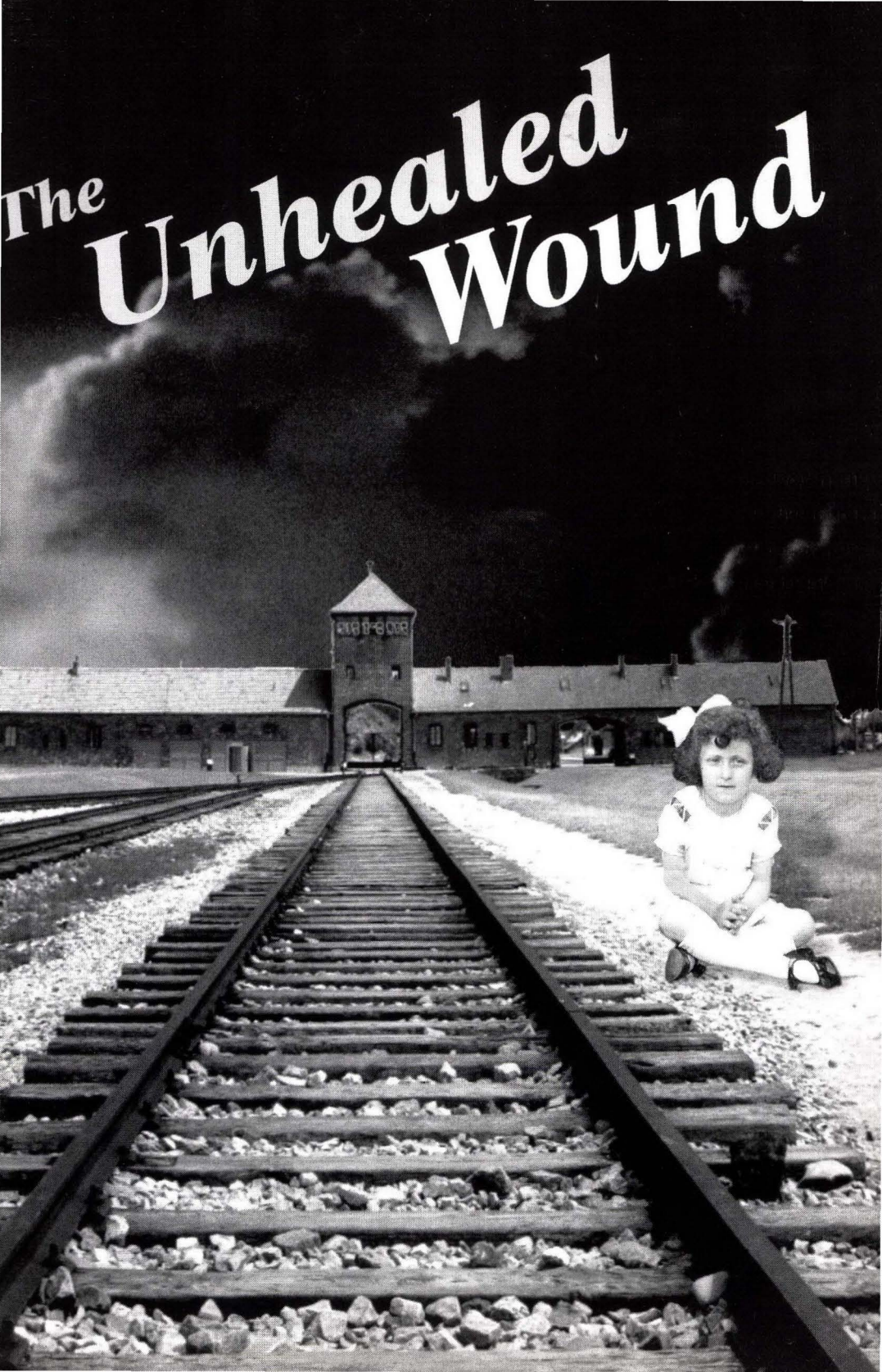
The Unhealed Wound



The Miraculous Survival of a Young Girl During the Holocaust

ALICE ROSENBERG

The Unhealed Wound



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Page Design: 347.678.4056 / reizyganz@gmail.com

This book is dedicated
to the memories of

My Dear Father
הר״ר ברוך צבי ז״ל

My Dear Mother
מרת חנה ע״ה

My Dear Siblings
רבקה, ליבה, מאיר אברהם ע״ה

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Introduction

My dearest children, grandchildren and great grandchildren k.y.,

I am writing this book and dedicating it to you all because you are my "revenge"! My revenge against the rasha who wanted to make the world "Judenrein" but Boruch Hashem did not succeed. If we were promised that Am Yisroel will endure, then so it will be.

When I look with pride and joy at you all, my beloved children and your children and then their children, I see that Boruch Hashem the rasha Hitler y.s. did not succeed. With each grandchild that marries and each great grandchild that is born in my family and to the families of the pitiful few others who survived the horrors of the war, Boruch Hashem, that is our "revenge". I am convicted to life to continue our family tree. It never fails to warm my heart to see a large wedding where the simcha is tangible, or the many school-buses filled to capacity, mornings and evenings taking the boys and girls to their various schools and Yeshivas. The Bashefer gave a promise that Am Yisroel will always continue to flourish and against the greatest odds and the most trying times, Boruch Hashem they do! May He keep His right hand over us all and foil the plots and plans of those who hate us.

Babi
Sivan, 5771



(at my Uncle Leibu Chasunah in Torna Alja)
My mother, her three sisters. My sister, Rifke and me.

Chapter 1

My Own Childish View

I was *zocheh* to survive, a lone member of a large and thriving *mishpacha*. Why, I do not know and neither do I understand. I do not even attempt to understand because it is a question to which there is no answer. Why was it that some of us, against the greatest of odds, were saved whilst millions of others were led to their untimely deaths? Why was it that some people managed to survive the atrocities and then died just before liberation — they simply could not go on?

There are so many questions but there are no answers. It is the intrinsic belief of a *Yid* that *Hashem* rules the world and everything that happens is because He wills it to. It is not given to us to understand, even simpler and less complicated issues leave alone something so complex as the Holocaust and therefore we should not even try.

Maternal Grandparents



Zeidi Alter Yisroel

A great *Tzaddik* once said after the war. "Two *malachim* went with every survivor!" And so it must have been.

I will begin by telling you a little about your special ancestors. Good upright *ehrliche Yidden* who perished *Al kiddush Hashem* simply because they were Jews. Many of you now bear their holy names and I am sure that in their far-off resting places in *Gan Eden* they are *shepping nachas* from you all as we are doing down here. They see that it was not in vain, since their holy names were perpetuated. May *Hashem* guard and protect you all that you should



Babi Chaya Sura

never ever have to understand what our generation went through because it defies human understanding. Even we, who were at the receiving end of the worst bestiality ever recorded by mankind, cannot comprehend the depth or the magnitude of the tragedy that befell our holy Nation. To this day I can still wonder if it was not a dream — rather a terrible nightmare — from which I will still wake up. May it be enough for *dor dorois* until the coming of *Moshiach*, speedily in our days!

My paternal grandfather was an *ehrliche Yid* who served his

Creator with love and devotion. His name was *Moishe Yehudah* Liberman and he was a *shochet*. He was the epitome of a *fa'tzeitishe* (old timer) *Oberlander Yid* who carried out his *avoidas hakodesh* with conscientiousness, care and dedication adhering to *halacha* in its entirety.

My grandfather and my grandmother *Zlatty* Levi were blessed with eight children. The oldest was *Meir Avruham,* the second son was *Elye,* and the third son was *Shimon Morderchai.* I am sure they were overjoyed when two girls followed — *Hendy* and *Malkie.*

Boruch Hersch (my father *o.h.*) followed and then came *Kalman,* the youngest son and then the baby of the family, *Pessy.*

They lived in a small town near Pressburg by the name of Kurta Keszi. They led an exemplary life of truly *ehrliche Yidden.* They were warm, kind people, devoted to each other, who had an open house and widely opened heart for all.

A *shidduch* was spoken between my father and *Chana* Weiss who was from the town of Sepshi near Kashau. After the young couple married they set up home in a small village — Debrad, about half an hour away from Kashau.

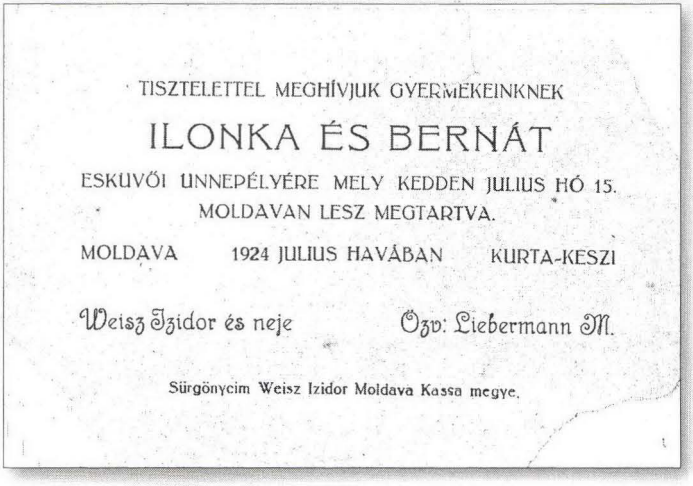
My mother's parents were my *Zeida Alter Yisroel* Weiss and *Chaya Sura.* They were blessed with ten children. My mother, *Chana o.h.* was the oldest. Then followed *Leibel, Slovie* and *Hendy. Rojze, Esther, Shije Borcuh* and *Shmilu, Pessy (Ellu)* and the youngest and tenth child was *Avrami.* May *Hashem* avenge their blood!

My maternal *Zeida* had a successful hardware store where he sold various items. These grandparents I knew better than my paternal ones because they lived that much closer and traveling in those days was not what it is today. I do not have too many memories of those times since I was still a very young child but I do remember that when I came there it was always "*lebedik*"! They always had "full house." Due to the fact that those were already the years when many men were conscripted by the army to the Munkatabor for forced labor (and their sons in law were amongst them,) their daughters came home with their own little children and the house was always noisy and lively.

My Dear Mother



My Parents wedding invitation



TISZTELETTEL MEGHÍVJUK GYERMEKEINKNEK

ILONKA ÉS BERNÁT

ESKÜVŐI ÜNNEPÉLYÉRE MELY KEDDEN JULIUS HÓ 15.
MOLDAVAN LESZ MEGTARTVA.

MOLDAVA 1924 JULIUS HAVÁBAN KURTA-KESZI

Weisz Izidor és neje Özv: Liebermann M.

Sürgönycim Weisz Izidor Moldava Kassa megye.

My Mothers Sisters



Esther Weiner



Rojzi Weiss



Hendy Spira

Then there was *Zeida's* old aunt who lived with them. I remember everyone according her the greatest respect. She was old, ill and very frail and spent most of her time in bed. The daughters helped out with feeding and caring for her. I remember it making a great impression on me even at that tender age, how everyone revered the *"Mime'* as she was fondly called and every family member was involved.

(In this day and age I can assure you that someone in her condition and at her advanced age would have been regaled to a nursing home years before without any questions asked.)

My mother helped out a lot with the business assisted by her brother *Leibel*. Since W.W.1 was being fought at the time, her father was called up for army services. I remember my grandmother as being an excellent *bale buste,* always busy with cooking baking and sewing and whenever I visited I always felt at home there.

Life was perhaps not easy because everyone had to work hard and so many of the modern conveniences that we take so for granted

today were not yet in existence.

No washers and driers, no meat that was already bought *kashered*, and no prepared fish. There was no such thing as a grocery order or supermarkets deliveries. We worked hard but life was relaxed and serene. Who was to guess that a monster would soon rear his ugly head and millions of our brethren would be systematically wiped off the face of the earth, shot, or taken to far-off places, never to be seen or heard of again? All the above-mentioned amongst them, with the exception of one little girl — myself! A beautiful blossoming tree standing firm and tall would so brutally be chopped down at its roots leaving over only one tiny sapling branch. This sapling later would later take root and another tree grow firm and tall — but there is a wound left by that felling axe that would never heal! Therefore I saw fit to give this book the title "THE UNHEALED WOUND!"

I was one of five children. The oldest, *Moshe Yehuda* named for my grandfather, passed away at the young age of two and a half. Then came *Rivka*, myself; *Esther Fradel, Libba* and *Meir Avraham*.

My Sister and Me



My Sister Rivky



Myself

My father ran a general store where they sold groceries, hardware, dry goods and textiles as well as other useful merchandise. They also had a license to sell drinks. (More about this in the next chapter when I describe my early childhood)

In the following pages I have tried a little to describe what happened to them, to us, to me, so that you, my children, your children and in turn their children and further generations should know and they should remember and they **SHOULD NEVER FORGET.**

Chapter 2

A Little About My Childhood

Can you picture a ten or twelve year old child? A little girl! Try to image your own child; maybe a niece or grandchild. An innocent child, a cute child, even though she may have perhaps been a somewhat pampered child. Do you see her youthful charm? Can you see her warm smile? Do you see her dress so lovingly adorned with bits of lace or ribbon sewn with love by her mother? Can you see her shoes polished to a gleaming shine by her mother's loving hand? Do you see her hair braided firmly into two full plaits? The woman you all know today as your grandmother and even *Boruch Hashem,* great-grandmother, was once such a little girl. However, it was destined that her childhood would not last too long! It came to a sudden and rapid end. From being a playful little girl, overnight, suddenly and abruptly she was destined to become

an "old lady." Her carefree days were numbered and soon she was a child no longer!

We had been living in Hungary quietly and peacefully. My parents worked hard and diligently to earn an honest living as well as at the seemingly never-ending adult chores. My siblings and I had enjoyed a sense of security and stability in our little world. We had our games, books and toys as well as our fair share of childish squabbles. We had our family times on *Yomim Toivim* and *Shabbosos;* when our dear parents had much more time to spare for us. We had a sense of satisfaction in being Jewish and took pride in our heritage. The beautifully prepared *seudos* on *Shabbos,* the gleaming silver on a starched white tablecloth, the *zmiros* my father sang. The beautiful *sedorim* on *Pesach* and a lovely *sukkah,* beautifully decorated on *Succos.* Our life was rich in Jewish experiences and those times were the stuff that memories are made of.

We were four siblings, *Rifka* or Blanka as she was called was the oldest. (As mentioned in the first chapter an older brother had passed away at the age of two and a half — therefore I have no recollection of him)

I was the next child named *Esther Fradel* and it was only my grandfather who called me by this name, I was otherwise known as Alice. Then came *Libby* whom everyone called Kathy. She was a beautiful girl with dark hair and blue eyes. After her, I had a little brother *Meir Avrohomele* whom we called Fredi. He was the youngest child and a very cute little boy. We all adored him.

My parents were quite young — my mother only thirty-eight and my father in his early forties when the black clouds hovering overhead burst, and this tranquil life came to a bitter end and those carefree days of my youth - vanished — gone forever! So bizarre was the distinction between the "then" and the "now" that at a very early age I was able to differentiate my "present life" from my "past!"

My father had a business that earned him a decent livelihood. It was a general shop, an all-in-one store. Those were the days of handmade dresses and the closest to modern shopping was choosing the

material for dresses to be sewn. Textiles were therefore a thriving business since ready made dresses were almost non-existent. We had a large as well as nice selection of fabrics in stock.

My mother bustled around in the store. She could be advising the woman about a classical material for a suit, or a mother choosing material for a dress for her daughter's wedding or even helping a young girl choose a fabric that would be perfect for her own trousseau. She was an excellent *meyvin* on quality and was very honest. She never tried to talk a customer into buying something because it was "better' quality when it wasn't or that the color suited her when it didn't! Since my mother also had a inborn natural flair for colors and style, her advice was sound and good. Because of her good taste, the village women consulted her for all ideas for styles and designs for their dresses for every occasion, and they trusted her implicitly and appreciated her genuine efforts on their behalf. This kept her on her toes.

We were quite close with the *goyim* around us — although we did instinctively keep a bit of a distance since they were after all so very different from us. We were the only Jewish family living amongst about 3000 *goyim*. Living as we do in vibrant Jewish communities such as New York or Israel, where a *goy* amongst *Yidden* is more likely to be the norm, it is hard to imagine a single Jewish family surrounded only by *goyim*. We were somewhat wary of these gentiles, and yet at the same time due to our close proximity to them we were forced to interact with them and managed to do so peacefully.

These *goyim* were mostly farmers and not too wealthy. As I wandered in and out of the store whilst doing my chores or perhaps playing, I would noticed on a number of occasions, my father would give one of the local farmers merchandise without payment. Later, he went to collect the outstanding debt and when he did it was always a tense time until we saw him home again safe and sound. We used to go along with him. Somehow it added a feeling of security if he was not alone since in truth there was the intrinsic feeling that one could not completely trust a *goy*. Their lifestyle was

so different than ours — so much more inferior. Family fights and quarrels were the norm, using their fists was acceptable, and their tempers were shorter than ours!

Father had a permit to sell alcohol and liquor too - strictly limited to certain hours of the week. Father tried to remind these coarse farmers that the drinks should be taken home and consumed there before the bottle was empty. But, of course, they could not resist taking a gulp or two on the spot. This of course was followed by another few sips. Sometimes they became drunk and we used to cower behind our locked doors, frightened by the rough shouting and drunken brawls that inevitably followed. When this occurred we children ran to hide, shaking with fear.

My parents were aware that this could not go on forever. We could not continue growing up in such an environment devoid of *Yidden* and *Yiddishkeit*. At the time we were still young and the problem of *chinuch* had not yet arisen. My father learned with my brother. Eventually, father realized that we would have to move to a Jewish community where we children would have the luxury of socializing with children from our own background. But my father planned and our Heavenly Father ordained differently!

My older sister, Blanka (*Rifka*) had a special charm about her. She was slim and dainty looking whereas I was chunkier and well built. She was at the time already in high school. I was still in elementary school.

Blanka stayed in Sepsie, the village next to ours, living with our grandparents. She stayed there all week and came home only for *Shabbos*. I wished I had my grandparent's attention the way she did. How I wished I was the one living in my grandparent's house! Little did I know how soon that yearning was to be fulfilled but under what different and tragic circumstances!

Somehow I always felt that every item of clothing that Blanka wore seemed better, looked prettier, and more adult-like than on me. Even if I would have the identical things, it somehow seemed more sophisticated on Blanka. I guess sibling rivalry and jealousy between siblings didn't begin in the 1950's with my own children

It was nothing new even way back then and I suffered from it too!

Life being as it was, I was stuck in the local school. The only Jewish children in the school were myself and my younger sister. Every single day began with the recitation of Catholic prayers and with the children reverently crossing themselves and we always felt that we were the outsiders since we obviously did not partake of these prayers. We stood watching resentfully feeling very, very much out of place and very different. It was a stabbing reminder, every day, of just how different we really were from these *goyim*.

Once a week, on Fridays, we had Bible classes. Looking back, I wonder at how we stoically sat through those foreign lessons week after week hearing things that went so against our grain. During their holiday season, as the only general store in the village, my father was forced to sell X-mas tree decorations and candy canes. All this pretty tinsel and luscious looking candy was, naturally, forbidden for us. I will not deny that I felt a stab of resentment at having to be so "different". It was not easy for such a young child.

I felt especially resentful when the X-mas carolers would come singing under our window. This was a normal tradition by the *goyim*, but when they came under our window we never knew how it would end and we were quite apprehensive. Usually, my father would throw something out the window and thankfully we would watch them move on to the next house, giving a sigh of relief.

Our next door neighbors were a well to do *goyishe* family. The little girl, Erzsi, was our friend. Often, I would go play in her garden that smelled pleasantly of flowers and the delicious aroma of fragrant apple blossoms. Other times she would come and play in our garden and maybe pick some of our ripe plums which she devoured with relish. We shared secrets and giggled. I tried to convince her, (as little girls have whispered to each other since time eternal) that I was adopted. She would listen seriously and nod in agreement, probably having "suspected" the same thing about herself!

Erzsi's little brother was about eight or ten years old when my brother, a five year old boy at the time, stole a box of matches. The

two of them hid out in the barn, with its tall stacks of dry hay. Sure enough, the boys experimented with striking the matches, and when they ignited, probably threw one down in fright, and needless to say the dry bales of hay immediately burst into flames. The fire spread rapidly until the red-hot flames seemed to be licking the cool blue sky. In no time the barn was completely destroyed. In the first moments of panic, nobody noticed the two little children running away.

The two naughty boys were so frightened that they ran to the other end of the village to hide. We thought they might still be in the barn. Many frantic and panicky moments passed before they were found and brought home. With the fire extinguished, the panic died down and it was time for repercussions. The *goyishe* little boy obviously blamed my brother. My little brother was severally punished. I felt really bad for him as I was sure that they were equally guilty partners. As soon as I could, I whispered into his ears, "Let's run away! They punished you for his bad behavior; it's not fair!"

The two of us quietly sneaked out of the house and started walking. We trudged down the lanes towards the end of the village slowly, feeling angry and indignant and very sorry for ourselves.

We walked and talked and after a while an uneasy silence fell on us. We were both hungry and tired. Running away was obviously not a solution. We were punishing no-one but ourselves. Our steps slowed and faltered. Finally, we turned around and ran home. Our escapade ended on a shameful note and we were quite embarrassed.

Chapter 3

A Little More About Those Years



Given my father's ingenuity and creativity, it was a pity that he was limited to running a village store. Today, with his capabilities he would have been a successful entrepreneur with his innovative ideas. Even though it is so many years later, I still clearly remember how he once used me as an advertisement. My flaming red hair was really an attraction in our village. so, he put a crown on my shock of red curls and marched me around the village advertising the new baking powder. It was called "Vanca Sutopor." (Baking powder) And how proud I was!

That wasn't the only time I got to wear a crown. In school, I played the part of the princess in a major play that took place on March 15th - Independence Day in that part of the world, and the teachers gave some of the children poems to recite. All the parents

gathered in the school auditorium which to my childish eyes was a huge and magical room and I was overcome by a feeling of awe . The stage and podium faced an audience of about a hundred people. One year I was chosen to act the part of a princess in a fairy tale performance. I wore a nice blue velvet cape with a gold paper crown. I was thrilled to be acting this part. I feld very important, like a million dollars.

The teachers who taught us were a married couple. The wife taught first through fourth grades, her husband taught fifth through eighth grades and their daughter substituted if and when the need arose. This school was a Catholic school that began with communal prayers every single day as mentioned. *Hashem* granted us *siyata dishmaya* during those lessons and prayers that they did not effect us in any way. They seemed to roll over us like water over an oily paper and we did not internalize what we heard. I don't really remember those lessons because obviously the *Yiddishe* upbringing from home was stronger and deeply *eingebacken*, and dominated our thoughts. I clearly remember the lessons from my father. I can vividly recall how he taught me first *aleph bais* then *davening* and *yehadus* and all about *kashrus*. Those *goyishe* lessons, on the other hand became a blur and until this day they are just a vague mist in my head.

The teachers were very strict. Lunch hour we went home to eat a meal and then had to return to school immediately. We had to be back on time otherwise we were severely reprimanded. We got a sharp slap on our palm with a stick that left a stinging feeling for at least half an hour. The boys were slapped on their bottoms. Another form of discipline was to be put behind the blackboard. This was extremely degrading and it seldom happened to me because I was pretty well behaved in school.

I played with the girls but never with the wild boys. As the years progressed and we began to hear rumors of the violence in Germany, the boys changed their attitudes and they soon became wilder and blatantly and openly anti-Semitic, even the youngsters.

It was at this point that I started hating school. We had never

been singled out before and we were natural friends by virtue of having lived together in the same neighborhood our whole lives. We didn't know any different! But now they yelled after us, "Jews, Dirty Jews." and I could not understand it. They had always known that we were Jewish so what had changed?

One boy, Robert, was especially vicious. It was no wonder since he had an older brother who was already in the army. This soldier brother sent home the news that it was "fashionable" and the order of the day to mistreat Jews. This intensified greatly in 1941. We were the only Jewish family in the village so felt the full brunt of these new winds of uncertainty that were gathering and slowly blowing.

Our next door neighbor also had a son in the army. They, too, became enlightened and changed their attitude towards us. Erzsi, though, continued to treat me as usual and remained quite friendly. Years later, in the year 1997 when I went to visit my hometown, I wanted to see her and relive a little of my lost childhood. But unfortunately she was in Carlsbad at the time treating her arthritis. My intense desire to reconnect with someone who could remember me as a child, who was a part of my past, had to remain just a wish. She would surely remember me, little Alice, as a ten year old little girl, apprehensive about the future, not even knowing how somber the years just ahead would prove. But obviously it was not *bashert* that we should meet again — so we didn't.

Although I was still as young as ten or eleven I got a very early education. How soon I became aware of how human ignorance can breed such intense hate and violence. I witnessed this terrible phenomenon first hand. Did I ever imagine in my wildest dreams that our peaceful existence could and would ever change so radically? No!

The black clouds on the horizon had been hovering there for quite a while already. Little did I dream that in that fateful year of 1941, these ever increasing clouds would burst and the ensuing storm that erupted would kill and destroy with such intensity. Our lives changed drastically from one moment to the next as havoc

broke loose. This was to remain so until I reached the age of almost thirteen. At that age I should have still been a child but I grew up overnight. From a young carefree girl of almost eleven I became decades older. The nightmare was to continue for four years. It heralded the end of one era and began another. The greatest miracle of it all was that I had no idea what awaited me, or for that matter, what awaited all of us because the knowledge alone was more than the human mind could bear. Perhaps that was the greatest mercy!

The golden years of my childhood changed colors at an alarming rate. First black with fear, then red with blood, and then gray with the faintness of starvation and thirst. If only I would have known at the time that there would be a light at the end of that long black and bleak tunnel — a beautiful rainbow of colors - and that joy would one day replace pain, but I did not know it. I could not have known!

Meanwhile I opened a closet in my memory that I firmly pushed into a corner of my mind and I stored everything there and I firmly shut the door and locked in my terrible experiences - everything that I went through, beginning on that dreadful day when.....

The images of starving Jews, the piles of dead bodies, the sound of screaming mothers as their children were torn from their arms. These sounds were to vibrate in my brain for years to come before they finally faded. In truth, they never faded completely. They stayed branded in my soul forever. The bestiality of the cruel Nazis *y.s* as they barked their cruel orders. Those whips, the iron tipped boots, the ugly uniforms, and the deathly stillness as we stood for hours in the freezing rain and bitter cold just to be "counted."

I firmly closed the "door" to that "closet" (that contained these horrific memories) and threw away the "key". This would not help when the nightmares came and I relived these times in the middle of a dark night instead of relaxing in delicious sleep. The "door" of the locked "closet" of my mind would swing open and everything became alive as I "relived" those horrors again until I awoke in a cold sweat and realized that it was only a replay — only a dream — no, a nightmare of my turbulent past. Once again I slammed that "closet" door shut.

This lasted for many years.

However, the time has now come for me to forcefully find that "key" and willingly open that "closet" and record into writing whatever I can remember. Firstly because it may give you a clearer picture of who and what I am today, and secondly because I feel that you should all know, even though for so many years I could not even entertain the thought of recounting my own personal experiences of the Holocaust. The pain was just too great and the wound was simply too deep.

I will now "open" that "door" slightly, beginning with a crack, and start by telling you what happened to us all in the year of 1941 and as I proceed I will try my best to "open" the door wider...

Chapter 4

Exile

The stormy clouds of WW.II cast a shadow on our existence, when one fine day in 1941 we were simply ordered to pack up. No explanations given, no prior warnings either. It wouldn't have been so difficult if we wouldn't have had to choose which of our belongings to leave behind and what to take with us. Food? Clothing? Personal valuables? Where were we going to and for how long would we be staying there? When would we be returning? So many questions and no answers! We were allowed to take along with us only what we could carry. This was the beginning of a long nightmare that was destined to continue until after my eleventh birthday.

The storm was just beginning for us, in Hungary. All the Jews who didn't have Hungarian papers to prove their citizenship were

ordered out of Hungary and into Slovakia. There was no mercy shown and no exceptions made. Imagine, people who had been there for years, who may even have been born there, their parents had been there decades before them and had put down firm roots. They had opened businesses and were loyal citizens, perhaps even served honorably in the Hungarian army. But that did not matter, because after all they **were** only Jews and therefore not to be reckoned with!

My father, being a Slovakian citizen, was amongst the group of hapless Jews shoved across the border. Even now, as the fires of the Holocaust were raging and consuming Jews in Germany and Poland, *Hashem* granted us a few more years (although they were years of unrest) to be together as a family. This was a blessing for me personally as I then still had the opportunity to store up some more treasured memories and experiences before I was subjected to the Nazi steamroller which separated us forever. These were all that I would be left with!

It began in 1941 by us, when the license to operate our general store was abruptly taken away from us without explanation. Once again our sin was that we were born Jewish. Our parents began an earnest struggle for survival then. Their savings weren't enough to ward off the worry of *parnosah* for long. Meanwhile, my father began to look for some kind of employment. This was demeaning and quite uncomfortable for him. He was a grown man, in his early forties, who had always hitherto managed his own affairs. He was a well known businessman and a successful one. Now, he couldn't find any occupation other than menial labor to which he was entirely not accustomed.

He eventually found a job in the next village in a factory that produced furniture. The factory was owned, ironically, by a Jew. Somehow they let him go unnoticed for a while, and he was able to manage his factory undisturbed. In the end, though, his fate was the same as everyone else's.

This gloomy and ominous existence of uncertainty continued until 1944. *Pesach*! It was the last day of *Pesach*, and we were in the

midst of packing away the *Pesach* belongings. Every year, we would place a note among the dishes with our fervent wish of *'Leshana Haba B'Yerushalayim.'* This should be our last year in *golus* and next year we would all be together with *Moshiach* in *Yerushalayim* — the dream of every Jew! This year, as usual, we packed away our *Pesach* dishes and utensils with a certain sadness and sense of loss — a bidding of farewell to the *Yom Tov.*

Before we could even put the usual note into the dishes, a hammering knock at the door startled us. Who could be knocking at this time of the night and why with such insistence?

The Hungarian Police stood there with their guns drawn. We were ordered to pack and go. From one moment to the next! To vacate our homes where we had lived for years! My parents hid their alarm from us children and tried to appear nonchalant as they hurriedly began packing. They tried to appear casual but we were not fooled. Not at all!

Every child was permitted to carry one package in addition to a food package.

We had no idea what awaited us so in the uncertainty and confusion we decided to pack and take with as much food as possible. A curtain of insecurity and doubt hung in front of us, obscuring the sad days and months ahead. We never dreamed how much worse things could and would soon become..

We were put on the trains and went only as far as *Kosice,* which was the nearest big city. They took us to the ghetto in *Kosice* about half hour away. These ghettos had been prepared to house the Jews, all in one place — the first step in their plan to annihilate us.

We were ordered to stop at this city and wait. We were lucky enough to be able to move in together with some cousins who lived there. The conditions were crowded but they were tolerable. Naively we thought that if this is the worst thing to happen to us, we would survive! For weeks we lived in uncertainty, a vague ambiguity, not knowing what was to follow, keeping all of our belongings tied up waiting for further instructions. Waiting uneasily for what? Waiting for word that it was time to leave again? Truly, we were

the "wandering Jew" with our satchels and packages packed and ready.

In our own way we settled down, after this big move. Though life was never again to be the same and a sudden feeling of fear crept into our lives. This dread was undefined and subconscious. I didn't ever again manage to regain that innocent trust in the world that I once had as a young child. Panic and trepidation became my constant companions. My childhood was over even though technically I was hardly yet at the threshold of my teenage years.

Ironically enough it was Hitler *y.s* who was responsible for my first taste of socializing with Jewish children. Until now, we had lived only with *goyim* and played with the gentile children in the village. Though we had played together almost since birth, there was still an invisible wall between us, a sense of reserve that couldn't be breached or overcome. Now, we were surrounded by Jewish families and all their children. I felt a sense of camaraderie and belonging with those children who were Jewish just like me, but this did nothing to calm my fears. All I knew was that I was afraid, and so were they, and none of us were even exactly sure what we were afraid of.

This situation lasted all of two weeks. Then they herded yet another family into the apartment and it became quite stifling. Today, we need at least a two-bedroom apartment for a family. Then, we lived in a five-room apartment with three families (each of them with quite a number of children).

Can you envision three sets of parents with an assortment of children of all different ages, boys and girls, in only five rooms? The lack of privacy was pressing — there was always someone around. The very air had to be shared. I missed our comfortable home with its widely flung open windows to let in the fresh village air and the freedom of space that I didn't even think of appreciating in my carefree days. Still, this wasn't the worst that the Germans, in their cruel evilness subjected us to. There was plenty more to come! This was only the *forshpeiz*!

One day, soldiers came to round us up.....They took us to a

brick factory in the outskirts of Kosice. They dragged all the people from the surrounding countryside and villages to this bleak factory. The shabbiness of the outside of the building boded no good for us. The glimpse I had before being herded inside filled me with fear and trepidation. We were shouted at and shoved along the way to get us to move along quicker — always quicker! The physical and verbal abuse inflicted on us by these accursed Germans was vicious and cruel. The treatment was more suited for criminals than for the decent and honest people we were. On second thought, even criminals wouldn't be treated so ferociously, so viciously and with such hatred.

We lived in barracks with a lot of people pushed into a long room. Everyone was forced to lie on the floor, and there was no heavy shag carpet that we had at home to soften the night's tossing and turning. The floor was of harsh cold stone and none too clean either. The food that was thrown to us so begrudgingly was unappetizing and cold and could hardly be called nutritious.

All the men and children over 16 were forced to do heavy menial labor. Because my father was the only one of my immediate family to qualify, only he was forced to work at the degrading tasks.

This lasted all of three weeks. Like the three sad weeks before *Tishah B'av,* we were despondent and disoriented by the cruelty and callousness displayed to us. What was our crime? Why should we be detained and treated worse than the way they treated their own pet animals? Still, the three weeks we had commemorated every year in our peaceful lives were never as tragic as what was to follow the next day.

One day later — my own personal *Tishah B'av,* May 19, 1944 — arrived.

Chapter 5

Journey to Auschwitz

Everyone was forced to the train station. In the ensuing confusion, no one tried to resist the orders or even question our destination. Mothers shouted for their children, and children shouted for their mothers. Fathers tried to help the younger ones stay together. Everyone was fearful and no one wanted to be separated from their family. Every last possession we still owned was left behind; in my utter bewilderment it didn't even occur to me to try to smuggle something — anything — along. Our oppressors were so persuasive and so forceful and they managed to instill such terror into us that it did not even occur to us to disobey their harsh orders.

At the train station, I noticed in confusion that there were no passenger trains waiting for us, there were only freight trains.

What was going on? Why were we rushed here with such a vicious urgency if there were no trains waiting to take us to our destination? Surely they wouldn't force us into the freight trains — cattle trains! These were trains generally used to transport animals from one area to another. But I didn't know then how low human behavior can fall. Not only were we forced into these freight trains, but the cursing and screaming that accompanied us was more fitting for animals than humans. Animals? Why do I say that? Does not *Hashem* command us to treat animals with kindness and gentleness? Do we not say every day in our *tefillos* that we must first feed our animals before eating ourselves?

Here the Germans were acting like beings from another planet — a planet where goodness and kindness were simply non-existent. Were these Germans actually human beings? In my estimation they were worse than the ugly dogs they held on leashes. The beatings, the abusive shouts, the bloodied victims, it was a horrible scene of brutality and almost more that my young eyes and mind could absorb. It was a nightmare from which I longed to awake.

The freight cars were rough wooden box-like contraptions without any chairs or benches to sit on. We were shoved aboard with hundreds of other trembling Jews, old and young. More and more people were crammed into the car until I thought that we would be squashed to death under the crush of people. I was wedged in with other people and squeezed tight between them. If I had thought even for a single minute that the crowding in the factory was intolerable then that word now took on a completely different meaning in my childish mind. A person should never have to know what they can tolerate.

At this moment we ceased to be recognized as human beings by the Germans, the Slovakians and for that matter, the rest of the world. And I? I was no longer a ten year old child, free to run in the sun and grass; to giggle with my sister or help my mother with the familiarly comforting tasks, something that was my birthright. No! I was now suddenly a little Jewish girl forced to grow up overnight and from this day forth — until years later, to struggle to survive a fiery storm.

As despicable as the Nazis thought us to be, it wasn't below their dignity to touch us in their search for jewels. We were checked by the female police. They clawed us all over, searching every part of our bodies for valuables in case G-d forbid it had occurred to someone to try and hide something of value on their person! "You won't need luxury items where you are going," they hastened to assure us. Of course not! **They** had a far better use for our gold and silver! In any normal society, this would be called downright molestation and robbery, but to these Nazis, who were worse than animals this was perfectly ethical because after all, we were not human beings in their eyes, so rules of common decency did not apply to us!

For three days and three nights we were locked into the claustrophobic freight train with hundreds of people. Old and young, adults and children, mothers and babies.

My bones were aching with exhaustion, but there was nowhere to turn, no place to sit comfortably and no place to stand comfortably either for that matter. We were like sardines squashed tightly into a can.

The train thundered through the countryside passing beautiful green pastures that lay emerald in the sun and staid large towns and cities that seemed to be so **normal**!. People went about their daily business, hardly pausing to glance up at our train as it roared its way along the tracks to a destination unknown. They didn't care about our fate. Anyhow, it was after all, just another load of Jews passing.

The train had no bathroom; only a bucket. This humiliated us and added terrible shame to our misery. I was horrified. There was no privacy when someone had to relieve themselves and needless to say, the stench was terrible.

We were hungry and thirsty and tired and dirty. The crying of the children was pitiful as was the moaning of the older people: the misery and wretchedness seemed unending. And when it did finally come to an end, we wished it hadn't. What we endured on the train turned out to be gold compared to what was awaiting us now when we had finally arrived at our destination.

We had arrived to Auschwitz. It was May 22 1944, *Erev Rosh Chodesh Sivan* - a day that is etched in my memory forever. A day when sanity ceased and madness took over completely. A name that until this day, over sixty years later still evokes a pain so deep that it is almost impossible to suppress it.

A crowd of Nazi officials "greeted" us at the station. Even though we consisted of a large crowd there were not many of them standing there. We outnumbered them by the hundreds but it did not occur to anyone to dare disobey them. We were frozen with fear. They ordered us to form a long line which we did. It straggled untidily down the platform where, although we did not yet quite understand it, the drama between life and death was now to be played out. Right and Left! Life and Death! Determined by the mere flick of a wrist or the pointing of a finger!

Some Polish Jews, inmates since the beginning of the war, sidled up to us. They had years of bitter experience behind them having been prisoners here since the inception of the war! They unobtrusively melted into our group; in their own way they were trying to help us. I was sure that I heard one man whisper to my mother to say that we girls were older than we actually were. How strange! I was sure that I had heard him correctly but it seemed to make no sense. What on earth did our ages make a difference to the Nazis? Why should any mother lie about the ages of her children? To whom did it matter?

The noise level was horrific. I stood trembling with fear and clutched my older sister's hand waiting for, who knows what! The sound echoed in and out of my ears and mind as we moved forward inch by inch.

Now we were in front of the Nazi officer who stood there with a back as straight as a ramrod, dressed impeccably in his uniform. With a wave of his hand we were ordered to the right, Blanka and I. My mother and my sister *Libby* and *Meir Avraham* were sent to the left. My father had already been separated from us a while ago and sent to the group of men. My dear beloved father! Without having had a chance to even say goodbye, we were separated forever.

I never saw him again! My mother and two younger siblings followed orders and went to the left and we never saw each other again! In a matter of a minute or two a whole family was viciously and callously torn apart and all that was to remain was.....painful memories!

My sister and I were swept along with a group of young girls into a large dingy room. We were all young girls, and the sight that met my eyes there filled me with horror. The girls were having their hair cut off and then their heads were being systematically shaved. On the ground lay a large pile of hair that was growing fast as more and still more hair, with tresses of many colors joining it. Blond, auburn, black and brown hair! Straight, long hair and short, curly hair. I was mesmerized! But it did not last long. Complete desolation took over as my hair soon joined the ever growing pile and I too was left clean shaven.

We cried, naïve as we were, for our hair. It symbolized not only the loss of our actual hair but the loss of our humanity more than anything else. The Slovakian girls, bitter with their internment from early 1941, comforted us callously.

"*Bolond!*" You're so stupid! You are crying for your hair?!" one girl shouted. "You have more than your hair to cry for; your parents won't grow back the way your hair will."

The absurdity of what she was saying struck us dumb for a moment. I almost laughed. *Our parents won't grow back*? Whose parents *did* grow? What was she talking about? What on earth did she mean and anyway, what did our parents have in common with our hair? She must be insane, we concluded.

"Where did they take our mothers?" some of us murmured the question, not expecting much of an answer.

Raising her hand straight up into the air the girl pointed to the sky.

"What?!"

I dared presume that she meant they had gone to Heaven, for what else could she be implying? This did not sink in. I knew my parents were young and strong. No doubt they survived. I had seen my mother going to the left with my little brother and sister

— but she was surely somewhere around. She could not be dead! The idea simply did not penetrate my numbed brain. Perhaps there are times in life when the ostrich policy can save a person's sanity! This was surely one of those times! I was too young and immature to even absorb her meaning, so I shrugged and dismissed the horrendous thought from my mind. Poor crazy, demented girl! She did not know what she was talking about!

For the next few moments I lost track of my sister. Where did she disappear to? I scanned the faces around me, absently rubbing my stubble head. Where were all the girls we came with? All around me I saw only boys. After seconds that seemed to stretch to eternity, I recognized my sister's features in the 'boy' standing next to me. If I could have, I would have laughed at my own stupidity. Of course, she was now as clean shaven as a boy! I didn't see myself, but I saw **her**!

After stripping us of our hair, our dresses were ripped off our backs. We were rushed past the *haftling*, who barely sized us up with as much as a glance and threw a uniform at us. The sizes were randomly selected and I was very fortunate to get a dress that grazed my ankles. It covered my legs and was an extra protection against rain and snow. Others were not so lucky. Tall girls were handed dresses that were much too short on them and that left their feet bare. Others swam in large sizes whilst others were not able to close their dresses because they were too small and too tight for their robust figures.

"Arbeit Macht Frei." These words were clearly to be seen above the entrance to this place called hell. What a lie! The work turned Auschwitz's inmates into slaves who were forced to work until they dropped from hunger, fatigue and disease, or rather, from a combination of all three!

Our routine in *Auschwitz* began without any introduction. Twice daily we were counted. You would think we were precious jewels or rare gems by the fanatic counting. G-d forbid one of us should be missing. Then the procedure started all over again. Sometimes we were forced to our knees in the cold mud or snow. Other times we had to stand for hours on end without shifting around. They

counted and counted until every single number, or Jew, was accounted for — dead or alive. If anyone was missing from the ranks during *appel* (*zeil-appel* was the official name given to routine roll-calls) the punishment was so severe that it still curdles my blood today to think of it.

In the shrieking madness of the concentration camp, there was one lone voice of reason and one piece of sanity and reality in this insane and unreal world. My sister! She was the only reminder that I was not a number, not an animal, but someone's sister! Her voice, no matter how burdened by pain or dulled by hunger, was the voice of home. I treasured her precious presence and did not take it for granted. The greatest terror that I carried around with me was that I would *chas v'shalom* lose her. I knew that was something I would not be able to bear. She was my salvation in a world turned crazy; she was my life-line and anchor to sanity.

Thus two weeks passed. Three weeks passed. Four weeks passed; not a very long time in the real world of daily life and routine business. But in the nightmare of the Nazi terror, each day was a year — a year fraught with danger, every single second bringing with it another chance for death. By the time five weeks had passed, my outside life had dimmed and faded from my memory and the only reality that loomed in front of me was the ever growing pile of corpses and the rotten smell of decomposing flesh that permeated the very air we breathed in.

I thought I couldn't be terrorized anymore than I was in those first five weeks. Then came the sixth week and with it came a fresh panic.

My beloved sister caught typhus. Small wonder that so many got sick from this debilitating disease. The drinking water they provided for us was dirty and rusty from the decaying pipes. They never gave this water to drink for their pet animals that they cared for in the camps — it was too dangerous! However for us it served its purpose. It made us sick and we died and thus saved them using bullets. The Germans were known for their thriftiness after all, weren't they?

My sister was slim and slight of figure, and with the concentration camp cuisine she soon shrank to skeletal proportions. She had always been a picky eater. Her resistance being so low, she caught the dreaded typhus soon and had no strength to combat it and her temperature spiked up to a record 105°. Had we been in a sane world she would have gotten immediate attention and the appropriate medication. Being that we were in the insane jungle of Nazism, she was sent to the 'hospital.' This decrepit building was a mockery compared to what we know a hospital should be. The Nazis kept a few patients there — not for healing purposes; only for show.

I was able to visit her once a week. It was with such a searing sense of agony that I watched my fifteen year old sister shrivel and shrink in size and spirit, from my one visit to the next visit. She looked no more than ten years old with her skin stretched tightly across her high skeleton cheekbones and her wrists so tiny and thin that they looked like tree twigs in the winter, as though they could break without any pressure having to be applied. The anguish of seeing this was unbearable.

This camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau was a liquidation *lager*. This meant that you were either killed or sent to a different place where you would be sucked of the last remaining strength in order to contribute to the Third Reich's war effort. Here we lived, or rather I should say "existed", not knowing what tomorrow's day would bring and whether we would still be alive to greet it!

Chapter 6

More About the Lager

Every day that I wasn't sent on a transport elsewhere was a miracle on its own. And I prayed for that miracle because there was no way I could leave my sister alone in this bestial place. I was still naïve enough to dodge the transports because, I reasoned, I wanted to go only when my sister was well enough to come along with me. I still hadn't fully grasped the seriousness and gravity of my sister's condition or my own danger in remaining in this liquidation camp. Once again I was using the ostrich policy of burying my head in the sand so as not to "see" the truth. I knew that if we would be separated I would have no reason to live!

At that point I was with girls from my grandparents' town. Some of them were my cousins and they begged me to go with them on their transport, but I wouldn't be persuaded to leave my beloved

sister — it was simply not an option. Even if it meant that when eventually we would be relocated, we would not have this wonderful group of girls for company and support. in this world of uncertainty and insanity, this would truly be a loss.

I tried every possible dodge strategy to avoid the transports, but this game of nerves was wearing me down. I couldn't hide any longer on my own. It was becoming too much for me and I realized that I needed help.

My cousin had a friend who held a high position. Her idea was to try to put me into the "twin" block, which was safe from the transport. The *rasha* Dr. Mengele *y.s*, wanted these victims to remain on premises. He needed twins of all ages for his medical experiments. I was too young at the time to fully comprehend what that sadist was doing. His experiments involved removing certain organs from one twin and trying to implant them into a second twin. The sanitary conditions there were not of the highest standard! He performed all kinds of bizarre surgeries that later left his hapless victims, if they survived, unable to have children. He was informed that I was a twin but my twin had died. On me they performed blood tests, *Boruch Hashem,* nothing worse. I was given candy and a spoon of honey (what a treat!), and then blood was taken. This was done repeatedly. I don't know what he was looking for or what he was researching, but my life had definitely improved. The constant fear of being sent away abated, finally.

We were no longer called upon to stand outside in the freezing weather for *Appel*. What a bonus! In fact, I can still recall the big oven that was located in the middle of the room that gave out some heat. We were no longer suffering from the biting cold.

This block was for all sorts of medical experiments and the worst that happened in the "twin" block for me were the endless blood tests as this *rasha* increased his medical knowledge. So I did not complain.

Dr. Mengele, *y.s.* may he get his just rewards, was careful with the well-being of his subjects for scientific research. Now that I was a 'twin' I was suddenly very valuable. We were counted inside the

barrack instead of standing in rows freezing in the field or boiling in the sun, as they counted and recounted us precious Jewish guinea pigs. Being that we needed to survive for research purposes, the torture of constant hunger and thirst was replaced by decent food rations. The wild horror abated somewhat. It is amazing what starvation can do to a person! It is equally amazing what a bit of decent food can do to the same person!

Every day, as part of our routine in the" twin" barracks, Nazi guards would take some of us to perform menial tasks. We would scramble to hide, because none of us wanted to be vulnerable to the cruelty running rampant in the camp. At one time a Nazi guard came into the barrack before I could conceal myself.

Moments later, I was being marched out to a huge pile of clothing and shoes, all haphazardly thrown to the ground. A few feet away stood an impressive brick building with a manicured garden in front of it. It was one of the pretty sights in an ugly world. Externally, that is. Ugliness beyond human comprehension took place inside its brick walls. It was the notorious gas-chambers as I found out later to my terror.

I was commanded to sort out the things lying there on the ground and I did as I was told. Mechanically, I sorted the clothing and shoes lying on the big scraggly pile. I separated shoes from clothing and dresses from coats and piled each in a separate pile, neatly. My eyes, though, were not as obedient as my hands. I had a sudden idea and I kept glancing right and left from the corner of my eye. I was watching the guard who sat comfortably up in his watchtower, and his job was to watch us. My breath became tight and caught in my throat as I silently argued with myself,

"Dare I?" I wondered.

"It's not worth it. Don't. Its suicidal and you'll be killed," I told myself.

"But my shoes — I won't survive long with these decrepit shoes that don't even fit."

"Yes, and if he catches you, you won't survive even **with** new shoes. The risk is simply not worth it!"

Thus I kept on conversing with myself, swinging first this way and then the other way like a crazy pendulum on a clock, out of control! The punishment from removing any item from this pile was an instant bullet!

At last, just as the guard glanced away for a split second, I changed my shoes. My heart was pounding, thudding so loud that it was a miracle that he didn't hear it. My hands were trembling and my mouth was dry. I discarded my old shoes (or what was a poor excuse for a pair of shoes!) and now I had a normal pair of shoes on my feet that actually fit and I didn't die for it! I couldn't even focus on anything around me as I waited for my heartbeat to slow down and my trembling to subside. Any violation like this could be the cause of a bullet without a second thought. It was a terrible "crime" after all! To "steal" no, "replace" a pair of tattered pieces of leather!!! A memory of going to buy new shoes for *Yom-Tov* flitted through my mind but it faded immediately. Those thoughts belonged to another world and were parts of my "ancient" past!

Then, as I finally calmed down and could breathe normally, I noticed the pretty building with the neat garden in the front was busy. A large group of people had converged there, and a long line snaked in front of it. Waiting patiently on line were some young children, adorable boys with curly *peyos*. They jumped and scampered around, not dreaming for a second that these were their precious last few minutes on this earth. Together with them were their mothers, some holding little babies. I heard a baby cry and watched the mother comfort him. My hands still continued to sort clothing, not realizing, or perhaps subconsciously sensing, with dread, that there would soon be another enormous pile of clothing to be sorted out!

There were older people, grandparents playing hand games with little children — they were helping these children's parents keep them occupied. There was a whole community in that line, old and young. A line of pure innocent *Yiddishe neshomos* who were condemned to die simply because they were *Yidden*. Did they know what awaited them? I did - young as I was, and my broken heart

bled afresh! The wound had somewhat eased at times through sheer willpower or I would have surely died from anguish. Now it began to bleed copiously again, to hemorrhage afresh, as though someone had just added another stab to that wound.

Unbidden, a scream rose to my lips. *"Run! Run away!"* I wanted to shout. *"Run away from here where you will be killed within minutes! Run for your lives! These are not showers as they promised you, these are gas-chambers*!" But I bit my lips before a sound could escape. How would my warning help them? They would die anyway and I would be killed for warning them. The instinct to save lives had to be smothered in this topsy-turvy crazy world if I wanted to save my own life. If I gave in to my emotions I would surely die along with them, of that there was no doubt. .

I was not a mature adult who could figure this out in a mature way. No, I was still a young child but my heart had hardened and my instinct for survival was not that of an adult but of a tortured young soul and there were times when I thought I would die, not through the hands of the Nazis and not through the gas in the "showers" but from sheer sorrow and heartache! Therefore I kept my peace! The conclusion I reached was a natural instinct for survival rather than through using common sense! I was simply being guarded and guided from Heaven from where my every thought and action was being controlled, but I had no inkling of this at the time. I had to grow a lot older until this could be sorted out in my mind and I reached the understanding that this could not have been the reasoning of an eleven year old child. It was pure Heavenly mercy and intervention.

Chapter 7

From One Barrack To Another

Every two weeks, the meticulous administration organized a 'cleaning-day'. We were all herded into a huge tent where every stitch of clothing was stripped from us. The first time this happened to me, I was struck dumb in shame.

Hundreds of chaste young girls were sitting around without any clothing. (We, who had the word *tznius* ingrained into our *chinuch* from our earliest youth!) Our clothing was put into a wash machine and then a dryer; naturally in Auschwitz-Birkenau our wardrobe didn't stretch to a second dress. We had nothing to 'change' into so we sat naked and waited!

Everyone was shivering, and avoiding each others' eyes. The Nazi guards wandered among us, because after all, we weren't young girls. We were branded cattle. What they did not realize was

that we were also Jewish girls and therefore *tznius* was an intrinsic part of our make-up. The terrible feeling of embarrassment and shame that ensued each and every time this happened was one of the most terrible feelings aroused in that camp. Sometimes I wondered whether they **were** aware of this and took special delight in shaming and humiliating us.

Another part of our monstrous routine was "selection". Every week, we were ordered to undress. The Nazis then inspected our skeletal bodies to see which of us still had some strength left in us to perhaps produce yet a little more work, and which of us were 'used up' and therefore rendering us useless, making us ready to be gassed and burned like so much useless garbage..

Older people and the very weak were weeded out immediately from the other walking skeletons. These people were sent to a separate room and never seen again. The Slovakian girls were quick to inform us that we need not bother looking for those girls again. They assured us cynically that those selected would never return. None of us indicated or reacted in any way that we understood what they meant, we feigned that we did not understand them, but how well we knew the bitter truth!

At almost every one of these selections, I was sent to this room with the old and almost dead ones among us. Time and again, I somehow managed to slip out of that group of condemned people and slipped back into the room of those who were chosen to live. I did this under the ever watchful eyes of the Nazi beast and I have no idea, not then and certainly not today, how it was that I managed to elude the Angel of Death every single time I was sent to join the condemned. An Angel of Mercy must have been guarding me, because there is no logical explanation as to why the Nazi guards didn't see me sneak out of the death room and run to the second room that still represented a bit of life, and this happened time and again. I look back and remember how I was simply "propelled" without any calculations or decisions thought over and reached. It was purely a spontaneous and impulsive flash that blitzed through my mind and I acted. There is no doubt about it; I was being led by

a merciful and unseen Hand.

This happened not once and not twice, but every single week when I was deemed no longer worthy of living by those bestial Nazis. The only reason, I think, that I was guarded so miraculously in the burning *gehinom* of Auschwitz was that it was destined from above that I, and I alone, should continue the family tree that had been chopped down so cruelly. Every single branch of the tree was axed down with a fury that left me breathless. My father was killed. My mother was killed. My sisters, my brother were all killed. Who knows what their last minutes on earth were like and how much they suffered? Only I, a tender green shoot cowering at the root of that felled tree, was left to survive this inferno and regenerate the family. I was destined to grow into a strong trunk, supporting many branches in a new family tree that would surely be a source of pride to the *neshamas* of those murdered so cruelly in cold blood. What a responsibility I carried! I did not understand all that yet but would grow to understand it all too clearly later when I married and then held my first precious baby in my arms. At that point I was too busy fighting for survival.

In the nearly seven months spent in Auschwitz-Birkenau, I was placed in so many different barracks. Each barrack meant something else. Lager A and then Lager B; and then the Gypsy Lager which was also one of the places I was honored to visit. The hospital was located there, as well as some of us younger children in the "twin" block were placed there, too.

Whilst in the 'twin' block, at one point, I was sick with an upset stomach. An older girl walked in, as I watched apathetically. She began questioning everyone. She then came over to me as I lay there clutching my aching stomach.

"Where are you from? Who are you?" she asked.

She was apparently looking for relatives. I didn't dream that it was me she was looking for. When she caught sight of me, a flash of hope combined with a look of pity flittered across her pale face as she beheld my pathetic state, optimism sparked in her eyes.

"What's your name?" she demanded eagerly.

I paused a moment. My name? When was the last time someone asked me my name? Who was interested? Here we were numbers, not names. Blue numbers tattooed onto our arms that were to remain permanent and indelible.

"My name is Liberman," I muttered.

Before I knew it, I was enveloped in a warm bear hug and this girl was crying. But who was she? I had never seen her before in my life!

"You are my first cousin! Our fathers are brothers!" she said.

How strange it was to have a family reunion with the gas chambers and the ugly barbed wire in the background. Still, it was a miracle — a special salvation *Hashem* sent for me. A ray of sun on a dark, dark day and a spark of hope in a hopeless situation. My heart lifted for a minute in joy, a feeling I had not felt for a long, long time. Even there, in the pit of evil, Divine Providence was not lacking.

Montzy (*Malky*) Liberman was about ten or twelve years my senior and much better equipped to survive than I was. She took me under her wing and cared for me. Without her, I would not have survived in that cruel environment. Of this I am sure and I owe her much gratitude.

Montzy arranged for me to be a '*stuben dintz*' (housemaid) in one of the barracks. Now, I was a privileged person and no longer took part in the selections. That meant that the weekly heart-stopping risk of sneaking out of the death room and back into the selection room to join the ones who **were** allowed to live was no longer necessary. The terror of those selections was over! The dangers of malnutrition and hunger, though, were not left behind. They accompanied me faithfully all the way to the bitter end!

Everyone was hungry. Hunger was our constant companion. We arose in the morning with growling stomachs and went to sleep at night feeling starved. The food, if it can be called that, wasn't really food at all. And whatever it was, it wasn't enough to keep body and soul alive, not to mention keeping a person healthy and strong. It was designed to encourage the Angel of Death's work in the camps.



Montzy (Malky) Liberman & her husband Elisha Kestenbaum
both first cousins of mine

After all, if a person died of hunger, it was of "natural causes" and thus a bullet or some Zyklon B was saved. It is a known fact, that they put something into the food in order to stop our regular bodily functions.

Because my cousin was taking care of me now, I did have somewhat better food. Still, as the *stuben dintz*, I was able to see and hear things that made me feel guilty; terribly guilty. The block *elteste*, who was directly in charge of me and also the rest of the barrack, would routinely 'take' food from the inmate's portions. She would skim some of the butter off everyone's rations.

As a *stuben dintz*, I was able to see her hide it in her bunk bed. Because of her privileges as *blockelteste*, she had a mattress instead of clumps of straw that served as mattresses for the rest of us. Under

her mattress were the stolen bits of butter. How low the Nazis had reduced this woman! She was hoarding butter under her mattress — today she'd be considered insane. I never touched this extra hoard of food hidden there. My feelings of guilt never allowed me to take advantage of the food, hungry as I was. I knew it belonged to the others.

Young as I was, I realized that the suffering of acute hunger brought out the worst in a person until his or her behavior was animalistic, even evil. I was able to see how those serving the food would take off a little from the portions they distributed only to have that little extra for themselves. It was literally for survival!

Once, though, I did touch some food that did not belong to me. My cousin, *Chana* Gross, came to me, weak and almost collapsing. She was on the verge of death from starvation.

"Do you have anything to eat?" she mumbled through stiff and dried lips that were as ashen as her face. I looked at her in agony. I, of course, had nothing! Oh how I wished I could help her, she was always there for me in her own way. But then, I remembered the *blockelteste's* hoard. She stole it! It wasn't even hers. Knowing that what I was doing was also not right I carefully took some of her concealed food and gave it to my cousin. This was the only time I touched the food that I knew 'belonged' to the block *elteste*. No matter how hungry I was, I could never bring myself to take food that was stolen for my own use. I would rather starve! This time, though, I was stealing from a thief and giving it back to one of the inmates from whom it was originally stolen.

The Nazis biggest crime in my eyes at the time was that they were turning us into sinners. Here was the block *elteste* stealing food — life — from others. In real life, she probably was a kind woman who wouldn't dream of stealing from someone. She would have rather welcomed us into her home and served us a full tasty meal with graciousness. But under the Nazi steam-roller, she became someone and something entirely different. A shell of her former self. They took away our decency and brought out the worst in all of us.

Some of the inmates would save their measly piece of bread for morning. Perhaps they thought it more prudent to go to sleep hungry and to save it for a breakfast. So many times in the course of the night, though, I woke up to the shouts of "My bread was stolen!" The sobs of despair were from someone who knew that the chances for survival for one more day had been significantly dimmed. My heart would constrict with pain when I heard these cries because I could empathize with that poor person but I could never understand the culprit. That piece of bread was our life-line. We were starving **with** it. Without it.....*How could they*? And yet, even as I asked myself the question, I understood the answer! Starvation is a terrible thing!

My relatively safe job as *stuben dintz* lasted all of six weeks. The Germans started emptying the lager; groups of prisoners were being sent on the infamous forced Death Marches. The Americans and Russians were coming uncomfortably close and they were worried. Evidence of the extent of the German cruelty had to be reduced as much as possible.

Liquidation was now at hand. I begged my cousin to stay with me. I didn't want to be sent away because I still believed that my sister was supposedly in the hospital. I couldn't visit her because I was no longer in the Lager A. Still, being in the Gypsy Lager was closer to my sister than being transported out of the camp to far-away places.

But we had to go further to a different lager. I missed my cousin and the familiar surroundings. It is amazing what one gets used to and does not relish a change. Better the certainty of a terrible 'known' than the uncertainty of the unknown. My cousin though was not able to help me in any way. Even her 'pull' and *'proteksiye'* wasn't enough.

Chapter 8

The Death March

We were now deep in the middle of the winter. There was not a breath of hope in the frozen world. No hope for spring; no hope for freedom. The Germans decided to evacuate the lager in January. There was a rumor circulating that they planned to blow up the whole of Auschwitz to erase it from the map. There was no way they could leave behind evidence of the extent of their cruelty for the Americans or Russians to witness.

The Germans wanted to take us out of the camp and kill us by walking us to death. The *blockelteste* and *lagerelteste* were the ones to decide who was going to be forced on the Death March and who would be allowed to stay behind — possibly to be blown up with the entire camp.

I was told I would not survive the harsh conditions outside and the long walk that would take days perhaps even weeks and

that I should rather stay behind. I was in a group of about twenty girls likewise condemned. However, we refused to remain and be bombed by the Germans. We vowed to take care of each other and told the *lager elteste* that we were going along with them . We were prepared to take the risk of joining the Death March.

We had to walk in rows of five. The five of us held hands and swore not to leave each other. One of them, a skinny delicate girl, couldn't make it. After a few hours she started to lag behind. She was simply too weak. We dragged her along the way. Who knows where the energy to pull her and ourselves along came from? It was surely pure *Chasdai Hashem!* We knew that if she did not continue with us it was a definite death sentence. The Germans were more than willing to help those that wanted to rest. A bullet sent them to their eternal rest in a second!

No one wanted to be at the rear end of the column of marching prisoners. Behind all the rows of prisoners were the rest of the Germans and their dogs. They walked along with us in that frozen landscape. The contrast between the healthy, well fed, warmly bundled up guards and us was striking. Even the German's watchdogs that frightened us so were in a better condition for this march than we were. At least they were not thin and undernourished. Neither did they feel threatened in any way.

We walked with little interest in our surroundings, concentrating only on placing one weary foot in front of the other. We were hardly dressed decently — let alone for a long winter hike! I wore socks that only came up to below my knee. My prison uniform was too short for me — but then again, no one really cared. My knobby knees were exposed to the elements, covered neither by the short socks I wore nor by the thin and flimsy dress. Who knows what insiduous damage was taking place? Obviously there was, because I suffered from my knees because of that exposure to the bitter cold for quite some time after the war.

As we marched, people froze and simply collapsed. When I heard a thud behind me, I didn't even turn around to look. I knew that liberation, if and when it came, would be just too late for another

poor Jew. The body of those Jews who collapsed lined the highway, open to the wind and wild animals. And I, the skinny little girl, survived because *Hashem* wanted me to survive and therefore made me survive.

As we hiked through the nearly knee-high snow in our scant clothing my body slowly froze — matching my soul which had long ago frozen in the ghastliness of Auschwitz. In order to survive the trauma of violence, cruelty and starvation, I literally shut down my heart and likewise I shut down my mind. I refused to think and feel; otherwise I would have gone crazy from the sheer insanity of our conditions, as well as from the agonizing pain of seperation and loss.

As we continued walking, I focused my meager energies on clutching the bag of provisions I held in my frozen hand. They had given us each a small bag with salami in it for the way. This ration

was the only bit of food for the duration! Hardly the trip bag stuffed with nourishing food for a winter's hike!

They didn't give us anything to drink; the saltiness of the salami aggravated our thirst badly. Very surreptitiously, we would scoop a bit of snow into our mouths as we marched. At least the snow served a positive purpose on this Death March, too. It quenched our thirst a little! This had to be done with extreme caution because stopping, even for a second, was against the rules and we could be shot because of a handful of snow.

When airplanes flew overhead, we were ordered to stop, sit down and not move. The cruel Germans weren't so worried about us. It was their own lives they feared. If the pilot mistook this orderly column of people marching for an army division, they would drop a bomb on us without a moment's thought. Thus they would not be spared and that was the only reason why the Germans made us stop. Not for a single moment out of any feelings of consideration for our exhausted condition and bitter plight but rather out of consideration for their own miserable hides.

All along this nightmarish march, my thoughts vacillated between panic and hope. Where were they taking us? Would they

just murder us at the destination we were heading to or would we perhaps survive? Would I freeze on the way or not? *Hashem* had been with me and brought me thus far, would He bring me to the end? I imagined the end of the war. I thought I would meet my mother and sisters again, though I was a bit uneasy thinking about them. Really, knowing that my mother had gone to the left, and my sister was in a German prison 'hospital,' deep down, I wasn't so hopeful. However, it was so much easier to use one's imagination and "invent" longed for scenes than to face the bitter truth. But somehow, for reasons I could not explain, I was sure that with my father it would be different! I had high hopes that my father had somehow survived. He was young, only in his early forties, strong and capable. If I was still alive, surely he must be alive too! Surely he would be there for me! I pictured him with his blue eyes, reddish hair and beautiful cheeks and I could just see him open his arms wide and his chuckle of joy as I ran to him! He would take care of me, love me, and chase the nightmare of Nazism away. It was a sweet dream that I indulged in, but only rarely (it was safer not to think) during this long and desolate walk. A vivid imagination can sometimes make the difference between hope and despair. For a few seconds, from time to time, this "dream" warmed my frozen heart.

I always knew, secretly, that I was my father's favorite; I was named after his two grandmothers, his mother's mother and his father's mother, *Esther Fradel*.

My mother, who ran the household, was a strict disciplinarian by nature. My father was the one to show more warmth and some exuberance. I so missed my father's love, that thoughts of him and our possible reunion is what gave me strength during that dismal grisly Death March. I let my imagination work when I had the courage to do so and that probably saved my sanity, and that most likely gave me the strength to continue putting one frozen foot in front of the other.

Chapter 9

The Nightmare Continues

At the beginning of our march, we walked briskly, no one wanting to be left behind. Then, as we marched during the day and spent the cold nights in a barn, our energy quickly ebbed. We walked slower and slower. Of the original twenty girls who had vowed never to leave each other, some were no longer among the living. They just succumbed, fell down and died from starvation and the bitter biting cold.

After five days and nights we arrived in a train station. There, waiting for us was a freight train used for cattle transportation, entirely open to the elements. They crowded us in, 30 to a wagon, with no seats to sink into after our long and exhausting winter walk. There was just the cold damp wooden floor. We sat close to each other huddling together for warmth. How I had changed since

that first freight-train ride so long ago. I had aged at least twenty years and seen and heard things that hardly bear thinking about, and here we were in such a train again! The snow kept falling on us, covering us, and in the bitingly low temperature it soon became a blanket of ice. Along with us in the cattle car came two German soldiers with two big dogs. They occupied half of the cattle car. No one wanted to sit too close to them so we crouched as far away from them as possible.

We traveled for about three days and nights. Finally we had to get out. My shoes were frozen of course. I took them in my hand and walked almost barefoot (since I was wearing thin torn socks) on the white snow. Later I tried to put on the shoes again but I couldn't get my frozen feet, which had now swelled badly, into the frozen shoes. I stood there, in the white snow, crying soundlessly without any tears, with torn socks on my feet and my poor knees exposed to the ripping winds.

My almost bare feet felt as though they were sticking onto the snow and the frozen, I looked again at my useless and torn shoes clutched in my trembling hands. Although I cried my heart out, no actual tears came. My tears were long ago used up and were as frozen as my heart!

We had to wait in line; they told us it was for a shower. Our bodies were frozen by the snow and wind; our hearts were frozen by the thoughts of a shower. A shower? We were no longer as naive and ignorant as we had been upon arrival in the camps. Now we knew all too well what "showers" meant. Would it be gas or water coming out from the overhead pipes? No one knew for sure that these weren't our last minutes on earth. Perhaps after these "showers" we would meet our beloved relatives who had been gassed just a few months (it seemed like a thousand years) before. I think we could no longer muster up the strength to worry, we were simply beyond caring!

We stood and waited in the snow, ten minutes, twenty minutes. The wait was unbearable. My feet were by now completely frozen and so were many others. I was jumping up and down and

stamping my feet so as not to lose circulation but still felt nothing. It was as though I was directing two logs of wood that had nothing to do with me, commanding them to move and for some reason, they obeyed!

The wait stretched for an hour. It was a miracle that I was not permanently affected by that wait and didn't develop frostbite or even have a fever or catch pneumonia from the exposure to the raw winter elements. That too was a miracle.

We had arrived in Ravensburg!

We were then herded into showers from which cold water trickled down on us. We were handed tiny bars of soap and thin worn towels with which to wipe ourselves. It was very humiliating and mortifying to bathe together in public but we were grateful for the fact that *Boruch Hashem* they *were* showers and not *chalilla* something worse!

At this point there were lots of people merging together from all over, so they put us into tents. They had no other place to put so many these people. It was a nightmare. A bitter cold winter day in January, in a tent - and we still had to take a bath in the cold tent for sanitary reasons.

They forced us to wash ourselves every day. We had to use a sponge and pail of freezing cold water. Washing our hands and face wasn't enough; we needed to strip to the waist and sponge ourselves. Then, we had to repeat the procedure from our feet up to our waists. They were very strict about this because they were wary of outbreaks of diseases from lice. Once again, their concern was not in any way for us. For their part the more of us that became ill and died, the merrier. Their concern was that *they* should not G-d forbid catch any of these diseases!

How degrading for so many of us to have to wash in public with no sort of privacy to speak of. All we could do was listen to the rules, feel ourselves shrivel up with shame, and shiver and suffer in silence.

This torturous stay in Ravensburg's tents lasted about four to five weeks. A strict routine was established in which we had

to wash ourselves first and then immediately hurry to *zeil appel*. Here, a big crowd of both male and female prisoners lined up for an attendance check. The Germans didn't bother separating us the way they usually did, for some reason.

Then, once again, we were forced to continue further with a train. This time it was once again an open train and though it was still mid-winter no one in the administration of the camps cared. But it was mercifully a shorter distance than our previous trip. Also, this time they told us that our destination was a working *lager*. We were not stricken by that terrible fear that they were taking us to our deaths. Somehow we believed them and were calmer hoping that it was the truth and that our destination **would** be a working-camp!

They took us deep into a forest, into an *Arbeit Lagar* — Malchov Germany, a camp especially for Jewish *haftlings* (prisoners.) It was a working lager that manufactured ammunition, but they didn't have enough work for us. So we, the group that arrived most recently, didn't really work. The original prisoners who were there before us did work. Here we lived in a normal shelter — a barrack; it felt like a palace compared to the open trains and the tents in Ravensburg.

Even though there was officially no work for us, we were nevertheless kept busy. Twice a day they had *zeil appel* — each time this lasted about two to three hours. This was the most harrowing and tiring part of the day, and in our eyes, the most useless and senseless since we still had not figured out what purpose it served them. They had to account for every single one of us. If one of us was missing then G-d help us all! They went wild and began counting and recounting furiously, again and again. If someone was found to have left the ranks, he or she was shot without mercy.

The food given to us was far from adequate. They gave us what they called breakfast. It was tea — black as ink and bitter as gall. I wonder what it was made of. Along with this tea came a bit of mush — a cereal of some sort. They gave each of us a piece of bread the size of a bar of soap — dark and as hard as a rock. This bread would have been considered inedible today even to feed the birds! Then, no one thought of turning up their noses on that piece of

cardboard that was a poor excuse for bread, but grabbed it gladly! Lunch was a bowl of thin and watery soup that was a stranger to fat or vegetables and therefore was in no way nutritious or nourishing even if it did fill our starving bellies for a short while.

On Sundays they gave a piece of salami — a luxury. I was always hungry! That memory stayed with me for years and years, how I was always hungry! I went to sleep hungry and awoke in the morning hungry. I probably had forgotten at that point what it meant to be sated. That was something that belonged to another world, a world of the past that had almost faded from my memory.

The S.S. were the ones trained to handle Jews in the effort to implement the" Final Solution." It would have been impossible for a human being to be as cruel as the SS were, unless they had been brainwashed and trained to stifle their natural human emotions. A normal human being is simply incapable of the kind of indescribable bestiality they routinely displayed.

Luckily this lager was not in the hands of people trained in the art of cruelty. The SS weren't here. Only the *Wherrmacht*, the regular combat soldiers, were placed there to guard us. These included a lot of older men — or so it seemed to me in the eyes of a young teenager. They must have been about thirty-five or forty years old. They had pity on us. Was this because they knew they were losing the war and wanted to curry favor with us? They tried to be nice for their own benefit, of this I was sure. It was not in a German to be fundamentally and intrinsically "nice" — that simply went against their grain.

Once they asked us to organize a talent show and everyone was asked to perform. One Italian girl sang "Mama" — she had a beautiful voice. The song stirred me greatly and I began thinking then that the end is near and maybe all the rumors we had heard over the past months simply weren't true and I'll see my own Mama again. It wasn't only me who was thinking along these lines because I saw that everyone had tears coursing down their pale and wan cheeks. Each and every one was hoping and praying for a reunion with their beloved Mammas. For that moment, as her beautiful voice

soared on an even higher note, we allowed our imaginations to soar - to once again take over.

What was my talent? I was told to dance. What was I to dance? When had I last danced? Then I remembered. It was when I was eight or nine and my sister was a little older. My aunt Esther, my mother's sister, got married and we danced a special Hungarian dance. We learnt this dance, practicing it so that we should be able to perform well. I, because I was such an adorable little girl, it was, taken for granted that I was to be the star at the wedding. I practiced the dance for weeks on end. But in front of everyone at the wedding, I was suddenly struck with a paralyzing shyness and I refused to perform. No amount of begging or cajoling helped. Now, four years later and a lifetime away, I danced the dance in captivity under such terrible conditions. Gone was the bashfulness, gone was the shyness. I danced in a concentration camp where we were constantly but a stone's throw away from death — here I danced gracefully instead of at a *simchah*. How ironic life was and how little say we have in our own destinies!

The stay in this factory lasted about three months. Slowly but surely, they ran out of food. The shortage happened because as the days went by, more and more prisoners were brought from all over the conquered territory. The Germans were losing, but they wouldn't leave the Jewish prisoners to be liberated. They marched them deep into Germany as they retreated.

Because the meager amount of food now had to be divided amongst so many more prisoners, we were literally starving. Our barracks also became unbearably crowded. It was so bad that at the end a typhus epidemic broke out. This killed a lot of Jews who might otherwise have survived had they been given humane accommodations to start with. Then, once they became ill, had they been given decent food and received even minimal medical care, they might have stood a chance of recovering. But, of course, neither of the two were obtainable so the end result was inevitable.

I couldn't help but stare at the prisoners who arrived almost daily. They were scary looking! They were so thin and emaciated;

they looked like live skeletons with their protruding and haunted eyes: dominant features in a gaunt and ghostly face. I myself probably didn't look any better; but without a mirror I obviously could not see this.

The only reason why we all didn't die of starvation was due to the American Red Cross. They sent us some food supplies in those last days of imprisonment. These sustained us in the final hours of agony as the Germans were no longer giving us food. If only the interest to save lives had been aroused earlier in the war years; who knows how many would have survived?

Chapter 10

Freedom At Last!

This state of affairs changed at May 5, 1945. Some of the *Whermacht* soldiers told us openly that the end of the war was approaching. We didn't hear too much news otherwise and had no real way of knowing definitely which turn things were taking. We had no idea in which direction they were heading and whether the situation was truly getting better and not worse.

We were once sitting around in the barracks and a *Whermacht* soldier, a forty-five year old man said: "Children don't worry, the end is near. You can sneak out of the camp. I won't stop you." He wanted to save himself so that when the inevitable time for accounting and retribution would come, we should be the witnesses to his great "compassion" and "consideration" towards us!

The statement filled us with a great sense of excitement and wonder. Could it really be true? Was there still a chance that we

would survive this inferno? Some of the adults decided to organize a group that intended to sneak out and I joined them. It was a group of older girls and a few men. A few friends and I also tagged along.

The *lager* that we ran away from was located deep in a forest in Germany. When we snuck out, we went to the highway. We saw tanks and soldiers passing, but they never saw us because we hid in the ditches by the highway. We hid and shivered, from both cold and excitement, as well as from fear. Any one of the German soldiers would not have hesitated to shoot us point blank had they discovered us. After all, we were the cause of all their problems, were we not, and now of their defeat! Since time eternal, it has always been the Jews who are the scapegoat!

It was also very obvious that we were escaped Jewish prisoners.

We did manage to take along some food from the *lager*, but it was only a little bit which was used up very quickly. We left at night and by the next day our food was gone. We scavenged for food and were lucky enough to find some potatoes lying on the ground that we roasted in the fields and then ate with relish and enjoyed. When had we last eaten baked potatoes?

Then we were reduced to knocking on the doors of houses in the village. We were a group of twenty. They didn't let us into the house; they greeted us with a heavy mixture of guilt and fear at the front door. Guilt, because they realized that we were prisoners and they knew what had been done to us, and fear, because they knew a day of reckoning would soon be upon them. These German civilians just brought food to the door and pushed it at us hurriedly, slammed the doors in our faces, and sent us away. We looked and smelled like homeless people and everyone was disgusted at the mere sight of us, and in truth, it was no wonder!

Also, there were plenty German civilians running away from the Russians with suitcases in hand. Some of the men in our group would casually approach one of them and say, "Give me the suitcase, please" and the German civilian, guilty of theft, would hand over the suitcase without a word. The look in the eyes of these men struck fear into their hearts. There was a barely controlled rage

and fury in them. Were it not for the fact that we were *Yidden*, they would have torn these Germans to pieces but this was not our way and it never has been. Even when provoked beyond endurance, a *Yid* does not kill! *Hakol kol Ya'akov hayodeiyim yedei Esov. We daven, and they kill!*

I watched this with an open mouth, marveling at this reversal of our fortunes. We were former prisoners and they were former civilians. Now, both of us were uncertain about our fate. However, we were at least the innocent victims while they were at best, silent in the face of the worst kind of evil that lived and existed among them. And worst of all, they had lent a hand in the destruction and annihilation of our people by doing and saying nothing, and in many cases, aiding and abetting the Nazis. Many thousands more might have made it if nor for the fact that the *goyim* were delighted to expose *Yidden* who had hidden and to bring information to the Nazis in order to curry favor from them.

We wandered around like this for about two to three weeks. It was officially the end of the war and all the German civilians ran away because they were terrified of the consequences and the questions they would have to answer. It was announced that law and order would now prevail. There were Russian soldiers swarming all over.

The bigger girls warned us younger ones to beware and to stay away from the Russian soldiers. One evening we were hiding from the Russians in a big garden, and before long, a group of Russian soldiers, ugly and war weary, found us hiding in the garden. All the girls were hiding in different places. One of the Russian came right over to me and towering over me, grabbed my arm and said "Come, I'm taking you for my child."

His face twisted into what should have been a friendly smile. I was frozen with fear — I didn't even know what it was I feared.

One of the girls in the group leaped forward, and pulled me away, screaming in Russian, "Leave her alone! She's sick! Can't you see that we all are! You'll be infected!" The Russians were deathly afraid of the infectious diseases that the prisoners carried. They dropped me hurriedly and ran!

I didn't move until every one of those Russians had turned and lumbered out.

In this city, Frankfurt, when the civilians just turned and ran away we were able to walk into an empty house with impunity and enjoy the amenities of normal life. We indulged in a good washing! That was first on our list! Clean clothing next to our skin instead of the torn tattered rags that were encrusted with filth, that in itself was sheer bliss and to us it felt like the height of luxury!

That *Shabbos* morning we laid in bed, luxuriating in the freedom to lie in a bed and get up when we wanted. No *zeil appel*! No orders! No beatings! *We were free! We were free!* Free at last! We were however still extremely weak.

Then came a knocking and the door was shoved open. Again, some Russian soldiers had come; we told them we were deathly sick with a highly contagious disease and might infect them. Ironically enough it was the very ones who liberated us who were now a danger to us, as well as a cause for worry.

We had four girls from the twin block: two of them came from Ungvar, and two from Munkacs, they spoke a little russian that helped to save us.

Chapter 11

A Shattered Dream

Now, we had one goal. That was to go back to our hometown to meet up with our beloved families again. How we had missed them! It was our sweetest dream at night and our deepest yearning by day — to go home; the home we knew before the nightmare of war overcame us.

Traveling was extremely difficult — the railway tracks were bombed in many places which meant that trains could not pass through these areas. We were able to hitch rides on wagons and trucks, but in truth we were still deathly afraid of the Russian soldiers.

After approximately three or four weeks of arduous traveling, finally, we arrived home. Home? I had to pinch myself to see if it was really true. What had been so real in my dreams was now so dreamlike in its reality.

I met a girl, a friend of my sister who was about three years older than I was. Her name was Dobris Mangel — this was her nickname; I don't remember her real name. She awakened memories in my heart. Memories of the good times before the world went crazy! We arrived in the town Kosice — a bigger city close to my hometown, where a lot of relatives converged after the war.

Before long, I found out that my mother's first cousin, a dentist, was here and therefore I went to their home. He had boarded by a gentile and thus managed to escape from the fate we all shared. He was not incarcerated in a *lager*. That was my first station. I was hungry and tired when I arrived. I ate a good supper — the first decent meal in the longest time. Eating whilst sitting at a table and holding normal cutlery in my hands, it was almost a novelty! Then, sheer exhaustion overwhelmed me, and I slept for twenty-four hours straight without budging.

Both my cousin and the owner of the house got scared when they saw that I was sleeping so long and so deeply and came to check on me to make sure that I was still breathing. It was the first decent and relaxed sleep I indulged in since the night before we left home so long, long ago. Finally I awoke and was rested, but somewhat disoriented and didn't know where I was. It took a moment or two for things to fall into place.

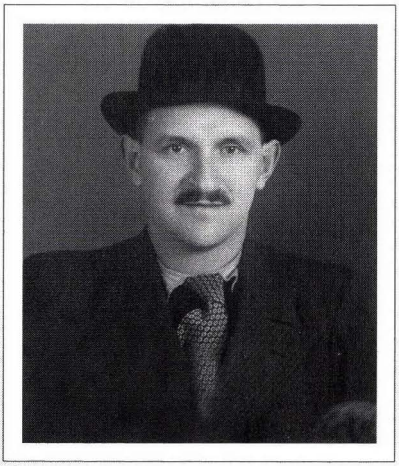
Then some more good news came my way. My Uncle Shmiel and Aunt Ellu (Pessy) were home in the town of Sepsi. These were my mother's single sister and brother. Before long, they got in touch with me and my uncle *Shmiel* came to pick me up. I was happy to see them, but it was a bittersweet reunion. Was there no one alive who was closer to me than this aunt and uncle? Where was my **immediate** family? *What had happened to my beloved father, my mother and my own sisters and brother?*

My parents and siblings were not here yet. I was in a haze - like existing in a vague dream. I was dreaming that I'd be reunited with my immediate family; my aunt and uncle would be my secondary family. I didn't realize yet that I alone, I was the sole survivor of a family of six healthy and vibrant members, *I alone was the single survivor.*

The survivors after the war



Uncle Shmilu with Wife Manci



Uncle Leibu



Aunt Pessu

It was only when I met my uncle and aunt that the truth dawned on me; the reality hit me like a hammer blow that my father had in fact not survived. The knowledge hit me like a ton of bricks and took a while to sink in. I cried and sobbed as though my very heart

would break, moaning in emotional pain for about a week without a break. They couldn't stop me in those first days of deep mourning. I cried for the loss of a man whom I had loved so dearly and who played such a great part in my formative years — so few of them! I cried for the wonderful mother who showered me and my siblings with love and took care of my every need. But hardest of all, I was crying for my lost youth and my lost innocence, grieving for what should have been, and now would never be, I cried for that little girl who was now a cynical and embittered teenager, no more than thirteen chronologically, but aged fifty in maturity, but I probably did not realize it at the time. All I knew was that I was crying and I could have sworn at the time that those tears would never cease to flow! But one cannot cry forever! Finally, after I ran out of tears, the sobbing slowly subsided and I calmed down and became coherent once again. However, that pain never left me completely. It left a gaping wound that slowly over the years and under happier circumstances, healed, then healed a little more, and then yet a little more, as good times came my way. But that painful wound never healed completely.

My aunt Ellu Weiss was called in to talk to me. She tried to convince me that I was not alone. I shared a fate with hundreds of thousands of other children. (In truth this was not so. Very few children of my age survived. Those that did were older.) In a way I was better off then many of them who had not a living relative to their name! How many were to remain the sole survivors of their **entire** families? Torn from home and left bereft! I at least had uncles and aunts.

She promised gently that she would take good care of me. She swore that she would be a mother to me even if she would eventually marry and start a family of here own, she would never desert me.

My state of health was not good at all. In fact my condition forced me to be hospitalized. I had infected pus pimples on my whole body from vitamin deficiency and had to stay in the hospital for a few days. My aunt came to visit me, and that ordeal, which

was easy compared to ordeals of the past, also came to an end as the infection healed.

At this point, I was a young girl — barely a teenager. I had been robbed of some of the nicest years of childhood — I'd been robbed of my parents and siblings. I'd been robbed of my dignity and sense of self. In fact, I'd been robbed from my very **own** self. I was a very hurt and confused young girl, wise beyond my years. Not the wisdom gained through education, but rather through suffering and fighting for survival. Sad to say, this definitely matures a person.

Ruzenka, my *Mizrachi* friend, pleaded with me to join the *Mizrachi* Movement. She visited and begged me to take part in her plans for the future. She promised me that I would have a good time. She painted such glowing verbal-pictures describing the friendship and camaraderie that I would find in the *Mizrachi* groups. I was starving for a feeling of belonging; for a friendship and love and was sorely tempted to join her.

But my aunt adamantly refused, and she had to work on me. This was not part of her plan for my future and she felt that she was responsible for me. She assured me that I'd find the love I needed and that I must remain here with her. And, stubborn as I was, she was even more obstinate and would not change her mind so I stayed with my relatives. Through nothing short of a *ness*, my body had survived the horrors of war. Now my aunt wanted to be assured that my soul too would survive!

Then I met a girl named Klari. Her nickname was *"Csopi"* (Hungarian word for small or tiny). She got her nickname because she was very small at birth — a premature baby. This premature baby, who probably struggled for life since when she was born, grew up and survived some of the harshest circumstances of the war. She grew up to be a tall, strapping girl. She was an only child and her parents didn't survive. She was about the same age as me and came from the same neighborhood.

We hit it off and became very good friends. We had a lot in common — both of us ended up in Israel and lived in the same

dormitory. She was like the sister I had lost and still missed so sorely. We still keep in touch until today; calling each other and updating each other with each new *simcha.*

Whenever we visit *Eretz Yisroel* now, I look her up so we can pay her a visit. We had good times together when we both felt so alone. She was a bright light in a dark period of my life, the time of adjustment to being an orphan and learning to stand on my own two feet, and I owe her a lot. I will never, ever forget her.

My aunt Ellu Weiss wanted to build up my physical strength a little. I was still so frail and skinny. She made me a special food and it was a delicacy for me, it was called *feigel milech* (bird's milk.) It was a concoction made from egg yolks, sugar and wine, and well beaten up. My aunt considered it to be very nutritious. It did feel very nourishing, both emotionally and physically, to have my aunt make this special food only for me. First of all, because the ingredients were good, and secondly, because a blending of love and devotion were contained in it besides those ingredients, and I desperately needed that too. And, of course, it *was* delicious.

My aunt really took good care of me. She felt responsible for my well being. I didn't realize the extent of it then, but I was such a *rachmanus* — an orphan girl; weak and alone. I was so dependent on my relatives for help. When I grew older, I understood it better and appreciated it more and more.

When I was a little girl before the war, I was so jealous of my older sister for living with my grandparents in Sepsi. Now, under the strangest of circumstances, I got my wish. I now lived in Sepsi in my grandparent's house. But how different it was from what I imagined as a little girl. My grandparents were no longer there. I couldn't go home to visit my parents for *Shabbos* as Blanka had done. Everything was different, and it **was** strange to me. I too was different. I had changed from a carefree little girl to a premature adult, only the house remained the same and at the same time — so different!

Before the war, when conditions began to change and the outlook was bleak, my grandparents had hidden some of their belongings.

Now, the hidden stash of valuables served as an income of sorts. The beautiful hand-embroidered tablecloths, some silver, and other nice pieces all were bartered for food. Amazing, when one thinks of it. A beautiful tablecloth used to enhance a table - the décor, in a room. A piece of gleaming silver in a china closet, polished to a perfect sheen to please the eye. When these things were purchased, their owners never thought for a single moment that they would end up in the home of a *goy* — in order to purchase food, yes, something as simple as food in order to stave off hunger pangs! Life is truly ironic!

The H.I.A.S. (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) gave us some food packages, but it wasn't good enough for my aunt. This was an organization founded in America in the late 1880's to help with the flow of Russian immigrants to the United States. Their help extended globally and took many forms.

However, their public kitchen was *hefker* and my aunt said we would rather starve than eat in such an atmosphere, and from a place where the *hechsher* was questionable. She was all of twenty-two years old, but wise and firm beyond her years. She understood that it would be wrong to eat with such a mixed crowd. She kept a firm hand on me since she was extremely *frum* and *upgeheiten* and felt responsible for me. I was still so vulnerable so she was afraid that I might become attracted to outside influences and she did not want that. She felt that she owed it to my parents to make sure that I followed in the path they had originally set my feet upon, and to ensure that I grow up to be a fine *heimische* and *upgehittene Yiddishe tochter*.

Then there were my two uncles. One was *Leibu*, who was married before the war and lost his family — his wife and two little girls. I felt that he was a little overbearing and quite bossy with me. He was constantly criticizing and correcting me, and I cannot say that I did not resent it, even though I understand that he too had my well-being in mind.

He had reason to be nervous about losing me. There was so much going on at that time; in my naiveté I didn't understand his

nervousness and fear. He treated me like a child who had to be disciplined and guided in every step. I hated and resented it because I felt that circumstances had made me what I was, and that I was no longer a child and didn't need disciplining. I was a teenager, old beyond my years and I'll admit that I didn't listen or always behave in the way he would have liked me to.

My other uncle *Fetter Shmielu* who was twenty five years old. He was a totally different; far more soft and understanding. I loved him very much. My aunt fretted for him and wanted to see him settled. Then one day my aunt went with him to meet a young girl, *Malki*. They met and soon after became *chassan — kallah*. They got married with my aunt assuming the role of mother of the *chasan*.

My aunt Ellu was delighted when they got married, but they left our cozy home which resulted in it becoming more lonely. Then *Fetter Leibu* moved to Kosice, since he obviously preferred being on his own. He opened a business and put his heart and soul into it. He was obviously drowning the sorrows of his tremendous loss in hard work.

Thus the two of us remained — my aunt and I. We had a hard life. We struggled to obtain food for every single day. We had no income and nowhere and no-one to whom we could turn to for help. At this point maybe a weaker person would have given in, but my aunt was as strong as a rock. The public kitchen where they gave food for the survivors was still off limits to us. It was too modern with a mixed crowd converging there, who were neither to my aunt's taste, nor up to her high moral standards and her standards of *kashrus*. She clung firm to her principles.

I had plenty of time to think and brood. And my thoughts weren't always positive. These feelings ran through my head like rolls of dark, undeveloped negatives. I didn't want to think about the years that I had survived. In truth I felt very guilty for surviving. This was one thought that stubbornly refused to go away. I had been a spoiled and willful little child. My parents, at times had difficulty disciplining me. Why did I survive? I wasn't such a good child after all; *so why did I survive*? Why me, and not my siblings?

I remembered clearly the events before *Yom Tov*. Strange, how it is etched so clearly in my mind after all these years. On *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur* we would go to the next village where my father was a *Ba'al Tefilla*. It was walking distance from home. My father liked this village because from here we could walk home. My grandparents' village had more friends for me to play with, and was certainly more appealing to me.

That *Yom Tov* morning, I hid because I didn't want to go to the *Shul* in the village where my father went to. Instead, I went into hiding by the *shikze* next door. I went out into the field with her. She was cleaning and working. I didn't do anything, obviously since it was *Yom Kippur*. I felt somewhat guilty remaining with her in the field. I was thinking of following my family and going to *Shul*, but I was scared to go by myself. So I stayed with the *shikzer* throughout that holy day. At that point I didn't feel as terribly guilty as I should have. I was young and it was merely a childish prank. But after the war, as I remembered each detail of the prewar days, I was overcome with guilt for the anxiety I surely must have then caused my beloved parents. I felt very blameworthy. Look at what I'd done! I was so sorry! *Why did I survive?*

Now, my aunt devoted herself completely to my welfare Somehow, we struggled along. She found some more things that were hidden; tablecloths and other items, and she sold them. We were now able to have food to eat. All she wanted was to build up my strength. She fed me with the most nourishing food she could find, (depriving herself in the process) with one thought in mind, one goal; I should regain my energy and to become a normal, strong and healthy young girl again.

A while passed and my aunt got a letter from her friend with a marriage proposal for her. My aunt had a hard time deciding, since she had no one but me to confide in and to discuss such a serious matter. The letter was from a friend who lived in Satmar, her name was *Pessi* Eckstein. They had been friends as teenagers. In the sane days before the war, *Pessi* Ekstein would visit her sister, the *shochet's* wife, in *Sepsi*. In those carefree days, she spent a lot of time

by her sister and became friends with my aunt *Ellu*.

Pessi Ekstein wrote that she got married after the war to a boy from Hungary and had children. They lived in *Satmar*, where a brother of hers returned after the war. During the war, he survived as a *goy* by hiding out in Budapest together with a younger sister. She wanted my aunt for her *gelungene* brother whose name was Yide Leib Weiss. She felt he would be very suitable for her. He was very nice, she wrote, but about ten years her senior and a *mitt-gemachte* (suffering) background — a legacy that everyone shared after the war. His wife and five children were killed by the Nazi beast! But she felt he was a fine and upright person and an *ehrliche Yid*. I thought it sounded good, and, though I felt terrible about losing her, I urged her to consider this offer, and to at least look into it. She did think about it and eventually my aunt became engaged to him

I now found myself in a difficult situation, I wasn't yet of marriageable age but where should I live if my aunt married? Moving in with a newly married couple during *shanah reshonah* was not an option, even if it is my loving aunt who had done so much for me when I came to her broken in body and spirit. Living alone was not an option either. So it was decided that I would commute between my beloved uncle, *Shmielu*, to my aunt; going back and forth.

The day of the wedding arrived. With nervous excitement we went to the wedding in Romania near *Satmar*. There were five of us altogether. My two uncles, Leibu and Shmiely, his wife Manci. And then there was myself, as well as a cousin, Olga Paskus. It was very exciting in a way for me to travel from one country to the other. We anticipated difficulties since I possessed neither a passport, nor official papers, but we made it. We hired a *goy* to take us across the borders to the other side of Slovakia to Romania. We traveled on an open boat, almost like a raft, through the river. It was terrifying and fun at the same time. It took us a week to make the trip. For *Shabbos* we arrived at our first destination which was Nyirbator. We went to stay by Olga's relative's *mechatunem* from her brother's first wife, the Beilush family. They treated us very graciously and we spent

the entire *Shabbos* there. They had girls close to my age, so I had the pleasure of the company of young people once again.

After *Shabbos*, we continued travelingand arrived at our destination, where the actual wedding was to take place. This was in a small town, near *Satmar*. It was a very *lebedig* wedding since my uncle was a popular person. Even though it was his second marriage, it was my aunt's first marriage and everyone went out of their way to make it *freilach*, even though there must have been deep undertones of sadness. How can one forget the terrible loss of a wife and children from one moment to the next? One's heart and mind can be open for the future, but can one so easily forget such a past?

My aunt was a very pretty *kallah* and on her face one could see the shadow of sadness, at not having her parents there to lead her under the *chuppah*. It was not easy without her parents and so many other family members who were no longer among the living. and if not for this accursed war, they would have so joyfully graced her *simcha*. But this was the situation, and as such, had to be accepted. Everybody made the best of it and tried to be *be'simcha*, but I am sure that it was not easy. How could it have been?

My two uncles and aunt stayed for about a week after the wedding and then left for home, leaving me in these strange surroundings. It was too awkward to stay at my aunt, the new bride, so I stayed by her sister-in-law, Suri Mittelman, for a while.

She was almost like a mother-in-law to my aunt, may she rest in peace. She was a little younger than her brother but liked to be in charge at times and was quite verbal in her opinions. This uncle hid out as a *goy*, though he still looked too much like a Jew to dare to venture out, so his sister, with her blonde hair, was able to go out and she felt that she had saved his life and this was probably true. As such, she felt a motherly instinct to continue directing her brother's affairs.

After a while I moved in with the young couple and became a family member. I felt pretty bored, since there was very little for me to do. My aunt was very strict with me, stricter than I liked! When

I read a book from the library, I had to hide it, so I made a point of reading at night when everyone else was asleep. I never asked if I can go to the public library. I knew all too well what the answer would have been!

When she discovered my "crime" she was quite upset. I told her I would gladly let her see the books, I'd gladly let her censor them since they were innocent and not offensive in any way. The public library of sixty years ago did not have the undesirable reading material of today's libraries, and of course, there were no Jewish books or libraries in those times, no Judaica of any sort. But she told me she didn't want to go against her husband's wishes, and therefore *goyishe* books shouldn't come into her house. I was a teenager, as rebellious as a teenager of today can be (maybe less verbal than the children of today would be) and I am afraid to say that I disregarded her wishes and continued to bring books into the house clannishly and I continued to read them as avidly as before.

Today, when mothers complain about how difficult their teenagers are, I understand them both, the teenagers and the mothers.



My aunt Pesu (Ellu) with her first baby Chaya Surele, and uncle Yide Leib Weiss

I see how difficult it is to discipline them, and on the other hand I remember myself at that age and I tend to understand them better than what they give me credit for, because I have "been there"!

I became friendly with my uncle's niece, *Peri*. She came every day to visit me. She had a mother and a sick little brother at home and her mother wasn't doing too well either. She was somewhat younger than I was, but we hit it off well and became close friends.

Soon enough, my aunt was expecting a baby and didn't feel too well. She became edgy and nervous. Now I understand more about her situation, then I was innocent and clueless about her condition and her resulting edginess. My aunt hired a help, an old maid who didn't see too well. Still, she helped out somewhat and it was definitely better than having no help at all.

When her baby girl was born, they named her *Surele*. My aunt gave birth in the house, so I had to leave for a while. Nobody wanted me to hear her suffering the pangs of childbirth when she had the baby. I ran to the neighbors. I was so petrified - at my age I never associated pain with the *simcha* of the birth of a baby.

After a while, I came back home. The house was quiet, my aunt was resting and there was a beautiful little baby girl. She was a cute baby, and very pretty. I enjoyed the new addition to the family. This baby was truly a symbol of rebirth and renewal. With her she brought hope that life **could** and definitely, with the help of the *Bashefer*, **would** go on!

Chapter 12

Uprooted Again

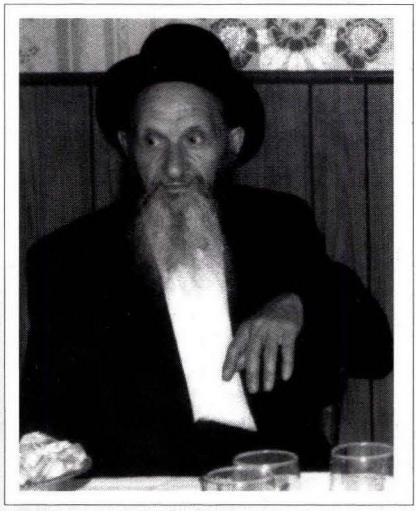
About a half a year passed and my aunt and uncle decided to leave Romania. The wandering was to start again. We'd barely put down roots and settled. Now, those roots were to be torn up and out, and resettled in our own land, *Eretz Yisroel*, and so it was, Palestine was the next place of choice. It was still under the British Mandate in those days and not yet known as Israel. It was 1947, just a little before the War of Independence and the consequent founding of the Jewish State..

And what about me? They could not take me along because I was too old to be claimed as their daughter, and too young to go independently. What would happen to me now? Again, I felt the sharp lack of a mother and father, a home that was truly mine and a sense of real belonging.

My Uncles



My Uncle Shmilu



My Uncle Leibu

I ended up going to *Fetter Shmiel*, my mother's brother, who lived in Kosice. People were always traveling from Satmar to Czechoslovakia, though not always legally. With post-war regulations and changes of border, it was sometimes impossible. My uncle, he should rest in peace, sent me on this journey along with his friends because the way was too hazardous for a girl alone. Because we were still refugees, we didn't have the right documents and couldn't go through the border legally; we had to smuggle ourselves through at the risk of being caught.

I wasn't enjoying the adventure too much. It was a group of three men, and I felt uncomfortable but I had no choice and tagged along without anyone to talk to, on a trip that wasn't legal. We went by car and by boat and the trip lasted a few days. If there would have only been some other young girls to keep me company, it would have been a grand adventure. Instead, it was an uncomfortable journey which I eagerly awaited to come to an end.

Boruch Hashem we arrived safely and I was delighted to be with family once again. My uncle and aunt were very nice to me. They weren't too strict with me. They didn't agree with the strict discipline of *Feter Yide Leib* and *Mime Ellu* Weiss, although they themselves were extremely *Chassidish* following the *Satmar shita* all the way! My family was more *Oberlander* — which wasn't quite so extreme but somewhat more lenient. Fortunately *Feter Shmiel* understood me, and so did his wife and they weren't quite so harsh with me, which I appreciated.

They already had a baby girl and her name was *Miriam*, though they called her *Mariamchu*. Under normal circumstances, she would never have been named *Miriam* which was my aunt's mother's name. She was young enough, under normal circumstances, to still have her mother alive and well. However, this was after a war that killed so many, including my aunt's mother, so there was no question as to what to name the child.

Then came a little boy whom they named *Sruly*, after my maternal grandfather.

In that neighborhood and in those days, it was fashionable to learn a trade — either in school or privately. My uncle insisted I should learn something useful for the future so I chose "muhimzes" — this was the art of sewing on applications. Since linens in those times used to come with applications on them, sometimes monograms, initials or even as a decoration, my uncle felt that it would be a useful skill.

It was fun; I was busy every day, learning the trade. I went to a factory where a lot of young girls worked together. I caught on quickly and I was quite good, the boss would say. My uncle paid for me to take this course, but I never ended up using this skill somehow. However, after spending time at the factory I became friendly with other girls who were learning how to sew. They boarded in the *Agudah* Home for Girls — a home for young survivors without parents.

Every *Shabbos* I visited the *Agudah* Home. *Shabbos* was very *lebedig* up there. They sang and danced in the afternoon. I always

looked forward to going there when *Shabbos* came; it was the highlight of the week, a special treat to be among girls my own age, a place where I was able to feel carefree and relaxed, something that had taken me a long time to achieve.

I especially enjoyed spending time with Csopi Schwartz, who became my very close friend. I still keep in touch with her today. She was from the same area where I came from, from a neighboring village. She was an only child, and we became almost like sisters.

One day, out of the clear blue sky, the political situation started to deteriorate. The USSR was governing our country, but from one day to the next, they turned their attention to the Jews living amongst them in their newly acquired countries.

They were staunch Communists, and as such, they wanted that *Yidden* to work on *Shabbos*, so once again, we had to move on. They were extremely strict about this, so in desperation, everyone scrambled around looking for a way out of this new predicament.

An extremely *chashuve* man from London, England, by the name of Rav S. Schonfeld, now came into the picture. He was a man who went to England from Germany before the war and his goal in life was to save Jewish children. He organized and masterminded the famous "transports" that brought hundreds of children from Austria to England just before the war began and thus he saved their lives. They were farmed out into *goyishe* families in many rural villages where they were treated with respect, even though their ways were strange to these *goyim* who had probably never even seen *a Yid* before! One of these villages was the famous *Shefford* where a school and a *Shul* were established, and these refugee *kinderlach* found a haven of some sorts, and were allowed to practice their *Yiddishkeit* undisturbed. Thus this noble and prominent man saved an entire generation of *Yidden*. The majority of them never saw their parents again. They grew up in England and married and they established the fine, religious, *heimish* and *chassidishe* homes — a generation in England who are today grandparents and even great-grandparents. Before that, England had very little by way of *Yiddishkeit*, and to some extent was a spiritual wasteland

— a barren wilderness. This expanding and thriving *heimische* community is only due to Rav Schonfeld, of blessed memory.

Today there is a complete complex in London, England, known as "Schonfeld Square", — in honor of this great man. It's an old age home where these Holocaust survivors are spending their golden years in an extraordinary environment. Nowhere in the entire world, neither in America nor Israel, is there a place that is run on such a high standard, that is in any way comparable to this institution, where these people are aging with great dignity.

This man did a lot of *chessed* in troubled times both before the war and during those bitter war years. The *kindertransporten* were the best known of them all, and they were many! Later, after the war, he went to monasteries (located all over Europe) where parents, in sheer desperation had deposited their children for safekeeping before fleeing. It was the only chance the child had of surviving, and thus gave the parents a slightly greater chance of hiding, without the hindrance of having a young child to care for.

Here too, in the village where I now lived he came to pick up Jewish children to save them from growing up as *goyim*. He met with a lot of opposition, since many of the nuns and priests did not want to give up their charges whom they had successfully "converted," He was truly a great man who did a lot of good in his lifetime.

Now, Communism was rearing its ugly head, and the *Yidden* were in real spiritual danger. He worked tirelessly on taking us out of the country and out of their clutches. Our transport, the last one in 1947, were the children he wanted so desperately to save from Communism.

Rav Schonfeld arranged for papers to take out children from the country, who were still under the age of sixteen. All of us wanted to go; even though some of us were older. I was *Boruch Hashem* included in the transport and given a chance to leave the Communist country. At the time I was by my beloved Uncle *Shmiel* in Kosice. He wasn't too happy to let me go; I was still a very young girl. He felt responsible for me and didn't want me to travel alone

into the unknown world.

I had a friend *Libu* Ekstein, who helped me convince my uncle that I should go. My uncle felt accountable for me so he was still reluctant and did not give in so easily. *Libu* promised him that she would keep an eye on me. He finally relented and gave me permission, albeit reluctantly, probably thinking that it would be better for me to be almost anywhere rather than here under the Communist rule. Therefore it was with mixed feelings that I left. I was a little sad to leave the only family that I knew now since the war, but on the other hand, I was excited for a new life of freedom.

Chapter 13

An End As Well As A Beginning

I was very happy and anxious to travel, and have yet another experience to look forward to. To me it was an adventure. We traveled by train and then by boat till we got to London, England. We arrived on the week of *Erev Pesach*.

When we arrived in England, Rav Schonfeld was arrested because some of the girls in our group looked so much older than sixteen and that caused the authorities to become suspicious. He had spoken of a transport of young children and not kept his word. (What were they afraid of? Perhaps we were spies???) He was imprisoned for about three or four days before, with the right connections and some pull , he was allowed to go free.

We stayed in a special home for Orphans. Some girls were then placed with families. Others were shipped to Ireland, where there



Part of the gang of our transport



My friends on the boat



Clonyn Castle — Delvin, Ireland

was a Jewish community with a number of rich members who invited us to stay there with them, temporarily, at least until we decided where we wanted to settle and to live our lives.

They bought an old medieval castle, named Clonyn Castle and had it fixed it up and we went to live there. They ran the institution like a private boarding school. We enjoyed it very much there; (at least in the beginning). It was a place to catch our breaths, sit back and relax a little and contemplate our futures. Rabbi *Yisroel* Cohen and his wife were the benevolent leader of the place. We had a *madricha* in charge of the girls and a *madrich* for the boys. The older boys over *Bar Mitzvah* went to Dublin.



Rav Schonfeld

People from Dublin came regularly to check on us. They considered us as

being "living miracles" (and they were right!) A number of us children were survivors who after the war, found that they had one living parent. They remarried after the war and the child was sent to Dublin for the first few months until the "new couple" took him/her home to live with them.

Since funds were limited, the food was not the best but they did try hard to please us. After a time, boredom set in since our education consisted of a few *shuirim*, some in English and some in *Yiddish*. We were not occupied enough, we had too much free time on our hands, so it was to be expected that after a while we became restless.

Obviously we couldn't settle in this remote community on a permanent basis. This place was too isolated and not a place that held any kind of a future for us.

We spent about nine months in this secluded castle. Then, slowly, it emptied out as the children went elsewhere. In a way it was beneficial to us, as we had a chance to calm down a little and forget. Not that our terrible experiences were such that one was ever able to completely forget them, but it gave us time to come to terms with those horrifying ordeals. Each one of us had a story! We also had the opportunity to forge close friendships. Now, everybody sought to go to their chosen destination. Some girls went back to London, and some applied for visas to travel to the USA. Others sought passage to Israel.

Time went on. It was now 1949, the State of Israel was born, and opened its doors to Jewish immigration. I had my Aunt *Ellu* and Uncle *Leibu* Weiss and their family living in *Yerushalayim*.

Staying in the castle of Ireland was of course not an option for me, and I too, needed to go somewhere. In the end, my Aunt *Ellu* and Uncle *Yide Leib* insisted that I come to them where they assured me they were waiting for me with open arms. Now that the British were no longer restricting immigration to Israel, I could easily join them. And the honest truth was that I had nowhere else to go. I was pretty excited. We were a group traveling by ship, though not first class, of course. I am not a good traveler and I cannot claim that the

trip across the ocean was a comfortable one, but finally we arrived at our destination *Boruch Hashem*. I was now in the Holy Land! It was an end and a beginning combined. It marked the end of one chapter in my life and the beginning of a new one. An end to my earlier years as a child in Europe and now a new beginning in *Eretz Yisroel* as a young teenager.

Israel was not like any of the places I'd ever been to until now. Everything was strange and different, and sometimes even quite difficult. It was just a scant year after the War of Independence of 1948. They were still exchanging the captured soldiers; it wasn't quiet or as peaceful as we hoped. Things weren't organized and neither were people as up to date or as well equipped as they are today. Things there were still quite primitive. The majority of the people were struggling to make ends meet. We had some good days and sometimes days that were a little more difficult!

My uncle and aunt, *Yida Leib* and *Ellu*, were waiting for me. Their home was in *Yerushalayim*. Because it was soon after the War of Independence, there was a shortage of food. We had to stand in line with coupons to buy our groceries; everything was sold in very limited quantities. This was largely due to the fact that the *Yidden* severed connections with Arab farmers. There was also a great influx of immigrants, mostly survivors, who came to *Eretz Yisroel* after the war, and there simply was not enough food. It took quite a while for *Yiddishe* farmers to begin toiling the land and seeing results. Then food became more plentiful. However, the early years of the new fledgling State was beset with many hardships. There were restrictions, and much of the food was rationed. Once again I was hungry, (but not starved like in the *lagers*!) all the time.

My Aunt *Ellu* was a Holocaust survivor from Europe, and here, she went through another war, as the mother of two little children. The second child was born in middle of the war. She told me that whilst giving birth there was no doctors available. The birth was not an easy one and they let her struggle alone. The wounded soldiers were more important to save and help, **they** obviously took priority. The staff at the hospital reasoned that the doctors were

needed at the hospitals so they could not spare a doctor to attend a mere delivery of a baby! After all, giving birth to a baby is a natural experience — so they left her alone to struggle.

This reasoning, though logical, surely didn't help her emotionally. She was a person who had her fair share of suffering already, and a little kindness and attention would have gone a long way.

We had hard times in Israel. We had very little no food and it was insufficient. Even now I can remember the gnawing pangs of hunger that almost never left us. There was no water in the faucet; we had to fetch it all from a well. We had to bring up the water in a pail and it was hard work. Things were very primitive. There was water that we used for cooking, washing dishes, and when we took a bath we had to save the bath water to clean the ceramic floors that needed washing every single day. Water was so precious that it was rationed and recycled.

When the baby had a dirty diaper, (and it happened quite often) it was a disaster, with a limited amount of water. Washing the diapers was a tedious and hard task. This was before the advent of Pampers and other disposable diapers. (Who speaks of Baby-Wipes and scented bags in which to dispose of a used Pamper?) Does the young generation of today realize how lucky they are?

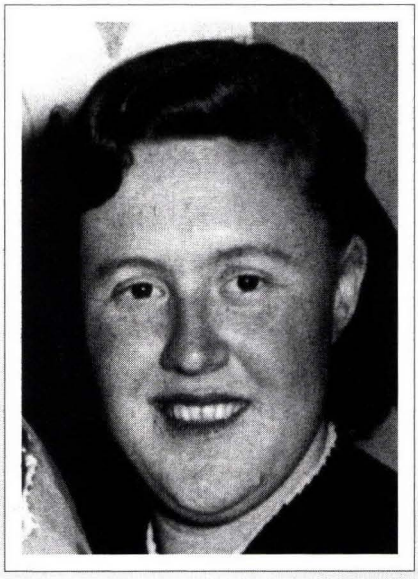
We went through quite a difficult time in those years. We worked very hard. It was such strenuous work that the doctor told my aunt that she must take it easy and see to get away a little, simply to air out and have a change of scenery. She had become an agitated person having survived two wars and having given birth to her second baby during the war didn't help. She was traumatized. Today, she would probably have been diagnosed as suffering from postpartum depression. Then, there was almost nothing to be done to help her. This was the situation when I arrived in Israel.

So it followed naturally that I became the built-in babysitter. I took care of the two little children every day for a few hours. I helped my aunt with the cooking and I did anything else that needed help with about the house. I did this for a month, and then two, and it dragged on for a third month. I had no time for friends

My Good Friends



Lily Lowinger



Klary Swarcz

or to open a book or socialize, and not surprisingly, sometimes I felt very tired and fed up with this situation.

I was still a teenager and wasn't ready to get married. My aunt and uncle, though, were pressuring me to do just that. My aunt and uncle wanted me to have my own home. I was not even seventeen yet when they tried to convince me to marry a certain boy. He was a very talented man, my uncle claimed . He would tease me that he would be ready to take him for his own daughter, but she was still a young child.

I wasn't interested at all, and refused to even meet him. They were a little angry at me, but I was stubborn. I let them know clearly that I was in no way ready yet to entertain the idea of marriage. I wanted very much to marry, and have children, raise a family but not quite yet.

Then my friend Klari wrote me a letter that I received with much excitement. In it she suggested that I should come to join her, and

I would be sure to enjoy it. She was in a seminary dormitory in *Bnei Berak* called *Beth Sara Schneirer* where a lot of girls lived after the war, the majority of them being orphans. They worked a little, attended *shiurim*, and had some free time to themselves. They did have to pay a minimal fee as rent. I was sorely tempted to move there, simply to be among girls my own age. I needed a break from the endless diapers and chores.

It wasn't easy to be accepted in this seminary because it was already crowded there. But my friend was really helpful; she went all out for me. She told the staff that I could be a fifth occupant in her room which really could only accommodate four beds comfortably. Eventually I was accepted.

I was thrilled at the concept of going to live with girls of my own age, and to get some respite from all the hard household work.

I went to work in a *matzah* factory and it was not easy but I had fun too, surrounded with friends I knew. I was a good worker, doing my work quickly and since I was appreciated for my good work, I felt good about myself, something I had not been able to indulge in too much lately. Because I was with my best friend *Klari*, I was really delighted. We walked to work together every day and went home together: we lived in the same *place*, we sharing a room like sisters. We really became close and shared all our problems. She too was alone, no sisters or brothers, only aunts — just like me. We could truly relate to each other.

My first job, which was at the *matzah* factory, was quite a strenuous one. I had to work in shifts, sometimes at night, every second week, but we worked together with a few girls, we never worked alone. Thus, we survived and tried to make the atmosphere a happy one. We were glad to have a job in those difficult times. Many people were out of work and searching desperately for some sort of income however meager.

Then Klari somehow tried to get me a job in her cigarette factory. She worked in a cigarette factory where they made better quality cigarettes for export. It was a big place, so I had a chance to get in as a packer, arranging cigarettes neatly into boxes. We had to work

very fast, like machines, (like robots — but there were no robots in those days yet!) to produce a certain amount. Otherwise, if we worked too slowly, we soon found ourselves out of a job. I used to be quite a fast worker and was considered to be one of the best workers there.

But the work was not fulfilling and it was only a matter of time before I got tired of doing this and began to wonder what would be with my life. I hoped there was something better waiting for me out there. It was now five years after the war and what did I have to show for it? I quit my job without asking anyone for advice. My Uncle *Yida Leib* and Aunt *Ellu* insisted that I should come back to *Yerushalyim* for *tachlis*, I was old enough, I **had** to settle down!

Until now, I used to go to them for every *Yom Tov* or when they had a new addition to the family to help, which was pretty often. Now they wanted me to come and start seriously thinking about marriage prospects. They were quite serious and very determined about it.

I had two aunts in *Yerushalyim* at this point, *Mime Pesu (Ellu)* and my other aunt, *Mime Monci* who was *Fetter Shmiel's* wife since they too had moved to *Yerushalayim*. They were very devoted to me and went out of their way to try to find me a suitable *shidduch*. They were both extremely busy since both aunts had eleven children each.

One of my good friend from those "castle-days" in Ireland, (It seemed like a hundred years ago — another world) Lilly, was married already, and she tried so hard to set me up with people she knew. But nothing came of these suggestions, because none of them were my *basherte zivug* obviously!

She even forced me to meet with someone she thought would be perfect for me. We went out a few times. He was called up to serve in the military after a few weeks. I got cold feet meanwhile, and I ended it *Boruch Hashem.* And I was not in the slightest bit sorry to do so. Then I moved on. My family was working hard on finding me a *shidduch* since they badly wanted to see me settled. They felt responsible for me. I understood them and could not blame them. After all I had been left without a father or mother, or even an older



In Eretz Yisroel

sibling. Who should care for me if not them? Since I loved *Eretz Yisroel* and enjoyed living there, they assumed that I'd stay and settle down there. But the future is not in our own hands and we may think that we make the decisions but in fact they are decided for us and people can only go where *Hashem* leads them. We are nothing but pawns on *Hashem's* "chess-board!"

Chapter 14

Our Marriage

Lilly knew another young man she thought would be right for me. This man's name was *Berel* Rosenberg; he was a kind and gentle person. She knew him from his visits to his parents, since he lived in America and they lived in Israel. After the war, his parents sent him to the United States because he was accepted to immigrate there.The parents weren't granted immigration papers. Lilly thought this young man would be suitable for me and she gave the idea to a *shadchan*, someone who happened to be Mrs. Rosenberg's cousin.

My uncle and aunt naturally did a lot of research and asked about this young man. They made extensive inquiries and in return got excellent information. They then convinced me that the time had come to give marriage serious consideration. I, too, felt I was now ready to settle down. Finally, it was the right time, the right



My husband family survived boruch Hashem

place, and obviously the right person.

My Aunt *Ellu* and *Uncle Yide Leib* had to give their approval, and since the young man in question **did** meet their high standards, they gave me the go ahead! My dream had always bean to marry into a big family, which it was, because I lost mine. I somehow always felt the great need to try to replace what I had lost.

As soon as I met *Berel*, and he struck me as a gentle and *eidel* young man. I knew I'd be safe with this person at my side, because his fine *middos* shone through. I needed someone to be there for me no matter where we went, and what we did, and what adversity would face us. For do any of us know what the future will bring? I needed a firm shoulder to lean on and a person to understand where "I came from". We were soon to make a major move in my life, I was to leave the little family I had and cross a vast ocean to America, so he would now have to be the sole person there for me. *Boruch Hashem* his kind and understanding nature and his intrinsic good *middos* made the move easier for me than it could have been.



Us at our weddding

Our wedding took place in the *Bnos Yerushalayim* "Hall" on Shivtei Yisroel 64, in Jerusalem on *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* in 1955. In truth, I was not too excited about the premises because it was no more than two classrooms in a school. I had been to the weddings of my friends and they had taken place in much nicer places. However, my uncle worked there and if this is what he wanted, I wanted to please him. I had a feeling of gratitude for him because after all he and my aunt had done a lot for me. I look back with a



מסדר קדושין,
Rabbi M.N Lemberger — Makover Rov

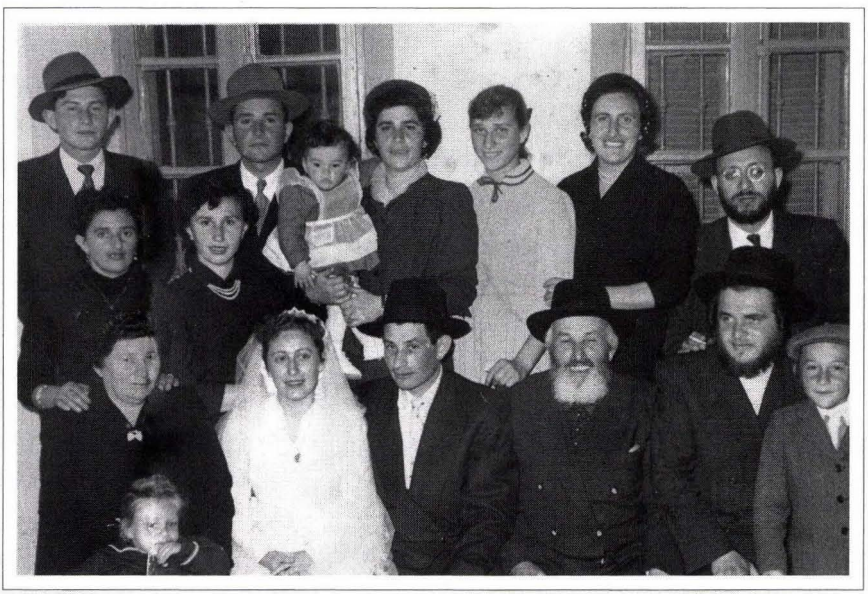


Serious moments under the Chuppah

smile when I remember that there was not even a single mirror in the place. I had no idea what I looked like with my *deck-tich* and I had to re-arrange it after the *chuppah* as best as I could without the



After the chuppah in Bnoth Yerushalayim



Family Rosenberg at the chassunah

use of a mirror. Today when I go to a wedding hall and see myself reflected all around on the many mirrors it brings back that memory, and I have to bite down on a smile!

We took a temporary *dira* (apartment) whilst we waited for the necessary papers to come through, and then we left to Canada. It was the beginning of a new life, but *Boruch Hashem* I was now no longer alone. I had someone at my side. I now had a wonderful husband, a partner for life.

We first went to Montreal, Canada, since my husband had Canadian papers. This was our first real home. We lived in a furnished room by a distant cousin. She had two spare rooms. One room was for us and the other room was for another couple. We all shared the same kitchen — three couples, and we shared one bathroom. That was a little hectic and quite uncomfortable at times. I was particular when it came to cleanliness and I found that the fridge and gas stove were not kept as clean as I would have kept them had I been the sole one in charge, but my hands were tied.

I was now expecting our first baby and had to use the bathroom quite often, especially in the middle of the night. In this public house, I couldn't keep on using the bathroom. I solved the problem by keeping a pail under my bed in our room. No-one there gave any consideration to the matter. Latrines were filthy and located outside and we were only allowed to use them at permitted times, so in comparison I guess this was gold!

Our room wasn't too big either, but we managed somehow. The greatest challenge was that my husband couldn't find a real job. A *parnasah* in Canada was not too easy at all in those times. My husband tried to go into the upholstery line but times were not good. It was almost impossible to make a go of it.

Also, the weather in Montreal was very cold. In the winter months it was almost unbearable. Coming from Israel it was really a stark contrast. Especially with the warm and humid climate of *Bnei-Brak,* where I lived for almost five years, it was so different. We then decided to move to New York. I was, at that point, in my sixth month of pregnancy and wasn't feeling the best. But *Boruch*

Hashem, that was a natural (and only a temporary) condition so we decided to go ahead with our plans.

The worst part of living so far from family was that I didn't have any close family member nearby to discuss anything, or complain to about my daily little problems. My husband had to go to make *parnosah*, so I really had nowhere to go and no-one to speak to so, I found it pretty lonely and felt quite forlorn sometimes. But the loneliness *Boruch Hashem*, was only temporary.

The next three months passed, and then came the beginning of some of the sweetest years of my life. Our first child, our daughter, *Chana Brucha* was born. She was named *Chana* after my own beloved mother and *Brucha* for the *Brucha* — the blessing - that she brought into our lives. (We were advised to add a name as my mother was *niftar* so young and under such tragic circumstances.)

This darling baby was a tangible reminder of how my life had changed. I went from being a small carefree child, to a little girl whose knees had nearly frozen on the infamous Death Marches, who had trudged along, half dead. Then, to a teenager who'd been so unsettled and confused. I was far too mature and experienced to be the young girl I really was, and on the other hand, not yet experienced and mature enough to be the "old woman" I had become! I had wandered from place to place, with nowhere to really call my own. Finally, I began to know true love and devotion from my dear husband and now I was *zocheh* to hold our own little baby girl in my arms. *I was a mother!!!* There is nothing that I can write or verbally express that can fully articulate that special feeling I had at the time. It defies language as well as one's pen!

I looked at my baby — at my own tiny little baby and my emotions were so mixed. I was so sad that my parents did not live to see this first grandchild of theirs, but I pushed away the sadness and my heart soared with joy and wonder. I thanked *Hashem* for all that He had done for me, from then until now, and prayed that He should help me further and we should never know of such *tzorros* again. We should be blessed with *nachas* from this innocent baby and with the help of *Hashem*, from other *kinderlach*!

Chapter 15

About My Husband's Family

My husband's family was from the town of Makov in Hungary.

Like Yidden all over Hungary, they too were rounded up and sent out of the country regardless of who they were and what positions they held. Luckily they were deported to Vienna instead of a concentration camp or a death camp. There, many families were forced to live together and the conditions were very bad. They lived in extremely cramped quarters and many families with many children had to share one single kitchen and bathroom facilities. There was little food and they were hungry all the time. They had to work, and they were allotted the job of working in the bread factory which made it a little bit easier. Even the young children had to work.

This was very hard for my mother-in-law who had gone through plenty of suffering in her life. She was orphaned at the tender age of three years old. Her father remarried and being raised by a step-mother is not always the easiest thing. (She herself lived to the ripe old age of nearly ninety five) Circumstances in her life had made her into a strong minded and strong willed woman, and she was very tough.

Being old enough to do so, my husband Berel had to go to work. He was sent to Seged and there his job was to cart away debris from one place to the next. The place was in shambles after the bombing and in truth there was no purpose to this work; just to keep the young men busy and to tire them out. There was no system or organization to it, simply carting the debris from here to there. It was physically very hard labor which served one purpose — to exhaust them!

The Rosenbergs were lucky enough to all be together even under these uncomfortable circumstances. The children remained with their parents and Boruch Hashem they escaped the fate that befell so many thousands, actually, millions of our brethren.

Later on they were relocated to Thereisenstad. Here, too, life was no picnic. When the war ended soon after, they made their way back to Hungary. There, once again they were lucky to get back their home. So many came back and found their house occupied by goyim who refused to budge. The anti-Semitic Hungarian authorities did very little, if anything, to help them. They really did not care. The war was over, so let the Jews take care of their own problems!

There was no furniture left in the house, it had all been stolen. Somehow they managed to do without. They remained in Hungary from about 1946 until the year 1949. In 1947, a son was born to them whilst living in Hungary. They named him Chaim. He was twenty years younger than the oldest surviving child. (3 children had died either in infancy or at an untimely early age. Berel was the oldest surviving child) Things were not rosy there and not comfortable for a Yid. Anti-Semitism was once again rearing its ugly head, so they realized that the time had come for a move.

In 1949, the Rosenberg family immigrated to Israel and moved to Givat Shaul. They were living in Givat Shaul at the time when my husband and I met. We married in 1955, and as previously mentioned, we started out first in Montreal, Canada, and then moved to the United States.

My parents-in-law followed us to the U.S.A. about ten years later.

Their children were Berel, Yitzchak known as Itzu, Mordechai known as Patye, Dovid called Dudi and Shoshanah — Shoshi who unfortunately passed away in the United States at a young age. Rivka, too, came to the U.S.S. and married. Unfortunately she suffered a debilitating illness and passed away young. Chanie and Blima stayed in Israel. Blima passed away in Eretz Yisroel and she left behind a beautiful family.

My in-laws spent a lot of time with us, and we got on well together. I may be prejudiced in saying so, but my husband was her favorite child. We spent four weeks of the year in Florida, and every second Shabbos together. My father-in-law was a very pleasant person and I really liked and admired him. He had a heart condition and unfortunately passed away while still in his seventies.

One thing I must stress is that I was proud and impressed to see the noble way in which my husband was mekarev his parents until their last days. His Kibbud Av V'eim was exemplary. I will admit that there were times I envied him. I did not have the zechus to keep this great mitzvah for my own beloved parents, except for a few short years, and I was too young to understand or realize that these years would come to an end — and so soon, or to appreciate what I had while I still had it!

My husband is a workaholic by nature and still goes into the business, until this day. May he continue to be able to do so until a hundred and twenty. In his spare time he can always be seen sitting by a sefer. He has a regular shuir every morning and every evening.

May Hashem grant him good health that together, we should be able to share and enjoy the great nachas we are reaping from our "interest".

Chapter 16

Our Beautiful Family

Time elapsed. My life took on a completely new meaning now as I entered the role of motherhood. The uncomfortably small accommodations of our apartment did little to hinder the immense joy we reaped in at this point of our lives.

Having lived through such hardships and consequent open miracles, we now had a new perception of what appreciation really meant. After all, one who has gone through the atrocities I went through, and had witnessed in my most trying years the horrors with my very own eyes, is unable to take the good things in life for granted. How can a wooden bunk in the camps, or a night spent walking in the frigid winter all but naked, compare to the luxurious comfort of a bed, albeit a narrow one, in a cramped apartment? We were overjoyed to have reached this point in life, together, with a

darling baby daughter, and a roof over our heads.

It was with this feeling of sheer gratitude that we embarked on our life's journey. When *Chana Brucha*, our pride and joy, was just sixteen months of age, we were granted another blessing, a second *lechtige* daughter, Golda Mintza. The magnitude of our joy knew no bounds as we watched Chana *Brucha* putter around her new baby sister,

Playing the part of "big sister" to *Goldy*, with the devotion that only an older sister can portray, and as we watched this, we had to smile. Each time my dear husband *Berel* would gaze at his precious *Goldy*, fresh tears would form at his eyes. Little *Goldy* was a living memorial to him of his beloved grandmother, after whom she was named. Unfortunately, she did not merit the days of seeing her great-grandchildren.

In view of the fact that we now had a new addition to our precious family, and were soon expecting another, we came to the realization that this apartment would no longer suffice. We decided to look for more suitable quarters. We found something more appropriate and affordable, and the move was soon underway. Sure enough, a short while later, we were the proud parents of a perfectly beautiful baby boy, and our *simcha* and joy knew no bounds.

I was elated. Never in my life had I experienced such immense ecstasy as with the birth of this child. It was as if a new breath had been breathed into me. "*Berel*, could you believe it?" I marveled over and over again, because I could not! I had to pinch myself to make sure that I was awake and that it was not just a dream!

My husband and I were spending a few stolen moments together in the hospital, with no interruptions from our little girls, who constantly vied for our attention.

"*Finally, after all these years of ache and separation, I somehow feel that my father's memory can begin to relive within me by naming this child after him, Baruch Hersh, may Hashem avenge his blood.*" I told him.

The *Bris*, when the name was given, was a very poignant and emotional event in my life. This was pure unadulterated happiness, but there was still a pain — that same open wound. True it was no

longer festering but nevertheless it was a wound — instead of aching it only throbbed. But it nevertheless remained unhealed.

It seems I wasn't the only one to rejoice over this child. My mother-in-law, living miles away in Israel, shared my extreme happiness and gratification to the One Above. She, too, had been yearning to be blessed with a grandchild, a boy, who would grow up to be a *ben Torah*. Our communication was mainly done through the medium of letter writing because transcontinental phone calls were at the time considered an extravagant luxury, something afforded and indulged in only by the wealthy. So through our constant letters, she received our exciting news and we received a reply in a letter that was soaked with her own tears of joyous exaltation.

One *simcha* followed the other in quick succession. Less than two years passed and we merited the privilege of another child, another boy. *Sruly* was an adorably sweet baby, named after his father's grandfather, *Chaim Yisroel*.

Those years, and the ones following them, bring to mind the most pleasant of memories. I quickly learned the ropes of child-rearing, and proudly sported my title as a "mother" and it was something I never took for granted.

Throughout all these years of blessed tranquility, we shouldered our personal burden of struggle and hardship and tried to take them in stride, and believe me life **does** have its ups and down. It is no way a bed of roses as the saying goes, but having come from where we did, we accepted everything with as much grace, as much appreciation, and as little complaining as possible.

When I stood by that pile of clothing, sorting them out, outside the crematorium, I never dreamt that one day I would be sorting a pile of children's and baby's clothing, washing, folding, ironing and lovingly preparing them for the next day for my own sweet children! Had someone said something to this effect at the time I would have laughed, or perhaps cried! It was a dream that I hardly dared to dream because it seemed to be futile and pointless at the time. However, if Heaven wishes for it to be so, then against the greatest of odds this wish could, and did come true.

Raising children is an immeasurable blessing, and yet it involves much patience and persistence and a lot of *siyato dishmayh.* Unfortunately, we did not have parents of our own who could support us, guide us and help us. We did not have their help and neither did we have their advice., and most of all their moral support. Still, we knew better than to complain. After all, our entire existence was a miracle in itself. We did our best and put in time and effort and never lost sight of the fact that each and every child is a blessing on its own. There were the usual childhood illnesses, the fights and squabbles, and the ups and downs, but we were grateful and thankful for all of them. The life we had gone though had been abnormal, this *Boruch Hashem* **was** normal!

My husband started right away with the upholstery business. It was not easy but he was a hard worker and a diligent man. After a while, his father wanted very much that he should join his brothers in a family business. They went into the line of sportswear and he wanted it to become a joint venture. My husband did, and it worked out well. After a while *Boruch Hashem* he was very successful.

The children grew up unbelievably quickly. Time, it seems, simply sped past us and transformed us first from being parents of toddlers to parents of schoolgirls and *cheider yinglach.* Then we became the parents of parents of high-school girls and *yeshiva bochurim,* and then before we could turn around we found ourselves into the *parsha* of *shidduchim.* It was like a dream. It seemed only yesterday that my aunts and uncles were so concerned about getting **me** married and settled, and now *Boruch Hashem* we were up to the same point with our own children.

Chapter 17

Moving On!

One by one, our dear children were blessed with their *zevugim* and they got married. Each wedding in our family meant another son or daughter gained. In June of 1975, *Chani* married and soon after that *Goldy* married her *basherter*. Our sons-in-law are everything we could have wished for. They were both *eidele* and *chashuve* young men with excellent *middos*. We had so much to be grateful for.

The couples married and settled down with their wonderful spouses and began to have families of their own. What these weddings meant to me only the *Bashefer* can understand! Not only had I been blessed with children but now with *Hashem's* help they too would be blessed with *kinderlach*! I always like to think of the war having left me as a thin fragile chain. I married and each child was a precious pearl that was threaded onto that chain. Then

the grandchildren would come, one after the other and join that beautiful strand of pearls. It would become longer and longer and therefore more valuable and more precious with each one! As time taught me, there is nothing as special as a grandchild and each one of them brought us immeasurable *nachas*.

We now *Boruch Hashem* possess a "heavy pearl necklace", may its length always increase! Our sons, too, got married to wonderful spouses and as the expression goes, "My cup runneth over!"

My heart was full and my tears flowed!

Then came the grandchildren. *Chani's Zalmy, Goldy's Hershy,* our son *Hershy's Yossi* and *Sruli's Reizy.* Each one of these precious *kinderlach* were blessed with many sisters and brothers and the chain grew longer and ever stronger!

So many years ago a beautiful burning fire had been ruthlessly extinguished, for no reason that we can understand. It had fluttered and gone out in the darkness of the night except for some lonely grey ashes that lay smoldering there on the ground. However, *Hashem* chose in His infinite mercy to send a gentle wind. This wind softly and tenderly blew on the ashes and they slowly ignited once again and a small flame rose. It was not a strong flame, but it burned steadily. With the years the flame burned brighter and brighter, and grew higher and higher until once more there was a beautiful fire burning. May the flames of this fire continue to grow steadily. This was my fervent prayer as I absorbed the wonderful news that another *einikel* had been born or another *einikel* engaged to be married! May each and every one of them be blessed with great *mazel* and *bracha*. May it be the Will of the holy *Bashefer* that what we suffered should be enough for all generations to come until the coming of *Moshiach*, speedily in our days!

Chani's son *Zalmy* married first and that too was a unique feeling. Each and every *simcha* brings its own joy, but the *simcha* of that very first grandchild is felt once in a lifetime. When I heard *Chani* tell me in an excited and choked voice that *Zalmy* was a *chasan*, I felt my blood run hot and cold and I shivered from excitement. It suddenly dawned upon me that with *Hashem's* help this couple

would have children too, and the beautiful chain would continue to expand. These children would carry the names of those lost and gone in Hitler's inferno and thus their memories would be perpetuated forever.

Other grandchildren followed in close proximity, and the chain of *simchas* continued to grow. More of our grandchildren were finding their *basherte* and they began to get married one after another. Each *simcha* was a special one and I found that my gratitude to the *Bashefer* did not diminish, but increased with each one. It was not something that one "gets used to", but rather with maturity and years came an even greater and more intense sense of gratitude and appreciation. There are still quite a few on "the list" and I pray that we should merit being at the wedding of the youngest *einikel* in good health and with *nachas*. Meanwhile, still having young *einiklach* kept us young, too.

We had now reached a very sentimental point in our lives. *Rosh Chodesh Nissan* was fast approaching, and it marked the day of our fiftieth wedding anniversary. It was both mind-boggling and emotional to us how all those years have flown by so quickly. I sometimes find it necessary to pinch myself to see if all this was really true. If not for the children to prove the authenticity of it, I would never have believed that all this time had really passed. *Boruch Hashem* we had so much to show for it.

The entire family participated in the gala event in honor of our anniversary celebration. I felt tears gathering in my eyes as I observed all my grandchildren, the married couples were more serious, while the youngsters frolicking around in happiness and innocence. Did these children know how lucky they were? Did they have any clue what it meant to have an undisturbed childhood that would become the stuff that good memories are made of, compared to a collection of terrifying memories that until this day can send a chill to my heart and cause it to beat faster?

But who was I to harbor such negative thoughts when *Hashem* has been so very kind to me? He had granted me a chance to live, and thereby allotted me an entire chain of generations to follow in

the wake of my life. At that moment, I was filled with a remarkable surge of appreciation to the One Above. I had only to be grateful to Him for the close and warm ties I have with my own beloved family. It still warms my heart each time one of the great-grandchildren proclaims *"elter Bobby"*. My dear parents were not *zocheh* to hear even the words *"Zeidy"* and *"Babby" nebech*, not mentioning such an exalted title as *elter Zeidy* or *elter Babby.* It is an honored title and one that no person should ever take for granted.

***

I received the news of my Uncle *Leibu's* passing with a pang in my heart. He had lived up to a ripe age of ninety seven, and had endured many a hardship in his life. Although our ties were not very close at the time, mainly due to the large distance between where we lived, I was still pained by his departure. After all, family remains family, and he was still my beloved mother's younger brother. My parent's other siblings, Uncle *Shmiel* and his wife Aunt *Monci*, and my Aunt *Ellu*, had already passed on a number of years earlier. Life had moved on for me, to being the Matriarch of a younger and flourishing generation.

All of these deaths were major milestones to me. My uncles and aunts remembered me as the little child I was in my parents' home so long ago and so far away — in another world. They were my guidance counselors in life and I reserved a deep respect for their words of wisdom. Now I became the mature and responsible adult to whom my own children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren look up to just as I once looked up to them. It was a strange situation and sometimes I found hard to imagine it was truly so.

We received a beautiful book for the occasion of our 50**th** anniversary with beautiful pictures entitled **A BLOSSOMING GARDEN** with lovely poems. The poems will appear in `chapter.

Chapter 18

So Much to Be Grateful For

As another summer approached, we began with preparations for the upcoming Catskills retreat. This summer marked the twenty sixth year of this tradition, going to Leisure Village. It is a nice, comfortable colony, which hosts a crowd of people not quite sharing my age (They are about ten years or so older than I am), each with their own history and a rich collection of memories and life experience. And each one has a tale to tell! A tale of suffering and loss, of miracles and survival. Actually, being as young as I was when the war came to our parts, I am somewhat younger than most of the other Holocaust survivors so our stories differ somewhat.

In the place where a number of bungalows once stood, there are now beautiful summer homes. But the people remain the same,

some of who still have memories of the place from the early 1970's. All of us well recall the days when little children meandered across the grounds and roamed around and the sound of their shrill voices filled the place constantly. Now these very babies are mature grown-ups with families of their own and frequently came to visit their parents and grandparents.

Our days in the mountains were always beautiful. The serenity and placid tranquility that envelopes us there each moment revitalizes the entire being. We all enjoy it and make the most of it in order to store up strength for the ensuing winter months. We have to remind ourselves that we are no longer as young as we used to be.

My husband remained in the city throughout the week, being that he could not leave his business, but for the extended weekend he would join me in our cozy summer home. He was delighted to know that I was in such good company for the rest of the week and that we were a congenial crowd who got on well with each other.

***

My husband and I are willing to provide financial support to all my grandchildren who remain in learning, which is, *kein ein hara*, a large number of them. After all, what can possibly bring us greater fulfillment in life than offspring following the path of our great ancestor's footsteps? Seeing them as *ehrliche* upright *Yidden*, who learn *Torah*, is nothing less than a balm to the soul!

We feel exceptionally duty-bound to support our sons and grandsons in learning, for we know the difficulty of not having that support. As young beginners in the business called "life", we were not privileged with the support that only loving parents can impart, emotional as well as financial. Therefore, we wanted to give our children all that we ever dreamt of receiving, but unfortunately were so bitterly deprived of. Untill we are able to do so!

Chapter 19

Not The End — The Beginning!

The end of this book which is an account of my life is similar in content to many others. A family is flourishing under my wings; men devote their days to *Torah* learning and *mitzvos*; grandchildren in abundance *k.a.h* who bring us happiness, *nachas* and pride all the time; the children growing up, maturing, and moving on in their own respective lives. It is the classical, expected turn of events.

Yet beneath that which the eye sees and what an outsider beholds lies a mountain of Heavenly intervention. This tale's end defies any hope we may have had, or wanted to have, on its onset. It simply seemed to be a hopeless situation with no way out.

Ask any child in today's day and age how she imagines her life to be as a senior. In all likelihood, the child will elaborate on the

picture of *Bubbies* baking cookies and *Zeidies* having retired from their businesses who now spend their lives learning *Torah*. They take it for granted that this is the *seder haolom*, this is how life is and it's the natural turn of events in this world. But it is not so. There is a shining layer on top but under that polish and veneer there is certain sadness and it will never leave a Holocaust survivor. It is ingrained into his very soul and etched there in blood. Oh yes, we *shepp nachas*, we dance at *simchas* and we laugh at jokes. We even crack our own jokes! We **are** truly joyful, but there is a wound that remained and although to the outside eyes it looks as though it is healed, it can in essence never be entirely healed. There are certain situations we can find ourselves in, there are certain words that are spoken, a sudden look, a certain remark and there are certain deeply buried memories that suddenly for no reason come to the fore, there is the unexplained sudden return of that old nightmare that once plagued us nightly, and the wound begins to ache again.

This is precisely the reason why I chose to share my story with my descendants and that is why I gave it the title of "**THE UNHEALED WOUND**." I want to be rest assured that the world will never forget. The horrors I've been through, together with all the others in my early days, is a part of our nation's history. The young, naïve children of this generation must be aware of their ancestors' past, for we will not be around forever to share it with them. I am sure that in a way when they read and hear of what transpired they must find it difficult to believe. I am sure that were I to read it I would doubt that it was not exaggerated.

We want them to know that the barbarism we went through was just as much the Will of the One Above, as is the peacefulness and tranquility of their own daily lives. We want them to possess undaunted faith and belief in His ways and to pray that it never happens again.

So yes, my dear children may each one of you live a life of peace, good health and happiness and may you never encounter anything near the atrocities that I and my contemporaries have been through. Know and understand that you are each one of you a living miracle,

evidence of *Hashem's* great *chessed*. Always remember to live up to the esteemed name of *Bnei Yisroel,* and may the lesson of my story be well learned. You had holy ancestors, good *ehrliche Yidden,* see to always be a source of *nachas* and pride to them.

I can now "close" the door of that "closet" but I feel that I have now emptied it of its contents!

To you all:

The beloved families on either side, that were so tragically wiped off the face of the earth, your memory lives on in our beloved children their children and grandchildren as well as future generations (many of them carrying names of you holy kedoshim) you will never be forgotten!



A translation from Hungarian of a poem/song*

Written by a group of us friends whilst staying in Clonyn Castle in Ireland (written in 1947).

A group of survivors from the horrors of the *lagers* we came
Would life for us ever be normal? Would it ever be the same?

Rabbi Schonfeld arranged this transport to Ireland, in the U.K.
And in a beautiful castle we were now settled, going to stay.

We stood there and gaped and we continued to stare and look
This only previously seen by us in a movie, or a fairy-tale book!

We settled down in this grand and elegant castle in a foreign land
It was only a temporary arrangement, we were given to understand.

To be relaxed and undisturbed, to enjoy ourselves, we really tried
Making the most of the beauty of the surrounding countryside!

Our leaders were very good to us, very kind to us as well
Rabbi Kohn, and all the others, and also the good Mrs. Appel.

They looked upon us as being miracles who managed to survive
Against all the odds we endured — we inexplicably stayed alive.

**With the use of a little poetic license*

Their pity and sympathy came through — we felt it, each and all
We were tired of it — we had enough — we longed to be normal!

We ate and we slept, we had some lessons, we went exploring
But it soon became monotonous and more than a little boring.

But we could not complain — because after all, you see
We *were* living in an elegant castle — just like true royalty!

The staff kept on changing — as did the management too
We had plenty of time to spare and really not enough to do!

Pocket-money was distributed to us — our empty pockets filling
It was the princely sum of the grand total of "*five shilling*!"

This was a fortune of money — pure riches - don't you see
The exact amount needed for going to the circus — the entrance fee!

But we had our own circus here — sometimes quite funny
Where we had free admission — and thus saved ourselves money!

They cooked with a shortening — probably bought at low cost
It was white, and swam on top of the soup, looking just like frost

Frost in this area was rare, something we really never saw in real
But they seemed to use this "frost" in abundance — at every meal.

It was cheap, it was useful, and of course it saved them *gelt*.
And we rushed to finish our portion before the "frost" would melt
And believe us — in our stomachs — for days — it could be felt!!!

The time is crawling — it is really not going too fast
Days and then weeks — and then months — have passed!

Summer, she came and she went — and then winter arrived
Life was not too exciting — but it went on — and we survived.

It became cold and we shivered — and it was not funny
There was little heat — but we guessed they had to save money!

A sudden dramatic change takes place in our boring lives
Can you imagine — from London — a new transport arrives!

And of course there is no need for us to mention
They were the celebrities — the center of attention.

We were the old-timers — as newcomers, attention *they* did get.
Do you think we were jealous? — Yes we *were* — you bet!

Wake up call for breakfast daily — oh what a bore
It was something we decided on — to choose to ignore.

There was very little served — by way of food.
So we felt we were being both supportive and good.

They did not think we were right — or even being funny.
Whereas we were doing *them* a favor — by saving money!

Every Sunday the visitors came — from Dublin's Fair City
To visit us poor orphans — oh what a *rachmonas* — what a pity!

They felt very virtuous and righteous — full of self admiration
To see to what good use was being put — their every donation

And we *were* living in a beautiful castle after all — we guess
So we nodded in agreement and answered them. "Oh Yes!!!"

Poems



Taken from ***"A BLOSSOMING GARDEN"*** *a book written and illustrated by the* ***Rosenberg Family*** *on the occasion of our* ***50th wedding anniversary***

THIS IS THE END OF MY BOOK,
BUT IN TRUTH, IT IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.....!

the Linkenberg's

On JUNE 24th 1975
In a great simcha, Zeidy and Bobby took pride
What a big wedding celebration.

On this joyous occasion
A new generation is building its foundation

It's continuing the Family Tree
Oh what A beautiful legacy!

Along came Zalmy the first grandchild
Over him everyone went wild

Then followed Devorie and Zlaty
What a nachas for Mommy and Tatty.

Tzvi and Sruli came one after the other
Energetic and musical — a two team brother

Rivky, Sury and Ruchy have each other for company
Moshe has brothers to play — not many.

Yocheved and Chaya Miriam get along so nice
Menachem adds to the family — the spice.

Kein ayin hora the family has grown some more
And you should see from them — only nachas galore!

The Linkenberg Branches

LINKENBERG FAMILY #1

So happy and gay
All children are unique in their own way.

Menachem, the oldest great-grandson great grandparents he made you be
From Menachem, Gershy, Mindy, Baruch Hersch much nachas you should see

The Schwartz family — what a lebedige bunch they are
Let's start by the youngest, Chumy, a comedian- a star

Sruly and Menachem Yoel, what a pair
Can you forget about Miri the oldest, so dear?

Look what smiles the Appledorfer kids are giving you
Such a cute bunch — there is such a few.

Miri and Moshe get along so well
Little smiley Yocheved so cute that everyone could tell.

LINKENBERG FAMILY #2

Is always on the go
First Boro Park, then Monsey next the mountains full of snow.

Smart clever Elimeilech keeps his mother on her toes,
What will be his next step? No one knows!

Frimi the sweetie —
what a girl! Such a cutie

Yanki and Mirele, what a pair
Yummy Yanky is loved by all his uncles and aunts — very dear.

They listen how their father music does play
Yanky will still be his competition one day!

the Lerner's

It all started out on a sunny afternoon
A beautiful wedding it was in June.

Tatty and Mommy became husband and wife
It was the start of a brand new life!

First came Hershy a first born boy
To the whole family it truly was a joy.

Along came Mendy — the two became a team
Of music and mischief together they did dream.

Then came an Erev Shabbos treat
Ruchie was born — so cute and so sweet.

Another Erev Shabbos treat did arrive
When Yitzchak with his red curls came into our lives.

The fourth boy was born — hey! That's not right
Because Suri was born, a true delight.

On Purim the new Mishloach Manos we did adore
Frumi now made between the girls and boys — an even score!

As a Ben Zekunim, Moishy is the cherry on the top
Running after him — we do not stop!

Mazel Tov Hershy and Chani = what a pair
A shidduch made in heaven — that is clear

When Zipporah was born the simcha was great
As the #1 grandchild she surely does rate!

First Mendy and Liba surprised us, making us as happy as could be
With the two new additions — Yitzchak Dovid and Naomi

On Erev Pesach a surprise was in store
When Eli and Ruchie became engaged
— kashering went out of the door!

If all the skies were parchment
And the quills were made of trees
And the ink to write the words
Were the waters of the seas.

We would almost, never be able to finish — to end
To mention all the good things
That over time — you did extend.

And the one thing
We hope to give in return
Is nachas and simcha
At every turn!!

the Rosenberg's #1

Your 50 years together commemorate a lot
Look what time has brought you —
and look what you have got!

Two people that gave over
Their time — their minds — and more
To keep us all together
With support and love galore

There are children that marry
And families they tend
Not knowing from where to start
As for themselves they fend.

But we **ROSENBERGS** know much better
With such parents at our sides
We need not fear tomorrow
For together we face Hashem's tides.

We give shevach to our Bashefer
Who has given us this gift
Of tatty and Mommy Rosenberg
To give each one of us a lift.

We hope to never disappoint you
For we try more and more each time
To be living Yiddishe examples
To continue such an honored line!

May Hashem grant you many more years together
As a complete family
And together may we all be zocheh
moshiach Tzidkeinu — soon to see!

From the very beginning — a union so beautiful — so nice
Hershy and Malkie gave shevach that words would never suffice.

Then on Rosh Hashanah of 1982 their joy was overwhelming
Not to mention a tear or two!!
A cute adorable boy to make this family complete.
Yossi so lebedig, a dream — a treat!

With that Rosenberg smile we've come to know
Our family tree was shining with nachas to show.

What's life without a brother? To share treasures and strife
With Zalmie around — we certainly don't have a boring life.

With a name like Meshulem Zalmen we have a lot to expect
We were certainly not disappointed, you have seen nothing like it yet!

Girls! What a joy — how could we not be happy and thrilled
As new additions were welcomed — our clan we continued to build

A Libby! A Goldy! Could one ask for more?
For life without sisters would certainly be a bore.

Two girls! Two boys! Who says life must be so neat?
As we welcomed our new addition, a nachas so sweet!

Chaim Shimon arrived with weather so cold and chilled
The Rosenbergs were once more so happy and thrilled!

Did we say something about balance and neat?
Well, as far as perfect goes, this family is a must to meet.

For now with the arrival of this adorable boy
Our family was once again even and full of joy!

Enter little Sruly, what a name!
For both Zeidy and Babby to share in it's fame.

And thus our family tree continued to grow
We delighted to share in our nachas, the stars of our show!

Baba was missing at this point in our life
But we did have some consolation as the next girl arrived.

A Yocheved joined our wonderful family crew
With that winning trademark smile — she proved to be one of a few.

How about another sister — now would that not be sweet?
Lo hand behold once again a yummy treat.

A Mishloach Manos — all cuddly and pink
Surele, another adorable child to our family link.

And if you think that it's ever enough
Pessy will prove that life can be tough.

Her smiles and her chochmah keep our family glowing
Together with Zaidy and Bobby our nachas keeps growing.

Rosenberg with Rosenberg — a new shidduch — did you hear?
As Reiny joined our family — that momentous year.

Now a couple to share in our family tree
What a pleasure to welcome Yossy and Reiny!

Then on Yoss's birthday we received once again a gift.
As the first einikle Shloima Zalman gave us a lift!

Off to Switzerland this sweet couple flew
And lo and behold we watched — as this sweet family grew.

Yocheved was born — so far away — yet so close
Once again baba was remembered as this name we chose,

Little Ruchie was born just as the Swiss chapter was coming to an end
Now this adorable family — off to Lakewood went.

Enter Cipora — with a smile of no compare
Another couple in our nachas to share.

Once again Zalmy and Cipora made us so proud
As little Sruly joined our happy crowed.

In Israel this couple decided to stay
we try to keep in touch — and enjoy them — even from far away.

Welcome Shloimy = a new son in law — surely something new
A couple like Shloimy and Goldy there are but a few.

Sharing with nachas — can be difficult you know.
As off to far-away Eretz Yisroel this couple did go.

Little Yocheved Leah to make a family so cozy — so sweet
An adorable picture — so yummy — what a treat!

We look forward to continuing providing nachas and joy
Zeidy and Babby — pleasing you is our ultimate ploy

the Rosenberg's #2

Zeidy and Bobby you hold so dear
Each of them is unique and rare

All of us add to your life spice
The greatest part is that we get along so nice!

Raizy the oldest came along one day
What a lovely smart girl — happy and gay!

Chany's face you always see in smiles
Her kind heart reaches miles.

Then the gang of boys came along
With such a "lebedige bande" you can't go wrong.

Yoely, Zalmy, Toivy, all in Yeshiva they excel
From far their parents kvell
They are the finest boys that everyone can tell.

Zlaty the youngest we cannot leave out
She's the most liked girl, we have no doubt.

The Rosenberg Branches

What a simcha — what a delight
When Raizy got engaged on this joyous night.

Ari and Raizy what a nice couple
The family is slowly starting to double.

Who can forget Erev Pesach so busy?
When the engagement was now for Chany!

What joy to the family Levi Yitzchak and Chany bring
Another chain to the family link.

With our two yummy einiklack who can compete?
Yocheved is so active she doesn't miss a beat.

Little Sura'le so charming
Her smile is so warming

Yocheved and Sura'le a pair we see
Good friends they will continue to be

So what do you say to our family?
Zeidy and Bobby we hope from us you will much nachas see
The Family Tree continue to grow till one hundred and twenty!

the Rosenberg Family saga

On this very day — fifty years ago
All the world was excited letting this joy to everyone know.

What was the simcha and all the fanfare?
Today, under the Chupah went a Chosson and Kallah so dear!

On this special day a new Bais Ne'eman B'Yisroel was being constructed
The immense celebration was surely paying back for all that the Nazis haddestructed.

When the beautiful wedding was over at last.
The brand new couple went straight to their task.

Through tests and travails
They surely did prevail

Their goals were clearly set out
They wanted a home with lovely children no doubt.

After months of anticipation
A lovely baby was born, what a joyous celebration

This little darling Chani was loved by all
With her uncles she surely did have a ball.

Then another adorable girl came,
Goldy, was she given a name

The two yummy kids played together all day
The Rosenberg Family was happy and gay.

As the family was growing some more
In came Hershy who never allowed life to be a bore

So the Rosenberg Family was as busy as a bee
Through winter, spring, and running to the country.

Then another precious gift came their way
It happened on that very lucky day.

Little Sruly was born
And the family he surely did adorn.

How beautiful the two brothers got along.
They kept each other busy with pranks and a witty song.

How quickly the years flew by
Life surely does fly, the kids became big
And the household became lebedig.

The two boys to Yeshiva were sent
Over Gemaras earnestly they bent.

Chani and Goldy in school did excel
They were the best girls in town, this everyone could tell.

Then the Shadchanim came knocking at the door.
"We have the best boy," they did roar.

One by one, par excellent Shidduchim the kids did do
After all, the Rosenberg Family was the greatest, everyone knew!

So now new nachas came.
In the role of being Grandparents — a whole different ball game.

Their lives were filled with joy
Enjoying every grandchild — girl or boy

Before you had time to turn around
The nachas surely did mount

Chasdei Hashem, grandchildren,
under the Chuppah they were able to see

Now you are very lucky to see great-grandchildren,
vaks and bli

But the most important part to this nice saga
we can't leave out
Such a wonderful story does not happen by itself
— we have no doubt.

Zeidy and Bobby all your life for your children you toil
In the hottest heat for your children you did boil

Your whole life for them you did give
You should see much nachas and a long life live.

All the years of hard work you put in your kids surely does show
That's what we all know.

That you are parents so rare
We hold you to us, so very dear!

You nourished their souls with food for thought
And nice gifts for them you always bought.

On this very big day
We ask Hashem only good to send your way

Till 120 years you should live to be healthy wealthy and wise
You should be worthy to see the dark cloud of Golus rise.

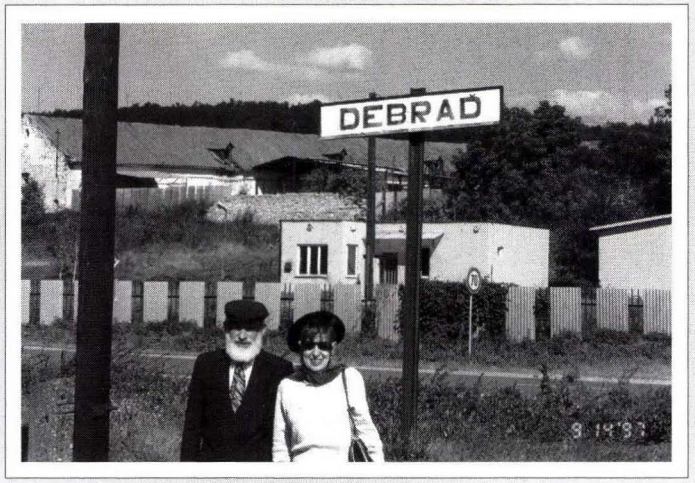
And together to Yerushalayim Ihr Hakodesh we will ascend
So we ask Hashem please the to Geulah to send.



Pictures

Visiting my Home Town

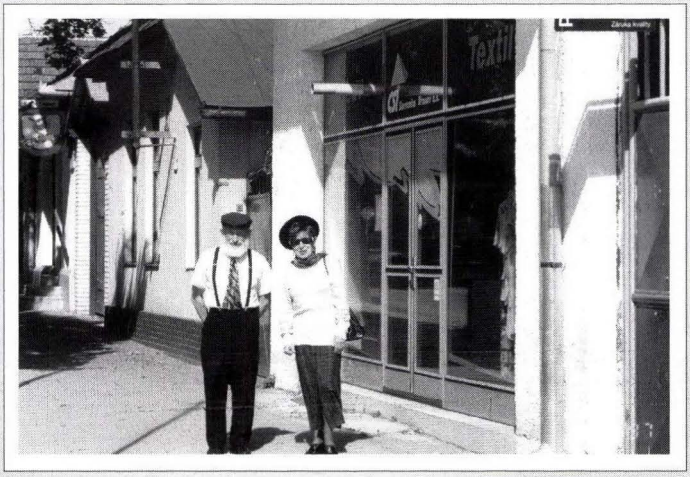
This is my home town our house from the back



My grand-parents lived here in Szepsi Moldava [Nad Bovdou]



My grand-parents House in Sepsi





From school day memories we use to visit castle on the hill



This was my favorite (spot, the) school I dreamed of but never got in



the Shul in Mako in my husbands home town

Growing Up Stages

Our Kids, when they were smalll



Captured in the right moments





Summer
with Taty



Summer
in the
country

Bar Mitzvah's



Boruch Hersh's Bar Mitzvah



My mother-in-law and my sister-in-laws



Sruly's Bar Mitzvah



With our children



Zev & Chane Bruche Linkenberg '75



Chaim & Goldy Lerner '79



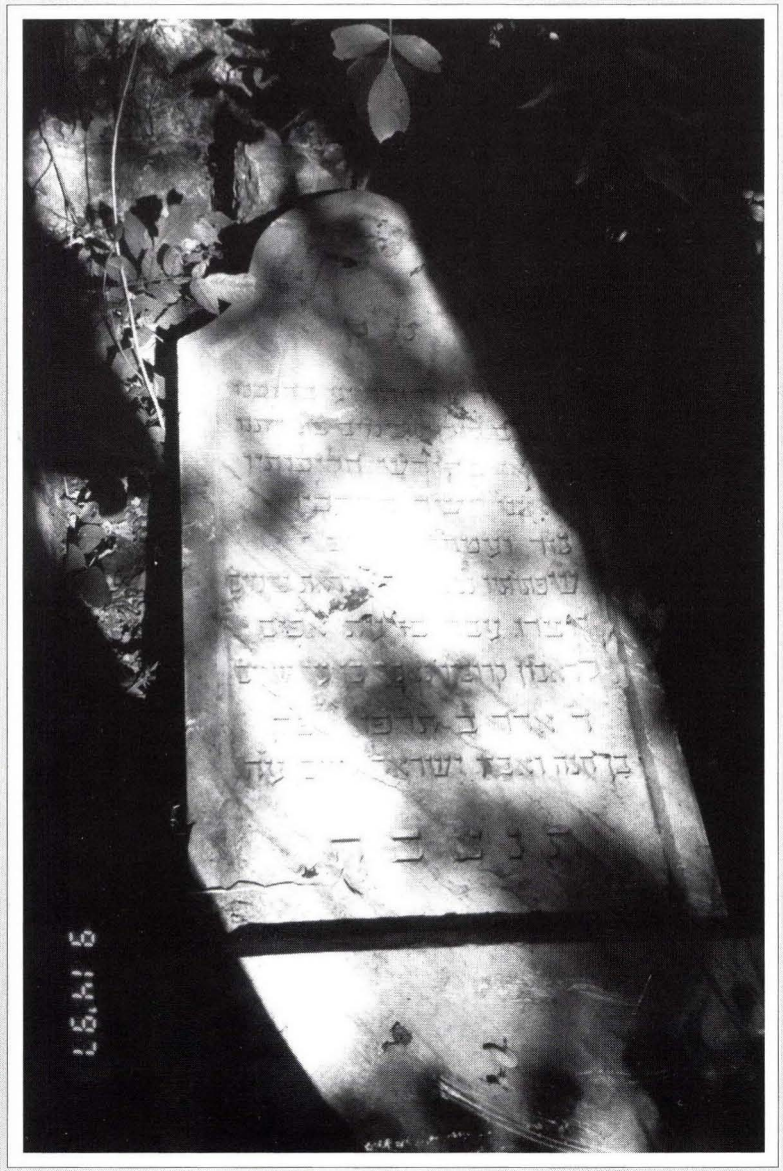
Boruch Hersh & Malky Rosenberg '80



Sruly & Malky Rosenberg '81

Great-Grandparents Kvorim

Liba Weiss, my Great-Grandmothers kever
Sepsi, Moldava



Usher Anshel Weiss, My Great-Grandfathers Kever
Sepsi, Moldava