age, Bobby was put to work. In exchange for a food ration card, Bobby began cutting trees. She quickly mastered the skill. While cutting into the tree's trunk she would carefully observe to which direction the tree was swaying. She then continued cutting, all the while looking up, eyeing the tree's angle. She had to be on guard, ready to run to safety instantly. Rags tied to her feet served as her shoes. (When walking home once, her shoe got stuck in the ice, never to be retrieved again). Many a day she would come home leaving one more person pinned under a tree, dead.

.....Yet her persistence prevailed.

Bobby's food ration card could not feed three hungry mouths, and they were beginning to starve. Her brother Nuta was suffering from malnutrition, and his stomach was very swollen. Bobby wanted to take him to the doctor in town. However, his condition had become so bad that he lost the ability to walk. Bobby got hold of a wheelbarrow. On the way to town, as she was wheeling her brother, he began to cry bitter tears. He could not accept the shame of being wheeled in a wheelbarrow amongst people. "Please take me home and let me die in dignity!" He pleaded with her, as tears were coursing down his cheeks. Bobby could no longer ignore his heart-wrenching pleas. With tears blinding her way, Bobby turned back with her brother, only to bury him shortly thereafter.

.....Yet her persistence prevailed.

The Yiddishe crowd moved closer to town. Bobby begged the Zeide to move along with them, but the Zeide stood firm in his resolution. He would stay close to the child buried near their dwelling. He felt his end drawing near, and wanted to be buried near his child.

The Zeida had but a small siddur with him. Bobby remembers him sitting immersed in prayers for the most part of the day. He was

once imprisoned on the mere grounds of being caught with a siddur in hand. Upon his release, he immediately took out his siddur again. Nothing would keep him from his prized possession, not even jail! Bobby kept this siddur with her throughout her wanderings. After the war, when she met Uncle Volf, she respectfully handed him the siddur – she wanted him to have a tangible memory of their father. This siddur is now in the possession of the Safern family.

Towards the end of Cheshvan, Zaide Naftule's strength was waning. When Bobby would offer him some bread, he would decline, ordering her to keep it for herself. He said the bread would be wasted on him, since his end was drawing near. "My life is no life without my wife Chave," he went on to explain. He later told Bobby that he had a dream where he saw the Bobbeh Chave. She told him that she had already passed on. There were four pieces of wood lying around, and each day Bobby would see her father earnestly approach the pieces of wood and fervently daven. When she asked him why, he would answer, "This wood is very precious. Save it."

A Father's Blessing

SHABBOS KODESH — 2ND DAY OF KISLEV

It was Shabbos and their supply of food had diminished. Bobby told her father that she would go to the field to see if she could find potatoes or any other edible food lying around.

Her father, our Zaide Naftule, told her not to go anywhere that day. He didn't want to be left alone at all. He knew he would die before nightfall as he had a dream that he was going to meet his sons in Heaven. Bobby was in hysterics. Her father called her over to his side. "Bring me a clean white shirt."

"But Tatte," Bobby said, "I just changed your shirt on Friday for Shabbos. Your other shirt is here. You'll need it for next Shabbos. There is no other clean white shirt." Bobby was in a dilemma. One clean white shirt was all they had.

"I dreamt," began her father, " that in heaven they are calling me and they are beckoning me to come. They were sitting around a long narrow table. It was Shalosh Seudes time, someone gave me a black bilke. The Russian Police was standing nearby and said they must punish me because I lied."

The big lie that they accused the Zaide of: When the two of them got to Russia and the police asked for their ages, Bobby passed herself as older in order to be eligible for work. To keep her father from having to work, she registered him with an earlier birth date.

Zaide Naftule did not have the physique to work. Back home in Poland he couldn't work much due to an intestinal condition, and Bobbe Chave always cooked and baked special foods and Challos for him. Every simcha would find the Bobbeh Chave with a little parcel of food she had brought from home for her dear husband to eat. He could not tolerate cakes, Challos, or food cooked by others.

"And so in the dream the police were dragging me away from the long tables laden with delicious soft bilkes, all because of those two lies about our ages. But the people that were sitting at the table were calling me and I was rescued by them. They sat me down at the head of the table, where I was given the white bilke and I ate it.

"I woke up and realized it was all a dream." The Zaide told Bobby that he saw his two sons Nutte and Avrum Meyer. Bobby witnessed Avrum Meyer's death three or four years prior, but she never told her parents. Her father continued with detailed instructions on the last rites and rituals for a Jewish burial. He instructed her to comb his hair and beard, wash his body and pointed to the wood to be used for a coffin. Bobby was bewildered. Her father, struck with the realization that a son of his had perished, was able to compose himself, laying out the details for his burial. When Bobby cried out to him, "How can you leave me all alone?" he *benched* her and promised her that she would survive the war. The Zaide told her that she would see *nachas* from the generations to come. With that, he closed his eyes for the last time.

MOTZEI SHABBOS KODESH — 2ND DAY OF KISLEV

In a state of hysteria, all alone, Bobby went to find help to bury her father. There was only one other Yid in the entire neighborhood. He was a *Shochet*. The Zaide felt that he wasn't stringent with the Halachos and so he forbade his family from eating this Shochet's meats. This man was enraged, and in revenge he refused to bury the Zeide Naftule. His lame excuse to Bobby was that he was a Kohen, but Bobby knew otherwise. Bobby's pleading and crying fell upon deaf ears. She finally found a sympathetic *goy* who helped her build a coffin out of the Zaide's four pieces of treasured wood. He offered the use of his wagon to transport the coffin to a burial plot. He then helped Bobby bury her father. *Chasedei Imos Haolem*!

Editors' note: We have confirmed with other Jewish residents of Kross that there were three Shochtim in town. Town gossip had it that one of them was accepting money from a non-Jewish source and was selling meat not prepared according to Halacha. Most of the Ultra-Orthodox Jews would not trust his schita, and refrained from eating his meat.

Years later, Bobby asked her brother, Uncle Volf, if perhaps they should arrange a trip to Siberia, to locate their father's burial spot. She had left behind a symbol to mark the burial spot, as well as a mental note of its location. She was confident that now, years later, she would be able to lead her brother to the burial plot so that they could erect a proper matzeivah. Uncle Volf responded, "Dee meisim, zei darfen ess nisht. Dus iz far dee lebidige." A monument is for the people who come to pray at the graveside. The deceased no longer benefit from a tombstone. With that, the trip was put off indefinitely.

Unbelievably... How did Bobby's persistence prevail?

The Journey's Last Leg

It was time to move on again. Bobby made the clever decision to disguise herself as a gypsy and smuggle herself onto a

boat, perhaps to Israel. She tore up her mother's letters, the last tangible link to her past, knowing that she must give up her past in order to have a future. Her mother's letters would surely give away her true identity.

Bobby knew that her father's *Tefilin* were of great value as they were written by a very Holy Sofer, R' Moshe Pshavarska. With a heavy heart, she found her way to the local synagogue and handed the precious Tefilin to a person who appeared to be Jewish. The first question Uncle Volf asked Bobby when he met her after the war was, "Where are our Father's Tefillin?" She suddenly realized the enormity of what she had lost in order to disguise herself as a gypsy, her only means of survival.

.....*Still her persistence prevailed.*

The war was finally over. Everyone was trying to piece their shattered lives together again. Bobby wrote a letter to a Krosno pharmacist telling him of her plans to return home. What foresight! His answer was short and concise. "All is gone. There is nobody alive in your family. There are daily pogroms. Jews that are returning home are being killed. Don't venture to return home!"

.....*Persistence prevailed.*

The onerous search for living relatives began. Bobby remembered an address in America, that of Tante Annie. She wrote to let her know that she had survived the war. Every day there were new lists drawn up, naming all the survivors. Ever so patiently, Bobby would go day by day to check and re-check the lists. Maybe, just maybe, today she would be lucky and find someone from her family amongst the living. At last, the miracle occurred. She received word that Uncle Volf was alive! (*See Chavie Knobloch's article for details*). With a pounding heart, she immediately set out to meet her sole surviving brother.

As she came to the town listed as his current residence, she was informed that her brother had just left town. She traveled for a few days, each time missing him by only a couple of hours. On the way, a passerby advised her that it was not becoming to meet her brother bare-legged. The passerby then presented her with a pair of large men's socks. Bobby vividly remembered holding onto those pre-

cious socks as they kept sliding down her legs. Despite the inconvenience, she wanted to meet her brother with kovod.

At last, Bobby caught up with him. When she arrived, he was learning with R' H. Tauber in the next room. She heard his voice through the door and almost collapsed. Such long, bitter years had passed, and she had finally found a family member to share her pain and suffering.

.....Yes, her persistence prevailed.

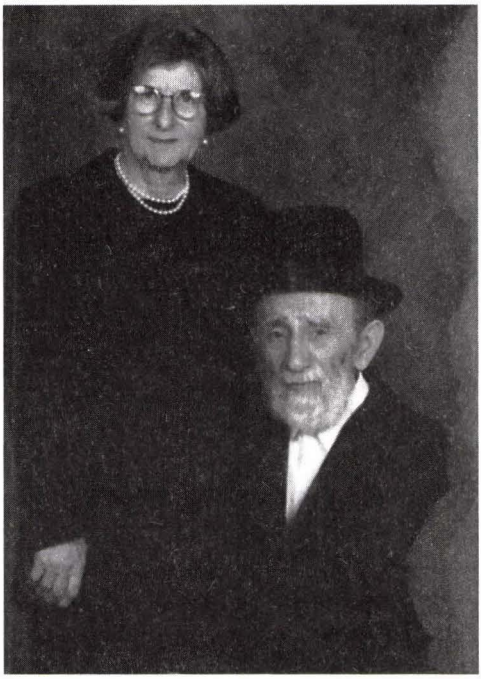
Uncle Volf suggested a few shidduchim to Bobby. How was she to make a decision? One of them was our Zaidy, Shimon Landau. Initially, she was hesitant about marrying a cousin. On the one hand, his illustrious background was very appealing, yet on the other hand, she felt uncomfortable as she knew him well. As a matter of fact, she used to baby-sit his siblings.

That night, Bobby had a dream. It was Thursday night, and Zaide Naftule stayed in shul all night. Supper was brought to him, so as not to disturb his learning. Bobby approached the door of the shul, and suddenly her father appeared. As she handed him the supper tray, he told her to marry Shimon Landau. The Zaide quickly left, saying that he still had a lot to accomplish. The heavy door closed. Bobby stood speechless, staring at the stark wooden shul door. With a sudden start, she awoke. Her decision was made and the Shidduch was set.

Memoirs...



Uncle Volf and Tante Shprintza



Uncle Aron and Tante Ettie



Celebrating the first great grandchild's Bar Mitzvah

Part Two
A Golden Link

R' Shimon Landau Shlita

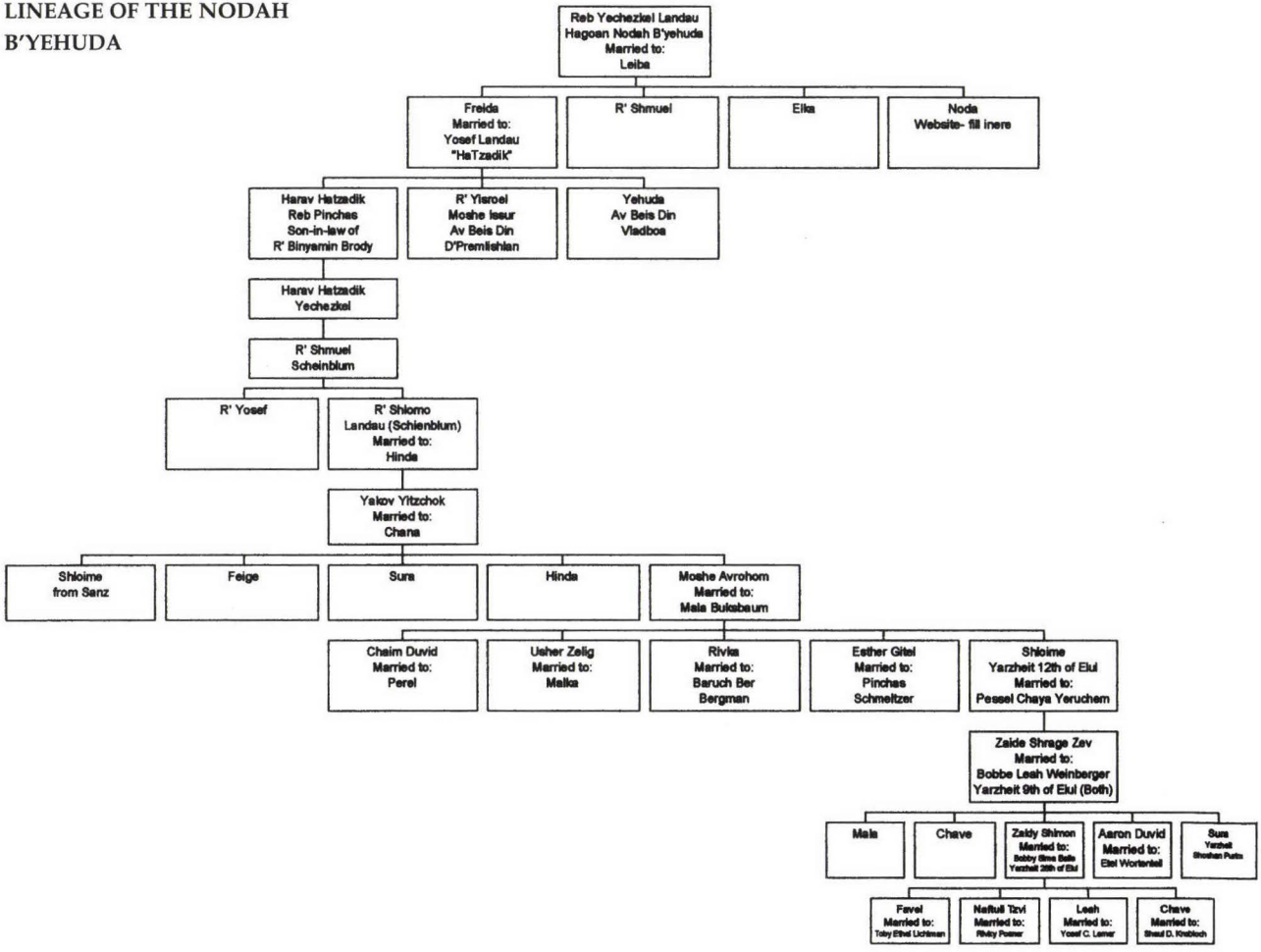


A distinguished personality, emanating a spiritual aura, thus forging the golden link of our heritage to our illustrious ancestors.





LINEAGE OF THE NODAH B'YEHUDA



Chapter One

The Nodah B'Yehuda

There are so many wonderful stories that have been written about Rabbi Yechezkel Landau.* A number of those incidents have become well known, as they have been told and retold over and over again. To be able to fully appreciate the greatness and the impact that this great Zaddik, who we are direct descendents of, had on the people in his generation and the generations since his passing, let us step back to the 18th century and follow him on his journey and watch as he becomes one of the famous Gaonim of the Acharonim (Gaonim were outstanding Rabbis; Acharonim were the last of the great Rabbbis of those generations).

At the young age of 20, R' Landau became a Dayan , and at the age of 24 he accepted the position of Av Beis Din in Poland.

At 40 years of age he was honored with the position of Chief Rabbi of Prague. Prague was not just another Jewish town. It was the center of Torah learning, and from where some of the greatest Torah scholars and Rabbinical leaders came forth. The position and title of Chief Rabbi of Prague developed into so much more.

*Editors' note: Rav Yechezkel Landau was called the Noda B'Yehuda after he published his famous set of seforim, the Noda B'Yehuda, a commentary on Chumash. He named the sefer after his father, Yehuda, and in his introduction he gives thanks to his father who has given him moral, spiritual and financial support.



The Nodah B'Yehuda

The Noda B'Yehuda ran a yeshiva, published numerous seforim, and was also called upon by the greatest Rabbis throughout the world of his days to advise and to rule on the many complex questions and disputes that arose. He met with Queen Maria Teresa on several occasions as representative of the Jewish people of the Four Lands under which she ruled.

*The Longest Pesach**

One evening, the Noda B'Yehuda, Rav Yechezkel Halevi Landau, was walking to shul when he noticed a young boy sobbing uncontrollably. Rav Landau stopped and asked what was wrong.

The boy explained that his stepmother had sent him to Prague's market to sell bagels, and she had threatened to whip him if he didn't return home with a large sum of money. Although he had sold many bagels, he had lost all his money and was frightened to go home empty-handed.

"How much money did you lose?" Rav Yechezkel asked the boy.

"Fifty gulden," he replied, his eyes overflowing with tears.

Rav Yechezkel reached into his pocket and gave the boy 50 gulden. To Rav Yechezkel, who was renowned for his kindness, this act was nothing out of the ordinary, and he did not give it a second thought. But it left an indelible impression on the gentile boy.

Many years later, a non-Jewish man visited Rav Yechezkel, late one night before Pesach. He told Rav Yechezkel that a plot had

*YATED NE'EMAN, The Jewish Weekly Newspaper.

been devised to murder the Jews. The local bakers were planning to poison the bread the Jews bought from them each year right after Pesach.

Rav Yechezkel was shocked when he heard of the plan - and even more surprised that the gentile man had shared it with him.

"Who are you?" Rav Yechezkel asked, "and why have you told me about it?"

The man reminded Rav Yechezkel of how he had given 50 gulden to a peddler boy years earlier. (This young man was the son of the head baker in Prague and had therefore been in the next room and overheard the plan.)

"I am that boy," he said. "I want to repay you for saving my life."

After the young man left, Rav Yechezkel sat deep in thought. Soon he devised a brilliant plan that would enable him to save the local Jewish community.

On the last day of Pesach, Rav Yechezkel summoned the entire Jewish community to come to the shul. He explained that an error had been made in the Jewish calendar and that they would have to celebrate Pesach for an additional day.

When the last day of Pesach had come and gone, the gentile bakers waited expectantly for the local Jews to purchase their bread. But soon it became obvious that they were not going to have any Jewish customers that day.

It wasn't long before the bakers learned of Rav Yechezkel's decree. Angry that their plan had been foiled, they reported Rav Yechezkel to the local police, charging that he had denied them of their livelihood.

The police began to question Rav Yechezkel, but the questions came to an abrupt halt when the Rav said, "Before accusing me, let's see if their bread is edible."

The bakers refused to taste their bread and the plot was revealed. The case against Rav Yechezkel was dropped and Prague's Jews were saved.

This was just one of the many instances in which Rav Yechezkel used his extraordinary wit and intelligence to foil the plots of rabid anti-Semites and save his fellow Jews from catastrophe.

Chapter Two

Landau Brothers Reminisce

As we take a walk down memory lane, we retrace our steps all the way back to those long Friday nights when Bobby or Zaidy would spontaneously begin recounting war stories or tidbits from *die alter heim*. In particular, a recent nostalgic conversation we had with Uncle Aaron one late winter night will forever remain etched in our hearts and minds. As he was reminiscing about the *alter heim*, we sat mesmerized. We were transformed to a different world. Though it was a mere sixty years ago, it felt like light-years away.

"Always remember," Uncle Aaron repeatedly said, "you had such great Zaides and Bobbehs. Your ancestors were totally absorbed in their spiritual growth. Mundane, everyday affairs were none of their concern. They were steeped in Yiras Shomayim and Aminas Tzadikim. Your Bubbas were equal to the greatest Rebetzins. Their preparation for a mitzvah, their performance of a mitzvah, was always with strict observance and *chumras*. *Tchinas* perpetually lingered on their lips. They reached such lofty heights." Uncle Aaron pleaded, "When you daven and beseech Hashem for *Zchis Uvos* remember who your grandparents were. In the *zchis* of their merits may your *tefilos* always be answered."

It is no wonder then that coming from such an illustrious background, Zaidy Landau is renowned for his tremendous *Yiras Shomayim* and Uncle Aaron for his profound *hischashkis haTorah*.

THE LANDAU WEDDING

Midway between the cities of Sanz and Kross lay a little town called Shtruss. In his humble abode, a matchmaker by the name of Shloima Aftergut is reviewing his potential list for the umpteenth time. He had recently met a Hertzfeld family member from Kross, who mentioned a younger sister Leah. Word had it that she was a pure gem, a rare catch. Who can potentially measure up to the rest of the Hertzfeld sons-in-law? They were all learned men, great scholars.

Scanning the list, he hit upon the name Favel Landau. His illustrious background and outstanding recommendations from his Rosh Yeshiva would make him the perfect candidate. At once he dispatched a telegram to both families.

A short time later, arrangements were made for the Herzfeld and Landau families to meet at Shloima Aftergut's house in Shtruss. The groom-to-be surprised both sets of parents with a beautiful *p'shetel*. Ecstatic, Rabbi Hershela Hertzfeld arranged for his daughter Leah to meet the boy. Before long, the boy and girl emerged from the room elated. As the chosson drank l'chayim, wishing his bride a hearty mazel tov he said, "*bleib mir gezunt*". And so it was. A few weeks later a joyous chasunah was held in Kross.

Another score for R' Shloima Aftergut!

The chosson and kallah were our Zaide Favel and Bobbeh Leah.

Early Childhood

YEAR—1920'S

As the townspeople were rushing to shul at the crack of dawn, anxious to say the first *Slichos*, a pure soul was born to the Bobbeh Leah and Zaide Shrage Zev Landau. They named him Shimon after his grandmother Sima Baila who had recently died. (Incidentally, Bobby Landau, being Zaidy's first cousin, is also named after this Bobbeh Sima).

As the firstborn, Shimala basked in his parents' loving attention. The grandfather, our Zaide Shloima who lived in Sanz, could not contain his excitement much longer. A trip to Kross was planned. His visit was eagerly anticipated. Upon arrival, Zaide Shloima was ushered in to bless the wailing infant. The young mother, Leah, was standing in a far off corner of the room. Immersed in prayer, she was oblivious to the infant's cries. All eyes were fixed on Zaide Shloima as he blessed the infant. "*L'gadlei l'torah, ul'chupah, ul'masim toivim.* May you merit to see much joy and Yiddish *nachas* from your firstborn." Zaide Shloima then turned to the new mother and exclaimed, "*Varf daim siddur oifen belleck*! *Geb daim ying tzee essen.* Put your siddur aside and tend to your child's needs."

The young Landau family lived in the city of Kross in a six family house, within the Rynek vicinity. Soon after, little Shimon was joined by a younger brother. The baby was named for the Krosno Rebbe's father, Arele Twersky, whose petirah occurred a few weeks prior to the baby's birth. Sura, Chave and Mala completed the loving family. The family surname was "Yeruchem," Bobbeh Leah's maiden name. Most of the legal documents have the family registered under the nameYeruchem.

The Bobbeh Leah owned a small dry goods stand under the Putchena (arcades). She sold soaps, socks, thread, shoe polish, needles, brushes and other odds and ends. Zaide Favel, a Talmud of the Altshtater Rav,[27] was a big Talmud Chuchim. Part of the day he would learn with Bochurim who were18 or 19 years of age, and the remainder of the day he would spend learning. When he met the Krosno Rav for the first time, the Rav was very impressed with his vast knowledge of Torah. After a lengthy Torah discourse in the Shul, the Krosno Rav turned to his congregants and said that Reb Hershela Hertzfeld had acquired yet another son-in-law, a big Talmud Chuchim. In later years, when the boys (Zaidy Landau and Uncle Aaron) were sent to the Rav with a *Sheila,* he would always ask, "Your father is a big Talmud Chuchim, why don't you go ask

27 The Altshtater Rav was one of the most prominent Gedolim of his time, and was the Zaide Favel's uncle. Zaide Favel's mother, the Bobbe Pessel Chaya, was the Altshtater Rav's sister.

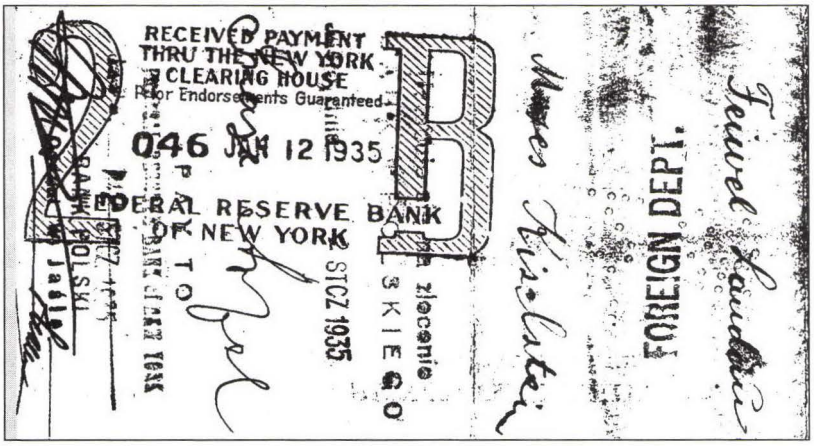
him? I'm sure he would be able to advise you correctly."



Altshtater Rav (center)

The Zaide Favel corresponded frequently with his uncle, the Alt-shtater Rav, who resided in Vienna. He would often write letters to his uncle, which included lengthy Torah discourses, *sheilos* and *teshuvahs* and other chidushim. Just prior to the onset of WWII , the Altshtater Rav sent a letter to Zaide Favel requesting copies of specific chiddushim and shailos and teshivos. He was preparing to print a *sefer* and wanted to include the responsa of Zaide Favel. With the onset of WWII, communication to the outside world came to a sudden halt, and the Zaide Favel could not send the requested material. Unfortunately, he had to bury it before his death.

The meager income was stretched to support a growing family. Despite their limited ability to spend on material items, the family managed to thrive on the love and care bestowed upon them by their parents. A common family fable is told: There were times when they were barely able to afford sugar. The Bobbe Leah would hang a sugar cane from the ceiling. She would then tell her children that when they drink their tasteless tea they should look up to the ceiling and think about the sugar; it would make the drink more bearable. Uncle Aaron recalls that his father would make kiddush on homemade raisin wine. At times, when raisins were scarce, wine was made from apples; kiddush was made with a Shehakel. The children, however, never complained. They were content with their lot and have warm memories of their childhood.



Checks received from a dear cousin, Yoshe Landau from America, relieved some financial stress back home. Yoshe Landau, an affluent pharmaceutical dealer, was a noted philanthropist contributing large sums to Yeshivas around the world.

In the six-family tenement owned by Ella Tzellar, situated in the town's square, Zaide Hershela and his youngest daughter, Chana Bogen, occupied an apartment on the main floor. Zaidy Landau's family lived one flight up. The apartment consisted of one large room with very tall windows. To meet the needs of the growing family, Bobbeh Leah hired a worker to build a dividing wall. To allow sunlight to filter through, she hired a glazier to install a glass into an opening in the wall.

A small unfenced balcony extended from the main room. One day, Mala was sitting on the balcony enjoying the sun. As she got up, she suddenly slipped and tumbled off the porch. The neighbor, Mrs. Felder, in a state of hysteria was soon heard clattering up the stairs. With her hands thrashing about, she yelled, "*Azoiy hodavet Men Kinder*?" (Is this your idea of raising a child?) Bobbeh Leah raced down the stairs at once. Seeing her daughter stretched out on the ground made her go numb with fear. Her daughter, Sura, had just died from blood poisoning. Would she lose yet another daughter at such a young tender age? She took hold of herself and ran over to her daughter's side. She felt a pulse and then slowly brought her daughter back to consciousness.

To express her sense of relief, and to show her daughter that she was truly grateful the incident had passed, she took her down to the food stand and treated her to a banana, a rare delight at that time. With relish, Mala bit into the sweet banana, while her siblings looked on with watering mouths. Each bite was savored, for who knew when luck would strike again!

Mala is remembered for her exceptionally fine middos. She was the one entrusted to pay the family's gas bill. Every month, her mother would carefully wrap the few zlotys and send her off to the community council. On one of her trips, as she was handing over the money to the clerk she noticed 50 zlotys lying on the floor. It was a small fortune, enough to buy much needed shoes and indulge in a new furnace to keep the family warm at night. Yet Mala did not waver for a moment. She instinctively picked up the money and walked over to the town magistrate to hand him her find. The magistrate was deeply impressed by her selfless act and remembered to make mention of it the next time he stopped by to collect Bobbeh Leah's rent.

Bobbeh Leah had an oven built, a luxury afforded to a select few. Her sisters would gather at her small kitchen table every Friday morning and together they would bake Challos l'koved Shabbos. The aroma of fresh Challah baking wafted through the open rynek. The Mitzvah of taking Challah was very special to Bobbeh Leah. During wartime, when food was rationed, Bobbeh Leah managed to get hold of two pounds of flour- a very precious commodity for those times. She took out her hidden supply of challah ingredients staples she had lovingly saved up throughout the weeks, hoping, beyond hope that she would acquire some flour to complete the recipe and made the dough. She asked her husband, if the brachah could be recited on two pound dough instead of the usual five. Zaide Favel responded that the *halacha* cannot be altered. Bobbeh Leah was determined to perform this mitzvah. She ran from door to door scraping together pieces of dough until she had enough to recite the Bracha. Alas- she made the bracha on the dough with tears streaming down her face. Her children remember her sheer happiness experienced that day- over and over again she reveled in the fact that she was zochah to perform the mitzvah of taking challah once again.

At age three Uncle Aaron was wrapped in a Tallis and taken to the Melamed in Chedar. Uncle Aaron remembers sitting on the Melamed's lap. "If you will know the Aleph Bais well, I will reward you with a shiny red delicious apple. If not... ..." The Melamed, pointed to a straw hanging from the ceiling and said he would hang the apple there. After he recited the Aleph Bais, the Melamed dropped the shiny apple into little Aaron's lap, while he gave him a peck on his cheek.

Zaidy loves to recount how his sisters showered him with respect and great admiration. Upon his return from Cheder, his sister Mala would be sitting at the kitchen table doing her homework. She would move her books aside, grab a smock, rub her hands together and rush to him. *"Zatzt dich aneder, ich vell dir shoin brangen tzei essen." Have a seat,* I will be serving you momentarily. Her schoolwork was put on hold for her dear brother had walked in.

The Zaide Favel's *hasmudah* knew no bounds. He was always seen with a sefer in hand. So deeply immersed in his learning was he, that it was difficult to disrupt him. Dinnertime, while the family was seated at the table, Zaide Favel would approach his seat engrossed in a sefer. Bobbeh Leah's insistent pleas, "Please sit down to eat. The food will get cold," were in vain. During the meal, he would continuously glance into his sefer- nourishing his soul as well.

Uncle Aaron recalls his father's annoyance when he spotted a child standing idly, whiling away precious time. He would admonish the child sternly, *"Menichin chayei oilim, v'oiyskim v'chayei shue?"* How can you set aside eternal Heavenly life whilst being occupied with mundane chores? It is no wonder an oft repeated quote regarding the Zaide Favel was, *"Ar darf gornisht, nor ah sharben shank mitt seforim."* He has no materialistic needs, his sole want is a seforim shank filled with seforim.

During the winter months, epidemics were rampant, claiming many lives. Antibiotics in those early days were scarce. When one contacted an insidious disease, it ravaged virtually every organ in the body while the person slowly collapsed. Family members would attempt to nurse the afflicted back to health, but oftentimes it was hopeless. One frosty winter, Sura, the oldest daughter, a mere

twelve years of age, was afflicted with pneumonia. She later developed blood poisoning. The sole doctor in town, Dr. Baumring, prescribed non-kosher salami to provide an energy boost to the emaciated patient. Bobbeh Leah bought the food from her gentile neighbor and cut it with a knife labeled "*treif*". Sitting at her bedside, the concerned mother fed the sickly Sura bite size pieces, one at a time. Intermittently, Sura in a meek voice queried her mother, "Are you sure this salami is *Kosher L'Mehadren?* It has a different taste to it, and I do not want to eat forbidden food." Her mother continuously reassured her that the food was permissible.

Bobbeh Leah, fully aware of the situation's severity, purchased a needle- point canvas to help Sura pass time in bed. In her heart of hearts, she had a foreboding feeling. This cross-stitch wall-hanging would be her last tangible memory of her daughter.

As Sura breathed her last breath, her mother cried out, "Such a pure and untainted Neshama is being returned. " Sura died on Shishan Purim; it was a very sad day for all. The family missed her dearly. Promptly after the Shivah, the Bobbeh Leah hung her daughter's handiwork in a prominent place to keep Sura's memory alive. The Bobbeh Leah was spotted many a night staring at the needlepoint whilst crying bitter tears over her lost one.

Uncle Aaron, learning in Tuna at that time, had a frightening dream. In his dream, he saw a *L'vayeh* with a large crowd walking to the *Bais Hachaim*. He asked one of the familiar faces whose L'vayeh it was. Uncle Aaron was shocked to learn that it was for his very own sister Sura. Promptly, the very next morning, he mailed a letter to his parents. He wrote, "How is Sura? I am very concerned about her health." Two months later, upon returning home, Uncle Aaron was shocked to learn that his letter arrived during the Shiva. His dream was on the very night Sura passed away.

The Zaide Favel had in his possession the sacred shirt of the Tcheshinover Rebbe, Reb Simcha Y'socher Dov, son of the Shinover Rav. This shirt was sanctified, and was donned by Zaide Favel on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Zaide Favel would often take his boys to receive the holy blessings from renowned Rebbes. When the Kolishitzer Rebbe visited the city

of Sanz, the Zaide Favel, with his two sons in tow, traveled to his hometown to receive a sacred blessing from the Rebbe. As the Rebbe placed his hands on little Aaron's head he proclaimed, "*Ar Zul Leben Biz Moshiach Kimpt.*" At another time, the Zaide Favel met his Rosh Yeshiva, who was fondly dubbed "Der Hoiacha," and asked him to bless his son. "*Zulst Zein ah Talmud Chuchim Vie Dein Tatten.*".

"*Ad Khan?*" the Zaide asked. "*Halevei!*" he responded. Uncle Aaron was also blessed by the Kedishas Zion with "*Hischashkes HaTorah.*" What an accumulation of wonderful Berochos!

The Move to Sanz

Zaidy's father felt that their spiritual needs would be better met by their holy grandfather. When the two boys were ages 11 and 13, they were off to Sanz. Living with the Zaide Shloima was a spiritual experience in and of itself. The home of Zaide Shloima was steeped in Torah. The Bobbeh Pessel Chaya was a very righteous woman. Her stringent adherence to all Halachos was on an elevated level. Her manner of dress displayed great modesty. Zaidy and Uncle Aaron remember Bobbeh Pessel with her tichel down to her eyebrows (biz dee oigen bremen)! Her dress actually touched her shoes! She was always seen with either a siddur or sefer in hand, whether it was the Menoiras Hamuor or the Tzena Uhrenah. Each morning, they would quietly observe her while she peered through the window shades as though waiting for somebody. When the boys asked her if she was anticipating a prominent visitor, her quick reply was, "Ich kik tumer Moshiach kimt."

Pesach preparations were of paramount importance to Bobbeh Pessel. She took the extreme measures in every aspect. As an added precaution, she covered the doorknobs with rags. Food was kept to a minimum; only the bare necessities were used. She would make sure that she was present at the grinding of the flour for the Shemira Matzohs.

The Zaide Shloima was a big Talmud Chuchim who believed in self-infliction. During the weekdays he would sleep on a hard board. *L'kuvod* Shabbos and Yom Tov, he afforded himself the comfort of sleeping on a hay-sack. Dressed in *bekesha* and *shteivel* (as is customary for distinguished Rabbis, Zaide Shloima wore a *zeidena bekesha* during the week), he said *tiken chatzos* every night. He also took it upon himself to fast "BaHaB" twice a week. The Yidden in Sanz would often say to him, "Surely you are visited by Eliyahu Hanovi every Motzei Shabbos!" Uncle Aaron once asked him, "Zaide, you are a wise person, your living conditions are extremely poor, the house is in desperate need of a painting, to what limit is your self-infliction?" The Zaide responded, "*Ich vill huben TZAR MARAH, ich vil upkimen oif meina chatuim oif die velt.*" (R' Shimon Bar Yachui's Tzar Marah raised him to lofty heights which could not have been achieved otherwise.) During the week of Succos, Sanz early winter winds were blustering, thrashing against the thin succah walls. Undeterred, Zaide Shloima, layered with warm cloaks, would spend the night sleeping in his succah, oftentimes awaking numb with cold, and the prepared water in the negal vasser basin frozen. The Zaide Shloima was often called upon to compose the tombstone inscriptions for prominent community members. He was the *koisev* of the Pyekala Rav, a grandson of the Sanzer Rav.

The Zaide Shloima had the big *zchia* of having personal encounters with the Sanzer Rav, the Tzadik Hador. The Sanzer Rav was Sandek at his bris, and performed his *pidyon haben* ceremonies. He was 18 years of age at the Rav's petirah. Tzadikim later said about the Sanzer Rav, "*Blessed is the blade of grass that was on the ground during the lifetime of the Sanzer Rav.*" The Sanzer Rav elevated the sustenance of every living creation. Imagine, then, the z'chus of the Zaide Shloima who knew the Rav personally! Recalling the persona of the Sanzer Rav would evoke strong emotions within Zaide Shloima. He would clench his fists, raise his eyes upwards, and in a low trembling voice would say, "*Ah leib fin dee markuvah alyoina, bmei hatanuem k'chad min hatanuem.*" Zaide Shloima's father, Moshe Avrohom, is buried in close proximity to the Sanzer Rav. The Zaide Shloima had the key to the Sanzer Rav's Ohel and did not miss a

day of saying Tehillim at his graveside. Through rain and shine, sleet and snow, he was there day in and day out reciting Tehillim at the Holy Rav's tombstone.

The Petirah

The Bobbeh Pessel Chaya's health was deteriorating. Arrangements were made for her to move in with her only child, our Zaide Favel, in Kross. She arrived at her son's house fatigued and worn out. By week's end, her conditioned worsened. It was Motzei Shabbos Kodesh. Zaide Favel gathered the family members to hear *havdalah* at his mother's bedside. A heavy, solemn atmosphere hung over the small gathering. Cup raised, unsteady hands causing the wine to splatter, Zaide Favel turned to his mother and with an anguished look on his face cried out, "*Momma, bist mir moichel*?" Silence prevailed. All eyes were riveted to the sickly form propped up on pillows. Suddenly Bobbeh Pessel Chaya in a meek, yet clear tone said, "*Yuh, mein kint.*" With that, Zaide Favel recited havdalah.

After havdalah, Bobbeh Pessel Chaya's labored breathing was noticeably worse. Zaide Favel instructed the children to stand vigil at her bedside, while he ran to shul to gather a minyan. With a minyan at her bedside, her neshama departed and her soul was beckoned to the Heavenly throne.

The Zaide Favel, who revered and highly respected his mother, went into a state of tormented grief. His children remember him banging his head into the wall, once, then again crying out in pain and then banging his head once again, this time even more forcefully.

A telegram was quickly dispatched to Sanz, informing Zaide Shloima to come to Kross at once. The Zaide arrived in time for the L'vaya. As the coffin was carried towards the Bais Medrash, where the *hespaidem* were held, Zaide Shloima ordered them to redirect the route directly to the Bais Hachaiyim. He affirmed that eulogies were not her will. "*Ess iz nisht kein toivah far dee neshama.*" Though her will

was to be buried in Eretz Yisroel, it was inconceivable at that time; therefore, she was laid to rest in Kross.

When the Zaide Favel recited the Kaddish for his mother, the immense anguish and deep sorrow were palpable. With a tear-streaked face, Bobbeh Leah would turn to her sons and ask, "Will you too say such an earnest Kaddish for me? Will I be deserving of that?"

When Aaron turned thirteen, his mother requested that he return home, because she wanted the Krosno Rebbe to put on his tefillin. Uncle Aaron vehemently refused and sent a message back to his mother, saying, "It is my biggest honor to have the Zaide Shloima don my teffilin." And so it was. When the big day arrived, the Zaide Shloima put on Uncle Aaron's teffilin with many a blessing.

Being that the Bobbeh Pessil Chaya was no longer alive, Zaide Shloima would spend Shabbos with his brothers, Zelig and Chaim Duvid. The two young lads, Shimon and Aaron, anticipated Shabbos from Sunday on, they savored the times spent together with the extended family. When the boys turned 13 and 15, they were sent off to Yeshiva. Zaidy was sent to Reisha, to learn at the Kolishitzer Yeshiva called Zerah Kodesh, and Uncle Aaron was sent to Bobov. The following year, Zaidy Landau was sent to learn in Lansit. Interestingly enough, when the Yeshiva boys "huben gegessen taig," Zaidy Landau was assigned to eat at the Knobloch family, none other than in the home of his future Mechitin.

Kolishitzer Rav

As retold by Favel Landau

Zaidy once had a problem with his eyes; uncontrollable tears would suddenly stream down his face. When the condition worsened, it was decided that he would see a specialist in Krakow. On his way, he made a stop in Reisha to spend Shabbos with the Kolishitzer Rav. As devout Chassidim do, at the first opportunity, he



The Kolishitzer Rebbe flanked by his chassidim.

ran to take *shrayim* from the Rav. As his eyes met the Rav's, his vision blurred, and his face was suddenly flooded with tears. The Rav jokingly said, "D*i kimst mir darmanen dar maseh hueigel*?" *Eigel* is the Yiddish word for eye. He was referring to Zaidy's condition with a biblical reference. "Listen to me," he continued, "I have a kabulah from my grandfather the Shinover Rav. For this machlah, you need to soak a cotton swab in liquor, and apply it to your eyes before retiring for the night. Be'ezras Hashem, you will be healed immediately."

Zaidy heeded his advice, and went to sleep wondering whether his condition would still be there in the morning. When he awoke with a start, he realized that his condition had disappeared. The trip to the specialist was cancelled.

On another occasion, Zaidy made arrangements to travel to Reisha to be at the Kolishitzer Rav's tisch. His journey was delayed due to unforeseen technicalities. To his dismay, he arrived to Reisha moments after the tisch had ended. It was past midnight, and the Chassidim were in a hurry to get home. As they piled out of Shul, Zaidy was left standing on the side, waiting for someone to take notice and offer him lodgings. Suddenly, he felt a tap on his shoulder. How surprised he was to see the Kolishitzer Rav standing right behind him. The Rav invited Zaidy for the night; he was thrilled to oblige. As Zaidy was preparing for bed, the Rav unexpectedly appeared in the doorframe and said, "*Shimmala, nem mein kishin.* Take my pillow, Shimon; you had a long journey. You can use the extra comfort." What an incredible bonus. This surely made the long and arduous trip worthwhile!

In 1941, the Kolishitzer Rav relocated to Kross. There he continued to serve Hashem despite the fierce war raging in all of Europe. During that time, our Zaidy Landau, a young bochur, had the z'chia to fill in as the Kolishitzer Rav's gabbai. One day, he called to Zaidy and said, "We did not learn yet today and I feel as dry as a radish." Zaidy quickly ran to bring a gemarah and they sat down to learn together.

> Editors Note: *Zaidy Landau contributed many stories to the sefer "Divrei Chunah" written by Naftula Wagschal, a compilation of stories and divrei Torah from the Kolishitzer Rav. One of the stories recounted by Zaidy was about a bochur learning under the auspices of the Kolishitzer Rav. One day the Rav overheard the bochur making a disparaging remark about another prominent Rebbe. The Kolishitzer Rav opened up the siddur to 'tefilah l'fnai hatfila' written by the Rebbe Reb Meilech. He pointed t,"Tein belibeini shanirah col ached malas chavereini vloiy chasronen. Put it in our hearts to see the goods and not the faults in others." The Rav ended with, "You sit and learn, and leave the 'kanois' for the Rabbonim."*
>
> *Zaidy, a true rodef shalom, enjoyed repeating this story. He felt this moral was a lesson worthy of being ingrained over and over again.*

As conditions worsened, the Germans decreed yet another set of gezetzen: No bearded Jew may be seen in the ghetto streets. Anyone caught with a beard or peyos would pay dearly with his life. The pious Rav refused to meet the demands of the Nazis; he would not cut his beard or payos. He would stay in hiding, for days on end, not venturing out for fear of getting caught. Zaidy Landau, dressed in Aryan clothes, with a *dashek* on his head, slightly skewed, would venture in and out of the ghetto. He would bring the Rav seforim, relay important messages and gather staples to sustain the Rav throughout this very trying period. Serving his Rebbe faithfully nourished his soul; it was well worth risking his life.

Since he was the Rav's gabbai in 1941, Zaidy was present when the Germans asked the Kolishitzer Rav for the nature of his profession. The answer given would determine his future, as skilled people were kept alive at the disposal of the Germans. Although his

mind was in turmoil, the Rav, hardly missing a beat, answered, "I am a bathmaster." Zaidy wondered at the answer, and later asked him, "Bathmaster??" To which the Rav replied, "Didn't I write a *chibbur* Sefer Toras Mikvah?" The Rav never lied, even at a time where it was a matter of life and death.

The Parting Message

The war atrocities as recounted by Zaidy and Uncle Aaron can never be accurately depicted. To describe the disasters of war in its full spectrum encompasses traumatic events and emotions that are far too deeply scarred. The harrowing experiences reflect super human strength, which was required to survive physically, spiritually and emotionally. May Zaidy and Uncle Aaron's tremendous *mesiras nefesh* be an inspiration to future generations.

"Ich hub nisht azoiyfil huar oiyfen kup – vifeel shlek ich hub bakimen," began Uncle Aaron.

Friday morning, September 1, 1939, at 6:00 a.m. Krosno inhabitants were rudely awakened by a blasting explosion. They later learned that the Germans had bombed the local airport located several miles from their homes. Their worst fears were now confirmed. War had reached their hometown. The next eight days passed in a whirlwind. People were running about gathering food supplies, planning escapes, and attempting to make contact with the outside world to set up a safety net. September 9th dawned bright and early. Zaidy remembers the fateful day when they rounded up all the Jews of Krosno. Loud opera music was played on speakerphones as Jewish families were being torn apart. The viciousness of the Nazis, *yimach shemom,* was apparent every step of the way.

With music blaring from loudspeakers, the Germans invaded Krosno. Throughout the week, groups of men were rounded up and taken to headquarters. With malice, the Germans lined up the Jewish men and had their beards and peyos shorn. To brand them, a white arm-band embossed with the Star of David was given to

each Jew. The branding of Jews in Nazi Germany and the occupied countries was designed to enable them to be distinguished from the general population, and consequently isolated from it and degraded in its eyes. To add insult to injury, the Jews were forced not only to make their own badges, but to distribute them as well.

For the next four weeks, they were given menial labor, work that in most cases was meaningless. The Germans' sole intention was to humiliate and ridicule the Jews. While the Poles looked on in amusement, prominent members of the Jewish communities were seen sweeping the streets and washing latrines and garbage dumpsters. In addition, they were mandated to pave pebbled streets.

Despite the hardship, Zaide Shloima made every effort to keep in close contact with his loving grandsons. His letters were full of moral support. One memorable letter concluded with, "*Al yad ben Yishai, bais halachmee, kurvi el nafshee geulah.*" His applicable interpretation was, "At the time when a Yid will be forced to wear a ben yishai, a magen david on his arm, *kurvi el nafshee geulah*- remember, we are nearing the redemption."

The High Holy Days were approaching and the Yidden, their hearts filled with anxiety, wondered what the New Year would bring. To their bitter dismay, under torturous conditions, they were forced to work through Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. They were mocked, beaten and ridiculed by their formerly friendly Polish neighbors. The pusik "*halacha biyadiah aisov soinah lyakov*" was proven over and over again.

Erev Succos, when the Yidden were gathered at their designated work sites, the Germans ordered them to return home. They were told to pack their belongings, assemble their family members and cross the Sanz River over the Russian border. Many families made it across the river only to be exiled to Siberia when the Germans invaded Russia in 1942. The remainder of the people sought alternative arrangements or went into hiding.

As the Yidden in Kross were rounded up, the Landau family split up as they ran into hiding. The Zaide Favel hid in Kalmen Bogen's attic, while the Bobbeh Leah and her two daughters found refuge in the cellar of Kalmen Volf Diamond, a family friend.

Friday at sunset, Bobbeh Leah recited the blessing at candlelight. With a fervent prayer she beseeched Hashem, begging him for mercy. The tears were streaming down her face, as her whole body was absorbed in deep prayer. She stood for what seemed an eternity with her face covered by her worn bony hands. As the daughters looked on in fearful earnest, she removed her hands and whispered, "*Tefilah oisah mechzah*. Tefillah can accomplish half. *Ich hub oisgapoilt dee tzvei zih*. My two sons have been pardoned, their survival has been assured." (Mala later relayed this incident to her brother Aaron. In later years, Uncle Aaron would get teary-eyed while recounting this incident. He would point out that of four siblings, two sons survived the war. What prophecy!)

When the hysteria outside had subsided, it seemed safe to venture out once again. Since the Landau apartment had been vandalized, it was no longer a safe haven. The family therefore made their temporary dwelling in the Bais Medrash. Bobbeh Leah repeatedly told her sons, "*Holt zeech! Farleir nisht dein b'tuchen*. It is due time for the redemption. Moshiach is on the way."[28] Their two-week stay at the shul was punctured with daily interrogations by prowling German officers on the lookout for unlisted Jews. The only Jews allowed in town were those registered with government-sealed ID cards. Zaidy and Uncle Aaron possessed valid ID badges; they were free to attend to their family's needs.

While in the Bais Medrash, Bobbeh Leah continuously repeated, "Zaide Shloima's daily tefilas recited at the Divrei Chaim's *tzion* surely saved our lives thus far."

Bobbeh Leah's youngest sister, Tante Chana, in a risky undertaking, walked to the shul to check for survivors. She heard rumors that the shul was attacked by Germans, and so she came to survey the damage. Everyone in the shul was elated to see her. Bobbeh Leah ran over to her sister and warmly embraced her. During the course of her short visit, Tante Chana filled everyone in on the catastrophic happenings around town. She told her sister that her father, Zaide

28 Shortly after the war, typhus claimed many young lives. As the stricken group of boys slowly dwindled, they would repeatedly point to Uncle Aaron and say, "This Yeruchem boy will outlive us all. He has such strong *bituchin*."

Hershela, had moved in with their sister Pessil. Upon her sister Pessil's insistence, at the onset of the Auszidlung, she reluctantly gave in. Uncle Aaron, sitting within earshot, could not believe what he had just heard. His aunt, Chana, was living in cramped quarters with nine children. With the war upon them, they were forced to share their humble abode with many others. Food ration cards were not enough to feed the family and yet she bemoans not her fate! She bemoans the fact that she was no longer ableto serve her father. Uncle Aaron turned to his aunt with renewed respect and asked, "*Hust nisht moirah gahut, vee azoi bisti aribargakemen uhn die papeeren?*" She boldly answered that she fears nobody; she fears the one and only Creator.

The Yidden in the Bais Medrash were not kept waiting for long. On the 9th day of Elul, the door flew open with a sudden burst. A cruel German officer ordered everyone out at gunpoint. The Zaide Favel and Bobbeh Leah felt that their hours were numbered. Zaide Favel began pacing the aisles of the Bais Medrash repeating over and over again pesukim from Zohar and Gemarah. "We are going to a Chaim Nitzchios. We are being killed Al Kiddush Hashem. What a great share awaits us in Gan Eden." The last bit of Gemarah he recited to his sons was, "*Behadar hariga litka ein kul baria v'lushen yecholim lamoid bimchitzusom.*" (During the times of the Tanaim, the Jews were blamed for the death of the king's daughter. The king issued a decree: the Jew who killed the princess must come forward. If no confession was forthcoming, the entire town would be annihilated. As the Jews gathered in shul to pray to the one and only Merciful One, there were three Tzadikim who came forward and confessed the murder to the cruel king. They were hung in the gallows. The gemarah in Buba Basrah states that through their mesiras nefesh an entire town of Jews were saved. As their neshamas entered the Heavenly gate they were ushered into the highest heichel in Gan Eden. Such is the reward for those who perish al kiddush Hashem.)

The Zaide Favel raised his trembling hands and called out, "These ten fingers have toiled in Torah learning. They relinquished all earthly pleasures. *Ich hub nisht nehener gavazen fin dee velt, afileh mit mein klein fingerel.*" The Zaide thus quoted a gemarah in Kesubos: "*Bshas peteerusoiy shel Rebbe*, prior to Rebbe's passing, he

raised his ten fingers and proclaimed, 'I have toiled in Torah with these very hands, down to my little pinky. I did not taste the pleasure of earthly vanity.'"

Zaide Favel continued his spiritual discourse with yet another reference to the Gemorah. Moshe Rabeinu pleaded with Hashem to gain entrance to Eretz Yisroel. He had an ardent desire to eat the fruits of the Golden Land while standing on its holy soil. The Gemorah asks, "Why couldn't Moshe eat the fruits in the *Midbar*?" The Gemorah answers that Moshe Rabeinu wanted to fulfill the mitzvah in Eretz Yisroel because it had an added *chashivas*. Lastly, Zaide Favel pointed out that while the Yidden were collecting riches at the Yam Sif, Moshe Rabbeinu went in search for Yosef Hatzaddik's bones. Moshe Rabbeinu had no lust to acquire riches; his sole purpose in life was to accumulate mitzvahs to elevate his spiritual level. The Zaide Favel reinforced this by adding, "*Chacham leiv yikach mitzvahs*. A wise person utilizes his allotted time on this world to amass an eternal fortune; every moment is spent either in preparation for or in performance of mitzvahs and *masim tovim*." He hoped that these analogies would give his family chizzuk and the much-needed strength to withstand the terrible ordeals ahead of them.

It was time for parting words. Both parents begged and pleaded with their children: "Right before the coming of Moshiach, it will be increasingly difficult to adhere to the stringency of halacha. The Satan will be on hand doing all he can to deter the people from keeping to their Mesorah. It will seem insurmountable, as hopeless as climbing a straight wall. But I ask you and plead with you: do not stray from *Yiddishkeit k'chit hassarah*. Tznius should be an integral part of your life. Never diminish the standards set forth by our *ehrlicha* grandmothers."

Bobbeh Leah, wringing her hands, cried out, "Presently, I am in a clear state of mind. I know that Hashem wills and decrees. I hope that I will never forget even whilst I am being tortured." She then turned to her husband and asked, "Why don't we merit the miracles witnessed during the era of the Tenayim?" Zaide Favel sharply replied, "Because our generation was not *moiser nefesh al Kiddush Hashem*."

Bobbeh Leah anxiously exclaimed, "Who knows the extent of the barbaric tortures ahead?" Her husband replied with a story from *Toisfos*. When Reb Shimon Bar Yachuie left his cave after twelve years of hibernation, he observed a bird flying overhead. A hunter, standing at a distance, was aiming to shoot down the fowl. Suddenly Reb Shimon heard a Heavenly decree, "This bird will escape unharmed." And so it was. The gunshot missed its target as the bird flew off, merrily joining its flock. Soon after, another bird was seen flapping its wings as it soared upwards. A Heavenly decree was heard once again, "This bird is destined to fall prey." As the shot rang out, the hunter breathed a sigh of relief. This time his aim bore fruition. With a thud the bird fell to the ground. The Zaide expounded, "If a mere bird cannot get trapped or killed unless there is a Heavenly decree, then surely a person, created in the Divine image, will not be harmed unless Hashem has destined it to be so." The Bobbeh Leah, temporarily placated, asked her husband one last time whether they should go into hiding. Unwaveringly, he answered, "*Al Tifroish Min Hatzibur*. Our destiny is to be here with the rest of our brethren. We must follow the crowd and trust that Hashem will not forsake us, for all that He does is just and right."

With a pained and anguished look, Zaide Favel pointed to a little wooden table, where he had spent his years poring over seforim. His fervent desire was to be buried in a coffin built from that very table. Yet another forsaken dream! He picked up his kesuvim, a compilation of his chiddishim, *shaelos* and *tshivos*, and was heard muttering out loud, to no one in particular, "These are my toil and sweat. Can I leave them behind? Should I take them along? What if the Reshaim will desecrate my holy work?" With a broken heart he took the kesuvim and joined the rest of his family outside the shul. The assembled group was led to the center of town. Midway, Zaide Favel stopped and asked his sons for assistance with burying his chiddushim. When they were done, Uncle Aaron turned to his father and asked, "*Efsher duch,* exchange your long coat for this short jacket in my possession and you may still have a chance to escape." The Zaide turned to his son and admonished

him, "This jacket was not checked for Shatnaz. I cannot wear a garment that may contain Shatnaz."

Bobbeh Leah prepared to say *vidoiy*. In distress she pleaded to Hashem, "*Tatte in himmel, ich vill nisht nuchamuhl m'gilgul verren.*"

And so on that very same day, the 9th day of Elul, Zaide Favel and Bobbeh Leah were lead to their eternal rest. Their pure neshamas were returned to the Heavenly throne in a world far better, a world of truth.

The Landau offspring, now young orphans, were left to fend for themselves. Once again the siblings were separated at the start of Operation Barbosa. During that time, the Germans received a new command: to shoot Krosno Jewish civilians at random. In desperation, the remaining Jews ran for cover. While some risked crossing the Russian border, others sold their valuables to Polish neighbors in exchange for cover. Mrs. Meleroven, a well-known woman in town, provided a safe haven for some thirty odd Jews. There, in the attic, amongst Torah giants such as the Rishkapala dayan, the Krosno Rav and Zaide Herhsela, Zaidy Landau, his sisters, and Diamond cousins sat huddled in fear. Uncle Aaron decided to go to Reisha. Zaidy and his sisters joined Zaide Hershala who was in hiding. Each passing day brought them closer to the realization that they could not survive much longer. After three months, when the food supply had completely dwindled, the elders decided to send two boys in search for food. The two boys chosen were none other than Tante Chana's son and Shimon Landau- our Zaidy.

That night, the Nazis ym"s, were standing guard, search dogs in tow. Suddenly, a loud bark pierced the silent night. A little boy with his head bent over a garbage pail heard the heavy taps of an S.S. man's shoes. He lifted his head, with the intent of making a dash to take cover. A bright searchlight blinded his face. Frightened, the boy began to shudder. The S.S. man lifted him by the collar and dragged both boys all the way to the central station. On the way, the two boys, in an effort to draw on inner strength, recited *tzetel kuten* from memory. At headquarters, they were tortured, whipped and threatened with execution. The young lads could no longer withstand the agony. With a heavy heart they disclosed the whereabouts of their hideout.

The Germans lost no time. The very next morning, December 19, 1942, military cars were dispatched to stake out the attic. Soon a loudspeaker sounded. "Achtung! Achtung!"

The adults hiding in the attic were ordered to come down at once. There, while the children were watching from the attic window, they were ordered to line up. The announcement "Now the Rabbina" was followed by a ring of shots. Soon after, another announcement was heard: "*Der Kleiner*" (Zaide Hersehala was on the short side). Once again, a shot rang out. Fifteen elders were killed in total.

When the last of the men were shot, the Germans made their way up to the attic. There they rounded up the children and forced them into the awaiting military trucks. Along with a handful of Jews discovered by the Nazis, they were transported to Reisha. Mala and Chave, Zaidy's sisters, remained in Reisha until September 1942. On a cold and blustery morning, they were rudely awakened and shoved into cattle cars. They were transported to Auschwitz, only to be tortured and sent to the gas chamber in September of 1943.



Kever of Hershala

Nuchemel, A Martyr

A terrible tragedy had befallen the Bogen family. The young mother of nine, Chana, was ruthlessly shot by a menacing Nazi. Her husband, Benzion, was left to fend for the orphaned family. Totally heartbroken, he was crushed under the heavy burden. Soon after, he developed a heart condition, and as a result was bedridden. The children were at the mercy of strangers. A young cousin, Nuchem Bogen, took pity on the helpless family and decided to shoulder the responsibility single-handedly.

A young boy, wise beyond his years, Nuchemel moved in to Feter Benzion, providing both physical and emotional support. Nuchem undertook to feed the hungry mouths. As dusk turned into night, young Nuchem would walk down to the Rynek, peeking his head into the archways, searching for scraps of leftover food. This arrangement worked well for the Bogen family, especially for the grieving father. After three weeks, a summons was issued, demanding Benzion Bogen and family to appear in court. The records indicated that Mr. Bogen did not attend to his assigned post. Young Nuchem insisted upon joining the Bogen family. A German officer marched the small procession all the way to the courthouse. As they neared the entrance, the brutal Nazi *ym"sh*, stopped short, pulled the rifle's trigger, and mercilessly shot Nuchem in the presence of them all. Nuchem died the heroic death of a martyr. He could have planned an escape; however, he chose to join his brethren in solidarity.

With a thud, the lifeless body fell to the ground. The little children let out wild screams. They were frightened and confused. The German officer barked his command, "Gain zee veiter- march on." The Bogen family could not muster the strength to take another step. The searing pain weighed heavily upon them. Their feet turned to lead, unwilling to move. Only after the Nazi took a whip, threatening to lash out, did the group slowly advance.

As they neared a small village called Potok, the Nazi, without blinking an eye, asked the family to line up. Ten shots pierced the air. Lifelessly they fell to the ground. The ground was steeped in

Jewish blood. As their cries pierced the Heavens, a solemn decree descended: "Their blood will be avenged!"

Uncle Aaron's Escape

Uncle Aaron was on the lookout for a new hideout. At a nearby auto repair shop, he spotted a wall, eleven feet high. Besides it stood a massive wall unit. The two foot space between the wall unit and the wall would serve as a temporary hideout. Armed with a backpack containing his essentials, Uncle Aaron slithered into place. There he stood, frozen to the spot. He hoped his rapid breathing and pounding heart would not give him away. An hour passed. It seemed like an eternity.

The he heard approaching footsteps. Leaves were rustling. Someone was definitely advancing. The blood drained from his face. "It is all over," he thought. As he raised his eyes to meet his persecutor, his heart skipped a beat. It was none other than his young cousin, Benzion Bogen. He had come to join Uncle Aaron.

No sooner had the lad set foot on the ground when a burly German officer appeared. From afar, he noticed the little boy running and followed in pursuit. The officer was surprised to find two young boys hiding out in the narrow space. As he addressed Uncle Aaron, Benzion made a dash to the wall and leaped right over it. Sprinting across the road, he knew he had escaped by the skin of his teeth.

Frozen with fear, Uncle Aaron stood rooted to the spot. He was ordered to come out at once. He climbed the eleven foot wall and jumped over unscathed. The officer marched him to the center of town, where other discovered Yidden were rounded up.

To this day, Uncle Aaron insists that should the opportunity arise, and should he be in Poland again, the single site he would visit would be the auto repair shop. There he would recite the brochah *boruch shenasee lee ness b'mukoiym hazeh.* Throughout the Nazi tyranny, Jews discovered in hiding were instantly killed. The fact that Uncle Aaron was left unscathed upon discovery was a miracle in and of itself.

Chapter Three

World War Two

World War II ended and the camps were liberated before most of us reading this book were born. The events we recall today have the safe distance of history. There will come a time when the eyewitnesses are gone. That is why we are bound by conscience to remember what happened. During the war, the Nazis repeatedly told the Jews that in time no one would believe the accounts of the eyewitnesses. Evil on so grand a scale would seem incredible. Yet we do not just believe. We know. We know because the evidence has been kept, the record has been preserved. Our remembrance marks more than one single historic tragedy, it marks six million lives- all the possibilities, all the dreams, and all the innocence that died with them. The Holocaust is defined as much by the courage of the lost as by the cruelty of the guilty.

At a recent family simcha, Zaidy, with a smug look on his face, turned to the Bal Simcha and resolutely proclaimed, "As the Nazis were conducting their methodical destruction, they aimed to make the world Judenrein. Their ultimate plan was to annihilate the entire Jewish nation, leaving one Jewish male on display in a museum showcase, rendering them extinct. This Simcha tonight is yet another victory for the Jews, may the victims' blood be avenged."

We hear about concentration camps, we read about it, we try to picture the pain, the torture, the bestial murders, the horrors. But for us, who Baruch Hashem are blessed with living during times

of prosperity, it is hard to conceive the unthinkable. The two Landau survivors, in deep conversation, recounted some of the tormented tortures they've experienced. They were in countless concentration camps and three ghettos over a span of three years. The mere uprooting of people, one second to the next being thrust into the unknown, expecting them to familiarize themselves with their surroundings by the next morning, was enough to break one's spirit, let alone the torture, humiliation, the beatings, the starvation, degradation, the gassing, the murdering and the endless list of atrocities our previous generation has withstood. From a statistical vantage, in 1933 there were nine million Jews in Continental Europe (5.5 Million in the USSR & Poland). Within a span of 12 years, two out of three Jews were eliminated. Jewish life would change forever.

Zaidy Landau's trail of torture began in Reisha, continued on to Huta Kamarowsca, Plasho, Mielic, and Flossenbürg, where he was freed by Americans and taken to Shwandorf. From Shwandorf he was sent to Feldafink, a D.P. camp in Germany; however, a short time later he was transferred to Foehrenwald, yet another D.P. camp, a place where he picked up the pieces of his life and began anew. There, in the D.P. camp, despite the impoverished conditions, he married his cousin, Sima Baila Safern. Soon thereafter, little Chavie, a chubby cherub, brought much solace to the young couple. Finally, in December of 1944, the young family set sail for America.

1941 Landau Orphans' Persecutions

When Zaide Hershela was killed during the Krosno Aktzion, the Landau orphans were left completely bereft, their final link to their parents gone. In solitude, the young siblings prayed that they would not be separated once again. Being united as a family would allow them to draw on each other's strengths, sustaining their parents' memory.

RZESZOW / REISHA GHETTO

Rzeszow's ghetto was established on 1 January 1942. The ghetto was liquidated in July, 1943 by the Gestapo, police and SS battalion Truppenübungsplatz from Pustkow. The Jews had to give up all their belongings and were led to the train station in Staroniw, from where, in cattle carriages, they were taken to different places for extermination. Krosno Jews shared their fate with those from Rzeszow. Most were killed in Belzec, some shot dead in Rzeszow, some in the Glogow forests and in Pustkow.

A survivor's account: *It was May 2, 1942, a beautiful morning. I was getting ready for work and so were many other men on the streets of [the ghetto]. I heard some commotion outside on the street. I looked out the window and pulled back my head quickly and closed the curtain. I could not believe what I saw. On the street a Mercedes was parked, sporting a big swastika flag. Rzeszow chief of the Gestapo, StrumbanFurer Mak and his driver, with their own pistols in their hands were shooting people as if they were puppets at the shooting gallery. They did not ask any questions. I could hear the Gestapo chief shouting to the driver to catch this one and shoot him as he was busy shooting someone else. Then the two killers pulled out their cigarettes, lit them, slipped into the shiny Mercedes and left. We later learned those two killed thirty-six people that morning.*

How could I describe my feeling when in the liquidation of the Rzeszow Ghetto, my father, brother, aunt, uncle, sister-in-law with [a] one year old baby and thousands of other young, old, women and children were moved under SS guard to the train station, loaded into the cattle cars with the SS men following kicking, beating, and shooting at will? How could I describe my feelings when all my loved ones were gone? The ones who gave me my life, love and protection in my younger years were gone, removed by the supreme power of the German Nazi and Gestapo to an unknown destination. Those feelings and agonies are impossible to describe... The Germans would bring to Rzeszow camp some Jews from other towns and take out some people to the unknown. How traumatic those selections were when the

wives were separated from their husbands, children from mothers, and all this to the brutal beating, kicking, and hollering by the SS men. And I can still hear the people's piercing cries as they were driven out to the cattle cars!

Landaus in Reishe

From Krosno, the Landau siblings, along with the Krosno able-bodied were transported to the Reisha Ghetto. There the men were forced to do backbreaking excavations. Thousands of people wandered around aimlessly with spades and other implements in their hands. Elders of the city, the scholars, the women and children — all of them volunteered to participate in the excavation effort, many of them in reality digging their own graves!

Zaidy's sewing expertise came to good use. In exchange for food, Zaidy tailored men's clothing. Uncle Aaron was amongst those ordered to demolish Jewish homes. On his bare back he would carry the heavy planks of wood, piling them into the awaiting wagons. Uncle Aaron's layman's hands were not accustomed to such coarse labor. His blistered hands developed terrible sores and in time swelled. Their food ration consisted of a meager portion of slimy soup and a dry crust of bread. Zaidy refused the soup, unsure of its contents, but did accept the dry crust of bread.

While the men were at work, the two sisters, Mala, age 12 and Chave, age 14, were left behind in the ghetto. They spent the day waiting for their brothers' return. They had secured a tattered copy of the *Tzene Urena* and faithfully read it out loud every Shabbos. As it happened, one Succos, Uncle Aaron, after a grueling day of labor returned home to rest his tired body. He had saved his dry crust of bread, wanting to eat it in the comfort of his home. When Mala saw him approaching with his prized piece of bread in hand she mussared him, "Today is Succos. You should refrain from eating *chitz lasuccah*. Two blocks down there is a little hut converted into a Succah. Take your bread and eat it in that hut. Do not allow the Germans to break your spirit- true, you are

drained, but show them that nothing will deter you from performing mitzvahs."

The appointed head of the Reisha Ghetto, a kind-hearted Jew, spotted Mala on the ghetto street. There was something about her that seemed amiss. As he got into closer proximity, he noticed the swollen neck. Realizing that she was suffering from malnutrition, he decided at once to take a personal interest in her welfare. From that time on, a weekly package, earmarked for Mala, would arrive. The small bundle contained two carefully wrapped eggs.

At the behest of the Germans, several young Jewish boys were forced to remove expensive furniture and valuables from the town's Jewish inhabitants. Germans pillaged anything of value that remained and transported it to the Third Reich. Young Uncle Aaron, carrying an oversized mirror, was hit by surprise, when a stone, out of nowhere, came crashing through the mirror, splintering it to tiny pieces. A sharp fragment cut into his eye. The excruciating pain was beyond endurance. Late at night he crept into the ghetto doctor's living quarters, where the doctor removed the mirror fragment with a makeshift tweezers. Uncle Aaron cringed at the thought of the eye infections he might contract due to the unsanitary treatment. Nevertheless, he paid the doctor with the last few groshen he had hidden for emergencies. When the eye had healed, Uncle Aaron returned to thank the doctor, only to learn that he had been shot a few days earlier.

One day, while working in Reisha, an officer rounded up the able-bodied men and sent them off to Huta Kamarowsca.

HUTA KAMAROWSCA

Both Zaidy and Uncle Aaron were assigned to uproot forest trees, keeping its roots intact. These trees were shipped to Germany to be replanted on German soil. Each morning they would leave the camp's base to make the five mile trip to the worksite. At the end of a day of hard labor, malicious beatings and harsh conditions they would make the five- mile trek back home.

An order came from headquarters commanding 1500 Jews to be sent to Plasho Concentration Camp. Zaidy Landau was amongst the unfortunate ones transported to Krakow Plaszow (Plasho).

KRAKOW PLASZOW / PLASHO CONCENTRATION CAMP

A survivor's account: *"It was a dreadful place ... with thousands of Jews in it from many small towns. In the first day, we were ordered to gather in a circle of fifty men. The SS men instructed us to put in the center all the valuables we had with a warning that noncompliance would be punishable by death. So the pile of watches, gold, diamonds was quite sizable. Then the SS man checked the pocket of one of the men and found something. He started to beat the man, hollering, 'You dirty dog Jews, you are all cheaters. You cannot be trusted. You were told to give up everything.' He made the man lie down on the ground and shot him in the back of the head to the horror of us all."*

A Day in the Concentration Camps

A typical day in a concentration camp began at 4:00 a.m. The prisoners were rudely awakened for *"Appell"* Roll Call. There they stood at attention, sometimes in freezing cold weather, for hours. They were counted, and recounted. Public floggings or hangings were common events for the ill-fated Jews reported to have fallen behind on their quotas. Many a Jew would be beaten for minor infractions such as being caught with a prayer book, outside passed curfew, or the like. Roll Call was pre-empted with a speech to the following tune: "Your G-d says you are the Chosen Nation- *Ir Yiden Hut Krigs Gevalt 'atah b'chartuni'*- What were you chosen for? To die?" They made every attempt to dispirit the poor Jewish prisoners. However, the Jews held steadfast to their religion. On the contrary, the cruelty and mean-spirited brutality strengthened their belief in Hashem.

After the onerous Roll Call, with menacing dogs at their heels the Jews were marched off to work. Ahead of them lay twelve hours of

grueling slave labor. SS men and Kapos, whip in hand, would tower over them, instilling a terrifying fright. The single meal consisted of a crust of bread and small portion of broth. After hours of hard labor, the tired, drained prisoners were marched back to their barracks. They slept on overcrowded bunkers, sometimes as many as six people per plank. If one wanted to turn during the night, they would all have to turn along with him. The bunkers were lice ridden. People were assigned to barracks based on identification number, resulting in a hodge-podge of nationalities. It was not uncommon to find people with dialects from Hungary, Russia, Poland, and Ukraine grouped together. Communication amongst the prisoners was stilted and oftentimes frustrating.

Laying in the bunkers after a laborious day of work, the non-believers would sigh heavily, "When will the big bird fly overhead and drop an egg to end our misery?" The reference was to the hope that the American planes would fly overhead and drop a bomb on German soil to end their suffering.

PUSKOW & WIELICKA PRISON CAMP

Zaidy was sent to Puskow Prison Camp only to be evacuated shortly after his arrival and relocated to Wielicka Camp. There he spent his days in the salt mines. Before he had a chance to become acclimated with the lagger routine, his world was once again in a state of upheaval. He was transported to Mielic Camp.

MIELEC CONCENTRATION CAMP*

The strain of the brutal work had already taken its toll. Many prisoners would collapse in the bunker at night, never to see another day's break. When the order came announcing his transfer to Mielic, Zaidy Landau was hopeful. "Perhaps," he thought "Mielic will offer improved conditions." Upon his arrival, an inmate

* Subcamp of Plaszow

informed him that Aaron, his brother, and some other family members were in Mielic Lager as well. Zaidy was beside himself with simcha. Being together with family would clearly make his stay more bearable. The commanding officer asked Zaidy the nature of his profession. In response, Zaidy informed him that he was an experienced tailor. It was with foresight that at the onset of WWII, his mother, Leah, insisted on his apprenticeship at a tailor. She knew that mastering a profession might become the key to survival.

To brand the prisoners, the Nazis would tattoo their arms by inserting burning hot needles into their skin. The process was torturous and humiliating. The contaminated needles bred infection. Zaidy's arm was tattooed with the insignia "KL." To this day, as he rolls up his sleeve, Zaidy repeatedly says, "This does not stand for 'Koncentracia Lager.' This marks 'Kodesh LaHashem.'" He wears it as a badge of honor. It is his way of serving Hashem. Several years ago, at Shaindy Weiss's tnoyim, Zaidy Landau was seated next to R' Hershela of Spinka. R' Hershela noticed the inscription on Zaidy's arm. With a deep *krechtz* and wave of his hand he implied to Zaidy that he too commiserates with him. Zaidy instantly enlightened him, "*Das macht Kodesh LaHashem.*" The Rebbe was flabbergasted. What piety! He gave Zaidy a winning smile and thanked him for sharing the insight with him.

Always on the lookout to salvage scraps of food, Zaidy Landau finally spotted a small fortune. Cooked potatoes! What a sumptuous meal this would make! Selflessly, Zaidy gathered the weaklings to come share the feast. He divided the potatoes amongst the many gathered, and was left with but a spoonful. What better taste can one savor than sharing the *letzten bissen*? For Zaidy, that taste lingered on long after the food was gone.

Since Zaidy's deft hands could master almost any skill, he was assigned to the crucial task of creating gyroscopes, an intricate part of plane navigation. With dexterity he mastered the skill. His work was considered amongst the best, tailored to perfection. Working alongside his Aryan assistant, Zaidy realized soon enough that he would need to complete the work single-handedly. Zaidy's patient coaching fell on deaf ears; the gentile could not master the skill. At

day's end, when the Oibermeister made his daily inspections, the Aryan assistant was quick to take credit for Zaidy's meticulous work. Impressed by his excellent craftsmanship the Aryan was awarded extra food rations. Zaidy opted to overlook the pretense, not wanting to create a stir.

Although required to work seven days a week, Zaidy tried to refrain from deliberately desecrating the Shabbos. When the machine's motor would need to be turned on or off, Zaidy found lame excuses, and so the task was left for the gentile. Fearful that his scheme would be divulged, Zaidy let the Aryan gentile merit the credit for his skillful work. The gentile soon found favor in the eyes of the high ranking inspectors, while Zaidy turned a blind eye. As a token of appreciation for remaining mum, the assistant would occasionally slip a slice of bread into Zaidy's tool bag.

One night, Itcha Leib Safern gathered the remaining family members at the Mielic Lager. He asked them to form a circle and there they sat, huddled together, cherishing those last moments. Amongst the assembled were Zaidy Landau, Uncle Aaron, Boruch Hofferlink, Itcha Leib Safern and little Sphrintzala. Their moment of silence did not last long. Suddenly a siren was heard announcing another transport. With that they sadly bid farewell, never to be reunited as a group again. Zaidy and Uncle Aaron were taken to Flosenberg. While Zaidy remained in Flosenberg, Uncle Aaron was transferred soon thereafter to Dachau, and then onto Leit Meirtz.

FLOSSENBÜRG LAGER

Location: Germany, near Bayreuth
Established on: 1938
Liberation: April 23th, 1945, by the 2nd U.S. Cavalry
Estimated number of victims: 73,000

After Dachau, Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen, Flossenbürg was the fourth concentration camp established in Germany by the Nazis. It was in a small village located in a beautiful area, with many forests and mountains, not far from Weiden.

Living conditions in Flossenbürg were extremely hard. The SS administration itself considered Flossenbürg as a "Hard Regime" concentration camp. Most of the prisoners had to work in the stone quarries. The malnutrition, the total lack of hygiene and medical care, and the brutality of the SS guards were the main causes of the death of thousands of prisoners in Flossenbürg as well as in its sub-camps.

The prisoners in Flossenbürg were housed in 16 huge wooden barracks. The camp also had a kitchen, an infirmary ("Revier"), a laundry, and a disinfecting house. There were crematories and an execution place located just beside the crematories. The whole camp was surrounded by an electrified barbed wire fence and watchtowers. The original camp was established in 1938 for 1,600 prisoners. Some months later, the camp was transformed in order to house 3,000 prisoners. Eventually, more than 111,000 prisoners were incarcerated in Flossenbürg and its sub-camps — 95,400 men and 16,000 women. It is estimated that 73,000 prisoners died.

The camp was liberated on April 23, 1945, by the 2nd U.S. Calvary. There were only some hundreds of ill and weak prisoners left. The other prisoners — more than 14,000 men and women — were forced by the SS to leave the camp in a Death March on January 19, 1945, weeks before the Allied troops arrived. Those who were too weak to march were shot by the thousands. As they marched through the severity of winter to new locations, tens of thousands more were shot for minor infractions. Three days after the liberation of the main camp, a U.S. unit retrieved the survivors of this Death March. All of them were in pitiful condition, and in only three days, more than 4,000 prisoners died of weakness or starvation.

> Eyewitness account from 97th Infantry Division: *The Jewish chaplain, along with my assistant Ervin Royse and I drove to the camp at Flossenbürg. I expected to find some of our troops in charge, but none were there due to the fact that the camp had just been liberated. We found a Jewish lad of about thirteen or fourteen years of age who had been a prisoner. Fortunately, he and our Jewish chaplain spoke in Yiddish, which became our language of contact. Since this young boy seemed to be the only child around, I supposed the*

German guards had not harmed him. He was nicely dressed and not emaciated as the other prisoners. This young boy became our guide. We saw one of the barracks where the prisoners stayed. He told of sleeping on the bare wooden bunks. Sometimes the person sleeping next to him had died in the night. He told us that there were prisoners marked for death by starvation, but in whom the will to live was strong, and these were eliminated by holding their heads under water. He showed us the path from the main buildings where the prisoners had to remove their clothes before walking down a number of steps into a small open area where they had placed the gallows. Near this were buildings in which they stacked the bodies until they had time to burn them. There was a stack of many bodies there. Near this I observed a large cistern-like area with an opening of about six or eight feet in diameter. The furnaces were nearby. Looking down, I saw that it was almost full of small bones. I realized that this was the remains of all the bodies of persons who had been cremated. I wondered how many thousands of bodies had been cremated in this manner. As I looked down, I prayed that Hashem would have mercy on those who had been so mercilessly treated.

Zaidy at Flossenbürg

There in the dank, overcrowded barracks, morale amongst the inmates was tanking. During the day, Zaidy along with others familiar with aerodynamics, were marched past the padlocked gate to nearby Altenhamer Village, home of the Messer Schmitt factory. The Messer Schmitt factory is the birthplace of the MS Me 262, the first operational jet-propelled aircraft, and the only one of its type to see significant action in WWII. Zaidy was assigned to a role of paramount importance, creating cylinders for this military aircraft.

Naftula Vietchner, a brilliant young bochur, held the position of Messer Schmitt's bookkeeper and stockroom manager. In the warehouse, among the barrels of metal scraps, assorted screws, and

navigational supplies, Naftula obscurely hid a precious pair of Tefillin shel Rosh. Every morning a select few, entrusted with the Teflon's whereabouts, would be seen furtively making their way to the stockroom. Zaidy, a trusted friend of Naftula, would covertly dispose of some screws, granting him reason to replenish his supply from the warehouse. Stealthily, he would don the Tefillin and recite *Kris Schema.* As Zaide pronounced each word slowly, his eyes darted to the door, hoping that unwelcome intruders would not enter. In a dash, he would quickly return to work, where his absence oftentimes would go unnoticed.

One fateful morning, Zaidy's worst fears were confirmed. With the tefillin shel Rosh still perched on his forehead, in walked a Nazi sergeant. In a fury he bellowed, "What connections do you have? I have caught you, an Allied spy, communicating to your satellite station. Remove the radio transmitters from your head, and hand them over. Espionage is a crime punishable by death. You will pay dearly." When Zaidy removed the Tefillin and explained to the officer that they were used for praying, not spying, the officer spat and walked off. As Zaidy tenderly laid the sacred tefillin back into its hiding place he breathed a silent prayer to Hashem, thanking him for once again being his savior.

Purim night, returning from a taxing day at work, the Jewish troupe reached their barracks tired and fatigued. As the men prepared for another restless night on the bare wooden planks, one of the elders called out, "Tonight is Purim. Let us try to celebrate by reading the Megillah." "But we don't have a Megillah," a soft cry was heard. The silence was broken when a young comrade pointed to Naftula Vietchner and said, "He is a learned scholar. He has memorized most of the mishnas. I am sure he knows the Megillah by heart." Modestly, Naftula nodded and began reciting the Megillah to the traditional tune. Reading the miracle of Purim kindled new hope amongst the assembled.

Erev Pesach, the bitter reality set in. There would be no arbah koises, nor matzah, but plenty of maror. In discussion, the boys pondered how many times they would transgress by reciting the Seder Kiddush over bread. Deep in thought, Naftula Vietchner walked off.

He rummaged through the kitchen trash and salvaged a treasure, a lone radish. Gleefully, he called to the men, "Don't despair. Your prayers have been answered. Kiddush will be made over 'karpas'." Zaidy then presented the eldest with a neatly pressed rag to be used as a head covering whilst making Kiddush.

Word amongst the high-ranking Nazi commandos spread quickly. The young man, Shimon Landau, aside from being a skilled worker, possessed a pair of adroit hands and was a tailor to boot. Late into the night, Zaidy would sit at the *esszhall's* sewing machine and sew the lieutenants' uniforms, caps and miscellaneous items. To ensure that their personal tailor would not die of starvation, they would throw him some leftover food from time to time. Zaidy would carefully wrap the food scraps and bring it back to the barracks, where he would generously share it with his ravenous inmates.

Uncle Aaron recalls: "It was after the camp's liberation. I was standing near my brother when a foreigner approached, and warmly embraced him. In explanation, my brother described those cold lagger nights when he would return with his prized possession, the meager scraps of food, only to find this starved young man amongst others awaiting his arrival. He evenly distributed the coveted edibles, and was thankful to see yet another survivor. He gave shevach to Hashem for giving him the fortitude to withstand the temptation of eating the food in solitude."

LUJTENBERG LAGER

In Lujtenberg Lager, near the city of Stutka, Uncle Aaron worked with the assembly of small aircrafts designed to attack enemy planes. Promptly at 11:00 a.m., the German officer would put their work under careful scrutiny. One fateful morning, the officer noticed a loose screw in one of Uncle Aaron's parts. Ruthlessly, the officer threw Uncle Aaron to the ground, ordering him to stretch his arms. Twenty lashes meted out was a punishment few survived. The S.S. officer removed his whip and mercilessly began lashing at the recoiled body.

One lash — what excruciating pain!

Two lashes — the torturous pain was unbearable.

Uncle Aaron fell into a semi-conscious state. In a state of oblivion, a shadow of Bobbeh Pessil, who had long passed away, suddenly towered over him. Uncle Aaron braced himself for the continued floggings, however none were forthcoming. Fearfully, he slowly opened his eyes. Lo! The red-faced officer was advancing with yet another flurry of lashes, but the throbbing pain was no longer present. Evidently Bobbeh Pessil shielded him, as she absorbed the whip-lashings.

Watching from the sidelines, an Untermeister (assistant) could witness the torture no longer. "Ganug!" he yelled. Although the beating was curtailed, the officer was not through with Uncle Aaron. He immediately reassigned him to an intolerable task. With his hands raised above his head, he was to hold a heavy piece of metal in place while a gentile worker would drill a hole, inserting a nut and bolt. Holding the heavy, unsteady metal in place against the strong vibration of the saw was totally impossible. As the worker prepared to insert the screw, the heavy metal suddenly dropped from Uncle Aaron's hands. Goaded by hatred, the gentile worker attacked him. With vengeance, he grabbed a nearby plank of wood and callously beat the frightened lad. In self-defense, Uncle Aaron lay down on the floor and began crying hysterically. Has he not surpassed his level of affliction? A passing officer took pity, and transferred him to his original post.

THERESIENSTADT* / CONCENTRATION CAMP / LEITMERITZ

Leitmeritz, a subcamp of Theresienstadt concentration camp in Czechoslovakia, was created in July of 1944 with the intention to dig anti-tank trenches. The Germans, in an effort to outsmart the allies, began building warplanes underground. Overcrowding and malnutrition killed thousands of prisoners and disease killed thousands more. Only one in eight new arrivals survived. An interior

* Terezin

gate inside the Small Fortress held the famous Nazi slogan "Arbeit Macht Frei" (Work Will Free).

> Post wars visitors eyewitness account to Terezin concentration camp: One of the many things that intrigued me about Terezin is that it had been used during the war as a facade: it was tarred up by the Nazis to look like a spa town to the International Red Cross. The ruse worked and the Red Cross backed off, allowing the death camps to continue their horrific work.
>
> Our first stop once inside the walls was at a row of "isolation cells," rooms big enough to hold a pallet about the size of today's twin bed, and not much else. It took me about three steps to walk the length of the cell. I did so several times and tried to calculate how long it would have taken me to go crazy in such a place.
>
> Next we saw some of the common rooms for women prisoners, perhaps the size of a two-car garage, which held 25-30 people and provided no electricity or running water.
>
> Brutal as they were, neither of these places prepared me for what came next: a room where the SS gave prisoners "extra treatment," as our guide put it. The most appalling example he told us was that the SS would lock 100 or so people in a space the size of your average suburban living room, without food or water-and simply wait for them all to die.
>
> Around the corner was the shower room. Our guide must have seen our stunned expressions and read our minds: "These were actually showers, not gas chambers. In fact, one way that the inmates of Terezin found out about the gas chambers in the camps to the east was from a group of children who'd been shipped back to Terezin from Auschwitz. The children were to be deloused and began crying at the sight of the shower room, screaming, 'Gas! Gas!'"
>
> We continued past the house where the camp commander and ranking guards lived to the target range. Prisoners would be forced to run from one side of the yard to the other, providing moving targets for the SS guards.

We walked through an opening in a high wall and the sight of gallows knotted my insides. Our guide pointed out the two sets of steps resting on the platform of the gallows, upon which the condemned stood. He worked as a carpenter in the camp and had himself made the steps, not knowing their purpose.

Next came a "newer" section of the fortress, added during the war to house the growing number of prisoners. The common cells here actually provided electricity and running water at certain times of the day. The cells surrounded a courtyard where all the prisoners would be brought together on occasion. For example, our guide told us about the time three prisoners escaped from the camp. The prisoners were assembled in the courtyard and watched as three other prisoners were chosen and stoned to death. Later, when the surviving escapees were captured, the prisoners were reassembled and the escapees stoned to death as well.

We left the Small Fortress and drove to the Large Fortress and the Terezin ghetto.

The rain had come and gone throughout the day, but as we got out of the bus to walk to the Jewish cemetery, it began to come down in buckets. Our guide explained that these were mass graves, and pointed out one monument that had been placed there. I can paraphrase the inscription: "For those for whom it was not possible to rest in their own land."

The climactic moment of the tour was a visit to the crematorium. A small anteroom displayed prisoners' drawings of the crematorium, as well as Nazi propaganda art praising the efficiency of the site and examples of records kept at the camp. One of our group pointed out a meticulously-kept list of prisoners' names and said, "This is why I can't understand why anyone can deny there was a Holocaust. The Nazis wrote down everything."

I could hear sheets of rain falling outside. Our guide ushered us into the crematorium itself with a sentence that ended in the word "death." As this word left his lips, a thunderclap

struck outside and I didn't know whether to shake or jump-so I did both. An intensely scary moment.

Visiting a concentration camp is not an enjoyable experience, yet I believe it is an intensely valuable one. It provides you with a focal point for everything you've seen in films and read in books about the Holocaust. It also helps you to view events in your own life with a new perspective: as a copywriter and graphic designer, I'll never look at the "life-and-death" arguments we have about grammatical correctness and font size the same way again.

If you visit Prague, tear yourself away from that beautiful city to spend a day in Terezin. As the woman who signed the Jewish museum's guest book ahead of me wrote, "We must never forget."

Uncle Aaron at Leit Meritz

Uncle Aaron recalls this lagger as his most treacherous war experience. Suffering from malnutrition, skeletal, Uncle Aaron was handed an axe and ordered to excavate a rocky mountain. Colossal rocks were broken and hauled away to make room for an underground tunnel. Subjected to torturous conditions Uncle Aaron felt many a time that he could no longer continue. His Rebbe, Reb Benzion Halberstam of Bobov, deceased at the time, would oftentimes appear in his dreams. After each occurrence Unlce Aaron would gain renewed strength, assured in the knowledge that the Rebbe was protecting him. Seforim note that when one is attached to a Tzaddik, he will reap the benefits long after the Tzaddik has passed on. When the Tzaddik is niftar he will beg in the Heavenly courts on his behalf.

With Allied forces fast approaching the Germans were eager to dissolve evidence of Theresienstadt Camp as well as annihilate the remaining survivors. Evacuations were underway. Thousands of Jews were transported to Dachau, an extermination camp.

In July of 1944, during Germany's military collapse, the converg-

ing armies of the allies liberated the people at the concentration camps. The Germans began retreating to their own territory. They loaded what was left of the concentration camp prisoners onto cattle cars. Suddenly an American plane flew overhead. Out of the open cars, the Jewish prisoners raised their hands to Shomayim and thanked Hashem that the end was finally in sight. The Nazis warned them to stay still, threatening to kill anyone attempting escape. With that, they quickly ran for cover.

On the opposite side of the track, the hungry Yidden saw a train transporting barrels of sugar and crates of sardines. The gaunt prisoners, who had not been fed in days, stood there with their heads hanging out of the car craving the food across the platform. But nobody dared to move, until one meek voice was heard. It was the voice of our Uncle Aaron. He told the passengers he would risk his life and run across the platform on condition that he would not be betrayed. Uncle Aaron mustered his last bit of strength, made his way to the end of the cattle car and descended. He sprinted across, lifted a crate of sardines onto his shoulders and ran back. He handed the crate to the outstretched arms of the fellow prisoners, and they quickly divided the contents amongst them and handed the empty crate back. Uncle Aaron quickly made his way back for another supply. He ventured this risky trip several times until finally he climbed safely back into the cattle car. The ravenous Jews were ecstatic! They consumed the sardines and sugar in no time at all.

The warplanes moved on and the Germans, with the looming threat gone, quickly emerged from their hiding places. With an extra dose of malice they began making their rounds in the cattle cars. Had anyone escaped? When they chanced upon a man bent over a bag of sugar, licking the last grain of what was left, they instantly shot him. How dare he eat? The Germans were furious. How did this man get food? They began searching the cattle cars to find the culprit. Uncle Aaron quickly sat down over the crate to hide the evidence, and as every limb in his body was quaking he said a quick prayer to Hashem to guard him through the ordeal. The Germans pressed, threatened and yelled but they never found the perpetrator. The cattle cars arrived to Dachau amidst chaos.

LIBERATION AT LAST!

Abram Sachar's account of the liberation of Dachau: "...most of the German staff have fled, leaving the prisoners and a few SS men to fend for themselves

"On the last Sunday of April 1945, the first Allied soldier, an American scout of Polish descent, came through the gate of the main Dachau camp. The few Nazis in the tower watched apprehensively. They were no longer there as guards; they had been ordered to stay on merely to complete the formalities of surrender. The upper ranks had already fled, to blend in among the German civilian population. The young American's first impression, later detailed in an interview, was one of `glaring chaos,' thousands of ragged skeletons, in the yard, in the trees, waving little rags, climbing over one another, hysterical, completely out of control. The scout went back for support and returned with a small detachment. The flags of many Allied nations had suddenly appeared. Apparently the prisoners had been secretly piecing them together over the months, from tatters and patches and strips of cloth.

"Soon the advance scouts were joined by other Allied soldiers and one of the German guards came forward to surrender with what he believed would be the usual military protocol. He emerged in full regalia, wearing all his decorations. He had only recently been billeted to Dachau from the Russian front. He saluted and barked `Heil Hitler.' An American officer looked down and around at mounds of rotting corpses, at thousands of prisoners shrouded in their own filth. He hesitated only a moment, then spat in the Nazi's face, snapping `Schweinehund,' before ordering him taken away. Moments later a shot rang out and the American officer was informed that there was no further need for protocol.

"Some of the Nazis were rounded up and summarily executed along with the guard dogs. General Eisenhower sent a laconic communiqué from headquarters: `Our forces liberated

and mopped up the infamous concentration camp at Dachau. Approximately 32,000 prisoners were liberated; 300 SS camp guards were quickly neutralized.'

"During the next few days as the burials went forward, the sick and the dying were transferred to hospital facilities, makeshift as they had to be, and food was carefully distributed. `Prescribed' might be the better word, for the starving had to adjust their food intake with medical discipline.

FLOSSENBÜRG LIBERATION

April 23, 1945 at 10:30 A.M. American soldiers of the 90th Infantry Division arrived at the Flossenbürg Concentration camp. There a horrific scene unfolded before their eyes. Hundred of skeletal survivors were standing at the padlocked gate, attempting to remove the large iron lock. On the side lay the remains of thousands of lifeless bodies. While the American soldiers attempted to find temporary placement for the liberated prisoners, the Red Cross was setting up DP camps for survivors to be fed, deloused and given medical treatment.

No sooner did the lager iron gate swing open when hundreds of emaciated boys came bolting out. In a frenzy, they began shouting, *"Mir huben ibergelebt! Nekumah! Nekumah!"* With invigorated strength they made their way to the nearby farmers and ransacked their homes. At nightfall they returned with an accumulation of clothing and livestock. Zaidy Landau was presented with a brown suit with the premise that he would assume the role of shochet. Zaidy looked askance. "How can I slaughter your livestock, when I have not studied the laws of shechita." They responded that he was the most respected pious person amongst them. Zaidy, although relishing the taste of chicken, would not entertain the thought of slaughtering the animal. As the group turned to another inmate, brown suit in hand, Zaidy walked off.

At first, the American Army Chaplain approached a nearby farmer asking him to provide food and shelter for Zaidy Landau. Noting that

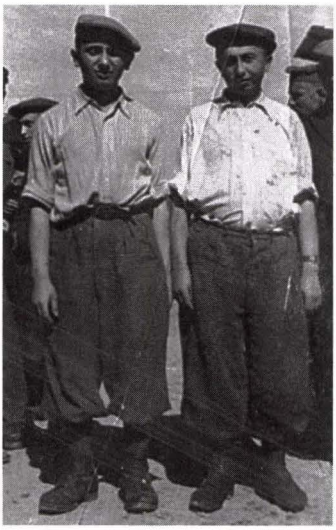
Zaidy was a skilled laborer, the farmer expected Zaidy to earn his keep. Zaidy was put to work in the fields. He planted the seeds for the next season's crop. However after two short weeks, his health returned and he departed, eager to join a Yiddish group at the D.P. camp.

Zaidy went to Shwandorf D.P. camp, where he was happily reunited with his brother Aaron.

The bitter war wiped out much of our Jewish nation. The survivors, wandering skeletal figures, were broken and crestfallen. The tear ducts dried out, their tears simply ceased to flow. Barbaric scenes witnessed daily dulled their emotions. Would human instinct ever rekindle? Would the desire to live surface? It was a trying period.

The survivors could not shake off recurring scenes of brutal horror. Fear and trepidation were their ever-present shadows. Orphaned from family and friends, a searing pain slowly reawakened. Once again their tears flowed unchecked. "Did we survive this war only to be left alone?" While many went in fruitless search to locate living family members, others gave in to deep depression.

Finally, the JOINT organization was established. All survivors were placed in Displaced Camps. At first Zaidy and Uncle Aaron were placed in Feldarfing and later they were moved to Foehrenwald, to meet up with their cousin Shia Volf Safern. Out of the ashes, rescued from the blazing inferno of death, Shia Volf spearheaded a rebirth movement amongst his fellow Yidden. He assumed the role of shadchan and introduced many a couple. It was in Foehrenwald where he suggested the match between Shimon Landau and his sister Sima Baila Safern, who was still at the D.P. camp in Krumbach.



Landau Brothers at Feldarfing DP Camp

The Landau/Safern war-survivors have forged a path with fortitude and honor for us to follow. They are an inspiration to us all. We must never forget.

Chapter Four

Starting Anew

The Tenoyim

Zaidy was traveling from Foehrenwald to Krumbach to meet his kallah. In those days, a potato was treasured, yet somehow Zaidy managed to obtain a dainty watch along with a freshly baked cake to present to his kallah. At nightfall, he stopped at an inn to rest, hoping to continue that last leg of his journey in the morning. He awoke with a start! The room had been raided! During the night a thief had stolen the watch while mice feasted on the cake. Composing himself, he determinedly decided that nothing would come in the way of his simcha. He arrived empty-handed to the Tnoyim. Throughout their marriage, Zaidy made up for it many times over. He always treated his wife, our Bobby, like a princess.

During their engagement, Zaidy received a relief package from U.N.R.R.A. (United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration). As a charming groom-to-be, he removed the perishables and repackaged selected food items, which he promptly sent off to his fiancée. Among the goodies lay a bar of chocolate exuding tantalizing aromas. The packaged arrived to the elated kallah. Ecstatic, she called to Tante Shprintza to share her small fortune. The delicacy was immediately stored out of reach, reserved for a special Shabbos treat. All week long, the two young women would reach into the cupboard and slowly inhale; the delicious

Bobby and Zaidy's Tenayim

smell wafted up their noses and they simply could not wait for the coming Shabbos.

Finally, the long awaited moment arrived. They unwrapped the chocolate bar, attempting to break it in half. When they couldn't, they each bit into the chocolate. Simultaneously they spit it out. The taste was horrendous; there was a burning sensation on their tongues! The smell was delicious, but it was definitely not chocolate. The beautiful wrapped delicacy turned out to be none other than a brown bar of soap![29]

29 Anecdote source: The Saf Sez

FOEHRENWALD

The Chasunah

The Chasunah date was set for the sixth day in Sivan. Bobby wore a bridal gown that had been sent from Reb. Shternbuch from Switzerland. This very gown was passed around and worn by all the Foehrenwald kallahs. Luckily for Bobby, the fit was seemingly okay. A pair of size 10 white pumps circulated amongst the brides. In an effort to keep the shoes from slipping, Bobby stuffed them with cotton. The Chupah was held at the Bais Yakov communal center. As Uncle Volf and Reb. H. Tauber, the *untefeirars,* walked the groom to the Chupah, there was not a dry eye to be seen. With the obvious absence of parents and loved ones, the ceremony was emotionally stirring. The Klauzenberger Rebbe officiated. Indeed, he was the D.P.'s most influential person, responsible for rekindling the flame in Jewish neshamahs. After the Chupah, close friends gathered in a nearby bedroom all set for a modest meal. Hours before the wedding, devoted friends emptied the room, making way for tables and benches. Hot potato soup and chicken, slaughtered by Mr. Burach Ganz, a shochet from *der heim,* were served. For many this was their first piece of kosher meat in years.

As the assemblage joined hands in tune to a joyous niggen, the somber, heavy mood was lifted. Live music was lacking, but a badchen *grammed* to a modest mitzvah *tanz.*

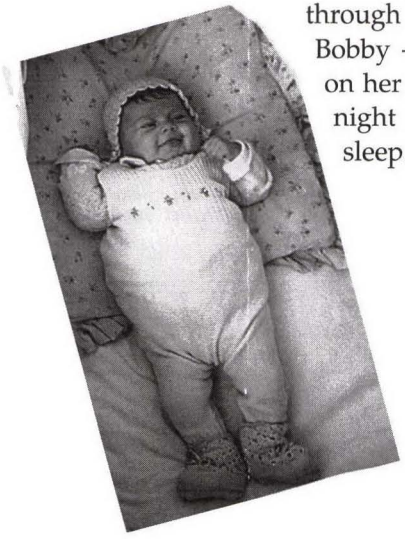
The young bride's trousseau consisted of donated handouts. A white sheet served a dual purpose: covering the table during the daytime and the mattress at night. The Klauzenberger Rebbe presented every kallah with $50 towards the purchase of a wig. The wig, made of inferior quality, coarse hair, was impossible to comb. Thus, the knotted wig was disdainfully referred to as a *'knup sheitel'* He also supplied the frum women with oversized men shirts. Army shoes were distributed by American soldiers to men and woman alike. Penniless, the young couple would acquire household provisions either through bartering cigarettes, or picking through piles of

discarded items.

From the onset, the independent couple would make every effort to remain self-sufficient. Uncle Volf invited them for their first Pesach, but Zaidy and Bobby rejected the invitation. They were eagerly anticipating their first Seder at home. Throughout the years, Uncle Volf served as a father figure to Bobby. When Zaidy and Bobby were selecting a Yeshiva for their boys, Uncle Volf was consulted for the final decision.

JULY 1948

Mazel Tov! A beautiful baby was born; Chavy made a dream come true. Alone, Bobby found the daunting task of motherhood overwhelming. The newborn cried through the night and Bobby, unfamiliar with colic, spent the night warming bottles, burping and fussing over the baby. A concerned neighbor met Zaidy in the hall inquiring about the baby, "Why does she cry all night?" Zaidy innocently remarked," She is a *teir kint*, and of course sleeps right through the night" The neighbor was horrified. "Through the wall, I can hear her cries, and you sleep through it?" But that was so distinctive of Bobby — she would handle everything on her own, even if it meant staying up night after night while she let Zaidy sleep.



Chapter Five

On Free Soil

Once again, it was time to uproot. Zaidy and Bobby set sail on a steamship to America. Chavy came down with whooping cough. Bobby fed her bottles of Carnation concentrated milk, unaware that it needed to be diluted. No wonder the child vomited continuously! After eight long and hard weeks aboard, land was finally in sight. News traveled quickly — young and old came dashing onto the deck to see America at last. Folk tales had it that American streets were paved in gold. Would America truly be a dream come true? As the ship neared the port, the Europeans noticed that most of the Americans were wearing glasses. What a "spectacle!" Did the air in America ruin their eyesight? In Europe wearing glasses was frowned upon- it was considered an impairment, to be avoided at all costs.

The steamship docked on Shabbos. Uncle Jake and his daughters ran all the way to the port to welcome his family. Tante Anne, with



Bobby and Zaidy's citizenship papers

her sensitivity, had forewarned her children never to remind Bobby or Zaidy of their suffering, or make them feel like "*greene*" (immigrants). The young Landau family was an extension of Tante Anne's family and she equally divided all she had amongst them. Bobby and Zaidy were forever grateful for their amazing hospitality.

Zaidy and Bobby were quickly settled at the HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) shelter. Probing Yidden visited around the clock, anxious to hear yet another war story. Bobby could not bear repeating the horrors and atrocities she witnessed. Sharing the terrifying experiences to one who has never experienced such torture would reduce the suffering to a tale — the pain was too deep. Bobby gently put a stop to the well-meaning inquiries and vowed to remain silent until the proper time would come.

After a short stay at the HIAS shelter, Uncle Jake and Tante Anne helped them locate an apartment on the Lower East Side. The small and cozy top floor apartment on Colombia Street rented at $14 a month. Quite a fortune! Life was hard and difficult. The emotional impact of losing one's family, the physical hardship of starting anew in a foreign land, coupled with the economical struggle could have been devastating. However, blessed with wonderful neighbors, the Goodsteins, Bobby was soon acclimated and the future seemed promising once again. Libby, fondly dubbed Tante Goodstein, was an exemplary Tzedeikas. She was always on the run in search for Mitzvos. The entire Goodstein family had taken the young Landau family under their wing. Tanta Goodstein would take Bobby to the market, helping her select '*metziahs*,' while Malkala and Chayala Goodstein were thrilled to shower young Chavie with attention, often taking her to the park. Tante Goodstein was especially keen on Gemilas Chassadim. Of European descent, Tanta Goodstein was honored to live next door to the Landaus, since their Chassidishe traditional lifestyle triggered warm memories.

In the summertime, Bobby and the children would vacation at a bungalow colony. Zeidy would stay behind to support his family. Tante Goodstein would prepare his supper every night. To ensure that Zaidy's *Chimros* were followed, the food was cooked in Bobby's pots. In Bobby's absence, the Goodsteins tended to all of Zaidy's needs.



Tante Anne and Bobby

Tante Anne, living in close proximity, would stop by at every opportunity. As an immaculate housewife and excellent balubusta, she was quick to share useful tips. She sewed beautiful clothing for young Chavie, and always delighted the family with her famous "Tante Anne's cookies." From time to time she would indulge the family with surprise gifts. One Chanukah, in her typical manner, Tante Anne arrived unannounced lugging a large gift-wrapped package. To the family's delight, out came a new phonograph, along with some Yosela Rosenblat albums. Sunday brunch at Tante Anne's was an occasion to look forward to. Fresh bagels smeared with cream cheese and nova lox were followed by homemade chocolate pudding. As surrogate mother, Tante Anne was balm to the wounds of a young orphaned mother.

Zeidy found a job in a factory as a machine operator where he was revered and respected by all. During the holiday season, his gentile co-workers would present him with fine wine and other gift items. On one occasion, Zaidy received a Walkie Talkie doll for little Chavelah. Zaidy removed his pocket knife and promptly cut the doll's pinky. He patiently explained to Chavie that cutting off the doll's limb now made the doll permissive for use in his household. Otherwise the doll would be considered an idol and could not remain in his house.

Max Yudel, the foreman, took Zaidy under his tutelage. In no time he showed him the ropes of the clothing business. He explained that in order to conserve time and money, the garments' buttons need be sewn strong enough to last through its trip home.

Once the garment was purchased, it was no longer necessary for the buttons to remain intact. To this very day, whenever Zaidy admires a new garment, he automatically reaches for a needle and thread to reinforce the buttons.

Zaidy was an active constituent in the building of the East Side's Cheredim Shul Mikvah. Spearheaded by Mr. Sprei, the project involved fundraising, engineering, and being on hand to provide technical assistance. Many a Yom Tov, Zaidy would walk across the bridge to Williamsburg and daven with the Satmar Rebbe. He had a burning desire to be close to a Tzadik. On occasion, Zaidy sewed *koplich* for the Satmar Rebbe, slipping a kvittel into its lining. Zaidy was honored to fulfill the request of the Stropkiver Rebbe. He sewed the Rebbe's bekesha complete with *strokkes* and velvet trim. As Zaidy presented the finished product to the beaming Rebbe, he forfeited compensation for an explanation of the *strokkes'* symbolic meaning.

The first Pesach on free soil was fast approaching. Bobby spent her time divided between cleaning her house and the heavy load of pre-Pesach cooking. Zaidy, usually her right hand in the kitchen, spent his spare time at the sewing machine, designing white kitlach. It all started when an old acquaintance approached Zaidy. His modest request was to own a white kittel sewn by a pious and G-d fearing Jew. Zaidy was happy to oblige, and before long many a Chassid sat Seder night clad in a handtailored kittel, compliments of Shimon Landau.



Bobby & little Chavie

Reb. Yankela Pshvorsker *zt'l* was a frequent Landau house guest. He enjoyed many a meal at their cozy table, and spent hours conversing with Zaidy. Bobby would send him off with a freshly laundered Tallis, washed and ironed to perfection.

When Chavie turned six, Zaidy went to the Bobover Rav *zt'l to* receive a blessing. The Rebbe advised him to move. *"M'shanah M'kum, M'shanah Mazel."* Bobby and Zaidy wasted no time in heeding his advice.

JUNE 1956

Moving day arrived. The Landaus moved to 709 FDR Drive, apartment 3-I. True to the Rebbe's word, Layee was born a short time later. After eight years, her birth caused a great sensation!

Tante Gutshtein dropped in on Bobby just as she was getting ready to leave to the hospital. "Where are you going so late at night?" she queried. "I'm going to the butcher," was Bobby's quick response. (Years later Bobby would turn to her thin daughter and say, "I went to the butcher to buy some meat and instead returned with a bag of bones!") Tante Gutshtein offered to accompany Bobby. As the twosome neared the butcher, Bobby could no longer keep up the charade and revealed the truth. Tante Gutshtein grabbed Bobby by the hand as she hailed a cab to the nearby hospital. Before long, the beaming doctor appeared in the lobby. "Congratulations, your daughter just gave birth to a bouncing nine pound baby." Tante Gutshtein lost no time, rummaging through her oversized bag to find change. Jittery with excitement, she dialed Zaidy's number. "Mazel Tov," she yelled, "a Boyala!"

Zaidy was beside himself with joy. A boy after eight long years! He wasted no time and quickly ordered a Mohel. He then made the arrangements for the Shalom Zocher. Since it was Thursday night he asked a neighbor to cook some chick peas. With all that done, he hailed a taxi to the hospital. A glowing smile on his face, the proud father entered



Lively little Layee with Bobby

the nursery. "Can I see the Landau boy born today?" "There were no boys born today in this hospital. You must mean the Landau girl." Zaidy was crestfallen. He tried to compose himself as he entered Bobby's room. Bobby was a smart woman and was able to read his facial expression. Something was amiss! Boy! She had a good laugh when she heard the Mohel was ordered and that the 'Arbis' were cooked.

JANUARY 1958

To everyone's great joy a beautiful boy was born just a year and a half later. Little Naftuli graced Zaidy's arms. Arrangements were made for the bris to be held at the Satmar Shul in Williamsburg, with the Satmar Rebbe as *sandik*. Due to a heavy blizzard, the bris was prepared at home. Uncle Volf was the *Sandik* and Reb Aaron Miller was the *Mohel*.

Bobby spent her long summer afternoons in the park. There she would sit absorbed in her knitting while the children frolicked in the sunshine. Before long, she was encircled by a group of young eager mothers, anticipating their next knitting lesson. The other mothers would bring their knitting projects to the park and would ask her for advice and instructions. Throughout her life, she always found the time and the patience to teach others to knit. She would never stop at the basics — she would show them the advanced stitches until they mastered the art.



Naftule, a boy at last!

In an effort to learn English, Bobby enrolled at a local night school. Upon the completion of the first semester, Bobby, encouraged by her quick progress, registered for the second course. Zaidy discouraged her, with the pretense that she had already mastered the language.

Although Bobby had a thirst for knowledge and a desire to continue her education, she obliged and cancelled her registration.

One winter, the apparel industry dipped into an all time low. With no prior notice, Zaidy was laid off from work. Incidentally, he was offered a position as a substitute *Melamed* in the *Belzer Yeshiva*. Zaidy basked in the glory of teaching *Yiddishe kinder*. This was right up his alley. The coming of the spring season introduced a sudden wave of retail fever. Business at the factory was once again humming. Zaidy's foreman, Max Yudel, called Zaidy appealing to him to return to work. When he sensed the hesitation in Zaidy's voice he attempted to lull him back to work with an offer of increased pay along with fringe benefits. With Bobby's approval, Zaidy declined; he had found his calling- teaching *Yiddishe kinder*. Consequently, right then and there Zaidy's career as a *Melamed* became firmly rooted.

Bobby and Zaidy frugally scrimped and saved in an effort to make ends meet. Yet, they were always accepting and contented. A frequent phrase around the house was "*Dus iz Fin die shensta and die beste,*" even if it was hand-me-downs or second quality. The children, picking up from their parents example, were satisfied with their lot.

SCHOOL DAYS

While the children were asleep, Bobby would tiptoe into the room and lovingly prepare freshly pressed clothing for the next day. In the mornings, the girls would ready themselves while Bobby would dress little Naftuli besides the open oven already warming the small room.

Naftali, standing upright on a kitchen chair would recite the morning 'Berochos' with Bobby. In a sing-song his sweet voice rang out, '*Al Mitzvas Tzizis*', kissing his Tzizis and then '*Al Mitzvas Mommy*' kissing his mother.

Each morning, Layee, at the ripe age of five, would stand at the door as Chavie and Zaidy were off to school. How she pleaded to join them! Zaidy felt that her place was at home, where Bobby

would tenderly care for her, feeding her nutritiously. Layee's preschool years were spent at Bobby's side. While Bobby ironed her laundry, she would teach her reading basics. When Layee entered first grade she was reading well above her age level.

Each morning Bobby would kiss her children good-bye as they hopped onto the bus and then run the couple of blocks to school, breathlessly awaiting the school bus's arrival. Without fail, her rosy cheeked children disembarked, Mother was always there giving yet one more hug before they entered the school building. Lunchtime found Bobby once again at the school. She would make her way down to the lunchroom to feed her children a warm homemade meal. Bobby would not leave their side until the last bite was swallowed. Luckily, the teacher enjoyed Bobby's witty sense of humor and overlooked the daily intrusion. Promptly at 4:00, Bobby was at the school building to ensure that her children, lunchbox in hand, were safely seated on the bus. In a hurry, Bobby dashed home. As the bus pulled up to the curb, Bobby was there, awaiting her children with open arms. What privileged treatment accorded to her lovely kids!

JANUARY 1963

The birth of a baby boy completed the happy family. In preparation for Favel's zochur, arbis were cooked and spread onto a floral tablecloth to be spiced and dried. The Satmar Rebbe zt"l was the Sandek at the bris and Reb Aaron Miller the Mohel. Tante Etty and Uncle Aaron were kvater. In the evenings when the baby cried, Zaidy, against Bobby's protests, would wash the floor with whiskey and alcohol. Supposedly this home made remedy would soothe the baby's cries and lull him into a restful sleep. From time to time this antidote would work. Friday nights, when the seudah was interrupted



Little Favel

with Favel's cries, Zaidy would round the children and dance around the baby's crib, "Shabbos Kodesh Yoim Chemdusoiy." Little Favel enjoyed the act, sometimes even clapping along. Each night Zaidy would lein Krias Shema with the children to an engaging tune "Hareini Mkabel Ulay Ohl Malchis Shumayim Beahava". He then took his tantler[30] — pointing to the chart above the crib and reviewed the Aleph Bais with us.

Favel remembers sitting in class enrapt in the teacher's lesson. Suddenly a familiar figure appeared in the doorway. There Zaidy stood, Chinese apple in hand, motioning to Favel. The teacher, disturbed by the commotion, asked Zaidy to kindly stop the daily visits. However, Zaidy would not be deterred. Everyday promptly at 4:00 Zaidy would reappear, Chinese apple in hand. Favel's nutrition came first. *Er darf koiyach tzee deenan dam Eibershten.* Favel remembers his class enjoying the distraction, as he dispersed the fruit when the teacher's back was turned.

As more and more Yidden relocated to Williamsburg, the Lower East Side was fast becoming a Goiyishe neighborhood. One afternoon, when the children were sitting on the windowsill enjoying the midday sunshine, a large rock was hurled straight through the glass pane, missing the children by a mere inch! With that, Bobby and Zaidy's ultimate decision was made. They would uproot once again, and resettle in a Yiddish neighborhood.

FALL 1965

The Landau family moved to Williamsburg. 85 Taylor Street, Apartment 10-D, here we come! The family was growing up and soon Chavie was engaged. This was a Simcha the entire Landau/Safern family was eagerly looking forward to. Wedding preparations were in full swing. Bobby sewed a beautiful navy blue tunic outfit which she wore to the wedding, as well as several sheva brachas outfits for the kallah. Zaidy took great pride in the young choson, and sewed him an exquisite white kittel. Invitations marked

30 *Tantler* — pointy wooden stick



R' Shaul and Chavie' wedding

with Zaidy's hand-drawn monogram were sent to the nearest and dearest. The wedding was a joyous celebration for all.

One Simcha led to another. As the new generation was born, Bobby and Zaidy basked in happiness. They were Boruch Hashem reaping the fruits of their labor with *interest*.

Memoirs

By: Chavie Knobloch

Although Mommy didn't like to talk much about her childhood, there were some stories she would recount over and over again as she wanted us to have a link to her past.

When Mommy was about 12 years of age her older sister became a *kallah*. What an excitement in the household! Being one of the younger ones, Mommy wore hand-me-downs from her sisters. This time, however, Mommy had a new dress sewn especially for the wedding. Weeks in advance, the dress hung over the door with her new patent leather pumps on the floor waiting to be worn. Every day Mommy would look at her dress and shoes and every so often, when no-one was around she would try it on. She would slip the dress on, slide her feet into the new shoes and practiced waltzing around the room.

The wedding day finally arrived. Mommy awoke with a burning fever. There was no arguing with Bobbeh Chave. Mommy did not attend the wedding, and stayed home with little Shprintzala. All night long, she sat with her little sister and made dolls out of towels and socks. She used buttons for the eyes and sewed little doll clothes out of scraps of material. Shprintzala had a wonderful time, while Bobby yearned to be at the wedding- but she never once made mention of it. She felt that since she was chosen to stay home it was only fair to keep her little sister company.

Mommy and Totty, being first cousins were named after the same person — Bobbeh Sima Baila. Zaidy's name is "Shimon" and Bobby's "Sima". They used to laugh about the times that Bobby would come babysit Zaidy as a little boy. Zaidy reminisces how

when he would pass Bobbeh Chavtcha's store she would always give him a double scoop of ice cream.

Mommy was very learned. She would stand within earshot of her brothers while they were learning. If she didn't understand, or if she had some 'Chiddush' to add she would join in her brothers' studies. They tried to stop her, but persist she did, until they would answer her questions.

She was so full of life. She would slide down the banisters and the family would scream in delight, "*Simala Kumpt!*"

In Poland, all the children attended Public School. Mommy also attended Bais Yakov Sarah Schenier School. This was right up her alley- she would challenge the teachers with her comments and questions. Mommy sure was a great asset to her class.

As an award for excellent achievement in school, Mommy was given a free train ticket. She decided to use it to visit her brother Uncle Volf A"H in Bobov. The Bobbeh Chave spent the better part of a day cooking special syrup which she knew her son would enjoy. She wrapped the bottle of syrup and entrusted it with Mommy.

Mommy ran all the way to the train station- she couldn't wait to begin her journey. As she wasn't a teenager yet, the law required that she travel in the company of an adult. Bobby walked around the station looking for someone suitable to sign for her. As she walked around the station, the bottle suddenly fell out of her hands and splintered into hundreds of tiny pieces. All that precious syrup on the floor!

Mommy turned white. She was frightened. Pricey summonses were issued to anyone caught littering a public area. Mommy was afraid to stay at the station and so she left in a hurry. She was terrified of going back home so she spent the night with friends.

Bright and early the next morning, she appeared at the station. She gave a quick look and saw that the syrup had been cleaned up so she felt free to be about. She found a responsible adult who would travel with her.

When the train stopped, near her brother's dormitory in Bobov, she disembarked. What a disappointment! Upon arriving to her brother's place she found his room empty. He had left a short while before.

Mommy lost no time. She went to the shelf where his stuff was kept and began organizing. She found plenty of evidence that his laundry needed freshening up. Acting upon her sisterly instincts, she gathered his laundry and began washing. She clearly recalls how she put the worn socks into the wash water. Lo and behold! The water was black! Invigorated, she scrubbed even harder. Yet the wash water remained black. And so, she kept rinsing and re-rinsing those socks. What a surprise she had when she spilled the water and found that the socks had turned a light-grey! Instead of washing out the dirt, she had industriously washed out the dye!

The Zaide Naftula was a pious man and learned Torah all day. Bobbeh Chave would send his food to the Bais Medrash. She once sent hot pretzels from her store. He promptly sent it back along with a message, "Please don't waste a hot selling item on me, *s'iz a shud die gelt.*" Since then, whenever she sent him a specialty item from her shop, Bobbeh Chave would break it into several pieces beforehand. In this way she was assured that her husband would enjoy a hearty meal. At day's end, after closing up her shop, Bobbeh Chave would pass the shul to pick up her husband. Together they would walk home.

During the war, when Mommy was on the run with her father and brother, she bartered her sole nightgown for bread. This nightgown was one of the few belongings she took with her when they escaped from Poland. One day, while in town, scouring for leftover food, she saw a wedding from afar. Something she saw seemed vaguely familiar. Coming a bit closer, she realized, to her amazement that the bride was wearing the very same nightgown she had parted with in exchange for bread.

Imagine- Mommy wore it to bed, while the Polish bride wore it as a wedding dress!

As a young girl, when Mommy was forced to flee, while kissing her mother good bye for the last time, she was made to repeat over and over again the address of Uncle Jake in America. As retold by our cousins S. Lipper and her sister E. Young, "Promptly after the war, we received a letter from your mother notifying us of her plans to emigrate to Israel. Our father replied, " *Schvartz De Granitz*. Your

brother Shia Volf is alive!" He had seen an article in the Algemeiner Journal along with a picture of Uncle Shia Volf. He immediately recognized the man in the papers as his very own nephew. He scanned the paper for the story details and was shocked to learn that this frail looking man had forgotten his name. The cruel tortures of Auschwitz did not only take a toll on his physique, his memory was scarred as well. Uncle Jake lost no time. He immediately ran to the nearest HIAS headquarters and identified his brother's son.

Uncle Jake and Tante Anne undersigned as guardians, and Uncle Shia Volf was released to their care.

Mommy and Totty's wedding took place in somebody's apartment. The beds were taken apart and moved into a neighbor's apartment. Suddenly the room seemed to be spacious enough to accommodate all the well-wishers and friends. Mrs. Rachel Tauber was the *interfererer*. She bought candlesticks as a wedding present.

When I was born, Mrs. Tauber became the surrogate grandmother. She fussed over me and gave Mommy parental advice. I remember Mommy telling me how poverty-stricken they were. There was a blanket in the house that was used as a tablecloth during the day and a bed wrap at night.

When the family grew, we went to the country for the summer. Totty observed the little boys wandering aimlessly during the day and on the spot decided to become their *melamed*. Daily he rounded the children and learnt with them for the most part of the day. He did this voluntarily, without pay. Later on, when the opportunity arose he remembered the positive experience of that summer and quickly accepted the position of *melamed* in Belzer Yeshiva.

Part Three
The Imprint of a Noble Woman

Etched deep within our hearts lies the most unforgettable woman. A woman of valor endowed with profound wisdom and heartfelt benevolence. Bobby, your many attributes, have endeared you to all.



Bobby's oldest granddaughter, Pessie's Tenoyim



Landau Chanukah Party

Chapter One

Bobby as a Mother

Reflections By: Chavie Knobloch

Mother was fascinated with life. She was bright and open-minded. She could have been almost anything she wanted. Her job, as she saw it, was to be our mother full time. She did this by choice. She defined herself as both a wife and mother. She was the smartest woman I knew. At the end of each day; whether it was coming home from work or school; I always knew Mother would be waiting for me.

You might ask- why was an intelligent woman home all day? And I'll tell it is because she *enjoyed* caring for us. She received immense satisfaction from baking, cooking and keeping house. It definitely made an impression on me. Years later I can still feel what it was like to rush through the door and see her there. In her quiet way she impressed upon me the importance of keeping our family together. That message was subtly reinforced when I saw her doting on us rather than indulging herself, day after day. . I would not trade that feeling for anything in the world.

I can still hear her words "*Inter Chavelas vigala...*" echoing. And as the words resonate, I see her on her worn rocker, rocking gently to the rhythm.

As I look around at the women of today's generation, it's hard to believe that women of our mother's ilk existed; her way of life, once so prevalent, is now uncommon.

Below are a few points that will enable you to get a glimpse of the woman my mother was:

As she was always concerned for my posture, I never slept with a pillow as a child.

On the first day of school Mother sat with me to ensure that I had committed our telephone number to memory. Interestingly enough, I missed the bus the very first day and had to give the office my telephone number. After calling home, I remember being picked up by our neighbor Mrs. Libby Goodstein A"H.

The proper lighting in the room was important to her, in order to protect the eyesight.

Friday night by candle lighting, as she uncovered her eyes, glistening tears shimmered from her face.

As a bride coming to the hall, awaiting guests, my mother stood beside me as the pictures were taken. She hovered over me the entire night, did not leave me alone for a minute- she felt a bride must be protected until she goes home to her husband.

She was a well-dressed woman. She would say, " a neat wig and comfortable nice shoes make the person presentable. The dress can be understated, but it should fit well."(In my case, she liked me in a short wig because it framed my face.)

She brought us up to look at the positive in others. Over and over again she would tell us, "When asked for information for a Shidduch concentrate on the positive points."

My daughter Shaindy told me that whenever she sent a letter to my mother it was answered on the spot. My mother was never one to procrastinate.

Whenever I came back home to visit her with my family, her face would be beaming. We always heard a booming hello through the door. When she would visit us, she never failed to bring along a bottle of fresh homemade wine. We would ration off that bottle as it was everybody's favorite drink. On Chol Hamoed when my parents visited, aside from the usual grape juice they brought, there was always a fresh cake as well.

Her sense of humor was always one of her character traits that came through in the best and worst of times. When her first great

grandchild was born she said, " The English language is beautiful. I became a great-grandmother, not an *Alter Bobba.*" Toward the end, when she was already seriously ill, every other day the doctors would come up with another form of treatment or medication. Instead of expressing her sadness she would jokingly say, "I'm in for a lot of surprises!"

May she rest in peace and be a *Malitza Yeshara* for the whole family and all of Klal Yisroel. I will be thankful to Hashem, if I will be privileged to follow in the footsteps of my mother ???.

A Living Testimony By: Leah Lerner

Life; an endearing gift granted to all of mankind, yet never alike. For it is not the essence of life that makes the person, it is the person that makes his imprint by what he chooses to do with his life.

Seventy-nine years of age is relative. While some may squander years, leaving no lasting impression; others can accomplish more than words can tell.

Mommy, you are truly one of those heroines who amassed great riches with each passing day. With care and devotion you wove a rich tapestry which took shape before our very eyes. Through difficult times you would rise to the challenge, always looking for the bright side in everything.

My vivid childhood memories include images of you constantly hovering over us. Our nutritious meals were well planned. Your greatest pleasure was seeing our plates licked clean. (I definitely challenged you on that!) Daily trips to the playground for some outdoor fun and fresh air was mandatory. While you starched and ironed our clothing, I would sit nearby. You then patiently taught me to read, well before I entered first grade.

You were a self-educated woman who had a thirst for knowledge. As a result, you had great aspirations for your children. You always took a keen interest in my schoolwork. As I practiced handwriting

skills, you would beg me to perfect my letters, to write more legibly.

My lunches were carefully wrapped each morning. As you sent me off to school, you taught me many a lesson on how to be friendly and helpful.

At times you longed to regale us with stories *"fun der heim"*, but you would stop abruptly as a choking sob would escape your lips. World politics and news were serious matters to you. You constantly kept us posted on the latest news, sharing your viewpoints, thereby forming strong opinions.

The letters and care packages I received in camp were full of *"hartz."* You sewed most of my childhood dresses to perfection. Though on occasion, I recall our shopping sprees fondly. The conversation at meal time was always peppered with your sense of humor.

Mommy, you definitely set a perfect example of being a hard-working woman, who enjoyed her work, never looking for the easy way out. Cleaning help was non-existent, yet, I never heard you complain about the load of housework.

Liver was *'gebruten'* at home. Fresh liver was sandwiched between two tongs and grilled on the open flame. With the bellowing smoke rising, a grilling smell spread throughout the house, puncturing our nostrils. However, its high nutritional value was well worth it.

Preparations for Shabbos and Yom Tov were anticipated with pleasure. Gefilte fish was made from scratch. *De Tatte* would bring home live fish. As he banged on the head of the fish with a *"hock messer"* the fish would jump high into the air, thrashing about wildly. We could not look on, and ran for cover. But *De Tatte* heroically shouted above the din, *"Lekoved Shabbos Kodesh."* I would often be reminded that since Tzaddikim are *'megilgul'* in fish, it is a *'zchia'* for them to be served at the Shabbos seuda. Mommy would then proceed to grind the fish and prepare it for cooking.

It was not so long ago, that I remember you kneading challah dough by hand. You were reluctant to give up that extra investment in the mitzvah when we got the Kitchen Aide mixer machine. At your house, it is absolutely mandatory to make brachahs loud and clear. Woe to the one who forgets and mumbles the brachah under

his breath! *De Tatte* would begin trembling (and so would we), having us repeat the bracha, enunciating each and every word clearly. It was imperative to remember to pause after, "*Burach attah Hashem*", so that *De Tatte* could answer, "*Baruch Hu Ivoruch Shemoi*". His *Amein* would ring out, a broad smile would spread on his face. *De Tatte* then begged us to give him the pleasure of refilling our plates and eat to "his" heart's content. (and what a large heart you both had.)

The atmosphere at home was calm and pleasant. It felt wonderful to come home. As I opened the door with a "*A guten uvent*" I would find *De Tatte* sitting at the table with a sefer in hand.

De Tatte was treated with great respect. As you took on the responsibilities of paying the bills and making appointments, *De Tatte* was left free of additional burden. In this way, he spent the remainder of the day, after cheder, totally immersed in "*Avoidas Hashem*". *De Tatte* is reputable for his superior spiritual heights. For that alone; your share is immeasurable.

Mommy, the *chesed* you performed through rain and frost, speaks for itself. Among your friends you were loved and admired. They reveled in your company for you offered a great measure of intellectual talk spiced with humor and laughter.

You were a deep thinker, always looking for the moral in each story, of each occurrence. Years later, you spent late hours on the phone discussing your personal viewpoints on historical books or current world politics (never on idle chatter).

As "*De Helige Teig*" were approaching, a serious mood penetrated our home. Erev Yom Kippur, kaporos were kashered at home, to be eaten at the Yom Tov seudah. As the chicken quarters lay scattered on the salt-board, thick layers of salt was heaped upon them. *De Tatte* would raise his eyes and with deep concentration say, "*dus vus ich hub nisht gezaltzen, zulen kimmen di gita maluchim in zalten*" a tefillah often heard from his mother. Right after Succos, esrog "*eingamachts*" was prepared.

I remember as a young child, Pesach cleaning was very enjoyable. We were handed a scrub brush with a pail of sudsy water. We scrubbed and scrubbed and poured water to our hearts' content. (I wonder if it was meant to keep us out of the way.) The walls, the

floors were scrubbed so vigorously, until a pool of water formed, ankle-deep. I had such satisfaction when passing that scrubbed wall. It was my very own contribution *"l'koved Yom Tov."*

Our Seder had a spiritual aura befitting *"Malchus"*. *"De Heilige Seder"* as *De Tatte* says, was conducted with awesome "heligkeit". I truly felt that I was in the presence of a king. At *"Shfoich chamoschu"* just seeing *"De Tatte's"* flaming red face, we trembled in fear. Our eyes were riveted to the open door; knowing that *"Eliyahu Hanovi"* was making his appearance. (Some of the eineklech were reluctant to hold the door. They were scared to face Eliyuhei Hanuvie.)

Between Pesach and Shevuous extra measures were taken as you followed the minhag from *"der heim"*. It was customary to make your own lokshen. You rolled out thin dough, letting it dry and then cutting it into strips; resulting in our very own homemade lokshen.

As the "eineklach" became a part of your life, nobody was your equal. You took such pride in their *chuchmos* and accomplishments, always cheering them on, as only a Bobba like you could. You always took time to converse with the two year olds that refused to relinquish the phone and babbled on endlessly.

At family get-togethers in your house, you would stand on your feet all night long. You would serve and serve, and serve some more, until it was time for bentching. No amount of coaxing could get you to sit down and relax. Your enjoyment was doing for your kids with your very last ounce of strength. (I always wondered, was your energy reserve really endless?)

Mommy, you walked us through life, forever at our side. I marvel at the special relationship you had with each individual family member. Your family meant the world to you. Your nieces and nephews were ever so close to your heart. Making everyone feel good was your specialty. You showed such confidence in our decisions, no wonder everyone confided in you.

If we ever mentioned a child's misbehavior you would focus our attention to his positive points. You would make us feel privileged to be the lucky parent of such a *"lechtig kint"*. Compliments were quick in coming. Without hesitation, you would pick up the phone to check on an *'einekel'*; never waiting for them to call first.

Mommy, the life you have lived has made a significant imprint. With your passing, there is much to look back upon. The lessons you have imparted will live on forever. Just as in your lifetime you were constantly giving, so too, you now continue to be on the giving end. We are inspired anew with each passing day, as we continue to glean from your exemplary lessons that you left for us.

This Chanukah, three months since your passing, your 'eineklach' gathered to spend a nostalgic evening. It was most befitting, for we knew that keeping in touch meant so much to you. Through laughter and tears they relived good old times, making those memories come alive. Your sayings, your quips, your selflessness and boundless devotion, left lasting impressions upon us all.

Your traditional gift giving was not forgotten. This year, gift-wrapped souvenirs — all types of knickknacks collected from your home, were handed out to each of your grandchildren. As they watched the film and listened to the song narrating highlights of your life, everyone marveled as your perseverance prevailed to the very end.

The evening was summed up when on of your eineklach got up to speak. As she mentioned *De Tatte,* suggesting how we can help out, a lump in her throat was threatening to burst. With a silent resolution to make an extra effort, everyone parted.

Mommy, I know you were there in spirit. I know you were bursting with "nachas". May you look down from above and continue to shower us with many a blessing. You will perpetually remain a living part of us.

T.N.T. B.H.

די פעדער איז איינגעטינקען אין טרערן
בשעת די געפילן פון בענקשאפט טוען זיך מערן
צו אן אימפארגעסליכע באליבטע באבע
אן אשת חיל עטרת בעלה
וואס איר לעבן איז געווען איין לאנגע קייט
פאר די קונדער און אייניקלעך- אזא איבערגעגעבנקייט
די ליבשאפט פון א באבע וואס זי פלעגט ידעס קומד אויסהערן
אין יעדע פראבלעם גאר טיף ארייגקלערן
און יעצט געבליבן פאר די אויגן איז אן איידעלע גייסט
אין דיינע פרוכטבארע מעשים געפינען מיר א טרייסט
זאל רוען און משפיע זיין פון גן עדן דיין לויטערע נשמה
מיר זאלן שוין בקרוב זוכה זיין צו א ישועה ונחמה!!

רבקה לאנדא

Shadows By: Rivky Landau

I sat by the window watching the sun disappear from the horizon. The sun was setting and all that was left from this fiery ball of splendor were shadows. Shadows that were a reminder of a beautiful day gone by. Whatever was accomplished during the day will be hers forever. How this day was utilized will make a difference eternally. Whatever joy achieved from this glorious sunlight is hers to keep! All that is left of this magnificent day are SHADOWS!! Shadows that whisper of a beautiful day gone by, never to return!

We are those Shadows; einiklich of a most righteous and courageous woman. A woman of true valor ; the crown of our family!!

As I reminisce, tears flow freely. My heart aches. I cannot control my emotions, for I truly lost a most precious indescribable Mother-In-Law. A woman of Wisdom, Guidance and Inspiration.

This great loss has left a deep void in my heart. But we must not dwell on the loss. We must strengthen our family relations and continue as shadows in her footsteps. Shadows that will make her proud to say, " These are my shadows."

WILL I... Give my precious time and listening ear to my Shnir every day???

WILL I... Inquire about my einicklich's wellbeing and check up on all the children's colds, aches or fevers???
WILL I... Stay up nights knitting beautiful outfits and gartlech for the Bar Mitzvahs?
WILL I... Never reprimand my Shnir????
WILL I... Not sing the praises of one Shnir over the other??
WILL I... Offer and be available to baby-sit my einicklach in a flash???
WILL I... be so financially supportive???
WILL I... dance with each individual einickel at family Simchas, whether I feel up to it or not???
WILL I... acknowledge and insert a $10 bill with a reply, when I receive a letter from my young einicklech???
WILL I... Give each einickel undivided attention and make them feel so important in my life???

There is a *'vertel'* ... "A shnir, a shtick shvigger"—halevei, EVEN JUST A SHADOW!

A Tribute By: Toby Landau

Dear Shvigger,

I'm writing this as I sit at your kitchen table where you once so blissfully sat, a queen in your own *'Melichala'*. Wherever I look and whatever I'm doing here this week, I cannot help but miss you.

This past Erev Shabbos, as I cooked in your neat little Farberware pots, I tilted the covers of the lukshen and chulent pots. Suddenly I was jolted back into the past. How vividly I recalled a happy time some fifteen to twenty years ago. We would come for Shabbos. We would walk into your warm, cozy kitchen back at 85 Taylor Street. The Shabbos food would be merrily bubbling in these very neat little shiny Farberware pots, their covers tilted.... just like now. You put such 'hartz' (heart) into your Shabbos preparations and we certainly felt it. A heavenly scent of potato kugel sizzling in its frying pan would assail our nostrils and tease our taste buds. At home, I usually

bake my kugel in the oven, but somehow here I found myself down on my knees rummaging between the pots for your frying pan...

Friday night, while the Shver and Favel were away davening, my three year old Mendy played with your toys. Toys that you, dear shvigger, must have selected after much thought. I found myself marveling at your expertise. How did you know these toys would last "forever"? How did you know that these very same toys would appeal to your einiklach of different generations? My child now is enjoying them just as much as my seventeen and sixteen year old did. Well, after a while it got pretty messy around here. There were little off-white cubes strewn all over. Then there were colored nuts and bolts with which little Mendy had constructed a Menorah, just in time for Chanukah, which is right around the corner. It was almost impossible to see the carpet, and I knew the men would be home soon. Upon impulse, I bent to collect the toys. However, on second thought, I said to myself, "Let the kid enjoy- that's what children are all about." With my foot I just shoved everything aside towards the wall so that the Shver wouldn't trip. Come to think of it! Fifteen years ago that's just what you, dear Shvigger, trained me to do, when Yankela and Leah'la played here. How guilty I would feel surveying their mess. But you, dear Shvigger, would calm me down while deftly *shtipping* odds and ends from before the Shver's approaching feet.

As I set the Shabbos table, I felt a lump forming in my throat. I put out the large white plates embossed with the gold design at each place, forks and spoons (NO KNIVES) in the center of the table... just like in the good old days... And when the Shver walked into the house after davening, his face radiant with sheer Shabbos joy he asked, "*Ver Hut Alas Azoiy Shein Zeegagreit?*" The lump in my throat threatened to burst. It did, a few minutes later, when his sweet plaintive heiliga voice so full of innocent trust in his Creator, sang "Aishes Chayil Mie Yimtzah". How very appropriate... how very sad.... Before Kiddush, as well as during the seudah, he looked for his Aishes Chayel and sent for you.... He missed your presence at the Shabbos table. We all did.

Shabbos morning as I lay in bed I thought I heard you cough. I almost expected to see you in the doorway, telling me, "Gut Shabbos" before leaving for shul. How sweet you would look- from your

matching tichel and outfit, down to your dainty shoes. "There's cheesecake on the table... Please, Toby, the refrigerator is all yours."

At the Shabbos morning seudah as we ate the hot chulent, I had it on the tip of my tongue to say *"s'rut arein in dee gest,"* your standard quote. I recall staring into my heaping bowlful wondering how I'd get it all in. However I'd find that after a few spoonfuls the rest would just follow quickly till I had licked the platter clean. While we ate the compote, I envisioned you sitting in your seat opposite me, a small piece of challah in one hand and with the other you indulged in your favorite dish. You always commented on the importance of compote and how it washes down the whole seudah. You failed to understand how one could just omit this course. Well, compote like yours would have been difficult to skip.... golden delicious apples and dried apricots. I'm still smacking my lips... Oh, and how I missed your conversations at the table; your witty remarks- chock full of humor. Your laughter still rings in my ears.

Motzei Shabbos, I stood at your fleishige sink, dear Shvigger, washing away the Shabbos dishes. I waited for someone to swoop up from behind me sliding the divider back over the unwashed plates and cutlery. I heard you announcing, "the business is closed... relax"... *"gei ess eppes"* but in vain did I wait. Please forgive me, dear Shvigger, for covering your once gleaming *blech* with aluminum foil. I did it out of convenience, although I know how much pride you took in your sparkling blech.

Dear Shvigger, you left us with warm pleasurable memories to cherish. You are still very much alive amongst us. Not a day has passed that we fail to talk or think about you. As I observed my little Mendy at play with his cousins, he suddenly became possessive over toys he had brought along from home, and refused to share. Instead he announced, *"Mommy, ven dar eibishtar vat tzirikgaben Bobby's neshama val ich ir fragen tzi Pinchas Yoel mag shpeilen mit eer* toys!"

Dear Shvigger: Won't you answer them soon??

We fervently hope for and await the days of Techias Hameisim and till then may your pure neshama reach great heights in 'dar lechtiga gan eden!

With much love and reverence, Your Shneer, Toby

Chapter Two

Bobby as an Aunt

By: Ruchie Zitronenbaum

Whenever I look back with my minds' eye, the first thing I remember of Tante Simala and Uncle Shimon's house was the feeling of being encompassed by warmth, love and care, verily like the 'Annanei Hakovid'.

Whenever I would visit at their home, whether I was a young girl or married matron, there was so much love, caring and attention showered upon me. . When my husband and family came the attention was equally spread out. Going there was like coming home again. Their house was the place to go to on Chol Hamoed. I remember when my husband once came for Shabbos, Tante Simala took out the kugel she made for us. In the same second, Uncle Shimon opened up the oven and presented us with a second surprise Kugel he had made in our honor, unbeknownst to Tante Simala.

Tante Simala loved people. She especially loved her family. Her extended family, nieces, nephews were especially treasured to her and by her. To us, she was an ever-important link as well. She would regale us with tales of the Bubbas and Zeidas, aunts and uncles and their children from before the war.

She was the very embodiment of simcha and wisdom. She always had a good word to say in any situation. Tante Simala would shore up a person with a timely compliment and she meant it. I once asked her why she didn't take a job to knit garments (her talent was

so exquisite) and her answer to me was, "Something like that I can't do for money, only for love." Her children, grandchildren and the rest of us all knew how true those words were.

As soon as she appeared at a family simcha she was the center of attention. With a witty compliment and a twinkle in her eye, she was quick to add to the gaiety and make everyone laugh.

She was never afraid of acting younger than her age. In fact, she reveled in it! She always looked for the good in any situation and found it and then she presented it as a fait accompli`

She defied gloom and negativity all her life. People, till this day, stop me in the street and tell me how much they enjoyed dancing with her at simchas. And did she dance! Even at the end, when Tante Simala was faced with her last tragic illness, she attended our family weddings, defied and denied any gloom, danced and laughed her noble way to the very end.

By: Chavie Rieger

It is a tall order you have given me to write about your mother/grandmother and my aunt from both sides of one family.

I am imagining myself as a stranger coming into a room of women or even sitting down at a simcha. Unconsciously, all the women are gravitating towards one woman. I look and try to see who it is. I walk closer and closer. I am amazed at the sight before my eyes. A very diminutive woman, but of straight posture, is holding court. She has the floor, though she is sitting in her chair. She has her audience spellbound reliving memories, retelling scenes of bygone years. What is it that pins my gaze to this woman? Perhaps it is her beautiful full smile or could it be those sparkling eyes? Her words are pearls of wisdom, gleaned from age and experience. The longer I sit the more amazed I become. This woman does not talk down to anyone; rather, she looks up to every person regardless of their age. As long as you are honest and do not put on airs about yourself, you are hers to have and to hold. No pretenses with her.

That will not do at all. She sees right through you. To go about life being happy with one's lot and making the most of what one has, is what counts with her.

She is a brilliant yet humble woman. Her life experiences are varied: lots of heartache and headache. She has gone through much in her life.

She cares deeply about her children. They mean the world to her. Oops, so sorry. They mean almost the world to her. Only her husband means the world to her. He comes first, always did and always will till the end of her days. The pride in her face and the smile on her lips when she is discussing her children, grandchildren, and later even great-grand-children are something to see. I have been informed that she has on occasion even had newborn great grandchildren and their mothers recuperate in her house. Well now... How young do you think she is?

Her friends range in age, from early teens to her contemporaries. She can sit among women of any age and partake in their conversation on the most intellectual level. She makes lots of sense and her words have lots of meaning.

Conversation at the affair is tapering off. I notice this woman slowly rising from her chair. Then I hear the music begin a slow waltz tune. Our lady takes one of her nieces, wraps her slender hands around her partner's waist and begins a slow waltz. Her feet move as if on their own. They are dancer's feet. Her steps are taken so lightly. She seems to be floating on air. She knows all the steps and is always the leader in the dancing, I see. It is like watching a ballet. When the music finishes, our two dancers bow nicely to each other and slowly glide back to their seats.

Conversation soon begins once again. However, the hour is late and I must return home. I have stayed longer than I should have. But our subject matter is fascinating. How I would love to stay, listen, and partake in the conversation that will soon resume. I know there will be lots of give and take at her table. I hastily bid a quiet goodnight and head home. Chavee, Layee, Rivky and Toby (and the sons too), I am privileged to have had Tante Simale as my best and favorite aunt and to have been her niece. Thank you all so much for sharing her with me always when I needed her.

The pen does not contain enough ink, nor is there enough paper in my pad, nor enough descriptive words in my vocabulary to write about your special mother. She was my good friend and I miss her so much.

MEMORIES

It must have occurred when I was an eighth grader. The school sent out the eighth grade graduates, (each day a few groups of girls together) to go about collecting ads for the forthcoming yearbook. I was paired off with a girl named Chavie Rottenberg. We decided to go to Manhattan to the diamond district and try our luck there. It was the first and last time I would ever do it. We went from building to building, from floor to floor, from suite to suite knocking on doors as if collecting alms for our school. The men who were all working at their workbenches or with their jewelry loops at their eyes took out their hard earned one and two dollars for our "vichtige tzvek". When we finished the round in the Jewelry District we headed off to the Lower East Side for a repeat performance. Until today, I cannot believe I did it. It was humiliating. (In fact, for my twelfth grade yearbook, I did not bring in one dollar of ad money. The memories from 8th grade were still too fresh in my mind. Anyway, there was no one I could really ask for ad money. We had no wealthy relatives and as for my father's boss... well, I do not think it would have been appropriate to ask Him).

After hours and hours of walking the floors and halls of 47th Street and the East Side, my friend and I were drained. All we had to show for our effort must have been about thirty dollars. We were hungry and tired. There was no place to have a bite to eat. Suddenly I remembered Tante Simale, who lived not far away. To be honest I do not remember whether I phoned her or not, but a short time later, having gained admittance, we were both seated around her kitchen table. Your dear mother prepared a meal for us. We washed up and ate it all until the last drop. Your mother was surely not expecting any company that day. However, we were wined and dined royally

that day. Not only that, but your mother heard what we were out doing all day, she gave us a sizeable donation too. It never dawned on me that maybe, just maybe, she would not appreciate such a visit without being prepared beforehand with food and the rest. I knew then, that Tante Simale was one person I could always count on when I needed someone.

A similar story happened many years later. A dear teacher, who meant the world to me, was having a get-together with a few of her former students. I was one of the lucky ones to be invited. The original plan was that I would take the Monsey bus back to Williamsburg and then the Williamsburg bus to Boro Park. Obviously, back then, there was no direct bus from New Square to Boro Park. The other girls lived in Williamsburg. For some reason the Williamsburg girls all left early and I still tarried and stayed much longer. By the time I arrived to Williamsburg it was quite late. The last bus to Boro Park had long since left. I was stranded in Williamsburg with nowhere to go. I remember calling your mother, probably waking her up from her sleep. I explained my sorry situation to her. A girl alone with nowhere to rest her weary head. The voice of your mother's response is one that I cannot forget, "Come right up. Do not worry about a thing. I will call Mommy for you to inform her that you are safe and sound at my home." A load off my chest, I certainly was afraid to face the music. (Your mother, on many occasions, was the quiet go-between, a negotiator no less, between me and my parents.) The welcome I got from your mother, past midnight, was awesome. So homey, so warm. Within five minutes I went from being stranded, to having a comfortable place to rest with an added bonus of your mother's companionship late into the night.

My Shver z"l and my shviger were in Fleischmans for the summer. We would go once a summer to visit them. I loved going because I knew that I would get to spend time not only with my in-laws, but also with my beloved, favorite aunt and uncle. We arrived and the men went off in one direction to learn and have a walk around. We women all sat down around the old round rusty umbrella table. Your mother saw a ball, picked it up, ran off to one side,

motioning to me to go to the opposite side. She threw the ball to me. Perfect aim and perfect pitch. The older Rebbetzens looked askance at the scene. The holy ladies had a look of utter disapproval. The more fun loving of the ladies, Mrs. Wachsman and others, had a good laugh and looked as if they too would like to join us, but did not dare. After a few minutes, my legs were just getting too tired to run after the ball and I sat down in the circle with the ladies. Your mother got up soon after, to get your father a drink or maybe to give him lunch. One of the ladies told me that in the morning before she goes outside to sit, shmooze, knit or walk, she peeks out of her kitchen window to see who is sitting outside. If your mother is one of the sitters, she hurries up with her indoor chores and goes outside to sit and chat. If your mother is not outside yet, she would not hurry , "You have to understand something. When I see your aunt outside I know that we will have ourselves a grand time. There will probably be an interesting debate going on. Your aunt would soon have us all laughing. What a special woman she is. She is a woman who loves life and is not ashamed to let people know that. She is a true Misamayach bechelka.

Dear Tante Simale's children. You all knew her very well. Her *Simchas Hachaim* was awesome. She had a rather hard life and never did she complain about it, even later in life when her world was crashing down all around her.

By: Dassy Kessler, Toronto

Visiting Uncle Shimon and Tante Sima in Belzer Camp was a treat. We found Tante Sima knitting and entertaining the ladies under a shady tree, while Uncle Shimon was bandaging a camper's scraped knee or making hot chocolate for another. (He was like a mother taking care of the campers' every need.) We were escorted to their neat little room while Uncle Shimon ran to buy us ice cream and goodies. Apologizing for lack of seating space, the heat or the cold, they made us feel comfortable and special.

Uncle Shimon is on a different level than most. He is a multi-talented gentle man, respecting all, a teacher, a friend, who loves to serve Hashem and his fellow man. When we were with him in Eretz Yisroel he came home from davening the first morning of our stay on a high. He described the 'heiligkeit' of every stone. He was able to see and feel the 'kedushah'. His face was beaming.

Fond memories flood our minds when we think of Tante Sima. Always with a smile, a twinkle in her eye, a compliment, a lively dance, or a joke to brighten your day. We still laugh, reminiscing about her remarks to a photographer. Her sharp and witty quips in her high pitched voice, still make us smile, "I danced so much, my face is red, I don't even need make-up. Please call again".

She was a people person with a cheerful disposition and infectious laugh, a good word, and a warm berachah. Young at heart, her enthusiasm and spirit never faded. As we grow older, we remember Tante Sima forever young.

By: Tillie Katz

I was very young and I remember Tante Sima sitting in our kitchen on 48th street around the corner from where the bus would pick her up for her return trip to Williamsburg. It was dark outside and she had but a few minutes to sink her tired self into a chair, exhausted after a day of cooking, scrubbing and helping her children in any which way she could. For us, those few moments that she would spend at our house were very special "visits".

As a young girl I enjoyed dancing very much, but with Tante Sima it was a completely different experience. As swift as a bird, she'd grab me and start waltzing across the ballroom floor. I could never keep up with her speed or grace.

At one of our Chanukah gatherings (that have unfortunately stopped) I was pouring a drink from a heavy and full pitcher. Tante Sima put her drinking glass over to my side and said, *"Oiyb di vest gissen far yanem, vast di es machen leichtar far dir" If* you will pour for another, you will make it easier for yourself. What a great lesson!



At Kever Rochel

Tante Sima made sure to call and say Mazel Tov for each Simcha. Every phone call to the kimpeturin was always short and to the point. She was also a very generous and giving person.

At the end of last year when Favi and Zissy Katz were married the chasunah was just not the same, the dance floor, the mood in general- Tante Sima wasn't there. She was already too weak to attend but she certainly remembered to send her good wishes.

I remember traveling with her on the bus to Yides Schwartz's wedding. Neighbors and friends of the Kessler family had offered their homes to the out of town guests, so that they could rest up before the chasunah. Dassy Kessler, wanting to stall for time, (she didn't want to inconvenience the gracious hosts and so she made sure the bus arrived in the morning) had arranged with the bus driver to make a stop in Niagara Falls. Tante Sima was ecstatic. Everybody else was tired and just wanted to see a bed, but not our Tante. She made a big commotion about the upcoming stop. She got us all riled up and by the time the bus stopped at Niagara we were all so happy that Tante Sima was going to have her 'bonus' fun!

As I mentioned during the Shloishim Seudah, I had the z'chus to be with Uncle Shimon and Tante Sima in Eretz Yisroel. It was both entertaining and spiritually uplifting.

Friday afternoon Uncle Shimon sh"lita was seen running around from fruit store to fruit store looking for the right Hashgachah (it was during shmitah). When he finally found out which store was okay to shop at, it was almost closing time, as it was Erev Shabbos.

Walking through the small back alleys of Meah Shearim we noticed extreme poverty. This seemed to distress Tante Sima greatly.

A couple of days later, we went shopping to a shoe store in Geulah. A mother was buying shoes for her children. When she finished she dumped the used shoes into the stores garbage bin. Her children then followed her out, proudly wearing shiny new shoes. This too upset Tante Sima. She said Boruch Hashem that not everyone is so poor, but to throw away shoes that were wearable just a few minutes ago... Since then I would never throw out an old pair of shoes (till mold grew on them!)

Going to Kever Ruchel with Tante Sima was one of my highest spiritual points in Eretz Yisroel. I remember standing in front of the navy blue velvet covering on the kever and the words "Ruchel M'vaka al Buneha" were embroidered in gold in front of my eyes. And next to me was Tante Sima crying bitterly for her dear children and grandchildren on the other side of the ocean.

Yes, Tante Sima you may be many oceans away from your family but now you're much, much closer to being a *"gitta bater far di gantza mishpacha. Zolsti takeah zein a maliza yeshurah far intz alah".*

By: Baila Landau

Dearest Tante Sima,

From the first time we met, when Favel and I were newly married, I felt at ease with you and *Feter* Shimon. I looked forward to being in your company ever since, being that you always made us feel so special.

Favel and I enjoyed every minute we spent with you and Uncle Shimon on our trip to Eretz Yisroel. You noticed and were aware of every detail and helped us appreciate the kedushah and beauty of Eretz Yisroel. Your wonderful sense of humor entertained us throughout the trip. You wanted to thank us, when it was truly a zechus to be with both of you during that trip. Mordecha Yossi was born approximately three months after the trip. You not only made your customary Mazel Tov call but also paid us a personal visit – not

empty handed! You had knit an adorable purple and white little dress for Blimie. We felt so special to be one of the few that received a hand-knitted outfit from Tante Sima. Blimie (two and a half) was complimented every time she wore her little dress.

Shortly after Shea's bar mitzva, you were notified by one of your informed sources that Shea would love to have a hand knit gartel. With delight, you went right to work and wowed him with a beautiful knitted gartel, which he cherished and treasured.

The last time we met, at Naftula's daughter's wedding, I hesitantly went into the room where you were resting. I wanted to wish you Mazel Tov and a speedy recovery. You looked at me and then with the little strength you had, you began giving me Mazel Tov for Leah, who had a baby a few weeks earlier. How did you remember? But of course, it was not atypical of you; you never missed a single Mazel Tov call.

Favel and I will always remember your smile, warm handshake and good word.

By: Chana Ruchie Hopfer as retold by Dee Dee Reinhold

In a poem form — with a few short rhymes,
I'd like to talk about some good old times.
Let me share,
Some unforgetful memories of a special aunt that is no longer here.
It wasn't so very long ago,
When we heard Tanta Sima'las most cheerful Hello.
She'd visit my mother at least once a week
And paint a beautiful picture of situations that were really bleak.
Here warm smile, golden heart and caring word of chizuk
Yes, gave my mother's mood a lift, it really did the trick
In the name of my mother, let me thank you today,
For doing this wonderful mitzvah in a most unique way!!
Tanta Sima — help me be like you!!!

By: Chana Ruchie Hopfer as retold by Chanie Goldberger

Purim day is visiting day – which naturally meant visiting Bobby Goldberger, as well as Tante Simale as an added bonus.

As soon as we stepped foot through Tante Sima'las door we were engulfed in a warm sea of happiness. Each individual child was greeted personally, clearly articulating their full names. (She never missed any of our Simchas, and so she knew every child's name by heart). We were then showered with compliments, starting from the oldest to the youngest she always found something to make a to-do about.

Uncle Shimon lost no time, he ran into the kitchen to prepare a sumptuous snack. He would then make sure every one took a seat and served us his homemade wine, Tante Sima Simala's famous sugar cookies.

I was amazed as to how much Tante Sima'la knew about each of my children's developments. Never mind big milestones in life, like my sons first few steps, she even made a to-do about the Best of Month award my daughter had received. (How did she know those stuff, and how could she have the presence of mind to remember them?)

After a pleasant visit, we would get ready to leave. While I would be buttoning my children's coats, Sima would busy herself in the back room.

Soon enough, she'd come out with her famous bar of Torino chocolate with green dollar bills neatly tucked inside. She made sure to give each child a nosh and Purim gelt.

Then the sweet couple would leave the roomful of people in the dining room and walk us to the elevator, but when the elevator came, no amount of prodding would keep them on the outside. They would insist on joining us, and would accompany us to our car... As we drove away and waved to our loving aunt and uncle we knew that the memory of the day would stay with us forever.

Yes, this was my great Tante and Feter, sweet on the outside, and even sweeter on the inside.

Chapter Three

Bobby as a ... Bobby

By: Chanie Weiss

One calm evening, as I was relaxing on the couch, the phone rang. It was none other than Bobby Landau calling to shmooze. We started talking about babies, feeding them, taking care of them, giving birth etc. Although Bobby never liked to talk about herself, through the conversation it came out that every time she went to the hospital to give birth she went all by herself. The first time she went to give birth, Zaidy was nowhere in sight. By the next two children Zaidy stayed home to baby-sit. Finally, when the kids were able to stay home by themselves, Zeidy was adamant, this time he was going to come along to the hospital. They left the house together. Bobby waited in front of the house while Zaidy went in search for a taxi. Sure enough, on of the way to the hospital, Bobby sent Zeidy home. She told him it was very late and that he needed a good night's sleep in order to be a good melamed and father. She ordered the driver to drive Zaidy home and told Zaidy not to worry about her — she would manage on her own.

This was our courageous Bobby!

By: Mendel Knobloch

Bobby used to give attention to both young and old, making an extra effort to make them feel important.

When I was a young boy, Bobby would start her weekly Motzei Shabbos shmoozes over the telephone with: Nu, vos hart zich by der Rebbe, Rav Mendela fin Boro Park?" She used her humor to make me feel good about myself and remind me of my heritage- the Zaide Rebbe Reb. Mendela of Rimanov.

By: Surie Knobloch (Monsey)

Bobby Landau will always have a special place in my heart. - Flashback to three years ago- I needed extensive dental work done. Although Monsey boasts many competent dentists, I chose to travel to Williamsburg to do the procedure there on the account of my dear grandmother. I wish I can say that on an ordinary day I would have the wits about me to pick myself up and visit my dear grandmother, just because. But as life would have it, that idealistic goal seemed far off. When the opportunity came for me to do dental work in Williamsburg I jumped at it. I knew that would mean that I can spend valuable time with the grandmother I so dearly loved.

Once in two weeks I would make the long trek from Monsey with my two children in tow. My first stop would be at 99 Wilson, where the young babysitter graciously greeted me. The children ran to her, and from my vantage point at the doorpost I saw the toys neatly arranged in the corner of the room.

Have you ever heard of anybody looking forward to a dentist appointment?

By: Esther Suri Wercberger

אין די יעצטיגע מאמענט
איז מיין הארץ פארקלעמט
אייגענטליך איז יעצט א צייט פול מיט שמחה און גליק
אבער אין מיין הארץ איך שפיר א דרוק
ווייל באבי האט זיך מיט אלע כוחות ציזאמענגענקליבן
נישט צי שטארן די שמחה, און דערפאר איז אן אנדענק פארבליבן
איך דאנק דעם רבש"ע אז איך האב ב"ה נאך געהאט די זכי'
און לאמיר האפן אז אירע חשובע מעשים זאלן אויף מיר זיין משפיע

אסתר שרה ווערצבערגער

By: Chanie Weiss

For those of us who have been fortunate enough to be sent to sleep away camp, we all know that underneath all that fun is the unspoken word *'home'*. Yes, we all have ourselves a grand 'ole time in camp. We stay up past midnight and sing all kind of crazy songs but when a package arrives from home it is an excitement beyond compare. For starters you feel like you just got a *piece* of *home*. You feel that your family at home is thinking about you. And usually, depending on the contents, it's something you were desperately in need of (like nosh, bathing cap etc.). All in all, on the day you get a package or mail from home you felt happy and complete. There is a reason we nicknamed the parcels that came "Care Packages"!

Well, one rainy day in camp, my entire bunk was sitting on their beds and talking, trying to pass time. Suddenly, the door opened and a staff member walked into the room. She said, "Chanie Lerner you have a package." I jumped up, relieved that I wasn't singled out for mischief making. I wasn't expecting anything from my mother so I was pretty curious as to what it was. She didn't let me wonder for too long, as she quickly told me, "Oh, it's from your grand-

mother." She said she had a day off, and took advantage of the time to visit her grandmother in Fleishman's. Bobby spotted her and before long made the connection that she was in the same camp as I. She told the girl to wait a moment while she ran back to her bungalow to send something back to me. I opened the bag and sure enough – without a doubt- Bobby didn't forget her famous Torino Chocolate bars. As I stood there holding the brown bag in my hand I literally felt Bobby's presence in the room with me. I felt so good to be remembered by her.

Chocolate in camp is a treat. Before I knew it, my bed was surrounded with several girls, one of which had already opened the wrapper. Suddenly someone said, "Hey, something just fell out. She bent down and picked up a 10 dollar bill with a note attached to it in Yiddish — '$10 for Ice Cream — After eating Zei Gezunt'. The girls were moved. They were amazed at the relationship Bobby had with each and every grandchild.

By: Toby Lerner

In the short time that I was blessed with knowing Bobby her middos were exemplary and was definitely passed on to her children and grandchildren. The following chronicle, which Avrumi repeated to me, depicts just one aspect of her outstanding Middos.

As is well known amongst us, Bobby went out of her way to ensure that she would not be a burden on anyone. One night, close to Pesach, the family was sitting around the supper table discussing the various little tasks that were still on the To Do list for Pesach. My Shvigger assigned Avrumi, who was twelve years old at that time, to go to Williamsburg and help Bobby with her preparations. As his mother was finishing her sentence, the children played out the scene that would unfold upon Avrumi's arrival. "Bobby will first sit you down to a good meal." "She'll send you right back home", said another. A third piped in with, "She'll tell you that she'd love your help, but there is nothing left to be done." "She'll

give you money for the bus back home". Despite naysay, the next morning, bright and early he was on his way to lend his hand in Bobby's Pesach preparations.

Bobby gave him a warm welcome, "What a chushiver guest!" she exclaimed when she saw him standing at her doorpost. She ushered him in, and immediately sat him down to a warm meal. Putting her work on hold, she joined Avrumi at the table and conversed with him about anything and everything. Avrumi tried interjecting with, "Can I help with something" but she kept waving him off.

Realizing that he would have to act on his own, Avrumi walked over to the closet and pulled out the vacuum cleaner, plugged it in, and enthusiastically pressed the "on" button. To his dismay, silence prevailed. The vacuum cleaner lay there motionless as if siding along with Bobby's determination. (It seems, Bobby's vacuum cleaner had stopped working, yet she hadn't mentioned a word about it to anyone.) Defeated, Avrumi headed back home. He thought back to the previous night's discussion and laughed as he realized the children had predicted the scenario in advance. Bobby didn't change and he should have known that.

From firsthand experience, I instantly knew that this grandmother of ours was just not the ordinary. To prepare for my upcoming school year I called around to other teachers hoping that some of them would be willing to share their notes with me. I was referred to a nice young woman residing in Williamsburg who had previously taught the identical topics that I was scheduled to teach and was kind enough to share her notes with me. I made the arrangements to have the package dropped off at Bobby's house and asked Bobby that when she gets the package she should put it aside and send it to my mother-in-law's house with the next Boro Park visitor. Before long I received word that the package was safely in Boro Park. I called the teacher and profusely thanked her for remembering to take the package to Bobby's house. She immediately told me to stop thanking her for the efforts. It was Bobby who mysteriously found out her address and showed up at her door and asked for the package.

"Emor M'aat V'Asei Harbei"

By: Chayala Lerner

It was two days after my engagement. Nervously, I made my obligatory calls, first my shvigger and then the Bobbehs. "Hello Bobby," I began. "This is Chayala, Mendy's kallah." Bobby sounded so excited but cut the small talk short, "Thank you for calling... so how's the kallah feeling, let me tell you what I tell all my eineklach. I know kallahs are busy and don't have to waste your precious time calling me — I know you wish me a Gut Shabbos regardless." I felt comfortable at once. We even managed to have a lovely twenty minute conversation. I was impressed with her wisdom and wit and was looking forward to many more enjoyable conversations.

How surprised I was, when I answered the phone to hear Bobby's voice on the phone, "I did not hear from you, just checking up." I thought I was the only privileged grandchild to receive such a call, but that was our Bobby. She made every grandchild feel like an only one.

Shortly after my chasunah, my husband mentioned that he would like to visit for Shabbos. At first, I was uncomfortable with the idea. However, after a few weeks passed, I called Bobby and told her I would take up her offer for an open invitation. Bobby said, "What will you have from an old lady's company. Come for a short visit and forget about spending an entire Shabbos."

After much insistence Bobby compromised, "When the clock will be moved and the z'man ends early you can come, in this way the time will pass quickly." And so it came to be. At the first opportunity we were on our way to Williamsburg. I clearly remember that Shabbos. What an utterly enjoyable experience! Motzei Shabbos was too fast in coming... I felt as if I was spending time with a close friend. No wonder my husband was so determined to be Bobby's Shabbos guests.

Later, when we would come with my daughter, Bobby's excitement was palpable. She seemed so genuinely interested in the baby that I couldn't wait to come and show off yet another little chochmalah...

By: Chana Ruchie Hoffer

After an exhausting day of work I usually head to my answering machine first. It's a good way to start a successful evening. And so I arrived home that day, and as usual pressed play.

I recognized Bobby's happy and gentle voice right away, "Hi Chana Ruchie, how are you?"

What makes Bobby call me on Monday? We just spent a wonderful Shabbos afternoon together. I had no time to think, the lovely voice just continued.

"Mazel Tov Gershen! Mazel Tov Chana Ruchie!"

"I am so happy to hear that your Shvigger did a shidduch with her daughter. In a Mazel'diga Shu. S'zul shtandig zein simchas. Bleib mir gezunt, ah gitte nacht."

Wow! Wow! Bobby is calling me to share her happiness in my simcha!

Bobby was simply designed, with you in mind.

This little story is one of many I can share
That shows Bobby's ultra devotion & care

It was simply her style
To uplift ones spirit & make them smile

She would bend over backward to satisfy all
Every little detail got its deserved attention, no incident was too small

And the nicest part-
Her acts of kindness came from the depth of her heart

Never did she let herself be acknowledged by the many good deeds she's done
She made sure to keep them a secret; they were like a hit & run!

Now Bobby your job is one hundred percent complete
And for my part, they say history is a repeat

In your footsteps I shall go for as long as I'll be living
May I too continue the endless act of giving.

ותפארת בנים אבותם
אן אנדענק פון אונזער באליבטע באבע

א קליין קינד קען שוין זיצן אליין אט נעמט זי איר ערשטע פאר טריט, וועמען ריפט מען אן מיט די נייעס? דער באבע!!

די מאמע דערציילט די חכמות פון דעם קינד טאג איין און טאג אויס, און די באבע קוועלט. דאס קומד הייבט אן שולע און קען קוים ווארטן צו זינגען איר נייע לידער צו דער באבע. ביי די ישרליכע פארשטעלונגען זיצן די מאמעס און באבעס אינאיינעם. די באבע קוקט מיט ליבשאפט אויף די בילד פון איר ערוואקסן אייניקל ביי איר גראדיורין. אין די זיממער שיינט אויף די באבע'ס פנים ווען זי טרעפט אין פאסט קעסטל א בריוו פון דעם אייניקל. זי לעבט מיט, מיט יעדע קליינעקייט וואס איז דארט בארשריבן. נאך אין דעם זעלבן טאג שיקט זי צוריק א בריוו און פארגעסט נישט אריינצולייגן אפאר דאלאר.

די צייט שטייט נישט, און מיט אמאל איז דא א מזל טוב! דער אייניקל איז געווארן א כלה! קענען מיר זיך פארשטעלן די באבע'ס פרייד ווען זי נעמט ארום דעם אייניקל און טאנצט מיט איר ביי די חתונה? דער אייערשטער העלפט ווייטער און אין שיינעם טאג קלינגט דער טעלעפאן.... מזל טוב!! "באבי, דו ביסט געווארן אן עלטער באבע!" די באבע,ס ווארימע געפילן ווען זי באקענט זיך מיט איר נייע איר-אייניקל, זענען אזוי הארציג. נאך אזא שרעקליכע מלחמה, האט זי דען אמאל געגלייבט אז זי וועט נאך אמאל זוכה זיין צו האלטן איר-אייניקלער?!

די יארן לויפן אדורך, קער באבע לעבט אויף ווען דער אייניקל דערציילט מעשיות און חכמות פון אירע קינדער. עס פארשאפט איר פול פרייד ווען זיי קומען צו איר און שטיב ארויין. זי האט הנאה צי פארברענגן צייט מיט זיי, איז אינטערעסירט צו הערן אלע נייעס, און זי באדאנקט דעם באשעפער פאר די גיטס.

אט האלט מען שוין ביי דעם איר אייניקל'ס בר מצוה, און פליצלינג די עלטער באבע ווערט קראנק... זי שטרענגט זיך אן וויפיל זי קען נאר אנטייל צי נעמען אין די שמחה, וואס איז ביי איר אזא איבערלעבענישׂ. אפאר וואכן שפעטער קומט זי מיט איר לעצטע כוכות צי אן אייניקל'ס חתונה, אבער גלייך נאך די שבע ברכות האט זי אויסגעהויכט איר נשמה. עס גלייבט זיך נישט, וואס וועט יעצט ווייטער זיין??!

מיר זענען געווען זיכער אז די באבע וועט בליבן מיט אונז. א דור האט זיך געענדיגט... א ביך האט זיך פארמאכט!!

באמערקן מיר דען אז מיר ווערן עלטער, און די באבעס ווערן נישט אינגער?! זיי זענען א ספעציעלע מתנה פון הימל פאר אונז אייניקלעך וואס זענען אויפגעוואקסן מיט זיי. ווילאנד מען האט די זכי' צי האבן א באבע, דארף מען זען אז ווען מען האט א גרעלעגנהייט זאל מען זיי אנרופן, אזיכן, און רעדן מיט זיי. עס איז דא אזוי פיל וואס מיר דארפן ווי'טן אזן באר ז"ל קענען עס דערצי'לן, מיר ווי"טן נישט גענוג מעשיות פון דערהיים, פין זייער יונגד, זייער פירונג און מנהגים. דאס אלעס איז גאר וויכטיג זיי זאלן עס אונז איבערגעבן - דאס איז דאך אונזער מסורה!!

Chapter Four

You Interlaced Us With Your Knitting

My First Sewing Lessons by Pessie Spira

Dearest Bobby,

You once told my mother to send along my uniform when I come for Shabbos. Little did I know what awaited me. Sunday morning, when the brown dresser was pulled away, the blue plaid uniform material was proudly sitting there on the sewing machine table. Within an hour or so, a school jumper materialized- identical to the original one I had brought along. I will never forget how you pleated the skirt. You pinned down the pleats, spread a wet diaper over it and with a hot ironed steamed it until the room filled with vapor. Little did you know that this was my very first sewing lesson! And then when the jumper was done you opened the closet door and brought out two light blue uniform blouses you had sewn earlier- how they fit so perfectly, I never figured out.

Shaindy and I once showed you an off-white vest we had bought- a nice metzia we thought you would appreciate. A couple of days later, we came home from school to find a beautiful lavender and off-white plaid skirt that you had sewn for us. You now turned our

little metzia into a beautiful Yom Tov outfit.

I used to watch in wonder how you cut out material from a jacket pocket to create a dickey. You shortened a belt to lengthen sleeves- those were lessons #2 and #3.

You hemmed my kallah robes so professionally; you always sent back the excess material that you cut off, saying it may come in handy one day. How about the precious chalatlach for the little boys and the magnificent kitlach for the grown ones?. Can any grandmother in the world measure up to that?

As my thoughts turn to your talent for knitting I suddenly need to put the pen down. I cannot even begin to describe how each garment you knit became a work of art. They were done with so much taste each one full of love and devotion. As a little girl, I was the proud recipient of a knitted navy full skirt and vest set trimmed with white, embroidered with "pop-up" cherries. It was a classy piece. If it were still around today I would proudly put it on my little daughter and she would surely be the belle of the ball. Most of the things you knit were classics that never went out of style.



Every single thing you knit for my children was so eye catching- done to perfection- masterpieces at their best! When we commented on their beauty, fit or style you would say, "That's because you bought the wool," or "Anyone can follow instructions." Mind you, Mrs. Mandelbaum, (the woman who sells yarn) would quickly jot down instructions and draw a sketch. "How is anybody supposed to understand this?" I would complain, "Don't worry," she said confidently "Your grandmother will figure it all

out. She's not the usual!" Today we cherish the knit tops — they are priceless treasures!

By Chayala Lerner

When I first got married, every so often I would see a niece, nephew or cousin wearing some beautiful knit garment, detailed and done to perfection. My first reaction would be, "Don't tell me Bobby knit that too?!" Then, after seeing so many masterpieces I would try to imagine what I would love to have Bobby knit for me. When Faiga Yitty was born, my Shvigger told me that Bobby wants to knit something, I should let her know precisely what I want. I thought about it, thought again, took my time thinking until one day I stopped into my Shvigger to find that a nice surprise awaited me. Bobby with her love and wisdom knew that I would sit on the offer for too long, so without any further ado she knit me an adorable white newborn sweater with tiny specks of pink and light blue pearled buttons. So tempting to bundle a newborn into something as beautiful! I immediately fell in love with the soft, beautifully handcrafted masterpiece. It's the only knit I have from Bobby. Thank you Bobby for not waiting for me I will surely use it a lot, enjoy it and treasure it.

By: Chanie Weiss

Bobby was multi-talented. She cooked, baked, danced, sewed and did practically everything. But she was mostly renowned for her knitting. Bobby's knitwear are masterpieces one by one. They can almost be worn inside out - that's how professionally they were done. Whenever someone would buy yarn by Esther G. Mandelbaum she would say - "Oh for your grandmother, let me give her something real hard and gorgeous." But, for Bobby it was always as simple as pie and it really did come out gorgeous.

I remember as a girl, I had beautiful tops and sweaters that Bobby knit for me. I felt like a million dollars in those clothes. I loved wearing them. Whenever I would wear something Bobby knit to shul, the Bobover Rebetzin would stop me and say, 'Don't tell me your grandmother knit this? That woman is just something special." She would then show it off to everyone that was standing around there, and they would all ask who made it? I would proudly say — my grandmother. Bobby would always come up with new ideas of what to make. She once knit a beautiful jacket, matching berets for my sister Raizy and I. Mine was maroon and Raizy's was green. I used to look forward to the fall and spring so that I could wear it. Berets were in style then and we looked really fancy in them.[31]

After I had a baby I kept on saying "I want to buy yarn so that Bobby should knit something nice for my baby." But, I wanted to wait until she got a little bit older, so I never did ask her to knit anything. Once when Bobby came for a visit, she took two handmade dainty little sweaters from her bag. She told me to pick one - they were slightly different. I chose a gorgeous sweater with baby pastel colors. Bobby really knew what to make for each child at each age. It came into excellent use. I used it all the time. Finally, last year before Pesach I decided to buy yarn for Bobby to make me something over the summer for Sukkos. But it was too late — Bobby was too weak and had no stamina to start a new project. What a disappointment that was. I am ever so glad that I have that one sweater that I never even asked for. At least I have something to treasure. Bobby's own handiwork each stitch tenderly knitted with lots and lots of love.

Another talent that Bobby was recognized for was her graceful dancing. Bobby was extremely light on her feet and danced beautifully. My friends all remember her dancing at weddings. During the meal when the guests were seated Bobby would waltz with a partner. They looked so cute. Everyone would stop eating and just watch them — really enjoying the entertainment.

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31. Editors note: Bobby Landau told us that as she knitted these fancy hats for us she was always reminded of the time when she was a little girl. She wore berets in the stylish fashion, one ear covered and the other uncovered,. Her grandfather used to say, *"Farvos hut dar oiyar gazindikt?"* — he was referring to the ear that was uncovered!

By: Surie Shimanowitz

Most people who remember shopping for their '*shtafeer*' during their engagement, cringe at the memory of standing at the tailor's trying on and off, having the hassle of picking up the goods- the *agmas nefesh* of something coming out too short, too loose etc.-.especially the petite and exceptionally thin kallahs. Those girls definitely passed on the offer to go get yet another model-coat. 'Why bother', they would think out loud, 'nothing will fit. And to redo a model coat- taking it in from the sides, the sleeves, hemming and stitching is just not worth the bother.'

But my memories are good ones. I knew that I had a Bobby sitting in Williamsburg practically begging me to send her stuff "You are doing me a favor, I don't have any babies at home- now you are giving me what to fill my time with". She said it with such conviction that it stuck with me during my shopping sprees. I would walk into a store choose an outfit, robe etc. of my liking without thinking twice about the fact that it needed hems, taking in, adding material etc.

I would come home from my shopping extravaganzas, repack the bags to 'Mending' and 'Non-Mending (usually ?'s empty)' and then ship off the 'Mending' bag to Williamsburg. Bobby had a sense of my size and forbade me to come in to try on the stuff- 'Save the hassle for better stuff' she would say. A couple of days later, the bags were returned meticulously mended, beautifully folded and it was usually accompanied by a compliment on my excellent taste of clothing- what a great bargain!

By: Toby Lerner (Toronto)

I consider myself fortunate to have a handmade sweater that Bobby herself knitted for Gitty. I am certain that every stitch was interlocked and woven with warmth and heart wrenching psikim of Tehilim, fervently praying that the wearer of the garment should grow up to be a 'Yiras Shamayim' and have 'Middos Tovos'.

If only this little sweater can grow along with Gitty.... Being that we are not in the 'Dor Hamidbor' we outgrow our clothing only too soon. However, I am sure that the little sweater will not only keep her body warm today. It will continue to infuse her with the beautiful kavanos that went along with every stitch.

"Masei Yidia L'Hisspaer"

By: Raizy Shachter

Bobby was known far and wide as "the expert knitter." Her knitwear had that professional look which was eye-catching to all. Walking into Mrs. Mandelbaum's store, about to purchase yarn for a new knitting project, I received a warm welcome. "Choose any pattern, your grandmother can knit anything. Nothing's too hard for her!" How proud I felt as the other customers eyed me with envy.

Upon receiving the yarn, Bobby would immediately begin. Often staying up late into the night, so that by the next visit we were able to try it on for a fitting. She was consumed with the task at hand and often forgot to eat. Zaidy would beg us to stop bringing yarn, he was concerned for her well-being. However, once the garment was done, Zaidy was Bobby's proudest fan. At every opportunity Zaidy would point out Bobby's handiwork and impress upon us to cherish the garment as much *koach* and *mesiras nefesh* went into every stitch.

On occasion, when I would give Bobby a 'winning picture' (remember how she always said, "This one is a winner") of the children, I would receive a beautiful hand-knit sweater in return. She would tell me, "As I looked time and again at the *sheina painemlach* I couldn't resist knitting something for them." That was Bobby's way of expressing an inner excitement, an appreciation of her *nachas*.

How moving it was when Bobby rushed to knit her last project, a gartel for my brother Naftuli. Months before his bar mitzvah, she sat up late into the night embedding each stitch with love. Though serious sickness had already set in, Bobby used her last bit of strength to complete the gift of love. We are sure Bobby shepped nachas in Gan Eden as he was *Mekabel Al Hamitzvas*, adorned with her *gartel.*

Chapter Five

Bobby as a 'Great' Grandmother

By: Chavale Lerner — age 8

I remember Bobby Landau. She always gave me a big smile when I came to her house. I always loved to come to her house cause she always gave me a candy and sometimes I even got a lolly- If she wouldn't have any candies or lollies she would give me from her delicious homemade sugar cookies. She always had fresh fruits on the table. She always cared about me and always asked what I was doing. She would tell me stories of when she was a little girl. I loved to hear those stories. I really lost somebody that I loved.

By: Rachella Schachter — age 6

I really miss Bobby Landau. On Sunday, I would call her and sing my davening on the phone. She would be so happy. I also always sang my plays to her. Last year, I called her before Pesach. I wanted to sing her my Pesach songs. She took a break from her cleaning and listened to me. Then she happily went back to her hard work. Bobby, I will always remember you.

By: Estie Lerner — age 11

Bobby was a very special *'geshikta'* lady. She remembered to compliment and always made you feel special. She always remembered you, and treated you like a one and only. She is a great example for all of us. We can learn a lot of special things from our special grandmother — Bobby Landau.

..... Bobby had her special way with.....

When you got a new dress, she would get so excited, you thought you looked like a queen.

When you got a good mark — she couldn't be prouder

When you helped your mother she would make you feel like you truly outdid yourself.

When you came for a visit she thanked you profusely for coming.

When you tried to cook something and it didn't come out — she pronounced you the greatest Bala Busta anyway.

When you bought a metziah — Bobby would make you feel like a millionaire.

When a baby was born — she would be in your house day and night taking care of the baby, family and house. She would bathe the baby in the sink while the big audience- the entire family- would stand around and watch.

When it was your birthday and you would call her up she would sing 'Happy Birthday' making you feel very happy.

Bobby was a great cheer-leader. She always chanted her famous cheer: 2,4,6,8 who do we appreciate...

These are some of the few things that I, and all of us will always remember about Bobby. Bobby was a wonderful lady and we will always admire the nice way she spent her life. If we would all be like our Bobby we would be the nicest family in town!

By Rivky Weiss — age 9

Bobby was always so nice to me,
Whenever I came to her door she always said a big, "Hello Rivky!"
She was so excited to see me and hugged me with a big smile,
Bobby was so nice that to help someone out she would even walk
a mile.

Bobby was very special and helpful to whomever she met,
But talking about others she never let
She was always very satisfied with what she had.
If I was ever sad,
When I spoke to Bobby I always came out glad.

Bobby tried to solve everyone's problems, she really did try,
But the last time I saw Bobby so weak at Esther Sury's wedding, I
felt like I would cry.

Bobby always wanted to see the compositions of mine,
She would get so excited and want to keep them, and I would say,
"O.K. fine"!

You were always so special to me, I will never forget you, Bobby
To talk to you and be with you was really my favorite hobby.

By: Chavy Landau — age 7

I loved Bobby because she gave me delicious cookies. I loved Bobby because she showed me cute pictures. Bobby used to kiss me on my hand. I wish Bobby would still be alive. I will daven to Hashem that He should send Moshiach and then I will see my lovely Bobby again.

By: Bruchie Landau — age 8

מיין בעסטע באבי

אלא מייגע יארן האב איך געוואיסט אז איך האב די בעסטע באבי! יעדן שבת וועז זי פלעגט קומען צו אונז אהיים, פלעגן מיר איר אפווארטן ביים פענסטער און שרייען "באבי קומט... באבי קומט!!" נאך פין וויי האט זי אונז געוויזן אז זי זעט אונז, און פלינק ארויפגעאנגען די שטיגן.

יעדער איז גאלאפן צו די טיר איר קישן אין מיט הויכע קולות פין ליבשאפט, האט זי אונז אלע ארומגעבומען. וועז מען האט זיך שוין געזעצט בי די couch און זי האט אביסל הערעדט צו מאמי האט זי יעדעם געפרעגט וואס טוט זיך און סקול? וואס האט עסט עפעס ני געלערנט א.א.וו. יעדער האט צוהאמען געוואלט זינגען לידער, טאנצן און דערציילן מעשיות. זי האט געשפילט מיט אונז games פון קלאפן מיט די העגט, אזוי ווי איך שפיל מיט מיינע friends.

איך האב קוים געווארט אויף מיין Chance צו זינגען, וויי'ל זי פלעגט זיך גוט צוהערן אין דערנאך הויער קלאפן. אויך האט זי מיר געקישט . איך וויס אז זי האט מיר זייער ליב געהאט און זי וויסט זיכער אויך אז איך האב איר אזוי ליב געהאט!!

ברכי לאנדא

By: Sura Leah Spira — age 10

טייערע באבי,

וועז איך טראכט פין דיר דערמאן איך זיך אסאך זאכן,
וואס די פלעגסט טין און וואס די פלעגסט מאכן.
איך געדענק וואס פאר א גוטע באבע די ביסט געווען,
עס האט דיר אלעמאל אינטערעסירט יעדע קלייניע זאך וואס איז געשען.
הערליכע סוועטערס און מאנטלעך האסטו אונז געשטריקט,
געלט אויף אייז קרים האסטי אונז געשיקט.
די בעסטע חנוכה מתנות האבן מיר באקימען פין דיר,
טשאקאלאד האסטו אלעמאל געגעבן פאר מיר.
מיין שבת בי' דיר וועל איך אלעמאל געדענקן,
די פיל וואערמקייט וואס די האסט מיר געטין שענקן.
די קוכן וואס די האסט אונז געבאקן האבן מיר געגעסן מיט אפעטיט,
דיינע פארטיס זענען אלעמאל געווען בעסער ווי גוט.
איך וויל דיר פרעגן איין שאלה,
פארוואס ביסטו אוועק פין אונז אלע??
איך בין אבער זיכער אז אין הימל קענסטו אויסבעטן,
אז ה' זאל אונז פין יעדע צרה רעטן.

פין דיין אייניקל,
שרה לאה שפירא

"א שבת ביי באבי לאנדא"

באבי לאנדא איז געווען א באבע וואס מען קען נישט פארגעסן! די האט זיך אנגעשטרענגט צו מאכן יעדעם פרייליך. אייגמאל האט מיין מאמע מיך געזאגט אז מיינע צוויי שוועסטערס, איך, אין אסתי לערנער גייען צו וויליאמסבורג פאר שבת. איך בין געווען אזוי פרייליך. די גאנצע צייט, אויף די באס האב איך זיך געזארגט אויב איך וועל וויסן וויאו מען דארף גיין. ווי ערשטוינט בין איך געווארן ווען איך קום אראפ פון די באס און זעה ווי באבי לאנדא אליין ווארט פאר אונז. די האט אונז וואריעם באגריסט, ציגענימען די פעקלעך פין אונז, אין מיר זענען שנעל אהיימגענגען. דארט האט זי אונז געהאלפן זיך אנטוהן און גרייט מאכן פאר שבת. אלעס האט די געטוהן מיט א שמייכל.

פרייטאג ציכאכטס זענען מיר געזעצן ציזאמען ביים טיש און זיך ציגעהערט צי זיידי שלי"טא'ס הארציגע זמירות. ביי די סעודה האט באבי סערוירט בא'טעמ'טע מאכלי שבת וואס זי האט געמאכט. שפעטער זענען מיר אלע געגאנגען אויף א שפאציר און באבי האט אונז געזונגען צי א שבע ברכות! ווען מיר זענען אהיימגעקומען האט באבי אונז געהאלפן זיך ארגאנאזירן וואו מיר זאלן שלאפן. מיר האבן געהאט אסאך פאן בייכאכט, און נישט אויפגעהערט צי שמיעסן און לאכן. אינדערפרי האבן מיר געגעסן פין די געשמאקע קיכעלעך וואס באבי האט אונז אנגעגרייט. נאך די סעודה האט באבי אונז געזונגען צי א פארק זיך צי שפילן. באבי האט געבעטן אז חי' שייגדי לאנדא זאל קומען כדי אלע קאזינס זאלן זיך קענען ציזאמען שפילן. מיר האבן געשפילט "trouble", פארברענגט ציזאמען און נישט באמערקט אז די צייט לויפט.

מוצאי שבת איז מיין משפחה געקומען. נאך זיידי האט געמאכט הבדלה האבן מיר געזונגען בילדער און געגעסן א פיינע מלוה מלכה. באבי האט הנאה געהאט ווען די קליינע קינדער האבן געזינגען לידער. יעדער איינער האט באקומען א קיש פין באבי. זיידי און באבי האבן אונז ארויסבאגלייט און הארציג געווינטשן "א גוטע ווארך". עס איז געווען א שבת וואס וועט אייביג בלייבן אין מיין זכרון.

פון: רחל גיטל שפירא



א באזיך ביי באבי

עס איז דא אן א שיער הערליכע זאכן צו דערציילן פון טאג טעגליך אבער, לכבוד מיין טייערע באבי וויל איך איבערגעבן איין מעשה וואס איז געבליבן אזוי מיין זכרון.

זיממער צייט, איז באבי געגאנגען אין פליישמאנ'ס זיך אפריען. מיר זענען געווען אין קאנטרי אזוי געגאנגען באזיכן איין זינטאג. מאמי איז נישט מיטגעקימען, נאר טאטי, שלמי אזוי איך. קודם האט באבי אימז געגעבן Ice cream אזוי כאש, אזוי געזעצן מיט אימז. טאטי איז געגאנגען דאוועגען מנחה מיט זיידי. וועז באבי האט געזען אז מיר זענען שוין מיד, אזוי ס'איז געווארן קאלט, האט זי גענאגט "לאמיר שפילן Catch". מיר האבן אלע גענשריגן "Not It", אזוי שלמי איז געווען "It". באבי איז געלאפן שנעלער ווי מיר!! אימז האבן איר נישט געקענט כאפן!! די האט הויך געלאכט אזוי אימז געמאכט אזוי זייער א גיטע mood . דערנאך האבן מיר געשפילט hide and seek.

עס איז געווען זייער אסאך פאן! די האט זיך באהאלטן אונטער א טיש אזוי אלע אונטערעסאנטע פלעצער, ווי מ'דארף זיך אראפבייגן אדער אריין שטיפן. קיין איינע פון מיינע חברי'טעס האבן נישט אזא גיטע באבי ווי איך האב געהאט!!

חי' שיינדי לאנדא

פורים מיט באבי

פורים איז א הערליכע יום טוב. אזוי נאך מער פרייליך איז געווען אין אונזער הויז פורים ווען באבי איז געווען געזינט. פורים בייגאכט ווען באבי אזוי זיידי זענען געקומען צו אונזער הויז נאך די סעודה, האבן מיר געמאכט גראמען אזוי אויך א play

באבי האט זייער שטארק ליב געהאט אונזער play. די האט קיינעם נישט געלאזט רעדן אדער אריין מישן אינמיטן די play. יעדער איז געזעצען נייגעריג זיך צוצוהערן. נאך די play האט מען אנגעצינדען א מוזיק טעיפ אזוי יעדער האט געטאנצן,

אויך זיידי אזוי אפילו באבי. עס איז געווען א הערליכע פורים . באכדעם האט זי געזאגט "שלמי שטי אויף אויף די בענקל אזוי זינג מיר א שיינע לידל".

אויך חנוכה איז געווען א יו"ט צום געדענקן. באבי פלעגט זייער שטארק בעטן מיר זאלן זיך אלע צוזאמענקומען, ווייל דאס איז געווען איר שענסטע נחת . זי האט געטיילט מתנות אזוי געשפילט מיט יעדע אייניקל . לכבוד חנוכה האב איך געזינגען די ליד אין זי האט זיך זייער געפרייט אזוי געקלאפט:

צו ארבזער געטרייע זיידי אין באבי עמו"ש

הגרות הללו די ליכטעלע ברענט
די פייער צופלאקערט שפיגלט אפ אויף די וועגט
ווי שיין איז דאס בילד ווי ווארעם די געפיל
ווען די זיידע אין באבע קוקן זיך צו ששיל

די ליכטעלעך - די זיסע קינדערליך
זיי באשיינען די משפחה, אלע אייניקליך
מירערן פליסן פיל מיט געבעט
זכרונות שווימען אויף ווען איד נחת זי זעהט

נישט לאנג צוריק געווינט אין וויגעלע
געפירט אין חדר איד קליינע אינגעלע
געשעפשטעט א תפילה צו זעהן נחת אלעמאל
דאס קומט זאל אויפוואקסן א גדול בישרא-ל

מיט מדות טובות יראת שמים
עד זאל זיך ווייקן אין די ריכטיגע מים חיים
הון געפינען אין אלעמנ'ס אויגן
זיינע מעשים טובים זאלן זיין איבערגעוואויגן

און יעצט א מאמע- עד גייט נאך אין דעם שניט
נאכן מאמנ'ס וועג טריט ביי טריט
אידישע דורות על פי המסורה אויפצוציען
פינקט ווי די זיידע און באבע האבן זיך געטון מיען

דער רבש"ע זאל געבן הזורים בזימה פון די גרויסע מי
זאלט איר שפעטן הויפן נחת בריגא יקצודי
די קונדערליך זאלן טאקע אויסוואקסן אזוי ווי איר דאס
אייגעזייט
און וויישער צוטן דעם גאלדענעם קיים!!

Chapter Six

Bobby as a Confidant

By Pessie Spira

Bobby's devotion to the family has made her so endearing to all of us. She truly shared in the plight of others. There were times last year when my apartment hunting was getting to me and Bobby always knew what to say, "Something big is waiting for you and NO ONE can take it away." She provided a real listening ear and at the same time infused us with encouragement and chizuk. Imagine my surprise when I would meet Tanta Etty and Tanta Shprintza's children and they would ask me, "Did you find an apartment yet? Your grandmother is so worried about you!"

Bobby was really interested in everything. She would follow up if the baby was sleeping through the night and if the two year old's training was going well. She wanted to know how the children were doing in school, and was very on top of our summer plans. She was my WIC proxy and even kept track when it was time to re-certify.

Her *kimperturin* care was unbelievable. She was the first to volunteer to watch Sara Leah, a fourteen month old baby. She kept her a whole month and made it sound like I did her a favor. Eight years ago (She was in her 70's!) she watched Rochel Gitty- a two year old and gave her a grand old time. Her visits later brought sunshine and happiness through the door. She would cook her liver, bake her classic potato kugel, insist that I drink two whole cups of Zeidy's fresh grape juice and then send me off to bed. I would awaken to a spot-

less kitchen and a freshly bathed baby, snuggled contently in Bobby's hands. Was Sea Gate any better???

I told her that I was making a *vach-nacht* and would be setting up for the ladies in the kitchen. She was so against the idea. "I will be coming to the *bris-* but not to the *vach-nacht*. If there will be ladies around, you won't get any rest." But Bobby didn't let me down. She arrived early and announced, "The babysitter is here. I am going to make sure that Pessie stays in bed." Bobby helped set up, dressed the baby, and kept on checking to see that I finished the whole supper she had brought along. She managed to convince me to change from a *sheitel* to a turban. "I want everyone to realize that you are a *kimperturin*" she reasoned. Needless to say, when the night came to an end, Bobby cleaned up so efficiently and organized everything, extra food, paper goods etc. She single-handedly washed all the dishes and folded the tablecloths. She was "vach" to the baby most of the "nacht" and as kvater, she was ready to bring him to his bris bright and early.

Bobby was the center of all action wherever she went. She was the main attraction. Three years later, by this boy's *upsherin* once again Bobby came to the rescue. She arrived early to Bluzev, took the ladle out of my hands and served all the fruit cups. When she was done, she announced, "I'm available. How else can I be of service to you?" Bobby, your devotion to us was immeasurable...

By Goldy Knobloch

I was on the phone studying the different species of animals when Bobby beeped in. " So, how is school?" That was all I needed, and I let out my frustration, "It's SO hard, and I'm barely ever home!" Bobby always had a soothing answer to everyone, so I listened closely," Enjoy it to its fullest. Soon you'll be out of school. You'll be busy with your job." I made a quick decision. I'd rather be a student than go out to work tomorrow. I hung up and finished studying. I'm grateful to Bobby for giving me this outlook on life.

If only I can tell Bobby now that I'm in twelfth grade and finishing school. I can see a vivid picture in my mind, how she'd pat me

on the shoulder and with a twinkle in the eye say, "How time flies".

The first time I made a chocolate cake Bobby happened to have visited, so my mother ever so proudly served her a piece of the fresh cake. I was so nervous. "Is she going to like it, I never baked a cake before, do I really know how to bake?" What if Bobby's face turns red and we find out I mixed up the sugar and salt?? My fears were quickly allayed as Bobby took her first bite. "Wow!" she proclaimed. "This cake is just right, not too sweet, but still sweet enough to make you want to take another slice". All my doubts vanished — Bobby was impressed — that's all that mattered!

At Reizy Schachter's tnoyim I must have been in fourth grade. I clearly remember sitting on a chair when suddenly Bobby came over and pulled me into a standing position. She took me by the hand, and walked towards the Chosson's sister, Hadassah Schachter, and she said, "Aren't you two the same age- you should keep each other company tonight." We smiled shyly at each other, and before we knew it we were left alone. Bobby was gone- probably to go check up on another guest. Haddassah and I immediately hit it off and spent the rest of the night having a good time together. Bobby, only you had the insight to remember your little eineklach during times that you really didn't have to- I'm sure there was plenty of adult company that you could have enjoyed, or simply stood around to take your Mazel Tovs as the proud grandmother of the Kallah. But no, you had another agenda. You wanted to make sure that everybody else was enjoying the night. Thank you, Bobby.

By Reizy Shachter and Chanie Weiss

Grandmother — a precious gift,
Her value goes untold.
She enriches beyond measure
Worth more than her weight in gold.

Diamonds and gold are lifeless,
They cannot feel nor care.
But Bobby's heart brings comfort,
Always a listening ear.

Your joys are hers, your triumphs too,
For she follows every step.
As you stand at the threshold,
She grasps your hand to steer ahead.

Years go by so quickly,
Bobby is always there.
To share *chuchmah*, seek advice,
Her understanding — so rare.

Then illness sets in,
Her body is wracked in pain.
When on the phone,
A *krechtz* so drained,

I no longer have the energy within me,
To carry everyone's burden on my back,
In my heart of hearts I care,
It's just the energy that I do lack.

I hang up the receiver,
A shiver runs through my spine.
How will I ever manage,
Without this Bobby of mine.

Standing besides your *kever*,
Many thoughts are racing by.
You had your share of hardship,
Yet you held your head up high.

You taught us how to give,
A smile, an encouraging word.
You taught us how to live,
A life fulfilled with good.

I read your *metzeivah*,
It sings your praises, just a few.
I know you were my perfect example,
Can I ever mirror you?

By Surie Shimanowitz

Summertime, a time to join the masses and flee the city heat. Time to sit on your porch, breathe in the mountain air, and lift your eyes to absorb the beautiful nature that surrounds you from all sides.

The summer of 2000 found Bobby at 99 Wilson Street in apartment #6B. But it wasn't a disheartened, gloomy grandmother sitting on the sofa seat in the dining room. It was a jovial, yet sweating Bobba sitting there working on one of her numerous knitting projects. She was sacrificing the company and excitement of the country. The four weeks Bobby spent away was the highlight of her year. We all know how Bobby enjoyed being amongst people, especially those that can share a good laugh, or those that can challenge her mind. Yet this summer she had forgone the thrill of Fleischman's, as it was impossible for Zaidy to go any longer.

All summer long I kept thinking about Bobby. How was it that she did not show one iota of bitterness or resentment. She did bemoan fate- but not hers- MINE. She kept calling me and telling me that she '*Shoins* me' with a one and half year old (a mischievous one no less) in a small apartment in the heat. Over and over again she would ask me if there was no way I could somehow make it to the country — for my sake, for my son's sake — "Berish needs the freedom to run around in the grass."

I planned a trip to Eretz Yisroel, we were leaving the 2nd week of August. I immediately called Bobby and as expected, she was thrilled for me. "Enjoy every second of it, who knows when you'll go again." With genuine happiness and enthusiasm she asked me about the details of the trip and kept interjecting with, "I am so happy for you".

I hung up the phone and just sat there. How could it be that she was SO happy for me, when her situation in the city was rather dull.

But now I understand. Bobby did not live for herself. She lived for others. She didn't wear her own shoes. She constantly borrowed ours, she literally walked with us. She was there for us in times of joy and when we needed her for comfort as well. And so, when I went to Israel that summer, it was as if she herself was on the trip.

By: Shaindy Weiss

One freezing day, when the ground was covered with snow,
The degrees outside was below ZERO.
Bobby Landau called me with a cheery, "Hello",
But then she sounded worried,
"Sheindy, do you think you will go?"

Where to, I thought, Where should I go in this huge snow?
"Last year you were home," Bobby continued,
"It wasn't easy you admit.
Do you think this year you'll be able to go to the country,
Can you swing it?"

I couldn't believe what Bobby just said,
The summer was more than seven months ahead!
The wind was howling-but the cold mattered no more,
Bobby warmed my heart that was for sure!

Bobby, it gave you no peace at all,
That my apartment is so small.
It weighed heavily on your mind,
That a job for Shloima Yankel was difficult to find.

Bobby voluntarily took over my worries,
She worried almost instead of me,
And, unbelievably, she did this for the entire family!

This incident took place when Bobby was seriously ill and very weak,
It took lots of energy for her to even speak.
When my phone rang and it was Bobby,
I was very curious about what she had to say,
Bobby got to the point right away.
She brushed away my inquiries about her health,
And what I can help or do,

She said, "Sheindy, I'm worried about you."

She wanted to know what I plan to wear,
My brother-in-law's wedding was drawing very near.
For a minute I was shocked, I just couldn't speak,
Is this what's on Bobby's mind, when she's so weak!

I told her that with a wedding dress I was all set,
But Bobby wasn't finished, "How about 'Aufruf'
And Shabbos Sheva Brachos, don't you forget!"
"I have some dresses hanging in the closet," I replied, and it'll be fine,
They still looked good when I wore them the last time."

Bobby didn't seem to agree,
She totally forgot about herself,
Now she was worrying exclusively about me!
I told Bobby not to worry,
To take care of herself and feel good,
But Bobby kept on insisting,
"A new suit you must wear- to look your best you should!"

She wouldn't take no for an answer,
"I will take care of the suit, if you don't.
A dress from so many years ago you won't wear for a Sheva Brachas,
No you won't!"
An ironic thought flashed through my head-
I was totally not into my wardrobe,
Because I was worrying about Bobby instead,
But look who is taking care of it-
None other than Bobby alone.
She wouldn't let me go,
Till we made a "suit agreement" over the phone.

I put down the receiver wondering
How is it possible for Bobby to put her pain so aside?
Deeply touched by her remarkable concern,
I sat down and cried.

By Reizy Schachter

Bobby's personality was truly amazing. There is much we can learn from her. "Eizahee ushier hasumeach bechelkoi"

Bobby, you were truly a rich lady. You did not need much and were happy and content with your lot. Your house was not filled with luxuries and riches. But there was a special warmth that engulfed us as soon as we walked through the door. Everything had its designated place. The organization, cleanliness and serenity just made the place very inviting to all. How many times did we beg you to buy yourself a new outfit or a winter coat? But you always downplayed your needs. 'Maybe some other time' was your happy medium response. However, with the children, you were so generous. You gave at every opportunity, and encouraged us to buy something new for Yom Tov or for special occasions.

Bobby you were a true example teaching us to perform the mitzvah of Hachnosos Orchim. Starting from the big welcome we received, walking us all the way back to the bus stop, to your standing at the curb and waving whilst throwing kisses until the bus was out of sight. Each and every visit was a cherished one. For a Shabbos visit, you always prepared our special favorites; white fish (how grownup we felt), a home-made bilke for the boys and a full jar of your scrumptious cookies. You stood at attention to every one of our little needs. Before we even asked for a glass you realized one was missing, and would jump up from your seat and there it was placed in front of us. I remember the good old Chanukah parties in your apartment. Bobby, you were hardly at the table. You spent the night running back and forth into the kitchen, making sure everybody had what they needed. Of course, when it was over, you never let us clean up. You would say, "I beg you, leave it. I'll do it myself. What else will I do after you leave?" Bobby, how fortunate we are to have had you as our example. May we be zoche to follow the righteous path you have paved.

Reprinted from the Saf Sez by Chavie Safern
Dateline: May-June '45 or '46
Place: D.P. Camp — Krumbach, Germany

It was a beautiful Shabbos afternoon. Perfect enough for visiting a friend or better yet, cheering up a sick person. So two ladies (Polish born and bred) decided that would be just what they would do. They donned their Shabbos finery (whatever that was in those days), put on their hats, slipped into their shoes and set out for a short walk to visit a sick Hungarian lady friend.

The visit went very well. The two ladies spent a pleasant hour or so talking about the sick ones malady, about illness in general, the state of the world, the weather, and their cramped conditions. All in all, time passed rather swiftly. Suddenly there was a knock on the door.

As one lady went to open the door in swept about two or maybe three Hungarian ladies, who also came to visit their sick *landsleit*. They sat down and began conversing in their mother tongue. Now really!! How improper of them!! Couldn't they see there are two other ladies who look Polish sitting right there. You can spot the Polish ladies with their twinkling blue eyes. Where were their manners?

Well our two Polish ladies tried to hem and haw their way into the conversation trying to get it back on track — in Yiddish. No Go. Hungarian was on. Well now! Something must be done. It just won't do. They were there first and to be so callously disregarded by the sick lady and her friends, no! It just wouldn't do.

One of the ladies raises her voice a bit. "You know," she says, "In Poland there are only two sorts of people who speak the mother tongue between people. The first are assimilated aristocrats, wanting to prove to their new friends that they are not associated with the "Orthodox Jew." Included in this group are the *intelligencia* — the upper class scientists, professors, doctors, lawyers and the likes. The second group, who speak their mother tongue are the plain peasants. Whether at home, on their farms, or during Wednesday's market day they can be overheard conversing in Polish.

"Now we all here in this room know that you definitely do not belong to the first group. That is self understood. Which leaves us only to believe ..."

Our lady did not have to finish the sentence, because all four Hungarian women started talking in Yiddish. And with that our two ladies, Mammy Safern and Tante Simale left the room.

Two Sides By: Suri Simanowitz

Bobby was an old timer,
From the pre-war days.
Yet she lived in America
And adapted in some ways.

Each new invention,
Excited her to the bone,
Yet she did not have a beep
For her very own phone.

Bobby's enemy was dirt,
Her house was always spotless.
Yet when the kids come over
She made peace with the mess.

Bobby was a doting "Bobba"
Yes, she did her part.
Yet we all know well,
That she was a "child" at heart.

Bobby was so very simple,
She never splurged an extra cent,
Yet she showered us with presents,
At any given moment.

Bobby was full of humor,
With a joke that couldn't wait.
Yet she had a serious side too,
For her priorities were set straight!

Chapter Seven

Bobby as a Friend

By: Mrs. Toby Langsam*

Honestly, it's been many a summer since I was in camp, (and I ain't a young chick!) Yet, etched in my memory, resides a vivid picture of a noble, dignified woman.

Merely mention the word country, presto! There she is, glowing with her usual warm smile, with her ever so pleasant disposition. Looking her very best every day, from perfect neat sheitel to crisp model coat, down to her clean shoes... Has she not taught us subtly, "That is how a woman should be attired, no matter her stage or age?" I reflect longingly at the cherished scenario, depicting her knitting machine-like stitches, for yet another precious einekel.

My mind is racing years of time and I see her once more. Ah! The 4 corners... Filled with intense nostalgia, I see the huge maple tree... green and white lawn chairs in semi circle form, seating all of us around. In a trance, we're being transported to her hometown, sharing her childhood memories. She enthralls us with her inspiring stories and we swallow every rod of her sound advice, useful tips and bits of knowledge. Changing modes, she regales us with humorous quotes and anecdotes, her contagious laugh still ringing in my ears.

Being half or even a quarter her senior didn't detract in the least from our camaraderie. On the contrary, we each claimed to be her best friend. We looked up to her, she played down with us and we

* An acquaintance from Belze Camp.

relished every minute.

Yes, that's a sliver of a glimpse of Mrs. Landau. We can never forget you- you've given us more than you could ever know. You've taught us, be it by virtue of your very being- that youth need not fade. We've been privileged to gain from you a positive outlook instilling in us a true *simchas hachayim*. You've earned our admiration for your vibrant spirit and respect for years of wisdom.

Every Erev Yom Kippur I would call, treasuring her *hartziga vintchen*. This past year, again, I called Layee for her mother's number and before I could say a word, she sighed heavily, "Your shvigger (who was a very dear friend of Mrs. Landau) was so getrei till the very end." Open mouthed — I could not speak... I hadn't known...

Mrs. Landau — Please bentch me again, Please!

You were my best friend...

Zull zee tahka zein a melizah yoshrah and mashpia zein mire zullen gebentched veren mit alla brochos, v'b'ikur b'vias h'Mashiach. Amen!

By: Pessie Spira

Dearest Bobby,

Why was it that I felt so at ease talking to you? What made me feel so comfortable to confide in you? You knew how to analyze a situation so well, your humor made heavy parts seem light, and your advice was always right. I will never forget the warm hello when I called you. Sometimes it was after a long tiring day in Boro Park and you were knocked out. Your welcoming voice on the phone was as strong as ever. Never even a hint about a headache or that you were in a rush. When I did well on a sale you were really happy for me. You made a big deal over every story I told you. Why? Because you really cared about us.

When I gave you pictures you enjoyed them. You looked at them over and over and never got bored. More than once you told me, "This is what to live for...".

I once had a very pleasant conversation with you on the phone. We spoke about everything and anything. When I hung up I must have been smiling to myself, for my husband was curious to know which friend was on the line. "That was one of my closest friends," I said, "It was Bobby Landau". Dear Bobby, you were a true friend and a special one too.

By: Faigy Knobloch

Bobby A"H was my close friend. If a week passed without my calling her, then Bobby like a friend checking in, would phone me just to say hello. Her concerns were always the same.

"Huben die kinder dir gelozt shlufen?" (Did the children let you sleep?)

"Vie azoi geit ess far Shloimie in Yeshiva?" "M'tzuhlt in zeit?" (How is your husband Shloime faring at his new job? Do they pay on time?)

"Dein dirah iz nuch nisht zee ang?" (Is your apartment not too tight?)

We always had an open relationship, and I felt at ease discussing everything and anything with her. Bobby never made it into the category of "Grandmother". She proudly kept steadfastly to her position as a "Mother". In that role, she would feel with us the pain where there was pain, and was overcome with joy and happiness when there were simchas.

At the very top of Bobby's priority list was to remain proactively involved in every aspect of her children and grandchildren's lives. When my first daughter Yitty was born, on that very first day, Bobby appeared. Her sunny disposition radiated throughout the hospital room. As was her trademark, she brought along Zaidy's homemade wine and a bar of Torino chocolate. (I wonder if the company that manufactures the chocolates would believe how much a part of our lives those red shiny wrappers became!) Her excitement was tangible. I was able to feel it. Ecstasy was written all over her face. The mere fact that she made the special trip all the way from Williamsburg made me appreciate how much a part of me she had become. She could've shared her excitement over the phone but she went that extra mile (or

two). How could she stay home when this was HER simcha.

Bobby was so special to my family, and in return we felt we were special to her. I always felt as if my children and I were her only einiklach. She paid a tremendous amount of interest in all their little nuances and chochmos. It was essential that she got updated at every stage of life for each child individually; the first tooth, sitting up, crawling, sleeping through the night and then the highlight — the baby can walk on its own. At this stage she would say, "Now your hands are lighter". It seemed as if Bobby's hands were tired from shlepping. We all know how she would move furniture on her own, trudge home from the grocery carrying all the bags in her two little hands. This is how she showed her motherly concerns. She wanted to make sure that our hands were free and relaxed.

Bobby and Zaidy were a special couple. They were *moser nefech* for their children's *chinuch*. They worked hard together to plant the seeds in the right spot with the right environment. Boruch Hashem their seeds blossomed to be a beautiful, *erlicha, Torahdika shteib*. They had what to be proud of, and they well deserved the nachas. Bobby and Zaidy were a true example of *machshiv* Torah. They lived a very modest lifestyle. Bobby never complained. She simply did what was right for the tachlis of Zaidy and her children. She had tremendous sacrifice for Torah, and she was zoiche to see her children and grandchildren growing in the Torah world.

We miss Bobby very much. We feel her absence daily. But we know that she did not forget her beloved children. Bobby was always there for us and will continue to be. May she be a *'gitte bater'* for our family and for all of Klal Yisroel. We should all be zochah to see her again very soon together with *Moshiach Bimheira Biyumainie Umein.*

Family Ties By: Leah Knobloch

Sometimes I lay in bed at night and my thoughts turn to our Bobby who has left us so suddenly. Oh how I miss her! She always knew just the right words to say to me, which brought forth a smile to my face. I'm convinced that her fervent wish would be to

keep the family close together, organize family gatherings so that we can be a part of each other's lives. So why don't we all take the lesson that Bobby taught. Don't wait for an occasion, pick up the phone and give your aunt, cousin or niece a call!

FAMILY LIST:

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61 B South 8th Street
(718) 782-4323

Chanie Goldberger
1214 46th Street
(718) 854-1858

Chana R. Hoffer
134 South 9th Street
(718) 302-9249

Chanie Horowitz
1520 49th Street
(718) 438-4712

Briendy Katz
1134 40th Street
(718) 871-3827

Tilly Katz
1746 44th Street
(718) 972-4828

Dassy Kessler
350 Brooke Ave. Toronto
(416) 785-1204

Chavie Knobloch
1351 45th Street
(718) 871-3827

Faigy Knobloch
1502 52nd #2B
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Surie Knoblcoh
39 Ashel
Monsey, NY 10956
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Tante Etty Landau
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(718) 633-1524

E. S. Wertzberger
596 Whythe Ave
(718) 852-2328

Ruchie Zitronenbaum
1560 48th Street
(718) 871- 6623

By: Reizy Schachter

Bobby, you were the most fun-loving and young at heart Bobba around. Recalling my childhood memories, I remember en-

joying every minute with you. We laughed together as we exchanged jokes and riddles and played Hangman. We took turns singing to each other. I especially loved to hear "*Oifen Pripitchek*" and "*Amuel iz geven ah meidela*". You were my playmate at each visit to the park. You helped me climb the top of the monkey bar and caught me as I slid down the slide. Twenty years later, I watched you do the same for my children, as you remained ever so young. We "seniors" were resting on the bench, as you entertained and ran after the little ones in the park. (How many people do you know that stayed 20 for fifty years?!)

You would often tell me how as a young girl, you loved fun and entertainment. I remember one daring story you repeated. A fresh sparkling snow had blanketed the town, and as you looked out the window on that cold blustery night you couldn't resist the urge to go out and frolic in the snow. Quietly, you slipped out of bed, put on an overcoat and a pair of boots and snuck out of the house. You edged your way through the snow until you reached the 'rynek'. You stood up on a sled and like a bird in the quiet night, dived flat onto the snow. You carefully arose, not to ruin your snow impression. You had made your mark! With a sense of satisfaction you headed towards home.

Bobby, I loved to call and share <u>any</u> news with you because you always listened with interest. Until this very day, I sometimes find myself reaching for the phone to call you. I loved to repeat my children's "chochmas" as you always prodded me with, "*fin meina kinder hub ich nisht kein chochmos. Luz man eppes heren fin deina kinder.*" You laughed at their jokes and treated each one as if it were the best laugh you've had in a while. And you would keep telling me to tape them so that the children can hear their 'chochmas' when they grow up. You'll be happy to hear that I heeded your advice, and the older children are already getting a kick out of listening to themselves when they were younger. Bobby, oh how I enjoyed calling you with the day's accomplishments, from my shopping extravaganzas, to the supper I was making. You kvelled and would respond with, "*Bist ah berye'la*".

You were involved with my shopping and would be thrilled when I finally purchased something. You even became involved in my social life. From time to time you would check up on my friends and ask me how they were doing. I remember you asking me to suggest a shid-

duch to my single friend. You were one of the first people on my list to call with the happy news when that friend became engaged. How happy you were for her."

What fun we had at Avrumy and Toby's wedding in Toronto! I recall sitting on the side, watching you talking and laughing as you made friends with the young Torontonian couple that was visiting with Dassie Kessler at the time. I remember marveling how the age gap melted away as you carried on an amusing conversation. The short trip to Niagara was enhanced by your enthusiasm. You joined 'the young ones.' Scratch that, you didn't join you, you led us with your humor and spirit. What a memorable trip that was!

Bobby, with your petirah, I have lost a dear friend.

*Song By: Goldy Knobloch**

How can it be,
That the time has flown so fast,
Can it be true?
That Bobby's days have really passed.

Oh! A sadness in my heart,
For so suddenly she had to part
Leaving us in shock, in disbelief.

Can you remember
All the good times
When being together with Bobby
We were her children "knitted" as one

The sharing, devotion and warmness
What a lovely pleasant dream.
We really miss Bobby so,
And yet we know
That in the future time will reminisce
The nostalgic melodramatic dreams
And those memories will warm us with their glow!

*Tune: Belze Camp Contata

By: Chanie Weiss

Summertime is always the most enjoyable time of the year. The birds sing, there is a fresh summer breeze, you wake up in the morning and just feel the warmth and happiness in the air. My family goes to the same bungalow colony year after year. Throughout the years we have made lots of friends in the 'country' as we so lovingly call it. We eagerly anticipate the summer during the winter months. with lots of friends, and we have a great time. There were two summers that especially stand out in my memory- two summers that when I think back to them, my mind goes into a trance and a calm comes over me.

Right next to our bungalow colony there is a small colony called Sunny Hill. For two summers Bobby and Zeidy rented a little hut so that they could spend the summer with us. What beautiful memories we have of those summers. I vividly remember going to Bobby's bungalow at night to bake with her the famous delicious sugar cookies! We laughed away as she cracked jokes. We rolled out the dough together , forming shapes and sprinkling sugar.

Thursday nights we sometimes used to bake Challos together. Bobby would teach me how to braid the Challos. Sometimes we played scrabble - Bobby was an excellent scrabble player - she was a good competition for my mother. In the colony there was an older lady that was recuperating from an illness. Every couple of days Bobby would ask me to accompany her on a visit to *'bazeech ah kranken'*. Other times we would go walking on the roads, oftentimes stopping to admire the waterfalls. Every Erev Shabbos Bobby would make her delicious potato kugel and save us some pieces, while Zeidy would make the boys' peyos with sugar-water so that they would last the entire Shabbos. We really had a wonderful experience being together with Bobby and Zeidy those two summers.

One summer when I was a little girl I stayed with Bobby in Belzer camp for a week (I don't remember why) It was during the nine days, and we couldn't go swimming. Finally the day after *Tisha Ba'av* we got dressed in our bathing suits and went down to the pool. I was so excited since I love to swim. It was a long walk to the pool. Finally we

got there and lo and behold the pool was closed due to inspection. I was so upset. Bobby felt bad for me and she made me a kiddie pool.

I remember when my family used to visit Zeidy and Bobby in Belzer camp. We would go into their cozy one room bungalow. We walked on the road to the Lake House Hotel. We passed the lake, and Bobby always promised us that one day she'd take us rowing. Zeidy would bring us supper from the dining room. It was always fun visiting them in the country.



When I started cooking supper after my wedding, each time I would be cooking a new dish I would call my mother to make sure I was doing it right-how much sugar do I need and what it should look like, etc. When my mother wasn't home or she didn't answer the phone, I would call Bobby and ask her all my questions. I remember making carrot salad for the first time. I must've called Bobby at least five times. The first time I made Shabbos my parents were in the country, so of course I called Bobby with all my questions. I made Bobby's sweet and sour fish, and I called her for the recipe. She kept on calling me to check up on how it was coming out. You could be sure it was delicious!

Since my parents and in laws weren't home for the summer, Bobby was taking their place. She called us and invited us for supper. She made us a five course meal, starting with her delicious liver. She ended off with her famous compote. After supper we sat and shmoozed for a long time. Bobby told us a lot of interesting stories. We looked at all her photo albums and had a real nice time. When it was time to go home, Bobby walked us down to the car and kept on thanking *us* again and again for coming.

By: Toby Lerner

It is impossible to adequately describe our Bobby. She was in a class of her own. Bobby's humility and utter selflessness, her devotion to her family and hundreds of discreet acts of chessed per-

formed daily endeared her to everyone she met. It is hard to fathom that Bobby by nature, an unassuming person, could have such an influence and leave such an impact on us all.

Somehow, when Bobby called I always had the intuition that it was Bobby on the line. Even the telephone ring had a singsong to it. Whenever I thought of calling Bobby it was just then that Bobby's call came through. I almost felt like we were racing each other and I knew it was my place to be first. But knowing Bobby- I knew it was her pleasure. She showed such genuine interest and wanted to know about every child. It was never a superficial conversation. She always wanted to know all the details with all the trimmings. We never had to resort to the weather.

I'll never forget that special time when Bobby came to Toronto for the Kessler wedding and stayed at our house. She showed a keen interest in everything and spent some quality time as she sang to the children while strolling with them outside. I feel fortunate to have had Bobby actually stay with us. As all these heartfelt stories testify, Bobby's heart was surely bigger than her petite frame.

By: Surie Shimanowitz

The summer I was seven I went to visit Bobby in Belzer Camp. After the great warm welcome I received, Bobby led me by the hand and pointed at a wall in the bedroom. There, proudly displayed was a letter I had written to her. She really treasured every letter- as I treasure the memories.

It was a long Shabbos afternoon and I was enjoying Bobby's company in the dining room at 85 Taylor Street. Bobby knew, that although I wouldn't dare ask, I was pining to go down to the playground. At the suggestion, my face lit up and Bobby quickly got dressed and made sure I was all tidied up before we trekked down the ten flights of stairs. Bobby sat in the heat for an hour or so watching me. Every time I caught sight of her from my position perched atop the monkey bar I always saw that twinkle in her eye- her face

was glowing and she seemed to be enjoying herself immensely. There was nobody else out on the benches, but that didn't matter to Bobby. She was enraptured by my antics. I swung, climbed and jumped for about an hour. We climbed up those ten flights again- exhausted.

By: Chavie Fleischman

During my stay at Zaidy's house right after Bobby's Shiva, while everyone was settling back to normal, I knew life would never be the same again, especially not in this house. There was a frightening emptiness. I looked for Bobby's presence everywhere. Even the walls seemed to be crying out for her.

Zaidy welcomed me warmly saying *Boruch Habue.* As he spoke, he reached for the fruit bin to offer me a fruit. He was surprised to find it empty. When reality hit him, he sighed, *"Dee balbusta is nisht due."*

As I settled into the recliner, my mind was flooded with memories. Memories of times spent together in this dining room while Bobby was knitting. Bobby listened to all my school stories, camp stories and general *maselach.* After my marriage, she listened intently as I regaled her with stories about the children, the apartment etc. Everything seemed very important to her. Indeed, when I did have a problem I knew I could easily solve it with Bobby.

I then continued on into the kitchen. The first thing that hit me was the washing machine. Wow! It was hard to believe that there was still somebody who in this day and age had to insert the water pipe into the sink, so that the water should go down the drain and not flood the kitchen (I later experienced to my dismay what a clean-up job it entailed!) I looked for her dryer and then quickly remembered how Bobby said she never needed one. I vividly remember my mother urging her to send over her laundry so that we could dry it for her. Her steadfast response was always, "Blessed are the hands that do for themselves."

She handled everything on her own until the very end.

On the kitchen table, a candle flickered in memory of Bobby.

When I opened the cabinet I saw Bobby's phone book. As I flipped through the pages I was just amazed how she had all her Einiklech's phone numbers clearly displayed, and where applicable she had their work numbers as well. I then remembered that during the summer, every so often, I would receive a call from Bobby to the office inviting me for supper or just inquiring how I was. While skimming through the pages the phone rang. Oseh Chesed was on the phone wanting to know if Bobby would give her yearly contribution of $25. Throughout my stay I received calls from Ashoer Koller, Belze Yeshiva to name a few, all wanting to know if she would continue with her yearly contributions. She gave Tzedakah to many different organizations, even those that the family didn't really have a connection with. She gave with an open hand.

Some of the interesting items found in the kitchen cabinets were: 4 jars of Apricot Jam — her daily breakfast on bread with butter, 3 bags of Sugar — a necessity for Zaidy. He adds plenty of sugar to every dish, a tin full of candies — ready for the einiklach's outstretched hands, a cookie jar filled with Bobby's specialty sugar cookies.

The freezer stacked with a complete Shabbos meal: challos, kugel, soup and many containers of apple compote prepared for Shabbosim she never lived to enjoy.

As I continued into the bedroom, I spotted 2 bars of chocolate. They reminded me of her $100 or $50 bills tucked into the wrapper on Yom Tov for each family to enjoy.

3 boxes of yarn supported the crib.

Zeidi's patterns of *challatlech* hung neatly in the closet over 18 boxes of candles and many small grape juices ready for Purim.

The quilt that lay comfortably on my bed dates back to the time Favel went to camp with his name imprinted with a laundry marker. The linen that covers the quilt bears my father's label, from some 30 years ago. Under the bed lies a brick of the old Satmar Bais Medrash that Zaidy still holds onto dearly.

A shoebox of 8 full Tzeduka boxes, 4 broken radios stacked neatly in the closet, Old receipts, some dating back to April 1, '62! Papers of JFK assassination, lay neatly folded, yellow of age. No man lives forever, yet words live on as evidence.

In the hallway I continuously heard Bobby's praise. Mrs. K. clutching her walker, spoke endlessly about Bobby. Her eyes would well up with tears as she remembered her dear old friend. She remarried recently, and Bobby discreetly helped her buy all the necessities and housewares. Another neighbor, Mrs. Spitzer, told me she had once asked Bobby to do her a favor and was a little surprised that Bobby turned down the request. She found out later, that Bobby volunteered at Bikur Cholim and couldn't renege on her commitment. She then approached Bobby and asked her if she could join her in the worthy cause. From thereon they went together. Of course, our dear Bobby never bragged or even mentioned these noble deeds. We didn't even know that she was a volunteer for several organizations until we found her Volunteer badges after her passing. Mrs. Fisch, one of Bobby's acquaintances from the sixth floor, broke her knee some time ago. Her children would rotate their visits. Each visit was preceded with a phone call to their mother, "Will Mrs. Landau of 6-F be visiting with you today?" Each one individually looked forward to Bobby's presence.

One evening while we sat peeling carrots Zaidy looked up at me and said, "*Glach vee dee Balbusta*" How I wish he were right! To be compared to my most beloved Bobby was always my dream!!

Bobby's sense of humor stayed with her until the very end. Once, after a trying day at the hospital the phone rang. It was her very good friend Mrs. Langsam. "Hello," she began, and instinctively she asked, "how was your day?" Without missing a beat Bobby responded, "I need a vacation. Maybe if I have a baby they would send me to a kimpaturan home where I can relax." Another few words were exchanged and then the conversation was over.

A week later, the phone rings again. It was none other than Mrs. Langsam. She called to find out how Bobby's baby was doing! They both had a good laugh over it, but we all know that it was her humor that kept her going.

When one of her friends became bed-ridden she bemoaned her husband's fate to Bobby, "My poor husband has to do the shopping, cooking and cleaning while I lay in bed waiting to recuperate from the operation." Bobby jokingly responded, " *S'shot nisht. Luz dee menner vissen vos dee frauen tian, vallen zei huben mar kavanah van zei zogen shaloiy asanei eesha.*"



Family Visit with Zaidy & Bobby at Fleischmans

Chapter Eight

Bobby at Simchas

By Reizy Schachter

Bobby, in your unassuming way you never realized that you were the highlight of every simcha. With your arrival, the simcha began and when you left, for all intents and purposes the simcha was over. I remember that at my son Tuli's upsheren, the grand entrance you made with Zaidy enhanced the simcha. Your face glowed throughout the night as you continuously thanked Hashem for giving you the opportunity to partake in yet another 'eir-einikel's' upsheren, as they joined the chain of our family's mesorah. As Tuli proudly sat on Zeidy's lap, learning the aleph-bais to Zeidy's sing-song tune, you stood by kvelling and shepping nachas. Your car ride home showed up earlier than expected and so the seudah was cut short. It ended with Zeidy's brochos and your warm wishes ringing in the air. Though by then, it was already more of a challenge, you helped Zaidy sew a chalatel for Tuli, presenting him with a cherished gift to treasure forever- a labor of love from Zaidy and Bobby.

Coming home from Dassy Kessler's son's wedding, I sat down to write with mixed feelings. The chasunah was beautiful, very lively and everybody looked their best, but there was an obvious absence. Sweet memories of previous weddings flooded my mind. Bobby, you were the first person I looked for upon entering the hall. As I approached to wish you mazel tov, you would rise from your chair, coming towards me, with that special smile on your face and you

would give me mazel tov. You always inquired about the children and their babysitter and then made sure that there was an empty seat and a ready portion. I've watched it happen often enough. You, the Bobbe, pulled over a chair for an einekel and approached the waiter, requesting a portion for the latecomer. Everybody vied to sit near you, for your seat was the head of the table, the center of the conversation and the source of laughter. Yides Schwartz once repeated, that at a chasunah, when you were asked to choose between chicken and meat, you instantly replied, "Whichever one is more expensive." You always had a sharp answer ready for any comment. Once the music started playing, we each waited our turn to dance with you, even for those of us in the family who usually don't dance. Your outstretched hand was very inviting. You would dance with each einekel separately, from the five year olds to your children, who are already grandmothers themselves. Your graceful steps were truly mesameach the kallah. The circle automatically stopped. The crowd of dancers stood by open-mouthed as you did your own little dance- *katzad merakdim lifnei hakallah.* You truly added that special touch to everyone's simcha. My husband's family as well as my friends oftentimes commented to me, that just by watching you dance they were already acquainted with your personality. Your *simchas hachayim* and bubbly nature came right through those dance steps. I recall dancing with you to a quick beat. As you quickened your pace, I found myself being pulled into an extremely lively dance, "Bobby, I'm not so young," I pleaded, but you just kept up with the music until we both physically couldn't anymore.

There is no one to fill that gap. Bobby, you are sorely missed at our Simchas.

By: Leah'la Landau (B.P.)

It is well known amongst us that observing Bobby at a Chasunah was sheer entertainment. Her nimble little legs, her gracefulness and youthfulness despite her advancing age caused people to wonder in awe "Who is that lady?!"

While she kicked up her heels, her eyes sparkled with spirit and spunk as she radiated warmth and pure joy in being able to take part in a simcha. When people were sitting down to the meal, as soon as the music began playing, no matter how fast or slow, she would grab a family member sitting closest to her and pull them into a waltz they would never forget! There was absolutely no choice, no questions asked. You just found yourself twirling round and round, back and forth, over and over again, all the while enclosed in Bobby's loving arms.

A few years ago, at a family wedding, I recall walking past Bobby. Suddenly, I felt a tug at my wrists. Before I could bat an eyelash, I was twirling around led by Bobby. I felt my face turning red as a beet. I was uncomfortable. After all I was only a young child. Today, as I think back to that time (and many others), I envy all those who seriously understood then what a privilege it was to dance alongside our one and only beloved Bobby Landau.

My mother always tell us how about Avrumi and Toby Lerner's wedding, a mere 4 years ago in Toronto. It was completely understandable that my mother along with the rest of our family members who had traveled from New York, felt a bit shy and self conscious. After all, they were guests in a foreign place. The meal began and everyone was settling down in their designated places. Out of nowhere Bobby appeared with her outstretched arms, eyes a twinkle, beckoning... OH! OH! Here goes! My mother suddenly found herself blushing like a peony gliding gracefully along the polished parquet of the grand ballroom. Pretty soon, her embarrassment vanished into thin air and she actually was having a good time, swept into the magic of Bobby's graceful dancing.

In general, at weddings, Bobby could never stay put for too long. Even while she tried to sit still, almost as if on their own accord, you would find her feet shooting out in all directions. As a mischievous smile played on her lips, her eyes gleamed with fun and laughter.

Bobby's last dance... Bobby was ill — very ill and she knew it. It was the night of Dedee Reinhold's oldest child's wedding. Only one day prior to the chasunah Bobby was lying in bed feeling miserable. She was so weak she was barely able to talk over the telephone. We

were wondering whether or not she'd be able to come to the wedding at all, never mind dance! Somehow she pulled herself together and with 'eizana *koachis'* there she was, sitting amongst the family looking gaunt and weak.

Was it because she tried to take the place of Tante Shprintza who unfortunately couldn't partake in her daughter's simcha? Or was it because she felt that this was her last opportunity to be *mesamayach* the kallah? Whatever the reason, she outdid herself at that wedding. She danced with the family with her usual spunk and pizzazz. For all us who witnessed this last dance we took home a special and unforgettable memory that night. A memory of our Bobby's iron willpower and unconquerable spirit.

A family simcha will never be the same again.

Tehai Neshamsa Tzirirah Btrir Hachayim.

Chapter Nine

Bobby At The End

By: Shaindy Weiss

• • • When I arrived, your bags were all packed. You were all ready to leave. It was the day you were moving into your children for an indefinite amount of time. It was the last time you were home on your own. You looked scared and very weak. I wanted to hug you, protect you and just pretend it's all a bad dream.

Bobby, you were pacing the house nervously. As we passed the second bedroom you showed me a plant that the wind had blown over two days earlier. You quietly admitted that you had no energy to clean the sand that had spilled all over the carpet. I instantly moved toward the closet door — I knew exactly where you kept your vacuum cleaner on the bottom of the linen closet. But Bobby, you got there before me — and firmly held your weak hand on the doorknob and said — "My einikel will never become my cleaning lady!"

I felt so helpless. You looked so thin. I begged you, "Please eat something before you go." You granted me the favor. We sat down in the kitchen. You pushed down one spoon of yogurt- nothing more was possible. You felt so nauseous... You weren't your bubbly self. I missed it. There was hardly any conversation. I couldn't hold myself back. I ran into the second bedroom just in time to catch the tears that were flooding my eyes. My worst fears were confirmed. Bobby is seriously sick.

The phone rang. It was the ambulette service saying they were scheduled to arrive in five minutes and we should wait for them downstairs. Bobby, you quickly went into your bedroom. I was there. I saw it all happen. In a frenzy, you began searching through all your drawers. Tichlach and socks were being pushed aside. You were frantically looking for a lost object. What could it be? I asked what you need, but you just motioned for me to leave the room. Bobby, you looked like you would collapse. You were shivering. I clearly remember turbans being tossed out of your meticulously neat drawers. I started sweating profusely. The pressure was getting to me. What in the world, is it that Bobby is looking so desperately for? And why won't she let me assist her? I suddenly realized that you were holding a single dollar bill. I thought to myself, "Oh, I figured it out!" I quickly told you that I had brought along carfare but it seemed to have fallen on deaf ears. Your desperate search continued. The van would be here any minute and there you were going through drawer after drawer. My heart was racing... Was Bobby looking for her jewelry, scared to leave it behind? You didn't give me a clue. I finally left the room, as I felt a bit uncomfortable. Only a few moments lapsed and I heard a sigh of relief coming from your room. You came running out of the room and pressed $60 into my hand and in a quiet voice said, "You're going to the country soon. Here's some money- get yourself something..."

I turned white, literally numb. This couldn't be for real... What? You almost passed out during your search.. for what? For me? My tears were falling unrestricted now.

"Bobby, Bobby" I cried. But no words would come...

There wasn't an extra second to argue over it. We grabbed our coats and bags and went down to the van. Bobby, I did catch that last glimpse you took at your 'melichalah' while kissing the mezuzah. It was as if you were saying, "Will I ever see this place again?"

As we waited for the elevator to arrive I took a close look at you. You looked so vulnerable, yet I felt like saluting the world's greatest general. You so valiantly fought and persevered... always on the giving front... never burdening yourself onto others... against all odds... great challenges and shattering illness.. you carried on hero-

ically.. until.. until it was utterly impossible.

Bobby, right there standing by the elevator bank, I felt like putting a few golden medals on your coat. If anyone deserved awards, it was surely you.

We sat together in the van. Bobby, you looked like you were almost fading away. All of a sudden, nothing else mattered. I couldn't think of a single point of interest. It was so quiet in the van. The silence was deafening. It was so painful. I couldn't recall a single time that I ever had to start a conversation in your company. But it looked like this was going to be the first time. I started talking about my family, my mother, my sisters and sisters-in-law, praising each one individually.

Bobby, you nodded your head and quietly said, "Yes, each one is so special. Now is the time of my life to sit back and shep nachas. But how can I? I feel much too weak..." The pain was evident in your eyes.

Again, there was silence in the van. I remember thinking how I wished I were in the privacy of my own home where I could cry my heart out to Hashem and beg for Bobby's speedy recovery. But, I said to myself, I'm here now, Hashem, please put the right words into my mouth. Bobby was always the one to do the cheering up... can't I think of anything to raise her spirits?

And before I knew it words were coming out of my mouth.. "Bobby, not everyone can say this about themselves. But you, Bobby, can. You can proudly proclaim that the generations you built are ehrlich and Torah'dik. Each family is a nachas to Hashem and to Klal Yisroel... This is no small feat. Not everyone your age can say that about themselves so easily..."

Bobby, you stared straight into my eye and said, "It's time to tell the eineklach.."

I moved closer as you whispered "This generation was a blessing received...My father, the Zaida Naftule, made a promise to me...

And Bobby began her tale.

"While in Siberia, right before he passed away, the Zaide Naftule, called me over and told me that in he had a frightening dream. In his dream he was already in the world to come. He then gave me instructions on how to bury him. I was a young girl then and burst into tears. I was all alone. Now I would lose my father too. I could-

n't stop crying. Over and over again I cried, 'What will be with me, who will take care of me ? How will I ever get married and build a family all on my own... I'll just get lost...' Zaide Naftule calmly told me "*Mein teire kind*," don't worry, I promise you that you will have *lechtige* generations. That night my father was niftar."

With that, Bobby, you finished your moving story. It must have cost you so much precious energy. But I remember how your tired eyes glistened and your gaunt face shone with a special purity as you spent another few moments reminiscing...

I was so moved, I couldn't see through my clouded eyes. What a z'chus to be a grandchild of a Bobby as noble as Bobby Landau, and a great grandchild of the Zaide Naftule. I felt privileged to be a part of such a special dynasty.

As I stepped off the van I felt physically spent, emotionally drained, yet spiritually uplifted.

By: Pessie Spira

We all knew your negative opinions about hospitals, but when you were admitted you didn't voice it. You tried being as upbeat as possible, smiling, straining yourself to talk, and telling us time and again, "Hashem is so good to us". You were so full of dignity and pride, from the beginning to the very last day you always had that aura about you. It was so obvious that you were in writhing pain, but you held it all in. When the potassium was burning through your veins, the pain was unbearable. I felt it in the air- pure TORTURE- but you had no complaints. We tried to make you a bit more comfortable and with your last bit of strength you showed appreciation. And then, right before our very own eyes, before we had a chance to let the reality sink in... you ever so quietly slipped away.

Dearest Bobby, we all miss you so much! I fall asleep thinking about you. In the morning I feel you're watching us, and throughout the day I can't forget you. There are times when I suddenly get an empty feeling- it hits me full force- Bobby is no longer with us. A

certain sense of security is gone... But the legacy you left behind, is richer than rich. The precious memories we have with you- they remain behind and they will have to keep us going...

By: Raizy Schachter

I called to speak to Bobby one day towards the end of the summer. When I asked how she was doing, she answered, "Boruch Hashem much better. It should only continue getting better and better." This was a day after they had drained her lungs and she was feeling better. Before I had a chance to go on, Bobby was already leading the conversation. "How is the baby? Does he sleep at night? (Yanekle was a continuous cry baby). "Do you make sure to sit out at night? Reizele, remember this is your time to relax, and the summer is almost over." With a quick good bye she then hung up, as she had guest in her house. I looked at the telephone receiver in my hand and couldn't help but marvel, "How typical of Bobby. Always on the giving end."

Walking into Esther Surie's chasunah, I spotted Bobby in her wheelchair looking pale and weak. As soon as she noticed me, she perked up and immediately complimented my dress and the results of my successful diet. She was also concerned whether I had enough *koach* to care for my baby and ended off with "Take care of yourself". As I pulled over a chair and sat down near Bobby thoughts began to race through my mind. *Bobby hardly has strength to breath or to take care of herself. Yet she can muster up the strength to compliment others and make them feel good about themselves.*

With a sense of trepidation, I walked through the hospital corridor, on Motzei Shabbos. This was my first visit to Bobby in the hospital. I couldn't help but be nervous about the state I would find Bobby in. What would I say to her?

As soon as I poked my head through the door, Bobby's warm smile calmed me. She immediately said, "Oh, you came? Who's watching the children?" I realized then that although Bobby's body was

wracked with pain, she still remained the same old concerned grandmother. I proudly showed Bobby a beautiful professional picture I had taken of the children during the summer. She smiled and said, "Oh, the baby sits already? Look how cute the others are." Even in her hardest moments she noticed every detail and shepped nachas. On my next visit to Bobby, Monday afternoon, I was horrified to notice how quickly her condition had deteriorated. I thought I would entertain her, but her weak condition caused her to keep dozing off. Although she suffered from lots of pain, she did not utter even one word of complaint. Sadly I looked at this frail woman before my eyes. Who would have believed that our Bobby would ever reach this point? Bobby who was so full of life, the epitome of determination and strength, lay there so helplessly. I yearned to do something to help her, but I realized that other than saying Tehillim and starting our new Loshon Hora program there was little we could do. When my shift was over, I trembled as I left the hospital room. What will the morrow bring? My mother-in-law urged me to leave the children at her house the next day and visit Bobby again. Bobby slept through most of my short visit and with a sense of fear and foreboding I took my final leave. As I left the hospital I couldn't control my racing thoughts... *Bobby is still needed in our family. We are dependant on her to be a wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, aunt, great aunt, friend, confidante, etc. How can her end be so imminent?* However, I brushed aside the somber heavy feelings with one final one thought ... *Whatever Hashem does is for the good.*

By: Chanie Weiss

After Shvuous when Zeidy and Bobby were staying at my parent's house, I constantly went to visit them. Sometimes Bobby was downstairs sitting on a chair and talking like her old self. But, most of the time she was upstairs in bed. She was nauseous, weak, dry, dizzy — what not? But she never showed it. She always had a smile on her face and would keep the conversation going as if nothing was wrong. She wanted to hear all about my job, my baby's

antics etc. After we would talk for about fifteen minutes she would tell me that she's not feeling too well and would like to lie down. Once I dropped in with pictures that I had just developed. Bobby's face lit up with each picture. She was especially crazy over one picture of my baby. She said with tears in her eyes, "This is what I have to live for". I framed that picture and gave it to her. Bobby put it on the dresser facing her bed, and told me that every time she opens her eyes and looks at that picture it gives her the push to keep on going.

One summer afternoon I came to visit Bobby. My mother begged me to get Bobby to come downstairs, since she was in bed the entire day. After much persuasion Bobby came down. I wanted to sit with her on the porch but she was afraid of catching a draft, so we sat on the couch instead. I brought a stack of old pictures and together we went through them, reminiscing about the old days. Halfway through the pile Bobby said that she had enough and needs to rest. She closed her eyes and tried to sleep which wasn't easy for her then. Every day was a new and challenging struggle for her.

Summer came and we went to the bungalow colony. I kept calling Bobby to see how she was. I couldn't always reach her and when I did it was a very quick phone call. I could barely hear her voice and I didn't always understand what she was saying. Once when I called her she sounded terrific. We had a long conversation and as usual Bobby gave me a whole list of instructions, I should go swimming every day, not sit in the sun, put on sunscreen etc. She asked me all about my baby and how I was enjoying myself. She told me to take care of myself and enjoy every minute. She sounded so well — too good to be true. Sadly, the next phone call was downhill once again.

After Bobby was hospitalized I went to visit her on Shabbos. She lay in bed and fussed over me as if I were the patient. She made me sit down - because I had climbed up seven flights of stairs. She literally forced me to take a drink and eat a cupcake. (I desperately needed it- after the long climb. Thanks Bobby!). There wasn't much conversation at that point - since Bobby was very weak, but when I told her that she looks so good – (because she put on her Shabbos tichel and sat up in bed) she said with a smile, "*Make believe*". I told her about my baby, Estie - that she's so cute etc. Bobby said "*She's*

something special." These were some of her famous quotes.

The last time I went to visit Bobby was on Wednesday — the day before she was *niftar*. Bobby was asleep the entire time. She breathed through a oxygen mask and was hooked up to various machines. Her hands were black and blue from being pricked so many times. My heart went out to her. This is my Bobby. She looked so scary. Her breathing was extremely labored. With each breath she took, I held my breath. A number of times she would start coughing, I felt myself go spastic — I thought I would succumb. I stood there watching her with a burning feeling within me — there was nothing I could do but watch her. I would fix her mask, sponge her face and just say Tehillim. Before I left I kissed her and said good bye. That was the last time I saw her. I was glad that I had the opportunity to be with her a day before she passed away. May she be a 'Meilitza Yeshurah' for us all.

Editor's Note:Bobby shared her hospital room with a childless almanah who was suffering from Alzheimers amongst many other complications. The continuous wailing of the woman, along with the noise of her life sustaining machine created an agitated mood in the room. The children requested to have Bobby's bed transferred to a quieter room where she can get her much needed rest. Hardly able to speak, Bobby, in a barely audible whisper motioned, "No" pointing to the woman she said, "This woman is all alone. While I'm in this room my guest can tend to her needs." It was only two days before Bobby's passing her pain was beyond endurance, yet how selfless she was.

Who took Care of Who? By: Chayala Lerner

The last Motzei Shabbos of Bobby's life, which also coincided with the first day of Selichas my husband had the privilege of spending the night with Bobby in the hospital. At that time, Bobby was already at her weakest point and was in dire need of sleep and bedrest. Before her children left for the night, they fussed over her and made her comfortable so that she could get a good night'[s sleep. When Bobby realized that Mendy was staying behind

she motioned him to leave. Mendy reassured her that the chair near her bed was a good makeshift bed and he would be able to get some rest. All night long whenever Bobby would open her eyes for a moment she would first divert them towards Mendy to check up on his sleep. When she caught him red-handed sitting up in the chair, she would wag her finger at him and then put her hands behind her head, motioning him to go to sleep. This was done with her last ounce of energy. Through her pain and weakness, her only concern that Motzei Shabbos was that her grandson should get some sleep.

By: Chavie Rieger

I have been asked to share my final parting with my dear aunt Simale. Let me just relate to you how I saw her two days before her petirah. I called and asked if it was okay for me to go up to her. To be perfectly honest, I really wanted you to tell me that the time was not right. I was terrified as I knew the condition she was in. I hoped for the best but expected the worst. There was no doubt that her end was fast approaching. But when I was given the go ahead to visit in the hospital, I went.

Tante Simale's face lit up when I walked through the door. Though my heart and soul were crying at the sight of her, I did my best to carry on and cracked a joke. She laughed and smiled. It made me feel good. We got to talking. There were three of us in the room, Tante Simale, Rivky Landau and myself. Your mother was talking about the food that she had prepared in the freezer. It was a nice time we had together. I then told her that she had a very special daughter-in-law, namely Rivky, who sat with her in the hospital all day. Toby was unable to come as she had just had a baby days before. When Tante Simale heard what I had to say about Rifky, she lifted her hand and held up two fingers. I did not understand what she meant by that. I must have repeated my sentence and she likewise kept putting up two fingers. Finally, I turned to Rivky and asked her what the meaning of her gesturing was. In one second it all became clear to

me. She did not have one special daughter-in-law, but two. Though Toby was not able to be at her bedside, Tante Simale did not for one second forget about her and all that Toby had done for her.

She was in anguished pain. Her love for all her children was equal, and she let everyone know it. I stayed for about an hour and half and then got up and kissed her good bye. I told her that I would bli neder come back the next way to visit with her again. True to my word, I was back there the next day when Chanie Weiss stood vigil over her bedside. Her condition had deteriorated so badly that she was given a heavy dose of painkillers and was asleep when I came. I did not stay too long. What I saw that day was very troubling to me. I was faced with the fact that her life was being snuffed out rather quickly. I loved her, I miss her. She was in a very big sense my 'veg veiser' because she understood me. There were times when I thought no one understood me like she did. But then again, so many people thought that about her. Tante Simale, I miss you so much. I am glad that I had the opportunity to kiss her and tell her how much I loved her.

Yehi Zichro Boruch.

By: Esther Surie Wertzberger

"She is the most caring warm-hearted person I ever came across," my husband Mendel told me as we left Bobby's loving surrounding for the very last time. Yes, my dear cousins and family, you all know what a wonderful grandmother you had, but no, you don't know to what extent she was superhuman.

When the last night of Sheva Brochos was over, we were picked up by a cousin and brought to Maimonides Hospital. As soon as we stepped foot into her room, Bobby's weak eyes lit up. They looked like bright light bulbs. Her dried lips instantly broke into a broad smile. She straightened her back and actually mustered up the energy from somewhere deep within, and she sat up. No one would ever guess this woman was experiencing even the slightest pain. I was stunned and speechless. I knew I was the visitor, but I wasn't

sure that Bobby was the patient. Her warm welcome was so becoming- I simply felt good. Bobby broke the silence, "Why are the two of you standing? Be as smart as me and take a seat!" I really felt at home now. *Humor was still her second nature.*

The first question she asked was whether our apartment was in move-in condition. Wow, Bobby remembered that my apartment was the topic of discussion during the last weeks of my engagement and she simply wanted to know the outcome.

Now it was Zaidy's turn, he began with his usual little Torah'la on 'Beraishes'. My father tried to shift the conversation back to Bobby, but Bobby shook her head and asked Zaidy to repeat the Torah'la over and over again. Each time, I could see, Bobby was quenching her thirst with Zaidy's holy words. Then she called Zaidy over to her — he came close, very close. Zaidy firmly held Bobby's hands and from the depth of his heart wished Bobby the best in the world to come. It was hard to hear Zaidy's exact words, but I did hear countless 'Amens' at Bobby's end. She had a calm and serene look about her. She knew the greatest man, the renowned Rebbe — her loving husband, was blessing her. I felt privileged to see the two of them bidding a final farewell. Yes, the sample couple departed in a special way. I was moved to tears.

May she continue to be a Melitzah Yeshurah for all of us. AMEN!

> Editors note: On Thursday Morning, the 28th day of Elul when the phone call came at 5:30 a.m. Zaidy was already up, but he wasn't feeling well. One of the grandchildren answered the phone and unfortunately had to be the bearer of the sad news. The grandchildren decided not to tell their grandfather anything until one of his sons would come over to break the news to him. We all know Zaidy, how he was a 'gibur k'ari' and would wake up at the crack of dawn and make his preparations for davening. His health was in excellent condition the night before, but this morning when he awoke he felt something wasn't right. He had a nervous stomach and vomited a couple of times. As he made his way from the bathroom back to his bedroom the eineklach watched him in awe as he picked up his hands to Hashem and said, "Zei Mir Moichel. In mein

laben hub ich mir nisht tzigaleigt faren davenen ubar heint ken ich nisht." He went on with his dialogue that he has nobody in this world — it's him and Hashem. He asked Hashem over and over again to forgive him for going back into bed. The next morning the queasiness suddenly disappeared. We, the children have pondered this story over and over again — what a Tzadik Zaidy is — an ovel is not allowed to daven until the niftar is buried. Unknowingly to Zaidy, he was an uvel that morning and was not allowed to daven.

How it felt in the Chapel: By Pessie Katz — age 7

When I went to the Chapel, I was REALLY davening for Bobby Sima Baila Bas Naftula. And I asked her to go up to the sky and ask Hashem to bring Mashiach. When my tears fell down I dreamt how kind she was when she was alive. When I said Tehilem, as the words came out from my mouth, I didn't believe that it's true that she has died I even asked her that everyone should be healthy (especially my sister Chanie who I love so much). Every two seconds I had to wipe my tears with a tissue. Oh! How happy I would feel with Bobby Landau in my life, I kept thinking. And I would even tell people stories about her and her life. When I saw the arohn my tears fell down again and my cries were heard all over the room.



I was lucky enough to be with Bobby's *arohn* in the same room. Bobby was the best great-grandmother ever!

Chapter Ten

Aishes Chayil

By: Reizy Shachter

I am sure as Bobby's neshama was ushered in through the gates of Gan Eden, the maluchim welcomed her with songs of praise from Aishas Chayil. We, the bereaved family can attest to the fact that her entire life exemplified every verse of that praise.

Aishes Chayil Mi Yimtza...

A woman of valor, who can find,
There are few with attributes of her kind.
Far beyond pearls, her value untold,
Her husband's heart to her is sold.

Bobby, to Zeidy's needs you'd faithfully tend,
Your care and devotion knew no end.
Standing at his side, all the way through,
Who can surpass a wife like you?

Chogro B'oz Moaznehu...

She girds her strength, invigorates her hands,
From the fruits of her labor, a vineyard she plants.
She prepares for their needs with competence and skill,
Their spiritual growth, her uppermost will.

Bobby, you were the mainstay of your home,
With profound wisdom, your devoutness shone.
Your virtues extolled, testified by deeds,
You were always there, perceiving our needs.

Kapoh Porsoh Le'oni'....

To the less fortunate, she hands out alms,
To the destitute, she extends her palms.
A lesson of kindness, always on her tongue,
Surely with the righteous, she sits among.

Bobby, your chesed to others, a shining star,
Making your rounds both near and far.
A good word, a smile, a compliment to treasure,
Giving of yourself, extending beyond measure.

Sheker Hachain, Vehevel Hayofi...

False is grace, beauty is vain.
Achievement amassed, her external gain.
Her husband, her children arise to praise,
An accomplished woman, lofty in her ways.

Bobby, your deeds an inner reflection,
Your middos, your character, molded to perfection.
May the fruits of your labor, the seeds you have sown,
Adorn your neshama with a golden crown.

By Leah Lerner

She is left alone amidst heavy darkness and destruction,
Yet there is no time to grieve.
A lifelong task lay ahead of her.
As she gathers her strength,
She is overcome by a strong resolve
to persevere,
to rebuild,
our mesorah

With much hardship and endurance,
They set foot in America — a foreign country.
Faced with constant struggles,
They strengthen each other,
With betochen and emunah they begin anew
to pursue
to rebuild
our mesorah

Zeidy finds a job as a factory operator.
His exceptional middos
Make him an instant winner.
Though he doesn't speak the language,
He is revered and respected by all,
Our Tatte, our Zaide
a higher soul,
a man of nobility.

With much s'yatah d'shmayah a family is raised.
With Bobby's encouragement Zaidy lowers his wage,
Becoming a melamed to perfection — instilling kedishas ohl malchus shamayim.
Bobby tries hard to make ends meet,
You can hear her gebait bei licht benchen,
Help me
to raise,
to nurture,
our mesorah.

As each child is led to the chupah,
They are filled with emotion.
Nuch azahy bitarah chorben,
Var hut zich dus fuhrgashtalt?
Dee Zaides huben zich avadei gamete.
To help rebuild,
to reconstruct,
our mesorah.

The family grows k"ah.
Bobby is always there,
Lending a listening ear, an eitzah.
Sharing in our simchas,
Reaping the fruits of her labor.
A labor of love,
of pride,
Nachas hard earned.

How she tried to spare us agmas nefesh.
She would cover up and say all is fine.
"Lumeer besser haren vus tit zich bei deir"
Until ... she could no longer.
She surrendered a true hero,
leaving us,
our legacy,
our mesorah.

Bobby continues to be the heartbeat of each family.
We clothe her neshama with the mitzvahs we do.
Bobby's spirit perpetually lives on,
Because a mother's heartbeat,
her lingering pulse,
is eternal,
it's our mesorah.

BY: Pessie Spira

Dearest Bobby,

Your care for all of us was so genuine. Every person felt as though they were your only child. Our joys and accomplishments made your day, our sorrows and hardships were shared with you. We knew that you were always there for us. Can we even begin to understand what you were to Zeidy? Can we even imagine what a special wife you were to him?

Right from the very beginning when you settled in Williamsburg you did it for Zeidy. That's where his job was, his shul was, his life was. He always spoke about a certain kedusha felt in Williamsburg, and you, like a real *eizer kenegdo,* knew in your heart, that this was the place you'll call "home". Even though Boro Park offered you the luxury of family and many friends, you turned it all down for the sake of your husband.

When your married children invited you, or begged you to move in to them for Yom Tov, you put Zeidy's needs first. He would be so much happier in 'his' own place and his Lantsiter shul, and that's what mattered the most to you. I am sure it wasn't easy for you to pack up food and carry it down ten flights of stairs to the community sukkah. Thus, most of the time you ate the Yom Tov meal alone in your kitchen. But instead of focusing on how pleasant it would have been to eat in a sukkah on a porch right off your children's kitchen, you thought of Zeidy's happiness, watched his shining face, and you knew you made the correct decision. It took all your energy, and lots of hard work to clean your apartment for Pesach- especially with your no *goyta* policy... You prepared all the food yourself, from *shmaltz* to *borsht.* I even remember the live carp squirming around in the tub. The idea to moving into your children for Pesach so you can relax must have been very enticing. But like always, you put your husband first- Zeidy needs his own home. There he is king. Those of us einiklach that were lucky enough to spend some sedurim with you, are witness to what a magnificent kingdom he reigned over.

Wherever you were Zeidy was most uppermost in your mind. When you came to my mother, you barely had your coat off and already you were calling Zeidy, just to check up... In the later years you left him many little notes. Your clear instructions gave him the confidence to go out on his own. He trusted you and knew that you are the most faithful wife one can have.

> *(Editors note: When cleaning the apartment we chanced upon a note Bobby wrote to Zaidy. She wrote, "Ich bin gagangen mit die 7:45 bus. Dee tee vus dee vilst." Zaidy wrote back,"Ich tie teshuvah"— How characteristic of him!)*

On Tuesdays, Boro Park day, you were constantly on the run. Between babysitting for Tanta Toby, visits to Tanta Shprintza A"H, scheduled sheitel machers or doctor appointments, you were hardly able to get to yourself. But Zeidy was never neglected. You made sure that his supper was prepared before you left and the table was set, for he liked to eat early. Oh, how the roles reversed. I remember Zeidy telling us how little you ate, and now you were worried about how little Zeidy ate and his weight loss.

You dedicated your last years to a major project called "Care for Zeidy". Your visits became quick and harried – what if Zeidy didn't notice my note, what if he needs me, who will take him to the shiur if I'm late? Your life centered on him and you watched him 24 hours a day with indescribable devotion. You served him so loyally, you honored and respected him and you were always tuned into his needs and wants. You were practically his backbone. You were a most extraordinary mother to him- caring, sheltering and taking pride in him. It's hard for me not to cry, for only now that we have actually stepped into your project do we realize that you had it far from easy. The way you shouldered the responsibilities alone is mind-boggling. You must have had many sleepless nights, plenty of apprehensive hours, and yet nothing was ever a big deal by you. You never carried-on about what you did, nor did you complain. You always told me, "As long as I can do it, I will. I'd rather not have to come to others for help. After all, it's my husband." You kept up a real positive attitude and always counted your lucky stars.

The last few months when you were really not feeling well, you didn't even confide in Zeidy, the person you were closest to. How did you have the power to contain all that pain? It is amazing that even when you were weak and frail you kept on pushing yourself to take care of Zaidy until you literally had no more strength. Did we realize what a heavy burden you were carrying in your heart? You were so uneasy about the whole situation. You were the one that was always giving, not taking. Now you were worrying about Zeidy non-stop. Who will take care of him? Who will be there for him and make sure he was happy? We were in shock over how quickly things were happening. We were trying ever so desperately

to hold onto you. Why didn't we have the sense to allay your fears?

But, Dearest Bobby, you have paved the way and shown us that with love, anything is possible. Rest assured that your children and grandchildren are Boruch Hashem taking care of Zeidy in a way that would make you proud. We are trying to follow your path and mother him as only you could have taught us.

I know, Bobby, that your life was full of many good deeds. But I think that there was something special about the unique way you cared for Zeidy, and I have a feeling that these selfless acts have opened many doors for you.

It is most touching to note that right above your neshama candle, Zeidy hung a paper onto which he wrote these words *"Aven M'kir Tizak"* A stone from the wall will cry. The first letter of each word spells EMES. The one who misses you the most, the one who really needs you, has expressed himself by saying, "The stone of the wall is screaming out my pain. It knows the truth. It is witness to how much the *'bal habusta'* has done for me." Need we say more?



Zaidy and Bobby

Epilogue

Dear Bobby,

It is Motzei Shabbos, and I'm sitting at the little table in the corner of your kitchen writing this manuscript. The lights are dimmed. I am suddenly very aware of a Yarzheit candle burning on the counter. The radiance emanating from it seems to expand and intensify, creating incandescence around me.

You have touched my life so deeply and as this book attests, you have touched the life of all of us with your intelligence, humor, the breadth of your understanding and your sense of wholeness.

It is hard to believe that we are nearing one year since your petirah. Forgive us, for in chronicling your life we have merely touched on your fine character traits.

For your outstanding chesed you never received an official award but we were witness to your acts of kindness. Every Wednesday you took a bus to Boro Park and were mevaker cholim. Throughout the day you would sit at the side of your bedridden sister-in-law keeping her company. Five years, rain or shine, hardly missing a week!

When the decision was made to place Tante Anne at an elder care center, her children chose Aishel Avrohom, located just blocks from your home, knowing that you could be relied upon to tend to her needs. True to your character you made weekly visits, ensuring that she was cared for. I recall a particular visit, when you tenderly washed her face, rearranged the knickknacks in her room, and made sure to exchange pleasantries with the nursing staff; solidifying your relationship with them. The extra effort was well worth your while. As the entire Aishel Avrohom team knew to treat Tante Anne with the deference and respect she deserved.

In Memoriam... The shock is still with us. It is hard to accept your untimely passing. Your friendly face will no longer smile again. Bobby, you lived a life of achievement, integrity and wit. You will be long remembered not only for your widely-recognized endearing personality but also for a life well-lived. You served as an advisor, a support, a wit, and a companion to all those dear to you. Your deeds are our vintage jewels serving as a beacon of light illuminating the path for us to follow.

Your loving Grandchild, Briendy Katz