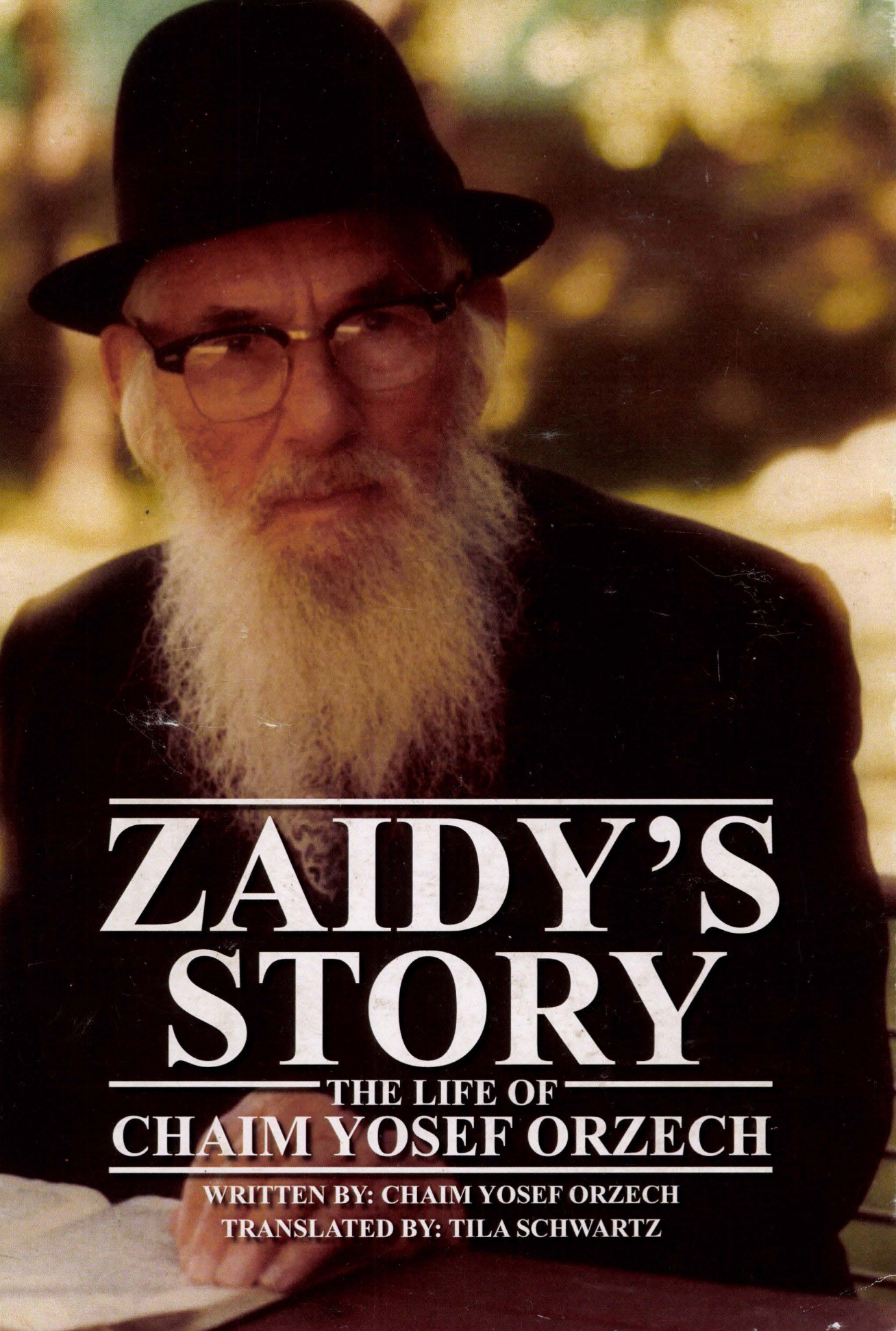


A portrait of an elderly man with a long, white beard and glasses, wearing a dark hat. He is looking directly at the camera. The background is blurred, showing green foliage.

ZAIDY'S STORY

**THE LIFE OF
CHAIM YOSEF ORZECH**

WRITTEN BY: CHAIM YOSEF ORZECH

TRANSLATED BY: TILA SCHWARTZ

ZAIDY'S STORY

**THE LIFE OF
CHAIM YOSEF ORZECH**

WRITTEN BY: CHAIM YOSEF ORZECH

TRANSLATED BY: TILA SCHWARTZ

Digitized by Project Zikaron
Touro University-NY Libraries
www.zikaron.tourolib.org
2025

PUBLISHED BY:
MENDL SCHWARTZ
THE INCREDIBLE PRINTING COMPANY INC.
2021

INTRODUCTION

I started reading Zaidy's memoirs for my own enjoyment. I found it fascinating. This was the story of my own grandfather written by him himself. And what a story it was! It was not until I was in the middle of the book that I got the idea that I should translate Zaidy's story for everyone to benefit from. It was actually Zaidy who gave me the idea, or rather, the request.

Zaidy wrote, "It was my original intention that I should write a book to each of my dear children separately, but I find that I do not have the strength for it. Therefore, I am writing only one book. I ask Hashem that my children should be successful and will be able to spend money to print this in Yiddish and in English. Let us hope that you will be able to do this."

With this in mind, I borrowed the book a second time from my mother and started to type.

Before I begin with the actual story, I want to emphasize a few things.

Much of Zaidy's style is lost in the translation. Whenever he mentioned his father or mother's name, he prefixed it with the word 'leeba' (dear). He spoke of his father as his 'beloved father' even when he was mentioning something that he did not like. He used the same words for his wife and children, 'main taire vabel' (my special wife), 'belibte kinder' (beloved children).

Zaidy's life was rich with experiences. No occurrence in his journal, tragic or successful, was recorded without the acknowledgement that all was guided by the Divine Hand. Zaidy thanked Hashem at each step of his way. He wrote it was a 'nes' (miracle) when he was rescued from a misfortune. He wrote how 'der leeber G-t' (Beloved G-d) guided His world and knew all that we could not possible understand.

Lastly, Zaidy wrote that he is writing his life story from age eight to the present time, but it may be incomplete. He wrote that there were probably instances that he forgot, and then there were things that he remembered but felt that we might not understand and therefore he omitted those as well.

Now I will let you hear Zaidy's story as he wrote it! I found it easier to write in the third person so I translated it that way. I hope that you will glean the essence that Zaidy wanted so much to transmit to us, the lessons his life teach, both written and unwritten.

Tila Schwartz

CONTENTS

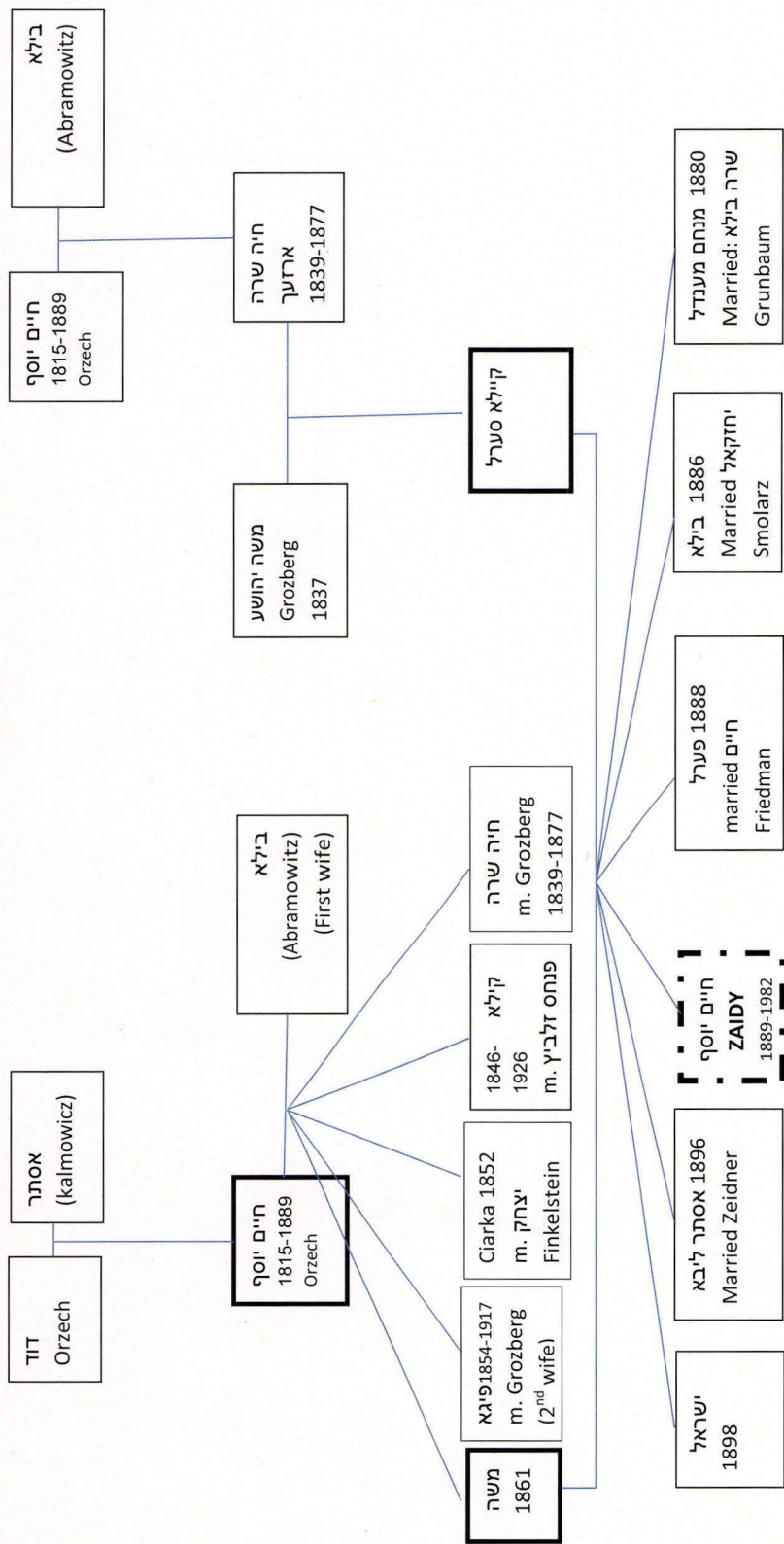
GENEAOLOGY

Family Tree - Zaidy Orzech	<i>i</i>
Family Tree - Bubby Orzech	<i>iii</i>

CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE - <i>Early Years In Stopnitz</i>	<i>1</i>
CHAPTER TWO - <i>Zaidy's First Job</i>	<i>5</i>
CHAPTER THREE - <i>Zaidy Learns a Trade</i>	<i>13</i>
CHAPTER FOUR - <i>Zaidy Becomes a Chosson</i>	<i>17</i>
CHAPTER FIVE - <i>The Years of the War</i>	<i>23</i>
CHAPTER SIX - <i>Zaidy and Bubby's Chasunah</i>	<i>27</i>
CHAPTER SEVEN - <i>Brazil</i>	<i>31</i>
CHAPTER EIGHT - <i>Difficult Years in Stopnitz</i>	<i>37</i>
CHAPTER NINE - <i>Toronto</i>	<i>43</i>
CHAPTER TEN - <i>The Family in Stopnitz</i>	<i>51</i>
CHAPTER ELEVEN - <i>Daily Life in Toronto</i>	<i>55</i>
CHAPTER TWELVE - <i>Annual Trips to Miami</i>	<i>61</i>
CHAPTER THIRTEEN - <i>The Later Years</i>	<i>75</i>
Some of Zaidy's Sayings	<i>89</i>
Zaidy's Speeches	<i>89</i>
An Exerpt from Zaidy's Will	<i>93</i>
I Remember...	<i>95</i>

Family Tree- Zaidy Orzech



Note: Chaim Yosef Orzech (1815-1889) married twice. Zaidy's father, Moshe was a son of the first wife, Baila Abramowitz. Bubby's mother, Esther Liba was a daughter of the second wife, Gittel Greenbaum.

Moshe Orzech, Zaidy's father, married his niece, Kayla Saryl, the daughter of his oldest sister.

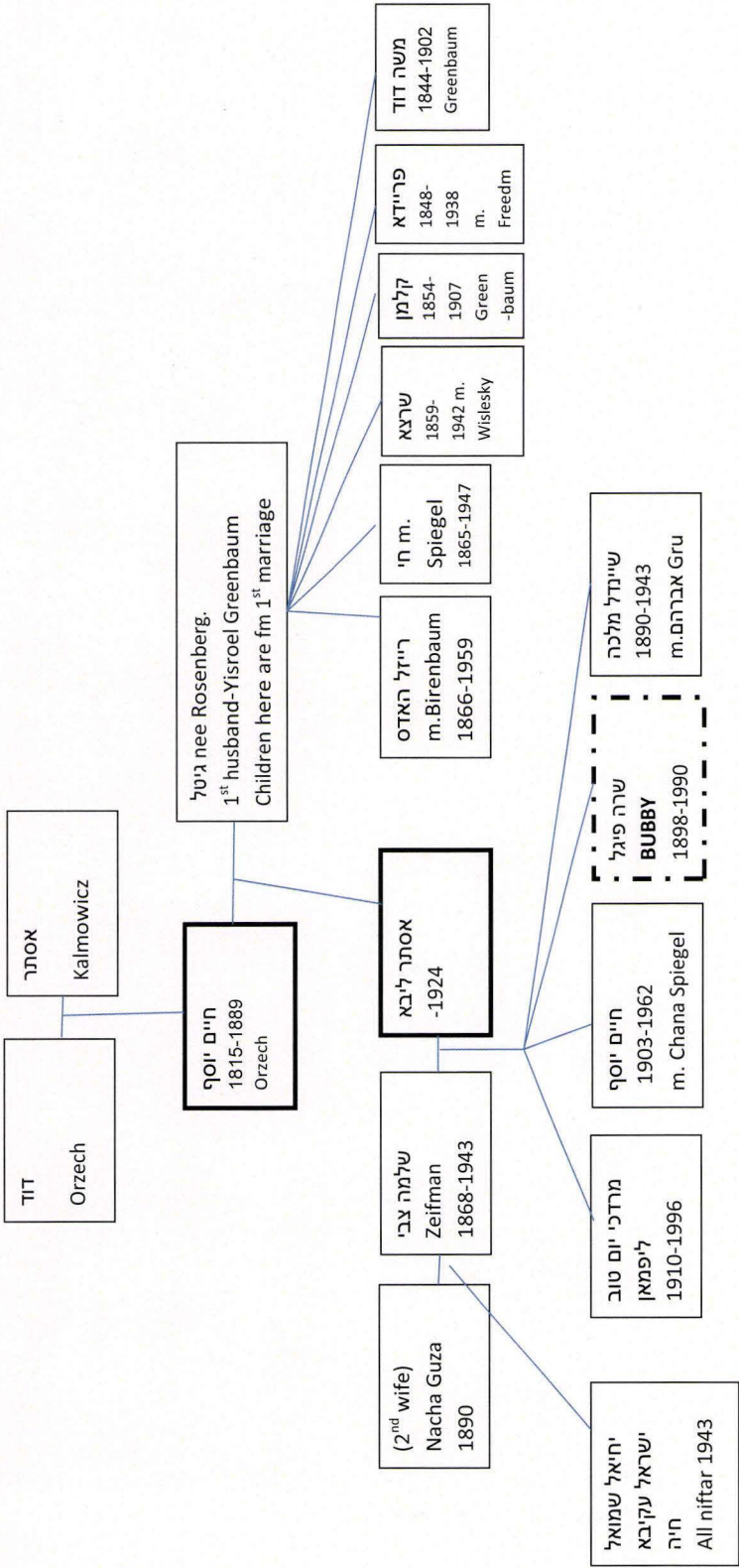
ZAIDY'S STORY



Moishe Orzech (Zaidy Chaim Yosef Orzech's father)

Family Tree- Bubby Orzech

ZAIDY'S STORY



ZAIDY'S STORY



Shlomo Zvi Zeifman (Bubby Sara Faigel Orzech's father)

ZAIDY'S STORY

CHAPTER ONE

Early Years In Stopnitz

In Poland, in 'der alte heim' a lot of Yidden were poor. Approximately 75 percent of the villagers who lived in the small shtetlach lived below the poverty level. Zaidy's parents lived in a small village, Stopnitz, and they were among the 75 percent. The village was small enough to walk through from one end to the other. There was one main Shul and small Shtieblach scattered throughout. There was no running water, no electricity and therefore, no indoor plumbing.

All in all, the residents all knew each other, as landsleit even if not intimately. Many families were related in more ways than one, including Bubby and Zaidy's families.

Zaidy's father, Moshe Orzech, was a very learned man. Upon his marriage, he had received a dowry of 800 rubles, a large sum for those times. Also, his father-in-law, Moshe Yehoshua Grossberg, had promised to support him for two years. The young Moshe Orzech had never dealt in business. Now that he knew that he would soon be responsible for bringing in the money for his household, he took the dowry money to the butcher. He arranged that the butcher should give him the hide from the calves that he would shecht. Moshe Orzech was confident that he would be able to continue to sit and learn because there were always customers for the hides. He naively thought that the butcher would bring him the hide whenever he shechted an animal, but alas that was not to be. The butcher

ZAIDY'S STORY

took the money and Zaidy's father had no benefit from it. They were not able to penalize the butcher, as he himself was very poor and could not pay back the money. (He had married off a child and also two animals that he shechted were treif and brought him no profit.) On top of that loss, Zaidy's grandfather, Moshe Yehoshua Grossberg, lost his money and could no longer support his daughter and son-in-law. Zaidy's father turned to the only trade he was capable of. He became a melamid and remained poor all his life.

Zaidy was born 5 Adar 1889. He was one of six children, although I do not know the order of their birth. There were three boys and three girls: Mendel, Baila, Perle, Esther (Liba), Chaim Yosef (Zaidy) and Yisroel (Srulik). Mendel and at least one girl were older than Zaidy and Srulik was younger than him.

Zaidy's father wanted him to sit and learn all day, to continue in his path, but Zaidy soon discovered that he could not do that. His parents did not have enough money to feed and clothe their own children. He was always hungry and was determined to earn money to be able to provide himself with his needs.

Zaidy first looked for employment when he was merely eight years old! He claimed that any child with 'sechel' (intelligence) would have done the same. What could a child of eight do? True, a child in Europe in those days was more independent and knowledgeable in the ways of the world than a fifteen-year-old in America, but one's choices in Stopnitz were limited. So Zaidy became a 'shamisil' in a Chassidish Shtiebel.

People in the shtiebel promised money to the shtiebel on Shabbos and Zaidy's job was to collect that money. The biggest neder (promise) was 18 groschen and from this Zaidy received 20%. His earnings were nothing to speak of but they were more than his parents could provide him with. Beyond that, on erev Yom Kippur he put out a collection plate; on Succos he brought the lulav and esrog to the women so that they could make a brocha on it (and tip him); on Chanukah

ZAIDY'S STORY

when the Chassidim played cards, Zaidy provided the cards and by each round they gave him a groschen; on Purim, Zaidy delivered Mishloach Monos.

In the course of a year he made 12-13 rubles, and wanted to use the money to clothe himself. Most of the money he earned on Chanukah. Zaidy remembered how he got into trouble with that, when he was eight. Zaidy's father was a melamid, and away all day from early morning until ten at night. On Chanukah he used to come home early and wanted to learn with Zaidy in the evening. But, as Zaidy said, "How could I think of learning if I was so hungry and not clothed or shoed properly?"

His father warned him that he should be home in time to learn but Zaidy knew that was the optimum time to earn his money. Due to his great hunger, he did not listen but went to the Chassidim and came home late. His father thought he himself was playing cards. When he arrived home, hungry and cold, his father let him wait a little to show him he was upset. He finally let him in and gave him to eat, but he also hit him and admonished him not to do it again. The second night of Chanukah, the same thing occurred and his father strongly warned him that he better come home early the next night or he wouldn't let him in. The third night, when Zaidy came home late again, freezing because he did not have a coat and starving because he had not eaten, he was not let in.

Zaidy was desperate. He was still a small child who had not been playing cards. He had simply chosen to try to earn some money instead of coming home early to learn with his father. He picked up a stone and cried, "I'll break the window if you don't let me in. For what did you bring me into this world if you don't give me to eat? If you will feed me and clothe me I will be able to sit and learn!"

When his father heard the desperation in his son's plea, he opened the door and told his mother to give him something to eat. Zaidy's mother gave him a slice of bread and a drink similar to coffee (Tzigaria). She warmed up the coffee on a

ZAIDY'S STORY

primus. They had neither electricity nor gas but used the tripod for cooking despite the fact that it filled the room with smoke.

The next day after davening, Zaidy's father took him to a store and bought him clothing, a shirt, a jacket, pants and a pair of boots. Zaidy had eight rubles with him. The rest his father paid, although Zaidy could not guess from where he had any money, unless he had borrowed it.

ZAIDY'S STORY

CHAPTER TWO

Zaidy's First Job

From age eight to age twelve, Zaidy lived in Stopnitz and tried to earn as much money as possible. At the young age of twelve, Zaidy wanted to start earning more money. He wanted to learn how to be a goldsmith, but for that you needed money. He decided to go to a small village to be a paid teacher for young children to pay for his trade.

Zaidy hired himself out to a man, Beryl Vatcher (from the town Vatch) for six months for 18 rubles. His living standards were not improved at all as Beryl Vatcher himself was a poor man and did not have enough food for eleven people—himself, his wife, eight children and Zaidy.

Beryl had a mill to which the locals brought grain to be ground with flour. For this they usually paid Beryl with grains, corn, wheat or barley. All the grains were mixed together and ground into flour on Friday. Bread was baked l'koved Shabbos and from that they had enough until Tuesday. From Tuesday until Friday they had potatoes, potatoes and more potatoes sometimes fattened in oil. To drink they had sour milk. They had no money to buy bread. Zaidy, still a child, had a large appetite for bread. He knew where the hens laid their eggs and was able to take any extras. A few eggs he cooked (by his boss's daughter's home) and a few he sold for bread.

ZAIDY'S STORY

Beryl Vatcher also had a machine with which to make sweet butter. From the crud taken from the milk, he made cheese. Despite all these businesses, Beryl still did not prosper.

In every village, for the milk to be kosher, a trustworthy Yid had to be present at the milking. This job fell to Zaidy for an additional six rubles. Every evening he went to Dilna, where the milking was done and slept there overnight. After overseeing the morning milking, he returned to Vatch. He davened, ate something and learned with the children for two hours and then started making cheeses. Noontime he went back to Dilna for the midday milking. Upon returning to Vatch, he learned two more hours with the children and then finished the cheeses. They made 360 cheeses a day. Zaidy had to make 100 of them.

In total, Zaidy earned 24 rubles that summer (six month season). He returned to Stopnitz and apprenticed himself to Mechel Goldschmidt for two years at the fee of 40 rubles. Ten rubles he was able to pay immediately (the rest of the money he earned he used to buy clothing). That was enough for six months, after which Mechel Goldschmidt wanted the rest of the money.

Zaidy did not have any more; his father definitely did not, so the goldsmith offered that he should stay an extra year and work for free for that year. Neither Zaidy nor his father agreed to that.

During this time, Zaidy turned thirteen – bar-mitzvah. Zaidy described a bar-mitzvah in Europe. The day of his bar-mitzvah he put on a new shirt, went to the mikvah and to shul with his father. His father had bought a bottle of liquor (bronfen) and a dozen egg bagels. Everyone drank lechaim to the bar-mitzvah bochur. On Shabbos he received an Aliyah for maftir and that was it. There was no ceremony as is done in America, but one thing was definite. The boy who started putting on tefillin continued putting on tefillin his whole life. Now, Zaidy wrote, “he is a Gantze Yid, a complete Jew”.

ZAIDY'S STORY

Zaidy now had to make some more money in order to be able to continue learning the trade of his choice. His only option at the time was to go to Cracow. In Cracow there was a street where people looking for work and those looking to hire gathered. Zaidy went to the gate there and hired himself out to someone from the town Pavidra (past Bydgoszcz) for six months for 30 Rhenish to learn with his two children.

Zaidy was a still a child and a greenhorn at this and had to work very hard for his money. His boss was a poor man and did not have enough money to pay Zaidy. He therefore gathered six more children from the town and collected their money to be able to pay Zaidy. Some of those 'children' however, were older than Zaidy, did not even know their alef-bais, and had no interest in learning. Every Shabbos Zaidy was supposed to tell his boss what the children had learned that week. There was not always much to tell and all in all, the work was very hard.

Besides teaching the children, Zaidy had to help his boss with his work. He had a small store (gevelbel) where he sold salt. The salt came in large rocks and Zaidy had to hammer them down into smaller portions that could be sold. His boss also sold schnapps. This was in a large barrel and had to be poured into smaller bottles. The bottles had to be washed very well before they were filled. Twice a week an inspector came to check that the bottles were clean and to seal them. The third side job was to gather young calves. Every week his boss bought calves from the small villages and brought them on Wednesday, market day, to Cracow. The calves had to be gathered, a job for a few men, Zaidy included. Typically, a calf was led by a rope but very often, Zaidy carried a reluctant calf on his shoulders. Again, despite all of these 'gesheften' (businesses) his boss was still a very poor man.

These were all of Zaidy's jobs for the 30 Rhenish; now I will tell you what food he was provided with. Every morning everyone was given a slice of bread for the

ZAIDY'S STORY

whole day. Other than bread, there was enough to eat. There were cooked potatoes, arbis, (chick peas) fentzig(?) and cabbage. There was no meat during the week. In honour of Shabbos, a chicken was cooked. For the first two Seudahs (Friday night and Shabbos morning) the thirteen people that ate there had to be satisfied with looking at the chicken. Finally, at Seudah Shlishis, the chicken was served – a bite for everyone!

Zaidy still hungered for bread, but had no money to buy any. His boss sold bread and Zaidy, in his hunger, would occasionally take an extra piece. He hid under his covers to eat it, dry. He wrote that it was a nes (miracle) he never choked on it.

This was his life for six months. Despite the unfairness of his labour, Zaidy never thought of leaving before his time was up because he had made a contract with his boss.

At the end of the winter, after Pesach, Zaidy went back to Cracow to the street where he could find employment. This time he was more experienced. When someone approached him if he would like to learn with his children, Zaidy agreed only on condition that they go together to the Rav. Zaidy was sure that no man would lie about his responsibilities in front of the Rav. The man was very willing and accompanied Zaidy to the Rav of Cracow. There, he gave the agreed sum of 60 Rhenish to the Rav and told Zaidy that if he lied to him in any way, Zaidy could come to collect the money and not owe him anything. Zaidy was very happy to see how honest the man was. He went home with his new boss, to teach his children for six months.

His boss was a wealthy man, a Berditchever Chossid, very learned. Zaidy did not know where to look first. He had never seen such furniture as was in this home. He was given his own airy room with a bed, closet, table and chairs. This was the first time in Zaidy's life that he slept in a bed! It was the first time he

ZAIDY'S STORY

had ever eaten such rich foods. In one word, it was simply Gan-Eden and Zaidy thanked Hashem that he had sent him there.

Zaidy did not have too much work to do. He learned with the children, two boys and a girl, for an hour in the morning and an hour in the evening according to what their father told him to teach. The children were eager to learn and had very good heads. Zaidy started with the alef-bais and continued until they were ready for Chumash.

At the end of six months, his boss made a party to celebrate his children beginning Chumash. Zaidy prepared a Chumash speech for the children to say. Both grandparents came from their towns. The poor were invited. A lot of Tzedakah was given. Zaidy was given presents, including new clothing, in honour of the siyum.

His job was finished and Zaidy was ready to move on, for two reasons. Firstly he felt that the children were ready for a more learned teacher than himself. And secondly, he didn't see fulfillment in this job for the future. His boss, however, like him and offered him another job for the same amount of money.

He used to buy mansions with their surrounding grounds and hold onto them until it was a good time to sell. He needed someone to watch over the workers. His boss had just sold his last purchase but his father-in-law had a property and needed an overseer. Zaidy went to the father-in-law's town, Hodikopke. His job was to watch over the workers, supply new ones if need be and to pay them. It was easy work; Zaidy lived like a Poritz and well respected by the goyim. He was there for a year and a half. (According to my calculations, Zaidy, the overseer, was all of fifteen and a half!)

At that time, a Yiddish couple who were running a tavern for his boss, received papers to go to America. They left and Zaidy's boss had no one to run the tavern.

ZAIDY'S STORY

This was in the winter. Zaidy decided to rent it. The tavern was in Hodikopke, on a well-travelled route between Kalbesef and Modin. Tuesday was market day in Kalbesef and Wednesday in Modin. On both these days, the goyim stopped off at the tavern to water their horses and have something to eat.

Zaidy had two workers that cooked and baked. One morning, on market-day the cooks didn't show up. It was getting late and Zaidy had no choice. He rolled up his sleeves, put on an apron, and got to work. It was the first time Zaidy had ever cooked. He made 'roshke', goulash and baked cookies!

Zaidy knew everything tasted good because it was all eaten and the customers even complimented Zaidy on the food! Zaidy himself had not known what he was capable of before he tried it. It seems that knowing how much money he stood to lose if he did nothing gave him the push to accomplish what he did.

It was a good business, and Zaidy would've made a fortune if he wouldn't have left it. He ended up leaving because he felt he had no other choice. His boss had a niece that he wanted to marry off to Zaidy. Zaidy was not interested for a few reasons. He felt he was still young; even the girl was older than him. Also, he had an older sister at home that was not married and in those days the children were married off in order. His boss would not listen to him and pestered him until Zaidy could not take the pressure any longer.

He finally told his boss that he would go home to speak to his parents and would return. (Otherwise, his boss would not have let him go.) Zaidy left everything behind except for his money. He had a total of 2600 Rhenish, a lot of money for those days. (Remember, the first job Zaidy took was for 30 Rhenish for six months work!)

Zaidy was now 19 years old. Imagine! He had been a teacher, having acquired the position (three times) on his own. He had overseen workers, was considered a

ZAIDY'S STORY

man by them, and had run a tavern. He had even cooked a meal for his customers. From the age of thirteen he had not been living at home and not in a sheltered dormitory either. He had already gone through more jobs than some people do in a lifetime and he was only nineteen!

ZAIDY'S STORY

CHAPTER THREE

Zaidy Learns a Trade

Zaidy was back in Stopnitz. His father wanted to marry him off. Zaidy was not ready as he wanted to have a profession in his hands so as to be able to provide for his wife. He still wanted to learn how to become a goldsmith. Zaidy's father told him he was foolish. With all the money he had brought home, he was probably the wealthiest boy around. Zaidy was adamant and didn't listen.

This is the only time that I read that Zaidy did not listen to his father. He continued to write that it does not pay to disobey one's father as no good will come out of such disobedience. He spent eight years in the trade of his choice and it did not end up providing him with money and he did not end up supporting his family as a goldsmith. But all that comes much later. The bottom line is that one must obey one's father.

Zaidy went back to Mechel Goldschmidt and offered him 75 rubles if he would teach him everything he knew in one year. After that, he should pay Zaidy wages, five rubles a week. Zaidy was there for two years at which point Mechel Goldschmidt told him he was ready for the big city. As part of his job, Zaidy was also the salesman. He went out to the neighbouring villages to sell the jewelry that they had made.

Zaidy was now 21. He did not have to worry about the army draft for another three years as his birth had been recorded as three years younger than he really

ZAIDY'S STORY

was. This was done to enable his brother Mendel to go free. If the oldest boy had a brother younger than him, then he was exempt.

Zaidy went to Lodz to start working and to get used to a big city where earnings are higher. When he arrived in Lodz he went to a goldsmith and asked him if he could use another worker. The owner asked him what experience he had and Zaidy answered that he had learned everything in Stopnitz.

The man laughed and gave Zaidy a ring to make. Zaidy looked at it and saw that he could not do it; the big city had a completely different style. The goldsmith told him he has to start all over again as an apprentice. Zaidy did not want to start from scratch. He went to a second and third store, but no one wanted him, even when he offered to pay them until he would catch up. Zaidy was very upset. He felt he had spent two years for nothing.

Zaidy was staying by his uncles, his mother's brothers (Yechiel and Yisroel Duvid Grossberg) and he went to them now for advice. They told him to forget about becoming a goldsmith. They would teach him their trade: weaving. They guaranteed him that in three months he would know the trade. In the meantime, he would eat and sleep by them. Zaidy let them persuade him and he became a weaver – for two days!

He rethought of all the efforts he had put into learning his trade. He had spent years earning enough money to pay Mechel Goldschmidt. He had spent two full years studying and practising the trade. He refused to yield to others' persuasion. He would intensify his search for a goldsmith that would accept him. A goldsmith was a more respected job than a weaver. A weaver could be compared to a shoemaker.

In Zaidy's own words, "Az men zicht, gefint men!" (If you search, then you will find.) He went out again looking and found another goldsmith. He told him the

ZAIDY'S STORY

truth, that he had learned in a small village but now wanted to learn the style of the big city and was ready to pay.

This goldsmith, Sanik Glicklech, from Noviminske 6, accepted Zaidy for 120 rubles for six months apprenticeship. He ate and slept there as well. Zaidy started work and learned it all in six weeks. He had really known all the techniques and simply needed to learn the new styling.

The styles at that time were “Fantasia” rings. The head of the ring, made out platinum, had different flowers engraved on it with diamonds set in. The ring itself was gold. In the shop were eight workers and each man made one ring each day.

Zaidy thought of a method whereby each worker would make eight rings in one day! When all the workers left for the day, he sat down to try his plan. He soon saw that his idea was not only logical; it worked in actuality. The next day he asked his boss what he would pay him if he could demonstrate how each individual worker could produce eight rings in one day.

Sanik Glicklech, his boss, said he would give back to Zaidy the 120 rubles and pay him six rubles a week. Zaidy agreed and showed everyone his methods.

Unfortunately, instead of bringing in more money for the goldsmith and his workers, this caused a disaster. The men were even able to produce more rings than was originally demonstrated and thus created a surplus of goods. It caused a crisis in the shop, the owner had to close down and Zaidy was laid off.

This was in the middle of the winter and Zaidy could not find another job in the middle of the season. He decided he would travel to Warsaw and try his luck there. Zaidy had a married sister living there and figured he would at least have a place to sleep. When he arrived in Warsaw, he went out looking for a job. On Jikuv Street he found a goldsmith shop and went in to ask the owner if he by any

ZAIDY'S STORY

chance needed a worker. He replied that one of his workers had gone home to his parents in Lodz. He could sit down and work at his seat until the man would return.

Zaidy had nothing to lose and sat down. The owner's name was Shea Alteschlle, a very frum Yid. Every morning he went to a shiur before coming to work. It became Zaidy's job to open the shop. (Think of it. Zaidy was the new worker. He arrived in the middle of a season, but before long, he was once again the man with the responsibilities!) He worked there until Pesach. Zaidy was very pleased in this setting. He felt he had learned a lot in this location, both in the goldsmith trade and in dealing with people.

Since he had arrived in the middle of the season, as a replacement worker, he had never discussed wages, but now it was almost Pesach. Zaidy wanted to go home to his parents for Yomtov and asked his boss for his wages. R' Shea asked him what he charges and Zaidy replied that he should pay him as much as he understands is the correct price. R' Shea did so and offered him a job for the summer season. Zaidy accepted on the condition that he be paid 8 rubles a week and be served dinner.

Zaidy returned to Warsaw after Pesach and stayed there until 1914, when war broke out. In total, he worked for Shea Alteschille for five years. Every six months his wages had increased until he received 12 rubles a week, the highest wage for a goldsmith. Also, he had all his tools at his lodgings and freelanced after hours for a few additional rubles a week. Zaidy would have left there with a lot of money had the war not broken out.

Zaidy wrote that people said that the world would be destroyed in the war. In truth that is what happened because the world was not the same after that, not in Yiddishkeit and not in Menschlichkeit.

CHAPTER FOUR

Zaidy Becomes a Chosson

Before the war broke out, something momentous happened in Zaidy's own life.

While living in Warsaw, Zaidy spent much time with a landsleit from Stopnitz, a man named Yermieh Kippel. At this house, all the landsleit would gather and daven together Shabbos and YOMtov. Yermieh Kippel was a Neustadter Chossid, a very fine man. He had a niece that he wanted to marry off to Zaidy. He promised Zaidy a dowry and 'kest' (that he would provide food for them for a certain length of time).

Zaidy met the girl a few times over the course of a few months. He wrote home a letter to his parents that he had been redt a good shidduch. His father knew her parents; they lived in a small village near Stopnitz. His father wrote back that he would choose the girl for his son and not the other way around! At that time, it was still possible for a father to come home and tell his son, 'Mazel Tov! You are a chosson!' or to a daughter, 'Mazel Tov! You are a kallah!'

Zaidy still felt that the shidduch had many merits. As it was before Rosh Hashanah, he decided to go home and personally try to persuade his parents. He told the girl why he was leaving town and that he would keep her informed.

When Zaidy arrived home, his father did not let him speak. He emphasized that Zaidy simply could not listen to a shidduch right now. His main objection

ZAIDY'S STORY

was that he really should wait until he would receive his exemption slip from the army. He also said that the shidduch was not for him. He did not give any specific reason for this statement but it seems as a father he had a feeling that things were just not right. Zaidy agreed (about the army) and explained the situation to the girl when he returned to Warsaw.

He still went to Yermieh Kippel to daven, but did not speak anymore to the girl. One week at Seudah Shlishis, Zaidy overheard a man telling Yermieh that he sees he had two 'kankrenten' (competitors) by him. Yermieh motioned for the man to be quiet and Zaidy realized that there was something being kept from him. After davening, he went quietly to the kitchen and asked this girl what was meant by this remark.

At first she denied that anything was amiss, but Zaidy insisted that she tell him the truth. He pleaded with her that perhaps he could help her. Finally she broke down and told Zaidy the whole story.

She had a cousin who was already married, with two children, but wanted a get (divorce) from his wife. She wanted to marry him and that was why her uncle, Yermieh Kippel, set her up with Zaidy. He was hoping to marry off his niece as quickly as possible and then to bring peace between husband and wife. The girl begged Zaidy to tell Yermieh that the shidduch is not for him as she really wanted to marry her cousin!

Zaidy was glad he heard the whole story before he was too involved. He was amazed at how his father had 'known' that the shidduch was not for him without even knowing all these details. He told Yermieh Kippel that the shidduch was not for him.

Now that this shidduch had fallen through, Zaidy was anxious for his true shidduch. He felt it was time for him to get married. He was already an 'alte bochur'.

ZAIDY'S STORY

He had a good name and came from a good family. He also had money and a good trade. He was a lucky catch and many shidduchim were being redt to him. As it turned out, only one wouldn't take 'no' for an answer.

Zaidy had an aunt, his father's sister, Esther Liba, who had a daughter who was not quite 13. She decided that she wanted Zaidy as her son-in-law. Zaidy disagreed; he was too old for her. After all, he argued, this was the child that he used to wheel around in her carriage. It was to no avail; Esther Liba answered that he could do as his father did; Yitzchok Avinu waited for Rivkah for three years. Zaidy laughed and thought to himself that he would soon be back in Warsaw and have his Tenaim.

"De mentch tracht un G-t lacht" (Man plans and G-d laughs.)

Zaidy's aunt didn't wait. She sent a shadchan to her brother for her. The answer came back in the negative, so she went herself and begged him to listen to her. Zaidy's father wouldn't listen at first, but finally said that he would agree is she would give a dowry of one thousand rubles. His sister agreed although she knew she really only had 800 rubles. She assumed her brother wouldn't embarrass her for 200 rubles. It was then the last day of Chol Hamoed before Yomtov.

Esther Liba Zeifman went home, prepared for a Tenaim, dressed her daughter, invited people and prepared candles for the festivities. Finally she went to her brother to give him the dowry.

Zaidy's father counted the money and saw it was not a full thousand. He did not say anything, but put the money down and walked out. His sister mistakenly thought that he had just stepped out and would momentarily return but the time passed and he did not appear. The day was waning, and it was nearing Yomtov. She simply told the people gathered to return home.

The girl was still young and did not understand what had occurred. The boy

ZAIDY'S STORY

was not young but he did not either understand because his father did not tell him anything.

Zaidy had been out walking with his friends, but when he entered the Shul to daven on Yomtov, everyone came up to him to wish him Mazel Tov. Zaidy was quite shocked and rushed home after Shul to speak to his mother before his father reached home. She told him the story. Both of them were very upset. Zaidy felt that his father was selling him, like a cow or a horse. The truth was that Zaidy's father was against the shidduch but not for lack of money. His son was rich and did not need a rich dowry. Zaidy's father had used the thousand rubles as a last resort because his sister would not leave him alone. He was against the shidduch because Bubby's father was a craftsman, a carpenter, and he wanted only the daughter of a lamdan for his son.

Meanwhile, Zaidy said nothing to his father. He waited until after Yomtov and then went out to arrange for 200 rubles for his aunt. She immediately brought the money to her brother. It was too late for Tenaim; they just made a vort. Zaidy had to return to Warsaw and his uncle (Shloime Tzvi Zeifman) to Salitz.

Zaidy was now a chosson but he had to wait three years until his chassunah—as his macheteniste (future mother-in-law) had told him.

Zaidy had a new worry. He needed a release from the military draft. He knew he was healthy and would not easily be freed. He had an idea. He would run away to America. He had some money and a good trade. He had heard that life was so much easier in the 'Golden Land'. Zaidy's father refused to hear of it. He said that no child of his would go to America in his lifetime. He had heard that Yiiddishkeit was so much harder to keep in America. His advice to Zaidy was to do as he himself had done years ago. He should make a 'ropshe' (hernia). Zaidy was not pleased. He had no desire to make himself into a cripple, but he listened to his father.

ZAIDY'S STORY

Zaidy went to Warsaw to a man who made 'ropshes' and gave him 30 rubles. Zaidy was put to sleep and the 'ropshe' was done on his left side. This was in 1913, in the middle of the summer. Zaidy stopped working and went home to Stopnitz to prepare himself. After two weeks you still could not see that a 'ropshe' was done. Time was short and Zaidy's father suggested that he go back and have it done on the right side this time. Zaidy listened but this 'ropshe' you couldn't either see.

Zaidy did not ask his father for more advice. He himself decided that he would try to bribe the doctor. If yes, then all would be well and if not, then he could always run away to America.

When he did go into the doctor, he was exempted because of his weight (205 lbs). He received his white ticket and he hadn't had to do anything. After some time, both 'ropshes' surfaced and Zaidy suffered from his feet until he was operated on (before he left for Brazil).

Afterwards Zaidy reflected that if he had gone to America he might have been able to save some of the family, but he knew that it was bashert this way.

Zaidy was a chosson. He was exempt from the army. He returned to Warsaw and continued to work until World War One.

When war broke out, Zaidy stopped working. No one was interested in jewelry now. Of all of Zaidy's money, he only had 20 kopeks on him. He had a lot of money owed to him. His boss had no money to pay him. However, his boss had some watches that were smuggled into Poland. At that time, it was illegal to sell watches that were not made in Poland. Zaidy's boss had given Zaidy some of these watches to hold for him and whenever a customer requested one, Zaidy would bring it to work for him. Now, there were two dozen of these watches still in Zaidy's possession. Zaidy told his boss that he would keep them in lieu of his

ZAIDY'S STORY

wages. His boss had no choice and agreed. Zaidy kept them by his sister for safekeeping.

He and two other boys from Stopnitz started off for home. With his 20 kopeks, Zaidy bought 20 pounds of bread, a 'rozivana' and some sour pickles. This went into a sack and onto his shoulders. They started walking. It was 36 miles from Warsaw to Stopnitz. The war was in full swing. There were soldiers all along the way but Boruch Hashem, no one bothered them. They walked from Sunday to Friday, until they reached Stopnitz.

CHAPTER FIVE

The Years of the War

Zaidy was back in Stopnitz. Poland was at war and obviously there was no point in practicing his trade. No one was looking for jewelry. But everyone has to eat; so many people started dealing with whatever merchandise they could. Zaidy did the same.

It was before Succos. Zaidy's father used to sell esrogim, so Zaidy decided to try and do that. In peaceful times he would have gone to Cracow to bring the esrogim from there, but travel was impossible now. Zaidy heard that someone in Chmielnick had gone to Warsaw and had esrogim to sell, so he decided to go there. (24 miles?)

Zaidy traveled there on foot with another man via side roads so they wouldn't run into any soldiers. Even on the side roads travel was risky, but Hashem helped and they arrived safely. They bought four esrogim for 100 rubles. They rented a wagon and brought them back to Stopnitz. One esrog they sold for 75 rubles to the Neishtiter Rav. The second Zaidy's partner took for himself and for half the village to make a brocha on. The third, Zaidy's father took for himself and the other half of Stopnitz.

A man, Zimmel Schander from the village came and said he wanted to buy an esrog, regardless of the price. This last esrog they sold for 130 rubles. They divided the profits, leaving each with about 40 rubles. The esrog they each had

ZAIDY'S STORY

also brought in money (as people paid to make a brocha on it). Zaidy's family had enough money to make Yomtov, and there was still some left over for Zaidy's next business deal.

For the next ten years or so Zaidy was a merchant. He bought whatever was needed at the time so he dealt in many different commodities. A great deal of money passed through his hands, sometimes to his benefit and sometimes to his loss. Yet even after a successful deal, any extra money was immediately pumped back into the next purchase. Despite his standing as a wealthy merchant, Zaidy still lived hand to mouth, dependant on next month's profits.

For his first business deal, Zaidy went to Warsaw and brought back merchandise that he sold at such a profit that he recouped all that he had lost due to the war (from his becoming a goldsmith). He continued with these business deals, traveling to Warsaw or to Lodz until he had a standing as one of the wealthy merchants.

Included in his business ventures was providing merchants with merchandise for a percentage of the profit. His main purchases were in jewelry. Also, there was a time when the paper money was checked for holes. If a paper money had a hole, it was valued at 25% less than its written value. Zaidy was an expert at fixing these holes. He would buy the 'holey' money in Warsaw and fix it so that there was no way you could tell it had had a hole.

One time, after purchasing a wagonload of merchandise in Warsaw with a good part of his money, Zaidy was attacked by robbers ---"Cossacks" as he called them -- just before reaching Stopnitz. They took all of Zaidy's money and all of his belongings. That was not enough. They beat him up and took him with them. He overheard them saying that now they would have to kill him.

It was a ness that Zaidy was saved; the eldest among them said they shouldn't kill him but just leave him alone. They listened after giving him another beating,

ZAIDY'S STORY

and left him on the road. Zaidy made his way home in great pain. He thanked Hashem for saving his life. He lay two weeks in bed to recuperate and then went back to business with borrowed money. In Zaidy's words, "Ich bin nisht gesitzen shiva noch hem shuden" I didn't sit in mourning after the loss.

Not always did everything go so smoothly. Once Zaidy went to Lodz for 'shnit' merchandise which was selling well at the time. It was no longer possible to take the merchandise back to Stopnitz with him, Zaidy had to send it via an expediter. This time there was another dealer from Stopnitz, Bunim Bochman, who persuaded Zaidy to share one container for their merchandise. It would be cheaper for both of them. The wagon was in Zaidy's name, and he traveled to the station (Yendauv?) where it was scheduled to arrive.

As soon as Zaidy arrived there, he went to inquire if his wagon had arrived. It had not, so he waited a day, two, a week, two weeks and still nothing. At this point Zaidy became very distraught. He had borrowed money for this deal. It was one thing if a business deal soured and there was no profit. Now however, without this merchandise, Zaidy was in debt with no means to pay his dues!

He went back to Stopnitz, heartbroken. Sure enough, all of his creditors came running and demanded their money. He couldn't bear to stay home any longer and returned to Yendauv to wait for the train. Every day he went to the station to ask if his wagon had arrived. He was in "gehakte tzuros" (terrible affliction). He ate dry bread, slept in the shul and sat saying Tehillim begging Hashem to help him.

Just before Succos, Zaidy went home. He arrived in time for Yomtov and stayed in the house in shame and despair. The first day of Chol Hamoed he went back to Yendauv but the wagon had still not arrived. Erev Hoshanah Raba he was up the entire night saying Tehillim. In the morning he borrowed a few zlotys and something to wear from Bunim Bochman's daughter. He wanted to go to Rav Shlomo Leizer in Valbiram for the second days of Yomtov. Rav Shlomo Leizer

ZAIDY'S STORY

was his father's talmid and Zaidy wanted to go somewhere that he could forget a little about his tzoros.

Zaidy went to the train station to buy a ticket. Almost instinctively he first passed the area where the merchandise arrived. Hashem had heard his prayers because the Natchalnik came running up to Zaidy. The Natchalnik knew him well because he had been coming to the station daily for so long now.

"Orzech!" he cried, "your wagon with merchandise arrived last night! Pay 20 zlotys duties and it is yours!"

Zaidy was so excited but first he needed the twenty zlotys. He turned around and saw a frum Yid.

"Reb Yid," Zaidy said to him, "could you lend me twenty zlotys that I need to redeem my merchandise?"

The Yid asked no questions and when Zaidy went back to thank him and ask him his name so that he could repay him, he was gone.

It was too late to go home, but Zaidy managed to send the news home with someone who was traveling. He took everything to Yendauv, stored it and stayed in a hotel over Yomtov.

Hashem well rewarded Zaidy for the aggravation he suffered. The merchandise had tripled in value during the time it had been enroute, and Zaidy made a nice profit from it. He paid everyone all that he owed.

After this incident, Zaidy was ready for a well-earned rest. In any case it was three years since his engagement. Zaidy was 26 and his kallah, Sarah Faigel Zeifman, was 15 and three months.

ZAIDY'S STORY

CHAPTER SIX

Zaidy and Bubby's Chasunah

Zaidy and Bubby's chasuna (wedding) was a beautiful affair. Zaidy wrote that it was much nicer and more heimish than a more elaborate and costly American wedding. The Shabbos before the wedding was Zaidy's bavarfen. He was called up to the Torah for Maftir amidst singing and nuts being thrown at him. The villagers were all invited for a Kiddush after the davening. Later, the bochurim had their farbrengen. They ate, sang, danced and said Torah Vertlach unti Motzei Shabbos, when music was brought in and the singing and dancing continued. The same occurred in the kallah's house with the girls.

The Chasuna was on a Tuesday, the twelfth day of Cheshvan 5675 (1914). That day Zaidy's father bought schnapps for everyone to drink lechaim and bentch the chosson. Zaidy went home after davening. He said the entire Sefer Tehillim and davened Mincha. He asked Hashem for forgiveness and for health and parnossah for himself and his kallah, for a long life together with Mazel and good children.

Before the Chupah, the bochurim came over to the house to sing and say Torah. The chosson was brought to the chupah first with music in the streets and the kallah afterwards. The chupah was in shul, after which everyone accompanied the chosson and kallah with music to the place where the meal was. A badchen sang grammen, the music played and people gave presents. After benching and sheva brochos, the people danced. The bochurim called up the people for the Mitzva Tantz unti the chasunah ended, close to dawn.

ZAIDY'S STORY

Bubby and Zaidy's home in Stopnitz consisted of two rooms. (The house I am describing was the one Aunty Gerty remembered when they left for Toronto. I am assuming that it was the same one that they moved into together after their chasunah.) One room was the kitchen with a stove, cabinets, a barrel of water and beds. The second room had more beds, a table and chairs. The basement had a cold cellar which was used for food storage. This house was rented and not their own.

One night, when Zaidy was already in Toronto, there was a chasunah for a neighbour in Bubby's house. They moved all the beds into one room and danced all night long in the other!

Zaidy spent the whole week of Sheva Brochos in Stopnitz. Altogether, he had not done any business for four weeks. Now he had to go back to work. Soon after the wedding he was back in Warsaw, closing his next deal. He continued this way until 1924.

Zaidy and Bubby were married five years before Aunty Gerty was born. "Es redt zich schnell ober biz dos iz geshen hot zich geteen genig" It is easy to squeeze five years into one sentence, but they were a long and difficult five years. After the first year passed and Bubby was not expecting, she went to a doctor who declared her healthy and said perhaps her husband has a problem.

It took some time for Bubby to be brave enough to tell this to Zaidy, but when she did he went to Warsaw to a doctor there. He didn't want to go to a doctor in Stopnitz for two reasons. He didn't want anyone to know and secondly, he was afraid if he did have a problem, word would get around and he might lose Bubby whom he loved very much. The doctor (to whom Zaidy paid 25 rubles for the visit!) said Zaidy could have children; perhaps his wife has a problem.

ZAIDY'S STORY

This went on for a while until Bubby went to a specialist who said Bubby needs an operation. Their first option for surgery would have been in Cracow but that was not possible at the time, so they went to Kielce (39 miles away). A year after the operation, on May 22, 1919, (22 Iyar) Chaya Gittel was born.

Not long afterwards, in 1921, Bubby's mother was very ill. There was no hospital in Stopnitz so she was taken to Tarnow (36 miles south). Uncle Max used to babysit Aunty Gerty while Bubby went to stay with her mother in the hospital. She was niftar at the young age of 42 and was buried in Tarnow. Her Yartzeit is 6 Av.

Two years after Aunty Gerty was born, on Isru Chag Succos, 5682 (October 26, 1921), Bubby and Zaidy had a son, Moshe. This child was named after Zaidy's father but Zaidy did not write when his father was niftar. It was between the time of their wedding, in 1914 and this birth 1921. Two years later in Cheshvan, 5684 (1923) they had another girl.

After this third baby, the little boy, Moshe got sick. It was an illness relate to the lungs, possibly tuberculosis. He was sick for a whole year and Zaidy used practically all of his money to try and cure him. Nothing helped. Moshe was nifter on his third birthday. Zaidy was left without a son and without money.

It was then 1925. Business was very bad and Zaidy could not make a living anymore. Bubby was expecting again. Zaidy felt he had no option but to look for parnossah elsewhere. Immigration to America was closed. Only Brazil was open. Zaidy got a passport and his papers and left for Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Before he left, Zaidy went to Warsaw for a hernia operation. He was suffering from a double hernia caused by the two surgical procedures done years earlier in an attempt to avoid the military draft. Zaidy used to wear a special belt that he called 'gartlen' because of the hernia. Boruch Hashem the operation was successful.

ZAIDY'S STORY

Aunty Blanche was born 8 Tishrei, 5686 (1925) when Zaidy was already in Brazil for four weeks.



Middle one is Zaidy (Chaim Yossef Orzech) in Brazil where he went from Poland "to seek his fortune".

CHAPTER SEVEN

Brazil

Zaidy tried different business ventures in Brazil. His first commodity was old teeth. Each tooth sat on two supports that were either platinum or plated steel. Zaidy and a partner went door to door in small villages to buy old teeth from them. Zaidy used a magnet to see what material the tooth support was. They only purchased the platinum as the steel was useless to them. Zaidy also bought gold teeth from dentists. It was a very good business and they earned well.

There was one humorous incident that was not very funny when it happened. In one village, Zaidy worked as usual, knocking on the doors explaining that he was collecting old teeth. Zaidy 'talked' like a true Jew—with his hands and feet—as he did not know the language. One woman did not understand. She thought Zaidy was a dentist and could fix a tooth of hers that was loose. Zaidy understood from her that she wanted to sell this tooth. He took it and broke it off to use his magnet on its supports. It was steel so he gave it back to her, broken. She started to scream that Zaidy had broken her tooth and her husband came running. Zaidy was afraid for his life. Boruch Hashem, his partner was nearby (they separated so as to cover more houses in a shorter time) and he came over to see if he could help. He explained the misunderstanding and even offered to take the tooth to a dentist to fix if they felt Zaidy had wronged them. The husband realized that Zaidy was right; dentists don't go door to door looking for work. The man stopped screaming at Zaidy and started screaming at his wife instead. Zaidy and

ZAIDY'S STORY

his partner left as quickly as they were able. The lady's brother had come over when he heard the commotion and he was ready 'mit de messer' (with a knife). The two men caught a train right away and stayed away from that village the entire time they were in Brazil. (They heard later from someone that the brother was looking for them.)

The tooth pickings slowed down and Zaidy turned to old suits. This was also a good business and they made a lot of money. Zaidy had a partner this time also. It was very important to work in pairs. Due to the extreme heat, a person was only able to work outdoors in the sun for fifteen minutes at a time. Zaidy and his partner worked in fifteen minute shifts knocking at the doors from 9:00a.m. until 1:00pm. After one o'clock it was harder to catch anyone at home; at that time they went to the stores to sell their merchandise. As soon as Zaidy had some capital, he bought out the peddlers and sold the suits to the stores on credit. This was profitable both to the stores, who were able to sell some suits before their bill was due, and to Zaidy who now had steady customers and was able to charge a bit more (as it was not COD).

A new suit at the time cost 400 mil-reis, the best old one only one hundred.

Zaidy realized it was getting harder to find old suits and the market in the stores was still high, so he came up with a plan. He bought cheap material and thread and became a cutter! He cut pants and jackets (no one wore vests in Brazil) and found a cheap seamstress to sew the suits. The material and labour cost Zaidy 30 mil-réis. He creased the new suits, dirtied them a bit and sold them to the stores as old suits for 75 mil-réis! This continued for five months until the storekeepers caught on and started to do the same on their own. There were still some stores that bought Zaidy's suits as not everyone was able to produce their own.

Zaidy now felt that he was earning nicely and wanted to make Brazil his home. He wrote Bubby that he wanted her to come with the children but Bubby wouldn't

ZAIDY'S STORY

hear of it. You see, Zaidy had written letters home throughout his entire stay and his first letters were unhappy ones. He did not like Brazil at first. In his daily letters during the beginning, he had told Bubby all the details.

When Zaidy arrived to Brazil, there were 4000 Yidden, but not even 100 were frum! Zaidy was one of the very few with a beard. Kashrus was very poor. In those surroundings, Zaidy could have become a Rebbe. He was the only one in Shul that said Tehillim, Maamodos and Mishnayos every morning.

One morning in Shul, a man came in and saw Zaidy sitting and learning in a sefer.

He came over and said, "Hailiger (Holy) Rebbe, I am in great need. My child is very ill." He gave Zaidy a kvittle and some money (a pidyon) asking Zaidy to daven for his child.

Zaidy was an honest man. He told the man he was no Rebbe, just a 'proster Yid' (ordinary Jew). The man would not take 'no' for an answer and only demanded that Zaidy vintch (bless) his child a complete recovery.

Zaidy had no choice. He said, "Hashem should help you and your child should be healthy with a refuah shelaimah (complete cure)."

The man was delighted. He went back home and to his great thrill, his child was better! A few days later the child recovered completely. The man came back to the Shul. He told everyone about the miracle Zaidy performed and thanked him profusely. Zaidy repeatedly told him that he is a simple Yid, that he has only Hashem to thank for his child's recovery, but to no avail. The man gave Zaidy 50 mil-réis, which Zaidy returned and told him to send to Eretz Yisroel.

Zaidy stopped going to that particular Shul. Everyone made such a commotion there and started looking up to him as to a Rebbe, that he was afraid he would start

ZAIDY'S STORY

fooling even himself and come to believe it! This incident happened soon after Zaidy arrived.

Zaidy went to a second Shul and was careful that the same thing shouldn't happen again. Here, however, he was not happy. He came the week of Rosh Hashanah. The first day of Rosh Hashanah, he was sitting in Shul and looked out the window. He saw a car pull up and a man came out. Zaidy did not know the man but when he turned around, he saw that same man was putting on the kittel to daven Mussaf! The people in the Shul told Zaidy that he was the Chazan. Can you imagine Zaidy's pain? That was not all! As the man went up to the bima to daven, a woman stormed in and called out that the chazzan is her husband. He had left her and was living with a Christian!

The Polish Yidden who were in the Shul were very upset. Such a man should lead their tefilos?! They went home together after Shul to a hotel that they had koshered. They told the owner of the building the misery that the Chazzan had caused them. He mentioned that he had brought a Sefer Torah to Brazil and had sold it to some older Yidden who had made their own minyan. If they were to go there, the Yidden would definitely be happy and would probably allow them to lead the davening. The group of Polish Yidden did not make any further inquiries. They followed his directions and davened at this minyan the second day of Rosh Hashanah and also Yom Kippur.

Yom Kippur as they left this new minyan, they met other Yidden. The Yidden told the newcomers that this new minyan had been made because these men, due to their behaviour, were not allowed into the Shuls or to deal at all with the Yidden. If Zaidy and the other Polish Yidden would continue to daven with them, they too would be ostracized. Zaidy was heartbroken. He had fled from the rain and hail had hit him!

ZAIDY'S STORY

The Polish group went back to the shul they had davened in the first day of Yomtov. The 'chazzan' was not there a whole year, only on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. However, on the first day of Succos, the only Kohanim in the Shul were among this group (of Polish Yidden) and they were not given an Aliyah during leining. (A Yisroel was called up.) A Kohein knows how to stick up for his rights and they started to argue for what belonged to them.

The head of the Shul called out, "You Poles! You came to us! Not only don't you thank us, but now you want even more?"

Zaidy had had enough. He walked out and told the Polische Yidden that they must find their own place and have their own minyan.

"Az men zicht, gefint men" (If you search, you will find.) The men found a Sefer Torah and an esrog that they were able to borrow (from a Palestinian Schochet). A man gave them a large hall to use and his son gave them chairs, tables and a closet for the Sefer Torah. This was all done in three hours, so that the second day of Yomtov at night they were already davening in their new minyan.

With the Shul settled and a parnosah (livelihood) found, Zaidy wrote to Bubby asking her to come to Brazil. Bubby wrote back, "If you really wanted me to come you shouldn't have written all those letters in the beginning!" All that Zaidy had written was true of course, but with time Zaidy got used to it all and was earning very nicely. Zaidy did not want to go back to Poland. He wrote another letter to Bubby with a warning that if she does not agree to come, this will be his last letter. He would move and not tell her where he is.

In truth, Zaidy was using this as a last resort as he loved Bubby and the children. Bubby, back in Poland, was not so sure. She knew that the man who had left her so many months ago would never really leave her, but who knows what may have happened to him in all that time? Maybe he was serious.

ZAIDY'S STORY

Bubby quickly mailed a letter to her brother, Chaim Yosef, who had moved to Toronto. She enclosed Zaidy's threat in the envelope. Chaim Yosef was scared. He had seen firsthand what happened to people in America. He sent Zaidy a telegram that he should stay put; a letter would be arriving shortly. Eight days later Zaidy received the letter. Chaim Yosef wrote that Zaidy should liquidate his business and return to Stopnitz; he already has papers for the family to go to Toronto.

Zaidy thought about it. He figured that if he was able to make a living in Brazil, in Canada he'd also be able to. In Brazil he had no family; in Toronto he would be amongst family. Zaidy liquidated his business and returned to Stopnitz.

ZAIDY'S STORY

CHAPTER EIGHT

Difficult Years in Stopnitz

It was 1928. Zaidy had been in Brazil away from Bubby for three years.

However, when he arrived home, there were no papers waiting for him. Life was very hard. Zaidy was used to a big city and the small village depressed him. He wrote to his friends in Brazil describing his misery and they sent him a 'ships-card' in first class to return to Brazil. When Bubby saw the ticket, she started to cry and begged Zaidy to have patience to wait for the papers from Toronto. What don't you do for your wife, especially if you really love her? Zaidy waited six and a half years for the papers that 'were waiting in Stopnitz'.

One of the first things Zaidy did upon arriving in Poland was to arrange for a Sofer to write a Sefer Torah for his friends in Brazil. He had collected 70 dollars from all the members of the Shul and added ten of his own. The Sefer Torah and Megillah cost 125 dollars so Zaidy wrote to Brazil that they should send more money, which they did. The Sofer asked twice for an increase in the price until Zaidy took him to a DinTorah. The Rav paskened that this time Zaidy should pay but the Sofer must agree not to ask for any more money. (The Rav told Zaidy that he must pay because if he forces the Sofer to write then the Torah would not be valid.) All in all the Sefer Torah cost Zaidy 35 dollars, besides the cost of the party that he made when the Sefer was finished. He sent the Torah to Brazil with a woman who was traveling there.

ZAIDY'S STORY

Zaidy needed to make a living while he was waiting. He tried dealing with different merchandise but business was very poor. The money he brought from Brazil was being eaten and he wasn't making more.

A large sum of money went to doctors. Zaidy's two girls were playing together with peas, a girl of five and (lehavdil bein chaim l'chaim) Aunty Blanche who was three. The five-year-old swallowed a pea and it went into her left lung (I think). Over the next sixteen hours Zaidy called many doctors but they were unable to do anything and the child was niftar.

Zaidy wrote that it was a punishment from Hashem because he and Bubby had cried continuously about their son who had passed away at age three. Hashem now showed them that they shouldn't be crying. They should accept with love what Hashem gives. They did not wail now but davened for Rachmonis (mercy), that Hashem should not send them more punishments.

Zaidy and Bubby had two girls now, Aunty Gerty and Aunty Blanche. They were still young and hoped for more children, but two whole years passed with no signs. Zaidy's mother told him to speak to the Rebbe in town, to who so many went with their problems. Zaidy was a friend with this Rebbe; they used to go together for a walk in the field every day.

Zaidy poured out his heart on their next walk together and the Rebbe laughed.

"I am a 'proster Yid' (plain Jew)," he said, "but I am the son of R' Kalmish of-Neistadt and I have some time for Tehillim and to learn a little, so people come to me with requests. In truth, every Yid who davens with a clean heart Hashem will help." He also said that he is sure there is no need for a doctor as they have two healthy children. (I am assuming this was Reb Yosef Boruch ben Reb Klonomus Kalman Halevi Epstein zt"l who was known as the Gutter Yid from Neustadt)

ZAIDY'S STORY

Not long after there was good news and a beautiful baby boy was born on 21 Kislev, 5691 (December 11, 1930). His bris would have been on a Thursday. In anticipation, Bubby prepared a big seudah, but this little man did not cooperate; he was yellow. They distributed all the food to the poor for Shabbos. Sunday they bought fresh food, prepared a second time and Shea Meyer had his bris.

In quick succession two more children followed. Aunty Bella was born 13 Shvat, 5692 (January 21, 1932) and Aunty Esther was born 16 Av, 5693 (August 8, 1933).

Zaidy was working in the meantime at different jobs. After he saw that he wasn't making money in 'handlin' he received an offer from Sarah Kerzner. The Kerznerns used to buy fruit in the summer and sell it in the winter. The fruit was kept in cellars and checked weekly. Any that were beginning to rot were sold, and the rest were left. Before Pesach, merchants from the big cities would come and pay dearly for the fruit that remained. They asked Zaidy if he wanted to become a partner. He would lay out some money, but he wouldn't have to work, only to oversee the workers.

In the end, Zaidy, Bubby and Sarah Kerzner worked very hard that summer. They stored apples and pears in the cellars, bought plums and dried them. The machines were on 24 hours a day except for Shabbos. After all their work the entire summer, there was no profit from the season for Zaidy and Bubby.

Zaidy wrote Chaim Yosef in Toronto that he had used up all the money that he'd brought from Brazil and had nothing left to live on. Chaim Yosef sent him 100 dollars – a large sum of money. Zaidy took the money and went to Lodz to buy Taleisim. He was told that the taleisim would be ready to be picked up in a week's time. Zaidy put down a deposit and decided to travel to Warsaw in the meantime. Before he left the city, Zaidy went into a restaurant to eat something. When he was done, he realized that he had put all his money in a safe place but forgotten to leave some out for his ticket and now, for the food. He had no choice but to take

ZAIDY'S STORY

out the money there in the restaurant. Exactly what Zaidy had been trying to prevent, occurred. A thief saw where he put the rest of the money away and followed Zaidy to Warsaw to try to steal it. Zaidy was up the entire night because he knew he had to be careful. The thief was not successful in the train.

Upon arriving in Warsaw, he looked for a taxi but could not find one. Just then a streetcar came by and Zaidy boarded it, followed once more by the thief. In the middle of the way, he managed to steal the money, how, Zaidy himself did not know. Amidst the money was Zaidy's passport. He quickly called out to the thief, "Send me back the papers. You can gain nothing from my passport and for me it is a great loss!"

Believe it or not, the thief must have had some honesty in him because he sent back the papers in the mail.

After the robbery, Zaidy was penniless. He did not even have enough money for a ticket to go home. But his bitochen was not swayed. In Zaidy's words, "Noch a sreife vert men rach." (After a fire, you become rich.)

After a week had passed, Zaidy went back to the merchant in Lodz where he had put down the deposit, although he was very embarrassed. Before he said anything at all, the merchant told him he had heard about the theft. It had been written up in the papers. He told Zaidy that he could have some merchandise on consignment (loan?). He even charged him cost price so that he could recoup his losses quicker. Zaidy took the merchandise home, sold it and was soon back for more.

However, each day he was impatiently awaiting the papers for Toronto.

Finally the papers arrived. Chaim Yosef sent papers for Zaidy, Buby and all the children. Zaidy sent them back and asked that he should send papers just for him alone. He wanted to know he could make a living before bringing the family. Neither he nor Bubby wanted to be a burden on anyone. This still took time, but now Zaidy knew it wouldn't be long and he prepared himself for the journey.

ZAIDY'S STORY

When Zaidy left for Toronto, Aunt Esther, their youngest at the time, was just ten weeks old. Bubby and Zaidy corresponded as frequently as they were able to in the eighteen months that they were apart. In one letter, Bubby informed Zaidy that Aunt Esther had started to walk!

These letters between Bubby and Zaidy are a clear indication of their life together. Bubby asked Zaidy his opinion on business and personal matters even though he was so far away. (She continued selling taleisim and was in charge of collecting all the money owed to them.) Their letters showed respect and love for one another, an eagerness to be reunited and concern for the other's health and well-being in a country so distant.

Indeed, throughout their entire marriage each one was one half of a whole. They did everything together, kitchen work and business work. Aunt Shutsy recalled an incident from years later, living in 3 Kensington in Toronto. When Bubby wanted to finish cleaning in the kitchen at night, Zaidy insisted that she come up to bed with him. Only later, when she was sure Zaidy was fast asleep, would Bubby quietly slip downstairs to finish shining the pots! I myself clearly remember Bubby serving Zaidy supper. If Zaidy was sitting at the dinner table and Bubby was still in the kitchen, Zaidy would call out, "Es benkt zich mir!" (I miss you!) He wouldn't eat until she was seated beside him.

ZAIDY'S STORY

Rysopis - Signalement		Płona - Femme	
Rok urodzenia	24. 5. 1892 r.		
Data de naissance			
Miejsce urodzenia	Stopnica		
Lieu de naissance			
Plan	życiowy - mąż		
Etat civil			
Katoludnienie	Kupiec - marchand		
Profession			
Wzrost	średni - moyenne		
Taille			
Twara	średnia - ovale		
Visage			
Włosy	czarne - chatoisies		
Cheveux			
Oczy	ciemne - bruns		
Yeux			
znaki szczególne	nie ma		
Signes particuliers			
Dzieci - Enfants			
Imię	Wiek	Płeć	
Nom	Age	Sexe	

Fotografie - Photographies	
	
Podpis posiadacza	
Signature du porteur	
Chaim Jozef Orzech	

Zaidy's passport

Rysopis - Signalement		Płona - Femme	
Rok urodzenia	1898		
Data de naissance			
Miejsce urodzenia	Stopnica		
Lieu de naissance			
Plan	zamężna - mariée		
Etat civil			
Katoludnienie	bez zajęcia - sans prof.		
Profession			
Wzrost	średni - moyenne		
Taille			
Twara	podługna - allongée		
Visage			
Włosy	ciemne - blond-forcés		
Cheveux			
Oczy	ciemne - gris		
Yeux			
znaki szczególne	nie ma - nulles		
Signes particuliers			
Dzieci - Enfants			
Imię	Wiek	Płeć	
Nom	Age	Sexe	
1. Chaja-Gitla, 25.6.1919 r. żeńska - féminin			
2. Brzajda, 10.12.1925 r. " "			
3. Szyja-Majer, 5. 5. 1930 r. męska - mascul.			
4. Batia, 18. 10. 1932 r. żeńska - fen.			
5. Estera-Liba, 30. 5. 1934 r. " "			

Fotografie - Photographies	
	
Podpis posiadacza	
Signature du porteur	
Bubba Jozef Orzech	

Bubby's passport with the children.

CHAPTER NINE

Toronto

Zaidy arrived in Toronto on November 2, 1933.

Chaim Yosef and other family members were waiting for Zaidy in the train station. They all went together to the Zeifmans. Landsleit and family visited Zaidy throughout that first week with parties and all. Zaidy wrote that they treated him, not as a brother-in-law but as a father!

Zaidy was eager to start a job in this new land. Chaim Yosef told him that he could become a teacher, a melamed in the Talmud Torah for 20 dollars a week, but Zaidy did not want that. Another job that was available was a Shammos in the Polish shul, but Zaidy did not want a job given by the community (khal's gesheften). He went out looking if he could find work in his trade, to become a goldsmith, but there was nothing to be found where he would not have to work on Shabbos.

In those years the work week was a six day affair: Monday through Saturday. Every week on Friday, the Torah observant Jews were told not to bother coming back on Monday if they wouldn't show up on Shabbos. It was not hard for the store owner or factory manager to find a replacement. These were the depression years and plenty of people were looking for jobs. Zaidy had no other alternative but to become a peddler.

ZAIDY'S STORY

He went with Chaim Yosef to a dry goods wholesaler, Yosef Pomerantz. Zaidy knew how to peddle, from his years in Brazil, but he did not know what he should buy that would sell well in Toronto. The wholesaler packed him a bag of merchandise worth twenty-one dollars and told Zaidy what he should charge for each item.

On his first day, Zaidy went peddling only amongst the Yidden because he did not know any English. The Yidden lived in the downtown area of Toronto. On Zaidy's first day he made only three dollars. After that, his new customers told him what merchandise they needed and he made more money.

Zaidy peddled every day with a heavy pack from the morning until late at night. He worked very hard and saved his money so that he could bring his family to Toronto. He ate and slept by his brother-in-law, Chaim Yosef, and thus was able to save the money he would have spent on food and lodging. Times were very bad. People wandered about without work. It was in the middle of the depression years.

Chaim Yosef took Zaidy to the bank and spoke to the manager to vouch for him. The manager told Chaim Yosef some time later that his brother-in-law was a very smart man. If the manager wanted a payment or something from him, he answered, "Me no speak English." But if Zaidy himself needed a favour from the manager, he managed to get his point across with his hands and the few words he spoke.

At this point of time, when Zaidy was a new immigrant, a Yid was arrested for bootlegging. It was not his first offence and he was afraid of a severe punishment. Someone asked Zaidy if he would take the fall and he did. Zaidy went to court and through an interpreter, he claimed the whiskey as his own and that he had asked the man to hold it for him. As it was his first offence and he was new in the land, Zaidy was let off with a warning. He saved the other Jew from a large fine or jail sentence.

ZAIDY'S STORY

Zaidy saved 1800 dollars in the sixteen months he was in Toronto. He sent Bubby tickets to join him and some money for the trip. He rented the house on 3 Kensington for 30 dollars a month. It was a three storey house. The girls ended up sleeping on the top floor, Bubby and Zaidy on the main floor and the second storey was rented out. Zaidy bought new beds, and some second-hand furniture. He was now ready for his family and anxious for their arrival. The house on Kensington still had tenants and it was arranged that the family would stay at Chaim Yosef until the house would be empty.

Bubby and the children left Stopnitz for Warsaw, travelling by train. They were delayed in Warsaw because of a medical condition (varicose veins) that Bubby had. It was there, in a hotel, that the children saw running water for the very first time! They finally took a second train to Paris and boarded the boat in Paris for the trip to Montreal.

Bubby and Auntie Gerty (age 16) were seasick the entire way. Auntie Blanche (age 9) took care of the small children. Bubby had never experienced such a trip. In her agonies she thought she was on the verge of death.

She would call out, "Ratavet a Mame mit zex kinder!" (Save a mother with six children.)

A fellow passenger interrupted her, "Ma'am you have five children."

Bubby answered, "Dos beste kind iz in der land." (The best child is in America.)

From Montreal they took another train to Toronto. Upon their arrival, in May 1935, the family was met by their uncle, Chaim Yosef Zeifman, and other relatives at the train station.

Auntie Blanche arrived with her head down, looking for zloties on the pavement. Before they had left Stopnitz, Bubby had taken her to say good-bye to an elderly

ZAIDY'S STORY

couple. They were lying on two iron beds in a room with a floor of earth. They were very poor and not well. Aunty Blanche told them good-bye and not to worry. They were off to 'dem Goldeneh Land' (the Golden Land) and she would pick up all the zlotos from the floor and send them some!

The day after the family arrived, Zaidy shouldered his pack to go out on his rounds. Bubby and Aunty Gerty took one look and both started to cry. For this they had left Poland? At least there Zaidy had been a well-known merchant. He had dealt in silver. They had come to Toronto so that Zaidy could sell towels and housecoats?! It took some time before they adjusted and realized that although it was all that Zaidy was able to do in Toronto at the time, they were still better off there than in the small village of Stopnitz.

After the family moved into their new home, Zaidy had no more money saved. Between the tickets, the furniture and other expensed, he had nothing left to buy more merchandise to peddle. There was money owed to him but he had nothing on hand with which to purchase stock or to provide food for his family. He had to borrow money to continue. There were many times that he and Bubby spent more time running around trying to borrow some money than with his peddling to make more money!

Soon after their arrival, Aunty Gerty went to work. She learned on the job for six months and then began bringing money into the house. At the same time, Aunty Gerty went to night classes to learn the English language. The younger children learned in school.

Aunty Blanche became 'Blanche' in Toronto. Before she started school, she frequented a corner confectionary store. The proprietors there were delighted to see landsleit and hear her Polish Yiddish. They asked her questions and gave her sweets. The man asked her what her name was.

ZAIDY'S STORY

“Brandel” she answered.

“You can’t go to school with a name like that,” the man said. “How about Beulah?”

“No,” said Aunty Blanche. “I don’t like that name.”

“Then call yourself Bella.”

“I already have a sister Bella,” Aunty Blanche replied.

The man went through a few “B” names until he came up with ‘Blanche’!

And Aunty Blanche became Aunty Blanche!

The financial situation at home was always tight. Bubby and Zaidy were constantly borrowing from one person to pay back another. From their own business, there was perpetually money to be collected. People paid in installments and very often continued buying at the same time. The children were often sent collecting the quarters and dimes that customers paid weekly.

There was one account that was long overdue. Zaidy gave up and told Aunty Blanche that she needn’t bother collecting from that person. Aunty Blanche saw her opportunity and asked if she could keep the money if she would manage to collect it. Zaidy agreed and Aunty Blanche persevered. She went to the house every week and knocked at the door until they opened it. Slowly the change added up and the money was hers!

Despite the lack of money, the children did not feel deprived. They were given what they needed, as well as timely treats. They were embraced with warmth and love and remember only a happy home together.

With this special attribute, the Orzech house soon became a landmark. It was a haven of contentment and was known to be open to all of those in need. Shabbos

ZAIDY'S STORY

was especially a time for guests. There were the regular Friday night guests, such as the tenants and the blind man down the street, and there were others who Zaidy might have found in Shul and invited them home. It did not take long for Bubby to find out who needed help on her block or in her neighborhood. She cooked for many who could not do it themselves. She would bring the food over to them with a child accompanying her or send the child over alone. It was not enough that she did the work. She needed her children to take part in the mitzvah so that it would be embedded in their souls.

Those that needed more care very often ended up at 3 Kensington. Many years later, when Aunty Blanche was working, she used her own money to fix up the living room; she spent \$50 to paint the room, and \$50 to fix the ceiling. She bought a couch and a lamp. She was so happy that finally she would have a proper room where she could entertain guests, including Uncle Toots whom she was seeing at the time. Soon after she was finished and the room was fresh and new, Bubby brought home a 'guest'. She was a Jewish lady whose family had sent to a home as she was mentally ill and needed full time care. Bubby brought her into the house and established her in the newly decorated living room!

There was also a Polish Gentile woman, Jennie, who Bubby took in off the street. She was mentally ill and was terrified of the outdoors. Bubby gave her a small oven and bought her all her food. In return she did the washing, by hand of course, and ironing for Bubby and helped her in the kitchen as well.

Needless to say, there were times when the children resented the care Bubby lavished on these unfortunates. Bubby did not give in. She said the children must learn that there were others who were worse off than they were and Boruch Hashem they were capable of providing for them.

Bubby canned different fruit in their seasons. She made canned peaches, and plums, blueberry jam and raspberry sauce, grape jam and wine. All of this was

ZAIDY'S STORY

done in partnership, with Zaidy at her side. Auntie Shutsy remembers going with her parents to buy live chickens every Wednesday. They took the chickens to the shlach house and brought them home to kosher. It was a strenuous and messy job and one that they shared every week. One year before Pesach, Auntie Shutsy told me that she was helping them clean chickens for Yomtov. It was very late and she couldn't keep her eyes open anymore. She went to sleep feeling very guilty that she couldn't stay up to help any longer. In the middle of the night, she awoke and went to check the kitchen. Sure enough, Bubby and Zaidy were still sitting there, hard at work. Feeling refreshed, she sat down and joined them!

There were a few shuls in Toronto at this time. Zaidy davened in three of them: Rabbi Langer's shul on Kensington, D'Arcy Talmud Torah (Rabbi Kaminetsky and later Rabbi Ochs) and at Rabbi Burak's. Every Shabbos Zaidy went to D'Arcy. He was the Gabbai there for 25 years. Uncle Dave's bar mitzvah was in D'Arcy Shul and Bubby and Zaidy were there. Bubby was so impressed with the Bar Mitzvah boy that she went over to his father and asked for his permission to have Uncle Dave move into her home for good! (Uncle Dave's mother was no longer living then.) Naturally Mr. Goldberg refused. But Bubby had the last laugh. When Uncle Dave and Auntie Bella got married, they lived in the attic at 3 Kensington for a while and Bubby got 'her yingele' to live in her house!

Every week Zaidy cooked 'arbis' and prepared an Oneg Shabbos for the D'Arcy Shul. He also prepared the Kiddush in the shul when necessary. Bella Gabrielow used to bake a honey cake for the Kiddush. The week she had her daughter (Donna) Zaidy called her up and asked her for a honey cake for her own Kiddush! Bella said she couldn't possible do it now. She had just come home from the hospital.

"No problem," Zaidy told her. "I'll come over and you'll tell me exactly what to put in and I'll mix your honey cake." And that's precisely what he did!

ZAIDY'S STORY

Aunty Gerty and Uncle Harry were soon engaged, despite the lack of a dowry. Before Aunty Gerty's wedding, she asked Zaidy what he will give her as a wedding gift. Zaidy answered that if she will build a Jewish home like her mother, he would give her all the furnishings of her new home, for the kitchen and bedroom.

To Zaidy's delight, Aunty Gerty answered that she will not sell her Yiddishkeit; she would keep a home kosher like her mother's without being paid for it. Zaidy went into a store with the young couple and let them choose all that they needed. The bill came out to \$345 and Zaidy paid it in full!



*Aunty Gerty and
Uncle Harry Markowitz*

CHAPTER TEN

The Family in Stopnitz

In the years from 1933, when Zaidy arrived alone, until July 21, 1939, when Zaidy received the last letter from his brother, Zaidy kept up continuous communication with his family in Poland. They sent and received letters and photographs from each other. The main correspondence was with Bubby's father, Shlomo Tzvi Zeifman and Zaidy's mother, Kayla Saryl Orzech. Bubby's mother had been niftar in 1921. Her father had remarried Necha (Guza?) and had three small children living at home at the time. Zaidy's father had been niftar sometime between 1914 (when Zaidy and Bubby married) and 1921 (when they had a boy whom they named Moshe after Zaidy's father). Zaidy's brothers, Yisroel and Mendel and his sisters, Perel Friedman, Baila Smolarsz and Esther Zeidner also wrote letters. Bubby had one married sister who was still in Europe. Her name was Malka Nisenholtz. She also wrote to the family in Toronto.

The letters, after the traditional salutations, were basically all the same. The family in Poland either thanked Zaidy for the recent funds he sent them or asked for money to help them. In quite a few letters, the thanks and requests flowed one another. The situation in Stopnitz was very bad. There was no money and no work. A lot of the money was spent on doctor bills. Zaidy's younger brother, Yisroel, expressed a desire to follow Zaidy to Canada. He asked Zaidy to give him all the information he needed, but unfortunately, it was too late. The gates were closed.

ZAIDY'S STORY

In 1937, Perel Friedman's husband Chaim was niftar. It seems that he was quite ill and was in and out of hospitals and the baths for months before he passed away. Zaidy's mother, Kayla Saryl was very distressed, especially because she herself was weak and unable to help her daughter. She lived by this daughter and was actually bedridden by 1938. Perel wrote to Zaidy that she had no income at all. It was no longer permissible to sell anything in the streets to 'handle' as it was called, without some type of permit. Zaidy's other sister, Esther, also wrote that she lost her income. If one was caught peddling, he was imprisoned for three days. It was a vicious cycle of starvation in Stopnitz.

Parnossah in the larger cities was a little better, for example in Warsaw or Lodz. Those that lived there, though, had to support their poorer relatives in the small towns. It was a constant struggle.

In 1938, Mendel, Zaidy's older brother, was niftar. He was travelling to a Rebbe and there was an accident with the wagon. Zaidy's mother, Kayla Saryl was never told the news. She was completely bedridden at the time and very weak.

On May 26, 1939, Perel Friedman wrote a letter to Zaidy detailing how difficult life was for them in Stopnitz. She was on her own, with no livelihood and a bedridden mother to care for. The children were hungry and she saw no help in sight. She was considering sending a son to Toronto. In the same letter, her son Moshe added a few words. He wrote, "One thing you should be happy about. That you are away from here. Here it really is not good. Especially now because of the war. By us everyone is questioning whether it will be war or peace. The last few months in Poland and in all of Europe the situation is very tense. You are very lucky you have Roosevelt. The Yiddishe world looks at America with hope."

Zaidy received one final letter from Yisroel in July, 1939. During World War Two, they heard very little news from Europe. The effect of the war was not felt very strongly in Toronto. There were practice air raids, rations on certain items and collections for the soldiers.

ZAIDY'S STORY

In 1940 they received a postcard from Europe (from a cousin, Avraham Chaim Grossberg, then in Holland) that Shlomo Tzvi Zeifman, Bubby's father, was niftar. Aunty Gerty named her baby after him.

When Aunty Shutsy was born, in 1942, Zaidy wanted to name her after his mother, but he had no definite proof that she was niftar and therefore couldn't. The next contact Zaidy had with any family member was after the war when a few cousins wrote requesting help and sponsorship.



3 Kensington

ZAIDY'S STORY

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Daily Life in Toronto

When Zaidy moved into 3 Kensington, he set up the front room as a business. However, he still peddled from door to door as many customers only bought if the merchandise was brought to them. On his route there was one house that always had an open door. There, at 68 Huron, Zaidy would stop for a break to rest with a cup of tea that was offered him by the storekeeper: Uncle Dave's mother!

It was getting increasingly difficult for Zaidy to continue shouldering his heavy pack all the time. He tried to push it with a carriage, but he was always afraid to leave it outside when he went into the customer to sell. He was persuaded to buy a horse and wagon. Zaidy wrote that if they had persuaded him to learn how to drive a car they would have accomplished a lot more. In any case, Zaidy went with his cousin, Chazkel Friedman, to the country to purchase a pony and a wagon. He built a box with a lock in the wagon so that he could leave the merchandise safely in order to go into the house to serve his customer.

Zaidy went from street to street with his pony, but he suffered from children's antics. Very often, when he left the wagon outside the customer's house and went inside, they used to ride away with the whole wagon! More than once, Zaidy had to walk about until he found his pony again. Nonetheless, it was still easier than carrying all the merchandise by hand. Also, Zaidy was able to take more merchandise with him. However, there was a large drawback. Whereas

ZAIDY'S STORY

previously, when Zaidy had finished his rounds, he could relax at home, the pony now gave Zaidy more work after his long day. He had to give it to eat, to drink, to comb it and to clean the wheels of the wagon.

Zaidy's first horse he used for years, until it died. He bought a second but it was very wild. Zaidy tried to break it in, but ended up selling it after only a few weeks. The next horse he bought was an old horse that he paid ten dollars for. It was perfectly suitable for his work, but the humane society pestered Zaidy about it until he was forced to sell it. After that he did not buy another horse. He was tired of taking care of them and also, the Second World War had broken out by now. Merchandise was very hard to come by and people sought out Zaidy. He did not have to go searching for customers.

While Zaidy was still using his horse, he once had a bad accident. The horse was scared by something and started to run. Zaidy couldn't control it. He fell off and people on the street managed to stop the horse a bit farther away. It was erev Pesach and Zaidy was badly hurt. He lay in bed for eight weeks and was paid 25 dollars by his insurance. Once he was up and back at work, the insurance policy was cancelled. A second time, while visiting the Kerznerns, a child started the pony running, but Boruch Hashem, no one was hurt that time.

Zaidy had a sign put up in the front window, "Orzech Dry Goods". The house however, was in desperate need of repair. Zaidy offered to raise the rent he was paying in return for renovations but the landlord was unwilling to do any repairs. Instead, he offered to sell the house to Zaidy for very cheap. Zaidy borrowed some money and took out an open mortgage on the rest. He bought the house for 3000 dollars and paid up in three years!

Zaidy and Bubby were already grandparents before Auntie Shutsy was born. Auntie Blanche was engaged and couldn't believe what was happening. (She told her fiance, Wilfred (Toots) Schwartz how embarrassed she was.) In 1942,

ZAIDY'S STORY

Aunty Shutsy was born with great joy and happiness. (Uncle Toots told Aunty Blanche that she should be happy she has a young mother.)

In 1945 Aunty Blanche and Uncle Toots got married. Once again, Zaidy borrowed money to pay for the wedding expenses. There were more expenses at that time. Zaidy knew there were a lot of repairs that had to be done in the house. They still had no fridge, no oil heating, no hot water, no washing machined and the house needed a paint job. He also thought of the wedding coming up for his younger children. Zaidy came up with an excellent idea of how to earn money. Zaidy was a heavy smoker. He smoked fifteen cigars a day! His cigars could cost ten dollars for the week. Then and there he decided to stop smoking and to save the ten dollars every week. (He had also developed a terrible smoker's cough and was advised by his doctor to stop smoking.)

Every Friday, before going to shul, he would put ten dollars into a pushka. In a week when business went exceptionally well, Zaidy put in twenty. When he felt that there was enough money in the pushka, he started renovations. He put in heating, hot water, a fridge and washing machine.

After the Second World War, Zaidy and Bubby learned that their family in Europe was practically wiped out. They did find out that they had some cousins left, and promptly sponsored them to enter Canada. They sponsored Cousin Dina (Grossberg), Oscar Reiter and Baila Gabrielow. The first two were denied immigration, but Baila Gabrielow entered Canada on their sponsorship. As well, a family of four, the Silvers (parents and two children) cousins of Bubby were also granted their papers. Thus, a second family of four moved into 3 Kensington in order to be united with their family. Zaidy and Bubby even gave up their own bedroom for three months for this family.

In 1951(or 52), Zaidy had his first heart attack. He refused to go into the hospital and insisted on recuperating at home. They had a hospital bed put into the living

ZAIDY'S STORY

room and catered to Zaidy around the clock. Zaidy could not speak. He communicated by writing down any requests.

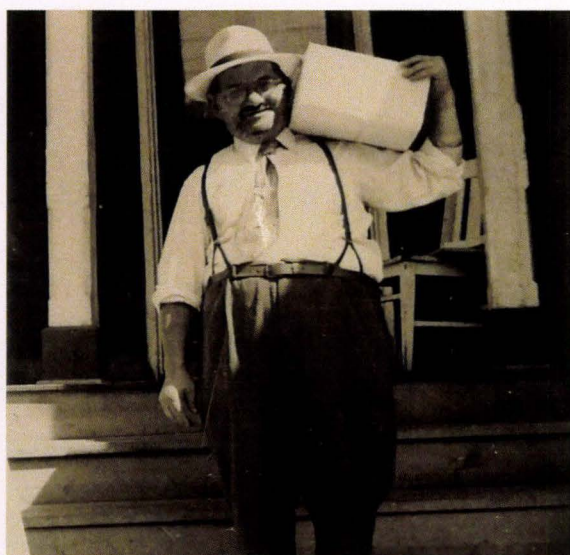
It was during this recovery period, when he was still restricted to bed, that Aunty Shutsy remembers how Zaidy played games with her and listened to her reviewing her Chumash homework.

Aunty Bella and Uncle Dave were engaged at this point. Zaidy asked them if they would prefer a large wedding or the money for themselves. They said a small wedding would be enough. Zaidy started to go through the list himself and just couldn't leave anyone out!

Aunty Bella and Uncle Dave were married in March 1952.

The following year Aunty Esther and Uncle Yosef became engaged. A mere five weeks later Aunty Esther left Toronto for a year's stay in Israel. Bubby opened her house to her future son-in-law and Uncle Yosef lived with Bubby and Zaidy for an entire year before his marriage. Aunty Esther came home in 1953 and they got married in January 1954.

Uncle Mike and Aunty Sylvia celebrated in 1955.



1950's: This is Zaidy on his way to the Post Office. Once a month he packed a parcel to send to Israel and sewed it closed with white material - It included; Schmaltz (chicken fat) in a metal tin from oil which he soddered closed, dried salamis and sugar. (Thats all I remember)

ZAIDY'S STORY



1945: Auntie Blanche & Uncle (Wilfred) Toots Schwartz



1952: Auntie Bella and Uncle Dave Goldberg



1954: Zaidy, Esther & Akiva Yosef Mandel, Bubby



1959: Uncle Mike and Auntie Sylvia Orzech

ZAIDY'S STORY



Zaidy & Bubby in Miami

CHAPTER TWELVE

Annual Trips to Miami

In 1957 all of the children except Aunty Shutsy were married. One Motzei Shabbos Zaidy came home as usual and made Havdolah, after which he went out a little to his friend. He came back to a grand surprise. He barely recognized his house. The table was set with delicacies. All the children, as well as his brothers-in-law, Chaim Yosef and Mordche, and his cousins, the Kerznerns were gathered there. Zaidy asked in surprise what the occasion was and was told to sit down with Bubby for a lechaim so they could tell him all about it.

It was Cheshvan 12, Zaidy and Bubby's 46th anniversary. The children presented their parents with two plane tickets to Miami and money for a vacation. They gave 'speeches' and told Bubby and Zaidy that since they had never had a honeymoon, now was their chance. Zaidy was very pleased – not specifically for the gift, but that Hashem had given him such precious children who treat their parents so well. First thing, Zaidy thanked Hashem for this chessed (kindness). Bubby on the other hand, started to cry that the children shouldn't spend so much of their money. She could do without Miami.

Uncle Mike stood up and told Bubby, "Mammesh, you always did so much for me. Hashem has helped me, and I can afford to give you a present. We all want you to have a rest from your work. Hashem should give you good health. Have a safe trip and 'gai gezunterheit' and enjoy yourselves."

ZAIDY'S STORY

Aunty Shutsy also stood up. "Mammesheshe," she said. "I worked in the summer happily because I knew that I would then also be able to give my share. This is my greatest pleasure that my dear parents will enjoy themselves. Travel gezunterheit and enjoy."

Each child persuaded Bubby with her own speech. Zaidy thanked Hashem a second time for the goodness of his children. Zaidy wrote that he vintches each of his children that they should be healthy and have nachas and joy from their children, and their children should care for them as nicely as they took care of their parents.

They started preparing themselves for the trip. In Zaidy's words, "Es iz gevoren lebadik in die shtetl" (It became lively in the village.) The night before they left, friends and family came to say goodbye and to wish them a safe trip.

Tuesday morning, Aunty Blanche and Uncle Yosef took Zaidy and Bubby to the airport. They waited until liftoff. Zaidy was able to see them waiting from the window in the airplane. They arrived in New York at 12:30. Zaidy was very comfortable but in the beginning, Bubby's head was turning a little. Zaidy talked to her of other matters so that she should forget her pain, and the time passed pleasantly. In New York they had to wait until 4:45 because the plane they were supposed to travel on was 'burnt out'! The last stretch of the way they both felt good. They finally arrived at 9:15.

Here was a couple, born in the nineteenth century who had grown up with horse and wagon as the staple means of transportation. They had been on trains and ships. In Toronto, they had been chauffeured in cars and now at ages 68 and 56 they had their first ride in an airplane!

That first year in Miami was a cold one, but anything was better than Toronto. There was no snow, no frost and they truly enjoyed. Zaidy described in more

ZAIDY'S STORY

details his trips and lodgings for each year. I will just translate his typical daily schedule there in Miami.

Zaidy woke up almost every day at 5:00am. He took his shower, said Birchas Hatorah (the blessing said every morning before one learns Torah) and made himself a hot drink. Then he sat down and said the Tehillim for that day, Mamodos and a chapter of Mishnayos. This took until 8:00am. Eight o'clock was time for davening. Zaidy went to shul to daven with a minyan. Breakfast was at 9:00am. After breakfast, Zaidy went out for an hour to enjoy the fresh air. He took with a newspaper or a letter to write and was busy until Bubby was ready to go out. If the weather was nice, they went to the beach for a few hours. If it was not so nice they might have gone shopping. 1:00pm was dinner. Zaidy then lay down and Bubby would look for something to fix. When Zaidy woke up he would go to shul to learn until Mincha. After Mincha and Maariv, Zaidy came home, ate something and then they usually went out for a walk together, sometimes to a friend.

Zaidy and Bubby went annually to Miami, from November until after Pesach.

In 1959, Bubby and Zaidy delayed their trip until December because of Auntie Shutsy's wedding. Zaidy was very enamoured with Uncle Yaakov. The young couple would be moving to Rochester where Uncle Yaakov had a job as the Shochet. They had printed a card to enclose with the wedding invitation to the people that it pertained to, as follows: "We respectfully request the ladies to dress in a Chassidish manner, by wearing a hat and refraining from wearing low cut or short sleeve dresses."

The Chasunah was recorded in the daily paper –"Short Sleeves Banned at Jewish Wedding!"

The report in the paper caused such a crowd outside the wedding, at 1 Viewmount, that policemen had to come to hold off the people.

ZAIDY'S STORY

Of the first trips to Miami, Zaidy wrote of his lodgings and his daily activities. In their eighth year, however, in 1964/65, they did not have such an easy time. The first month or so everything was fine, but in the middle of the winter, Bubby started feeling ill. She lost her appetite and her mood. She only wanted to go back home to her children. Zaidy called doctors but no one was able to help her. Zaidy did not want to go back to Toronto as he felt that in Miami Bubby was getting excellent care. They had friends there who cared for Bubby much better than a nurse who could be hired for money. Of course the children would do the same at home, but firstly they lived far from Kensington, and secondly they were busy with their own families Boruch Hashem. Bubby however, did not get better and continued insisting that she only wanted to go home. By then, Zaidy was unsure of what to do. He finally decided that he would take Bubby home, but the decision had come too late. At this point, he could not get a reservation. It was by then almost Pesach. Aunty Gerty and Uncle Harry came for Yomtov. Bubby perked up when they were there, but immediately after they left she was again feeling down. They stayed in Miami for only two more weeks and then left for Toronto.

Bubby was still not feeling well, so they arrived at Aunty Esther's to stay for three weeks before returning home to Kensington. Zaidy and Bubby were anxious to sell the house. They had a lot of heartache from the tenants and did not have the energy to take care of a big house alone.

The summer passed. Succos they went to Aunty Bella in Ottawa as was their usual custom. That year after Yomtov, on Cheshvan 12, 1965, was their 50th anniversary. Zaidy was very excited that Boruch Hashem they lived to see this date. He expected the children to make a party so that they could rejoice together and ask Hashem that they should live to celebrate the diamond anniversary also! The children were ready to prepare a gathering but Bubby insisted that they do nothing to commemorate. She was afraid for an Ayin Horah. Zaidy wrote that

ZAIDY'S STORY

usually Bubby is right; they will wait and daven that Hashem should keep them healthy they should be able to celebrate the 75th.

It was a busy time. Zaidy and Bubby were preparing for their ninth trip to Miami. They were awaiting the news that would make them great-grandparents. Mazel Tov! Shloimie was a father! May his son, Avrohom Dov, grow up to be a good Jew! Aunty Gerty made a beautiful Pidyon Haben on November 26, 1965.

The following Tuesday, Zaidy and Bubby left for Miami. The weather was very warm. By Chanukah Bubby had already been in the ocean a few times. On the first night of Chanukah Zaidy and Bubby went to a party from the Chevra Tehillim. Zaidy belonged to the Chevra Tehillim; every morning they said the day's Tehillim before davening. They had Boruch Hashem a lot of friends in Miami and truly enjoyed.

After Chanukah the weather was not so nice anymore. It turned out to be a difficult winter. Besides the poor weather, Bubby did not feel well again. She got attacks on her nerves. She would lose her appetite and her mood. Zaidy knew exactly what to do when Bubby did not feel well. Sometimes an attack would last a few hours, sometimes a day or two. At the end of the winter, close to Pesach, she was feeling a little better.

Shabbos HaGodol when Zaidy was ready to go to Shul, he asked Bubby how she felt. She said that she was fine. She just wanted to sleep a little longer. Zaidy left and soon afterwards, Bubby got an attack. She started to scream and the neighbours rushed in. They didn't know what to do. They called police and a doctor. An ambulance pulled up and said that she must immediately go into the hospital. All this time Zaidy was in Shul. He walked home and saw the whole commotion as he turned into his street.

ZAIDY'S STORY

Someone immediately ran up to him and asked if he was Orzech. When he replied in the affirmative, they tried to rush him into the ambulance.

Zaidy resisted. He screamed, "Today is Shabbos and I don't want to go in a car. Give me my wife and let me take her home."

No one listened to him. They forced Zaidy despite his protests to get into the ambulance and they were taken to the hospital. There, they asked Zaidy all sorts of questions which he answered as well as he was able to, and then they asked him to sign the papers. Zaidy refused. He said it was Shabbos and he could not write anything on Shabbos.

They waited for hours but the doctor did not come. Usually, before Zaidy went to Shul he would eat something so that he wouldn't feel weak. Just that Shabbos he had not taken a bite to eat. Most Shabbosim there was a Kiddush in shul, but again, just that week there hadn't been. During the week, Zaidy always carried a bottle of schnapps with him in case he felt weak. On Shabbos however, he could not carry and therefore had nothing on him. It was 2:00 by now. Zaidy's heart started to 'klap' (pound). He was worried about his wife and was afraid he would have another heart attack.

Zaidy saw that Bubby was a little bit better, even without a doctor. He started to scream at the nurse that if a doctor doesn't come this minute then he is leaving. The doctor finally arrived and they were able to leave. Zaidy took a taxi to take Bubby and himself home.

Zaidy wrote that he was mechalel (desecrated) Shabbos twice. Hashem should forgive him. He had no other choice. He felt that if they would remain there in the hospital even one hour longer, both of them would truly have become sick. Actually Zaidy was not mechalel Shabbos at all, as in the case of an emergency it is mandatory to go to a hospital. They had to return on Shabbos as well as they had

ZAIDY'S STORY

no food or facilities in the hospital and it was necessary for their health that they return home.

It was now two days before Pesach. All the chometz still had to be removed and the Pesach preparations had to be done. Auntie Gerty and Uncle Harry arrived on erev Pesach. Boruch Hashem Bubby was feeling better and able to help a little as well. Somehow, everything was ready on time for Pesach. The yomtov passed peacefully and the weather improved. Auntie Gerty and Uncle Harry stayed for eight days after Pesach; Bubby and Zaidy stayed until the end of May.

A few times after Pesach, Zaidy had heartache, as Bubby didn't feel well. When they returned to Toronto, they again went straight to Auntie Esther's.

Every day Zaidy went to Kensington himself to straighten up in the house after being away for the whole winter. It was the spring of 1966 and Zaidy was 77 years old. He worked hard until it was ready for them to move back in. At that time the family was preparing for Mendel's Bar-Mitzvah. The Kiddush was in the Polish Stiebel on Shabbos and Tuesday was the party.

After Shabbos Zaidy started to feel the after effects of his hard work. He called Auntie Blanche to take him to his cardiologist who gave him medication and advised complete rest. He told Zaidy not to go to the party. Zaidy however, did not want to scare the family and disturb the simcha. He made Auntie Blanche promise not to tell anyone—especially Bubby—what the doctor said. Zaidy felt that Auntie Blanche had worked so hard for this simcha, and she was such a good daughter. Not only to her parents was she so helpful and considerate, but to everyone. Besides, at the time, he felt fine.

He didn't listen to the doctor and went to the party. He gave a speech at the Bar-Mitzvah (it is translated at the end) and almost immediately afterwards began sweating and found it hard to breathe, feeling very weak. A doctor who was a

ZAIDY'S STORY

guest checked him and advised the children to take him home immediately. The entire night Zaidy was in terrible pain. In the morning they called an ambulance and they took Zaidy to General Hospital.

Zaidy had had his second heart attack. He was on oxygen for 14 days and stayed in the hospital for 22 more days. Even after that Zaidy was not well enough to go home. He went to a convalescent home for three weeks and to Aunt Esther for three more weeks.

It was by then close to Rosh Hashanah and Zaidy wrote that he hopes the New Year will bring good health.

Zaidy and Bubby were desperate to sell their house on 3 Kensington. There was constant work to be done in the house and they were no longer so young. They were anxious to sell and to move into Aunt Esther's house. Aunt Esther had bought the house with Zaidy's help in 1963 with the intention that Bubby and Zaidy would move in as soon as they sold their own home. There were three tenants still living in the house, one in the garage, one an elderly tailor and the third, a bochur. Bubby was persuaded to evict one of the tenants and in their place take in a cousin. The elderly tenant begged Bubby not to throw him out as he had nowhere to go. He had been in the hospital for most of the previous winter and was not well. Bubby couldn't refuse him so she gave the bochur notice.

In the interim, until the boy would move out, their cousin moved into their quarters. Bubby and Zaidy did not know what they were getting themselves into. The cousin needed constant care. They catered to his needs and provided him with food. It was an additional strain on Bubby and Zaidy but they could not turn away their own cousin.

Aunt Gerty came to the rescue. She found a buyer for the house! They agreed that the house would change hands after the winter due to the request of the elderly

ZAIDY'S STORY

man who was afraid of being left without a home in the winter. As it turned out, he spent the winter in the hospital again the house was sold for \$16,000 on April 5, 1967. Zaidy found a place for his cousin in a nursing home for over Pesach. After Yomtov, the daughter came and took her father back to Chicago with her.

Over the years Bubby and Zaidy had accumulated many possessions, some useful and some 'junk'. There were many things left from Zaidy's store that he had been too weak to sell. Bubby could never throw anything out. It was a 'shud' (pity) to throw out something that might be needed someday. Some of the things they sold in a rummage sale and the rest they transported to Auntie Esther's house. Many things that ended up in the garage were quite useless. They were not garbage, just not practical. Zaidy wrote that he brought these items solely because Bubby couldn't stand for them to be thrown out and he wanted to please Bubby.

At first, when their cousin had moved into their home on Kensington, Zaidy and Bubby had been very upset. It was very hard for them and created so much more work. However, Zaidy wrote that it was actually his move that pushed them to leave. When the children saw how tough the situation was, they worked harder to find the right buyer and Boruch Hashem, they did. So, Zaidy wrote, you should always accept your lot with joy because you do not know what good will come out of a hardship. Now they were very happy to be free of the headaches of tenant and property management.

That Succos they felt well enough to go to Ottawa to Auntie Bella although they only stayed for the first days. At first Zaidy was hesitant about travelling to Miami for the winter, but he contemplated that in Toronto he would have to stay indoors for so many months and decided that it was better to go. Auntie Gerty came with them to settle them in. It was good that she was there as Zaidy and Bubby had to find new lodgings. Also, soon after their arrival, Zaidy did not feel well and had to go to the doctor. He was put on a diet and lost 25 pounds that winter! Zaidy wrote

ZAIDY'S STORY

it just like that, and knowing Zaidy, the weight came off 'just like that'! He did not note as he did in other occasions that such a matter is easy to write yet is difficult in actuality. Such was Zaidy's self-discipline. If he had to change his complete diet to lose weight for the goodness of his health, then no sooner said than done. All in all he was at the doctor eight times that winter, including three times for a blood test to check his sugar and Boruch Hashem everything was fine.

For Purim Bubby baked hamentaschen and made kreplach. Zaidy cooked a fricassee and 'kratz borscht' (a herring dish). They prepared a lavish meal and invited friends. Their best guests were not even invited. Uncle Mike and Aunt Sylvia surprised them and flew in for Purim! The weather was so nice and Zaidy and Bubby were feeling well so they decided to stay an extra month and went home in June.

The first few years Zaidy and Bubby were in Miami, they stayed in different apartments. Either the rooms were chosen for them or they spent their first night in a hotel and then found a suitable apartment on their own. The last few winters they stayed in the Lord Balfour Hotel. The first year they arrived there, there was a recreation room on the main floor where hotel guests passed the time playing cards such as poker. As the hotel filled up with more Yidden over the years, Zaidy managed to convince the owner that it would be beneficial to him to convert the room into a Shul. Zaidy could not walk far at the time and he dearly wanted to daven with a minyan. He also knew that there were others who would choose to stay in a hotel with a shul rather than have to walk to one. Somehow they got a Sefer Torah and the room became a shul. To Zaidy's credit it developed into a place where one could always find at least one or two men sitting and learning.

When I accompanied my mother on her annual trips to Miami, I remember a hotel with a fenced in yard. There were chairs set up under the trees and in the sun. Zaidy and Bubby had plenty of company there and were always calling me

ZAIDY'S STORY

to come and say hello to their friends. It was there that Zaidy sat and said his Tehillim and developed those well-tanned 'Miami hands' from sitting in the sun and turning the pages of his Sefer. I remember taking walks with bubby and Zaidy. I would walk on the low wall that separated the beach from the path and hold onto someone's hand as we sauntered along. For those few days I basked in the glory of being the only one of the children to come along (Perle joined one year!). I was the one whom they called on to run and bring something with my young and eager feet. I was the one that was 'glett' (patted) and praised. Zaidy and Bubby always had so much love for us and for those two weeks I was practically the sole recipient of it! When my father was also with us, then I was the one who stayed to sleep with Bubby and Zaidy while my parents went to a nearby hotel. I used to hear Zaidy get up very early in the morning to start his day. I would watch Bubby preparing their breakfast. She worked with such love. Although she knew my mother would soon be there, she wanted to be the one to be making Zaidy's food for him. It was a beautiful time for me in Miami and I have very fond memories of my visits there.



Late 1950's or early 1960's: Back Row from left to right: Bubby, Aunt Bella (holding Moishy), Uncle Dave & Zaidy. Front Row from left to right: Martin, Mechel, Minchie. Notice the wedding pictures on the dining room wall of 3 Kensington.



c. 1950's: Zaidy & Bubby. Looks like the anniversary of Gerty & Harry.

ZAIDY'S STORY



1959: Rabbi Heller (Uncle Yaakov's father),
Yaakov, Shutsy, Bubby, Zaidy



1960's: Zaidy and Uncle Yaakov Heller



c.1960: From left to right: Shutsy, Esther, Bella, Mike, Zaidy, Bubby, Gerty, Blanche

ZAIDY'S STORY



Aunty Blanche & Zaidy.



Zaidy & Bubby in Miami

ZAIDY'S STORY



Mid 1960's: Family Schwartz. Standing: Blanche, Zaidy, Toots, Cindy Front: Stanley, Bubby



From left to right: Uncle Max (Mordechai Zeifman), Auntie Lily, Bubby & Zaidy.

ZAIDY'S STORY

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

The Later Years

(Zaidy did not write anymore about his life. He wrote his will which I have translated. He also recorded different stories of Gedolim that he remembered. The following is a recollection of memories about Zaidy. Some of the incidents may have been written in earlier chapters.)

Bubby and Zaidy arrived at 280 Strathallan Wood, the house they now lived in with Aunty Esther. The business was liquidated, their house sold; they were in truth a free couple. Retired, they could have spent their days in leisure, doing no work at all. They had surely earned a rest. Zaidy was in his late seventies, and had worked hard all his life with Bubby at his side. A life of idleness, however, was not something that agreed with Bubby and Zaidy. In fact, I do not recall ever seeing Zaidy simply sitting and not doing something. He always had something in his hands to do and if not he was sure to go into the kitchen to ask Aunty Esther, “Esther’shi, host dee epes far mir tze teen?” (Esther’shi, do you have something for me to do?)

When there was nothing for him to do, Zaidy found something to do. He wrote this book of his memories. He wrote stories that he remembered reading. For example, he wrote the entire book about the Maharal from Prague from memory, as he wrote that it seems to be hard to find the book. He also wrote the entire Sefer Tehillim with the translation in Yiddish.

ZAIDY'S STORY

Zaidy had a daily schedule for himself. He completed the entire Sefer Tehillim every day. Even though one is allowed to speak in between the chapters of the Tehillim, Zaidy took it upon himself not to speak from start to finish. He felt that this way he would be sure to finish and not be interrupted or distracted. He would bind Seforim that needed to be fixed. Zaidy brought home these Seforim from Shul and bound them free of charge. People also brought him their own Seforim to be fixed.

A man would come in with his Seforim and the conversation would run as follows:

“Could you possibly bind these Seforim for me?”

“No problem,” Zaidy replied. “When do you need them for?”

“Oh, there’s no rush. You can do it whenever it is convenient for you. How much would it cost?” the man asked in return.

“There is no charge.”

The next day the Seforim would be bound (unless there was a very big job). Zaidy called up his ‘customer’ to pick up his Seforim and still refused to take any money for his work. If the customer would insist on payment, Zaidy relented and told him to give him as much money as he felt it was worth. This money was used for a Tzedakah fund.

Bubby as well, never sat idle. Bubby loved to sit in the sun but the only time she allowed herself that relaxation without working at the same time, was on Shabbos.

Zaidy was also busy organizing his regular Tzedakah funds. Every year before Rosh Hashanah, Zaidy started a campaign. As usual, Bubby was his partner in this mitzvah. They collected money and goods to send parcels to poor families in Israel. When financial circumstances in Israel improved somewhat, Zaidy received

ZAIDY'S STORY

a note thanking him for his support all the years and stating that Boruch Hashem they could stand on their own now. He could direct his money to a needier cause. Zaidy did not stop collecting. Instead of sending the money to the families he now sent it to Yeshivos. Zaidy's policy about Tzedakah was that the more you give the more you yourself will have.

You should not think that Zaidy sent money to faraway places and neglected his own surroundings. As I mentioned earlier, Bubby had always cooked for the needy in her area. Zaidy was known as the 'Goldene Yid'. The children heard countless stories, during Bubby and Zaidy's life and after they were niftar, of how their parents had helped others.

All of the children knew about the 'knippel' in the cabinet for those times of need. Bubby kept some money set aside in a handkerchief that was tied in a knot (hence the term 'knippel'; in Yiddish a knot is a knip (pronouncing the 'k')). She always said every Yiddushe Mame must have some of her own money put aside for an emergency. In Bubby's case the emergencies were, more often than not, to help others who came to her in desperation to borrow some money.

There were the new immigrants that arrived, alone in a new country, with little money and few relations. Zaidy welcomed them to Toronto. He offered them merchandise from the store, all the towels, linen, tablecloths, etc. that they needed, on credit. He told them not to worry. He was sure they would pay him. They should settle their needs and pay him in partial installments as much as they could afford at the time.

There was the saleslady in Hermes Bakery who stopped Aunty Blanche and asked her what her name was as she looked familiar. Aunty Blanche answered, "Blanche Schwartz." The name 'Schwartz' didn't mean a thing to her, so Aunty Blanche said her maiden name was 'Orzech'.

ZAIDY'S STORY

“You’re Chaim Yosef Orzech’s daughter?!” The saleswoman was so excited. “You don’t know what your father did for me! I came here as a refugee after the war,” she told Aunty Blanche while all the customers were waiting and listening. “He took me into his house. I smelled delicious food cooking and your mother must have realized that I must be starving. She took me into the kitchen and gave me warm food. He found me a place to live. Then he took me to his store and gave me all the linen and towels that I needed. He told me not to worry. I should pay him back when I would be able to.”

Aunty Shutsy remembers Jenny (Kudlatch), who lived in the house. Bubby shopped for her because she wouldn’t go out and in return, Jenny cleaned for them. Aunty Shutsy called her ‘Mrs. Jenny’ and she taught Aunty Shutsy how to iron, perhaps when she babysat for her!

As a child, I remember Bubby making phone calls before Rosh Hashanah requesting money for her fund. Even after she had her first stroke, she would show me the paper, ask me to dial and speak to her ‘customers’ with her annual request for a donation.

We must remember that all of this was done despite the lack of luxuries in their own home. Bubby and Zaidy were never rich in money. Their wealth lay in their good deeds and many mitzvos.

Even before the neighbours, we know that Tzedakah begins at home. Zaidy and Bubby loved to be surrounded by his children and grandchildren. It was Zaidy who made sure that Shloimie Schwartz was given a seat in the Talmud Torah. Zaidy was still Gabbai at the time. He went to the office to register his grandchild and was told that there was just no more room.

Zaidy did not take ‘no’ for an answer.

ZAIDY'S STORY

“What do you mean, ‘there’s no more room?’” he demanded. “I am sitting here in this office until you find him a seat. I don’t care if he has to share a place with another boy. I am Gabbai here in Eitz Chaim and my grandchild must be allowed to come in and learn Torah.”

Sure enough, Shloimie Schwartz was admitted.

In later years, the grandchildren that lived in Toronto always made it a point to come visit, very often on Sundays. (I know, because I loved to take my cousins downstairs to entertain them while the adults talked!) Zaidy greeted them with his warm smile and the few English words that he knew.

The best seat in the house was in Zaidy’s lap. Recently I told my sister how I used to sit in the seat of honour every Shabbos when it was time to sing my favourite Shabbos song. Zaidy used to tell everyone to be quiet so that I could sing my song. Do you know what she answered me? She did the same thing! Zaidy always made me feel as if I was his special favourite. But he was able to do that with all of us that were close to him. He made us all feel special.

Bubby was right beside Zaidy each step of the way. If Zaidy wanted anything all he had to do was call ‘Surashe!’ or ‘Senora!’ as he fondly called Bubby, and she was at his side. On the other hand he, Zaidy, did not demand more than Bubby could give him.

All their life they worked as a team. Aunty Shutsy remembers the weekly process of obtaining fresh chicken in Toronto. On Wednesdays they used to go shopping together to buy live chickens. They took the crate of 12 chickens to the Shochet and brought home the chickens shechted and געפליקט (plucked). That evening they koshered the chickens together. This was in the time of the ice box when the food only lasted a week. In later years, Aunty Blanche would drive them to Kensington Market in between her school runs.

ZAIDY'S STORY

One evening, past the supper hour, a grandchild (Moshe Goldberg) came over to the house. He asked Zaidy if he had eaten and was very surprised to hear a negative reply.

“Aren’t you hungry?” he asked Zaidy.

Zaidy answered that he was indeed ‘starving’.

“Bubby she didn’t call me,” was Zaidy’s simple answer. “If she didn’t call, then the food is not ready. If I would ask to be served, I would only upset her that she is making me wait.” They were both so attuned to one another and so careful to do for the other without distressing the other. Zaidy knew without a doubt that Bubby was rushing and waited patiently to be called although he was so hungry.

In the same context, Zaidy always complimented Bubby on the food that she prepared for him. He thanked her for every meal and finished it all—even if it was not his taste. If he really did not like a food, then after he ate it up he would ask Bubby please not to cook it again.

Bubby cooked for herself and Zaidy for as long as she was able. She did not want to be an imposition on Aunt Esther, as their diets required special considerations. She helped Aunt Esther in the kitchen as well. I remember well how she sat and checked the peas, beans, popcorn kernels, barley etc for worms. It was a job that required time and patience, and Bubby had both. Bubby would not dream of using any of these products without thoroughly checking them. It was a practice she had always seen and done ‘in der heim’ (at home—in Poland) and she would not veer from the tradition of her upbringing regardless of her present location. Once, a friend of one of the grandchildren came to the house to visit. She could not understand why Bubby was counting the peas! Bubby checked the vegetables for bugs as well. On one occasion she called over Aunt Shutsy to show her a bug to illustrate how careful you must be; the bug was the same colour as the cabbage she was checking.

ZAIDY'S STORY

There are different foods that both Bubby and Zaidy made, as their 'specialties'. Zaidy made galle every week (also known as galleretta, a jellied broth made from calf knee bones) and maigel, chicken skin stuffed with flour, onion, schmaltz and spices. Bubby made 'gribben' (rendered chicken fat) that was so crispy that the jobbers used to step into the store and ask for some. Friday night they served a fricassee made with meatballs, chicken feet and wings. Just as was done in 'der heim' they bought fruit, such as peaches and plums, at the end of the summer season in order to make jams and jar them for the upcoming winter season. Bubby made her own Challos. When they lived on Kensington, she would braid the challos and then take them across Dundas to the bakery after hours. The oven was kept hot because of their bagels. Bubby waited in the bakery until the challos were baked. In general, Bubby both cooked and baked without recipes, turning out gourmet food every time. In her later years, Mommy wanted to help her mother and make the sugar cookies for Zaidy. She stood over Bubby and wrote down everything that went into the bowl so that she would have the recipe.

Bubby was extremely frugal. She saved and reused anything that could possibly still have a purpose. If you would have opened Bubby's fridge, you would have found a bit of this and a bit of that. Tuesday and Thursday she (or both?) went to Aunty Blanche. Bubby told her, ס'איז א שאד אוועק צו ווארפן (it's a pity to throw this out). In order to prevent that, Bubby ate everything up! I remember walking with Bubby up and down the block in her later years. She told me that when she arrived to America there was so much that she 'got fat on the עבירות' (sins). She explained, 'it would be a sin to throw this out' and therefore she ate everyone's leftovers! However, along with saving they had a strong appreciation for every little thing. When Zaidy and Bubby visited Aunty Blanche in her building, they were able to take their exercise indoors- up and down the hall- and they said, מיר דארף געבן געלט, מיר צו וואוינען (we should pay money to live here!)

ZAIDY'S STORY

Bubby knew how to give mussar when it was needed. If Mommy was working and Miriam Ruchel was home, Bubby wouldn't let her sit but would tell her, שטיי אױף און העלף דיין מאמע. קוק וואו שווער זי ארבעט (stand up and help you mother; look how hard she is working.) Once, a teenage granddaughter walked into the house wearing a skirt with a slit. Bubby exclaimed, אױ וואו וואו (oy, va voy) your skirt is torn. Come I will give you a safety pin until you get a chance to sew it.

Shloime Markowitz remembers going to the mikve every Friday to pick up Zaidy. Went every Friday to pick up Zaidy from mikve. When they would enter the d'Arcy Shul (led by Rabbi Dovid Ochs) on Friday night, they were greeted by the other members who all called out, "Ah, Chaim Yossel iz du."

Zaidy never talked in middle of davening. Zaidy was the Gabbai at the d'Arcy Shul. In those years there were pecklach thrown both for a Bar Mitzva Bochur and for a Chosson who were called up for an Aliyah to the Torah. Aunty Shutsy made sure to sit up front with Zaidy so that she could catch as many as possible! Years later, when Zaidy lived on Strathallan Wood I remember walking Zaidy home from Shul on Shabbos. I didn't walk him to Shul as he left way before me, but I had the honour to have Zaidy holding onto me for the two blocks home. Aunty Shutsy told me that Bubby went to Shul at 5am on Hoshana Raba so as to be able to daven and then prepare for Yomtov.

Bubby and Zaidy went to visit Aunty Shutsy and Uncle Yaakov in Monsey twice. On their second visit, when Zaidy was already in his upper eighties, Aunty Shutsy remembers an incident that clearly demonstrated Zaidy's feelings for Bubby. They were getting ready to leave for the airport Aunty Shutsy was helping Bubby with her last minute preparations. She took a comb and spiffed up Bubby's shaitel. When Bubby walked into the room where Zaidy was waiting he gave a look and turned to Aunty Shutsy. "Hosdee shoin gezein aza sheina vabel in der gantze velt? (Did you ever see such a pretty wife in the whole world?) I have the prettiest wife in the whole world!" Zaidy said with pride.

ZAIDY'S STORY

Zaidy was always careful not to believe rumours about others. He would relate a story from his personal experience as proof that one may not suspect another of wrongdoing regardless of what you are told about him. One day someone came to Bubby and informed her that he had seen Zaidy on Shabbos smoking a cigar at the horse track. Now Bubby did not believe that for one second. She emphatically told him that he had mistaken him for someone else. However, the rumour spread and some people did believe it. It reached the point that Zaidy felt the need to squelch the rumour and prove from eyewitnesses that he had been in Shul at the time. (In fact this was at the time that he had already stopped smoking his cigar.) It caused Bubby and Zaidy aggravation and Zaidy constantly emphasized the importance of not believing similar rumours.

Zaidy always emphasized the importance to having a good name. He said that regardless of how much money one has, he will only do well, in business or in relationships if his name is respectable. Zaidy could not always help his children financially but he always stood by and helped with character building. When Uncle Mike went into business, Zaidy took him to the wholesalers to vouch for him and then told him that he must build up his own standing. The way to do that was to stick to his word. If he promises payment or delivery at a certain time, it must be kept to.

Zaidy was honest to the penny. Zaidy used to send Aunty Blanche to Eaton's with a list to purchase items on sale that he could sell in the store to his customers. Once she came home with \$6 extra, not quite sure where the mistake was. Zaidy checked the receipt over and over and told Aunty Blanche that she has to go back to Eaton's to return the money, spending 6 cents on bus fare (3 there and 3 back) to give back the six dollars. He said the receipts are checked according to the salesperson and the salesperson will lose out because of her mistake.

ZAIDY'S STORY

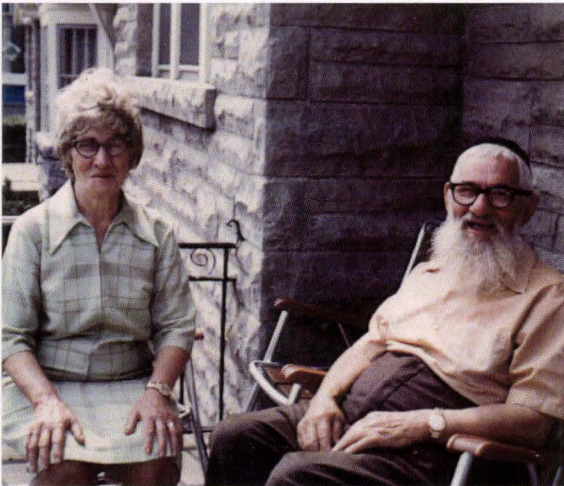
Aunty Blanche once asked Zaidy why she never heard about a favour he did for someone and Zaidy told her, אז מען טוט א מצוה דערציילט מען נישט. (If you do a mitzvah for someone, there is no need to tell anyone.)



1970's: Zaidy making Hamotzi at a Simcha.



1970's: Zaidy making Havdalah after Shabbos



1970's: Bubby & Zaidy on the porch of 280 Strathallen Wood.



Mid 1970's: On the porch of 280 Strathallen Wood. Bubby (holding Henna Ross) & Zaidy (holding Mordechai Ross).

ZAIDY'S STORY



1970's: Family Goldberg. Back Row from left to right: Uncle Dave, Aunty Bella & Bubby. Front Row from left to right: Shaya, Lonna, Zaidy & Kayla.



c.1972: Shaynee Schwartz, Bubby, Zaidy

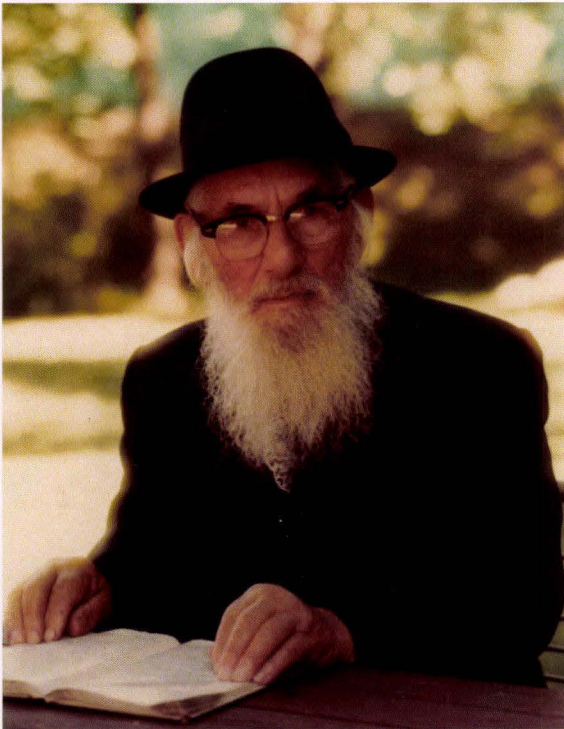


Late 70's: Zaidy binding seforim at the kitchen table in 280 Strathallan Wood

ZAIDY'S STORY



c. 1975: In front of the house in Monsey. Back Row from left to right: Zaidy, Bubby (holding Moishe Mordechai), Kayla Saryl Mandel, Miriam Ruchel, Avrum, Kayla Saryl Heller & Uncle Yaakov. Front Row from left to right: Rayzel, Perl Mandel (holding Blimy), Fruma Chana & Malky.



1980: Zaidy



1980: Bubby.

ZAIDY'S STORY



1980: *Bubby & Zaidy.*



1980: *Zaidy*



1981: *On the porch of 280 Strathallan Wood. Bubby, holding her great granddaughter Tila (Greenfeld) Feig, Zaidy, Tila Schwartz holding Volvy Greenfeld*

ZAIDY'S STORY

ZAIDY'S STORY

SOME OF ZAIDY'S SAYINGS:

"Az men laigt arain, hot men." If you put in then you will have; if you exert yourself and work at something, then you will reap its benefits.

"Az men lernt, ken men." If you learn, then you will know.

"Az men zicht, gefint men." If you search, then you will find.

Zaidy never liked to see a 'sour face'. He would chuck you under the chin and say *"Listig 'n lebedig!"* (It should be lively!)

"Vos men ken teen hant, legit men nisht avek oif morgen." Whatever you can accomplish today do not put aside for tomorrow.

ZAIDY'S SPEECHES

I would like to include two speeches that Zaidy made and copied into his book:

(1) At a grandchild's wedding:

"Mazel Tov my dearest children,

"First of all let us thank Hashem that we lived to marry off our grandchild. We ask Hashem that we should live to see many simchas by our children with much Yiddish nachas and joy.

"Every evening in Maariv we say the words: יראו עינינו Our eyes should see. רישמח לבנו and our hearts should rejoice, ותגל נפשנו and our neshamas (souls) should be happy from the redemptions of Hashem Yisborach.

ZAIDY'S STORY

“First we ask that the eyes should see. There are so many people that await the moment that their eyes should behold the redemption, but their hopes are not fulfilled. Therefore we ask that our eyes should indeed see.

“Not always does one see and rejoice in that which he sees. A man can dream and hope his whole life and when his wish is fulfilled he is still not happy. Therefore, the posuk continues, let our hearts rejoice in what the eyes see. We should be able to sing and dance with what the eyes see because the heart is happy.

“It can occur that the eyes see and the heart is truly happy, but the neshoma is at a loss. The neshoma wonders where the joy is in the vision the eyes behold.

“For the neshoma to be happy, the simcha must be a Yiddish simcha. We hope that this young couple will continue in the Yiddish derecho (way). I am sure that my grandchildren will heed the ways of our Torah so that our neshomas will also be pleased. We ask Hashem Yisborach that inasmuch as we were priveiled to live to see this simcha, so may we be privileged to see by this young couple and all of our children and grandchildren and by all of you gathered here, much Yiddish nachas and joy.

“I thank you all for listening to my speech. I and my wife wish you all a Mazel Tov.”

“As you wish that I should sing and dance a little with the chosson, I will start now, אם אין אני לי, מי לי? (if I do not do for myself, who will do for me?)

“Zol zan lebedig! It should be lively!”

ZAIDY'S STORY

(2) At a grandchild's bar-mitzvah:

"It is written in the hailege (holy) Torah:

ידך וקשרתם לאות על ידך And you should tie them for a sign on your hands,

והיו לטטפת בין עיניך and it should be for a 'toitofos' between your eyes.

"This is the commandment, the mitzvah of Tefillin. This word טטפת which means 'four' (referring to the four parshiyos (chapters) of the Torah that are inscribed in the Tefillin) is a difficult word.

"It is explained in the Gemorah that 'tat' (the first two letters of the word טטפת 'toitofos') means two. The word 'fas' (the last two letters of the word טטפת, toitofos) also means two. Therefore, together it is two and two which equals four. However, it is still difficult to understand why the word 'toitofos' was used and not the simpler Hebrew word, 'arba' four.

"The two words combined by the Torah are from foreign languages, the African language and the Koptisha language. Why did Hashem choose to use these foreign words for such a hailige topic?

"Rabossai, the Bashefer (Creator) did it for us. Hashem saw that there would come a time when Yidden would ponder about the Torah. They would consider that perhaps the Torah is not for them. One might say that the Torah and Mitzvos are for the old people who are retired and don't have anything else to do. For them it is good. They should go to shul and daven and say Tehillim, but we are too busy. It is not for us.

"Others will say that certainly the Torah is not only for the old. If one does not learn in his youth, he will not be able to do the mitzvos in his mature years. However, the Torah and the mitzvos were given for Eretz Yisroel (Israel). There in the holy land, one can be a proper Yid. Here in this dark golus (exile) we are free of the entire program.

ZAIDY'S STORY

"As the world says, 'when in Rome, do as the Romans do.' They say, if we live here in America, we must live as Americans. We play baseball and football and hockey. We spend our time and money on this. We have no time for Torah or money for mitzvos.

"Therefore, Hashem wrote this word in the mitzvah of Tefilin in a foreign tongue. It is to prove to the Yidden that not only in Eretz Yisreol must a Yid follow the Torah and keep his religion. The Torah is binding everywhere in the four corners of the world, even in Africa!

"Now, here at the Bar-Mitzvah of my grandchild, I would like to acknowledge that my children are spending their money on Torah. I bless you in my name and in the name of the dear Mammeshe that you should see true Yiddush nachas from this bar-mitzvah boy and from all your children. We should be proud of them as Yiddush children who follow Hashem's path.

"Now I have a few words to say to the bar-mitzvah bochur. You should remember every day to put on your Tefillin and to daven and Hashem will help you and you will be successful. Do not rejoice with your presents but with the mitzvah that you have received today. This is the mitzvah of Tefillin. It is a present from Hashem.

"I and the dear Mammeshe would like to thank all of you that have come to share in this simcha. Zol zan lebedig! (It should be lively!) I will end with some singing!"

ZAIDY'S STORY

AN EXCERPT FROM ZAIDY'S WILL

Late fall in the year 1975, Zaidy wrote that he was not feeling well and decided to write a **ציואר**, a will. He wrote that it cannot hurt to write a will and that this was not the only will he wrote. Zaidy wrote that he did not have much in material wealth and outlined a few loans in the family that were outstanding at that time as well as the amount of money he had in the bank. He promised \$500 to The Talmud Torah, \$500 to Israel and \$500 to the Yeshiva Ner Yisroel.

He specified that the silver *leichter* (candelabra) belongs to Esther; she watched us all these years. After 120 you (the children) should divide my possessions between you. Naturally, as long as Gott will give life to the Mameshe, she is the boss.

After dealing with his few possessions, he addressed each child and grandchild by name, wishing them long years of a healthy life and an easy livelihood without overexertion.

In summary, Zaidy continued:

All this is *naarishkeit* (silliness). The important thing to know, my dear children, is that Man does not live forever. We must know that there is a Gott in Himel (a G-d in the Heavens). You shouldn't think that He does not see everything. Every action of Man is inscribed; every action is captured as in a movie. When a person will come to *yenne velt* (the eternal world to come) he will be shown his personal movie and all his bad deeds will be visible.

ZAIDY'S STORY

Therefore, my dearest children, you should be true Jews, put on Tefillin every day, wash your hands as soon as you wake in the morning, and make a brocha on everything you eat. I am sure you are busy, but to pray, to put on Tefillin and to make blessings do not take long; you simply have to get used to doing these actions.

In conclusion, now I wish you all a healthy winter and we should be able to continue to be with you for many years. And I thank you for all you have done for us. I hope to Hashem Yisborach that your dear children will attend to your needs in a similar way.

Love your father and mother
who think of you every minute,
Chaim Yosef and Sara Faigel Orzech

ZAIDY'S STORY

I REMEMBER.....

The following are stories or vignettes culled from the memories of various grandchildren. I sent out a request to my cousins for their memories and included many of them in the section, Later Years. These are more memories, perhaps random but to those of us who remember Zaidy and Bubby O"H each memory stirs up more. For those of you who were not privileged, maybe these anecdotes will add to the visual picture I am trying to create of our very special grandparents.

Shloime Schwartz started going to Zaidy for Shabbos at the age of 10. (Auntie Shutsy played a good game of Parcheesi!) He slept over Friday night on the couch in the living room/dining room. The lights were on from the Shabbos meal so he created a tent of sorts from the blankets and slept under them. In due time, Stanley Schwartz and later Zavi Markowitz joined him. In the mornings he would walk Zaidy to Shul.

It is evident that Zaidy loved having his grandchildren accompany him. Earlier I noted that Shloime Markowitz routinely picked Zaidy up from the mikve Friday afternoon to walk with him to Shul. They both noted that Zaidy did not talk in middle of davening.

Shloime remembers that the house and the dining room table was always full. There was the 'crazy lady' who lived upstairs that Bubby spoke to in Polish. (This was Jenny who I mentioned earlier; she never ventured outdoors and in return for Bubby doing all of her shopping, she did some cleaning for them.) And of course,

ZAIDY'S STORY

the tenant from upstairs, Luzer, was there. He was a farm labourer and had a room in the house in the winter.

Bubby's fricassee was delicious. The soup was always so hot. Zaidy used to eat quickly. He always finished first and Bubby told him not to eat so fast!

After Zaidy's heart attack, the doctor told Zaidy to get exercise. He would walk from the main room (living and dining room) to the door of the kitchen and back, counting aloud in Polish, until he reached 100 steps.

Zaidy sang Zemiros (hymns for the Shabbos meal) every week no matter where he was. One week he was at a Kiddush in Shul. He sat down and began singing, requesting Shloimie to join him which he did even though no one else was singing. Nevertheless, Zaidy sang his Zemiros.

About those Shabbos Zemiros, one year Zaidy asked my mother, Aunty Esther, to record his singing. They went to a studio (Bill Berle) and Zaidy sat and sang through his entire Shabbos symphony so that his children can have an everlasting memory.

(Cindy) I have so many memories of Zaidy- him "snuffing" (I loved the smell of his snuff in that little tin can) I remember him sitting & davening, visiting the Shul on D'arcy & watching him from up above where the women sat. I remember him wearing a full length rubber apron when he was making gefilte fish (I think). I remember that I was afraid to give him a kiss because I didn't want to get scratched by his beard, When I turned five , I think , I surprised everyone & gave him a kiss. I loved the succah on Kensington & that wood burning stove. I loved the way he used to come up to Bubbie when she was eating, sort of giving her a little hug saying, "Sureshi, esse mit a guten appetit!"(Eat with a good appetite.)

ZAIDY'S STORY

Bubbie always seemed to “accept” my kisses & then would ask me some scrutinizing question or after giving me cookies would check to see if I knew the appropriate bracha. She used to mend socks. She usually wore a housecoat & tichel. When they came back from Florida, they’d bring all the grandchildren candies called “Charms”.

Mummy always passed on their mantra of “Remember who you are & where you come from”.

(Sherri & Kimmy) When the weather was warm Zaidy would be sitting on the porch with Bubbie. If the weather was not warm he would be sitting at the kitchen table as the pre Shabbus goodies were flying in and out of the oven. We remember times of people standing in line waiting for Zaidy’s special blessings.

We felt a sense of excitement when it was our turn to feel Zaidy’s hands above our head. We distinctly remember his unique scent that originated from his tin of snuff.

Zaidy also had a special blessing that he recited at family simchas. Our father continued this tradition. We now include this famous blessing at all of our family simchas. We know this tradition will be carried on for generations to come.

זייד'ס ברכה: זאל זיין מיט מזל און מיט גליק, הצלחה מיט א ברכה,

מיט אשר און מיט כבוד, מיט נחת און מיט פריד,

מיט געזונט און מיט פרנסה, שלום אין ישראל

מיט אלע גוטע פיפיטשיקעס און מיט אלע גוטע גאלדענע גליקן!

Translation of Zaidy’s Blessing:

I congratulate and wish upon you good luck and joy,

And every success and blessing from the Almighty,

Peace in Israel,

ZAIDY'S STORY

Good health and extreme wealth, and all the good trimmings.
You should have prosperity and honour so that you may reap rewards
and happiness with all kinds of extreme joy.

*Love Granddaughters,
Sherri & Kimmy
(Shaynda Malka and Kayla Golda)*

There is a saying, if you want to teach a child something, then DO IT.
'ACTIONS speak louder than WORDS'. Living with Zaidy and Bubby was a huge
lesson that I don't think we Mandel girls could have learned anywhere else.

We watched Aba and Mommy deal with their parents and in-laws, we observed
Zaidy and Bubby's other children taking turns caring for them, we saw all the
kovod (honour)the grandchildren practiced. But most of all we were lucky to have
Zaidy and Bubby teach us hands-on many important values in life.

Bubby and Zaidy lived at 280 Strathallan Wood for many years. All four of
us girls were used to our house being 'Grand Central Station'. There was no
resentment; it was our privilege to have Zaidy and Bubby living with us!

I don't remember ever hearing Zaidy raise his voice or say a nasty comment. He
had the patience of a saint and I remember marveling at that even at a young age.
One of my fondest memories was waking up early in the morning to study and
hearing Zaidy's sing-song recital of Sefer Tehilim. Some people wake up to the
chirping of the birds. Others to the sound of their alarm clocks. I was lucky
to open my eyes, wash my hands with negel vasser and begin my day with the
melodious chant of the psalms. I don't think it can get any better. Years later, I'd
hear Zaidy's voice and the beautiful words of Tehilim...

I remember watching Zaidy's brown (leather-look-alike hands, tanned from the
sun) organize his pills. He must have taken at least ten to fifteen every morning.

ZAIDY'S STORY

He had this orderly way of opening each bottle and lining them up. He was so organized. Even the way he ate. The food on his plate was always piled on neat. It didn't matter if Zaidy was in the middle of eating or already completed his meal, that plate was just plain neat.

Zaidy, would ask Mommy or Bubby if there was anything he could help with in the kitchen. He'd peel any potatoes or apples that needed to be cooked. Most of the time, they were ready for Mommy when she came home from work.

The best treat for me, was peeled grapefruit. Zaidy would meticulously remove all the white outer peels (which carried the bitterness) and present the skinned fruit to anyone that wanted. When I came home from school, there was a jar full of the most delicious fruit waiting for me.

For my bas mitzva, (Miriam Ruchel) Zaidy and Bubby bought me a \$100 Israeli bond. Of course, I didn't appreciate it when I was handed my birthday gift. But when I turned twenty-two, Mommy redeemed it for me and presented me with \$180. At the time, we needed a small coffee table to hold our leichters but were not sure where we would have the money from. Low and behold, Zaidy to the rescue....we purchased a small table that we used and enjoyed for many many years.

Zaidy was so meticulous with everything he did. When he bound seforim, he didn't do anything else. When he would write in his journal - - that was what he was doing then. When he davened, he davened, when he learned, he learned. Accomplishing what he set his mind to was priority number one.

Zaidy sang with us and sat at our Shabbos table for as long as we did. Until he became much weaker and felt the need to rest more often. We still sing his songs.

Zaidy was a happy person. He radiated simcha. Mommy used to always tell people what a satisfying personality her father had. Nothing was ever a problem. If it didn't work the way you wanted it to, then you wanted it the way it worked.

ZAIDY'S STORY

Everyone remembers Zaidy and Bubby on the porch, all the cousins who sent in memories, neighbours who I'd meet years later, and all our friends. Kayla Saryl loved coming home and seeing her grandparents on the porch. Of course they weren't just sitting. Zeidy was saying his Tehillim & Bubby was mending or checking beans. When Mommy was at work, she appreciated it even more; it meant not coming home to an empty house. By the time I (Tila) was in high school, Zaidy was niftar and we didn't want Bubby to be alone. On the short winter days, I made sure to rush home so that Uncle Yosef could leave to go to Shul.

Kayla Saryl Mermelstein remembers coming home many times to a delicious smelling house - Bubby baked cookies or plum pies. Bubby also cooked her trademark delicious soup with nockerlech.

Another memory that Kayla Saryl sent in is identical to one of my own that occurred years later when she was already married. That Shabbos morning was cloudy and Mommy asked Zaidy to stay home from Shul in case it rained. Zaidy davened in Viewmount which was two blocks away from our house. Zaidy insisted on going to Shul. As anticipated, when davening was over, it was pouring. Kayla Saryl ran home to ask Aunty Esther what to do. She put Zaidy's raincoat on top of her own and ran back to Shul. She said she was about 12 and must have looked a sight! Together they walked home in the pouring rain at Zaidy's slow pace. Zaidy came home soaking but said it was worth it to have davened in Shul. When the same thing happened years later, Zaidy was that much older (probably in his late 80's) but as long as he was able, despite the weather, he walked to Shul.

We all remember that Zeidy sat at the head of the table every Shabbos. Uncle Yosef insisted that he is the head of the family. Only once a year, at the Pesach Seder did Zaidy sit "at the other head of the table" as Zeidy said he did not have the energy to sit for so long at the meal. Pesach night we started the seder together, but then continued with two 'seders' being conducted at the same time at the same

ZAIDY'S STORY

table. At one end Aba listened patiently to all our Mandel girls' stories and lessons and told us stories as well. At the other end, Zaidy read through the Hagaddah at a much quicker pace to Bubby. Obviously, they were ready for the meal long before us and Mommy served them graciously, while we were still sharing dvar Torahs.

Zaidy thanked Mommy with a cherished, 'Esthershe' And when Perle heard Zaidy calling her, 'Perleshe' she knew that Zaidy wanted a favour from her. Of course, I was 'Tilashe'. When we sat discussing our memories, every child just knew she was a favourite. Every Mandel girl had her featured song from the Shabbos Zemiros that she sang, either on her seat, or on Zaidy's lap.

(Lonna) When I was in Miami visiting them one Chanuka, I wanted to help Bubby peel potatoes for the latkes. She said "You know how to peel potatoes?" I said "Yes" She said "Who taught you?" I said "My mother" She said "Your mother doesn't know how to peel potatoes!!"

(Ed note: No one peeled potatoes like Bubby! Each peel was paper thin, done with a knife because a peeler takes off too much meat! I also remember her touching pots, etc with her hands that were too hot for me to touch and how I told her, "Bubby, careful!" Now my children say that to me!)

The porch in front of the hotel in Miami was a favourite place to sit and enjoy the air. One time, there were two old ladies who were silently fighting with each other. One sat down and the other sat next to her. The first then moved, and the second then moved. Apparently the first wasn't interested in the other's company. Who made peace between them? Bubby Orzech!!

There was a terrible smell in their room in Florida. Bubby was such a clean person, I couldn't understand it. I did some investigating and found a pile of chicken fat to be the cause. I asked Bubby why she is saving this, it smells. She was saving it for the "Ketzilach"(cats)

ZAIDY'S STORY

Zaidy and Bubby were from a different generation. When I went to the Aquarium with Raizel nee Heller, Zaidy said "What do you need to go for? To see animals?"

When we came back from a bakery outing, Bubby presented us with a glass jar from pickles that we had thrown in the garbage. "Why did you throw this out?" she wanted to know. Then when she saw the cookies we bought from the bakery she was also very upset. "Why do you have to waste money I have honey cookies in the freezer from Aunty Esther!"

Do you remember Bubby would "לעק אויס די אויגעלעך" (literally "lick out the eyes")? It was to get rid of the ayin hara (the evil eye). She did it to my oldest, Roda Nechama. She literally licked her eyes and then spit, and she did it 3 times. And Tila remembers what Bubby did when something scared you. She would grasp the front of your dress or shirt lightly and say something that sounded like 'whititutoo!'

Of course everyone remembers Zaidy saying the whole sefer Tehillim daily and twice on Shabbos and Yom Tov!

Memories...memories...

Lucky us.

Lessons learned by example.

Grateful are we.

Lessons stored in the recesses of our brain.

A million thanks.

Lessons, never to be forgotten.

Digitized by Project Zikaron
Touro University-NY Libraries
www.zikaron.tourolib.org
2025

PUBLISHED BY:
MENDL SCHWARTZ
THE INCREDIBLE PRINTING COMPANY INC.
2021