

עץ חיים

Soon You'll Need an Orchard



Chana Thee

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Soon You'll Need an Orchard

by
Chana Thee

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*Upon seeing a painting of our family tree, my
daughter Shirley said, "Soon you'll need an orchard."*

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I would like to devote this book to my husband, the best partner in my life till February 19, 1989, when Hashem said: "You had him for 58 years, be happy. He belongs to me." Chaim Thee died as a Tzadik.



Contents

Introduction	7
--------------------	---

Part I

Chapter 1

<i>Roots: The Klugman and Weitman Families</i>	11
--	----

Chapter 2

<i>Childhood</i>	17
------------------------	----

Chapter 3

<i>World War I</i>	20
--------------------------	----

Chapter 4

<i>Between the Wars</i>	26
-------------------------------	----

Chapter 5

<i>Chaim Thee, My Partner in Life</i>	33
---	----

Chapter 6

<i>Living Under the Nazis</i>	41
-------------------------------------	----

Chapter 7

<i>Belgium</i>	63
----------------------	----

Chapter 8

<i>Escape From Europe</i>	73
---------------------------------	----

Chapter 9

<i>At Last — America</i>	77
--------------------------------	----

Chapter 10

<i>The Holocaust: the Horrible Truth</i>	82
--	----

Part II ❧

Diaries and Poems	99
Glossary	247
Poems in Hebrew	272

תוכן עניינים לשירים בעברית ❧

272	הקדמה
ב	מלחמת יום כיפור
ג	לכבוד יום העצמאות השלושים של מדינת ישראל
ד	על שפת הים
ה	לים נישואין לסבא וסבתא
ו	אזכרה על אהובינו מליסקא וסביבתה
ז	אזכרה
ח	איך ליוויתי את חג החנוכה
ט	מעשה העז מאת ש"י עגנון
י	החוויות
יא	ביער ובעיר מאת עגנון
יב	חג הפסח במשפחה
יג	יזכור
יד	ירושלים
ט"ו	הוקרה בשכנים הטובים
ט"ז	אגודת יד שרה
י"ז	תודה לאב בשמיים
י"ח	"ליל הבדולח" 1938 – 1988
י"ח	גר צדק בימינו
י"ט	ונפוצותינו כנס
כ	מה צריכים לעשות לגבי יהודי רוסיה?

Introduction

November 1989

Why do I write this book? First of all I always liked to write down some special occurrences in my life. Sometimes I expressed it like in a diary, or even put some special emotions into poems. When I was active in some organization I liked to write out my notes if I had to speak. Little by little it collected in many notebooks or pieces of paper in my handbags, all kinds of junk. I didn't feel it is of some value for anyone, and had an impression that my children see it as just another hobby. I didn't feel encouraged by my children to write more. With the years when I took upon myself, in the name of our *Landsmannschaft*, to make an *andarta* for our *kedoshim* of "Libai," which stands for four towns in the area of Galicia including 129 villages in which all the Jews were exterminated by the Nazis in the years 1940-1944, our children became very interested in the biography of our origin and always asked me questions about our relatives. As the family is, *Baruch Hashem*, extended and I cannot tell everybody about many things at their present ages, I tried to put as much as I know in a book as a biography. I consider myself "young" enough to undertake this task.

I am grateful to Edward Levin, for his help in organizing the chapters of the book, and for his good suggestions about including some pictures. My thanks to the lovely secretaries in Top Office for their devoted help.

The selection of photographs was the most difficult task I faced while writing this book. If I had included all our dear relatives and our friends in America and in Israel, an orchard wouldn't be enough, I would have needed a forest. As for my children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, I don't need their pictures — I have them. I hope the few photographs I have included give a taste of my blessed life.



Part I

CHAPTER 1



Roots: The Klugman and Weitman Families

As the mother of four fine children, and as a grandmother and great-grandmother, I feel a responsibility to introduce the members of my family to their roots — my and my late husband's grandparents, parents, and relatives. Many of them were killed during the Holocaust, and this will be their only memorial.

I know that my mother Gita was the youngest daughter of Abale and Keile Klugman. She had three older sisters: Brandal (called Brancia; we called her “Ciocia,” which is Polish for Aunt), who was married to Naftali Ungar; Sima, married to Kalman Leib Retter, in Sadagora. They had eight children (Sarah, Wolf, Jacob, Malka, Yisrael, Avraham, Keila [Babie], Benyomin); and Balcia, married to Leibish Ginsberg in Lisko. They had five children (Gitcia, Jacob, Brancia, Nachum, Benjo).

My grandparents also had one son, Nathan. His wife was our Aunt Gittel. They lived in the same house with us upstairs. They had six children (Esther, Shaya, Leibish, Srulu, Moshe, Pepi).

I personally don't remember my grandfather Abale Klugman, but I heard a lot about him, and I'm very proud of what I know. He was a great *Talmid chochom*, a famous *mohel* (for which he wouldn't take any money), and a very successful businessman, in the clothing business. He was a mild person, and very charitable. He learned *milah* only to be of service, to volunteer. He himself sat most of the time in the *Beis Medrash* to learn. The business was left to the ladies, his wife and his daughters. But a few times during the



Top row, from left: Uncle Yitzchok Weitman, Jacob Ginsberg, Sima Ginsberg, Eva Weitman (niece of Aaron Weitman), Aaron Weitman, Benjo Ginsberg (on a visit from Israel). Bottom row: Gitcia and Balcia (Jacob and Sima's daughters), c. 1935

year my grandfather used to travel to Budapest and Vienna, where he stayed for several weeks at a time, buying large quantities of used clothing, which he sent home in very large bales for sorting and alterations, before they were sold wholesale and retail. Sometimes he took along his son and his sons-in-law to teach them the trade, to learn how to sell and to evaluate material. They would stay away from home for several weeks. And suddenly the big bales used to come in, one by one, from Budapest or from Vienna. And when those bales came, everyone in the house was busy with the unpacking and the sorting. There was also a whole workplace in the house, with machines and tailors. They fixed things, turned them over, and patched them — whatever was needed to put everything in order. For this kind of business it was necessary to have a special license, only a few of which had been granted in the town.

This was already after my grandfather's time, because I don't remember him. When Grandfather was already in Eretz Yisroel, I don't know who did the buying of the merchandise. I do remember the bales coming in. And one time I climbed on the bales and went up to the highest shelf in the store. And I vanished up there and fell asleep, and all of a sudden I fell off the shelf, but I wasn't hurt. We were very involved in this, and very happy. Sometimes we looked in the pockets and we found a cigarette holder, or a whistle. There was a lot of fun in unpacking, and we helped as much as we could. As long as we were not in the way, the adults didn't send us away. The unpacking was done mainly at night, because in the daytime the store had to be clean, to receive customers.

My grandmother Keila, who also came from a very dignified family of rabbis (Chajes), was a very able businesslady. Besides *davening* every morning and caring for a large growing family, with the help of good, reliable maids, she was a very respected businesswoman. She was known for her honesty in business. Many of the Jewish customers called her "Reb Keila." Their children were trained in the business, as well as being educated in *limudei kodesh*. Secular education also was important for them.

Some of the married children also lived in the same house with their families. Of these, I want to especially mention their oldest daughter Brancia, married to Naftali Ungar, a very great Talmudist. They were childless. She was an authority both in business matters and in family responsibilities.

After my grandmother Keila passed away, my grandfather Abale Klugman left for Eretz Yisroel, to spend his remaining years in the Holy Land, which had always been his dream. He signed over the business to my uncle, Naftali Ungar, making an agreement that his children would send him money, which they did, until the First World War broke out. I remember also one time we sent him a cake. It went around too long, and couldn't be delivered. The package came back to us, and the cake was just one piece of worms. So my *tante*, Ciocia Brancia, took it straight to the San River and threw it in. This is one of the few things I remember about my grandfather; this was probably just before the war. He remarried and lived in Safed for ten years, until he died in 1914. The family

found out about his death somewhat later, when we were in Budapest or in Bohemia, because of the war.

I have no idea whether anything was done for a *matzeva* for him. This is very painful. When I came to Israel with my husband in 1958 as tourists, I felt that my first obligation was to go to Safed where he lived and was buried, to find out if he had a *matzeva*. I turned to the *Chevra Kadisha*. They gave me a *shamash* who remembered that my grandfather constantly sat in the *Beis Medrash* and learned. He took me to the old cemetery. My husband, who was a *kohen*, could not go with me. The *shamash* and I looked at all the overturned *matzevot*. It was a real disaster. He explained to me that there had been an earthquake, and then in 1936 the Arabs had destroyed the cemetery. We went and went — it took more than an hour — and at last, he said, “This is the row that I remember. Your poor grandfather is supposed to be someplace in that row.” But we couldn’t find the exact place. I was very desperate to have it found, to know where it was. If there was no *matzeva*, I was willing to put one up. But we didn’t know exactly where it was.

I mentioned this to my older son-in-law, Julius Behrend. In 1968 he and his wife took another trip to Israel with us. We slept over in Safed, and at 10 o’clock we had an appointment with the *rosh kahal*. We went to look. My son-in-law was determined to look until he would find it. Grandfather lived there and he died there. It couldn’t be that he was not there. Once again, we went over the entire cemetery, for three hours. The first *shamash* was no longer alive. I talked to someone else from the *Chevra Kadisha*, I gave him money, but nothing could be found.

(In the scroll we put in the monument for the *kedoshim* from Libai, with the names of all those who were killed in the Holocaust, I mention my grandfather. That’s all I have.)

* * *

In my time, Ciocia Brancia was the main businesslady. Although she was a petite person, and not very strong, she had the mind of a giant, and was very independent. Whatever she undertook came out just right. My oldest sister Sima showed great

talent right away in business. She became the main person in the business, until she married her cousin Jacob Ginsberg.

My grandfather on my father's side was Joseph Weitman, the mayor of Baligrad, a rich and respected hotel and estate owner. My grandmother's name was Hinda. They had many sons. As much as I can remember:

Uncle Yitzchok Weitman, married to Beila, with four children (Jacob, Josef [I think], Chaitcha, Ruchtche — who, together with her husband Aaron, made the wedding for Chaim and me);

Uncle Berl in Nizankowice, who had twelve children (including Josef, Tilly, Rivka, Tovya, Shimon, and one son, whose name I don't remember);

Uncle Herzel and Aunt Rachel Weitman, who had five children (Esther, Chava, Chana, Chaim, Hersch);

Uncle Manes Weitman, married to Reisel, who had five children (Avrum, Shimon, Jacob, Ruchtche, Moishe).

Uncle Herzel and Uncle Manes remained with their families in Baligrad, a town in Galicia. My father, Mendel Wolf (Menachem Ze'ev) Weitman, was the youngest son.



Uncle Manes Weitman, c. 1933

They also had two daughters: Aunt Rachel Wilner lived in Dobromil. She and her husband didn't have any children of their own. The other daughter, our Tante Perlei, was married to Baruch Kampf, a banker. They lived in Moscisko in Galicia, and had three children, two sons and one daughter: Joseph, Escia, and Falik (who would later guard Balfour as an officer in Eretz Yisroel).

My parents had a separate business; however, they lived in the same house with Brancia and Naftali (in separate apartments), while my father both studied Torah and learned the men's clothing business. When the children came and their living quarters became too small for them, they rented an apartment and a store and became an independent family, with my mother helping in the business and a housekeeper taking care of the children. My mother, the youngest in the family, was very much loved and praised for her constantly doing good deeds. She was known as "Gita the *Tzedekis*." She would take care of families which had been struck with sickness. Even in the late months of her pregnancy she would go in the wintery slush and mud to bring help of all kinds to her sick friends. They also told how beautiful she looked, and that she never complained of hard work. She bore six children, all girls (Sima, Keila, Esther, Rosa, and myself — one died after a week). When I was born, people teased my father about having another girl. He used to answer, "My girls are better than other people's boys."

Suddenly my mother had to leave me, when I still was a nursing infant, to travel to Lemberg to a dentist. She was treated there, and received temporary fillings. She couldn't stay too long, since she had a baby and small children at home. After she came home, she developed blood poisoning and died, at the age of 29. I was one year old at the time. I don't remember my mother at all. The oldest child, Sima, was 12. She had to leave her last year in school to help out in the business. There was a maid for the children and the housework.

CHAPTER 2



Childhood

This death was a disaster for my father. He couldn't find any peace of mind. He was very heartbroken. After a period of great mourning, my aunt Ciocia Brancia offered to take care of the children, so that he could be free to find a proper place to settle and make his living. He was assured that the children would be waiting for him, whenever he would be ready to take them.

I never felt any lack of affection and love. I never was lonely or unhappy. Our Ciocia loved us with all her heart, and so did our Uncle Naftali. Our father would constantly write us long letters from Belgium, and would visit us and bring presents. Our Ciocia didn't find the right time and place to let the children change their place of learning and join our father. We were so well-established that she was afraid that a new environment would harm us. Then my father went to Germany. He tried many ways of supporting himself: as a teacher in a Hebrew school, as a *kashrut* supervisor, and as a member of the *Bet-Din* in Cologne.

After six years of being alone, he remarried and hoped to bring his children to him. His wife had a daughter the age of Esther, the third of his daughters. We kept corresponding regularly, and Papa also came on visits. He saw how well-organized the family was, with the children helping in the business and in the house, receiving a good *Yiddishe* and secular education, and being well-adjusted in general. Our Ciocia was against the children leaving to live with a stepmother. In the town they knew that we belonged to Brancia,

who was a highly respected person because of her charitable deeds and great wisdom. Our Ciocia cared very much that we should be well brought up, to be religiously educated, and to have good friends.

It was a fine home with good habits of helping others at any time. As a school girl, I was the messenger to many poor families, bringing them material help from my dearest good-hearted aunt. For some breakfast, for some chicken soup with meat and compote, for others just a piece of raw chicken, with cake and a little wine, and for many just a few kroners, especially before a *Yom Tov*. Our life was a happy one, full of hope for a better future. The belief in the Almighty was very deep-rooted.

I was a very happy schoolchild. I remember once in the first grade I went to the cemetery to pick yellow flowers for my teacher. I went with a friend of mine. We knocked on the door — we knew where she lived — and brought her a bouquet of flowers. When I hear how people complain about the behavior of teenagers today, my time as a teenager appears to me very clearly. When people talk about children being bored in school, all the situations in my school years appear clearly before me, and I think that today as then, it was a great privilege to be a student in public school, starting in the first grade, as well as the higher classes. Besides your parents, a teacher was the most respected person. If a teacher looked at you it was considered a compliment. Everyone sat quietly in the class, following every word and gesture of the teacher. The lesson was worked upon in school, students were asked questions, and homework was given every day in every subject. The hours were from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Girls and boys were separated in school. There were two different buildings and separate administrations. The school for girls was under the supervision of an elderly gentleman we called the Director. He was a lovely grandfatherly person, who came back to teach after his retirement. All the other teachers were women, mostly not married. They were very refined, exceptionally well-dressed, and well-groomed. They always smelled of a fine perfume. Christian religious education was taught by a Roman Catholic priest. The Jewish religious teacher was a Jewish woman who had studied in a theological seminary.

Everybody in the town was my friend, both before and after the war. Every day Ciocia would give us a kreutzer, to have a glass of milk straight from the cow. I went with a few of our friends to one of our fellow students, whose mother had a cow. She would milk the cow and give us fresh milk. Half of the cup was foam. There was a saying that if you washed your face with the foam, you would be a pretty girl. So I did this, like everybody expected. I still remember the wonderful taste of this milk.

CHAPTER 3



World War I

The Escape from Lisko

Then the war broke out. Lisko, in Galicia, which was part of Austria at the time, was occupied by the Russians for two weeks. It was especially difficult for young girls; they disguised themselves as old women, got their faces all dirty, and hid under the bed whenever there was a knock on the door. After having experienced one Russian occupation of the town, with fear, sickness, and danger, when there was a threat of a second invasion everybody ran away to Hungary or Austria, especially those with girls in the family. Our whole family decided to run away too. At the last minute, my aunt decided to stay with our uncle. They took into their house a refugee family from Moscisko with 16 children which had been stranded in Lisko with no means. They stayed and lived fairly comfortably in the house, keeping an eye on things and helping our aunt and uncle. There was a sufficient stock of food in the house to last a long time. At that time Uncle Naftali had lost part of his vision, as a result of learning and writing a book in poor light. Although the eye specialists tried to help him, they were not successful. This was another reason why our aunt decided to stay home.

It was very hard for my oldest sister to leave them, but it was urgent and we went with Uncle Nathan's family to a train. Our destination was Budapest, because we had relatives there. I remember I carried a food basket. We had to walk. A soldier

helped me with the basket. In the end he took out a bulkule roll and disappeared. We had a hard journey, going partly by foot and partly by cart. All along the way we saw dead horses. We rented a wagon for the baggage and the smaller children. We had to meet our family at a certain place. Rosa and I were sitting on the baggage in the cart. The driver went to get another pair of horses, because the ones he had couldn't carry on any more. Rosa and I were left on the wagon, waiting for the driver to come back. In the meantime, people from our town passed by, going in the same direction, just to get away from the fighting at the front. Then we heard the destruction of a bridge — the same bridge we had crossed only a few hours ago. We were very frightened. As it was before evening, Rosa left me sitting in the wagon to wait for the driver, who was supposed to bring us to our elder sister Sima, who was waiting in Mezelaborce. Rosa went with the stream of people. All I knew was that my sister Sima had put us on the wagon and paid the driver to bring us to her. Since she told me to stay here, I had a responsibility to stay put. But after a while (I was only nine years old at the time), I became frightened with my older sister gone. When I saw a lady I knew I ran after her, calling her name. When she saw me, frightened, alone, she took me along with her family. We went by foot with other people. It was night, and I got lost from everyone. I mixed with strange people, crying all the while. An officer, also all by himself, had pity and gave me chocolate. Then I saw somebody from our town and I was told where my sisters were waiting for the wagon and for us. The reunion was a miracle. I cried bitterly, hoping not to be punished for leaving the wagon. We were in Mezelaborce, which was on the Hungarian border. From here we went by train to Budapest. For the first time in my young life I traveled in a train. It was wonderful. The finely dressed ladies gave us chocolate.

Budapest

We arrived in Budapest on a Friday. Uncle Nathan Klugman led us to a relative's house. Chaim Schwalb was his name. We stayed over the weekend, until we found an apartment to rent.

Three families occupied a small apartment. There were our

Uncle Nathan and Tante Gittel and their six children. The older ones were Shaya, Esther, Leibush, and Srulu, between the ages of 12 and 19. Moshe was seven years old, and Pepcia three. We were four sisters: Sima, about 19, Esther 14, Rachel (Rosa) 12, and I was about 9. In one of the rooms lived a dear older couple, Mottel the Streimelmaker and his invalid wife. Their daughter, Blima Segal, served them. I don't remember if she also lived there with her husband and infant son. They were very fine people. We all lived like one big family in a three-room apartment. The toilet worked poorly, with so many people around. The bedbugs I will always remember. We had to burn them out.

The girls, besides me, went to work in a paper bag factory. The older people worked at home, sewing buttons on military coats. I was the little shopper at the grocery. Not far from us lived an uncle, Herzel Weitman, and his wife and children. He was a sickly person, constantly coughing. Aunt Rachel was busy with her married child, who gave birth to a girl or a boy, I don't remember which. There was another, unmarried, daughter, Chana, a son Chaim, and Herman, the youngest. I used to visit them very often, and to this day we are very close, even with their children.

I liked Budapest. With no school, I strolled around the city free as a bird. I went to the market; I enjoyed watching the people buying and selling. On my walks I saw a different type of women. They strolled the street dressed very flashy, but I didn't ask any questions. I played in the yard with children whose language I didn't understand, but I remember being happy. In the house people were busy, some cooking, others sewing, and I didn't bother them. I also played with my two younger cousins, Moshe and Pepcia.

My father heard from the Red Cross that we were refugees. He got our address, and came from Cologne to stay with us. Afterwards we moved to a better apartment, with only Uncle's family and we four sisters. I remember the attention my father gave us, and especially me, the youngest, and how I sat on his lap at every meal, and our walks in the park with my other sisters. This was our happiest time, but it didn't last long. In May 1915, we had to leave Budapest.

Bohemia

The government sent us, as refugees, to Bohemia, to a village by the name of Shoendorf-Seifersdorf. We rented an apartment in a farmhouse. In the bedroom there was one bed for Sima and one bed for Papa. Rosa and I slept on a mattress on the floor. The people were very friendly. My sister Rosa and I were registered in school, she in a higher grade, and I in the first grade. My father took our sister Esther, the next to oldest, and went back to his home in Cologne. She was 14 years old at the time. My father's second wife also had a daughter the same age, and he thought that they would get along together. The war was still going on in our hometown. As soon as the Russians left the area, our oldest sister Sima went home, to care for our aunt and uncle and to reestablish the business, after the enemy had left the town in a bad shape. Rosa and I had gone with a carriage to take Sima's satchel to the train. On the way back, with the empty carriage, Rosa and I suddenly felt very mature and responsible for each other. Rosa and I were moved to the house of Uncle Nathan and Aunt Gittel and their family. This house was in the same village, but much further from the school. I felt at home with the family, had friends in the neighborhood, and loved school, although it was far to go to. I still have fond memories of this village in which I started school and learned the German language. In winter it was very cold, with heavy snow, but it still was a happy time in my life. The little school had just two classes and only two teachers, besides the principal, but the education was thorough and practical.

We had to live on relief. Rosa took her role as the older sister very seriously, and cared for me in every possible way. This was a bad time of food shortage. We did not have enough bread. Except for Pesach, we didn't eat any meat. I remember we bought a rooster. I went with Uncle Nathan to Reichenberg to a market, where we bought *matzot*, glasses, and so on. I loved to travel.

Rosa had stopped going to school much earlier. Nothing could persuade her to continue. She occupied herself by sitting on a little chest, using a chair as a table, and wrote all day long, 18 hours a day. She copied out passages from books of poetry and other storybooks. She had a beautiful handwriting. She also read a lot.

Because she had so little exercise, she became fat. She was not on good terms with Uncle, but everything was fine with Tante and the children. I liked Uncle very much. It was like one family. In the summer Rosa and I went to pick blueberries, which we sold. Rosa was very economical, and saved up for material for a dress for each of us. These were the first dresses that had been made for us by a dressmaker since we had left home. I was closer to Rosa then than at any other time. From our small savings she bought a nice apron for me, her baby sister. She made me very happy. We never had to fight.

Back in Lisko

In 1917 Sima came and took us both home, when the fighting stopped.

Rosa felt that at 14 she was too old to go to school, so she had private lessons. She did not like to work in the store, so she took over most of the housework. I went to the third grade, and once again began learning in Polish. I had many friends there.

I liked to help in the store, which was connected with our living quarters. It was very hard to make a living then. There was no material if you wanted to sew a dress or something. We started in business again as a men's clothing store. All we had to sell was paper suits. These suits, which were not cheap, melted in the rain. Where there was a lot of rain — there was a hole. So we thought that this is not an article to be sold.

Sima was the buyer. After the war, or perhaps when the war was still going on, and there was no merchandise to be had, my sister Sima went to Bohemia, to get merchandise. She collected dowries from engaged couples of whom the groom had died in the fighting. The young ladies, who were very disappointed, needed money very badly, and they sold their dowries. My sister bought many of these and brought them back home. The clothes and the linens were very good, and this was profitable. But this also entailed making a dangerous trip. My sister, a young woman, had to travel in trains with soldiers as the only other passengers. But, thank G-d, she never had any trouble. Due to her intelligence and her upbringing, she completed these trips very successfully. This was our bread and

butter. She became the main person in the business, until she was married.

Political conditions kept changing. The Bolsheviks took over for a short time and wreaked havoc in the town, plundering and raping. Then the Halerczyks (the soldiers in General Haller's Army) gave us a bad time. They would tear beards from Jews in the street. Then the Ukrainians came, and finally the Poles once again. There was much anti-Semitism the entire period. Two of my cousins, Nachum Ginsberg and Srlu Klugman, went to learn with a *rebbe*, a stranded refugee, who opened a yeshiva. There was a curfew (either 7 or 8 p.m.). They went out five minutes after the curfew, and were arrested and brought to a girls' school, where prisoners were kept. The Poles beat them all night, and afterwards they were so black and blue that they couldn't sit down for days.

My father came back from the Austrian army and stayed with us in Lisko.

CHAPTER 4



Between the Wars

In the 1920's and 1930's, a crisis developed in Poland, because of revolutions, economic depression, and inflation. The Russians thought the Jews had money and they took everything away. And now the Poles came, and they found a new way to take away — taxes. Every time new taxes, higher taxes. The youth became restless and felt a need to find a solution.

The ideal of organizing and going to Palestine as builders of a homeland gripped the young Jewish people. They studied the Hebrew language, learned trades in farming, building, and other types of work. They organized in groups, some with both boys and girls, for discussions, readings, songs and hora dances. These activities gave them a feeling of importance and, under reliable supervision, they developed good relationships in the group and prepared themselves for the time when they would go to Palestine.

I was active in our group. In 1926-27 I became a leader of a group of children, who were only a year or two younger than I was. Every week I collected them and we read. Although I was popular and happy, I could foresee a depression in my country. None of us could get “certificates” for Eretz Yisroel then, and at the first opportunity, I joined my father and two sisters in Berlin, in 1928. I left Lisko, and the group remained organized. They completed their trade and got certificates, and they went to Palestine. Thanks to this little leadership, these people's lives were saved. They founded families and were very successful. They helped build Israel; they

were, and still are, the soldiers in Israel, the manufacturers, everything.

Today we can look with pride at the accomplishments of such groups of young people, who did not have high school education, but rather an ideal and determination to live a life of dignity, like all normal people in their own homeland. They came with a strong sense of duty and responsibility for their children and the whole Jewish people, to reorganize them as an able nation, with honest intentions of working and building their own homeland. No matter how hard it was to get there, and only very few came before the Second World War, they performed a miraculous job, which at the end led to the independence of the State of Israel.

A Flashback to My Dear Lisko

When I think about my childhood I recall:

*How neighbors greeted each other
From afar they noticed one another.
They knew if one struggled for a life
If one's child was sick or one's wife.*

*In case of financial worry
Help came through credit in a hurry.
My aunty, and also others, might
Bring help for the ill and watch by night.*

*The little schools were full of boys
They studied Talmud, had no toys.
The adolescents in the Synagogue
Grew into spiritual geniuses, not demagogues.*

*Suddenly progress knocked on the door
Youth tasted freedom, strived for more.
It came to a split between young and old
The young came out victorious and bold.*

*First secretly, organized they became
 Studying, playing theater, was their game.
 To learn a profession they were guessing
 Would bring some day expected blessing.*

*"Israel" which in the past was fantastic
 makes them pioneers and enthusiastic.
 The ideal and hope enriches their being
 United by a vision when a "New Life" seeing.*

(This poem originally appeared, in Yiddish, in the memorial book for Libai — the communities of Lisko, Baligrad, Ustryzki [Isterik] and Lutowisk.)



Youth group in Lisko, 1927. Pepi Freilich (far right, second row)



Mizrachi organization in Lisko, c. 1937

Nachum Ginsberg (ninth from left, top row)

Jacob Ginsberg, the president of the organization (far left, top row)



*The Zionist Organization in
Lisko, c. 1920-21*

*Bottom row: (right) Nachum
Ginsberg, (left) Moshe Freilich
(Pepi's brother). Middle row:
(left) Moshe Friedlander, (Chana
Weitman's first Hebrew teacher)*



Brancia Ginsberg, c. 1919



*Srulu Klugman (l.) with
Shmaryahu Lerner, a friend
from Lisko*

Sima married our cousin Jacob Ginsberg in 1921. He had courted her for ten long years. She had been afraid to marry him because his father, Leibish, had a very strong character, and she was afraid that she would suffer from a despotic husband. The truth, however, is the opposite. Jacob was very mild and good. He was the businessman, and she was the businesslady. They had three beautiful children, and they had a very decent, fine, life together.

As soon as possible after Sima's marriage, Rosa went to our second sister Esther in Berlin. Esther too had just gotten married. It was in 1922 that Rosa left Lisko. At home, before she left, we used to sleep in one bed, and would talk half the night. She was always good and considerate to me. Her departure was very hard for me, since I had never done housework. I cried a lot. At the same time, however, we wanted to see her happy, away from Lisko.

Berlin

Rosa and I met again in Berlin, in 1928, in Esther's house. Once again we were together. She was good to me. She was proud of me, because I had developed into a nice looking, talented young lady with an interest in life. Rosa had a good position and was happy with Esther and the family. Esther was pregnant with her third child then.

I was happy when a little later Ruchcia invited me to live with them. It was too crowded with Esther after she gave birth to her son Isi, her third child. Esther was sick for three months, and Rosa was busy with her job, so I had to take over and, thank G-d, I nursed Esther back to health. Then I went to live with Ruchcia. This was a very interesting period. I loved Ruchcia and Arzi (Aaron) Weitman. They were my protectors when I came to Berlin. They had no children of their own. They wanted me so much that they really kidnapped me. They went to my sister's and took all my clothes; I had a sewing machine there, and they took that too. Their home was as sweet and warm as a person could find, except for that of one's own parents.

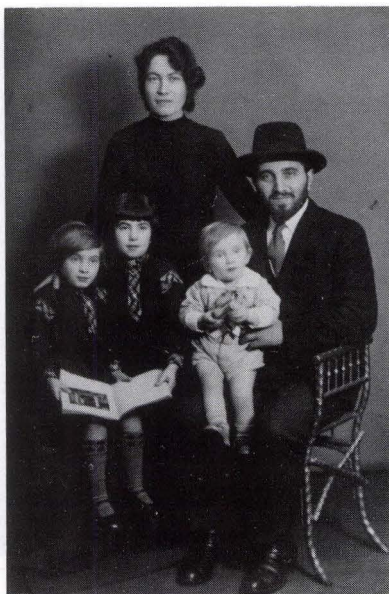


From right: Esther, Chana, and Rosa, with a friend, 1928



Top row, from left: Esther Nestel, the Kindermadchen, Rosa.

Bottom row: Esther's daughters, Heni and Betty, 1928.



Esther and Samuel Nestel and their children. From left: Henie, Betty, Izzi, c. 1929.

CHAPTER 5



Chaim Thee, My Partner in Life

On a Sunday afternoon in November 1929 Chaim Thee and I met each other in Berlin. This introduction by a *shadchen* turned into a courtship of thirty hours.

We went to a Cafe "Mofty" and started to talk nonsense, after an hour or so we had very much to talk about. By the time we went home it was 12.00 p.m. Going there we travelled by bus. The way back he took a taxi and asked me if he could see me tomorrow. During the whole way I didn't give him an answer. When closer to home I told him that he looked very young to me and it was a problem. As natural and as humorous as he usually was, his answer was "I'm getting older." The truth is he looked rather like a Bar Mitzva boy. I always wanted a more mature fiance.

He picked me up the next day, and on the next he took along his brother Yitzchok (Egon) and Yitzchok's wife Sabina and 2 children, Sami, 5 years and Estie, 3 years old, and we all went to Cafe "Koenig." Sami said to me: "I know who you are, you are Onkel Hans' (Chaim's) *kalla*."

He had happened to be a guest by his brother's for Sukkos and was ready to leave when someone (a lady by the name of Mrs. Honig) told him about me.

The dating continued during the whole week, five days each of six hours of dating, which made 30 hours. Before he left for Kiel where he lived with his oldest brother and family, we were ready to unite.

Out of respect for his brother he wanted his opinion and his blessings. Two weeks later his brother Joseph arrived. Joseph, who regarded his younger brother Chaim as his holy responsibility, and a sister-in-law of his, Sala Feldman, visited us at Ruchcia's home on a Friday night. On *Motzei Shabbos* he called up his brother in Kiel. On Sunday the young man came and an elaborate engagement party with all our relatives was arranged. We were wined and dined by the entire family. This was November 1929. After our engagement, I was invited to Kiel by my fiance and his brother and sister-in-law. There I met all the relatives, who received me very warmly. In fact, I had a room for myself with



*Chana Weitman and Chaim
Thee, 1929*

Aunt Ehrman, who showed me much hospitality. Each and every family of the cousins invited me to their homes. They also came to visit us, and I was made to feel very much like one of them.

After all my immigration documents were in order, and after a beautiful year of correspondence, on November 2, 1930, we got married.

Wir beehren uns hierdurch, Sie zu der am Sonntag den 2. November 1930 7 Uhr abends stattfindenden Hochzeitsfeier des Fräuleins Anni Weitmann mit Herrn Chaim Thee gen. Feldmann in der Wohnung des Herrn H. Weitmann, Holzmarktstr. 5 ganz ergebenst einzuladen.	קול ששון נקודת- קול חתן מסבירים אנונה בזה לבקש פאט קרובט ושוודעט לטא לקחת חבל בשמחתנו האז יום כלילה בנות הימים הכלה הבתולה הסמללה הבחור והחן הסמלל סרת חן נה חתן עני נסר חיים רוב יחי החופה תהיה איה בשפטים ביום א' מ' ור"א י"א ט"ו חשוון תרצ"א בשעה 7 בערב בשטח הר' אהרן ווייסמאן האלעמאקסשטאט 5 האיה בשמחת בנים נשבת לבם נשולבם
Mendel Wolf (Weitmann) Josef Feldmann u. Frau, Köln. u. Frau, Kiel, Karlstr. 9	מזכיר וואלף ווייסמאן ורעיו זוכף פערמאן ורעיו אשת הכלה קעל אה החתן קעל

Telegr.-Adresse: Weitmann, Berlin, Holzmarktstraße 5

Druck M. Oppel Berlin NO 43, Lietzmannstr. 4

Our wedding invitation

It was a very *bekovedicka* wedding. People sent congratulations to Ruchcia and Aaron on the wedding of the niece — they thought I was their niece. Actually, I was their cousin, from one side a first cousin, from the other side a second cousin.

Chaim and I lived a very loving, happy, moral, honest life together for 58 years. Our profit: 4 children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

The Thee Family

This is the time to tell something about Chaim's family. His father was Abraham Moses Feldman, the *chazan* in Rawa-Ruska in Poland. He was also a *sofer*, and his *tefilin* were highly valued. Abraham's first wife died after having three daughters: Esther Malka, Rifka, and Pearl. His second wife, Chaja Sara Thee, was the younger sister of the first wife. She gave birth to six children — two

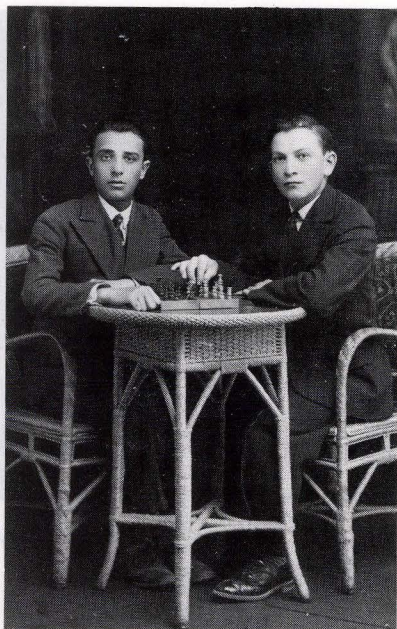


Rifka Zucker (Chaim's sister) and her two daughters Blima (l.) and Chana, Przeworsk, 1936

girls: Miriam and Henia, and four boys: Joseph, Izchack, David (who died young), and Chaim. Chaim's mother died when he was five years old. His father remarried and had another son, Shlojmo, who was the only one of the children to inherit his father's good voice.



*Henia Feldman and Chaim
Thee, 1925*



*Shlojmo Feldman with friend,
Rawa-Ruska, 1929*

Joseph was the first to leave Poland for Germany, where they had relatives. Izchack was the second to leave. They both married and built their lives in Germany.

Joseph married his cousin Runiu. Izchack married Sabina Stechler. The two brothers worked as salesmen and built their families.

Chaim was very close to his father. When the father was ill, Chaim took him to the doctor, and to a resort to recuperate. In 1927 Chaim, with a heavy heart, left his father and his brother Shlojmo under the care of his sister Henia.

In Germany with his two brothers, he learned the trade of a salesman. The two brothers Joseph Feldman and Chaim Thee were especially close. (They were brothers from the same parents, but registered differently, which explains their different last names.) They lived in Kiel, while Izchack with his family lived in Berlin.



Chaim Thee — "Prince Charming" — 1928

They were close with their relatives in Kiel. There was Aunt Rachel Ehrman with her husband and 8 children, 6 of whom lived in Kiel, one, Martin, was in America, and one, Beno, in Berlin.

Martin was the one to help most of the family to eventually come to America. The Tante and Uncle had decided to live the rest



Joseph Feldman and family, Kiel, 1934



Chaim Thee, businessman — Kiel, 1936

of their lives in Poland. In 1933 they left Germany. Their oldest daughter with family was deported to Poland in 1938 and murdered along with all the other *kedoshim*. Tante Rachel and Uncle died a natural death in 1939.

Our New Home

The family suggested to me that we have a large apartment, so that the two families could live together, because it was hard to get a smaller apartment. As a *kalla*, there already was a bond of oneness. The expecting sister-in-law, with three girls, and the newly married couple lived together in harmony with love and respect for each other. We became Uncle Chaim and Tante Anni for the three girls and the yet-to-come son Alfred (Avi).

There was such a natural feeling of oneness that Tante Anni bought material and made three beautiful dresses for the girls and an outfit for Tante Runiu, who substituted as mother-in-law, older sister, and a devoted and trusted friend to the girl from Berlin, who was hungry to continue her studies and for the big city cultural life. She helped me to settle in as a younger sister-in-law, devoted wife, and eventually new mother.

It would be hard for today's generation to understand that a life of such closeness can work and bring happiness, love, and trust for

so many years of good and bad times. The mutual help, mutual *simchas*, and, *chalila*, crises were worked out together.

When the families expanded, it was necessary to have separate quarters, yet there was not a day that passed that we did not visit each other.

CHAPTER 6



Living Under the Nazis

Coming from Poland, knowing anti-Semitism, we didn't find living under the Nazis such a terrible shock. We didn't regard the Nazis as something serious. We thought it wouldn't last. Today is bad; tomorrow will be better.

In 1933 an incident occurred in Kiel. There was a boycott of Jewish stores. Nobody could go into a Jewish store to buy. This was on a Shabbat. At every Jewish store, two SA people stood. They were the brown ones, the SS were the black ones. In one instance, the store owner's son — he was a lawyer — wanted to go into his father's store. And they did not let him. "It's my father's store, I want to talk to my father." They did not let him go in. In the beginning, we didn't know how serious things were. They started to struggle. Somehow, the SA man took out a revolver and the other one wanted to turn it away. It went off and the SA man was killed.

Right away this Jewish man was arrested, and was in jail. After a few hours — it didn't take long — a lot of SA people came to the jail. They tore off all the locks, pulled him out, and lynched him. This was the only terrible time that we experienced in Kiel all those early years. The lynching made a terrible impression on us. As life went on, however, we didn't forget this, but we said, this was just one occurrence, it wouldn't happen again.

Life went on. After five years of separation, I came back to Lisko for a visit as a married woman with my 16-month-old Ali. I felt very sad, not seeing my Cicia and Uncle Naftali any more.

They had passed away, first Ciocia with pneumonia in the winter of 1928-1929; then Uncle followed her, also with pneumonia, three weeks later.

The joy of Sima and Jacob at our visit was indescribable. Their children loved their little cousin Ali, and really spoiled him with their attention. Sima felt that she had a grandchild, and she showed him off to all the neighbors. We were treated to a vacation in the resort of Husele, on the other side of the San River. Sima took a nice apartment so we could comfortably spend the time. We bathed in the water and spent much time in the fresh air. Sima also hired a girl to help me with the baby. It was here that we received our friends and relatives.

In 1934 our second child, a girl, Gita, was born. People came to buy and the children went to school. They already had to go to a separate Jewish school. I had a German girl, a *Kindermädchen*, to help out with the children. In 1935, it was forbidden for Jews to



Top row, from left: Benjo Ginsberg, Chana, Jacob and Sima Ginsberg, Pepi Klugman. Second row: Ali with Jacob and Sima's children: Balcia, Jossi, Gitcia



The Thee family in Kiel, 1935. From left: Mrs. Thee, Gita, Ali, Mr. Thee

have a Christian girl as household help. I could have a 56-year-old woman, but not a younger girl. I needed somebody, because I was helping in our clothing business. So I had an older woman, who gave me trouble. She couldn't do anything, and she was very demanding. She put herself to bed, and expected that I would serve her. At last, I got Eva, a lovely German Jewish girl. She wasn't just a girl servant; she was what they called a *housetochter*, she belonged to the family. She knew all the relatives, the girls, and the Jewish teachers in the school. She was 17 years old when she came to us. I made a party for her 18th birthday, and I baked a special tort. We had a very lovely time with this girl. But when the Nazis came to send us to Poland in 1938, they sent her away. I remained alone with the children. That was a very bad time.

Not everything, however, was black. The German people, our customers, were our friends. Sometimes, despite it being forbidden to buy from Jews, they came and bought from us. Many good things happened during this period. In our building there was a

grocery store that sold all kinds of delicacies. We didn't eat meat for six years, because *shechita* had been forbidden. So we needed a little more butter, which was very scarce in Germany at the time. The man in the grocery knew this, and would always put in an extra pound of butter in our order.

There was a boy who helped out in the store. One time — it was before Christmas — he carried the bundle upstairs for me. I told him, "Willy, you are free to choose whatever you like, a pair of pants, a shirt, as your *Weinachten* (Christmas) present." He had always been very friendly to me, and he was always ready to help me with the baby carriage on the stairs. So I wanted to be nice to him now.

After the war, in 1958, on the way to Israel, I stopped off in Kiel. I saw Willy, and he cried and cried. He did not know how to express his happiness. He *shlepped* me into the office and introduced me to his wife. He invited me to his house. Every morning that I was in Kiel, Willy sent me a basket full of goodies: giant strawberries, a package of crackers, a package of chocolate. And until two years ago we always exchanged New Year's cards.



Willy

He would send us flowers by telegraph, and I sent him family pictures and told him about my new baby, Shirley, whom he didn't know. He always wrote and asked how the children were. This is my experience with the German people.

Papa

My father was living in Cologne, while we were in Kiel. His second wife had been bedridden for eight years, and he had taken care of her. As a result, he couldn't work much. When she passed away, in 1936, I specially went to see him. I said to him, "Papa, you have 4 choices. If you have something which holds you here — your environment, your friends, your being used to Cologne — you will have every possibility of living here comfortably. If you want to try living with one of the children in Poland, try this out. You can live with us, or you could live with Esther in Berlin. And wherever you find to be the most pleasant and convenient place for you, that is where I would like you to settle down." I told him that we would see that he had no financial worries, no matter which choice he made.

He listened to my advice. He said that there was nothing to tie him to Cologne then. He had the choice of living in Poland. After all, he had been born there, and my oldest sister was there, with her children and her husband, a wonderful son-in-law. He went to Poland for a visit and stayed there for three months, before deciding to come back to Germany. Then he had to decide where to live in Germany. In Kiel we had a very comfortable apartment. He could live like a king. But he had no friends his age, and he could never find somebody with whom to have conversations, besides us and the children. So this also was not the right place for him. He chose to be in Berlin, where he had a lot of relatives. He had his Gemara classes, he had someone with whom he could discuss Torah, he had the *Beis Medrash*, he had the Hasidim, and he felt very comfortable. My sister Esther was very willing to have Papa with them. We were in a better financial position than they were, and we wanted to contribute for them to have a larger apartment, so that there would be an extra room for Papa. We came often to visit. My children gave him the greatest love; he was the Opa. This

didn't last long, because in October 1938 Papa, my brother-in-law Samuel, and my cousin Aaron Weitman received the deportation order to Poland. They didn't wait for the police, but went on their own to Poland, so they could choose where to live. Papa went to Cracow, my brother-in-law went to Stry, which was his hometown, and Aaron went to Lemberg, where he had a sister. The end was all the same. The little bit of time that I spent with my father, I enjoyed to the fullest. I'm very proud of him. No matter how far he was from his children, no matter how much he suffered — from loneliness and sometimes from poverty — his children were his whole life. His letters and cards to me always started, "*Meine liebe susse kinder,*" my dear, sweet, children — never anything else. I never saw other fathers being so close to their children, kissing them so much, as my father treated his children. He was hungry for the presence of his children. But life is funny, and we could not be together much.

There are moments in our lives that bring longing for our dear ones who just vanish without a trace, without leaving a single sign.



Ali, two years old, wearing a sailor suit. My father adored him.



*Baruch Thee receiving his
great-grandfather's blessing*

I am talking about my father, Mendel Wolf Weitman, a beautiful person. This much we know: he was shot by the Nazis on June 12, 1942, in Tarnow. Someone who survived told us about it. This is a date that we keep holy, to remember and to say *kaddish* for his holy soul, to mourn his tragic and barbaric end. We gave his name to two of our grandsons, considering this an important monument according to our tradition. We have a beautiful portrait of my father, *olov hasholom*, in our apartment in Israel. Our engaged grandchildren with their fiancées are invited to pose on each side of this picture. This is so they can get his blessings. Other family members also take pictures with Grandfather as the background. Our visitors find a resemblance between me and my father, which makes me very happy.



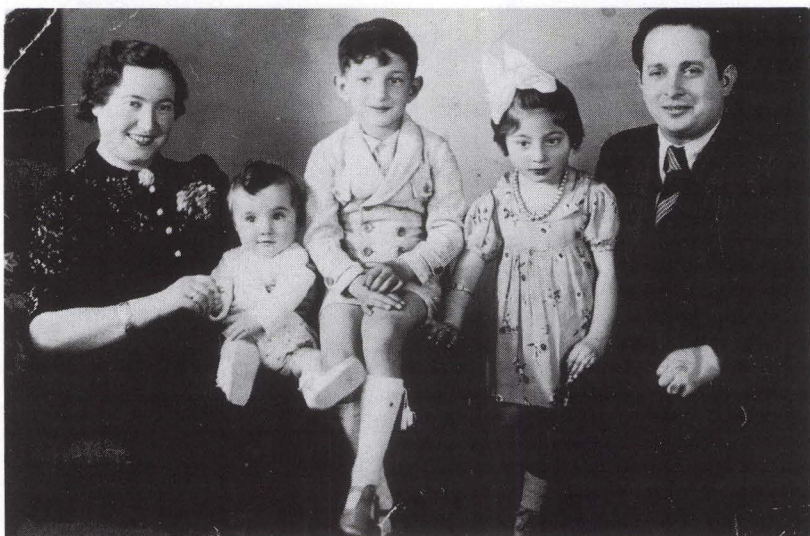
Mendel Wolf Weitman

Children

In 1937, when I was pregnant with my third child, I asked the doctor (who replaced my regular professor, who was on vacation) if he would permit the delivery in his private *Enbeindugs-Klinik*, since this had already been prohibited by the German lawmakers. His answer was, "First I am a physician, second a German." The delivery was conducted under his personal supervision, with great dignity. In fact, he performed it while in his officer's outfit, having come straight from maneuvers. He had time only to scrub his hands and put on gloves.

This was a boy, Joseph. Ali was already five years old. He fulfilled his role of big brother very seriously, and was always a help and delight to his parents.

New restrictions were imposed on Jews then. Ali, who was starting school, had to go to a strictly Jewish school with Jewish teachers.



*From left: Chana, Jossi (nine months), Ali (six years old),
Gita (four years old), Chaim, 1938*

Sima

Since my mother died when I was only one year old, it was my oldest sister Sima, along with our Ciocia Brancia, who raised me. Both of them assumed the role of mother. I remember only an atmosphere of love, compassion, devotion, and responsibility. Sima was the businesslady, the educator, the designer of our dresses, and the proud oldest sister. She sent her younger sisters to dance lessons, as representatives to relatives' weddings, etc. She herself was too busy to have fun. She had time only for reading as relaxation. It was a passion with her. If not during the day, she read all the classics late at night. She even arranged her married life so that her sisters should live together with her and Uncle and Aunt, who headed the family.

In 1938 I went for a visit to Poland. My sister Esther in Berlin offered to watch my baby Jossi, who was 10 months old. Our two older children were taken by good friends, our customers, for a vacation in the country for four weeks. Every year Esther and the children would come to us for a few weeks during summer vacation. Esther had taken good care of Jossi, and he had become used to her, so I didn't have any qualms about leaving him with her now. I went with Papa's promise that he also would keep an eye on the baby.

This was as nice a family situation as could be expected. Esther's two daughters were on vacation from school, and they lived near a park, so the baby was in good hands. My sister had a grocery store on the Ferberliner Strasse. And the baby was always outside in the carriage, in the fresh air. She didn't have only one person to watch the baby, she had more. There was my sister, the two girls, Papa, everybody was around the baby. I was away for about three weeks. This was the last time that I saw my sister Sima, her husband Jacob (who also was my cousin), and their three darling children: Gicia, Balcia, and Jossi. My husband saw them when he was in Poland in October 1938.

This was the only time Sima took me to the cemetery to see my mother's grave. I had always been considered the baby, and the baby wasn't taken to the cemetery. Now I wasn't a baby any more.

She told me, "Let's go to Mama's grave." This was the only time I was there.

I was going back to Germany, and we knew that these were not rosy times. You would walk in the street, and suddenly you would see a sign on a park bench, *Für Juden verboten*. This meant that a Jew could not sit on the park bench. This had a very unpleasant effect on us, like a slap in the face. There were songs on the radio, day and night the Horst Wessel song ("When Jewish blood spurts from the knife ..."). When you really paid attention to the words, it gave a stitch in your heart. This wasn't just hearing a song. It meant you. We knew we were in a dangerous spot, but we didn't know how dangerous.

My father, my brother-in-law Samuel Nestel, and Aaron Weitman had been expelled to Poland. Esther and her family and



Sima Ginsberg, c. 1922-23



Sima's children: Gitcia (l.) and Balcia, dressed up in Polish national costume, 1936

my cousin Ruchcia joined their husbands Samuel and Aaron in Poland, and this was the last time we saw each other. An avalanche of suffering and terror came upon them, secretly at first, step by step, until the "Final Solution" came, which shocked the whole world. We remained orphaned, with broken spirits, not able to understand how the whole world let it happen, at the time of the greatest civilization, by the most cultured people, the Germans.

Looking for a Way Out

We hoped to find a way out. Everyone was looking for a way out. We already wanted to leave in 1937, but there were several problems. First of all, we could not get our money. All our money was with our customers. They bought on credit, and paid weekly. Everyone brought 5 or 10 marks a week on account. We did not have a sizeable sum of money at one time. With three children, it was a hard decision to plan to leave the country.

We were Polish subjects, with Polish passports. We wanted to get out and go to Belgium, France, or England, but they wouldn't give us visas. The biggest stream of immigration was to America. We weren't very lucky. We did not have any relatives in America to send us affidavits. Some people received a visa when it was too late, and they were sent to the concentration camps and never saw America.

Pepi

I had a good friend named Pepi Freilich. We had been friends from the third grade in Lisko, after we came back from Bohemia. We liked each other from the first moment. We did our homework together, we read together, went on trips together, laughed together. I had other friends as well, but she was special. The Freilich family was a very well-known family. They had a wholesale grocery business. Her mother even wanted to bribe me to be her friend. I told her that I was Pepi's friend anyways. This went on until 1928, when I left Lisko for Germany, and she remained in Poland. We wrote letters to each other. In 1933, when I came back for a visit, we spent a lot of time together. I was sorry that she wasn't married yet, even though she was three years younger than I



*Chana Weitman (l.)
and Pepi Freilich, in
Lisko (1928)*

was. In 1934, my husband went to Poland to visit his family. He also went to Lisko to visit my family. It happened that this was the Shabbat when Pepi was engaged to be married, and so he could congratulate her, substituting for me. The young man came from Cracow, but lived in Antwerp, so they moved to Belgium.

She decided that Belgium was too close to Hitler — some day he would visit them. Since she had two brothers in Australia, she decided to go there. In 1938 she went to Poland to say goodbye to her parents in Lisko. On the way, she sent me a telegram, asking me to meet her in Berlin, where she would be passing through with her husband and child. I met them and went along with them to Essen, towards Belgium, almost the entire night. She promised that the minute she would step on the soil of Australia, she would send papers for us.

She promised that she would use her brothers, her acquaintances, and all the influence she had. For six months she promised me, "Have patience, in another two weeks your visa will be arranged." She told me to buy electrical appliances, like a stove, because they use a lot of electrical appliances in Australia, and to have them packed and shipped to Sydney. Pepi wrote me a letter in Polish, saying that she would give many years of her life to have me there, in Australia. She kept writing me, "Have patience, another

few weeks.” But the German authorities did not have patience. They rushed.

Later, when we were already in America, we started writing again. After the war she visited me twice in America. Unfortunately, she lost her husband ten days before our Ali got married. She remained with three children. Although she is small in stature, she is a giant in *ruach*. She managed to educate her children all by herself. Her son, Max Perlman, became a very successful doctor, specializing in premature babies. He is in Canada now. Her youngest daughter Suzanne, who is three months older than my Shirley, is a Ph. D. candidate now. She wrote a very valuable book, *The Edge of the Diaspora: Two Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Australia*. Reading this book, I found the exact reason why Pepi could not send us a visa. It was politics. They just closed the doors. That’s all. It was a rule not to let anyone in. Now the whole world will always say, “Hitler is at fault.” But Hitler is not the only one at fault. The whole world wanted the Jews killed. Otherwise they would have opened their doors and let the Jews in. So many countries, empty countries begging for people.



Shlojmo Feldman's wife and
child, c. 1938



Henia and her daughter, c. 1936

After I returned from my visit to my sister, my husband took a short vacation and went to see his brother Shlojmie and his family and his three sisters, Rifka, Miriam, and Henia, and their families. He left on October 25, 1938.

The Deportation Order

Four days later, on October 29, a Saturday, two policemen came to our house, to order us to get ready to be deported to Poland. They said: "Take valuables and documents, some food and the children, and come with us." After some telephone calls, they got permission to allow us to take the carriage for the one-year-old baby. I could only take a little hand luggage. I had to take my three small children, ranging from six to one year of age.

It was a strange feeling of humiliation to be escorted by police, to give over the house keys to the landlord (who also was shocked), and go with the children (leaving the Jewish-German girl behind) to the police station.

In the main police station, all the Jews of Polish origin had already been collected. Nobody knew why and where they would go. It was a scene of bewilderment and despair. There were very old people, sick people, and pregnant women. Even two mentally ill girls had been taken from their beds.

All 113 of us were put on a special train. A very educated and religious rabbi, who was paralyzed, was carried into the train by the police. My first reaction was a very severe nosebleed. I was brave. I remember saying to the officer guarding us, as I rocked the baby in the train for the entire night, "I am generally not a strong person, but now I feel so strong, that if I had 12 children, I could easily take care of them." Ali was six years old at the time. He was very brave and helpful with his sister Gita. It was a terribly sad trip. As we passed Hamburg station, the German Jewish community was organized to help the passengers with food, blankets, and offers to send mail to relatives. Chaim was already in Poland. I notified him by postal card, through this organization, that the family was on the way to Poland.

We prayed to *Hashem* to perform a miracle for us, as He had done to our people in Egypt. Only a few miles from the border,

Der Polizeipräsident

K i e l , den 29. Oktober 1938

II² 30³⁰

Ich untersage Ihnen und ~~Ihren Ehefrau~~
sowie den Kindern Alfred, geb. 2.2.32, Maria, geb. 16.6.34....
und Josef, geb. 11.2.37..... jeden weiteren Aufenthalt im
deutschen Reichsgebiet.

Mit sofortiger Wirkung ist das deutsche Reichsgebiet zu ver-
lassen.

Gemäß § 11 der Ausländer-Polizeiverordnung vom 22. August 1938
können Sie innerhalb von zwei Wochen nach Bekanntgabe der Ver-
fügung schriftlich bei mir die Beschwerde einlegen. Die Ein-
legung der Beschwerde hat keine aufschiebende Wirkung.



Im Auftrage

Polizei-Rat

An

... Frau

... Chan. T h e e, geb. Klugmann

in K i e l

*The Ausweiss: the German document forbidding Chana Thee,
Ali ("Alfred"), Gita ("Maria"), and Jossi ("Josef") to be
within the confines of the Third Reich, ordering them to leave
"immediately."*

after having travelled for 48 hours, the train stopped. Nobody knew why the train stopped. After a few agonizing hours, we were told to pay for the trip back to our homes. Poland would not let in any more Jews. It was a great miracle.

We didn't feel strong enough to continue the trip. We stopped in Berlin to rest and to see what had happened to my father, sister, and family, to my dear cousins Ruchci and Aaron Weitman. The men were away, in Poland. I sent a cable to my husband, and two days later we went home. All normal life was gone. A fear for everything was in our hearts. I did not know what to do. Should my husband come back?

Kristallnacht

And then suddenly the worst pogrom — *Kristallnacht*. November 10, 1938, will be remembered as long as the world will exist.

It was an organized pogrom. All the synagogues were burned. All Jewish businesses were demolished and robbed. The men were taken to the concentration camps of Dachau and Buchenwald. They came for my husband too. I was so lucky that he had not come back. I cabled my husband, begging him to stay in Poland, because it was dangerous to be home. I sent his clothes to him.

I would have preferred to go to him. But I had the business and the children, and I was helpless. A Jewish lawyer was shot. My husband came home on December 10, 1938. Two days later, a commissioner (*Treuhander*) came and took over the whole business and the money. Every month he gave us a certain amount to live on. Life was not the same, every day seeing different types of animosities against Jews, and listening to the radio announcements, which were full of hatred and poisonous propaganda. A sudden sadness and despair overtook a person's whole existence. I felt weak and had heart palpitations. I went to my doctor, who had known me for many years. He recognized a change in my condition, and asked me what had happened. Hearing some of the happenings, he shouted out: "I would be ashamed, out of the country, to say that I am a German!"

All this time we were waiting for a visa from Australia. We had

Der Polizeipräsident
-Ausländeramt -

K i e l , den 28. Mai 1939

Ich untersage Ihnen und Ihrer Ehefrau
sowie den Kindern
..... jeden weiteren Aufenthalt
im deutschen Reichsgebiet.
Sie haben daher das Reichsgebiet bis spätestens 15. Juni 1939
zu verlassen.
Sollten Sie und Ihre Angehörigen bis zum festgesetzten Tage
das deutsche Reichsgebiet nicht verlassen haben, werden Sie
zum Vollzug der Abschiebungsluft in ein Konzentrationslager
eingewiesen werden.
Gemäß § 11 Ziffer 4 der Ausländerpolizeiverordnung vom 22.8.38
verwende ich einer etwaigen Berghwerde, gegen diese Verfügung
die aufschiebende Wirkung.
Auftrags:

An
.....
.....
in K i e l



The second Ausweiss: the document forbidding Chaim Thee, his wife, and their children: Alfred, "Maria Gita," and Josef to be within the confines of the Third Reich. The document states that if they do not leave within two weeks, they will be forcibly "shoved off" to a concentration camp.

all the telegrams from Pepi which we showed to the authorities: We hope, we hope, we hope. On the basis of this hope, they gave us

another two weeks, and still another two weeks. Suddenly my youngest, who was a year and a half then, got scarlet fever. This was a blessing, a *nes min hashamayim*, because for six weeks he could not be with people. This was one of the reasons why they had to give us an extension. These were the conditions. But nothing came after the six weeks. We waited and waited.

Without the Children

And then I gave away my children to an institution for Jewish children, to be sent to England. We had to sign that we agreed that even non-Jewish parents would take them. This was how determined we were to get the children out of Germany. All our household goods were already in the port of Hamburg, waiting to be shipped to Sydney, Australia, just as soon as we would get a visa. All we had was an empty apartment. We slept on the floor. None of our neighbors knew; if they had, they gladly would have given us pillows and blankets, but we were ashamed. We felt so deprived of human dignity, to have come to such a state.

We were free now to go and look for a visa. The first day the children were away, I went to the Chinese consulate. No, he cannot give us a visa. To Haiti, anywhere, any visa just to get out of Germany. But nobody wanted to give a visa, because we had a "J" stamped on our passport.

While looking for a visa, I started to feel the absence of my children. Suddenly the whole world became black. How could people smile with the world this way? Everything was finished for me.

But we had to continue to try and leave. We were together then all the time with my brother- and sister-in-law, Joseph and Runia Feldman. They had two of their four children with them. One child, Annie, was already in England. A fourteen-year-old, she had been one of the first children to go to England. Another daughter, Sophie, remained in Germany. Somehow she was in Berlin with an aunt. They didn't forget about her, but who knew where it was better? We didn't know. They didn't try to take her with them, because they themselves were unsure where to go.

Then, it was either on a *Motzei Shabbat* or on a Sunday night,



*Annie and Sam Levine
with their daughter Aviva*

we left the house. On the way we went to Hamburg, where the children were. I wanted to see them. They were alright, but we didn't know when they would leave. I said, "No, I cannot go without my children." Everybody screamed at me, "What are you doing? The children are taken care of. In no time they will be out of the country. You have to smuggle yourselves out of the country. Who knows, they may pick you up and send you to a concentration camp."

I said, "No, I just cannot go." My life would stop. Without the children, I have nothing to live for. And I didn't want to live, I would not move, without the children. People told me, "You are going to bring your children unhappiness, you are committing suicide." No matter what, I couldn't. Then when the woman who took care of this group of children, Dr. Jacobson, heard what I said, she told me, "Mrs. Thee, if you feel this way, take your children." And when she said this, I fell over her and cried. I thanked her for not dissuading me.

I grabbed the *kinderlach*, with their packages, without their packages. I quickly brought them into a taxi, and we went to the railroad. But without my husband, and without Runia and Joseph and their children. Because I was blonde, and my children were blondish. I figured, that maybe by ourselves, we would pull through. I said to my sister-in-law, "If this works, and I succeed, I will send you a telegram."

Escape

We slipped across the border into Belgium at Aachen. My husband and brother-in-law were supposed to go through Cologne, via another route. The minute I arrived, I sent the message we had agreed upon: "I arrived well, and I wish the children good sleep." She understood it, and came the next day. I strongly believe that angels stood near us during all this travelling, and spread their wings over us. Otherwise we would have been ten times murdered, and twenty times burnt.

CHAPTER 7



Belgium

After ten days the family was united in Belgium. I had the address of a cousin who also had gone out earlier the same illegal way. We surprised her in their small furnished room and they were happy to see us safe. For the night they made place for my 5-year-old Gita to sleep on two chairs. Ali, 7 years old, was taken for the night to another refugee family in the neighborhood to sleep. I myself sat all night on a chair in the garden having my youngest Jossi, who was 2 years old, in a tiny sport carriage and watching over him that he wouldn't cry.

It was raining in the morning. I left my children with the relatives and I went to the railroad station to receive my sister-in-law with her 2 children. She received a telegram from me how to go about passing the border. They arrived and we came to our relatives. There was one furnished room in the same house, and my sister-in-law got it.

We needed a larger room and a little more in the center part of the city. With the help of a friend, also a refugee, I found a pleasant front room with a balcony. Our home here was only one furnished room, but it was a safe haven away from the danger of the concentration camps. Because it was centrally located, it was very convenient.

We moved in with the children and waited for Papa to arrive on Friday.

As much as possible it became a home, receiving our relatives



Jossi in Belgium, 1940

almost every day, just waiting for our husbands. Friday they did not arrive. The children were registered in school, and we hoped from day to day for the men's arrival. The second Friday my husband arrived but not my brother-in-law. My sister-in-law, with her two children, Leah 14 and Alfred 8 years old, came to us, hoping their husband and father would arrive. When they saw that just my husband and not their father had come, they cried and we all joined in. It was a great disappointment.

How did it happen? The smuggling became harder and more and more people pushed themselves into one car. My husband happened to be standing in the front near the door, and they pushed him inside the car. However, my brother-in-law was standing a little further and he was pulled away when the door closed. My husband felt very bad, but there was no other way but to wait for the next chance.

Just then it became impossible to get a way out. At last, after 4 weeks of trying, my husband sent a smuggler from Belgium and Joseph came over. The happy reunion took place.

For nine months we lived a pretty normal life in Brussels, always hoping for a chance to get a visa to America. Since our furnished room was small, and we needed a larger place, we rented another place. So within nine months we had three apartments. We had very good experiences. The landlords were very friendly. We received help from the Joint Distribution Committee. It was very little, but we lived according to the money, and we didn't starve.

Ali started school, and Gita kindergarten, and they learned French. I also studied French, to be able to communicate with the teachers. I put my children to bed and I went to learn French. At the time of the blitzkrieg I was the only one of the 14 people who could talk with the authorities in French.

Blitzkrieg: the Flight from Belgium

Suddenly, we had to leave Belgium. In the early morning on Friday, May 10, 1940, a swarm of warplanes flew over Belgium, Holland, and Luxemburg, bombing left and right. The people ran to basements during the first few days. Suddenly, the houses emptied themselves, because the people were fleeing towards the French border. On Monday morning, when the baker had left, the butcher had left the day before, and seeing the grocer ready to leave, I persuaded my husband that as strangers we couldn't remain there. We couldn't get a vehicle in order to leave. I persuaded my greengrocer, a gentile, to take us with his truck to the border of France. We paid him 150 francs per person, which was a lot of money. In the meantime, since I had this promise that he would take us, I ran to my sister-in-law, Runia Feldman, who lived a short distance from us. I said, "Runia, I have a chance to go out of the city, please don't take any clothes, the minimum you can take as food, and come. We will save our lives." She listened to me and took her family, my brother-in-law and their two children. When we were already in the truck, our cousin Mrs. Bodenstein, who lived across from us, came and said, "Please take my Bernard. He is very much afraid." I said, "What do you mean, Bernard? You all

will come." They had two daughters, Gisela and Zita. So I said, "Somehow we well manage." My brother-in-law Joseph and my husband came, and we paid the man. They didn't know how to thank us.

He brought us to a town on the border of France. He put the baggage, whatever we had, outside, and he went back. We prayed that he should come home safe, because on the way we had seen columns of people: the military going towards the front, the refugees going the opposite way. Nobody knew exactly where to go, just in one direction towards France. There were students, volunteers, who directed people where to go. There were no trains to take us.

We came to a barn. It was already night and we came in and slept, not knowing on what we slept. The straw and hay kept moving under us. But we were under a roof. In the morning, the three men went into the city, to look for a chance to go on, into France. We were tired and hungry, and we had heard cannons during the night.

We waited until twelve o'clock. Then they came back with the good news: we had a chance, at two o'clock there would be a special train and we should be ready to go. Sure enough, a train was ready to leave. We considered ourselves lucky and boarded the train in the hope of reaching France.

But after trying several routes, the train could not pull through the front lines, where the fighting was, and turned back. Finally, when the train was standing in the station of Mons, still in Belgium, a siren came and all the passengers ran into the tunnel. My husband and Leah took our Ali and Jossi and I remained with Gita. At last I grabbed her and ran towards the tunnel. There was such a panic. People prepared themselves for death, they prayed in all languages. Some took their baggage along and dropped it in the tunnel. This was a bad obstacle, people fell on top of each other. The bombardment went on for one and a half hours. When at last the sirens came that the air was clear, there was a pulling and pushing. The 14 of us, including all our children, had gone into the tunnel, and we came out soaking wet from sweat. We all were very thirsty, but there was no place to get some water. The streets around the

station were full of shattered glass. The city was burning from all sides, and we had no place to go.

We went to the railroad station. Miraculously, a freight train was standing there and we went into one wagon. I had my little sport carriage with the baby and my niece Leah, who did not want to go into this wagon. On account of her we had to go out, all of us, and look for another place. As we were looking, it became dark, when we saw a *frummer* Yid looking out. We went into this wagon, which was very full. It was dark, but we couldn't light a match, because of the straw in the wagon. We had to step on people. I *shlepped* with three children. I had Jossi in the carriage, and I found a little place. My husband had Ali, I didn't know exactly where, just that it was in the same wagon. There wasn't any place for Gita. A young man sitting there said, "She can sit on my lap." I was so glad that someone had *rachmunis*. I sat on the floor, rocking my baby all night, so that he wouldn't cry. (This young man was Mr. Henish. We remained best friends ever since then. His wife and two children perished in Poland, and when he decided to remarry, he brought the prospective wife to us for our approval and blessing. To this day, even after his passing, we stay in contact with his widow and two children, a son and a daughter. They are all very fine and wonderful human beings.)

The trip lasted from Tuesday to Friday, without food, without water, without having a chance to change my baby.

France

When the door opened and we were let out, it was just heaven. We were in Pommerols, a village in southern France. I want to tell how friendly and good-hearted the people were, and how they received the refugees. Each family received a refugee family in their house. We came to the house of an elderly couple, the husband was a blacksmith. They wanted to give us food and let us wash. They were very nice. As we were kosher, we couldn't accept their meat. So we had potatoes boiled in the skin, and we drank water, for which we were very grateful. We washed and rested. Then social workers came and took the three families, the Feldmans, the Bodensteins, and ourselves, to a house. This had been prepared for

soldiers coming from the front. There were three rooms. Each room had clean beds, with pillows and blankets. Each person got a towel, a glass, a plate, and a spoon, knife, and fork. We even got a big pot to boil our laundry.

Before we were settled, Chaim and Joseph were called up to the Polish army. Mr. Bodenstein, an elderly man, took over, to watch his "flock" of women and children. We managed together, but I wanted my husband and brother-in-law to be released from this army service. In the meantime, France had lost the war, and they didn't know what to do with these Polish soldiers. After about three weeks, the men began to come home. I went to a strange French town, looking for a way to get them out, when I met them on the street, ready to go home.

Portugal

After three months in France, we left for Portugal, passing through Spain. When we reached Lisbon, we were put in a hotel for the night, and then we got an apartment, with the Joint paying the rent. We cannot say that we suffered hunger, or that we felt poor. It was even possible to help others. My husband would send packages to the ghettos. Whenever we had an address, we would send packages. Sometimes other people would give him some money for packages together with the address of their parents. Even if we did not receive the money, we would still send the packages. We could only send a pound at a time; when we wanted to send a pair of shoes to my father, we sent the right shoe in one package, and the left one in the next package. Once we sent a pound of chocolate, with a twenty dollar bill inside. This twenty dollars saved his life for a certain time, he could buy whatever he wanted with it.

Twenty years later, we would learn, from the letter I am including here, how important these packages were to the people who received them.

October 17, 1972
Mrs. Hanna Jacobovits
44 Beecheff Ave.
New York, N.Y. 33

To: The Rifka Laufer Bikur Cholim
Flatbush and Greater B'lyn Chapters

I saw in the Rosh Hashanah number of the Jewish Press your ad speaking of honoring Mrs Jos. Feldman and Mrs. Chaim Thee at your annual luncheon on Oct. 22/72 in the Ave. N Jewish Center.

When my family was in the terrible years of persecution in 1941/42 in a small town in France, Montelimar in the South of France, we got several times Gemilus Chasadim of Mrs. Ch. Thee, who was then in Lisbon. So I decided, to write you some lines, describing this wonderful Eishes Chayil and asking you, please to read these — as a surprise — at this occasion to your assembly in honor of Mrs. Chana Thee. I put in a check of \$5.00 for your worthy cause. Too weak — with 80 yrs. — to come personally, I think this greeting will give some pleasure to our friend.

Rebbetzin Hanna Jacobovits
Lakewood

Mrs. Chana Thee

It was in Winter 1941-1942 in Montelimar, France, as a housewife and mother of 5 sons aged 18-10 years, I had a daily fight to get the basic food for 7 persons, without kosher meat, nor fish. One day I got a package from Lisbon. Two boxes of sardines from Mrs. Chaim Thee, in charge of my friends, the Agudah Women of Zurich or was it Lucerne? With great joy it was received and well placed in a store for Pesach. I wrote my thanks to the sender and the Agudah and got a very nice letter from Mrs. Thee enclosing a piece of white cotton thread since France has been totally plundered out of household goods by the German invaders. Of course, I was happy to have a thread to sew the buttons to the pants of the boys, even though it was a white thread. The next letter contained a black thread. Now my husband was encouraged by me to ask for Mrs. Thee's help to further our demand at the office of the Joint in Lisbon, where our demand for visas to U. St. were halted. And Mrs. Thee sacrificed a whole day in that office very far outside from Lisbon, to get an audience and to speak for our family. She was successful and got the promise for a special date and boat in 2 or 3 months. We were very happy, but 2 days later the

Americans landed at Algiers and the Germans occupied the whole of France. No possibility any more to leave over Lisbon — HaKadosh Baruch Hu helped us later in another way.

With personal regards to Mrs. Thee and her daughter in Monsey.

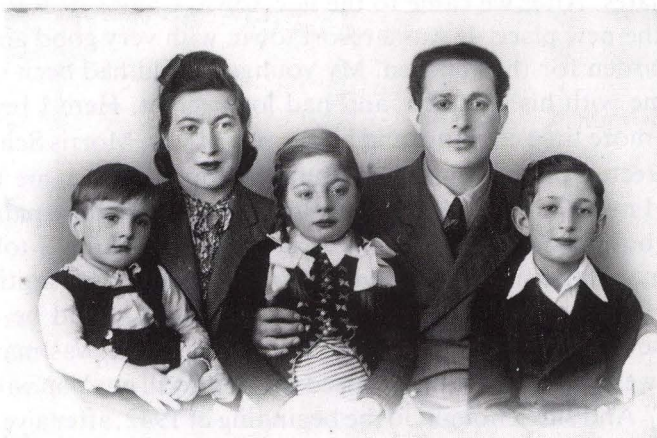
Mrs. H. Jacobovits

My husband had his *minyan*, and he made friends. One day he started talking to a man who also went to *shul* every day, a Mr. Koenig. They started talking, and it turned out that they were cousins, with the same grandfather.

The Bodenstein and Feldman families managed to leave for America in 1940. We remained in Portugal for one and a half years, because we lacked the necessary affidavits.

We spent one year in Lisbon. The children went to school and started to learn Portuguese. Our home became a social hall for all the men who had run away. There were quite a few religious men without their wives and children, because they thought that only the men were in danger, and not their families. They had rooms, but no one to cook for them. During the week there was a communal kitchen where they could eat, but they had no place to go on Shabbat or *Yom Tov*. They found solace by coming to our home, where they could have a cup of tea and get some advice about their lives. I remember that on Friday night I would put my table, which was very small and narrow, next to the bed. Any boxes we had served as chairs, and I served a *fleishig* meal to 15 people.

It was a big problem when Pesach came, because we lived in a place with a Jewish family, but they were not kosher. We had two small furnished rooms, and a common kitchen. The woman promised me that she would respect my religiousness, and she gave me a corner in her place to keep my dishes. I did not trust the dishes in the kitchen. There was a coal-fired stove. I had my section on this, where I cooked whatever I had to. I bought two very big pots in order to cook for Pesach. (We still have these pots, to show my children what a person can do if he wants to do something good. I gave one of the pots to Gita, who made many *simchas* with this pot. I have the other one.)



*The Thee family in Portugal, 1941.
From left: Jossi, Mrs. Thee, Gita, Mr. Thee, Ali*

I got a rooster and went to the *shochet*. From this one rooster, 15 people ate, and everyone was satisfied. There were potatoes, there were matzot, I cooked borscht, and everybody was happy with the *Yom Tov tisch*. I took a white dress that I used as a nightgown. I washed it and tore it apart, and this was the white tablecloth for *Yom Tov*. The *ruach* was there. We were together. I could help out other people, and the children saw this and they helped as well. I think everything we did then served us as a good *zechus*, to be able to leave the danger behind us and be free today to tell this story.

Life was almost normal, but we felt like we were sitting in a railroad station, waiting for the train. We were waiting for a visa to America, which didn't come, and when an affidavit for the visa finally came, the consul gave us a hard time. In the end, the affidavit was sent back to America, and we had to start the entire process from the beginning.

Finally, the Portuguese decided there were too many refugees in Lisbon and they sent them to the provinces. We were very unhappy about moving, because we were farther away from the

consulates. After we came to the new town, Caldos de Rainia, we liked the new place. It was a resort town, with very good air and a nice garden for the children. My youngest child had been sick all the time with his stomach, and had lost weight. Here I began to spend more time cooking, and he recovered. Dr. Morris Schwartz, the director of the Joint Distribution Committee, came to this place. I met him and told him how much my husband despaired; he was a businessman, and wasn't used to doing nothing. I told him that my brother-in-law has an apartment in America waiting for us. We were very much afraid that the border would be closed because America had entered the war, while Hitler was marching to the west. Dr. Schwartz promised us, "You will go. You will go to Cuba." And sure enough, in the beginning of 1942, after a year and a half in Portugal, we had exceptionally good luck in obtaining tickets (for what seemed to be the "last boat") for Cuba. Our children then were: Ali, 10 years old; Gita, 7; and Jossi, 4.



From right: Ali, Jossi, Avraham Fishler (a refugee who stayed with us for two years), Caldos de Rainia, 1941



Ali (second from left), studying for the choir, Caldos de Rainia, 1941

CHAPTER 8



Escape from Europe

Tragedy on the *Nyassa*

The *Nyassa* sailed from Lisbon, Portugal, with 900 passengers aboard — people from every European country.

The preparations for the trip took all our attention. As it was during the war, it was considered a privilege to have such an opportunity.

When the boat started to sail, I first realized what all this meant. With every foot of water between the departing ship and the Continent, I was moved to the bottom of my soul, and my feelings told me that everything which constituted our lives until then belonged to the past.

We left all our relatives in Poland behind. Until then we had managed to have mail. We had been able to help them with some food packages, as Portugal was a neutral country.

The feeling of parting was overwhelming, and I left our children's care to my husband. I stood on the deck staring toward the land, which seemed to become smaller and smaller, when suddenly a stream of tears began to flow without stopping. This helped very much to ease the pain in my heart, and slowly I came back to reality. I thanked G-d for everything and prayed for a safe voyage.

After two days, the ship stopped at Casablanca. It was a very interesting experience. We observed a new kind of people. The workers in the port wore very strange clothing. They seemed to

have a hard life. I also saw a group of women wearing veils covering their faces. The picture was altogether different from that of a European port. Lively trading developed on the boat in Casablanca. The passengers bought hand-painted pocketbooks and other small leather items. The native language at this port was French. After two more days, we were again on the high seas.

We made friends with very nice families in the dining room and sleeping quarters. I had chances to help in some ways with older and ill passengers. The trip lasted four weeks. Most of my time was devoted to taking care of my children. I kept them busy in every way possible. Gita, then 7, learned to embroider on a tablecloth. She liked to do this besides playing with her dolls. I used to tie a rope to each child's arm and hold the other end, which enabled me to have them close together.

Ali, our oldest, who celebrated his 10th birthday just then, found a pair of twin brothers for friends. The trio liked to take exploring trips on the boat. We worried mostly about Ali.

Since it was during the war, the whole trip was dangerous. We heard a rumor that, only fifty miles away, a ship from South America had hit a mine and exploded.

Our boat, *Nyassa*, had to stop in the Bermuda Islands for coal. The coal shaft was open, while there was a blackout. The same evening, our Ali begged me to be allowed to stay up after supper. He cried when he couldn't have permission. I pleaded with him, "There is a blackout, and the Captain did not permit children to stay up." In bed, Ali did not stop crying. Never before did he ask for special privileges. When the other children were asleep, Ali still cried stubbornly for being put to bed too early. After a long talk, and many promises, he gave in and fell asleep.

My husband was with friends at that time. I felt exhausted and went to find him, so that we might get a little fresh air. On deck, I noticed unusual gesticulation, and groups of passengers talking with anger and protest. Through curiosity, I found out that a terrible tragedy had occurred. A boy of 6 fell into an open coal shaft. Little by little, I found out more details. It was Paul, who used to play with our children every morning. His parents came from Yugoslavia. They had, besides him, a baby girl.

"How did it happen?" Paul was playing with another boy after supper on the deck. Paul wanted to hide, and in the dark he could not see the open shaft. His friend called him again and again, and when there was no answer, he became frightened. Since nobody saw Paul, his father became suspicious and notified the officers. They searched, and found the boy 12 yards down in the coal shaft with a broken neck. The doctor tried everything but there was nothing he could do. The boy was dead....

Nine hundred people felt this tragedy as if it was their very own. There were no words to be found for the poor parents. An atmosphere of mourning and deep sympathy enveloped everyone. The next day, the parents had permission to go on shore and perform the funeral according to Jewish rite.

This incident gave me much to think about. Being a believer in instinct, which tells someone, somehow, to be careful at special times, I was grateful and thanked G-d for my firmness with Ali the night before. Although Ali was young then, he understood the situation and felt sorry for his behavior. He promised to be a good boy in the future.

The *Nyassa* was for us the bridge to safety and happiness.

Cuba

When we reached Cuba, on February 25, 1942, we were put in quarantine. We were supposed to be in quarantine for two weeks before entering the city of Havana. During the whole time, I had been strong and watched over my children. But now, I broke down. I couldn't eat, I couldn't sleep, I was afraid the children would make noise and disturb the others. A woman who had been with me on the boat noticed that I was not the same Mrs. Thee. She took me away from the children and gave me another bed. She took me to the doctor and explained that I was totally weak, and couldn't walk or eat. He wrote a note to the kitchen, that they should give me something to give me more strength. I think what they brought me was an egg in milk. My husband brought me to the kitchen and I sat down. When they brought me the food, I couldn't even pick up the spoon. Sweat ran from my face, just from the effort of eating. Somehow, they let us out of quarantine early, after only eight days.

We went to the city and rented a room in the hotel. After a night in the hotel, I woke up, completely well, ready to fulfill all my obligations. I went to look for a grocery store, and I bought milk and bread, and I made breakfast for the family.

We found a very nice apartment in the suburbs, where we stayed for eight months. There was a school for diamond polishing, with an expert from Belgium. Although my husband was used to the textile business, I encouraged him to go to this school.

CHAPTER 9



At Last — America

When my husband was in the school for three or four weeks, we got a visa to America, to be reunited with the relatives who had gone straight to America from Portugal. Uncle Joseph had pleaded in Washington, with tears in his eyes, for our visas, and thanks to his determination, on November 4, 1942, our Pan Am plane arrived in Florida, and on November 6 we reached New York. Joseph and his daughter Leah greeted us on the station. Our relatives, who had not seen us for one and a half years, received us



*Jossi, Ali, and Chaim, Williamsburg,
beginning of 1943*

very warmly, straight into their home in Brooklyn. Their youngest son, Alfred, who was seven and a half months older than Ali, had always been very close to him. Now that they were together, there was no end to their talking, teasing, and laughing.

Although they had hoped that we would be able to live together in this one big apartment, the two boys disturbed the girls in their sleep. After three months we found an apartment near the yeshiva where Ali was already going. For 30 dollars rent a month it was partly furnished. After a short time the Feldman family moved close to us. Once again we formed our lives as one. We helped to find *shidduchim* for their grown children, and we were consulted with almost each new date. After one year we found another apartment, smaller, but much closer to the yeshiva where Jossi started kindergarten. We lived there very happily for four years, especially after my baby Shirley arrived. Shirley was a G-dsend for the entire Thee and Feldman families.



Sophie Feldman (Joseph and Runiu's oldest daughter), 1945



Alfred (Avilein) Feldman at his Bar Mitzva, 1944



Shirley, ten months old, 1947

The Thee and Feldman Families

So it went on with all *simchas* and with each new grandchild of theirs and later on of ours. We had to spend all the trips to Israel or other summer or winter vacations together. Leah, the youngest of the three girls, married Paul Jeidel. Paul was the darling of his father-in-law, and of the entire family. They lived first in Canada and then came to live in the States.

Avi (Alfred) showed much interest in the business, and as much as Joseph wanted him to stay more in the yeshivos, he divided his time between learning and business. This worked for the entire Feldman family with *hatzlocha*, and they became a source of charitable deeds and *hachnasas orchim*. Although the Thee business was in a completely different line, both brothers knew what was doing in each other's business.

Then one day we were on the way to Israel, to a Bar Mitzva of our second grandson, in Beer Sheva. We had already left and the Feldmans and their three daughters were at the airport. Tante Runiu, the *tzadekis*, the good person who she was, had a stroke, and the entire group went to the hospital instead. As soon as we had organized our home in Tel Aviv, we left to be together with our sister-in-law, who was very ill at home with a special nurse.



*Joseph Feldman and Chaim
Thee at the Kotel, 1968*



Leah and Paul Jeidel, 1953

The *kibud av ve-em* of the Feldman children and grandchildren was especially obvious when Tante Runiu fell ill. All of them were devoted entirely to serve their mother for three years. A queen could not have had better care by her husband and children, in addition to the nurses in the house. After three years of her suffering, we lost our dear, beautiful, Tante Runiu. Uncle Joseph was beaten and depressed. His good children tried their very best. They moved into a new, beautiful home where he could be both private and also together with the oldest daughter and her children. Joseph was once again the head of the family, with the greatest *derech erez* from all. He came to Israel in the company of his daughter Sophie for the Belzer Rebbe's son's *bris*. We came very often to New York and spent much of the time being together. When good friends advised him to remarry, he found a very fine and *bekuvédige* lady.

It would have been a fine life if he hadn't suddenly become ill. It did not take long and he was supposed to be released from the



The Rebbitzen of Belz and son, 1976

hospital, when suddenly a turn for the worse took place. Leah called me with tears that her father is critically ill. I promised that Uncle Chaim would be there. I went to the Diamond Exchange and slowly advised Papa to take the passport out of the safe. At 2:30 a.m. I went with my husband to the airport and he went to his brother's sickbed. Joseph was very happy to see his brother, and said, "You brought me the *ganze refuah*." They stayed most of the time together in the hospital. When all seemed to be alright, my husband wanted to be for Shabbos with our children in Monsey. All was well Friday, and after visiting in the morning and again at 3:00 in the afternoon, he left with a light heart for Monsey. When he arrived, our children had already had a call that their uncle was *niftar* unexpectedly. This happened about 5:00 p.m. Our children did not tell Papa, so as not to disturb his Shabbos *menucha*. Papa made a *mishabayrach* at the Torah. After *Havdala* our son-in-law quietly told the truth. After the first shock, he left right away to stay with the family of his brother Joseph.

With the departure of Joseph Feldman, an institution of a special sort of kindness, hospitality, philanthropy, and a love for *Chassidus* and everything connected with yeshivos was gone from our midst. He was a very youthful, healthy, and active man with an unusual zest for life.

As a father, he was a most devoted and protective one. At the same time, he was the example of an early riser, a hard and honest worker, who showed the importance of thinking of the future.

CHAPTER 10



The Holocaust: the Horrible Truth

Little by little, it became obvious that all of our relatives, all of our townspeople, all of the Jews in Poland and Eastern Europe, had been wiped out. Only a very few exceptions of rescued singles remained. Broken in body and spirit, these were the Displaced Persons who were in special camps in Germany after 1945.

The gentile world that had let it happen closed its ears and hearts and countries. At last, the U.N. voted for a homeland for the Jews on the soil of their forefathers, which they had considered for 2,000 years as the land of the Jewish people.

In December 1965 my *Landsleit* published *Sefer Yizkor Lekedushai Libai*, a memorial book dedicated to all the *kedoshim* from Libai who perished at the brutal hands of the Germans during the years 1939-1945 ("Libai" is composed of the initials of the four towns: Lisko, Baligrad, Ustryzki [Isterik] and Lutowisk; the term also represents 129 surrounding villages). I sent a copy of the book to my son Ali, together with the following letter.

To My Son Rabbi Alfred Thee
from his mother Chana Thee.

Dear Son,

This book is a monument for the entire Jewish population of Lisko (Linsk) in Poland as well as the other surrounding cities: Baligrad, Ustryzki, Lutowisk and 129 villages.

In the years 1942-1943 all our relatives, among them my eldest dear sister Sima, her husband Jacob Ginsberg and their

three children: Gicia, Balcia, and Joseph were murdered along with all Jewish men, women and children by the Germans. In this book you will find the names of my sister Esther, her husband Samuel Nestel and their two children: Henni and Isi. Also some pictures of my town, places so dear in my childhood, which became destroyed. I shiver to think that such pious and pure people, devoted to learning Torah and honest work, to charitable deeds and a modest life, interested in learning, business, and trades of all kinds, and in helping their poor neighbors, were mercilessly murdered.

In such a community there was no need for a jail in town, except for a drunken goi....

Religion was their natural way of life, and the strong belief in the ways of the Almighty was their source of strength. These little towns produced Talmudists, educators, doctors, lawyers and idealists. Thanks to the national movement a few young people went as *chalutzim* to Eretz Israel. Their fate was to survive the ordeal on the other end of the globe, and to participate in building and defending the new Jewish land as citizens of Israel, the "nucleus" of a new nation, "The Reborn Jewish People" in their own Homeland.

The noble, also sad task to write this memorial book is to their great praise.

With love Mama

The following is a letter from Asher ben Yitzchak Schwartz of Lisko to his sister Rivka Ginzburg-Schwartz in Haifa.

My dear and only sister Rivka!

January 25, 1943

I have no patience, and I no longer have any human feelings to write. I am writing only with the hope that you, the only one of the entire family [of ten brothers and sisters], will remain alive, and therefore I want you to know when to hold the *yahrzeits*. Today I sneaked out of the Zaslow camp and I'm at a farmer's house, in order to leave this letter for you. Unfortunately, there is no one who can hide me, because everyone fears for his own life. I do not want to go into detail,

because there is no one who is capable of describing this. If historians will ever describe what we have experienced, do not think that it was so. The greatest poet is not capable of describing even one one-thousandth of the reality. I myself am not capable of writing about everything that happens here in only one day. I have to say that this was just a nightmare. Unfortunately, however, this is all true.

As of now, I am the only one left from the entire family. Ten days ago they took away the last comfort and consolation I had left. Together with the rest of the Jews of the camp, they also took Hinda, Saul, and Meilich. Out of the 15,000 Jews in the district of Sanok, only 70 of us were left in the camp. I pleaded to go with all of them and put an end to this life, but they beat me for wanting this. They told us that they will send us to work in Cracow. But I think that they will finish us off too after we clean up the houses in the camp.

Therefore I am taking advantage of this chance to leave this letter for you. I don't want to live any more, but you and your children should know how to avenge the shedding of innocent Jewish blood. You should bring up your children in the spirit of arms and hatred for the German people. I ask of all the Jews there, don't seek businesses or to advance in your jobs, just take weapons in hand, kill everyone of the German people you get your hands on, men, women, and children, because this is what they did to us. The greatest author is not capable of describing the cruelty with which they treated your brethren. Therefore you must fervently devote yourselves to only one end: revenge! revenge! revenge!

Our sister Hinda began to keep a diary, but it was impossible to continue it. She left a letter for you that I am including.

So be well and strong, for we have suffered for you as well. I greet and kiss you, your children and your husband. You should not cry too much, because when my time comes I will go singing to join my whole family.

The *yahrzeit* of Father, Mother, and Lushin — they were shot in Zastaw, the day after Yom Kippur, on Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. in 1942. Rachel was shot in Zastaw on October 25, 1942.

Shalom died a natural death, of pneumonia, on November 6, 1942. Today is the tenth day, that means January 15, 1943, that they sent the last transport from here, the remaining 2,000 Jews, with Hinda, Saul, and Meilich.

I am leaving this letter with a Christian woman, who should send it to you after the war. You should send her in return 25 dollars. Her address:

I wish you a long life, with joy and good health.

Asher ben Yitzchak Schwartz

Remembrance

Most of the members of the four combined Libai *Landsmannschaften* came to Israel as young idealists in the years 1920-1935. They were all strongly devoted to their families and birthplaces. Now, at the ages of 70-80, they mourn deeply their personal losses as well as the national tragedy.

The monument for our beloved relatives and friends murdered by the Nazis in the Holocaust is a small part of the consolation for



From right: Nachum Ginsberg, Mrs. Thee, Rivka (nee Schwartz) Ginsberg (Nachum's wife) — to whom the letter was written, Pepi Rabid (daughter of Nathan Klugman)

the enormous brutality suffered by our martyrs. It serves as a gathering point one day every year to mourn together and to remember all our dear ones that were cut off from life and joy as youngsters, as parents and as children of all ages.

When my husband and I took part in the unveiling of the *matzeva* for the *kedoshim* of Rawa-Ruska, my husband's home town, I first learned of the existence of Chatzer Lvov, a special section of the Nachlat Yitzchak cemetery in Givatayim. The solemn gathering made a very deep impression on me. I also saw that this part of the cemetery contains *matzevot* for many towns in Poland to which their *landsleit* come once a year on a special day for the *azkara*.

At a meeting of the Libai *Landsleit*, I introduced the idea that we should follow this example and erect a *matzeva* for our *kedoshim*, to find some consolation by not letting our dear ones be forgotten. The response was, "It entails much money, and where



At the unveiling of the monument for the kedoshim of Rawa-Ruska

do we get it?" I suggested forming a special committee for this purpose. This committee would help to approach their families and friends in Israel for funds. I took upon myself to work for this purpose.

A committee of five was formed. We composed two letters, one in Hebrew for the Israeli *Landsleit*, and one in English for our *Landsleit* and friends in America. I took upon myself to do the utmost on our next trip to America. My dear husband and I visited societies which still existed from the towns of Libai. I invited the *Landsleit* that I could find to our home for a luncheon, introducing at this occasion our holy undertaking. The response was very generous. The income from this luncheon made it possible to acquire the ground for the *matzeva*. On June 16, 1983, Perez Gross and I signed a contract for the ground.

How to get the funds was a serious problem. Each member contributed something. At a gathering at Yad Vashem of underground fighters from all over the world, when the cornerstone was laid for the "Grand Monument for All Destroyed



*Appealing for funds for
the monument, Bilo
Temple in Tel Aviv,
1983*



Fundraising meeting in Flatbush, 1983



Chana Thee with Major General Levine and his wife

Polish Communities,” I got acquainted with Major General William Levine from Chicago and his wife. I was very impressed, seeing such a high officer in the United States Army at this place. I mentioned our project to put up the *matzeva*. We exchanged our addresses. Since I had brought a camera with me, they agreed to have a picture taken. I sent them one picture. The result was a beautiful letter, with a check for \$100 for the *matzeva*. This noble gesture was very encouraging to me, and I tried many possibilities to find individuals and organizations from these towns.

The contract was the best document to show what we were trying to accomplish, and a few gatherings in their societies or in our home, with a few inspiring words, made it possible to do the impossible — to gather enough money for the *matzeva*.

In October 1984, a very impressive and solemn unveiling ceremony for the (2 1/2 meters high) monument took place, in the presence of a few hundred *Landsleit* and friends. The ceremony was performed by Rabbi Frankel and Rabbi Ehrlich. All the men said *Kaddish*, and a few speakers took part, mainly Perez Gross and myself. It was very moving. The feeling of togetherness gave us the courage to go on.



Fundraising meeting in Tel Aviv, 1984

*At the unveiling, 1984**Rabbi Frankel at the
unveiling, 1984**The monument*

לבא"י ארגון יוצאי ליסקו-בליגרוד-איסטריק ליטביסק והסביבה

לפי הכתבת: חנה טי. ת"א, רח' חיסין 4א, טל. 297863

א. הולצמן, ת"א, מצדה 12, טל. 240540

פ. גרוס, ת"א, אנגל 10, טל. 612584

ב"ה אלול תשמ"ד

ח. נ.

הנד צוזמן(ת) להשתתף

באזכרה לקדושי קהילותינו שנספו בתקופת השואה לפני 43 שנה

שתתקיים ביום שלישי ו' תשרי תשמ"ה, 2.10.84 בבית הקברות

בנחלת יצחק, חצר לבוב, בשעה 4 אחה"צ

על סדר היום:

1. גילוי המצבה לקדושינו

2. אזכרה לנספי השואה

3. הספד לזכר הנעדרים

נא להודיע לכל יוצאי הסביבה

בברכת שנה טובה

ארגון לבא"י

Invitation to the unveiling ceremony, 1984

אזכרה וגילוי מצבה

לקדושי "ליבאי"

ליסקו, בליגרד,

איסטריק, לוטביסק

תתקיים ביום שלישי, ו' בחשרי תשמ"ה (2.10.84)

בבית הקברות בנחלת-יצחק, בשעה 3.30 אחה"צ,

בהשתתפות: הרב ש. פרנקל שליט"א

והרב ארליך שליט"א

אוטובוס מתחנה מרכזית, מספר 53.

אוטובוס מצפון ת"א, מספר 63.

נפגשים ליד השער.

*Announcement in
Maariv of the
unveiling ceremony*

לבא"י ארגון יוצאי ליסקו-בליגרוז-איסטריק ליטביסק והסביבה

לפי הכתבת: חנה טי. ת"א, רח' חיסין 4א, טל. 297863

א. הולצמן, ת"א, מצדה 12, טל. 240540

פ. גרוס, ת"א, אנגל 10, טל. 612584

ב"ה אלול תשמ"ה

ח.נ.

הנך מוזמן(ת) להשתתף

באזכרה לקדושי קהילותינו שנספו בתקופת השואה לפני 44 שנה

שתתקיים ביום ראשון ז' תשרי תשמ"ו 22.9.85 בבית הקברות
בנחלת יצחק, חצר לבוב, בשעה 4 אחה"צ

על סדר היום:

1. הטמנת מגילת השמות של הקדושים
2. אזכרה לנספי השואה
3. הספד לזכר הנעדרים

נא להודיע לכל יוצאי הסביבה

בברכת שנה טובה

ארגון לבא"י

Invitation to the azkara, 1985

The scroll of names of our dear ones was ready for the next *azkara*, in 1985. It was made by a professional *sofer*, on parchment. I mentioned my grandfather in the scroll, because he has no *matzeva* over his grave. A special container of heavy plastic was ordered. The members who came to the *azkara*, with Rabbi Frankel and Rabbi Lieberman, looked at the many thousands of names, all we could gather. Then the scroll was put into the Archive in the back of the *matzeva*.

All the members appreciate very much all the effort which was put in.

My personal reward is that at least something was done to unite us in mourning and remembering our dear ones, *zichronom livrachta*, who paid such a terrible price for being Jews. I only wish and hope that the future generations will sometime visit these places and find their closeness to their forefathers.

The contract for the ground for this monument contains the

condition that some ashes of the *kedoshim* had to be put into this monument and buried, symbolically representing all the Jews who died in Libai. This was a very hard task. I went to Yad Vashem a few times, because they were supposed to have some of these ashes. But nobody knew who was responsible for giving them out. At last I turned to the Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv, Rabbi Frankel. He told me that he had received some ashes before, and that he would go again to Poland. But we had to have the ashes in time for the unveiling. Rabbi Frankel gave me the address of an organization, where I got a small sealed container with some ashes of our *kedoshim*. It was a very strong and sad feeling, holding the container in my hand. I didn't know what to do with it, as my husband was a *kohen*. I didn't know whether I could have it in the house until it would be taken to the cemetery.

In the bottom part of the monument, in the front, there is a special square for this purpose. After the container with the ashes was placed in the monument, it was covered with a special tile, on which it is written that here are the ashes of the *kedoshim*.

Every year between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur we gather for the *azkara*. It makes us remember not to forget the enormous wrong done to our people. It is done according to the Jewish tradition, performed by a Rabbi. The moment brings our loved ones before us and we pray for their forgiveness.

I attended the *azkara* in 1986 with a heavy heart. My dear husband was in the hospital. Only thanks to our dear Rechi, who took me by car to Tel Aviv and also as always attended the *azkara*, was I able to be present.

At that time I was aware that besides our young daughter-in-law Rechi, there was absolutely not a single young person present. The memorial service was well attended, people came from far, Haifa, etc. On the way back, I expressed my feelings as to the necessity of awakening interest in the young generation to attend these gatherings and to become aware of their ancestors who, in today's history, were the sacrifices on the altar of a crazy ideology of Hitler *yemach shemo* to kill all Jews.

My Rechi encouraged me in this idea. I wrote a letter to the young people, Rechi typed it, and till today (I wrote this passage on



Thg urn with the ashes

August 30, 1987), I did not know what to do with it. Today I called the *Jerusalem Post* for the department of "Letters to the Editor" and was advised to send it in, which I am doing.

A Letter to the Israeli Younger Generation (born after WWII)

Today, at a yearly memorial gathering [of the Lisko Landsleit], the impression was that only older people come to pay honor to the martyrs of the Holocaust. These martyrs were the very closest relatives of yours, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins. They were Rabbis, teachers, scientists, doctors, lawyers, artists and philanthropists, writers and poets, etc. All those people who enriched the culture of their native lands and who created especially Jewish literature and Jewish art, all these people were condemned as not worthy of living and were put to death by the most brutal and inhuman methods by the Nazis.

It pays for our young Jewish generation to stop and think. Don't we have an obligation to learn all of that tragic epoch in our youngest history? It would take only a visit to one of the many cemeteries in which monuments are put up by their *Landsleit*.

I suggest that a group of young people should visit the cemetery in Givatayim, Nachlat Yitzchak (Bus no. 63, 53).

There one finds a special section "Chatzer Lvov," where you find a row of monuments for individual cities in Poland. Each monument has a history worth studying. The history of each town is a treasure and a source of pride; to feel oneself a descendant of the people who lived in these cities. It would inspire you to read the literature in many languages, by the people of many of those cities. One would be proud to identify himself with those people, with their ideology, with their deep feeling of morality and also a great sense of humor, in the midst of their hard struggle for a livelihood. Their trust in the Almighty is admirable and can inspire one to find that this is the right way of life.

The Libai organization also understands the need for present charitable deeds.

In December 1988 we had a meeting at Mr. Holtzman's home. I told about the sum of over 2,000 shekels in the bank, and Mr. Holtzman had 160 shekels left from the *azkara*. I suggested we donate 1000 shekels from this sum to the Bikur Cholim Hospital in Jerusalem, which does a very devoted job for their sick under tremendously hard financial conditions. We asked for an acknowledgement of this donation from the Organization of "Libai" *Landsleute* of the four cities in Poland in the name of our dear perished relatives killed by the Nazis. They all were charitable and pious people and would gladly help to support the good work in this hospital. *Kavod lezichrom*.



Part II

Diaries and Poems

In the early 1950's, I began to keep a diary of sorts, writing down my impressions on different occasions. I have selected some of the entries, which appear here, along with poems I wrote throughout the years.

June 22, 1952

To My Son Joseph at His Graduation

*O! Jossi, my good boy!
My Dearest, Dearest guy!
I am so happy and full of joy
That I must praise God in the sky.*

*When you were small and sometimes sick
I prayed you might recover quick
But now you are a swell strong boy
Ready to bring us lots of joy.*

Tuesday, August 26, 1952

A very beautiful weekend passed again. Ali feels better. Yesterday he was on the beach, and kept himself busy writing a poem, as follows:

*Flutter, flutter little wings
O'er the sea so calm
Hasten, hasten little legs
O'er the field and farm.*

*The crumbs on beach and picnic grounds
Are rarities indeed
On ocean surface and in dirt
Is where you find your feed.*

*Tomorrow is not your concern
Nor yesterday your care
You dive and jump to live today
Not seeing how others fare.*

*Is it a blessing or a curse
To be in such a state?
Had you the choice would you consent
To master your own fate?*

September 8, 1952

Long Beach

Yesterday, on Labor Day, it was very rainy. For so many business people, it was a big disappointment.

Saturday night, September 13, 1952

We are up late, ready to go to *slichos*. That is how our "High Holy Days" start. It always brings special religious feelings. We say prayers to ask forgiveness of our sins. Who doesn't have sins,

especially in these days? As a wife, maybe I do not take part enough in the heavy responsibilities to provide for the family? As a mother, who knows? To my older children I am maybe too overprotective. Sometimes expecting too much respect.... To the middle one too soft, overlooking his appetite, and probably too nervous toward the youngest when she demands too much attention. I am too lazy to write to my sister and others, and there are so many things to do for which I do not manage to find the time and strength.

There are so many fine organizations. I belong to some of them, but I should do more for them. Now I pray for good health and good spirits to be able to fulfill my duties as a Jewish woman and a loyal American in every way.

September 23, 1952

It is a happy feeling for a mother to earn compliments concerning her daughter. She (Gita) looked really sweet. Besides this, she prayed seriously and at home she was my good angel. Gita improved lately very much in all ways. I have to hold in my memory my happy feeling when Ali, being free from school the day before Rosh Hashana, helped in the house like in the old times. He hung the curtains on all my eight windows. He made a general cleaning in his room and in some of the closets. I appreciated his help greatly. As for Jossi, he is always the shopper. Shirley kept herself busy, drawing pictures and playing.

October 8, 1952

In the meantime we prepared for Succos. It is a pleasant holiday, but a strenuous one for the housewives. To carry the pots and pans with food for our men to the *sukka*. Otherwise there are very nice features to it. We are about six women serving the meals at the same time. In the yard of our *shul* there is a *sukka*. In the kitchen there is a stove and a refrigerator for our convenience. The hard part of it is that coming home, we women do not enjoy the meals any more. Nevertheless, when a question arises about going to the hotel for these holy days, I am always opposed. It is a pleasure to see that our husbands and sons are enjoying it.

My dear Chaim brought me to a meeting of the Mizrachi

Women. I have been a member for a few years only, but ideologically all my life. I gave a box which was in the house for a long time. I do not yet know how much there was. It was an inspiring meeting. Older ladies and younger ones do their best to help raise money for the needy, especially children in Israel.

November 26, 1952

We went to a Yiddish show on Saturday night. Our Ladies' Auxiliary bought some 100 tickets, distributing them among the members to sell. I sold 12 tickets.

On Sunday, we went with little Shirley to see the opening of the newly-named square, **J. L. Peretz**. I experienced strong feelings. Happy ones because it is possible, really possible, that a street was given the name of a famous Jewish writer. It is a very high moment in the life of a person who was born, lived and suffered in Poland. This fact, like so many others, makes America so worthy, so great, so beloved and so strong. It means freedom for everybody.

January 16, 1953

I became a busy lady. I am taking a High School Equivalency Diploma Course. Last night I went there for the second time. It is a course of 12 lessons, each Thursday, from 8:30 until 10:30 evenings. It is a little hard, because we get a lot of homework. It is a bit late for me, after a day's work. On the other hand, it's easier on my conscience. Sometimes I think it is a caprice of mine, to register in such a school. However, being in school makes me feel happy, clear in my mind, and really young again. In two hours of the lesson, I learn an enormous amount. My homework does not bother me. I am enthusiastic enough to find time to do it.

May 4, 1953

What brought me especially today to writing is a day of important family happenings. Even though I am in bed with a sore arm from a fall, and it is a strain to write, but I am really overflowing with happy feelings which I have to keep in memory: Yesterday morning, my nephew Sami Thee called up with the good news that his wife gave birth to a lovely girl. Mazal Tov! In the afternoon my

brother-in-law Joseph called up with the eager, expected, Mazal Tov of his daughter Leah's engagement. Just at this moment, as I am in bed, it came over me; all the feelings which I went through with Leah, who is so lovely and dear to my heart, and I cried with happiness. Leah Feldman, the youngest of the three girls of Joseph and Runia, who grew up under my eyes to be a very beautiful and popular young lady, was very choosy. All the boys that proposed to her, she matched up with her girlfriends. They already had families, but she still waited for her "Prince Charming." He really appeared, but was too bashful to propose. This made her a little hesitant. When at last he gathered enough courage, his proposal was accepted, and this made me very happy. I felt, with this decision, a light and clear feeling would take the place of all her doubts.

I just had a meeting of my Landsmanshaft Ladies Club, from Lisko, in my house for the first time. My friends helped me get dressed, my dear cousin Sala Feldman came early, to take over in preparing the buffet, and we had the most wonderful gathering. Gita was a sweet little hostess. My Chaimleben took part in serving the guests. Everything was just beautiful. Besides, it was a financial success. We collected 110 dollars for a poor family that came over from Europe, and they come originally from my home town; from a rabbinical family.

There was a fine spirit and a friendly atmosphere mixed with family *Simchos*.

August 10, 1953

This is a very special occasion in my life since I am in the United States. I am taking a vacation all for myself. A wish nurtured for years is coming true. To be able to go places where my heart desires, to see my people toward whom I have a warm feeling and to be able to go out of New York and learn more about the beautiful country of ours. Now I feel like a free person to do it, because my baby Shirley is over 6 years old and in camp with Jossi (15 years) and Ali and Gita are grown-up children who will take care of themselves. The hardest part was to leave my husband. He is very devoted to me as well as to the family. After a day's work, he likes to find me home ready to serve him with a grand meal. Then we

used to go for a walk, stop at my brother-in-law's house for a short while and go together always at the same time to bed. How hard this part is.

August 13, 1953

I am on vacation with my relatives in West Warwick, R. I. I found here many impressive things, above all the warmhearted people of mine. I feel just like at home with them. Mr. Markel, whom I call Mojshe Meier, is an exceptionally fine person. My third cousin, his wife Helen (he is a cousin also) is very fine, the real type of an *Eishes Chayil*, a devoted wife who all the time carries the responsibility for the business, the family and the house. They have five children, four daughters and one son.

My stay here couldn't be better, in every way. They feed me as if in a hotel. They try to show me almost the whole state of Rhode Island. After a hard day's work in the store, Anne, their second daughter, drives the car for hours, to treat me. I appreciate everything very much and it hurts me that Mojshe Meier goes to bed too late on account of my visit. Otherwise they live a quite systematic life. Their family life is a sample of love and devotion. It is a house which always has place for others in joy as well as in need. They give much charity and don't talk about it.

It was good to go away from home. However, I am much happier now, knowing that I am on the way home. Home! My home, my four corners, my Chaimleben, my Ali, my pride, my darling Gitileben. Letters from Jossi and Shirley. All these days I was far away from my fortune, I talked, I thought and I dreamed about my dearest husband and my lovely children.

September 21, 1953

Yesterday we made a beautiful engagement party for Gita. I would like to describe the feelings which I had, preparing a reception in our house for about 80 people.

With every step I took in this direction, I prayed for Gita's good luck, as well as praising the Almighty for the fine boy, the son of noble parents. We would have liked to invite all our friends. This was not possible, so we invited only the relatives and the rabbis,

and only one or two close friends. We were very impressed by the relatives of Julius. All of them are the finest type of German Orthodox Jews. We are very proud of them. Julius has two lovely sisters. Both are married and have sweet children. The brothers-in-law are the finest gentlemen. One of them, M. Wesel, gave a very nice speech. Gita the *kalla* looked beautiful. She behaved like a *kalla* should, being friendly and happy. The *chasan* looked very good and serious. He worked the whole day, helping a lot with the arrangements. Everything he does shows how reliable and responsible he is. There was much work to be done. Everyone had to help.

Between Shabbos and Sunday,
March 6-7, 1954, 1 o'clock

A very important day in my life, a very important night as well. It is before our Gita's wedding which will take place tomorrow. It is a very special day.

My mind is clear and my heart is overflowing with thankfulness, for so much happiness.

Our Gitele, the second in line, came to us greatly appreciated for being a girl. First of all, I wished to have a daughter named after my mother. Then a girl is like a doll to the family. Also Papa was very happy having a daughter. Gita came 47cm. small and weighing only 4 pounds. She had to have 7 meals a day and I nursed her for 8 months. With the doctor's advice, I gave her spinach juice, carrot juice and bullion from veal bones with vegetables, all in the bottle. She developed very nicely and caught up with the size and weight nicely. For 3 years I considered her my angel. She was good and cute and my biggest pleasure was to sew pretty dresses for her.

Her older brother was very good to her. She started to walk at 12 months, talked clearly at an early age and was the joy of the family. When Jossi was born, Gita was 3 years old. Only at that time I found out that she is a child just like all children. She would sometimes cry, and the angel became an "older sister." In school she was good. She also took piano lessons and Hebrew lessons and was a conscientious student. She was more on the shy side. She had only a few good friends. With her brothers she had an exceptionally



Gita, three years old

good relationship. With Ali she was like a girlfriend. They walked every Friday evening on Bedford Avenue where all the youngsters walked.

This way she met her future husband. Julius thought she was Ali's girlfriend. He stopped, said good Shabbos and Ali introduced his sister to him. When he found out that Gita is Ali's sister he made up his mind this is the girl he wants. He called a few times, but Gita was in school taking evening courses. I took one call and understood the name was Brand. I asked if Gita knows anyone by the name of Brand and she said "No." At last he caught her on the phone and she knew who he was. They made a date. She was 18 and he was 20 and after a few months he proposed to her. We met his parents and they made a very good impression. One day, after Yom Kippur, we made a beautiful engagement party with all the relatives, and the young people seemed very happy.

I am the youngest daughter of four girls. Hitler cut off the lives of my two oldest sisters, their husbands, and their children before

they could grow up to be the age for marriage. At this holy moment, I want to remember my dear sister Sima (who was the true substitute for my mother, who died very young). Her husband, Jacob Ginsberg, who was my cousin at the same time, was good to me like an older brother to a baby sister. Their three lovely children: Gicia a darling, intelligent girl, was only 16 years old. Balcia a beautiful and lovely girl only 14 years old. Jossi was not well, and was in some hospital in Lemberg when the catastrophe took place. Nobody knows where he ended.

Esther, my dear sister, had to part from Betty, her oldest daughter, at the age of 14, to save the child. Betty went with a group of children to England, and from there to Israel. The rest of the family was forced to go to Poland and there they joined the road of martyrdom with the six million of our brothers and sisters.

How can I be indifferent at a time like this? I am certainly not better than others to have the privilege of enjoying so much happiness. With my husband at my side, who is a really good and noble Jewish personality. With my other children of whom we



*Betty (nee Nestel) and her husband Sam Nesher,
with Chana and Rechi*

certainly are proud, we have a blessed life and lead our beloved daughter Gitaleben to the *chupah* with a fine religious boy.

I thank You, Almighty G-d, for everything, and pray today at my daughter's wedding day "Give my child as much happiness, understanding and harmony in her married life as You, dear Father in Heaven, let me enjoy. Give my child health, and *parnosa* as You gave me through my dear husband. Give us love for both of them." Amen.

When Gita left the house, to become a good wife to her husband, their apartment was across the street. I used to stay near the window, and my heart went out to know if she feels good, if she will decide all by herself what to wear as a young married woman. I used to find myself in tears, not being able to call her on the phone



Gita and Julius' wedding, March 7, 1954

to make sure she was OK. She was so near and yet it seemed to me she was thousands of miles away. She was the first child to leave home and I missed her so much.

Gita is an exemplary good wife, and Julius is a loving husband, taking after my husband Chaim. He is a righteous man, a hard worker, an excellent father, and a loving and proud grandfather. He is a true self-made man. As children to us, they are especially good and respectful. They are also very generous.

(Now they are the very happy parents of 6 children.)

1) Menachem, married to Draisy. They have 3 children — Esti, Meir and Sarale.

2) Malki, married to Sochor Heineman. They have 6 boys — Moishe, Meir, Mordechai, Shmuli, Benjamin and Jossi (Joseph).

3) Esther, married to Rabbi Zevi Katz. They have 5 children — Leah, Meir, Shaya, Yitzi and Rivka.

4) Yehudit, married to Shimon Levi. They have 3 children — Michael-Meir, Simcha and Rivka-Sara.

5) Rachel Sima 17 years. (student)

6) Rivka 15 years. (student)

November 30, 1954

Today is a very important date for me and my family. It is the birthday of my dearest Chaimleben. Not just an ordinary birthday, which counts automatically, but the fiftieth (50). It is an important milestone in the life of everyone. In my dear husband's life especially. He is a petite sort of man, but what a giant to handle so much responsibility. Since he was 12 years old he started to work for a living. He never complained. The youngest son of the second wife of his father, he lost his mother early. Then he lived with a stepmother who had children of her own, together with the father. Never did I hear a bad word about his stepmother. She died during the First World War when an epidemic broke out. He was always concerned about others. He was liked by his family. He is good-hearted by nature, blessed with modesty and ability to handle situations, people and business. As regards a husband I am the luckiest of all four sisters (as we used to be until 1943) with the best one. As a father, our children know they have the most ideal father

in the whole world. Beginning when they were babies, he is devoted with all his heart to the children, to each one individually. They love their Papa and pay much respect. For Papa they will do everything at any time. He is soft to his children. However, only once in a while they tasted his anger. It left a strong impression and they are proud of it. Now he is especially devoted to our baby Shirley who is eight years old. With her I have to be more firm. She happens to be a marvelous girl in every respect. Beautiful, intelligent, and very smart. Every wish of hers is granted. For her last birthday she got a piano. She makes her father very happy when she plays, and she shows much talent. Last night when Gita (who is expecting in two months, with G-d's help) came with Julius with a beautiful cake to congratulate Papa on his birthday, Shirley sat at the piano just trying to find the Happy Birthday song. She tried very hard and she played very nicely. Then came the presents: shoes, stockings, shirts, ties, pajamas, and so on.

I baked a few cakes. Tonight we will have our brother-in-law Joseph and his son Alfred over for supper. We expect Ali to come from the dormitory of Yeshiva University, so it will be a nice party. I am very happy and proud to be the successful wife of the best man



Chaim Thee at fifty

I know. I only hope that we will continue to be well, and go together in harmony. To overcome all problems which are existing at present, as well as those which are to be expected in the future. We hope to go together until 120 years, with clear minds, clear consciences, with *nachas* from the whole family in a world of peace for everybody.

Happy Birthday, my dear Chaim. Many, many happy returns.

December 19, 1954

I could use a comfortable rest. So could my dear husband. Somehow, when the children were small, we could arrange to go for a little vacation. It is very hard to do it now. Jossi works and I have to be home for lunch. Shirley likes me to meet her at the bus stop when she gets home from school.

The household needs me, I will try to gain strength at home, so that everyone will be satisfied.

March 21, 1955

Last night we had a gathering in Bertha and Sam Susswein's house. We are organized as a group of *landsleit* and ladies from Hungary, as well as for helping the family of a rabbi. They need this help very urgently. The evening was a success. Besides the financial satisfaction, such a fine spirit was felt with everybody content. The honor to speak was given to me and somehow it was O.K.! Everybody expressed their surprise for the good speech. I was with all my heart with the good deed. My dear husband and my dear sister-in-law came along also and another group joined us at this trip.

April 2, 1955

There is a lot of work to be done for Pesach. Everybody does his share of the work. Ali worked hard last night in cleaning the bookcases. Jossi was busy with the sink cabinet. Shirley was busy drawing beautiful pictures. She is very talented. Papale looked over the letters and all papers to clean the desk.

April 15, 1955

It is very late, before lighting the candles, but I would not like to miss the opportunity to tell how nice a Pesach holiday we spent. Even though it involved a tremendous amount of work, with all the cooking and baking, we all enjoyed every minute of it. We had our children and grandson for the first Seder and also next day. He is now 10 weeks old. What a darling little fellow. He is beautiful, active and a very good baby, really. Gita was so happy, home again at a table with a big family, with all the delicious food served. It made me so very happy, with my whole blessed family in a nice and clean house with plenty of light. Everybody was dressed *yomtovdik* and our Shirley was like a real princess. She asked the four questions very sweetly.

April 18, 1955

Yesterday was my birthday. Ali took me out to a good movie. Papa went also and Alfred our nephew came along. Everybody remembered my birthday with a little card and presents. I felt good and tried to make it nice and comfortable for the whole family. It was a fine atmosphere in the house. My sister called and I invited her to come over with Adi. They came and stayed until 12:00 midnight. It was a pleasant gathering. Rosa wanted me to have her pin from Israel as a birthday present. I appreciated the generous offer very much, but could not accept it. It is her most valuable piece of jewelry. When she tried again to persuade me to take it, I wanted to make her feel good and I took it. Then again I knew she has some sentiments in connection with this piece, bought for her by her husband. I gave it back to her, assuring her that I would be happier if she wore it, as I have other jewelry. We found a way of showing our sisterly love. The truth is that we love each other dearly, only Rosa is more on the pessimistic side; only time will teach us the rest.

In 1922 Rosa went from Lisko to Berlin, where she stayed with our sister Esther and her family. Rosa is the only one of my sisters saved from Hitler, thanks to her having gone from Berlin to Eretz Israel as an idealist in 1934.

In Eretz Israel she married Adi Neuhof, a very good and pious



Rosa and Adi Neuhof

man. They lived a very modest and peaceful life. Times there were very hard and they struggled, no matter how much we helped out after we arrived in the United States. We offered to send them an affidavit to come to America if they wanted. It took them four years to make up their mind, before deciding in 1954 to try their luck in America.

They came after we had not seen each other for twenty years. They were received with great happiness. Her husband quickly adjusted, but Rosa could not adjust. She missed her friends and her complete independence. She was not a well person, and suffered from much pain. After a doctor diagnosed her need for a gallbladder operation, she had the operation and recovered completely.

They had a nice apartment and arranged their life really pleasantly. We visited each other very often. When Adi was seventy years old we arranged a surprise party in our house, and invited all our relatives. They didn't have their own children, so they loved our children, and our children were very fond of their Tante Rosa and Uncle Adi.

Adi, who was a smoker, developed emphysema, and passed away shortly afterwards. My sister was very lost, but we and her friends advised her not to give up her apartment and to continue the same style of life she had had before. She continued to go to the



Rosa and Adi with Shirley's children

Educational Alliance, where she spends a few hours each day, and where she has friends who like her.

(Now Rosa stays close to our children, and always spends the holidays, Pesach and Sukkot, with our Gita and Julius. Shirley's boys pick her up by car and bring her back home again. Whenever I go back to America, my first visit is to Rosa. It would be hard for her to make this trip, so I try to go see her at least once a year. We always have a lot to talk about.

Whenever we talk on the phone or write letters, we are grateful for each of us being in her own home, not needing help from others.)

March 28, 1956

I had always liked to have, once a year, a gathering of my ladies auxiliary, in our house.

Much effort was put in it to make it a success. I made many calls to many of my friends, some from the new neighborhood and some relatives from Williamsburg. My dear Runia came with Joseph and

their daughter Annie, who had come from Israel to live near her parents. Also, my Gitale came, and she took over most of the duties in the kitchen. She looked so sweet with her apron, making salads and coffee, and serving, just like in the olden times when she was home, only much more mature.

Now, as for the attendance, it was lovely. More than 50 people came, the nicest bunch of women anybody ever had at a meeting. All of them seemed to be pleased. The end result was better than expected. I feel very happy. This money will help this poor family very much.

Ali and his fiancée Rechi were very sweet. They had someplace to go, but I did not know about it. They had to sacrifice their good time and stay home to be introduced to the guests. It was appreciated by everyone with much happiness. G-d bless them. My husband behaved very nicely. He took care of the gentlemen.

May 8, 1956

For a change I am in bed. Nothing serious, just a little tired. Yesterday, Ali did not go to Yeshiva, and watched me very carefully and truthfully. It hurt me, knowing that I was taking away his valuable time. As he insisted on it, I am very grateful to him.

February 17, 1958

*Happy Birthday to you,
Rechi, Dear!
We see you happy and full of cheer!
If we are far away,
But a difference is today.
In our heart and mind
There are thoughts of another kind.
Thoughts of tender blessings,
Of warm wishes for good health
Also, a comfortable earthly wealth.*

We all wish you everything best, you should be well, you should have a healthy and successful husband.

You should have much *nachas* from your dear son and, last but not least, when the time will come, *ihm yirtze Hashem*, you should be blessed with an easy and happy *Entbindung* in the right time.

As for us, we ask to have *nachas* always from you with your sweet family.

March 26, 1958

How surprised I was, noticing that since last August, I didn't write a line. This should show how quickly the time flies, being busy with the family and outside activities too. I devote much of my time to different organizations. However, one in particular is very close to my feelings.

By organizing a Ladies Auxiliary for the Sadigorer Rebbitzen, I try to help this family financially, as well as to introduce these fine, noble ladies to our friends. It takes much time, energy and money, but as it is always successful, I have my reward.

The following poem was written by a mature woman, a grandmother, in a moment when overwhelmed by a feeling of happiness and appreciation, for experiencing so great a measure of good *Fate*.

It was a warm summer day, when I was sitting on the beach accompanied by my two young grandchildren. The children played happily, building houses, castles and also cakes of sand and destroying them at the same time, with loud laughter.

The watchful eyes of their grandmother followed their games and my heart was filled with overwhelming happiness. While sitting in the beach chair with my feet in the warm sand, and the blue sky overhead in a pleasantly warm atmosphere, somehow a deep religious and philosophical emotion took hold of me.

Like a film of events passed clearly before my mind's eye. The birth of my son, who is the father of my grandchildren. As a young boy still this son showed much intelligence and interest for

learning. He was a source of much joy for the family. This was in Germany before the Second World War. At the age of seven years the boy, along with his family, was forced to leave home, and his role was that of a refugee. We had to pass many countries, learning many languages, and during 3 1/2 years experiencing during this time many miracles.

During this time the frightful tragedy took place, when the Nazis undertook to kill a whole nation, when blood was flowing and destroying all Jewish people in Eastern Europe, known as the Holocaust. The happy event was our family's arrival in the United States.

The eagerness to learn and the possibilities offered, evoked in this 10-year-old boy a great chance to study and to advance. He studied theology and served as a Chaplain in the United States Army.

He married a lovely girl and together they built a lovely family. Blessed with two boys and two girls, they felt rich even without much money.



Ali as a Chaplain

Now I, his mother, am filled with trust in G-d and believe in "Fate."

Should I be blessed with more grandchildren, I hope it will be a world of peace without any hot or cold wars, a world with freedom and justice for all, that it should be possible to bring up normal and successful human beings.

We believe in a promise of eternal peace. If we will teach love instead of hatred, peace is attainable.

Fate It Is

*Mother of "Sonny," when playing
On the beach with his angels, is praying
Thank you "Almighty," I thank you
For a happiness granted just to a few.*

*When into the world, in a deep dive
There came with birth a new life
Be it either female or male
It's fate, yes fate with a certain scale.*

*O! Boy! "Sonny" he got the name
Who knows? Might even come to fame
His genius, quite obvious at six
But history played unusual tricks.*

*When at seven a world war starts
From home and comfort he departs
Within a circle of miracles galore
New continents and peoples to explore.*

*While a nightmare, not equal takes place
Drowning in blood an entire race,
Fate, yes fate brings "Sonny" to the gates
Of the most blessed United States.*

*In this land one is free and safe
With education that the constitution gave
Here "Sonny" developed his genius again
And in gratitude served as a Chaplain.*

*Then when blessed with a lovely wife
Together they built an ideal life
Of devotion, righteousness and love.
Their reward? The greatest of mankind's hope.*

*Not millions did they gather yet,
But riches which no money can ever get
Together four dolls, two girls, two boys
A nation's most genuine and reliable toys.*

*What are her thoughts, who can explain?
The woman that gave Sonny's life in pain.
It does not matter, she does not remember,
Only in G-d she trusts and to "Fate" surrenders.*

*Should she be granted more of it
She hopes the world will match to fit
With happiness for all, young and old
Without any wars, not hot or cold.*

*A world stable with justice for all
The angels be free to play ball
And grow into normal successful men
Leading humanity in peace as best they can.*

*We have a promise of eternal peace
Let's rid us of the mental disease
When love not hatred, we will teach
Eternal promise is in our reach.*

Dear Rain

*Yesterday a bright tomorrow was expected
Instead we need umbrellas to be protected.
Enthusiastic about the change in weather,
Small fry at the windows gather.*

*They watch how raindrops form in rings
If only they could have some wings
To be a part in this beautiful play
But no! in the house they have to stay.*

*Their mother's nerves are put on test
When she insists that they should rest
Yet with all pros and cons here
Rain as well as sun is very dear.*

Miami, January 21, 1959

Last night we were with Mr. Wagner to watch the dog races, just to get an idea what it is like. *The poor dogs, the poorer people.* The truth is, that I am negatively impressed. Once you let yourself be led into it, there is no end to it. I saw people losing hundreds of dollars within one hour. They are almost sure that their number will win. They do win sometimes. But in the end they lost, even their self-respect.

July 29, 1960

I decided to register for college. It took me a whole year just to take the right steps toward this direction. I had to go through the ten-hour test for a high school diploma. Once I had the diploma in my possession, I tried to contact several colleges, to find out how I could be admitted. It was a very hard task. I planned to spend only about six hours for courses in a week, and in the afternoons, not evenings, because I feel the evenings belong to my husband and

children. During the day while Shirley was in school I wanted to do something that I felt a very strong drive for.

One day while I was on the way to Columbia University to find out about the conditions, I tried again a last time in Brooklyn College. This was my first choice. After attending 12 courses for adults it felt like home, but it seemed very hard to get admitted here. I needed a little encouragement badly, as somehow I felt guilty for wanting such a luxury for myself. As a happy wife, mother and grandmother of five lovable grandchildren, why suddenly such a strong desire for learning? When I told my problem to this professor, he said, "Why do you apologize so much? I think you should be congratulated for your courage! Go ahead, and there isn't a thing to stand in your way."

Long Beach

September 2, 1960

I made use of the afternoon, and visited Mrs. Scharf. They have three hotels for elderly people. the Ambassador, the Waldorf and the Royal Hotel.

Although it is a very nice hotel, and I was really impressed by the cleanliness and elegance of the hotel, the loneliness and the feeling of uselessness speaks for most of them. A new industry is in the developing stages. Hotels for "senior citizens." People live longer nowadays, especially women. When the children are married and are successful, they can afford to help a lonely mother or father, by paying the bill in the hotel. Sometimes the oldsters had success in saving some money for their old age and pay their bills independently.

I suppose they are well taken care of with meals, laundry, television, entertainment, and in other ways. But where is the sense of belonging; the close ties with the children's families? Where is the authoritative position of the father or mother — where the parents' experience through a long hard life which could be of some help for consultation, or at least they can get the feeling that they are considered a close part in the family.

Presents, yes; housedresses, slippers, sometimes snacks. Hello Pop! How are you? I observed two sons and their wives come to

visit a blind and deaf father. They gave him kisses and advice to take care and not let himself be bothered by anyone. They accompanied him to the elevator in the Royal, where he was taken by the attendant. They had a feeling of doing a mitzva. They paid respect to their father. Then they hurried back to their duties and families.

This scene brought back memories of many older people from my childhood and youth. A grandma helped take care of babies, or helped with the mending, or in the kitchen. She had the feeling of belonging, and paid for this with warmth, love, and blessings.

July 21, 1961

It is possible that Friday afternoon already carries the peaceful spirit of the approaching Shabbos, and therefore, I am able to write at ease.

July 23, 1961

It is Tish'a B'av. In our own circle we have some youngsters that are fasting for the first time — Naomi Freschl and Martin Reinman. This is usually a milestone in our lives. After this day, the test to be considered an adult was passed.

August 27, 1961

I am very grateful for the fine summer time we spent in the house of our dear Ali and Rechi with their darling children Aaron Zvi 4 1/2, Aviva Sima 3 1/2 and Baruch, 18 months old.

From our visitors:

*The marvelous time we spent in the sand
The company we kept, was really grand
The weather was also very fine.
All in all I had a marvelous time.*

Love Gisela Freschl

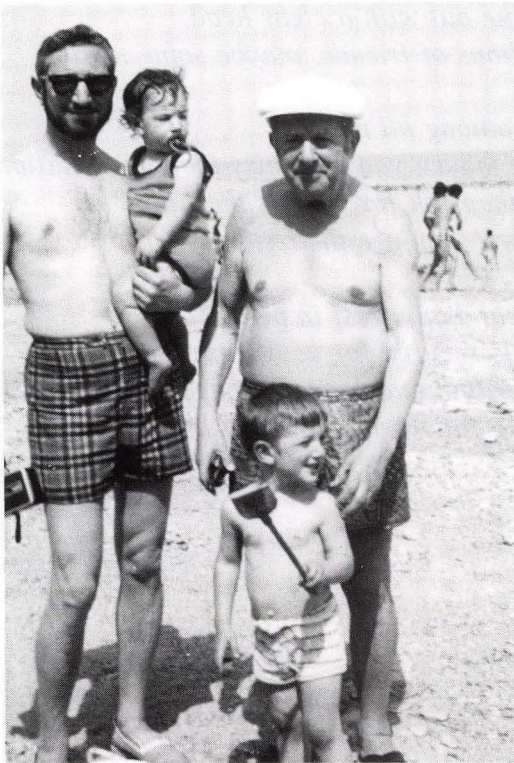
*With best wishes
signed by Rabbi Hyman Shapiro and family*

I am very glad to see such a close-knit and happy family spending such fine sunny days together.

Respect and love
Stanley

It is wonderful to spend my time of recuperation with my darling family together, and Long Beach is just the place to get back on one's feet.

Annie Levene



On the beach

A Tribute to Mrs. Roosevelt

*We say farewell, Madame, with a warm tear
To you who lived without a fear,
A life filled only with good deeds,
Helping everywhere in human needs.*

*You lived rather more than just one life
Being high up, fate made you dive.
But, you came out with a clear head,
Making millions of friends, maybe some mad!*

*Truly loved among all nations
Together we mourn you and miss the good relations.
Whom will they ask for help in their aim?
World Mother! You are their claim.*

*Farewell, Dear Lady, rest in peace
Your example secured for us a lease,
To guard freedom and peace perhaps
We pledge, to follow in your steps.*

1962

Out of Breath

*A sudden longing to visit and see
Your grandchildren, with whom to be
Just for a few hours today
The decision is firm, without delay.*

*A bagful with cake and snacks
and surprises which none expects
A bus takes you to the L. I. railroad
Up you hurry the steps, as if a smooth board.*

*The train just left, it's no use
Hurrying could only your health abuse
Out of breath, the heart is jumping
The lungs are busy with air pumping.*

*Is it worth all the attention?
For seeing them a short while not worth to mention
Who asks such question, cannot compare
The feelings of love for grandchildren everywhere.*

1962

Welcome Home Shirley

*This is a day of expectation,
Will there be a changed relation?
Away from home, free, not terrorized
For a long summer in camp, organized.*

*Shirley Darling, we really wonder
If a "Sweet Sixteen" became a thunder,
Or maybe matured more decisive
Or lonely, lively, acting as permissive.*

Four S. S. A.'s in one room
Double deckers caused in friendship a "boom."
Life's best lesson in reality
To control bad, display best quality.*

*Being responsible for a group of girls
Their behavior shone out just like pearls.
Awards many, with praise and price
They also won in color war enterprise.*

*With so much experience being enriched,
We became proud and really bewitched.
To greet our Shirley the only right way
We stayed at home, with her group to come, she may.*

*"Hello!" she said, just like that
We had a wonderful trip, tips not bad,
Just a good meal is all I need
And T.V. my soul and body to feed.*

* S. S. A. = "Senior Staff Assistance"

1962

(after Marilyn Monroe's death)

Marilyn Monroe

*A rare sample of beauty came to fame,
Yet her life turned out a tragic game.
She had warmth and charm so much admired
And the symbol of love became too tired.*

*Child love, what she mostly missed,
Had no parents by whom to be ever kissed.
By nature sensitive, not very strong
Her profession tiresome, and entirely wrong.*

December 13, 1962

It is late in the night, but I would love to put in writing my experience of this evening at a poetry reading session in Brooklyn College. To me this is an experience of extraordinary value. I do not forget that my children are of equal age as my costudents. So too this organization or club, of writers and poets, consists of young ladies and gentlemen of my children's ages.

This meeting took place in the newest building of Brooklyn College. At the window side of the third floor a chair and round table were reserved for the reader. There were four readers who read their own poems, Each one told the circumstances under which each poem was written, or to whom a poem had been dedicated. I sat on a sofa with four others and could observe the reader and entire audience. The easy atmosphere which prevailed in the room, which was good for the reader, was impressive. Everyone listened with great interest, and after each reader had finished his reading, the listeners gave him a big ovation. The behavior and the seriousness which the group displayed was for me a point to be greatly admired. Here we had young people with all

kinds of problems, like how to study for their tests, or how to manage a job and college at the same time. I am sure that many students here also have the problem of how to make ends meet. Some are engaged, need to find an apartment, etc. Yet they find time and inspiration for creative writing and for listening to their friends' creations. As for me, I was delighted and very happy for not being ashamed to be the only grandmother among so many youngsters, feeling myself as one of them and enjoying a highly spiritual evening.

The poems were on many different topics. Some serious and philosophical, others on the comical side. Love too was generously treated. Mr. Cohn read his translations of the Bible and I found this to be of real value.

I brought along my poems and waited for the occasion to eventually read one or more. But I spared my Shirley embarrassment, if she were to know about it. Besides, the time was late; also, I feel that my poems will be appreciated more by our circles.

This evening gave me an insight of others, of the circumstances under which they write their poems. I found that it is a sudden idea, or a strong emotional experience which, left in solitude, has to come to the surface in the form of a poem. This finding satisfied my curiosity, because this is also my way of writing a poem.

One thought, and an idea starts to develop until something like a poem is born.

Tonight again I lived my life before I was engaged, when I used to go to lectures in Berlin by the most famous personalities. In one word, I was very happy.

Labor Day, September 2, 1963, in Long Beach

For the third time, we stay with our children, since they bought their own home. With us, in the 4 room garden apartment (basement), stayed our younger son Jossi with his wife Zipora.

The advantages of being so close with married children are manifold. We have separate housekeeping but often share special meals, so that there is complete privacy, and yet some warmth which comes from barbecue suppers in the garden or common supper (*Shalosh'udos*) on Saturdays, mostly in the garden. This belongs to the most pleasant moments of being so close. We enjoyed always the good feeling of friendly relationship.

October 1963

Autumn Leaves

Fascinated by the beauty and charm

On an Indian Summer day's turn

A traveler's spirit experienced a lift

Touched by nature's generous gift.

What a panorama of colors! in all shades and range

Of green, yellow, gold, red and orange

With a truly strong and exquisite impression

One had to thank the "Creator" in deep expression.

Friday, November 22, 1963

The first impact at the news of President John F. Kennedy's assassination:

Unhuman Humanity

*How deep did we dive?
To take a good man's life
On his way on a mission
To better the depressed ones' condition.*

*Two decades ago, when a killer was around
One who destroyed innocent lives
Where were the assassigators?
Probably amusing themselves with their wives.*

*"We may not interfere with other nations' policies"
The result a world of complete moral paralysis.*

*John F. Kennedy! You cannot really die!
Be sure in your name there will be again some to try
And show that love for people
Whoever they are, always will entice a valiant war.*

December 16, 1963, Chanukah

To Mrs. Miriam Zuckerberg

*You are a "Lady of Valor" like no other
To thousands of children you are a Mother
They are protected under your arms
For your heart has love and is full of warmth.*

*These children pray for your good health
As well as for blessings in material wealth
For your happiness and all that good life bears
Till a hundred and twenty mazeldike years.*

December 21, 1963

A Good Man My Husband

*Among three brothers he is the youngest
The shortest in size, in goodness the strongest
In his feelings and thinking
At eating and drinking
In business or private very selfless
But ready to serve everyone when helpless.*

*A father a model of devotion
A husband an example of duty
His charm and humor spreads beauty
In community charitable out of proportion.*

*He is loved, respected, and trusted
About his successes he never boasted
He is a modest and religious man
Loved by children and wife, who isn't a peck hen.*

There are some people who close themselves up with their families. Chaim always thought of others. He was honored by the Israel Bonds three times: on the 15th, 20th, and 25th anniversaries of the State of Israel. This is the speech given by Ali on the 15th anniversary.

**PRESENTATION OF PLAQUE
TO CHAIM THEE**

December 21, 1963

By Israel Bonds Committee

At Young Israel of Eastern Parkway

Presentation Made By: A. Thee

It is rare indeed for a son to have the opportunity to honor his father in public. I, therefore, thank the committee and its chairman for assigning me this pleasant task of making the presentation tonight to our guest of honor **MY FATHER CHAIM THEE**.

Before a presentation is made, it is generally customary to give a biographical sketch of the man to be honored, to list the various organizations in which he is active, and to enumerate his many achievements. In short to establish and to extol the public figure of the man in question.

I think all of you know our guest of honor and his public contributions, Tonight I would like to talk about the private figure of Chaim Thee, as I, his son, see him.

If you were to ask my father what he considers to be the most important acquisitions a person could make in this world, I don't think he would hesitate and answer A Good Name.

Shlomo Hamelech already came to the same conclusion when he said in Mishlei, "נבחר שם מעושר רב" and the famous quotation from Kohelet, "טוב שם משמן טוב." In trying to describe my father, I think I can sum up my feelings and impressions in one statement כשמו כן הוא. His qualities and personality can be found in his name, in the nine letters that spell out

CHAIM THEE

The **C** — stands for **Courage and Character**

The courage to face life, the future, with optimism and *bitachon* in *Hashem* even when everything appears hopeless and discouraging.

The courage to leave everything behind and start anew in a strange land after being completely uprooted. This kind of courage has helped develop and achieve a noble character.

The **H** — stands for **Hospitality**

The Thee house is not only of the August moon. It always has had open doors — whether in Crown Heights, or Williamsburg, whether in Germany or in Belgium, in France, Portugal or Cuba.

Probably everyone here tonight can be a witness to the wide and generous hospitality which prevails at all times.

And I must add, that in this regard, my father is blessed with my wonderful mother who has encouraged even more his desire to fulfill the mitzva of *hachnasat orchim*.

A — is for **Advice**

It is to Chaim Thee that people turn for counsel and advice. Not only we his children, but our entire *mishpacha*, close or distant, and our friends and neighbors, whether in business, community problems or in personal situations, we all seek his counsel, understanding and wisdom.

I — represents **Idealism**

Our late President Kennedy aptly expressed the meaning of idealism. He said "We should not ask what does my country do for me, but rather, what can I do for my country."

This attitude my father carries with him at all times in every endeavor. His motive is always to be of service, to contribute. Every undertaking is *lishmoh*. We, who honor him tonight are cognizant of this idealism for Israel, for Jewry, for Torah.

M — is for **Modesty**

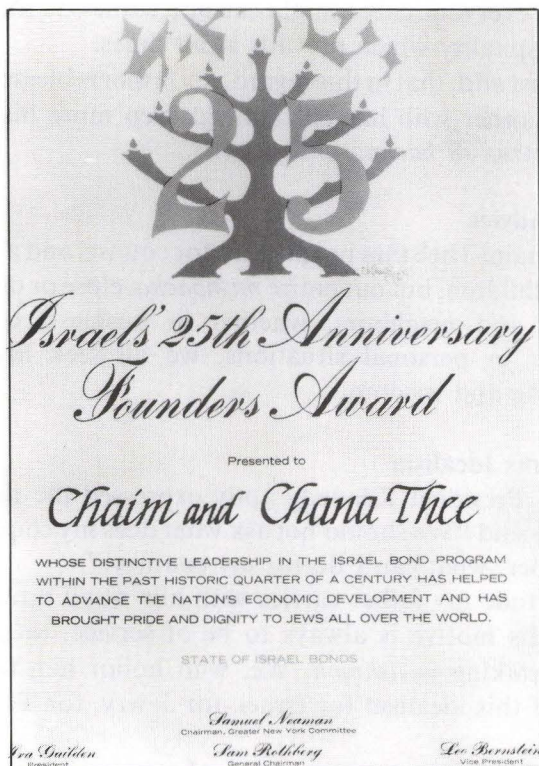
This is one characteristic, one mitzva, which the more you try to describe it, the more you talk about it, the less sincere it sounds.

All I can say is that my father's great respect for every human being, his *derech eretz* and *kavod* for every person is the best testimony of his modesty, his humility.

If I were to ask each of you what the "T" should stand for — your answer would very likely be, T is **TRUSTWORTHY**.

In business and among friends the name Chaim Thee is almost a synonym for trustworthiness. It is the cornerstone on which he has built his entire life.

I am grateful to him for setting such a high standard towards which we can attempt to strive.



In service to Israel

H — is for Humor

A sense of humor is a quality which enriches all the other qualities one may have. A cheerful countenance, a smile, adds warmth to hospitality. It disarms enemies and wins friends. My father's sincere smile and good humor is in no small measure responsible for the many friends he has as witnessed tonight.

E — stands for Energy

It never ceases to amaze me where my parents get the *koach* and energy for the dinners, *Melave Malka's*, *simchos* and functions.

This is a superhuman strength and energy which comes from a reservoir fed by

Ahavat Yisrael and *Ahavat Hashem*

by a love for *Hakodosh Baruch Hu* and a love for fellow Jews. There is no tiring where Torah, *Tzedaka* or Yisrael are concerned.

The last E stands for **ESTEEM** in which he is held by his family, by his neighbors and friends and by all who have the good fortune of knowing my father

CHAIM THEE

In the name of the STATE OF ISRAEL
and the Officers of Chevra

AHAVAS ACHIM ANSHE SFARD.

January 23, 1964

To Brooklyn College

*Expressing gratitude to my fate
For although somewhat late
Permitting me the pleasant taste
In an atmosphere so vast
With wisdom and high knowledge
To be part and parcel of this college.*

*The liberal spirit and devotion
Given selflessly in a full portion
By training teachers in a new fashion
A truly G-d-send mission in your profession
Your warm understanding is the measure
For our children, our greatest treasure.*

*To my professor in admiration
From a student who pays an obligation*



Charity — a way of life.

May 14, 1964

First, I would like to express a very pleasant feeling that I experienced two days ago. There was a Mother and Daughter Luncheon arranged by the Women's Organization in the Central High School where our Shirley is attending, and graduating from next month. All mothers of the close friends and the daughters too, occupied a whole table. This alone was a nice time to again meet the mothers of the girls whom I see very often in and around the house.

It seemed that our daughters were very proud in taking us out for a good time.

Today, when I finished my class in Psychology, Estelle Wolf, my son's sister-in-law, came in with a package. She told me that it was Ali's thesis, already printed, and asked if I would like to see it. Holding the three volumes in my arms, I first realized what a happy mother I really am to do such an honorable service for my dear son who gives us, thank G-d, so much reason to be proud parents. These books for which he worked so hard were received in the office by Miss Morton, who congratulated me as the mother. She introduced me to one of the professors who also congratulated me. I felt that such a moment should not be forgotten. There is not a means that could measure the thoughts and feelings of a mother in my position. The whole life story passes by in minutes. One sees the very tiny baby boy, then an early talker, walker. Some questions come into your mind that he asked when he was three years old: "Has G-d a beard?" As a tiny boy, the questions he constantly asked me about everything when I pushed the carriage with his baby sister Gita who was only 25 months younger.

I remember how stimulating his questions were. He soon became much loved by all the relatives, and was always popular among his friends.

He also showed great abilities with his hands, to an extent that we were almost sure that he would become an engineer. At 5, in his first Hebrew class, he received a reward for learning well, a Haggadah, which he still has in his possession.

During the years of constant wandering from country to

country, he managed somehow to learn many different languages and get along in schools, wherever we came.

When we arrived at last in the United States in 1942, he went to the Yeshiva Torah V'daas, and at his graduation from the elementary Yeshiva, after being in the country for only two years, he was valedictorian, and received a medal in English. If it had not been for his sicknesses before having his tonsils taken out, he would have skipped grades.

This way he managed to finish High School-*Mesivta* in a shorter time, and started in *Beis Medrash* and evening courses in Brooklyn College.

At last, he decided to register in Yeshiva University where many of his friends went. He stayed in the dormitory, or had a furnished room with another boy. He managed fine all week, certainly living very modestly. He was always very careful not to use a penny more than what was absolutely necessary. He came home for the weekend, which was always a happy family reunion.

At that time I always tried to greet him with some special treat, with one of his favorite foods. The house was carefully straightened, just like preparing for a very important guest coming for the weekend. Sometimes I thought he became estranged by being away from home on the weekdays. Shirley, who was fourteen years younger, mentioned once, "I think sometimes that Ali is my uncle." We all looked up to him. Many times he was very exhausted from staying up late at night, studying. At home he used to relax, and would go back, ready for intensive study.

He graduated college, majoring in Chemistry. Then he started to study for a Rabbinical degree. This was a very hard time for Ali. When we all went to Long Beach in the summer, he was closed in with the big *Gemoras* in the synagogue in the city. But after all, he managed, thank G-d, to get *S'micha* when he was engaged. One week later, his wedding took place.

His courtship as well as the time of his engagement were not fully enjoyed, because he and his girl friend were busy learning.

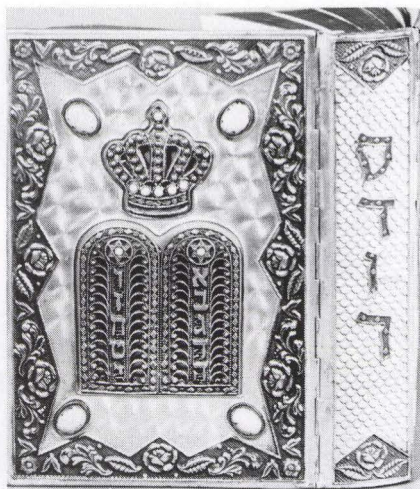
They did not rent an apartment. He decided to go into the army as a chaplain, where he stayed for two years.

At the end of two years they came back to New York, with two

*Ali and Rechi's wedding*

lovely children. Ali started to work in a chemical plant as a chemist, in research.

During five years on this job he completed his Master's degree by going after work to Brooklyn College. Who would say that this was easy? I certainly appreciate his tremendous feeling of responsibility to provide decently for his growing and blessed family. Ali is now, as always, selfless, responsible, modest, religious, good as a plumber, a gardener, able to take care of babies when necessary, and a responsible husband to a very efficient and beautiful wife. He is a very responsible and good son, brother, son-in-law, brother-in-law, and — last but not least — a reliable citizen and community man, with more obligations than he can take, but still manages to handle. Today, with his printed thesis in my arms, all these thoughts came into my mind. Can anyone imagine the blessings of a mother with appreciation for her son, who has reached his (and her) highest goal so far? My blessings, dear Ali, my son, our pride. In my eyes you are all, and even more, than I ever expected. G-d bless you.



Chaim Thee's father was a chazan and sofer by profession. He was well-known for his chazanut in the Belzer circles. The Belzer Rebbe used to invite him to daven in his Beis Medrash.

Chaim had a special feeling for the Belzer Rebbe, out of respect for his father.

My father had been a very devoted Sadigorer Chasid, and this influenced me to become close to Sadigora. When the occasion arose, I founded the Ladies' Auxiliary for Sadigora in the United States. One day, I had a telephone call from the head of the Belzer yeshiva in Brooklyn, pleading with me to accept the role of president of the Ladies' Auxiliary of the Belzer yeshiva. At first I was hesitant, because of my many years of activity on behalf of Sadigora. Chaim heard the telephone conversation, and told me, "Mamale, you don't refuse Belz." Respecting my husband's wish, I agreed to become President for one year. They wouldn't let me go afterwards, they said I brought them hatzlacha.

In recognition of my efforts on behalf of the yeshiva, on November 11, 1963, they presented me with this beautiful siddur. Chaim was presented with the Kiddush cup at a Melava Malka held in his honor by the Belzer yeshiva in 1965.

July 1964

All in all, it was a fine summer with more leisure time than other summers. I devoted more time to baking and managed to arrange a party for the Belzer building campaign.

August 1964

Long Beach

On the Beach

*A summer's day at the seashore
Can be delightful, not a bore
For those who love sun and the ocean
To think and swim in their emotion.*

*Should one close his eyes lying in the sand
He experiences a truly "Twenty Century Band"
A mixture of voices and noises he can hear
Overpowered by the waves sounds like in "La Mere."*

*When you wake up you can find
Circles of people of all kind
Some talking politics others playing cards
Some are just resting not taking any parts.*

*You see groups of children busy as the bees
Playing in sand nearer to the seas
They build castles and bridges out of sand
The older and younger ones work hand in hand.*

*As to some romantic moments
One can observe and make some comments
Young couples forget the world around
And display devotion in a loving bound.*

*The older ones delight themselves in food
The heavier ones find everything tasting good
Children hurry to buy ice cream
A summer's day on the beach is truly a dream.*

*A mosaic of colors on display
By many beauties young and gay
Lift your spirit in appreciation
For the wonders of the creation.*

Nov. 25-Dec. 1, 1964

To Dr. Joseph Schwarz

*Dr. Joseph Schwarz's "Scopus Award"
Is only a minimum of earthly pay,
For being a life long avangard
In rescuing brethren in every way.*

*A Hero and a Celestial being
Was he in time of greatest need
In time of chaos, he was seeing
Ways of help, like a father indeed.*

*A man so good and so courageous,
So selfless, a true "Samaritan"
He follows the ways of our sages,
As well as a good American.*

*With such a person as "Joint Director"
Humanity was enriched a lot.
A whole uprooted people's protector,
He became the messenger of G-d.*

April 1965

(Upon Shirley's engagement)

My heart, the heart of the mother who with the L-rd's help, so successfully guided the life of her children toward a happy family relationship, is full of prayers to our good Father in Heaven for a happy and successful life together for Shirley and Bumi. If I could do it, I would let you benefit from the portion of happiness that was meant for us in the future. But we well know that everyone has his portion of *mazal* assigned by *Hashem Yisboruch Hu*, so I wish, hope and pray that *mazal* should shine upon your home, harmony should prevail in your relationship and success granted in your life together.

On Yom Kippur, 1945, I felt for the first time a free lady in the Synagogue. It felt so good to be free to pray and fast undisturbed by my small children.

But our Father in Heaven had another plan. I became pregnant. After having pushed baby carriages for 10 years I thought I had fulfilled my obligations and was very thankful for my lovely children. Life became very busy before the pregnancy with tonsil operations, chicken pox, mumps, with preparing for Ali's Bar Mitzva, etc. But no one asked me, and I only hoped that I hadn't forgotten how to take care of a baby. We also worried where to put a crib. Each room was too small. However, the time came, and just on Sukkot our Shirley was born. In the hospital she was declared the prize baby. She was very beautiful, 6 pounds and normal in every way, *Baruch Hashem*. A place for the crib was made by closing one half of the French door in the bedroom. Shirley became the baby for the entire Thee and Feldman family. She was "Our Shirley."

To her parents she brought a new lease on life. For the older children she was the greatest treasure. When Shirley was one year old we rented a beautiful apartment in the same neighborhood. She developed, *Baruch Hashem*, very beautifully. She was walking at 10 months. The children were busy in school so the baby was entirely my responsibility and I was very happy. In summer we took a place in the country or on the beach. Jossi liked to be in camp. The last few weeks of vacation he also enjoyed the beach and the family was

together. When Shirley was 3 years I took her to a kindergarten in the YMHA. On the first floor was a course for adults to learn English. While Shirley was in her group I used the time to learn the language. At 12:00 I took her home, gave her lunch and put her to bed for a nap.

So far Shirley had an uninterrupted way of developing into a normal and intelligent child. In the school she was liked by teachers and friends alike. She always had many friends, also later as a teenager they went as a group to Washington, I being the chaperon. Little by little the older children got married and Shirley played as the flower girl, junior bridesmaid, etc. The longest time she was with Jossi and they loved each other. When Gita got married Shirley was 7 years old. When Ali got married she was 9 years old. At Jossi's wedding she was already a 15-year-old maid of honor. Shirley loved to learn, she was always busy studying or practicing piano. On Shabbat afternoon all her girlfriends met in our living room and they always had good times. Once I invited their mothers for tea on a Yom Tov and the girls were in another friend's house. The mothers predicted that Shirley would be the first to get married. It was true but they all got married very young and to this day they stay as close friends.

1965

Encore

*On the Campus you can find
Mature women of a special kind
You are not sure of their part
Teachers? Or students on a renewed start.*

*Here is a clear and honest explanation
About their and Brooklyn College's relation.
Once as students they interrupted their learning
Either for marriage or out of need for earning.*

*When then successful as mother and wife
They start to long for a cultural life.
Some study just for mental expression
Others for a degree in a certain profession.*

*The mature students join in "Encore"
A club respected more and more
By applying their assets one by one
They win friends, and loneliness is gone.*



Encore members

May 4, 1965

Spring in New York

*It's a warm and pleasant Spring day
Tuesday the fourth of May
When nature experiences rebirth
I look on a small spot of this Earth.*

*I see not green grass or flowers gay
That spring usually brings in May
The view comes from a window high up there
Onto 5th Avenue, an observation very rare.*

*A mosaic of colors of all kind
An elegance in cloth there you find
Mostly red, green and blue
And also colors others quite a few.*

*Most exciting is the lively spirit here
The swinging and rhythmic walk in sunshine
Especially of the young ladies', never mind
It's their Spring! their May! O! Dear!*

In 1965, as usual we spent the summer in Long Beach, together with Shirley, before her marriage. We both attended Brooklyn College, each taking two different courses. It is always a pleasant memory for both of us.

This is part of a speech I delivered at the Speech Festival representing my class:

Happiness in Marriage

Marriage is probably the most important of all human relationships. The establishment of the family by marriage creates the basic unit of society. "It is not good for a man to stay alone. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother and attach himself to his wife and they shall form one unit," as it says in the Bible.

The general attitude about marriage has changed in recent years. Marriage had been considered a sacred contract between a man and a woman, who were united with the grace of God to fulfill an important mission: children. The religious aspect of marriage was implemented in young people, with a view for ethics and morality, rather than self-interest.

The newest view of marriage has a more self-centered approach. Young people want to be in love, and think this is the only assurance for their happiness. The religious aspect of marriage and its ethics are of minor importance for the union and establishment of a family.

How do we find the right mate? Young people are busy, studying or working, and there is not much time for social life. Some find for themselves the partner in college, some at work. Executives marry their secretaries, doctors their nurses, etc. They might be in love or so they think, but they need each other's companionship. In some cases there is no romance at all, just an understanding that they will get married. Some wait too long for a chance, some take the first chance.

If we look around, we can find that neither beauty nor intellectual superiority necessarily makes the good match. We cannot generalize and say today's families are happier or unhappier than in the past generations. Only from the overall picture, from the recent statistics, the papers, movies, and television, we find a picture of today's families which leaves us with a sigh and worried. We ask ourselves, where is the answer? Why so many divorces? Why so many frustrated people and homes with just one parent, or step-parents?

The answer, I think, comes from two main sources:

1. The values that one seeks in marriage.
2. The way the mate selection is handled.

My purpose in speaking to you about happiness in marriage is to prove to you that marriage can be very happy and romantic, with a great feeling of accomplishment if you follow just a few important steps before you make your choice. Here is a prescription for a lasting happy marriage by Mrs. Chana Thee, the mother of three happily married children, and one soon to be married.

1. Similarity of background.
2. Not too great a difference in age.
3. Positive information about the good name, honesty, and responsibility of the candidate.
4. Guidance of parents in mate selection.

In my experience, blind dates which come from reliable friends are a good way of meeting each other. Long dating is not necessarily an insurance of knowing the character more thoroughly.

1. In the choice of a mate it is best that parents and children cooperate. The parents may have a cooler judgement about the background and character of the candidate. Yet, the decision should be yours.

2. Religion as a way of life is of great importance for the future family, therefore coming from the same religion causes fewer conflicts with the families on both sides. You pray together, and enjoy together the traditions and festivities which give closeness and warmth.

3. Respect for public opinion. A couple as well as a family cannot live isolated. They have to be accepted and respected by their families, in the community and among their friends. Too great a difference in background might impair the happiness of the young family.

Marriage is not a place to find only fulfilled dreams, status, and comfort. You can have comfort, status, fulfillment, and happiness if you can give all this to your partner in life. Don't ask what I can get out of marriage, but what I can give in marriage to make my partner proud of me and fulfilled.

My happy marriage, my harmonious and religious family, is the evidence of my statement.

Rereading this now, I realize that I did not just write this for a course — I lived it. The moral attitude of my environment developed in me a sense of recognizing right from wrong, and was helpful in developing a strong power of control. This was coupled with another goal: education for the sake of education was an inspiration in my home. I met my husband through a *shadchen*. After a thirty-hour courtship, and after obtaining the approval of relatives, we became engaged. Since my fiancé lived in Kiel, while I lived in Berlin, our real romance developed by mail, after our engagement. I received 300 cards and 100 letters from him during the year we were engaged. What a wonderful time this was, every morning to receive a letter, sometimes only a short note, but the words were so precious, and they sounded out a heavenly melody: “I miss you so,” “My treasure,” “My darling.”

A Rescue by the Air Force

In July 1965 Herschel Babad, a young camper in Camp Belz, wandered off from his group to pick berries, and got lost. Everyone was mobilized to search for him — the camp, the police, yeshiva bochers, the Air Force. After three days, on Shabbos afternoon, little Herschel was found safe and sound by Airman Theodore T. Houy, accompanied by his fellow airman Alec-Lee La Flam. On August 23, 1965, a delegation from Camp Belz visited the Edward Newburgh Air Force Base, to thank the Air Force and the two airmen. The following is a part of what I wrote at the time.

On the way to the Air Force base, following two Air Force busses packed with campers of Camp Belz. We are in the private car of Mr. Joseph Feldman, as invited guests of the Air Force. At that occasion, the heroic airmen will be presented by the staff of the camp with a token of appreciation. I feel that we are experiencing a historic event. In no country did it ever happen that an ultra-Orthodox group of Jewish students were paid so much attention as to be invited by the Air Force. I find it a beautiful gesture to

demonstrate that our Defense Department is free from prejudice, and it stands for the defense and protection of every citizen in the United States.

The response of the police, firemen, scouts and private volunteers was enormous. But G-d granted the great moment to the Air Force, in that the Airman Theodore T. Houy was the G-d-sent one to find the child alive. The parents, the director, the camp and the entire Jewish community will always remember.

The Reception

At the gates the two Airmen, Theodore T. Houy and Lee La Flam, were waiting for the arrival of the guests. We were given a permit to enter the grounds of the Air Force base. We were introduced to the two Airmen, as representatives of the Belzer Camp and Yeshiva. The hearty handshakes will be remembered always. Airman Houy has an exceptionally sweet smile, in fact he is all smiles. He was so excited as if his whole family would have come to visit. Airman La Flam led the group to different departments, like to the parachutes. There an expert explained the whole apparatus and demonstrated the opening of a parachute. The most exciting part was when the floating wings opened in case a parachutist should wind up in water. The counselors took pictures of some of the youngest in the group standing on a table with a helmet on. The newest equipment was demonstrated. It is amazing what kind of progress we have seen.

Then we were taken by busses to the headquarters. Here a delegation of eight were invited to Colonel Moore's office. This is the highest authority on the base. The two airmen, La Flam and Houy, were with us. We were introduced, first the camp director Rabbi D. Schapiro and Mr. Oberlander the manager of the camp. Mr. and Mrs. Feldman as the president of the Belz Yeshiva, Mr. and Mrs. D. Schapiro as the vice-president, Mr. Thee as the treasurer and Mrs. Thee as the president of the Ladies' Auxiliary.

We were led to the official office of Colonel Moore, an impressive and respect-commanding place decorated with two flags, the U. S. flag and the flag of the Air Force.

Airman Theodore T. Houy and Airman Lee La Flam stood on



*The reception
by Colonel Moore*



The campers from Camp Belz at the Air Force base

one side. Rabbi Schapiro spoke about the purpose of our coming: namely, to express the gratitude of the staff and entire camp for their help in the time of dim hope to find the child. Mr. Feldman gave to Airman Houy an inscribed gold watch and gold band in appreciation of his selfless effort, and for finding the boy Herschel Babad alive, and Airman La Flam was given a gold tie pin for accompanying Airman Houy in this mission. As the president of the Ladies' Auxiliary, I asked the Colonel if it is permitted to give some cash to these two fine gentlemen as a token of appreciation by all mothers. As the mother of a chaplain in the U. S. Army (in reserve) I had the courage to ask the Colonel if it would be possible to promote these two fine Airmen. This was immediately granted with a smile, and Colonel Moore said, As of tomorrow it will be Sergeant Houy. We took pictures with the Colonel and the two airmen, and had a friendly conversation until we left.

January 18, 1966

A "Tea" for the benefit of Yeshiva Institute for Hard of Hearing and Deaf Children by Mr. and Mrs. Rausman at 443 Crown Street, Brooklyn

My dear friends,

It was given me the great honor to extend to each and every one of you a hearty welcome in the name of our lovely hosts, Mr. and Mrs. Rausman, and the entire committee.

The committee consists of young Jewish mothers, who understood the need for a Yeshiva for Jewish children with hearing problems. Only a few weeks ago I was unaware of the existence of such an Institute. A young lady, the daughter of friends of mine, called and said: "I am Mrs. Lubet," and she then proceeded to tell me that this group had decided to ask for my help in the undertaking of a party to introduce this very worthwhile project to our noble Crown Heights friends. As young mothers, they are too busy, and not able to participate in all other charitable affairs, but this problem is very close to their hearts, and they needed my help as chairlady for tonight's affair.

I was moved and deeply touched by this consideration of the

problems of friends who have the misfortune to have children hard of hearing. In thankfulness to the Almighty for their healthy children, they organized a group, and are now working diligently to raise money for the upkeep of this new Yeshiva Institute.

I tried on my part to find out about this Yeshiva, and after having read some literature about it, I went with Mrs. Rausman one day last week to see the place.

I would like to share with you my impression. I met there competent teachers with experience to teach those children with the newest methods. They learn the sign language as we see it sometimes in the bus when two or more people communicate with each other. They learn to read lips, so they will be able to communicate with other children and also become prepared some day to attend a normal Yeshiva. The importance of this Yeshiva is mainly that here the children have the environment of a Yeshiva while learning or playing; they learn about Shabbos and all *Yomtovim*; they learn the *Alef Bais*, Hebrew reading and writing, from books, pictures, blackboard and through arts and crafts.

The children are in general happy and eager to learn; they are usually intelligent children, and with the right help they can grow to become fine Jewish youngsters, and to give their parents real *nachas*. To those children every step forward, every sound added to their vocabulary, is like wrestling with the sea of silence and winning.

*I can not hear the Alef Bait
But I can learn to say them
It's so hard to hear the daily prayers
Please help me learn to pray them*

This sweet message which is the masterpiece of Mrs. Joan Rausman, tells you everything there is to be said in an appeal to you Yiddishe Mames. I am sure that you will decide in your hearts not to stand aside and let such children come home from other institutes with Christmas songs. If all other religions can support such schools for their handicapped children, we should certainly not lag behind. Thank you all so much for coming here this

evening, and may you all be blessed with good health and much *nachas* from all your loved ones.

February 12, 1969

When I Became a Teacher

After receiving a letter from the Board of Education notifying me that I had passed successfully my last test, I felt ready to use this opportunity and become a "Home Economics Teacher" in a Junior High School, taking graduate courses at the same time.

My intention was to teach as a substitute teacher. Having received a list of Junior High schools from the B.O.E. I looked up one place that was easy to reach, at 2 Linden Blvd. I went there and got an address of a Junior High school. On account of the heavy snow I couldn't be there on Monday the 10th, therefore I went Wednesday the 12th.

The reception was very kind, although the principal was absent. The asst. principal, Mr. Hacker, accepted me for the sewing class to start the next day. This was right after the big teachers' strike in New York. I found that all equipment was missing from the schools. I had to ask my friends in the textile business for remnants, to have something to use in my classes.

First Day, February 13, 1969

The school day starts at 8:00 a.m. The teacher is supposed to be there ten minutes earlier. My time card was ready and after checking in, I got keys to my shop-room, and had to get the plan for my sessions.

My assignment for the day was 6th and 7th session. The time I had to wait I spent in the teacher's room on the same floor as my shop room, on the fifth floor. The teachers are of a very fine category — young men and young women. They are all seriously devoted to do a good job with the students. But you can hear from almost everyone the same complaint — namely there is no discipline in the classes. The youngsters play, fight, but don't want to learn.

Third Day, February 17, 1969

On Monday I have to endure 6 sessions. Four sessions in the morning and 2 in the afternoon. In one instance the girls brought a record player and asked permission to play one record. They got the permission, but there was no stopping them. They danced and let other girls in, and they were busy. The others wanted to learn. I had an idea to cut out small ducks as a decoration to a little girl's dress from felt. I had brought from home a package of needles. I gave them thread and needles and a little duck. It was a good idea to keep them interested in some sewing that is at the same time a kind of embroidery. They were really happy doing this work. In the afternoon I opened the closet and found some canvas to do some embroidering. There was a rush toward the closet and everyone wanted to have one. They did some work competing with each other. After all the 6 sessions it was a relief to be free and wait for the time to check out.



With my students

August 10, 1969

Mothers' Day in America, A Symbol

Each of the students in my class constructed a beautiful flower out of colored tissue paper. This was a small token of appreciation for their mothers. Otherwise, the year throughout — the Mother is taken for granted, she has to do all things for her family. Often she is exposed to mistreatment from the father, if there is a father in the house. Children are quick to imitate this kind of behavior towards the mother. Today's children are critical about their mothers and in many instances also arrogant. This comes from the way mothers easily give in to the demands of their children and in many instances are permissive. A real devoted relationship between children and their parents is a rare occurrence.

In our *frumme* families we are taught the great values of our *imahot* and their contribution in bringing up children of great characters. The Mothers of our Torah implemented discipline and all good assets so that they were worthy of becoming the forefathers of a Jewish nation. Their way of life is a guideline for the whole community.

1. Sarah had the great beauty and goodness of heart that made her the symbol of hospitality.
2. Rivka in her very young years displayed great wisdom and goodness of heart when she offered to Eliezer water, and also gave water to his camels.
3. Rachel with her selflessness by introducing her older sister in her secrets of love to Jacob, although she was very much in love with Jacob.
4. We have Miriam, who was responsible for saving Moshe from death and from forgetting his *Yiddishkeit*.
5. Devorah the Prophetess with her courage.
6. Rabbi Meyer's wife, Bruria, with her trust in G-d.

All these prominent women are brought into the life of every Jewish home as examples of piety and goodness. At any and every occasion a Jewish mother turns for the blessings of our holy Mothers for their *zechus*, and so we learn and teach our children

that a Jewish mother is a worthy person, a great gift from *Hashem* whom we have to respect, to obey, and to love every day of the year.

We pay our respect in that we trust that our mother guides us to the best ways in our lives. She teaches us responsibility to *Hashem* and to our parents, as well as to our community. She teaches us the ways of charity towards the needy, the great blessings of learning Torah, and respect for the *Rabbonim* and for our fellow man.

Monsey, November 10, 1971

The First Snowfall

*As a guest to our children's place
For a day, to enjoy the gift of G-d's grace
Our grandchildren of 5, 2 and 1 year boys
Seeing them busy, playing with their toys.*

*Early in the morning, the youngest in command
For his bottle called, a deserved demand
Soon number 2 joined the adorable sound
Of bubbling and laughter that filled the air around.*

*When satisfied they rested again, I looked out
What a lovely change in nature about!
A delicate snow came down on the lawn
And trees and car tops a white cover have shown.*

*The enthusiasm of the oldest was just too big
He wished one thing especially much
To open the window and have a touch
And feel the snow, and have just one lick.*

This is a speech delivered in 1972 to the "Bikur Cholim" organization in the United States, which hosts people from Israel coming to the States for medical treatment.

“My dear Friends,

“I feel greatly honored to be, along with my dear sister-in-law, the guest of honor of this luncheon. At the same time I feel that for my part I’m not really deserving of it, because I did not do enough for this wonderful organization.

“Each and every member of this committee is eligible to be the guest of honor, for their untiring devotion and wholehearted work. The concept of *Bikur Cholim* is a very big one. It means visiting the sick, privately and in hospitals, helping to find the right medical help in an emergency, and financial aid. This needs everybody’s support and is acted upon by this committee, sometimes under greatest conditions of sacrifice.

“As to my dear sister-in-law, Mrs. Feldman, she is a good angel in generously supporting this wonderful undertaking, along with many, many others. Together we do what is possible in visits to lonely and ill individuals in the neighborhood.

“I would like to describe some of the ways of helping the ill who were poor in the *kleine shtetel*. As everyone knows, there were no hospitals. Nurses did not exist. So, each house was at times a hospital — especially at childbirth. Also, each family member was trained to help in every way to give assistance to the needs of the sick ones.

“If there were cases of chronically sick members, their own relatives became exhausted and needed somebody to take over, so they could recover their strength. Every neighbor worked together in pairs with other neighbors, to watch at night. Others helped out by day.

“In case a doctor was necessary and there were no means for it, the little town in a hurry managed to collect from a few well-to-do citizens for this purpose. Sometimes it was important to send a patient for recovery to a resort, and no matter how hard a task this was, it was accomplished by the devoted townspeople under great sacrifice. Each person’s well-being was felt to be a responsibility by everyone in the *shtetel*.

“How did you get people to grow to experience such a feeling of obligation to his fellow man, to his neighbor? Here I would like to tell the ways a child was trained to come into contact with the

actual problems of illnesses, so that the child developed feelings of sympathy and compassion for the ones who suffered.

"In order to illustrate how this was achieved, I have to describe one week's assignment of a schoolchild in such a *shtetel*.

"Every day in the morning, on the way to school, the child (a girl in this case) had to bring a nourishing breakfast to an elderly woman who was too weak to take care of herself. At 2:00 p.m. coming home from school, after eating her lunch, she had to go to a place where a young boy was lying all alone, recovering from tuberculosis. He needed especially good food to get back on his feet. This meal consisted of a good chicken soup, a plate of meat, a portion of cooked carrots, a piece of bread, and a portion of prune dessert. As a beverage she brought a cupful of tea with lemon and sugar in a jar. This boy had lost his parents during an epidemic and had nobody to care for him. Just the fact that somebody came in for a half an hour to serve him the main meal and talk with him a little bit gave him the will to live and to recover completely. There were other families where the poverty was so great that the crowded rooms and lack of food caused all kinds of illnesses. What was most necessary for this family was some good nutrition to get rid of the deficiencies which caused the problems.

"For these kinds of problems, the *shtetel*, through the good women, organized a team in such a way that each family provided a day's meals for a particular poor family.

"If some people were eager to help out with a meal messengers were provided, to take it from them and bring it to the proper place.

"It seems as if this would be very simple, but it was not. The poor people sometimes refused to accept the help, and the messenger, usually a school girl, had to apply her best know-how to get her assignment to be accepted.

"There are educational philosophers who believe that through example is the best way to learn. I think that all our dear friends here were exposed to such examples of charitable deeds and to many ways of *Bikur Cholim*. Today as always, our dear friends of this Rivkah Lanfer Bikur Cholim organization have shown their good hearts and their compassion for the suffering of various illnesses and the people who have to endure pain.

“I am sure that this *mitzva* will be the *zechus* to keep you always in good health and you should never have the need for help from any *Bikur Cholim*, the good Samaritans, but the Almighty will keep you and guard you to be well and happy. Amen.”

December 1, 1971

For a long time I wanted to write a book. I was not sure how to do it. Whether it should be a collection of short stories, based on facts and real experiences, or like a novel, with characters playing their parts. So far, I think that I am not able to write in an abstract way. As for the material to use for my stories or novels, I like to report my own feelings. I have plenty of material from my own real life experiences. The question is only when to start and from which point to start.

Once when I was in a publishing store to buy a certain book on *kashrus*, I had a talk with the manager of the company. He gave me his opinion about writing a book. It would be possible to find a publisher for a biography only if it was about a famous personality. In my case, he thought a novel would be more advisable. Now I have to go about learning how to write a novel. I can't see putting my feelings into the words of characters, to bring forth the experienced emotions as they occurred. I like to read novels only when they sound real, when I can put myself into the situation of the person or the hero of the action. The question is — would it be possible to find the right people in my plot to do the right personification?

The following are a few short stories I wrote in my adult education classes in the 1960's.

My Professor

With a dignified look he enters the room. When at the desk, he slowly puts down his briefcase, and with a satisfied smile he greets the class as if to say: “This is what I like to see, each seat occupied.” There is something about this person, who seems to have devoted his life to bringing wisdom to the younger generation.

Even though the professor makes a remark here and there of criticism, it is done in such a humorous and mild way, that no one

feels embarrassed or hurt. It rather gives respect to his appealing lecturing and clarity of explanation. If I mentioned there is something about his character, I have to stress his constant finding examples, which come straight from his family experience or folkways long forgotten, but very alive with his introduction. For instance, "A Bagel and Lox Party" or "The Butcher, the Baker, and Candlestick Maker." When introducing a situation, he has a story from his family and it brings us close and truthful to the whole idea.

I always admired my teachers, a trend unknown today in school. With my reentering into school-life again, I feel even more respect and a sense of a very strong admiration towards teachers in general and to this professor especially. He has the ability to dominate each student of the class with a scholarly seriousness, as well as with a tender devotion.

Thank heaven for such fine and noble men and women who idealistically devote their lives to furthering education.

Vacation

After doing the same kind of work day after day in the same routine, regardless of how easy or how hard it may be, you need a rest. You need a vacation!

A long weekend like the last one, "Decoration Day" included, was ideal for a vacation in the country. The preparations, however, belong to the less pleasant part of it, especially if you do not go alone.

As soon as you are out of the city, you feel like a different person. You see a wider horizon with a blue sky. As the journey goes on, you see rivers, orchards, farms and meadows with grazing cows. It is a magic that brings peace into our restless souls and makes us forget the noisy city. It's a beautiful world around.

The destination is usually a hotel in the mountains. If it is a smaller place, it means more rest but less entertainment. As there is only a few dollars difference, you choose the more famous one. There you find many familiar faces and some friends. You feel as though you are at an affair in the city again, but only for the first minute.

Where the hotel is located it is a beautiful spot. On the terrace you have a most impressive outlook — large green lawns like carpets, with sections of beautiful flowers. Comfortable chairs and tables are distributed all around the lawns. The pools and lake with rowing boats, etc. are nearby. The mountains, covered with pine trees, surround the whole scene with natural beauty, which gives our poor hungry souls a spiritual uplift.

You sit down in a chair, either in the sun or shade, and think if you desire. Nobody will bother you. If you feel like talking, there is always somebody on hand to listen. Or, if you like to take a walk into the woods, you may find a companion. The facilities are the newest. You can play ping-pong, tennis or basketball if you wish. You feel young again with no responsibilities. You relax in the best way possible.

The food is being served pleasantly and sometimes too plentifully. At home you are watching your figure. In the hotel, you eat everything. It looks so appetizing and it cost so much money, you just have to eat — three times, occasionally even five times. The pastry is so delicious, how can you stay away? It is only a few days. At home, the diet will start again. Sometimes the good food does not agree with you. If you find an Alka-Seltzer or Milk of Magnesia in the canteen you are very lucky.

The next meal you sit at the table, a little embarrassed, a little angry.... Just now, they serve your favorite dish and you have to refuse it. The waiter tries hard to satisfy you. You get advice to be careful and have only tea and toast.... Or, you should eat everything in order to resist. You eat only a little and it is getting better. At such a time, you think — what do I need a hotel for? Is that a vacation?

After having the last meal, you start to tip the waiters, the tea-boys, the bellboys and the chambermaids. You pay your bill at the desk like a gentleman, even if it hurts.

Going back, you have one wish only — to arrive home safely.

At home again, you are very happy — always the words, “Home Sweet Home,” come into your mind.



Ali and Rechi moved to Israel in 1969. Although their parents and other relatives visited them in Israel, they wanted to be with the entire family, and they came to America for Pesach in 1972. Everyone gathered in the home of Julius and Gita for the second part of the holiday. Imagine, to have 25 people in one spot, among this group fourteen children of all ages, from 17, 15, 14, 13, 12, 11, 10, 7, 6 (two), 5, 3, 2 1/2, and 1 1/2.

July 1972

This is the English translation of the congratulatory message written by my husband Chaim on the occasion of Joseph and Runia Feldman's fiftieth wedding anniversary. The translation cannot do justice to the beautiful language of the original.

"My golden *choson* and *kalla*, the whole family and friends,

"Fifty years being married — those three words in Yiddish tell us the beautiful meaning of a golden anniversary. Fifty years as husband and wife under one roof, summer and winter, in the cold December and the lovely May. Fifty years you understood each other in all situations. You always strived together to give your

man and wife live together in peace, they merit having the *Shechina* between them, and G-d is their *shachen* (neighbor).'

"Now you are surrounded by your dear children and grandchildren, and this is the nicest blessing in a person's life. On this occasion I want to mention to you, my dear brother Joseph, how you went many times to Washington on our behalf, so that we could come to America.

"My whole family expresses its deepest thanks and best wishes to you, together with your dear wife. You should be able to celebrate your diamond anniversary together, Amen."

* * *

In 1973 we left for Israel. When we gave up our apartment, Jossi and Zipora were happy that we agreed to have part of their basement in Queens prepared as our headquarters for whenever we would come back to the States. Jossi undertook the entire work. He engaged some special workers and undertook the responsibility very seriously. His Zipora also helped in many ways, like hanging wallpaper in the kitchen, and doing the floor in the bathroom with small, beautiful tiles. Most Shabbatot we spent together, often with Zipora's parents also. Mostly we enjoyed our granddaughter Chavie. She was my best company when I went on Shabbat to the synagogue. After four years we rented an apartment in Flatbush. This was my brother-in-law Joseph's wish. He was lonely without his brother Chaim.

* * *

Jossi was born in a private clinic. The doctor came in his military outfit and had no time to change. He was on maneuvers and just washed his hands, put on gloves and my baby boy was born. This was on a late Saturday night. The *brit* should have been on the following Sunday. In order to be permitted to leave the clinic on Sunday, my husband had to sign on his responsibility. A nurse came along with me and the baby.

At home the *Mohel* was put up in a hotel over Shabbat. The *brit* took place at home with Ali being present. Gita was still away.

Jossi was an exceptionally beautiful baby. He was a good size, blond and fair with pink cheeks. On the street people stopped me to admire this beautiful baby. He grew nicely and healthy until

October 29, 1938. This was the day of our deportation. From then on, being one year old all the troubles started. The three and a half years being refugees caused a heavy damage to his health. He did not digest his food and was anaemic. Till four years of age he stretched his hands out to be carried — he had no strength to walk. He also suffered a sunstroke which affected him adversely. But his beautiful, humorous nature made him be loved by all relatives and friends.

Jossi is very handy at fixing things, is good hearted, and with G-d's help has found the loveliest partner in life — his darling Zipora. When Jossi went out with Zipora, he brought her to introduce her to us after a few dates. I saw her as the *Shechina*, a G-d-send gift to our dear Jossi. To this day I remember the impression she made on me. During all these years she proved to be all a mother can wish for her son. She is also the product of wonderful parents. We are still in close contact with her family, even when they very suddenly lost their mother early, as the result of a heart attack. Mrs. Stampel, z'l, was an exceptional, wonderful lady. The kind of *balabuste* who



Jossi and Zipora's wedding, March 24, 1962

did everything herself. She sewed her own dresses, knitted sweaters for the entire family, and was an excellent cook. She was a most hospitable lady. Along with her family's loss, I miss her very much as a close friend.

The week before Jossi's wedding, I was sitting outside the apartment which they rented as their first home, waiting for the furniture to be delivered. All this time I was deep in my prayers to the Almighty to grant these two pure and good children His blessing for a harmonious and loving togetherness. As a son and daughter-in-law they proved to be wonderful.

Jossi and Zipora are good and understanding to each other and give much respect to one another. They are blessed with one Chavale who is beautiful and noble in character, and who is blessed with a fine and learned husband. They have 3 children:

- 1) David
- 2) Yitzi
- 3) Chaya Rivka



The Sadigorer Rebbe at Jossi's wedding



(l. to r.): Zipora, Jossi, Chavi, Mrs. and Mr. Stampel, Chaim

This makes Jossi and Zipora the lucky grandparents of 3 lovely children.

For many years Jossi was Papa's help in the business. He is very reliable and quick.

However, with our decision to live in Israel, and with business going bad, he changed his occupation and is happy with his job. He takes care of his lovely house, keeps good relations in the neighborhood and community, and leads a fine, harmonious, family life.

As a son, he is the best. He is my bookkeeper, accountant, and adviser.

Zipora is a beautiful wife, good kindergarten teacher, and a beloved daughter-in-law.

* * *

At first we divided our time, half in Israel and half in New York. This way I learned Hebrew in Israel, in Ulpan, while in America I



Receiving my M. A.

worked on my thesis, receiving my M. A. in 1976. In New York I sometimes substituted in junior high school. But the main reason for coming often to the U. S. was happy occasions by our children. There were engagements, weddings and Bar Mitzvot. The arrival of great-grandchildren also gave an opportunity to come and partake in the happy festivities. This kind of coming and going continued until 1984, when it became harder for us to travel. Being in the

States during the winter, we usually spent February in Miami. At last we stopped going just for pleasure, and went only for extra-special festivities. The last time we were to the States was from April 1987 to June 1987, for the Bar Mitzva of our grandson Shimy Walfish, and also to participate in the wedding of our grandnephew Ziel Feldman with Chaiki. We spent a lovely weekend in Long Beach for the *Sheva Brachot*, which fell on Shavuot. After that we left for Israel.



*Chana and Rosa
in Jossi's house (1976)*



At the Bar Mitzva of Shimi Walfish: the Walfish family, Opa and Oma, and David Thee, representing his family from Israel

February 10, 1976

My Eulogy to a Woman of Valor

An Eishes Chayil, mi yimtza?

The English terms “being in love” and “idolize” do not come close to expressing *verliebt vergottet*, which describes the relationship of my brother-in-law Joseph Feldman to his beloved wife, Mrs. Rosa Feldman, who was his life companion for 53 1/2 years.

I met her for the first time as a guest in her home on December 20, 1929, when I came as the *kalla* of her husband's brother. She was then the mother of three little girls. She impressed me as being a very quiet and serious lady. As a visitor I felt much at home, thanks to my friendly acceptance by the Feldmans and by their other relatives who lived in the same town. There was a suggestion to rent a larger apartment, in order to share it with us, because smaller apartments were rare. The large ones were too expensive for one family. Somehow it was easy for me to agree. I was really part of the family. I took to the children very lovingly. We enjoyed being under one roof with Runia as my sister-in-law. She was very hospitable in a very quiet way. After two weeks of my visit, I returned to Berlin, telling my folks about my good impressions of my fiancé's relatives. The reaction was: “Everything is fine, but to live in one and the same apartment with a sister-in-law?” My answer was: “I know her, and I am not afraid.”

At our wedding the two younger girls, Leah and Anni, were the flower girls. Runia was in her third month of pregnancy. Her behavior was with a definite awareness of motherly responsibility to marry off her husband's brother. For the *Sheva Brachot* we came ready to settle in our part of the apartment. Again I was made to feel at home. Runia prepared all the cakes and goodies with much love and, like a sister, she filled the role of hostess.

The next few weeks, she did not let me cook for myself. “Wait a little bit more,” she used to say, “I cook anyhow.” When at last I tried my independence in housekeeping, it went fine. Now Runia was visibly pregnant and sometimes tired. I took over the “guest” department.

Runia gave birth to a beautiful boy on June 12, 1931. Although I was four weeks pregnant and had pain in my abdomen, a *Shalom Zochor* was prepared, and the *bris*. In February 1932 our first son was born under similar circumstances. Runia and her children with the baby in the carriage, I wheeling my baby in his carriage, went to the park and we enjoyed a happy, fulfilling and loving relationship. Because the growing babies were making too much noise together, we moved to a separate apartment. There was not a day that passed without our seeing each other. The children came by themselves and sometimes slept over, and as they grew older they were reliable with the babies. In short, this developed into two separate yet very closely-knit families.

All this lasted until 1938-39. In those years we supported each other morally and also left our town at the same time, as homeless persons. Although our lifestyle changed, we stayed together through all the dangerous situations. We fled to Belgium, and lived together in the same area in Brussels until we had to run to France. After that, we left France together through Spain to Portugal, where we lived on different streets but saw each other daily. Then they got their visa to America. This was the only time during ten years that we were separated, for a year and a half. We left for Cuba in February 1942. Joseph had to travel to Washington and plead for a visa for us. Somehow, he succeeded, and after eight months in Cuba, we arrived by plane to the blessed shores of America. When we arrived in New York, Joseph and Leah were there to receive us. At home as usual Runia greeted us with a welcome and a good meal. We couldn't live together, because our two Alfreds made us crazy, staying up all night talking, laughing, and often throwing pillows at each other. After three months we moved to an apartment near the yeshiva. A short time later, the Feldmans moved to our neighborhood. We went on vacations together. For many summers we rented apartments near the beach to spend the vacation together. Later, we always went to Israel together.

As time went on, we shared all our *simchas*. Tanta Runia baked, among other delicacies, nut strudel that won fame in the circles to which we belonged. You always found her doing something quietly and expertly, doing it with love. To serve her husband, her



Runia Feldman

children, and her relatives at any time was her life's pleasure. The way she called my name, "Annichen," "Annilein," sounds constantly in my soul.

January 28, 1973, we left New York for Israel to be at the Bar Mitzva of our grandson Baruch Thee in Beer Sheva. Joseph and Runia and their three married daughters were to leave at the same time on another airline, to be at the wedding of their niece Charlotte Bearwald, and also at Baruch's Bar Mitzva.

However, they never made this flight. Tanta Runia suddenly got a stroke, and the commotion and pain that followed is hard to imagine. They left from the airport for the hospital. For three years her family had only one goal: how to help Mama, how to make her life more pleasurable.

When we came back, we spent most of our time keeping them company and encouraging them in their situation.

On February 10, 1976, her holy *neshama* left her and she fell into her eternal sleep. Runia, z'l, is buried in Israel. She will always be remembered as the quiet *Eishes Chayil*.



*The Feldmans
and the Thees
visiting Israel
(1958)*

October 23, 1977

The Trip to Golan and Galilee

The weather is fine but a little cloudy. The width of the Kinneret is much more than I had imagined. I am very happy and have a good spiritual feeling to be privileged to sit on a boat and cross the sea in the company of my husband, brother-in-law, niece and nephew, and two lovely friends.

December 21, 1977

This is in the Delta Airlines airplane on the way to Miami, Florida. Actually, we were supposed to fly yesterday morning, but late at night we got a call that our very dear senior cousin, Mr. Bernard Bodenstein, had passed away. We postponed our trip so that we could attend the funeral.

When we were married in 1930 in Berlin, Mr. Bodenstein came to the wedding. We came to Kiel to celebrate *Sheva Brochos* on Shabbos, and Mrs. Bodenstein took a long walk to come to us, which was greatly appreciated by us. Soon afterwards we heard the good news: a baby girl, Zita, was born, a sister to Reginchen, Leo, and Gisela. Zita was a beautiful baby. Her parents were most

happy. Our relationship with this fine family, as well as with all of the children, was wonderful. During the war, our three families — the Thees, the Feldmans, and the Bodensteins — managed to cross the border to Belgium at different times. We lived together in Belgium and southern France. When my husband Chaim and my brother-in-law Joseph Feldman were called up for army service, Mr. Bodenstein, the only man left, fulfilled his role as protector of all three families.

In Honor of Israel's 30th Anniversary of Independence

*Our holy and beloved country
Our country that is old yet new
For you waited in Exile and dreamed
Two thousand years the whole Jewish nation.*

*You were born through much sacrifices
With the help of the Almighty and U.N. assurances
You immediately opened your gates
For Jews that were displaced remnants.*

*You worked hard, you tried to develop
And you succeeded in all responsibilities
A beautiful country was built
Based on the laws of the Torah, on righteousness, and justice.*

*Sometimes times were hard
During the wars with the Arabs
But for the future, we hope for a good life
With song, joy and success in peace.*

Feb. 7, 1978

Frania Wolf

The day of the departure of our dear and beloved Mrs. Frania Wolf, *aleha hashalom*.

In memorial to a great *Tzedeikis*, a valiant Lady, a Heroine and an Inspiration of every good deed.

Especially admirable was her noble relationship with everyone who came across her path; relatives, friends, neighbors, especially *mechutanim*. Her days were spent in productive activities, serving her children and grandchildren physically as well as intellectually, her friends with good advice, and the Almighty by fulfilling all *mitzvot*, besides spending many hours daily saying *Tehillim*.

Mrs. Frania Wolf, *aleha hashalom*, was our *mechutanesta*, mother of our dear daughter-in-law Rechi. Her devotion to her children and grandchildren was limitless.

After the departure of her noble and devoted husband she was living with their son Willy and his good wife Estelle and their blessed children. This close and harmonious relationship was an example to all Jewish families that knew what it meant to have 3



(l. to r.): Frania Wolf with Baby Mindel (Mrs. Werfel), Sarah
and Pinchas Walfish
(back): Moshe Weitman (1973)

generations living as one loving and respected family. There always existed a very intimate relationship with the daughters who happened to live in Israel. To each happy occasion there was visiting on a mutual basis.

Grandma Wolf was the authority and the soul for each of the blessed grandchildren. Each grandchild was a source of pride and delight. She especially had the joy of being *zocha* to see 2 lovely great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Frania Wolf will always live in our hearts as the model of an *Eishes Chayil*. She deserves the closest place in Gan Eden.

As devoted and selfless as she was in her lifetime she will be an advocate in heaven for her children and grandchildren, for good health, *parnosa*, and good *zivugim*.

Her blessed memory will always stand out as a light to direct in the right path. Her *Tzidkus* and modesty is unprecedented in our time. All those *maalos tovos* will reflect on many future generations that will draw inspiration from their roots of true Jewish aristocracy.

Our 48th Anniversary

*Like a dream, a beautiful dream,
We started as a loving team —
Building together in devotion
A loving family with emotion.*

*Life showed us many shades,
Mainly nice ones, also human hates.
War treated us hot and cold.
Yet, now we are happy loving and bold.*

*Our children give us many joys.
Some gave us more girls, others boys.
They are all righteous and fine.
Their children will repay them in time.*

August 16, 1978

Our Brother Is Gone

*Joseph Dear, we want you to know
That our pain is not to show
How much we mourn your eternal sleep
Only the "love" for you that is so deep.*

*For us you are not gone, we talk & think
To, and about you as participant in things
That take place here, of all kind
you are with us in heart and mind.*

*For 48 years together we spent
Like one family in palaces and tent.
Two separate, yet like one household
Filled with respect, trust, love pure as gold.*



The Naroler Rebbe at the shloshim

*We will remember your fatherlike protection
As our senior brother with warm affection
Your youthful and dynamic nature.
Love for life & humanity was a real reflection.*

*Your love for Torah and charitable deeds
Your generosity in human needs
Will serve as a model your posterity
And will bring happiness and prosperity.*

February 25, 1979

On the occasion of the First Birthday of our dear first great-grandchild, Estie Behrend

*With a heart filled with enormous joy
You are considered our precious toy
You are the climax of any grandparent's expectations
Therefore our warmest Birthday congratulations.*

*We wish for you best of health and mazel a lot
To be your dear parents pride as a tot . . .
And grow into a very happy human
And a source of nachas for the entire family, Amen.*

Happy Birthday

from

*Your great-grandparents
Chaim and Chana Thee*

May 4, 1979

To the Memory of My Dear Sister-in-Law Sabina Thee

It is the day after your funeral, and I cannot accept that you are not really any longer with us in this world. To me, you will always be lively, youthful, and very active, being kind at any time of the day to everybody. Your wholehearted goodness and your warm and friendly hospitality were always very inviting, giving any meal the "taste of Gan Eden." As a *baalat bayit*, as an exceptionally modest wife, mother, grandmother, etc., you will stand out in my memory as a shining example.

As to our relationship as sisters-in-law, it was always a deep appreciation and respect which grew into a close and loving friendship. You and your husband Yitzchock were the first ones to approve of my *shiduch* with "Hans" (Chaim) as your future sister-in-law. We shared good as well as bad times in Germany. We shared many *simchos* and enjoyed the progress in our offspring, until in order to save ourselves, we all had to go to different lands. With the help of the Almighty, we were saved and were united once again in the U.S.A.

After you settled in Israel, you organized your life ideally in



The three brothers: Yitzchock Thee, Chaim Thee, and Joseph Feldman (1976)

Netanya. Your home became the meeting point for all relatives and friends. Your happiness at living in Israel inspired many others for aliyah.

As a couple, you were admired for your devotion to each other. In your circle of friends, you were respected and well-liked.

The busload of mourners, as well as many carloads of friends, bore witness to their love for you, in bringing you to your eternal resting place in this world. We are all sure that your *neshama kashera* will find a peaceful place in Gan Eden.

We will all miss you at the forthcoming *simcha* — your children need your *zechus* for a good *mazal*. We mourn your so-sudden departure. We will always love you for being a good sister-in-law and an asset to our family.

Shalom velahitraot bezman biyas hamaschiach began eden (Goodbye until we meet when the Messiah comes, in the Garden of Eden).



(sitting): Sabina Thee with Yitzchock
(standing, from left): Chana and Chaim Thee, Esther Reinman
and her husband Willi, Sophie Sussman

Yitzchock and Sabina enjoyed a quiet and comfortable life together for over fifty years until Sabina's sudden death. Yitzchock suffered from high blood pressure, and he passed away two years later, in 1981. They left behind two children, Esther, who lives in Netanya, and Sam Thee, a photographer, who lives in New York, five grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren.

October 31, 1979

Our Trip by Arkia to Sinai

We left on the 7:30 Arkia flight from Tel Aviv for Eilat. The flight was smooth, and it was interesting to see the whole Negev desert from above. We have some thoughts along with prayers that some day this will be occupied by millions of proud Jews in a flourishing and fruitful land. However, when we saw some small pockets of green in the middle of the desert (where you do not see any life altogether) we have hope that our genius will prove itself and our dream will come true to the fullest: to sit on our own land as a prosperous working people, recognized for its achievements and good example by other nations.

In Eilat we stopped, to let off some passengers and have others board for Sinai. The continued trip over the Red Sea brought some special feelings with an experience of the living history of our people. You saw in your imagination Moshe Rabbeinu leading the Jews past this water, and understood better the great miracles experienced by our people.

The airplane took us for only a 20 minute flight over the Sinai Desert. Again no life around, only some green experiments done by Israelis. We came to a stop at the airport in Sinai built and used by Israel.

It is amazing how comfortable everything is built, with modern toilets, an elegant waiting room, and a restaurant. We were told that this restaurant serves as the dining place for the military staff

serving in Sinai. We were taken to a bus that would take us to the Mount Sinai section, to St. Catherina.

The road was new and comfortable. We saw a combination of different mountains. The only population besides the soldiers are Beduin children and women living at the foot of the mountains, in very primitive conditions.

In St. Catherina there are 12 monks, with 100 men employed to keep the place in top order. The monks are all from Greece. They are Greek Catholics and entirely devoted to prayer and a secluded life, away from all worldly influences. We were permitted to enter the church, which looks like an ancient, very wealthy, museum of riches of gold and religious art. We find there mosaics of the finest art. Paintings of all holy symbols are there, as well as a most valuable library of rare examples on exhibition.

By bus we went back to the airport, which in a few days has to be given over to the Egyptians. There we took the plane to Eilat. After lunch we went by bus again, to see the aquarium. The aquarium is located in the middle of the Red Sea, reached by a bridge. What we saw there was just enormous.

It would be really impossible to describe what we saw there. In our dreams we cannot imagine all the beautiful creatures living in the Red Sea. All forms, all sizes, all color combinations possible, the sea creatures move graciously free of care. The most impressive view was while admiring all fish and green plants that breathe and live. We saw swimming humans, men and a woman underwater competing with the fish.

The way back was beautiful.

November 30, 1979

My dear Chaimleiben,

With great pleasure and satisfaction I give you the book by the name *Der Shlissel zum Himmel* (The Key to Heaven), written by Zanin.

I don't know what is written in this book, but the title alone aroused my strong interest. I want to translate it in the following way: We both gave each other the key to a life which is called "bringing heaven on earth." The real taste of heaven on earth

appeared to me with you, my dear husband. With your devotion and love, *Hashem* helped us with success, *nachas*, and the possibility to continue with the way of life of Torah and mitzvot. I want to believe that I also contributed to your part of heaven on earth with my devotion and respect, and being a concerned and *baalebatish* wife. We both deserve receiving the key to heaven in both worlds.

With love and my wholehearted wishes for your happy birthday, until 120 years together with your first and right *zivug*.

From your wife,
Chana Thee

This poem was written by Shirley in 1980, for our golden anniversary.

*This is the time for us to declare,
Happy 50th Anniversary to a very special pair.*

*Oma and Opa, it sure has been a long time.
But to the top of the marital success ladder you surely did
climb.*

*Once upon a time a young man saw a picture,
He pointed to it and said "I'd like to meet her."*

*The fellow and girl met, fell in love at first sight,
Since then it's been smooth sailing, seldom a fight.*

*A business was built, 3 kinderlech were born,
They lived a happy life in a country from which they'd soon be
torn.*

*The family stayed together following the Torah way
Being an observant Jew was difficult in that day.*



Opa and Oma

*But Oma and Opa have always shown their trust in the
Almighty*

*It carries them thru to this day as greatgrand bobby and
zeidy.*

*Traveling to a new world, leaving so much behind
Knowing they were alive and together, they didn't really
mind.*

*Starting life over, adjusting to new ways and tongue
Was something that they mastered, when they were quite
young.*

*While fresh in the land they built a new home,
Their good name and reputation became well known.*

*Before too long, a baby arrived,
She was a symbol of freedom
A sign that they had survived.*

Years passed, the family stayed close — Baruch Hashem, no fights.

They followed one another to a new home in Crown Heights.

With a daughter married, a son soon to be

Oma and Opa were grateful to Hashem, dancing joyfully.

Business, family, college and Mitzvot played a large role in their life

But first and foremost there was always private time for the husband and the wife.

Two more children married, grandchildren old and new,

Oma and Opa were always available — though they had plenty to do.

Many years have passed, you've received compliments from near and far,

But from your own children you've seldom heard tell how wonderful you both are.



David and Chaim — learning

*This is a tribute to you, Oma and Opa, it's time you received
your praise*

*For being so generous and attentive to your children whether
nights or days.*

*Knowing that you produced, bli ayin hara, several
generations of Torah true Jews*

*Is quite an accomplishment to be proud of, not just everyday
news.*

May we bless you with health and long life

*Being able to enjoy it all together, ad meah ve'esrim shana,
as husband and wife.*

The next poem was written by our grandson Aaron Thee for
the celebration in Israel.

Oma and Opa — please sit on your rears

For only a moment — lend me your ears

For on the occasion of this special day

Please hear me out — I've got something to say



*At the fiftieth
anniversary celebration
in Petach Tikva, in
Shirley's home*

*If at first you may ask — what's all this fuss
 What does this guy have to say onto us
 Patience is all that I'm asking of you
 Explaining is what I'm trying to do*



*The children in
 Israel at the time
 of the fiftieth
 anniversary*

*Half a century ago — two people met
 In Deutschland no doubt — on that I would bet
 It's none of my business to ask why or what reason
 Those people got married — in the wintery season*

*But still they got married for worse or for better
 And now you may see why I'm writing this letter
 Thinking it over — this is all I could say
 Hadn't they married — where would I be today!*

*And it's not only me I'm thinking about
 My brothers and sisters and cousins no doubt
 Owe their existence to these special two
 And others of course — but I'm talking of you*



Aaron Thee with Oma and Opa

*Well,
For life in itself — we can't thank you enough
Or for giving us presents & that kind of stuff
To show all our love — would be an impossible task
So from Heaven above — all that I ask
Is to answer our prayers, our needs and concerns
wishing OPA & OMA —
MANY HAPPY RETURNS!*

Aaron

*P.S. One last request from poet to poet
If you enjoyed the above and are trying to show it
Don't over do it, just stay all at ease
A smile will do — no kisses please!*

This poem was written by Shirley, for the joint celebration of Opa's birthday and our 51st wedding anniversary, celebrated in Monsey.

Good Wishes

*My turn has come to speak to you all,
At a double celebration in the Behrend catering hall.*

*We are gathered together in particular this day,
To honor Opa on his upcoming birthday.*

*The Anniversary of Oma and Opa, we would like to include,
It will add even more meaning to the joyous mood.*

*To look around this room, Oma and Opa must "kvell,"
You did a job of raising a "frum" family that was just swell.*



In the Behrend catering hall

*In times of difficulty, due to war, finances and more,
You kept to your Torah ways even after reaching the New
York shore.*

*The going was rough, often pleasant and good,
No matter the conditions, Oma you made sure there was
enough food.*

*Your family is a tribute to your hard efforts and trust,
To you, faith in the Almighty is an absolute must.*

*We are so proud of you both, Oma, the Queen and Opa, the
King.*

*Happy Anniversary and Birthday wishes we will certainly
sing.*

July 2, 1982

Opa and Oma

During the growing stages, there is always a wish to reach a healthy and long life.

As parents, no matter how hard the responsibilities to bear and raise children, lead them with G-d's help towards maturity, there is always a prayer for success in their learning, towards a decent profession. So far, this prayer is granted, the parents pray again for the suitable spouse and Yiddishe *nachas*. With the arrival of the first grandchild the heart of the grandparents is filled with happiness and appreciation for this great privilege to be coined "Opa and Oma."

Oma is usually a bit more actively involved. She starts to knit a little sweater in a neutral color during the young mother-to-be's pregnancy. The good news of a first, especially a boy, makes her busy for a *Shalom Zochor*, the *brit*, etc. The furnishing of the baby's room is an important task. It repeats itself with each first baby, in this case three firsts were boys, one a girl. In each case a new grandchild is an immeasurable blessing, a treasure. No millionaire can compete with the feeling of thanksgivings to the Almighty for

normal, healthy and beautiful children, given to their loving and responsible and earning parents.

The time moves on, the children grow and develop under the close direction of their parents and reach, one by one, maturity. There is also an interesting age difference in some of these kins. About 18-20 years from the oldest to the youngest in the family. When a young lady reaches 18 years the parents consider that, besides the education for a profession, it is time to look for a suitable mate. This way it happened that the uncles and aunts were very young brothers or sisters-in-law. Oma and Opa are repaid a million times for their work, love and devotion. The time does not stay in one place. The grandparents become great-grandparents. Here speaks the Oma or Omama for one set of great-grandchildren. Their grandparents who also called their grandparents, as it was customary in Germany, Opa and Oma, didn't want to change their way. There was then a conflict, who would be called "Opa" and "Oma." One of the great-grandchildren solved the problem by calling them Omama and Opapa.



Israeli great-grandchildren (from left): Ilan and Noah Thee, Shira Baruchin, Amitai Monsbach, Yoel Baruchin, Tamar Monsbach



Exhibiting Opa's Chanuka gelt (from left, front row): Shira Baruchin, Itan Thee (middle): Yoel Baruchin (back): Chagai and Bentzi Thee — the two uncles, Oma and Opa



(l. to r.): Eitan and Noah Thee, Rechi and Ali, Baruch Thee, Opa and Oma, Liat Thee (holding Amotz), Taly Basan



(l. to r.): Shimi Walfish, Shaya Katz on lap of Rifki Behrend, Leah Katz, Shlojmi Walfish (holding Yitzi Katz), Meir Behrend, Naftali Walfish, Esti Behrend



Chana with her great-grandnephews, Zevi (l.) and Eli Reinman — the only twins in the family



The first of the annual Chanuka parties at Shirley and Bumi's house (1987)



Shlojmi Walfish at his Bar Mitzva at the Kotel with his brother Naftali and Ali



(l. to r.) Chaya Rifka Epstein, David, and Yitzi Epstein



Receiving Opa's blessing

Tel Aviv, August 25, 1983

The family doctor, who found Chaim's blood pressure to be a satisfactory 120/80, gave Chaim strict rules how to behave.

- 1) Not to go out during the hours of midday.
- 2) Not to go to the *Shul*, only *daven* at home.

He told him to go home, rest and read the paper. Instead the patient had a haircut and in the company of his wife went in a taxi to the Diamond Exchange. In the "Bursa" he felt at home. It is air-conditioned, and full of people who greet him friendly. Here he feels a *chaver* among all the rest. However, he forgets that his health



In Tel Aviv the Thee family became close to the family of the Modzicer Rebbe, as steady mispallelim in their minyan and great admirers of this noble and renowned family. We also became very close friends with other members of this congregation. The good relations continue to this day, even though we no longer live in Tel Aviv.

In the photograph: the Modzicer Rebbe, Rabbi Dan Taub, shlita, as a guest in our house at the Sheva Brachos for Gabriel and Vardi Jeidel, with Chaim (1983)

has to be watched. How unpleasant it is for his wife to plead with him to sit down for a while. Only when it is lunch time will he agree to sit down in the cafeteria and order a light lunch for two. It is absolutely interesting to observe this person in his real element. Business or no business, just to touch some merchandise, to give his opinion or listen to an opinion of other experts, this is what gives him a sense of being in business.

June 11, 1986

During the past two years, we made two trips to the U.S. in the winter, each time for a month in Florida. During the flight to Miami in February 1984 there was a scare because of a heat stroke. My dear husband passed out for a few seconds but, thanks to the Almighty, it didn't leave any damage. In January 1985 we gave up our apartment in Flatbush. We distributed some of the furniture among the family, and we moved the bedroom set and a few other pieces to Monsey. Julius, our older son-in-law, offered us 2 rooms in his house, which we gratefully accepted. We felt a need to stay closer to our grandchildren when we come to the U. S. to visit.

We used the place for 2 months and felt very comfortable. We all liked the arrangement. The place can be used by their children who come to them on happy occasions or for holidays. It is really a wonderful feeling, in these new modern times of loneliness felt by most families, for four generations, a huge stretch of time, to live under one roof in love and harmony. We consider ourselves very privileged. Thanks to *Hashem* for it.

Now we enjoy the change from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. Our children Ali and Rechi were very helpful in arranging everything that was necessary to move into the new apartment.

We spent most of Pesach with our children and it was heavenly. For Shavuot we are invited to them, but we feel it is more comfortable to stay home and have the children maybe for a meal.

June 21, 1986

To Our Dear Children Ali and Rechi!
As the celebrities of their 30th anniversary.
To the Bride and Groom ... Mazal Tov!

As you stood hand in hand to be united forever before *Hashem* you prayed to be shown the way to be kind, patient and understanding with your heart filled with love.

*Your prayers were heard.
You learned to live together,
Forgiving little human rifts,
That arrive in "stormy weather."*

You sailed through strong seas. Your love the creation of G-d taught you to build a life filled with accomplishment of highest value, a blessed family, a good name and an honest and fully occupied life.

*Your home is especially blessed,
Because G-d is your "Daily Guest,"
For married folks that pray together,
Are happy folks who stay together.*

At this milestone of your 30th anniversary we your parents are filled with pride and thanks to *Hashem* for providing us with much joy from your side. We wish you to continue going hand in hand towards future anniversaries with *nachas* from your loving children, grandchildren and, *im yirtze Hashem*, with many more generations of happy and righteous people that bring joy and happiness to your life together, *ad meah ve-esrim shana*.

July 15, 1986

Today we are in Tel Aviv. I attended a Tuesday meeting of Nila. This is a fine organization of ladies devoted to help the sick in the Tel Hashomer hospital. They also arrange many social affairs and

gather money for very important machinery for the hospital. For me it is important to participate, as my husband is a member in the Diamond Exchange, and members of the organization have to be wives of Exchange members. For each joyous occasion in our family I offer a sizeable contribution. In general, this is a group of intelligent women devoted wholeheartedly to their charitable and voluntary work.

September 22, 1986

One very happy note is the surprise visit from our sweetheart Shirley with her Frimi. Frimi is a very special grandchild to us. As grandparents of 19 grandchildren, *bli ayin hora*, there came a very desired little girl to Shirley and Bumi, who are blessed with 4 lovely boys, the youngest being 10 years old. Frimi made us feel younger by being enriched with a granddaughter, especially when she balances out the sexes. Now we are the most blessed Oma and Opa of 10 lovely boys and 10 lovely girls. Shirley's visit, bringing Frimi with her, is a wonderful treat for us and certainly an expression of *kibud av ve'em*.



*Shirley and Frimi
with Chana and
Chaim at the Kotel*

September 28, 1986

We went by taxi to the *Kotel* for spiritual uplifting and took some pictures. Shirley's stay was very pleasant. *Motzei Shabbat* Rechi invited their children with their families and we all had a lovely reunion with pictures being taken.

After that Chaim had some pains in his chest and arm. He was admitted to the hospital, where they conducted a thorough check with all sophisticated machines, while he stayed there for observation. After twelve days in the hospital, he was sent home on *erev Sukkot*. Ali put up the *sukkah* very conveniently, on the porch near the kitchen. The children, David, Benzy, and Chagai, came to decorate and they did a fine job.



*Every extra day
together was a bonus*

November 30, 1986

A Birthday Party for "Opa"

There is an elderly couple, "Opa" and "Oma" as they are called by the entire family, who are the parents of two sons and two daughters. The oldest son came on Aliyah from America 17 years ago, with a blessed family. Opa and Oma joined them after a few years, hoping that the other children with their families would follow. This wish, however, was not realized.

Having their children spread here and there, Opa and Oma

travelled very often to the United States for special happy occasions: Bar Mitzvot, weddings, etc.

For a number of years, Opa's birthday, November 30, was celebrated in the United States, in the midst of the family there. This time the celebration took place in Israel, in their own home. As a surprise, the younger son came from America, as a delegate from the rest of the family there, to congratulate his father on his birthday.

Opa, the birthday child, at the head table, surrounded by family consisting of a total of four generations, glowed with happiness. Toasts and good wishes for good health and long years, along with all kinds of presents, especially drawings from small fry, added to the happy atmosphere.

Oma, the hostess, was happy to serve all prepared goodies and, as it is her hobby, to take pictures with her camera.

The flowers and the beautiful birthday cake prepared by an expert pastry chef added much to the high spirits of a happy family reunion.

Mazal Tov, till 120 years!



*Chaim and Chana
with the birthday
cake*

April 24, 1987

Shimi Walfish's Bar Mitzva in Monsey

It is a rare privilege to have the great *zechus* to give a toast to a Bar Mitzva in the presence of such very close and *chashuv* relatives and guests in the home of his parents. It is also symbolic that the Bar Mitzva of the youngest son as well as the oldest is being celebrated in the U.S., while the two middle ones were celebrated in Israel. It is indeed equal opportunity in practice, for friends as well as relatives in both parts of the rich Jewish communities. As Eliezer Ben Yehuda said, "We are in the West *Galuth* but our hearts are in the East." As parents and grandparents our hearts are with our children wherever they are.

Today we are the most happy parents to participate in the beautiful *simcha* and congregation of family in such an intimate way to experience the *simcha* of Bumi and Shirley, the most devoted parents in their glory.

At the very high point of happiness we sincerely miss the very loving and close departed members of the family. As the



Pinchas Walfish and his mother Baby Mindel with Shirley the kalla

grandmother I would like to mention the name of Baby Mindel, z'l, who was instrumental in this *simcha*. It was a really "love at first sight" relationship. We first met for a charitable activity. When she later met our Shirley when she was 16, "I want your Shirley for my grandson," she said. "But she is only 16, would you marry a 16-year-old girl if she would be your daughter?" "But he too is young and can wait." And after 2 years they became husband and wife and the lucky parents of Menachem, Shloimi, Naftali, Shimi — our Bar Mitzva, and the most lovely daughter, Frimi.

At this point I hope that all the good *zechuyos* should watch over your dear family, and you should together derive much *nachas* from the Bar Mitzva as well as from all your dear children, and we hope to have the *zechus* to participate in all your future *simchas*. At the moment we are grateful for being here and hope for *shalom* and happiness in all parts of the world, especially for our dear Eretz Yisrael.

We should always meet again here or in Israel for *simchas*. Amen.

May 22, 1987

My dear Avi and Judy, Relatives and Friends, dear Ziel — *Hachatan*, Mazal Tov. What a pleasure to be gathered once more to a beautiful *simcha* in the *mishpacha*.

To some of the relatives it is a bit far to come here for the *aufruf* of our dear Ziel, for us it is just a few thousand miles, and a waiting time of a month. But we wish we should be able to participate soon in Heshi's *simcha*, even though it is not easy for us to travel.

As we sit here together with Avi and Judy, and all the close relatives, we would like to think how your Opa and Oma z'l would enjoy this *simcha*. However, we are sure that they will be *melitzei yeshar* to pray for your good *mazal* and *hatzlacha* in your new way of life, as a married man, with new obligations as well as new happy experiences.

In our hearts we feel as substitute grandparents to bestow upon you our blessings and to wish you a good *mazal* and success in all your ways. To your parents of both sides we wish to be *zoche* for

much *Yiddishe naches* from you and from the rest of the family, Amen.

Not knowing personally the *kalla*, we heard a lot of fine reports, and we hope to see and hear much happiness in your life as a family.

Chaim and I came to Israel after Ali and Rechi, who had already moved there. Our grandchildren in Israel all go to the army. This article written by Rechi, which appeared in the *Jewish Press* on October 16, 1987, beautifully expresses how the entire family feels.

My Son Has Joind The Army (Rechi Thee)

Every so often, something occurs which touches one so deeply that he finds a great need to share his feelings with others. Unfortunately, due to the busy every day lives we all lead, this feeling often passes, and the moment is gone.



Segen (Lieutenant) Ali Thee

I have decided not to let this latest great moment pass, but rather to try to put into words some of my feelings and thoughts so that others may share and maybe touch in a small way the special moments those of us living in Israel have rather often.

We visited our son (child No. 6) at an army training base, (paratroopers) last week. He is our third son, and thus this is the third time we have been invited to visit installations to receive pep talks, and to hear in detail what our boys go through. And so, when we received the invitation, and I saw that it was a whole day affair, I said to my husband, "Who needs this? It's hot and far; I went to his graduation; enough!" But of course there was no doubt we would both take a day off from work, pull out the two younger brothers from their day camp and make the trip.

And so, sandwiches prepared, we started out. The camp is located in the heart of the Shomron area. It was a long trip, through magnificent terrain. We arrived at the base and were politely directed by soldiers to the huge gym where the first session of the day was to take place.



*Shlojmo Monsbach with his wife Brenda,
Tamar, and Oma and Opa*

There were lots of benches, cold and hot drinks, and lots of baked goods (kosher) on a buffet table. The visitors sat down. The dais was filled with various commanders — of the base, of the individual units, of the secretarial staff, of the medical staff, of the religious-matters staff, etc.

The commander of the base introduced them all, and then spoke. He said it was the first time he had ever had a group of Yeshiva boys under his command (Hesder Yeshiva boys traditionally served as a group in the tank corps. As of this year, they were now spread among different units, and given the option to volunteer for paratroopers.) He gave proportional figures for the number of boys volunteering for this elite, difficult unit than from the regular draft. The figure for the Yeshiva boys was four times greater!

He spoke of his shortcoming in possibly not knowing their needs, since he never commanded Yeshiva boys before, and assured the parents that there were people in charge who would enlighten him. He requested that we feel free to speak to him, by visit or by phone, if we felt in the least bit that some problem existed in this area. He even apologized in advance for any grievances he might incur, and begged our indulgence with his ignorance. He assured us that whatever mistakes he might make were unintentional.

After opening the floor to questions, we were told to proceed into the two dining rooms according to the unit in which our sons were placed. This division was made according to the different Yeshivot, just splitting the group in two for practical reasons.

Here too there were cold drinks and cantaloupes on the tables. We met the unit commander, who told of the type of drill they would be doing; of the never-more-than-four hours a night of sleep they would have, etc., and of the tremendous responsibility that would fall on them in "guarding the borders in time of peace, or worse, Heaven forbid, in time of war."

He mentioned many of the same points we had already heard, but included yet another — he spoke of the social blending of our boys with the group they would very shortly be joining — a group that had started their training two months earlier. This May call-up



Aaron Thee

(which our boys who stayed in Yeshiva until the end of June would now join) is known as a special one — the *Atudai* — those few select boys in Israel who defer their army service for studies (naturally, permission is granted only to very bright boys, and only if their studies can service the army). It is similar to the ROTC program of the U.S. Army; after they finish their four years of study, they join the army as officers, and subsequently work in their field. But they must first go through basic training — thus — here they were going to be with our boys! I thought, “Boy, this *Zahal* really thought this through — if they had to mix our boys with someone, they picked the cream of the crop.”

The awareness, openly spoken of, that our boys were not “run of the mill” but superior, in learning and grasping ability, and especially in motivation to serve the country, was heart warming! And here too I thought to myself, this attitude is not what your average Jew in the diaspora hears about; only scandals make news! He must be made aware of the other side!



*Baruch Thee at his swearing-in ceremony,
with the rest of the family*

Again the floor was open to questions, and parents asked all kinds of things ranging from laundry, to when will you let them out so they can get home for *Shabbat*? One parent asked if they will have time to continue a regular learning *seder*, so that everything they had done until now would not get lost in these nine months before they return to their respective Yeshivot.

And then, a fellow with a huge *kippah*, his *Tzizit* clearly in view, who had sat on the dais before with a baby in his arms, and had been introduced as the commander of the training base to which our boys were going the next day for the continuation of their course, got up and asked permission to say a few words. He explained that as he does not belong to this base it was not on schedule for him to talk, but he was not sure he would have a chance to get us all together again and he had some things to say.

Well, I am not a mushy person; I do not take pictures of everything that happens in our lives; I do not ever tape everything;

but I was really sorry I did not have a tape recorder with me! For his words moved me very deeply.

He told that when he started his army duty, his mother was asked how she felt about it, and she replied that she was overjoyed! Her neighbor looked at her inquiringly, so she explained, "such a short while ago we Jews did not have an army where my son could defend his People and his Land."

I looked around the room and thought, "we all know this somewhere deep inside — how dare we forget to push back in our minds this important aspect of all that has occurred to our people in the last century. We do need reminding!" After developing this thought, and its applications for every Jew, he continued with another thought. This young, inspiring *dati* army officer looked at us, parents of Yeshiva boys, and said (in the name of his *Rav*), "Never for a minute should you think of this part of your son's life as *Bitul Torah*. Until now, in the Yeshiva, your son was learning, let's say, *Masechet Kidushin*. Now, as of two weeks ago, he has turned the page, and he is learning *Masechet Tzanchanim* (paratroopers). Just as in the Yeshiva, it was his obligation to learn *Kidushin* from all angles and to the best of his ability, so now it is his duty to learn this *Masechet* with everything he's got. If he wouldn't have done his job right in the first instance, it would certainly have been considered *Bitul Torah*. If he doesn't do his job 100% to the best of his ability in this instance, believe me, that is also *Bitul Torah*! If by standing a few moments more than the allotted time at his *Tefilah*, he misses some lesson on keeping his rifle clean, for example, he may be endangering himself, his best friend, or a whole town. Would that not be *Bitul Torah* of the gravest kind?"

After letting this sink in, he turned to us and said, "Your job now is a tough one, for it is up to you to encourage your sons in these new endeavors. You too should be proud and overjoyed that your sons can help insure the future of our People."

Dear reader, wherever you are, if this is just a remembered summary, imagine all that was felt in that room! The sincerity of his words was not lost, surely not on the parents, but also not on the other commanders, who could not take their eyes off this young religious officer!

This is *Kiddush Hashem*, I thought, in its purest and most natural form! Every *Shomer Shabbat* Jew has a duty to make his mark, by taking his rightful place in the rebuilding of a nation that had been almost devastated. Is it truly not a wonderful time we live in, if our boys can at one time be *Talmidei Chachomim* and also serve with their bodies to help defend our land against its numerous enemies?

Our prayer is that *Hakodosh Baruch Hu* should watch over them, and they should return home safe and sound, so that they may be *Zocheh* to teach their sons what it is to be a full Torah Jew.

Not having had the good fortune to know our Rechi as a child or youngster, I can only tell what I know since she is our Ali's wife. Rechi is an example of an *Eishes Chayil*. She is, *Baruch Hashem*, very pretty, intelligent, and very wise. As a mother of eight children, she, together with Ali, managed beautifully in bringing up sons and daughters, each one of whom can serve as an example in every way possible. The children are both G-d-fearing and patriotic, and are proud of their army service. Besides being a good housewife and mother, Rechi is very efficient and reliable in her position, which deals with scholarly interpersonal relations.



David Thee with his parents, grandparents, and brothers

August 1988

Being in the hospital before an elective operation, I was very calm for a few days. Only the night before the operation was supposed to take place, I could not sleep and felt like a child in need, missing her mother. In the morning Ali and Rechi visited me and recognized a change in my spirits. I told them how I felt, they saw the professor, and it was decided to postpone the operation until Monday. I could go home for Shabbat.

My stay in the hospital gave me a chance to experience the deep and honest devotion of my children. Rechi and Ali wanted to do everything possible to make me feel comfortable in this time of crisis. They offered to stay at my side through the night, but it was impossible for me to accept this. They both have responsible jobs and children to send to school. However, they did very much for me as well as for Papa, spending days with us. They constantly, devotedly, care about us.

Jossi's wife Zipora also called and was ready to come. I couldn't accept this, because Zipora had her responsibilities as a kindergarten teacher.

When I was home for Shabbat, I called Gita, and she wanted to leave all her responsibilities and come to stay with me. I couldn't accept such a sacrifice. She said she would talk it over with Shirley. Soon Shirley called, telling me she will come (Shirley is a nurse).

Shirley came the day of the operation, and this was the greatest gift for me. She sat through the nights near my bed, and I felt protected. After one week, Shirley went back. I will always remember her devoted sacrifice. G-d bless her!

Shirley finished college when she already had a few children but she had a desire to become a nurse. A nurse she is, and a blessed mother to four lovely boys. After her youngest was 10 years she gave birth to a beautiful girl. Frimi-Ahuva is the joy and toy of the entire family. She is exceptionally intelligent, mature and of a very noble character. She is four and a half years old. Shirley's husband Abraham Chaim Walfish, called Bumi, is an outstanding personality as a Yeshiva Chaim Berlin *Talmid Chachom* with a Master's degree in math and very much recognized as an expert in computers. His main characteristics are honesty and



Shirley and Bumi's wedding, September 20, 1965

goodheartedness. He is a religious man, devoted to his profession and community, a serious provider, a bookworm, and a person who cares that his children should follow their religious and practical way of life. As a son-in-law he is excellent: very respectful and always happy to be of service. Their sons: Menachem, Shlomji, Naftali, and Shimi. All wonderful, good-natured, Yeshiva boys. Oma loves them all and prays for their *mazal* in succeeding in their studies and finding their right *zivugim*. They are religious and noble, following the ways of their parents.

I have to mention that Professor Salz and all the staff and nurses were plain angels. They are devoted, and provide exceptionally kind and individual care for every patient.

November 2, 1988

On Our 58th Anniversary

First of all, I congratulate my dear husband for the much improved state of health, *Baruch Hashem*, and wish always good health and good spirits.

A present can be only the honest kiss in the presence of our beloved family.

I congratulate myself on my quick recovery from a serious operation three months ago. My wish as a gift from Papa is a new winter hat. "A hat or a *get!*"

Now back to our celebration. We both congratulate ourselves for the *zechut* of having such blessed and devoted children, to the fourth generation. Our only wish is for their happiness in all their lives. Amen.

This poem which I read beautifully expresses my feelings.

To my dear husband Chaim Thee

*Love is never ending
When two hearts with love are blending
In love there is beauty and joy
With love there is sharing and caring
With caring there is love.*

November 30, 1988

To My Dear Husband Chaim Thee

Happy Birthday Darling, *ad meah ve'esrim*

*Each lovely year, as just one day
It goes quickly, surely not to stay
As, Boruch Hashem, having still each other
We pray not to have anyone to bother*

*In our warm nest we count
All our blessings, which amount
To four generations with hatzlacha
With good health, Shalom ubracha*

Love
Chana Thee



The last birthday party

In 1988 and the beginning of 1989 Chaim and I appreciated being able to participate together in lectures, *shiurim*, and many happy *simchas* of friends and relatives. A visit to the Diamond Exchange in Tel Aviv from time to time made my Chaim feel part of the business world.

On February 19, 1989, we made a trip to Tel Aviv, enjoying the beautiful sunny weather. At five o'clock, after Chaim had a nap, I gave him a cup of coffee, because he felt a little cold. He tried to bring up some phlegm. My neighbor thought this was from the fresh paint on the windows in the apartment. When my husband said it is not from the paint, I said, "Pa, I am calling the doctor."

He said, "I don't need a doctor, we are going home in ten minutes."

I, however, called the doctor, asking him to come right away because my husband did not feel good. He answered that his home is full of patients. I should come with my husband, and he will take

him right away. When I told him that my husband is weak on his feet, he advised me to go to the hospital. I called a taxi to take us to the Bikur Cholim hospital in Jerusalem, because Professor Zivoni, under whose care Chaim is always, was there. There is also the record of his condition, as he had been hospitalized there two years ago.

The taxi came right away, and I saw that I need help. My husband was weak while I helped him get dressed. The taxi man came to help me, and I asked him to call an ambulance. He did. When the ambulance came with doctors and nurses they tried all ways to revive him. He was unconscious. At last they declared that he was "exit" (*niftar*).

The rest is just a bad dream. I became an automaton, doing what had to be done. I called my son Ali, and he took over all responsibilities. I thank the Almighty for my responsible and good children.

March 1989

We had planned to go for Pesach 1989 to be with our children in America. This was not to be. After my dear husband got a heart attack and passed away. Jossi and Shirley came to the *lavaya*, and Gita, Julius, and Bumi came to the *shloshim*. My children arranged the trip so that I would go with them, to spend Pesach with them.



March 18, 1989

To our beloved grandson

Benzi Thee

Mazal Tov on your Bar Mitzva

*At last you reached the time
The parsha, the Drasha are fine.
The proud feeling becoming a Man
To be counted here and then
For Minyan, drink L'chaim it may
be fun, also forms the way
To responsibilities as a Jew
And enjoy of them quite a few.*

*Lots good luck and
success in your learning
to be a source of pride
for your dear parents
and entire family
as well as for Am Yisrael.*

With Love and blessings

Your Oma

Chana Thee

June 20, 1989

Four months have passed since my dear husband's departure, and I am still looking for some goal in my life.

I do everything the usual way as before when I was together with my dear Chaim, but it is such an empty feeling. There is no taste in the food, no inspiration for doing some general cleaning in the closets, in the papers. Even if I take some with the intention to look them over, I put them away for another time. One thing I do the usual way — I go twice a week to *Ulpan*. For homework I have no patience. However, this month (another week it ends), there will be no continuation. I found out that in Beit Ha'am there is a Hebrew course, evenings 7-8.30. I am here to try out if it is good for me — *be'hatzlacha*.

June 23, 1989

It is Friday, with no special responsibilities. I don't have to cook for Shabbat, as I am a guest for Shabbat and holidays by Ali. Just not having any responsibility for preparing *lichvod Shabbat* gives me an empty feeling. Even to beautify the house (dining room with candelabra) does not appeal to me. I *bensch* candles there and it has a different feeling. I miss this emotion of deep prayer every Friday which meant always a way of privately doing an important prayer for the health of every member in the family: a kind of thanksgiving to *Hashem Yisborach* for the successful week and always begging for good health for my dear Chaim.

ברוך דיין האמת

בצער רב וביגון קווד אנו מודיעים על כסידתו של בעלי, אבינו
וסבנו היקר והאהוב, רודף צדקה נחמד, אהוב למקום ואהוב לבריות

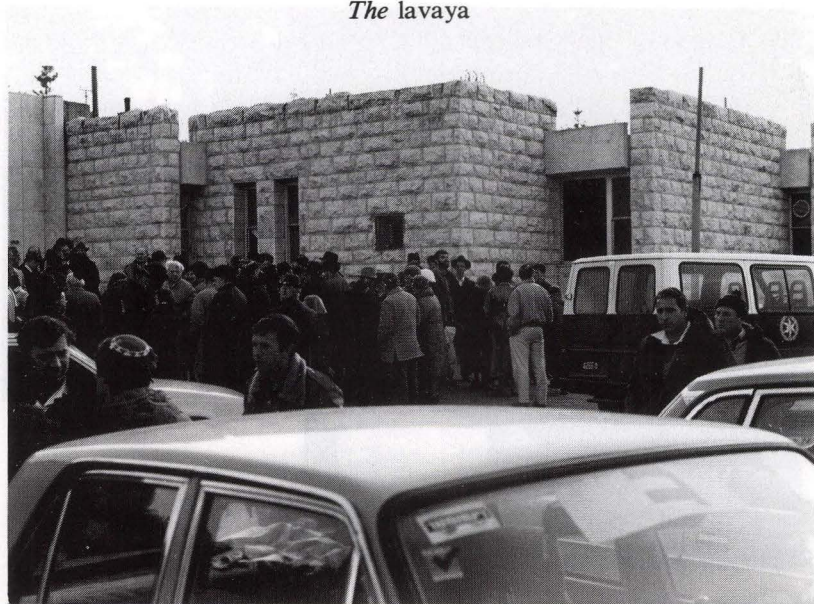
חיים טיי

ההלוויה תצא היום, יום שני ס"ז אדר א' חשמ"ט (20.2.89)
בשעה 4.00 אחה"צ, מבית ההלוויות העדוני ברח' שמואל, רוממה
בדרכה לבית העלמין, ארץ החיים, צומח שושון.

המשכחה המחאבלת

יושבים שבעה בבית המנוח.
רח' המלך ג'ורג' 16 כניסה ב' ירושלים.
(כניסה וחציה גם מרחוב אליאש)

The lavaya



*The shloshim*



November 30, 1989

While preparing material for this book to be published in time for my dear Chaim's *yahrzeit*, I was aware of this date as his birthday. I feel a need to express how I feel today.

To my dear husband, z'l. It is a 30th November day like all the other times, some sunshine, and some rain, but in my heart I feel cloudy, with no place for sunny rays to penetrate. I miss so much the pleasure of planning and buying a birthday gift for you, the warm feeling of presenting it to you. Your constant modesty and your appreciation for any kindness shown to you always warmed my heart.

It is over nine months since your departure, but you are constantly with me. Your presence in my feelings gives me energy to go on. You are my leading example in many phases of life.

Sleep well, my darling, and don't let your spirit leave me until we will be reunited for ever and ever.

Your wife,
Chana

December 27, 1989

It is over ten months, life goes on. I am very grateful to *Hashem Yisboruch* for freeing me from the fear to be home alone and sleeping alone. It is unbelievable, but I feel the presence of dear Chaim around me. I feel that he watches over me along with *Hashem Yisboruch*. I try as much as possible to carry on a normal life. I attend some of the lectures as before and continue my *Ulpan*, but with less enthusiasm. I took part in a three-day trip organized by the Friends of Bikur Cholim Hospital.

In the meantime, I have been suffering for four months from the shingles. I do not have enough good words for each and every one of the doctors and nurses in the clinic of Kupat Cholim Maccabi. I feel I am in touch with good friends.

From the *Jewish Press*:

Naroler Mosdos of Bnei Brak

Melava Malka

"*Motzai Shabbos, Parsha Vayetze*, (Dec. 9, 1989), the Naroler Mosdos of Bnei Brak, celebrated their annual Melava Malka. This year it was tendered in memory of a true and long time friend and supporter of the Mosdos, Mr. Chaim Thee of blessed memory. Mr. Chaim Thee and his elder brother Reb Joseph Feldman of blessed memory were instrumental in establishing the Naroler Mosdos in Crown Heights and ultimately in Israel. Their families are still actively involved.

"Mr. Abraham Wolfish of Monsey, the son-in-law, eloquently expressed his admiration of his father-in-law and stressed his beautiful *midos*, his dedication to Torah and *Chesed*, and his warm affiliation with the *Naroler Rebbe, shlita*."

You are cordially invited to attend the
Annual Melava Malka
 of the **Naroler Torah Institutions**
 of Bnei Brak, Israel
 under the auspices of the founder
 HaGaon and Tzadik the world renowned
 Naroler Rav
Rabbi Mayer Schapiro שליט"א
Motzei Shabbos, December 9, 1989
 at 8:00 P.M.

at **Khal Chassidim**
 4820 - 15th Ave., Brooklyn, N.Y.
 Guest Speaker: **Rabbi Israel Wagner**
 Rav of Beach Haven Jewish Center
 Chesed Award will be presented to
Mr. Morris Korman, of West Orange, N.J.

This year's Melava Malka will be held
 in Memory of
Mr. Chaim Thee
 who was a devoted supporter of our Mosdos
 He passed away 15th of Adar I, 5749, in Israel

Dinner Chairman: **Rabbi Naftali Fasten**
 of West Lawrence, Talmid of the Naroler Rav

Checks payable to Cong. Kol Beth Shmuel Aaron are tax deductible.

As far as I know, here is the complete listing of all of our relatives who are alive:

Relatives from Chaim's Side

Joseph Feldman's children (nieces and nephews):

Sophie & Bill Sussman
Anni & Sam Levin
Leah & Paul Jeidel
Alfred & Judy Feldman

Sophie's children:

Charlene & Avi	3 children
Motti & Sari	3 children
Miriam & Shaja	3 children
Pearl & Benjamin	2 children
Socher & Esti	1 child

Anni's children:

Aviva & Salmi	4 children
Rina & Alex	2 children

Lea's children:

Tova	
Gavriel & Vardi	3 children
Eli & Rochi	

Alfred's children:

Ziel & Chajki	1 child
Heshi	
Tami & Meir Lehman	3 children

Yitzchok (Egon) Thee's children (nieces and nephews):

Sami & Edna Thee
Esther Rheinman

Sami's children (second cousins):

Robert Thee

Susie & Allen Siroto

1 child

Esther's children:

Martin & Batya

6 children

Joseph & Rifka

3 children

Avi & Ida

3 children

Sala (niece) & Leiser Turkenkopf & 2 children

Lilly (niece) & husband

First cousins:

Benno & Anni Ehrman & children

(New York)

Regina Ehrman (wife of Gedalia z'l)

(Netanya)

Chaim Thee's other relatives:

Regina & Max Wojslawski

Rita & Uli Goodman

(New York)

Paula Better

(New York)

Hani Sivan

(Israel)

Martin & Inge Feldman

Emil Nadler

Rosa & Ginther Baerwald

Moshe Nadler

Letti (nee Locker)

Herman (Bubbi) Locker

Rita (widow of Martin) Ehrman

& 2 sons

(California)

Second cousins very close to us are:

children of Rosa & Bernard Bodenstein

(New York)

Regina Greenbaum & children

(New York)

Gisela & Herbi Freshel & children

(New York)

Leo Bodenstein	(New York)
Zita Steinmatz & children	(New York)

Relatives from Chana's Side

my sister, Rachel (Rosa) Neuhoff	(New York)
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Niece (daughter of Esther Nestel, z'l):

Batya & Sam Nesher	(Israel)
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Batya's children:

Chana & Shlomo	2 children	(Israel)
Chagit & Ami	2 children	(Israel)
Avi & Debbie	2 children	(Israel)
Yehuda		(Israel)

First cousins:

from the Klugman side:

<u>Nachum</u> & Rifka Ginsberg	(Haifa)
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Pepi Rabid (nee Klugman)

& 2 children	(Haifa)
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Celia Harrison (nee Retter)

& daughter	(California)
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from the Weitman side:

Hilda Weitman (widow of Moses

Weitman) & daughter Malka	(New York)
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Joam (Falik) and Betty Peleg (Kampf)

& family	(Tel Aviv)
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Second cousins:

from the Klugman side:

Nachman Ginsberg (son of Benio z'l)	(Haifa)
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Dr Arje Nesher (son of Dr. Jacob Retter)

& family	(Israel)
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Jossi Retter (son of Avraham Retter)
 & family (Jerusalem)
 Arje Retter (son of Wolf Retter) (Haifa)
 Jacob Retter (son of Wolf Retter) (Haifa)

from the Weitman side:

Hinia (Ilana) Dym (granddaughter of
 Herzel Weitman) & family (Israel)
 Cilly (granddaughter of Izchak Weitman)
 & Ben Radfiner & son Harvey (New York)
 Prof. Sasha Weitman (Israel)
 Rosi Bachman (granddaughter of
 Berl Weitman) (New York)
 Naftali Weitman (grandson of
 Herzel Weitman) (Israel)
 Avi Weitman (grandson of
 Herzel Weitman) (Israel)
 Nechama Weitman (daughter
 of Lezer) (Israel)
 Itzchack David Weitman (son
 of Lezer) (Israel)
 Abraham Shmuel Weitman (son
 of Lezer) (Israel)
 Zipora Shwager (nee Weitman —
 daughter of Lezer) (Israel)
 Alter Yisroel Fishheimer
 (cousin of Nechama) (Israel)
 Abraham Shmuel Fishheimer
 (cousin of Nechama) (Israel)
 Ijala Frisinsky (nee Fishheimer
 — cousin of Nechama) (Israel)
 Ester Kosochovit (nee
 Fishheimer — cousin of
 Nechama) (Israel)
 Shmuel Weitman (son of
 Joseph Weitman) (Israel)
 Yitzchok David Weitman
 (son of Beinish Weitman) (Israel)
 Shmuel Weitman (son of
 Beinish Weitman) (Israel)

My only niece is Batja Nesher, who lives with her husband Sam and their four children in Rechovot. Batja is the only survivor of the entire Nestel family (she had been sent to England in 1938).

Relatives from Chana's Side Who Died Natural Deaths

My mother Gicia (nee Klugman)	1908	on Shushan Purim, in Lisko
Kaila (nee Weitman) (sister)	1911	on Chanuka, from an accident
Abale Klugman (grandfather)	1914	in Safed, in Eretz Yisrael
Balcia Ginsberg (aunt)	1918	typhoid epidemic
Brancia Binsberg (cousin)	1918	typhoid epidemic
Ciocia Brancia Ungar (aunt)	1929	pneumonia
Naftali Ungar (uncle)	1929	pneumonia
Leibish Ginsberg (uncle)	1937	cancer
Benio Ginsberg (cousin)	1987	Haifa, heart attack
Srulu Klugman	1927	buried in Israel
Shaja Tachkimoni (Klugman)		died in Kibbutz Mishmar Ha'emek
Dolek and Etki Weitman	1988	in Stockholm
Moses Weitman (cousin)	1989	N.Y., heart attack
Rachel Weitman		buried in Israel, died in U.S.

On January 1, 1990, as this book was about to go to press, my cousin Nachum Ginsberg passed away. He was my mother's sister's son, and the brother of my brother-in-law Jacob Ginsberg. He was my first Hebrew teacher, and we had a special liking for each other. He went to Eretz Yisrael in 1922 and came back to Europe to find a wife. He married the prettiest girl in town, Rivka Schwartz (the sister to whom Ascher Schwartz wrote the letter from the Zaslow camp), and they stayed all the years in Haifa. He was very intelligent, and very popular among his friends. They have a son, Guri, and a daughter, Niza. The funeral was according to *halacha*, with the full attendance of relatives and friends. He was 88 years old.

Relatives from Chana's Side Who Perished in the Holocaust

Mendel Wolf Weitman (father)	June 12, 1942	Tarnow, Poland
Sima Ginsberg (sister)	1941	Zaslow, Poland
Jacob Ginsberg (brother-in-law)	1941	date unknown Zaslow, Poland
Gicia Ginsberg (niece)	1942(?)	date unknown Zaslow, Poland
Balcia Ginsberg (niece)	1942(?)	date unknown Zaslow, Poland
Jossi Ginsberg (nephew)	1941(?)	date and place unknown, Poland
Esther Nestel (sister)		date unknown, Stryj, Poland
Shmuel Nestel (brother-in-law)		date unknown Stryj, Poland
Heni Nestel (niece)		date unknown Stryj, Poland
Izi Nestel (nephew)		date unknown Stryj, Poland
Nathan Klugman (uncle)	1941	died of starvation, Poland
Gitel Klugman (aunt)	1941	died of starvation, Poland
Esther (cousin) & 5 children	1941	Zaslow, Poland
Jehuda Held	1941	Zaslow, Poland
Mojshi & Chana Klugman	1941	Poland
Manes Weitman (uncle)	1941	Baligrad, Poland
Reisel Weitman (aunt)	1941	Baligrad, Poland
Rachel (cousin)	1941	Baligrad, Poland
Berl Weitman (uncle) & family (12 children)		Nizankowitz
Oscar Greif (cousin)		Przemysl
Chava Greif & daughter Ginia		Przemysl
Chana & family & Ester Feldar		Przemysl

Joseph Locker	1983	
	or 1984	
Willy Reinman (nephew)	May 1986	in Netanya
Martin Ehrman (cousin)		in Los Angeles
Ira Greenbaum (cousin)	1986	in New York, of diabetes
Sala Feldman	1986	in New York
Lane Nagelberg (cousin)	1988	in a nursing home in Monsey

Relatives from Chaim's Side Who Perished in the Holocaust

Rifka (sister) and David Zucker	1940	Przeworsk
their daughters:		
Blume & Shlomo (youngest brother of Chaim) & child	1940	Przeworsk
Chana	1940	Przeworsk
Pearl (sister)	date and place unknown	
Miriam (sister) & husband & 4 children	date and place unknown	
Heni (sister) & Elieser & child	date and place unknown	
Regina (oldest daughter of Aunt and Uncle Ehrman) & husband Nagelburg	date and place unknown	

There were cousins, uncles, and aunts from both sides, and friends from organizations. Nobody was left to tell when all this happened.

We have to mourn all of them as the victims of a maniacal idea called Nazism, Hitlerism, which wiped out our present, past, and future loved and dear ones. We will never be able to grasp the enormous tragedy of this part of our Jewish history. Did all this teach a lesson for the survivors, for the builders of the new Jewish nation on the grounds of our forefathers? No country is given on a silver platter. If you want to be a free person in your own land, you

have to fight for it, defend it, work for it. To every Jew who lives comfortably today in the *Galut*, who thinks it can never happen here — remember, we thought the same in Germany.

Did the entire humanity learn a lesson from this inhuman experience? The Christian world doesn't want to listen any more. They put a church where millions of Jews perished. They even desecrate the memory. Life goes on for immediate interests with individual politics of personal power. Idealists are very few.

Names

I want my children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who were named after deceased members of the family, to know the sources of their names.

First, the children:

Ali (Avraham Moshe) is named after Chaim's father (Ali's grandfather).

Gita (Mari Gita) is named after my mother, Miriam Gittel.

Yosef is named after my grandfather, Yosef Weitman.

Shirley (Chaya Sarah) is named after Chaim's mother.

Now the grandchildren:

The children of Ali and Rechi:

Aaron is named after one of Rechi's family.

Aviva (Aviva Sima) is named after my sister, Sima Ginzberg.

Baruch is named after Rechi's father Chaim Baruch Wolf, who died when Rechi was expecting.

Brenda is named after Ciocia Brancia Ungar.

Chaike (Chaya Keile): the name Chaya comes from Rechi's family. Keile was the name of my grandmother, Keile Klugman.

David Shlomo is named after two of Chaim's brothers.

The children of Gita and Julius:

Menachem Zeev, the first grandchild, is named after my father, Mendel Wolf Weitman.

Malka is named after one of Julius's family.

Esti (Esther) is named after my sister, Esther Nestel.

Judy (Yehudit) is named after one of Julius's family.

Rachel Sima: Rachel is a name from the Bible; Sima is after my sister, Sima Ginzberg.

Rivka is a Biblical name, and the name of one of Chaim's sisters, Rifka Zucker.

The child of Yosef and Tsipora:

Chava Pesia is named after one of Tsipora's family.

The children of Shirley and Bumi:

Menachem Zeev is named after my father, Mendel Wolf Weitman.

Shlomo David is named after two of Chaim's brothers.

Naftali Yaakov: Naftali Ungar, Brancia's husband, was a *Talmid Chacham*; Yaakov was my sister Sima's husband.

Shimon Aaron: Shimon is from Bumi's family; Aaron is named after Ruchcia's husband, my cousin, Aaron Weitman.

Frimi Ahuvah: Frimi was Bumi's mother; Ahuvah is just a nice name.

The great-grandchildren:

Malka and Yissoschar's son Yosef is named after Chaim's brother, Joseph Feldman.

Esti and Zevi's son Yitzi (Yitzchak) is named after Chaim's brother, Izchok Thee.

Chava and Menachem's son Yitzi is named after Chaim's brother, Izchok Thee.

I look at my grandchildren individually, and what I see makes me really happy. Each and every one is, *Baruch Hashem*, beautiful physically and emotionally. They learn seriously in yeshivos and Beth Jacobs, they share responsibilities in the housework, and they try to learn a profession for *parnosa*.

The pattern for marriage with them is clear: a fine Jewish girl from similar background for the boys, who marry between the age of 21-24 years, and a *frum* yeshiva boy of *baalebatish* parents who appears to have a mature view on life for the girls, who marry between the age of 18-22 years.

The finding of their *zivugim* often takes place through the recommendation of friends. After a few dates, they introduce the young girl or young boy to the parents. Most of the time it is up to the children to decide if they like each other enough to become engaged. Sometimes the parents need to advise and point out some special good traits in the potential partner.

Once the first child in the family has achieved his happiness this way, it serves as an example for the younger brothers and sisters to follow.

Once married, they take their role seriously, with responsibility for each other, for their growing family, and for their parents and community, following in the footsteps of their parents. They become recognized members of the community, making new friends among young married couples, and they form a wonderful community. They themselves feel happy and fulfilled.



Five generations



The fiftieth wedding anniversary, in Gita and Julius' home

*The Behrend family*

*Opa (c.) with (l. to r.) Julius, his three sons-in-law and his son
Menachem*



Our fifty-eighth wedding anniversary (1988)



At Aaron and Estie's wedding (l. to r.): Mrs. and Mr. Felsenstein (Estie's paternal grandparents), Chana and Chaim, Mrs. Wolf (Estie's maternal grandmother)



*Chavi and Menachem Epstein's wedding, December 25, 1985,
in Monsey*



*Chaiki and Yehoshua Basan's wedding, January 27, 1986, in
Kibbutz Shaalvim*



*Top: Sophie Sussman, Chaim Thee
Bottom: Paul & Leah Jeidel, Ali Thee*



The Feldmans and the Thees — still close after three generations



Chanuka at Shirley and Bumi's home, 1984



*Ronni Baruchin and Aviva,
chatan-kalla*

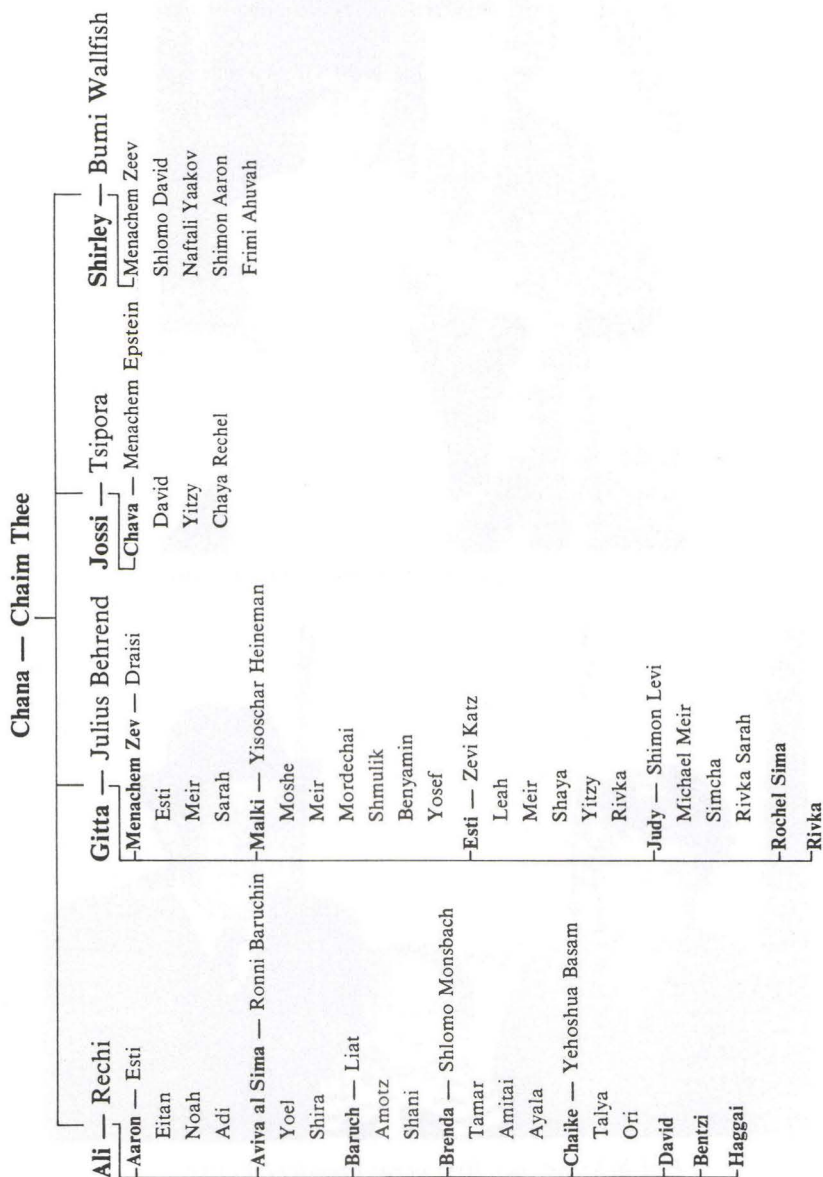


Frimi Walfish, our youngest grandchild (1989)



Esti Behrend, our first great-grandchild (1981)

The Orchard until now:



Friends In Our Lives Are Our Treasures

It is impossible to count out all the friends who shared with us good as well as hard times along the long and complicated road of our lives.

1. There are Landsleit from both of our birthplaces.
2. Especially intimate friends with whom (if still alive) there is an exceptional bond and mutual interest.
3. Friends made in different countries as a young family.
4. Our landlords, with whom we shared living quarters, became close friends.
5. My schoolfriends as an adult, while taking college courses and joining the club of Encore, the returnees to higher education.
6. "Shipbrothers," the people with whom we spent four weeks on the voyage to Cuba during the war, 1941-42.
7. Business friends of many years.
8. The in-laws of my children, with whom we share the joy of common grandchildren.
9. Wherever we lived, neighbors became good friends.
10. Friends with whom we pray together in any synagogue.

We are very grateful to all our friends for their trust, and for sharing their experiences and their joys by inviting us to their joyous occasions; for sharing with us our happy occasions; for showing much sympathy in the time of our tragedy, and for remaining in steady contact with me, no matter how far or near they are.

Personally, I count among my friends a lady over 100 years old whom I adopted as my aunt; young people my children's age with whom we are in steady contact; and certainly my children and the entire family, as well as their friends to whom I feel very close and respected.



Paul and Hinda Newman, friends from New York (now living in California)



Tel Aviv friends (l. to r. standing): Mrs. and Mr. Moses, Mr. Herman (sitting): Chana and Mrs. Herman



With Mrs. Eisenberg, a friend in Jerusalem



*The Friedmans. Mr. Friedman passed away at the age of 98.
Mrs. Friedman has already reached 100!*

My Philosophy of Life

If there is a philosophy of life, mine would be that the Almighty is the One who plans the destiny of every person. It is up to us to do the best one can, on the useful side in life.

A dependent child should listen to his elders and follow their good examples. In school, the teacher is the authority who helps you to become mature and useful. A teacher has to be respected.

With friends, be trustworthy.

With neighbors, be helpful and friendly.

In the family, have a system of privileges and shared responsibilities.

You cannot change another person's nature. If possible, adjust to the situation, or ignore the differences.

Don't expect more than what you get.

Be usefully occupied.

Have trust in the Almighty and go the way of the Torah.

* * *

I am grateful to *Hashem* for all the good things He has given us, for the happy times I spent on the school bench, whether as a child, a mother, a grandmother, or a great-grandmother. And for a beautiful married life and *nachas*. Every day is a gift from *Hashem*, not to be taken for granted.

My prayers are for good health and the strength to be able to help others, and to stay independent.

Glossary

- ad meah ve'esrim (shana)* until (the age of) 120
Alef Bais the Hebrew alphabet
alov (aleha) hashalom may he (she) rest in peace
Am Yisrael the People of Israel
andarta monument
aufruf celebration held on the Sabbath preceding a wedding
azkara memorial service
baalebatish behaving properly; knowing how to run a Jewish home
baalat bayit (Hebrew)
balabuste (Yiddish) a woman who is *baalebatish*
Beis-Din rabbinical court
Beis Medrash study hall or synagogue
bekuvedicke dignified
bensch recite the blessing over
Bikur Cholim visiting the sick
bitachon trust
Bitul Torah time wasted, not spent on Torah study
bli ayin hara "touch wood"
bobby grandmother
bris circumcision ceremony
chalila G-d forbid
chalutz(im) pioneer(s)
chasan groom
chashuv important

- Chassidus* Hasidism
chaver friend, member
chazan cantor
chesed benevolence, charity
Chevra Kadisha burial society
chupa bridal canopy
davening praying
derech erez respect
Drasha speech (on the *parsha*)
Eishes Chayil Woman of Valor, i.e., a model Jewish woman
Entbindung delivery (of a child)
Eretz Yisroel the Land of Israel
erev the eve of
fleishig meat
frumme religious
 — *frummer Yid* a religious Jew
Galuth Diaspora
ganze refuah complete cure
gemilus chasadim benevolent deeds
Gemora(s) tractate(s) of the Talmud
get [writ of] divorce
goi non-Jew
hachnasas orchim hospitality
HaKadosh Baruch Hu, Hashem Yisboruch Hu the Holy One, blessed be He
halacha Jewish law
Hashem G-d
 — *Baruch Hashem* Thank G-d
 — *im yirtze Hashem* G-d willing
 — *Kiddush Hashem* Sanctification of the Name of G-d
hatzlocha success
behatzlocha with success
Havdala prayer marking the end of the Sabbath
housetochter househelper from a good family, with status almost that of family member
ima(hot) mother(s)
kalla bride

kashrut Jewish dietary laws
kavod lezichron may their memory be honored
kedoshim martyrs
khap grab
kibud av ve-em honoring one's parents
kinderlach children
Kindermaidchen governess and household helper
kippah skullcap
lkeine little
koach strength
kohen person belonging to the priestly class
Kotel the Western Wall
kvell derive pride and pleasure
Landsleit people from one's home town
Landsmannschaft(en) organization(s) of people from one's home town
lavaya funeral
limudei kodesh religious studies
lishmo altruistically
maalos tovos good traits
Masechet tractate
matzeva tombstone (here, monument)
mazal good fortune
mazaldike fortunate
mechutan(esta) father (mother) of a son/daughter-in-law
Melave Malka(s) festive meal eaten after the conclusion of the Sabbath
melitz(a) tov(a), melitz(a) yeshar(a) good advocate
Mesivta Talmudic academy
midos good traits
mikva(s) ritual bath(s)
milah circumcision
mispallelim worshippers
Mohel circumcisor
mishabayrach prayer for the sick
mishpacha family
mitzva commandment; (by extension) good deed
minyan quorum of ten required for public prayer

mi yimtzah who can find
Mosdos institutions
Motzei Shabbat Saturday night, after the conclusion of the Sabbath
nachas pleasure
neshama kashera pure soul
nes min hashamayim a miracle
niftar deceased
olov hashalom may he rest in peace
parnosa livelihood
parsha weekly Torah reading
Rabbonim rabbis
rachmunis compassion
Rav, rebbe, Rov rabbi or teacher
rosh kahal community head
ruach spirit
seder order; study regimen
Shabbos Sabbath
 — *likhvod Shabbos* in honor of the Sabbath
 — *Shabbos menucha* Sabbath rest
shalom peace
 — *Shalom ubrachah* (salutation)
 — *Shalom Zochor* reception held on the Sabbath eve following the birth of a son
Shalosh'udos third Sabbath meal, eaten on Saturday afternoon
shamash beadle (synagogue official)
Shechina the Divine Presence
shechita ritual slaughter
 — *shochet* ritual slaughterer
Sheva Brochos festive meals held the seven days following a wedding
shiduch(im) marriage match(es)
 — *shadchen* matchmaker
shiur(im) lesson, class
shlepped dragged
shlita (term of respect added to a rabbi's name or title)
shloshim thirty days of mourning (or the thirtieth day after a death)
Shomer Shabbat Sabbath observant
shtetel town

shul synagogue
simcha(s) happy occasion(s)
slichos penitential prayers recited before the High Holy Days
S'micha rabbinical ordination
sofer scribe (of ritual objects, e.g., Torah scrolls)
streimel hat worn by Chasidic Jews
sukka temporary housing erected for the Sukkot holiday
Talmid(ei) Chachom(im) Torah scholar(s)
tante aunt
Tehillim Psalms
Tish'a B'av the fastday of the Ninth of Av
tisch meal (lit., table)
Tzadik (m.),
 — *Tzedekis* (f.) righteous person
 — *Tzidkus* righteousness
Tzedaka charity
tzizit ritual fringes
Ulpan Hebrew class
yahrzeit(s) anniversary(ies) of a death
yemach shmo may his name be blotted out
yeshiva bocher(s) yeshiva student(s)
Yiddishe Jewish
 — *Yiddishkeit* Jewishness
Yom Tov holiday
yomtovdik befitting the holiday
Zahal Israel Defense Forces
zechus merit
zeidy grandfather
zichronom livracha (abb. *z'l*) of blessed memory
zivug(im) match(es)

Portions of this book were written at different times. In the passages written in America, I used the Ashkenazic pronunciation of Hebrew with which I grew up. In Israel, I used the Sephardic pronunciation, which explains the differing spellings of the same word.

יום שלישי, ט"ו חשון תש"ן 7.11.89

מה צריכים לעשות לגבי יהודי רוסיה?

כמה שהמצב של יהודי רוסיה רע, הם בביתם, בחברה שלהם, בשפה שידועה להם. במשך שלושה דורות לא היה להם שום קשר עם דת ותורה של יהדות ולא הבנה על הקיום של ערך יהדות הפורחת, ונותנת כבוד לכל בני ישראל.

ארץ ישראל היתה איזה מדינה רחוקה ועניה, שמעו עליה בתקשורת רק דברים שליליים. חסר להם כל ידע על ההיסטוריה של שורשיו, כי לא למדו כל זה. הם לא הרגישו את הגעגועים לארץ ישראל ולהתאחד איתה.

פתאום המצב הפוליטי והכלכלי החמיר, וזה הביא אנטישמיות. כדי להטיב את מצבם הרע הם רוצים לצאת.

השאיפה היא לנסוע לאמריקה, שבה המצב הכלכלי יותר טוב. עם ישראל חיכה זמן רב להזדמנות זו לקבל אלפי עולים מרוסיה. לכן צריכים לפגוש אותם, ללמוד עמם חוכמת התורה, דרכי החיים בתוך עם ישראל.

יש תנועת המתנדבים, שעושים העבודה הזאת במסירות נפש זה כמה שנים. במיוחד לומדים בישיבות, שפותחים באחרונה לדור הצעיר, ויש להם חוויה חזקה בלימוד בתורה. את חווית יראת הכבוד לעם ולארץ ישראל הם לומדים בתנאים קשים עם חשק חזק. הם רעבים לכל ספר מישראל, ובזמן קצר הם מדברים עברית.

אנחנו מקווים שבקרוב כמה אלפי יהודים מרוסיה וגם מארצות אחרות יעלו לישראל להתאחד עם עם ישראל לטובת ארצנו ולקיומה לנצח.

29.11.89 ראש חודש כסלו א' תש"ן

ונפוצותינו כנס

את הפסוק בספר יחזקאל על העצמות היבשות, שקיבלו את רוח החיים, יכולים להשוות לעם ישראל, כשהיה מפוזר בכל ארצות בעולם בגולה, בלי הרגשת עצמאות, בלי כבוד כעם, מדוכאים ומגורשים בכל דור ודור. בהקמת מדינת ישראל קמה רוח החיים החדשה ונכנסה לכל אחד מהיהודים והרגישו שוב הכוח לבנות ולשמור על המדינה העצמאית בכל הנפש והגוף. בזמן קצר מאוד מדינה חדשה נבנתה על אדמת אבותינו.

המדינה החדשה משרתת את כל היהודים בעולם לעלות לכאן ולקחת חלק בבניה ובשמירה של הבית העצמאי היחידי לעם ישראל, וככה עושים. כל יהודי, שיודע מה זה גלות, להיות זר במדינות שונות בעולם. עולה לארצנו. למדינת ישראל באים מכל ארבע כנפות העולם להתישב, לעבוד, ללמוד ולשמור ביחד עם כל העם הישראלי בכוחות חדשים לכבוד לעם ישראל ולמדינת ישראל.

העצמות היבשות קבלו את רוח החיים.



האולפן בניו יורק, תשל"ח

כ"ט חשוון תשמ"ט 9.11.88

ליל הבדולח" 1938 – 1988

לפני 50 שנה יהודים בגרמניה התנסו באכזריות המאורגנת של הנאצים, בלי דוגמה בהיסטוריה אנושית. האסון בא פתאום בכח חזק והתפוצץ בכל הערים והעיירות בתוך גרמניה. מאורע זה נקרא ליל הבדולח – "Die Kristal Nacht". הנאצים הגיעו לנשמה של העם היהודי. הם שרפו את כל בתי הכנסת עם ספרי התורה וכל כתבי הקודש. הם הרסו אל כל המקוואות והחנויות היהודיות. הם אסרו את כל הגברים היהודים שמצאו ברחוב ובבתיהם והביאו אותם למחנות הריכוז.

פחד חזק נפל על כל משפחה יהודיה. ייאוש כבד עטף את כולם – דתיים ומתבוללים. הבעיה היתה: לאן לברוח? אף מדינה לא נתנה וויזה לדרכון, שצויין בו "Y". כל אחד חיפש דרך כלשהי לברוח, על-מנת להציל את חייו. בהמשך לכל באה "השואה", אשר נמשכה עוד 7 שנים, של עינויים, רעב (השפלה) ומוות. שליש מעמנו נהרג. אנחנו שנשארו בחיים ובני כל עדות היהדות, זוכרים זה חמישים שנה את "ליל הבדולח", בכאב ברעדה ובתפילה שהאנושות לא תשוב להתנסות באכזריות כזו לעולם.

מעט: חנה טי

יום רביעי, כ"ז בטבת, התשמ"ט 4.1.89

"גר צדק בימינו"

איש נוצרי מאוסטריה התיגר (ליהדות). הוא התחתן עם אשה יהודיה מאהבה וגרו כמשפחה בישראל והיו להם שני ילדים.

מר דוד אורן ז"ל התאהב במדינת ישראל, ותרם את גופו למדע הרפואי. בשבוע האחרון נפצע בתאונת דרכים.

כשנפטר, אשתו נתנה רשות לרופאים להשתיל את אבריו לחולים שחיכו לעזרה מזמן. חלקי גופו כמו: לב, כבד ושתי כליות, השתילו הרופאים המומחים לארבעה אנשים כדי להציל את חייהם.

האשה, גברת לינדה אורן, אמרה:

"אני רוצה שילדינו ידעו שאבא שלהם 'גיבור'."

הקהל מתעניין ברצינות בכל צעד רפואי של המושתלים בבתי חולים שונים. מקווים שכל אחד מהחולים ירפא בשלמות על ידי השתלת האיברים הבריאים. שם טוב של התורם דוד אורן ז"ל. יכנס להיסטוריה הרפואית כגיבור לקראת הצלת חייהם.

22.6.88

ז' תמוז תשמ"ח

תודה לאב בשמיים

חושבת סבתא על דרכי חייה
איך הגיעה עד כאן לגורלה?
דרך נסיונות לזכור כל ימיה
ולהכיר, "בסיעתא-דשמיא" בתודה.

איך עברה את ילדותה הקשה
במשך מלחמת הראשונה הנוראה
אחר כך כאשת איש ואמא המבורכת
יצאה מתחת ידי "הנאצים" מוצלחת.

ביחד עם בעלה וילדיהם
נדדה דרך יבשות רחוקות
עד שיכלו לארגן את ביתם
לסדר בעבודה, ולהתחיל את חייהם.

כך גדלו הילדים בישיבות
בלימוד התורה ועבודה בכבוד,
התחתנו במזל, ובנו את ביתם
עבדו, למדו, והגדילו את העם.

תפקידה של הסבתא? להשתתף בשמחות
לזכור את הנכדים והנינים בשמות,
להתפלל בעד מזל לדורות הבאים
ולבקש בשביל שלום "מאלוהים".

יום חמישי, כ"ה באייר התשמ"ח 12.5.88

אגודת יד-שרה

איש אחד מחיפה בשם יעקב לופוליאנסקי החליט להנציח מוסד לעזור לחולים – בישראל, לזכר אמו שרה, שנפטרה בשואה.

במשך 12 שנים המוסד התפתח מאוד יפה. היום ידוע שבכל עיר בישראל יש חוג של יד-שרה. לחוגים אלו כל חולה יכול לפנות ולקבל ציוד הדרוש כמו: ציוד אורטופדי, מיטות בתי-חולים, כסאות-גלגלים, קביים והליכונים, ציוד הנשמה כמו בלוני חמצן ועוד, וגם שירות כביסה לחולים או קשישים שאינם שולטים בצרכיהם.

יד-שרה מונה כעת 58 סניפים, אלפיים מתנדבים, עם תקציב של 1.3 מיליון דולר.

התרומות באות מהארץ ומחוץ לארץ.

המתנדבים שם שופטים, עורכי דין, רופאים, וגם כל מיני פנסיונרים, בעלי מלאכה. המתנדבים מבקרים גם את החולים בבתיהם ועוזרים להם במה שהם יכולים.

לקשישים הבודדים יד-שרה מושיטה את ידה והמתנדבים עוזרים להם ככל האפשר.



מזכרת מטיול לסיני; משפ' שלסר ומשפ' טי
(שבועיים לפני החזרת סיני למצרים)

הוקרה בשכנים הטובים

בשנה זו בשבת, בימי חג הסוכות, בזמן הצהריים, היו אורחים בבייתנו לקידוש. אלו היו קרובים מארצות הברית עם בתם, בת 14, וכולנו חיכינו לבעל שהלך לכותל להתפלל.

פתאום ירד גשם חזק והמים נכנסו מן המרפסת לסלון ובתוך רגעים הבית היה מלא מים. לא ידעתי לאן לפנות וכולנו היינו בפחד גדול. חשבתי אפילו לעזוב הכל ולצאת מן הבית. בבנין, השכנים כרגיל בחוץ לארץ, באים רק לכמה שבועות. יש גם כמה משרדים שהיו סגורים במשך החגים. ניסיתי לדפוק בדלת של השכנים שהם גרו רק זמן קצר אצלנו באותה קומה. הם באו מצרפת וידעו קצת עברית. סיפרתי להם שאנחנו בסכנה, שבבית מלא מים. השכן עם אשתו שהם גם דתיים, באו לביתנו ותכף ידעו מה לעשות. השכן יצא בקושי למרפסת, פתח את הצנור וניסה להוציא משם כמה דברים שהם סתמו אותו. זה עזר רק מעט.

הגברת פתחה באמבטיה את הצנור והעבירה בעזרת מטאטא את המים לשם. גם זה עזר רק מעט. אז השכן הטוב, בעזרת הדלי, שפך את כל המים מן המרפסת. זאת היתה עבודה קשה במשך שעות. גם בתם באה לעזור, עד שהגשם הפסיק, כולנו היינו עסוקים. אותנו, הזקנים, יעצו לשבת, והם עשו כל העבודה בהרגשה שזה פיקוח נפש. גם האורחות, הלבושות בגדי משי, עזרו במה שיכלו.

לעולם לא אשכח את מסירות־הנפש של האנשים הטובים השכנים שלנו. העובדה הזאת הביאה ליחסים יותר טובים בינינו כשכנים וידידים.

22 באפריל 1988

ירושלים

המלה ירושלים מה היא מביעה?
אלפיים שנה כחלום מופיעה,
בהרגשות ובתפילות ביום ולילה
ירושלים, עיר הקודש! היתה הילילה.

המושג של ירושלים פשוט כעיר,
לא! זה יותר קרוב לשמיים
זה מקום של תורה, לחם ומים,
זה עמוד חזק לעמנו, זה החיים.

בירושלים שם אלוהים מוליך
בזכות מצוותינו משיח יוליך
ירושלים, אהובה לכל העם,
שילמנו בעדה גבורה והרבה דם.

היום אנחנו בחיקה החזק
כבנים נשמרים על ידי אמא
ואותם הבנים תחת כנפיה
הגנה הגאה שומרת (והחזקה) על כבודה.

יזכור

ביום השואה לזכר קדושינו
קדושינו, של קדושינו של עמנו
מאמצע חייהם השקטים הצנועים
לשחיטה הביאו אתכם הנאצים.

אבא שלי! שומר מצוות התורה,
עם דרך החיים כצדיק בדורו
בתפקידו כדין עם נשמה טהורה
על קידוש השם הלך לעולמו.

אחותי היקרה! הייתי לי כמו אמא
לעולם לא אשכח לך, אחותי סימה!
עם בעלך יעקב, אב טוב לילדיכם:
גיציה, בלציה, יוסי, יקרים: אייכם?

אחותי היקרה, עם רוב המשפחה
אסתר, גיסי שמואל, הני ואיזי.
מה קרה להם? קיוויתי, ציפיתי:
אולי קרה נס? אין ואין שום הבטחה.

אחרי המבול — נודע החורבן
ששליש של עמנו היה הקורבן
כיתומים מזכירים אתכם כל העם
ובכאב עמוק, ובדמעות של דם.

חג הפסח במשפחה

זה כבר אחרי חג הפסח שזה תמיד חוויה מיוחדת לכל משפחה בישראל.
לפני פסח בפגישה עם מכרים שואלים זה את זה:
איפה אתם מבלים את הפסח?...

לפני שנים רבות זה היה פשוט להבין, כל משפחה חגגה את חג הפסח בבית שלהם. לא חיפשו את הדרך היותר קלה. ההכנה לפסח היתה חשובה מאוד לכל אחד במשפחה, התענוג מהנקיון בכל הבית, מהכלים היפים, מהבגדים החדשים לכבוד הפסח, כל זה היה חשוב מאוד בילדות, בתוך משפחות יהודיות. היום יותר משפחות מבלות את חג הפסח במלונות, שזה משמש להם כחופש בלי עול להכין לחג מיוחד, שזה נקיון כללי, כלים מיוחדים, מזון מיוחד ואולי להזמין אורחים, אז הרבה בישול ועוד ועוד. יכול להיות שאנשים היו יותר (חסכניים) במיוחד עם משפחות מבורכות ילדים. משפחות כאלו חוגגות את חג הפסח בביתיהן ביחד עם הוריהן שבגיל מבוגר וקשה להם להתכונן לחג הפסח. להם יש הזדמנות להנות מהנכדים בזמן הסדר, כיצד הם מתנהגים בנימוס ומשתתפים בקריאת ההגדה. לפי הגיל הם שואלים את ארבע הקושיות. לזה הילדים מתכוננים במשך שבועות לפני פסח. כל ילד מרגיש כחלק חשוב בטכס הסדר וזה חלק של הבידור בהלך הסדר. האבא ביחד עם הסבא משיבים לילדים בספור של עבדות ויציאת מצרים של עם ישראל. לסוף הסדר אחרי הארוחה הטעימה יש סדרה של האפיקומן. זה החלק היותר חשוב לילדים. כל אחד מנסה לגנוב את האפיקומן של אבא או של סבא. משיבים להם אותם רק לפי התנאים שלהם. בדרך זו הם מצליחים להבטחות שונות: אופניים, עגלה לבובה ועוד. זה מאריך את הסדר שעות ארוכות עד שכולם עייפים ומאושרים, שהסדר נמשך בהצלחה. היין מארבע הכוסות עזר למצב רוח שמח. כולם שרים ביחד ומברכים לשנה הבאה בירושלים השלמה ולשלום בישראל ובכל העולם, אמן!

ביער ובעיר מאת עגנון

בספור זה המחבר מספר באופן די ברור את הרקע של משפחתו בעיר הקטנה. המשפחה כולה עסוקה בעול פרנסה, במנהגים כפי המסורת כדרך שומרי מצוות ובחינוך של ילדיהם.

המחבר בעצמו בכשרון האומן מרגיש תאווה חזקה לטבע וביחוד בקסם של היער בקיץ. הוא מתאר בהתלהבות את הצבעים, את הקולות של הצפורים והיופי של כל בעלי החיים הקטנטנים שביער. לאט לאט הוא מזניח את הלימוד בחדר ובא ליער להתענג מכל היופי בתוכו. אבל החומש תמיד אתו. בתמימותו כצעיר פגש את הרוצח פרנצ'שק, שברח מהכלא. כל אנשי העיר פחדו ממנו וסגרו את בתיהם. מפחד לא יכלו לישון. הנער לא מכיר את האיש המוזר והאומלל כרוצח, ומתנהג אתו באופן טבעי כמו עם גוי פשוט. השיחה ביניהם מעניינת מאוד כי אין חשד בלב הנער שזה איש רע. הוא שותה אפילו מקיתונו כמה טיפות יין שרף, ומברך אותו בברכה "שהכל נהיה בדברו", זה מוצא חן בעיני הגוי, והוא חוזר על המלה "שהכל", מתפתח בטחון בין פרנצ'שק ובינו. באדישות הלך לו הביתה, ופרנצ'שק נעלם ביער.

העובדה שפרנצ'שק נתפש על ידי המשטרה נתנה לו לחשוב רצינית על דרכיו של הרוצח וכל המעשים הרעים בחייו של פרנצ'שק. אז הבין את הסיבה של הפחד, שאנשי העיר עברו בזמן שהוא היה חופשי. את המשפט של עונש מוות בעד כל הדברים הרעים הצעיר מצא כצדק. המחזה של התליה הוא מתאר ברור כאילו שזה הדבר הנורמלי. מי שעושה מעשי רצח מגיע לו מוות. בשעה האחרונה כנראה פרנצ'שק הרגיש הרגשת בטחון אישי לנער, שברך אותו ב"שהכל נהיה בדברו", וברגע הטראגי הוא ניסה להביע "שהכל" כתפילה. בזה עגנון מביע את דעתו, שבכל בו אדם יש צורך להאמין ב"אלוהים".

החיות

על שפת הים כל־כך יפה
לשבת ולראות את כל המראה
ילדים משחקים עם החול החם
ובונים דברים נפלאים שם.

הצעירים – עסוקים במים
צוחקים, וקולותיהם עד לב השמים!
הים זה מקום ראוי לחברותיות
בין הנערות והנערים חברותיות

באמת, שפת הים זה מקום
שכל אחד אוהב לנוח בחום
כאשר השמש זורחת ושוזפת
והרוח מן הים נושבת

לשחות זה דבר היותר נעים
ביחד עם הרבה אנשים
אבל – לפעמים יש קורבנות במים
אז – המחיר הוא כבד, מחיר של החיים.

יום שני, ד' באדר התשמ"ח 28.2.88

מעשה העז מאת ש"י עגנון

עגנון, אחד מהדור שמלפני מלחמת העולם השנייה, וגם יליד מזרח אירופה, הוא עבר את הנסיון של חילוקי דעות בין שני הדורות בנוגע לעלייה לארץ ישראל.

עגנון מתאר בספור הזה הנסיונות שעברו יהודי הגולה בענין החלטה לעזוב את כל הרכוש ביחד עם הגלות, ולהתחיל בתנאים בלתי ידועים בארץ רחוקה ארץ ישראל.

הבן, הדור הצעיר, הפך מלא התלהבות, מושפע בדמיון לעלות ולבנות את ארץ ישראל.

הבן העלה רעיון להיות מורה דרך להוריו.

הארץ מצאה חן בעיני הבן, ובפעם הראשונה הרגיש חופשי לעבוד בהתלהבות בבנין הארץ הקדושה והעצמאית. הבן הרגיש את האווירה המלאה קדושה ויופי. מתוך ההרגשות של חופש ואושר, ניסה לשכנע את הוריו לעזוב את הגולה, ובלי להסס לעלות לארץ הקדושה ולהתענג להיות חופשי.

הספור על "העז" זו אלגוריה, כדוגמה לכל התרוצים. בספור מוצאים הרבה בטויים פיוטיים על יופי ועל הקדושה של ארץ ישראל. עגנון מספר על נפש יהודי שהיתה תמיד קשורה לארץ ישראל.

אחרי כ־50 שנים רואים את הנבואה של עגנון. הדור הקודם ביניהם הוריו נשאר... הדור הצעיר בנה את מדינת ישראל ובעזרת ה' יגדל ויתחזק להיות לדוגמא לעמים.



מסיבת ט"ו בשבט באולפן בירושלים, תשמ"ח

מוצאי שבת"ק, ה' בטבת התשמ"ח 26.12.87

איך ליוויתי את חג החנוכה

בכל שנה ושנה אנחנו רגילים להיות ביחד עם הילדים ומשפחותיהם. לפעמים בישראל או בארצות הברית. בשנה זו שאנו שוהים בירושלים, שמחנו מאוד להיות מוזמנים להדלקת הנר הראשון בבית של הנכד ואשתו נשואים זה שנותיים.

הם גרים בירושלים בדירה קטנה מעל הסבתא הזקנה האלמנה בלי שכר דירה. האורחים המוזמנים היו סבא וסבתא והורים של בעלת הבית הצעירה. הם הגיעו מאשדוד. גם הסבתא מלמטה עלתה בקושי מפני שהיא חלשה. הורי הנכד (בן עם אשתו) עם שני בנים צעירים ואנחנו. הדירה מסודרת בטעם ובאופן מודרני, והיה נוח ונעים. זאת היתה הפגישה הראשונה מזמן החתונה של הזוג הצעיר.

אחרי הדלקת נר חנוכה על ידי בעל הבית, כולנו שרנו מעוז צור ביחד. זאת היתה חוויה רגשית שלנו. השולחן היה מוכן במזנון עם הרבה מאכלים טעימים והרבה דברים חדשים שבעלת הבית הצעירה בישלה ואפתה לכבוד המסיבה הזו. כולנו אכלנו בתיאבון, ושכחנו את הדיאטה. במשך השבוע ביקרו אותנו הנכדים עם ילדיהם, קיבלו דמי חנוכה מהסבא ומתנות יפות מסבתא. הנינים נתנו לנו תמונות יפות יצירות מהגן בשבילנו. השתתפנו בכמה הרצאות לכבוד חנוכה כמו: בישראל הצעיר, של אגודת נשי בית כנסת ישרון. בכל מקום האוירה היתה חגיגית ונעימה. ליום אחד נסענו לתל-אביב לבקר ידידים ומזג האויר היה חם ונעים.

תודה לאל בעד הנחת (האידישע) ומקווים שנזכה לחיות בשלום ושמחה אמן.

קוראים אותם בשמות מלאים והם גאים ששם אחרי איזה איש או אשה טובה ושומעים בהתענינות לספורים שסבא או סבתא מספרים על מעשים טובים של אותם האנשים הקדושים.

נכד אחד אמר לי פעם: "אני שמח מאוד שיש לי שם אחרי איש טוב, ישר, ותלמיד חכם." (נפתלי יעקב)

בלי המשך בשמות במשפחה נשכח את הקרובים היקרים אחרי כמה זמן. אולי יכולים לחשוב על דבר אחר כדי להעמיד את זכר קדושינו לנצח.

בספר יזכור מוצאים כמה שמות ודברים מצוינים על החיים בעיירות, אבל הנוער אינו קורא בספר זה, גם אנחנו לא קוראים הרבה פעמים.

הספורים יכולים לאמץ אותנו, ויכולים להיות לדוגמה למידות טובות. החיים קשים היום מפני האינפלציה, הפוליטיקה, ואנחנו צריכים להעלות את רוחנו. אם אנחנו משווים את חיי הורינו בגלות עם החיים שלנו, מכירים שהם היו גבורים בכל מובן. לנו חוסר ההתלהבות, והבטחון שנתנו להם כוח לסבול וגם להתענג מן החיים. הם היו הנרות שהאירו את הדרך לחיינו. כבוד לזכרם לעולם ועד.

ועכשיו אני מברכת את כולכם, בגמר חתימה טובה, בריאות וישועות ושלוש על ישראל, אמן

ספטמבר 15, 1987

אזכרה

זה מוקדם בבוקר, ואני רוצה לכתוב על החוויה הנרגשת שעברה עלינו אתמול. כל שנה בין ראש השנה ויום כיפור, ארגון ליבא"י מארגן יום אזכרה לקדושי ערינו, שנרצחו בתקופת השואה.

ליבא"י, זה ראשי תיבות של ארבע ערים בפולין: ליסקו, בליגרוד, ואיסטערק, ולוטוביסק. האזכרה מתקיימת לפני האנדרטה (מצבה) שהארגון הציב לפני כמה שנים בבית הקברות בנחלת יצחק. אתמול באו מכל המקומות אנשי הקהילות האלו, שחיים בארץ, לאזכרה זו. זה הזמן שכולם זוכרים את המשפחות שלהם שנספו, בוכים ומתפללים. הרב והחזן מבצעים את "אל מלא רחמים" והקדיש ביחד עם כל הנאספים באווירה רצינית מאוד.

בתוך המצבה יש "ארכיב" ושם עומדת מגילה של כל השמות של הקדושים, שנספו על ידי הנאצים במשך השואה.

זאת גם ההזדמנות שרואים זה את זה במקום אחד, כל אחד מנדב כמה שקלים שבהם יכולים לשלם בעד השרותים, כמו הזמנות, פרסומים בעתון וברדיו ושמש. הרב מרצה, גם אחד מהמנהלים מדבר ברוח רצינית מאוד. כולם שומעים בשקט וברצינות ובסוף מברכים זה את זה שנה טובה, וכל אחד הולך הביתה בתקווה להתראות בשנה הבאה בשלום.

ספטמבר 30, 1978

אזכרה על אהובינו מליסקא וסביבתה

שלום חברים וחברות היקרים.

שנה טובה לכולכם וגמר חתימה טובה. השנה עברה מהר, ואני שמחה מאוד להיות אתכם ביחד ולאחל ברכת שנה טובה לכולכם. אני אשתדל לדבר בעברית אפילו שלא התקדמתי במשך השנה. היינו כמה פעמים בחוץ לארץ ולא היתה לי הזדמנות לדבר עברית. אבל ראינו את ילדינו ומשפחותיהם והיה לנו הרבה נחת ב"ה. הנכדים הולכים לישיבות והנכדות לבית יעקב בארצות הברית. גם הנכדים בישראל לומדים בישיבות וכולם שומרי תורה ומצוות. יהודי אמריקה מתעניינים בכל הפרטים של החיים בישראל, ושמחים בהתקדמותה ובהתפתחותה בכל השטחים. אפילו יש סכסוך בין עמדת בגין לבין עמדת קארטר, יהודי ארה"ב עומדים בצד של בגין, ומצפים לשלום ולסוף של מלחמות.

האסיפה היום כמו בכל שנה בין ראש השנה ויום כפור נותנת לנו הזדמנות להיות ביחד, ולזכור את בני משפחתנו וידידינו שנספו באופן אכזרי שאין דוגמה לו בכל תולדות העמים. חשוב מאוד שנזכור את יקירינו. איך יכולים לזכור את יקירינו, את קדושינו, להעמיד אנדרטה בשבילם, שמתו לפני זמנם? לזה אני נותנת דוגמה, שאפילו שהיום הורים נותנים לילדיהם שמות מודרניים, בישראל שמות מן תנ"ך, בארה"ב שמות אמריקניים, אנחנו הצלחנו עם הנכדים שלנו, לכל אחד ואחד יש שם ממשפחתנו. ככה יש לנו:

בישראל	באמריקה
אהרון צבי	מנחם זאב
אביבה סימה	מלכה הענה
ברוך	אסתר
בראנדה (לע)	יהודית
חיה קלה (חיקי)	חוה פסי
דוד שלמה	מנחם זאב
בן ציון	שלמו דוד
	נפתלי יעקב
	שמעון אהרון
	רחל סימה
	רבקה

ליום נישואין שלנו: סבא וסבתא

מי אומר רק עושר עוזר בחיים?
האם לאכול רק לחם ולשתות מים
לא די אם בבית שולט שלום
אז החיים יפים יותר מהחלום.

כצעירים למדו ביראת ה'
התנאים בחיים קשים גם להם
כל אחד נשא עול לפרנסה
וכך גדלו לבוגרים בהצלחה

עד החופה גרו עם ההורים
ועם נישואיהם בנו את ביתם
כשהילדים באו במזל, נתקבלו באהבה
אז האושר וגם האחריות היתה גדולה.

כמו הוריהם, גם קיבלו דת ואמונה
וגדלו לאנשים ויהודים לדוגמה טובה
בלימוד תורה וגם לפרנסה
נתנו כולם נחת רוח לסבא ולסבתא.

על שפת־הים

זה יום חופש על שפת־הים
 ויושבים שנינו, זקנים בעם
 מביטים בגלים בשחיית הילדים
 ומתעניינים במשחקים של גדולים וקטנים

האזיר צח, השמש מחממת בהרחבה
 ורוח מהים מחזק את הכח והרגשה
 מתעוררים מחשבות וגעגועים
 לילדים, לנכדים, ולנינים היקרים.

בעזרת האל המשפחה מבורכת
 בבנים ובנות שהולכים בדרך הטובה
 גם ילדיהם יפים, מתוקים מלאי אהבה
 לומדים בתורה ומשרתים בצבא

חלק מהם חיים קרוב למשפחה
 כמה שוהים בשכונה לא רחוקה
 יש גם שיושבים מעבר לים
 אבל כולם נאמנים כבני העם.

בעזרת ה' היו ויהיו שמחות רבות
 לזה מקווים סבא וסבתא שבקרוב
 מתוך נחת, לנסוע עוד פעם בלי פחד
 להשתתף "כאורחי כבוד" עם כולם ביחד.

מאי 1978

לכבוד יום העצמאות השלושים של מדינת ישראל

מדינתנו הקדושה והאהובה
מדינתנו הצעירה והישנה
עליך, בארצות הגולה חלם
אלפיים שנה כל העם.

נולדת מתוך אש וקורבנות
בעזרת ה' ואו"ם והבטחות
מיד פתחת את דלתותיך ליהודים
שהיו זמן רב שארית הפליטים

עבדת קשה, השתדלת להתפתח
והצלחת בכל ההתחייבות
המדינה הנחמדה נבנתה
על יושר חסד ועל חוקי התורה.

לפעמים קשים היו התנאים
בזמן מלחמות עם הערבים
אבל בעתיד מקווים לחיים טובים
בשירה ושמחה, בשלום וברכה
אמן.

1973

מלחמת יום הכיפורים

בְּזֶמֶן שְׂכוּלָם צְמוּ וְהִתְפַּלְלוּ בְּכוֹנָה
פָּרְצָה פְּתָאוּם מִלַּחְמָה נוֹרָאָה
בְּדָרוֹם הַמִּצְרִים וּבְצִפּוֹן הַסּוּרִים
הִתְנַפְּלוּ עַל חֵילֵינוּ כְּמוֹ מַחְבְּלִים.

כָּל הָעַם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל כְּמוֹ אִישׁ אֶחָד
הָיָה מוֹכֵן לִלְחוּם כְּאַרְיֵה בְּלִי פֶחַד
אַחֲרֵי הַיּוֹמִים הָרִאשׁוֹנִים הַנוֹרָאִים
הַשְּׁמִידוֹ בְּאוֹמֶץ אֶת הַשּׁוֹנָאִים.

כְּאֶשֶׁר הִנָּצַחֹן הָיָה כְּמַעַט בְּיָדִים
הָאוֹיֵב דָּרַשׁ הַפְּסָקָת אֵשׁ פְּתָאוּם
בְּאֵין בְּרִירָה הַפְּסִיקוּ הַמִּלַּחְמָה בְּלִי שְׁלוֹם...
מְקוּוִים שֶׁבַעֲזֶרֶת ה' הִנָּצַחֹן יְהִיָּה אֲמַת וְלֹא חִלּוּם.

אַחִינוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּכָל אֲרָצוֹת הָעוֹלָם
הֵם "שׁוֹמְרֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל" כְּכֹל שְׁבִיכוֹלָתָם
בְּגוֹפָם וּבְנַפְשָׁם עִם יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּאֶרֶץ וּבְגוֹלָה
עוֹמְדִים יָחַד עַל הַגִּנָּת אֲרָצֵנוּ הַקְדוּשָׁה.

הקדמה

כאשה מבוגרת, ותלמידה באולפנים שונים ללימוד השפה העברית, אני חייבת להביע תודה נפשית לכל המערכת ובפרט לכל המורים והמורות הטובים והנכבדים.

נהייתי מהלימוד של השפה העברית באמריקה ובישראל כסבתא, בכמה קורסים באולפן בתל-אביב ובאחרונה גם בירושלים. הדברים הנמצאים במדור זה הם התוצאה של הלימוד באולפנים האלו. אני מקווה שבמשך הזמן אמשיך לכתוב.

This is a world in upheaval. A world where the burning of shuls and *mikvas* in Germany led to the destruction of entire Jewish communities. A world in which traditional values such as marriage are looked down on. And it is only the Torah, with the family at its center, which teaches the high value of human life and preserves the Jewish people.

This is my chance to recall the hardships along with the beauty of a Jewish family fulfilling its obligations according to the Torah. In the family, it is the mother who watches over *kashrut* and teaches the children. This is what I learned in my childhood, and this is what I have passed on to my children.

My reward for fulfilling this role? Seeing our two and a half year old great-grandchild asking the mother when receiving a drink of juice, "*Ima*, what *bracha* do I make over this?"
