

## Conversation about life in Kamenka, 1920s-1940s

Written by Elisha Roith, Israel

On August 3, 2002, Ofra Zilbershats invited the surviving children of Tsipa Shlafer and Mordekhai Perlman. Rokhele and Manya were already deceased, at that time. Judith participated in the conversation, at the age of 94, Borya was 92 years old, and Sarah was 85.

Additional participants were their daughters Dalia, Ofra, and Amira, their spouses, and Elisha, the 'senior grandchild,' Rokhele's son.

Elisha began the meeting, attempting to delineate the parameters of the dialogue, and the sequence of events. He concluded his remarks in stating that "in Kaminka, there were some pogroms, a bit of revolution..."

Borya: Some?! I remember a lot!... they called it a street there 'Yendrot' - the other street, that is how they called it.

Judith: That was also the main street.

Borya: And I should quite like to go there, and wish I could merit reciting qaddish over the grave of Grandmother and Grandfather. My grandmother was killed in front of me, I saw her, and how they murdered her - and the reason that I saw her... it was a pogrom.

Elisha: Whose? By Petlura?

Borya: No, no. By Denikin. We ran off, we had some Christian neighbors who were not bad; we escaped to their house, and they hid us. Grandmother was with us, and at noon, she suddenly said, "I need to see what is going on there." She wanted to see if the house was still in order, if it yet stood. I said... I was still a child... We said, "No. It is wise that you stay." It did not help; she went,

and did not return. I was like a Christian, a Gentile face, 'a sheygets.' I suffered in high school, the Hebrew Gymnasia in Kishinev; I suffered due to it – in that they called me 'shtshrushka.' I did not have a Jewish face, and had no end of trouble for that reason; that very thing did help me afterward.

They gave me a hat, a 'kutshma,' made of fur, featuring a cross, and I went to see grandmother, and walking up to her house, I saw two Denikiniki bastards standing there. One said to the other in Russian, "with the rifle butt." Then an order was given, for there were no bullets to be had...and I saw with my own eyes how - with the butt of the rifle, they murdered my grandmother. And to this day, I remember it.

Dalia: How old were you?

Borya: I was, I think, a boy of seven or eight years of age, not more. At the most, an eight-year-old, but I remember it as if today. To this day, I recall it. Of course, I needed to leave and to inform about this, but I do not recall what I told. I just remember one thing -- that when they asked me what was with Grandmother, I said, "she feels bad"... I did not know to say, that I had seen how they had murdered her... I recall... In general, I recall myself from age 3. They sent me...then there was no kindergarten yet. They sent me to Pinia der Royter (Red Pinia.) We sat there, it was a sort of kindergarten, and we would play. Everyone would take a bit of sand in their mouth, and drink. That was how I received my education, which I received from the Red One. They say that I was "a shuntek," a considerable rascal. He gazes at old postcards from Kaminka.) Kaminka, in general, was a famous town, in the manner of a summer resort place. Grapes and komaz, a sort of a mare's milk, for which people would come to Kaminka. Kaminka is quite a beautiful city. It is in a valley, and around it, there are special vineyards, unique grapes, and there were Tatars, who serve up the komaz. There were colonnades... Judith, do you remember the two public gardens?

Judith: Of course, I remember.

Borya: I refer to the old public garden above, which we would frequent, in which there were these columns then, which we called colonnades. (He reads what is written aback the postcards, in Russian.)

Judith: We both escaped together. In this Kaminka, when they opened the Gymnasia, we all went to study. It was called a municipal Gymnasia, although it was not a city, (but rather,) a government Gymnasia of sorts. There were Jews and Christians there, boys and girls, all together. There were a few Gentiles, several shkotsim, and we Jewish girls. The Gymnasia stood before the kindergarten. In the kindergarten, we spent time at recesses, and also, at times, we slipped out of lessons, although we were small. At a great distance, there was a flowerbed, which was called 'Landish,' although other things were there, as well - the beauty of this village, which was in a valley, encircled by mountains, vineyards, and the Dniester River. And we would bathe there. The Dniester River demarcated the territory between the Ukraine and Bessarabia. We left Kaminka via the Dniester. During winter, on the ice, on foot; this was the period of the revolution. A large portion perished en route; they fell down to the ice, or the police simply killed them. Whoever went there was in mortal peril. It was not certain that we would arrive. Borya and I, with another group of people, managed to cross the Dniester, and arrived in Bessarabia.

Borya: Why don't you tell about that man who was with us?

Judith: I know - Davidson.

Borya: He said (in Yiddish,) we were in great danger, but we crossed, and he then said, "We are taking a crap on the Bolsheviki." That was the first thing that he had said, that Jew. It was in the village adjacent to Kaminka, on the other side, in Bessarabia, when he had just crossed, and as we tread upon the territory of Bessarabia, that he then said, "we are taking a crap on the Bolsheviki." I was nine years old.

Ofra: And you escaped on your own? Whither were you headed?

Judith: We escaped Kaminka, we had family in Bessarabia, father's family - Grandmother and Grandfather Perlman, and all our family, slowly but surely... there was the danger that the entire family would come, and this would be evident to the authorities. We needed to leave in such fashion that they

would not sense it. Rokhele was the first; in general, she was the pioneer. In any case, she left before everybody else.

Ofra: She left first before you, and she left to Bessarabia also?

Judith: She came to Grandmother in Kishinev, and lived with her. She came to the family, there were children of her age there, and she spent a great lot of time with those girls, the relatives.

Alicia: She told me that she had prepared the groundwork for your coming, and that you came, before Mordekhai and Tsipa arrived, and that she took care of you then.

Judith: Of course.

Borya: Rokhele, she was my mother, at the time that we were without parents. Rokhele was in Kaminka, studied in Kishinev, and did not stay in Kishinev; she yet returned to Kaminka twice.

Alicia: She stole across the border?

Borya: No, no, this was at the time... that the country was then occupied by the Austrians and the Hungarians; there was not yet a border between Bessarabia and the Ukraine. There were no Romanians, there were Austrians and Hungarians, and I recall them back in Kaminka. I recall those Hungarians, that were there. There were Austrians also.

Pira: (Borya's wife) They would shout (in German) to clean the streets!

Ofra: But you wanted to tell about Rokhele, who was like a mother.

Borya: Afterward, when Judith and I arrived in Kishinev, without parents, the parents were yet in the Ukraine, and I was but 10 years old, and needed to register for school. Rokhele was indeed my mother at that point. She is the one who registered me for the Magen David Gymnasia, and she's the one who looked out for me. The director of the Gymnasia, Libornikov, of blessed memory, knew that I had a mother, whose name was Rokhele. She was the mother.

Ofra: And she was all of 15 years of age.

Borya: She got me into the Gymnasia "Magen David" in Kishinev; I began there and I finished there...

Ofra: And who remained in Kaminka?

Borya: The parents remained in Kaminka; Manya, Sarah, and the diamonds. He (his father) knew that the money...he was Kranski then...those little Kranskelekh, the tykes, are not worth a penny. He then said, "I need something better." He had brilliants then. Thanks to those diamonds, we were all rescued. He handed over the house to the smugglers. As I was an only child...They did no less than taking a steel bar and inserting into the chimney, intending to harm me, in their anger at me, so I recall to this day (his words are unclear, and it appears that he is confusing several incidents.)

Judith: Who was angry with you?

Borya: You and Rokhele.

Judith: Not !! (Loud laughter)

Borya: And I, once they were in the carriage, and our house was there. We had a quite lovely home, big, wide, there was a balcony, there were several flights of stairs, to climb up to the balcony, where a carriage stood, a baby carriage, and Judith, Mother, and I sat and watched them. I wanted to play with them, and let them down from our balcony, and they were miraculously not killed.

Sarah: You tossed me off some porch, Mother used to tell, that you hurled me off some veranda.

Ofra: Indeed, he is telling about that, when you were a baby.

Sarah: Why did we begin selling our things – for they wanted to send Father to Siberia, as he was bourgeoisie, and he ran off. Father ran away, and Mother, Manya, and I followed afterward.

Ofra: And how did you escape?

Sarah: We stole across the border, as well.

Ofra: How? I was in a wagon full of hay...

Sarah: And they shoved a pitchfork into it, to check that no one was hiding there, and we were fortunate that none of us was poked. In addition, I was a tiny child lying there among the corn with a 40-degree fever, and there was nothing to eat or drink; they thought that I was not going to make it. A certain gentile there brought along some milk and mamaliga (corn mush,) which saved me. I remember Mother telling me this...We crossed the border, and they shot after us. Mother took this famous samovar and filled it up...and here it is to this day...with all manner of precious objects, which she placed inside the samovar, and she said that she would hold it in her hands. They shot after us, the samovar crossed the border with us, and that is what Mother told me.

Judith: This samovar, it is the sole asset that remains from Kaminka, and I know not how it survived. I only know that Mother brought it from Kaminka to Kishinev, just this samovar, and it was produced in...In Russia, there is a certain city that they call Tula and it is the place in which they manufacture good samovars.

Elisha: That is why they say that "one does not go to Tula with a samovar."

Judith: Correct.

Elisha: And where are the candlesticks? Grandmother said that she brought candlesticks from Kaminka.

Sarah: I have the two candlesticks, the samovar and both candlesticks.

Borya: There was one village...where is Shifra from?

Pira: I do not know.

Borya: The village is not important, the Jews did not want to host us in their home, as they were frightened...

Pira: They threatened them.

Borya: So we were afield, among the corn, and among the people who were there, we met Nusya, and Nathan Peled. (Nathan Peled was later Manya's husband, and served as a government minister in Israel.) and his brother Lonya. To this day, I recall that Lonya said in Russian, "Mother, this is difficult for me, and I am having a hard time." We did not cross with them (the frontier,) although they were refugees, as well.

Judith: We did cross with them. 150 people were there, and the Fridl (Peled) family was among them. They were in Kaminka as refugees.

Ofra: Then, at one point, you steal across the border from Kaminka and arrive in Bessarabia, the entire family, correct?

Elisha: In stages.

Sarah: We arrived with the last transport, and the one that led us, they killed him. The minute that he returned, they killed him. He never merited receiving our house and the money, which was inside the stones... they killed him. Mother told me this.

Elisha: One moment, money remained inside the house...?

Sarah: Yes, inside the rooms, Mother hid money in the walls... there is now a large sanatorium in Kaminka and convalescent house; people really travel there to eat grapes, someone told me that. One individual related to me how he would travel to Kaminka; it is quite an important resort place in Russia.

Ofra: Let's proceed; the family was then united...

Borya: This took a long time, some five years.

Judith: Good, so we arrived in Kishinev, Rokhele was indeed with the family; she was a counselor-nurse, and she studied in the Jewish Gymnasia. She fixed Borya up in "Magen David," and I was in the Jewish Gymnasia. Jews were there. We studied in Russian, and Romanians were there already, but in our time, we studied in Russian. I completed Gymnasia in the Russian language, including Russian literature; we had an excellent teacher. And Rokhele was the one that helped us. She indeed managed more easily; she had friends in the family, and she would leave grandmother alone, whenever she was able. Borya and I, we were really more with grandmother, and this grandmother, she was known for her wisdom and craftiness. I arrived in Kishinev, a year before the parents did, and we had barely seen and heard about them. We knew not if they were alive – that is the point! I was a girl of circa 12-13, without any parents, and I knew not whether I would ever see any of them again. It was ghastly.

Rokhele had it easier, for she had a social life, and she had already become accustomed to the situation. And during that year, we had...a couple on one occasion, in this manner as well, and they transmitted greetings. They then summoned us, the 'orphans,' in order to pass on regards. We sat there with this couple, and they began to speak, and I started crying, and I sat there weeping incessantly, barely hearing what they were saying. The same instance recurred with me on the night of the Passover Seder. We were invited for the Passover Seder to one of the uncles. Uncle Pinia and Aunt Luba were staying Grandmother and grandfather – they were the close family. He was Grandfather's brother. They had come from Petersburg, were quite intellectual, and he was a great deal of aid, to his parents. They were not so observant insofar as concerned religion. So, the family of Pinia and Luba and the children came to grandfather for the Seder, and Borya and I were invited to one of the uncles, and Moshe Perlman was there, as also Khaykale and Poly...

Borya: Judith, you err on but one count. We were not (there) one year; we were there over two years, without parents, I believe, close to three years.

Judith: No, you are mistaken. There was a large and beautiful family, and they all knew how to sing. In our house, they did not sing at the Seder, although at that Uncle Velvl's Seder, everyone sat and sang. I lowered my head onto the



table, and sat and cried as they said in Yiddish "Let her be, Let her be – let her cry."

A lively conversation followed among the siblings, which could not have been recorded with accuracy, (in which) Judith recounts of Uncle Avraham, her mother's brother:

Judith: He then took care of both of those boys, as a devoted father, in addition to that that he was also (?) So, he knew who both to work and to help. In our house, he was considered a refugee, so he wanted once, somehow to make things easier for Mother...They would bring water from the well, it was a Gentile, who would bring water from the well. So Uncle Avrum, when he came, he then advised mother, "give up on that Gentile, and I shall bring." He would take the yoke with two buckets, and there (was quite) some distance... We had two wells; one was near the house, non-potable, although for drinking water, one needed to walk far. This Avrum would bring thence in order to save; he wished to compensate the parents. They were a large family, and they all got along in our house. We had a lovely apartment, for a family, but not for several families, although we managed...

Sarah: There were two floors; Grandfather lived above.

Judith: That Uncle Avrum eventually arrived from America with children and a brother of Mother's remained there, and he lived in the same town in Shepikle (?)

Borya: The children, who grew up with Uncle Avrum, who was gabbai, they were killed in pogroms in the city of Tutshin. That is a famous city, and their parents were killed by the Petlurist Ukrainians. (There is a contradiction between the two stories, if they were killed according to Borya's story, then they did not reach America, according to Judith's story.)

Alicia: From one of the girls in the family (Marilyn, that is you) in the United States, I received many details about the family. She sent me a whole book, and she says thus (reading): in 1825, Israel Shlafer was born in Kaminka, and Israel fathered Avraham, Moshe, Shmuel, and Ita.

Borya: Ita was Mother's sister.

Elisha: And Sarah and Dina. Samuel, who was the father of your mother, fathered Avraham, Haim, Ita, Yaaqov, and Tsipa.

Another such lively conversation ensues, unable to be recorded.

Judith: When we arrived in the country, with a small group of friends, who intended to found a kibbutz of Shomer Tsair, we were the initial contingent here. Only five people, and each one had some kind of family. I arrived at Rokhele's, and entered the house to find Rokhele and Leizer with a three-year-old boy who knew not how to speak Yiddish. So this boy - that was Elisha. I remained there for a whole month. This was the first apartment; we knew about this apartment. Rokhele informed that she was already living in an apartment equipped with a kitchen, bathroom, and three rooms. And she had a room, of course, and there were other housemates. (A tenant was in each room.)

Borya: Judith, tell us exactly -- had she a closet? That is what is important!

Sarah: Why did you not start with Rokhele, where she was in the country, about her kibbutz...

Judith: I am recounting of myself. After one month, our comrades arrived, and our station was in Hadera. They planted us in the moshava and gave us work.

Judith tells of her husband Yaaqov, whom she had come to know yet in Kishinev.

Judith: Yaaqov was in Maccabi; he was in the drama club, he was an artist, and he played a role... There was a director there... There was an orchestra, of course, and exercises first of all, then a drama club and Department of Hebrew studies. He was quite a handsome youth, as you all know.

Dalia: (Judith's daughter) And you were a lovely girl, as well.

Judith: I don't know...

Dalia: There are photographs.

Ofra: All the children in the Perlman family were attractive.

Judith: He participated in Moliere's play **Les Fourberies de Scapin (The Impostures of Scapin,)** and when he already had his make up on and had prepared to go out on stage, he then requested that they call me, for to see him before he went on stage. He had immigrated to Israel before me, because he had reached the age of the conscription, and wanted to escape. They were compelled to enlist, those boys. We then had an aunt here who sent him a request immediately, and he came to Jerusalem. From Jerusalem, he enlisted in the Jewish Brigade, and went north to Kfar Giladi. We continued corresponding, and I came to Hadera with my comrades, where I was quite contented with them.

My father then began to think about an arrangement, about how we were to get set up, until they decided what he would do, eventually selecting En Ganim. He came across an arrangement, and had a bit of money to start up something. There was a certain house, an old flat where there was a bit of a shop, so he opened a grocery store there...

Borya requests to tell the story of Aqiva (Qolya) Baron. Baron was also from Kishinev, he was in love with Judith. He was a member in the Revisionist Party, and despite the schism between the Revisionists and the rest of the people in the Yishuv, he maintained good ties with Judith. In June of 1933, Judith gave birth to Dalia. Upon returning home after a week in the hospital (they lived on Shalom Aleichem Street, at the corner of haYarqon, close to the seashore,) Qolya came to visit her. He spent several hours there, playing with Elisha, and took his leave from them. The next night, one of the Yishuv leaders, Haim Arlozorov, was murdered on the beach, quite near Judith's house. The Yishuv people accused the Revisionists of this murder. In the evening, detectives of the English police showed up in Judith and Jacobs house, questioning them at length about Qolya Baron's visit. When they left the house, they informed them that Qolya is a suspect, but he demanded vigorously of them not to bother Judith with a visit to the police station, as she was recovering after birth. To this day, it is not known who murdered Arlozorov.

Borya: I remained in Bessarabia to organize cells of Shomer Tsair - throughout Bessarabia.

Judith: On the matter of Manya, when Mother and Sarah,... they were on one passport; Sarah was a girl, and Borya was also there; he arrived with 'heHaluts.' Manya was then a scrawny, thin 16-year-old girl. She had remained in Kishinev with acquaintances. Mother had left open the possibility that she reside with one of the friends, and she worked in a certain factory. This was already after the Gymnasia; she was forced to remain there until a request could be sent her from Israel. She did not go to 'heHaluts,' and without 'heHaluts,' it was in possible to obtain a request, a certificate. When Mother and Sarah arrived here, just when mother arrived, they sent her a certificate, and in such form, they sent Manya a request. It seems to me that she stayed behind for two years. I do not know. I was in Kfar Giladi when Manya arrived in the country. Evidently, she arrived in 1931.

During a fairly excited conversation, it becomes clear that Mordekhai Perlman came to Israel to examine the possibilities of acclimatizing and livelihood. He reached the conclusion that there is no chance of good livelihood in Israel, announced to Tsipa that he was returning to Kishinev, and that they would emigrate to America. Tsipa wrote him a stiff letter in which she established that she would live only in a place in which her children resided, and that Mordekhai could forget about America. He relinquished, remained in Israel, began working things out, and Tsipa arrived after him, with Sarah.

Elisha: Let's put this in order: Rokhele arrived first, afterwards, Judith afterwards, Grandfather, then Grandmother and Sarah, and eventually Manya and Borya.

He was a laborer for Grandfather in Kishinev, and opened a store on Hen Blvd, which was at that time outside of Tel Aviv, beyond the sand dunes. He arrived there, and then Mr. Busqal (?) showed up, saying, "whom do I see, the great Mordekhai Perlman?" And then, Grandfather told him, "he is no longer".

Sarah: No, that was on NaHalat Binyamin, where father's acquaintances were. They opened the largest store in Nahalat Binyamin. He would come to visit them

there, and enter, and the acquaintance would say, "Mr. Perlman!" to him, and he would respond, "No - he died a long time ago; this is someone else."

Borya: You should add that he had taken money, Mr. Perlman. At that time, it was not Stalin, but yet Lenin. Father was a contrabandist, a smuggler, from Bessarabia to Kaminka. He had also previously worked, was a big merchant, but do you know what smuggling is? Bringing a meter of cloth from Bessarabia to Kaminka? They would profit a terrific amount for this, and he endangered his life. People died of hunger, while we lived a life of luxury. They would come from the Gymnasia and would tell me, "your father is rich, you are rich," and it was true. We knew not whence....

Pira: And where was this?

Borya: In Kaminka. In the actual period of the Revolution, during the days of the smuggling, at which time being a contrabandist was tantamount to death.

Sarah: Father made a great lot of money, and upon arriving here, went bankrupt.

Borya: Father, along with those contrabandists with whom he was in cahoots, escaped to Romania, and they knew that he had a lot of money. They spoke Moldavian among themselves, and Father knew Moldavian, as it was spoken in the villages in which he had plied his trade. He heard that they wanted to murder him and to take his money. He set up a big hue-and-cry, and said that if you touch me, I will run to the village and I...He was saved because of this, that he knew Moldavian, and in that he had heard that they wanted to kill him. Perhaps, Judith, you don't know this anecdote, but father told it to me.

Elisha: What is the story with the agricultural equipment in Beer Tuvya?

Sarah: No, that was with fuel. Do you not recall that Eliezer arranged for him to set up a company with Shapshunik?

Elisha: That was at a later stage. In an animated exchange of impressions among the participants, the thread of the story was lost.

Judith: (Concerning Eliezer, Rokhele's husband, the father of Elisha) He was in Kishinev -- a deserter. He was in our area, he met us every so often, would speak before us when we would meet, and when they heard that anyone was drawing nigh, he would then dash off immediately. They told me a story about Leizer; we would stroll about the city of Kishinev in groups of individuals, (and) in a certain place (the name is not clear) they were in 'heHaluts'; when he came to town, he would live with us. We were walking, several comrades, and a police officer approached us and began asking, "who are you? Show me your I.D. papers." When he reach Leizer and requested the document, Leizer inserted his hand into his pocket, then removing it to serve up a slap to the policeman, running off and disappearing over the horizon. In Kishinev, he was a deserter, and he had not yet received his certificate. And boy, did he ever succeed...there were such as those. Indeed, Yaaqov managed to depart from the country before he was drafted, and he did not succeed. I do not know what the reasons were. He was circulating as a deserter.

Ofra: You all already knew Hebrew when you came to Israel, right?

Judith: Yes.

Borya: There was one poet whose name was Jonathan Tverski, and he was our teacher in Kaminka. We had already learned Hebrew in Kaminka; in Shomer Tsair, in general, they spoke Hebrew only.

Judith: Mother had a fairly difficult time with all the children, so without anybody assigning anything to me, I took it upon myself to help Mother. I assumed the burden of helping Manya, and this occasioned our deep bonding throughout all our lives - to this day. Manya exists for me just as the others in my house, for we were always very close, such that I recall Manya and am tied to Manya since she was born, without even imagining a moment without Manya. I now dream frequently about all the family, but it has yet to happen that I dream of our house in Tel Aviv without Manya and Nusya also being there. They were a part of the family.

When I was about to emigrate to the country, I recall that we reached a train station as a whole family, and when the train jolted away, I recall Manya chasing after the train in tears. This picture is ever in my memory.

From this point on, the conversation is intertwined with memories that are related to the children's initial period here in the country. I jotted down only those parts that concerned the parents Tsipa and Mordekhai, and less of the children's personal recollections.

Borya: Manya arrived at Jaffa port.

Pira: You received Manya.

Borya: Yes.

Judith: True, the entire family was already here, and I was in Kfar Giladi. They told me, that when Manya arrived, and even subsequently, she was very weak, particularly after having remained two years without the family, independent, and working in the factory. They told me that when she arrived, alighting from the boat, and the entire family stood awaiting her, what she said was, in Yiddish, "whom do I not see?" She could not believe her eyes, that precisely I was absent. I was in Kfar Giladi.

Dalia: I belonged to Kibbutz Magdiel, but being that my parents lived in En Ganim, they then knew in the kibbutz that I was going to help them. However, they also knew that I had a new pair of shoes, so on one fine day, the economist Luba arrived, saying, "I know that in another couple or three months, you will need to go to your parents, so give us the shoes at least." (Everybody laughs.)

Dalia: You can go barefoot.

Borya: No, but I gave them the new pair of shoes, and I told her, "take them, and let the khevre use them."

Judith: When everybody was already in the country, we are all settled down in En Ganim, an apartment was there, a room with a large table, which Father first

of all made sure that we should have...When he rented an apartment, he took me to Tel Aviv, to purchase furniture, and he drove to south Tel Aviv. He so ran that I was barely able to keep up with him - I could not run that fast. He brought the big bed, and I remember that he searched for a table, above all a large table. He indeed acquired a large table, which stood all the time. At Passover, finally, everyone came; the entire family, and little children, they always came. Indeed, there was a period in which the Peled family was absent. (Nathan was in various positions, first in the United Nations in New York, and afterward, he was Israel ambassador in Bulgaria, and subsequently Austria.) They were abroad. But they were full partners; Manya lived the family life in its entirety. She even suggested at one Seder, when they were in Vienna, that we record the Seder night on tape. They positioned the tape on the floor, connected the electricity, we sat at our Seder, and as we spoke and chatted, Mother said in Yiddish, "children, is the record speaking?" Manya afterwards said that this was the most beautiful part.

Judith: Father was full of humor; one of our neighbors once said, "how did I know that your father was at your house? I heard that roaring laughter!" Wisdom and witticisms. He was also quite capable of losing his temper; that is another story. I sat with mother on the porch, in En Ganim, where I would come, and as we were chatting on and on, he would suddenly fly outside, saying, (in Yiddish,) "what is happening with dinner? Have you entirely forgotten that I exist?" Despite it all, he knew quite well how to cook, and he would prepare eggplant for us; he was a real expert at eggplant.

Borya: He was the right hand of the rabbi in the synagogue, I was already 12 years in Israel, and he never asked me to go with him to services. I knew to respect and honor him, and never smoked on the Sabbath in front of him. Once, the rabbi asked me, "where do your children live?" Then, he said to him, "ask where I live!" I told him once, that I was going on vacation for a fortnight from work. "What is vacation?," he asked. He just did not understand that.

Judith: He was very industrious.

Elisha: We indeed were a very secular family, and he knew this quite well. One day, Grandfather calls me and says to me, "listen, I love you. Do you love me?" I told him yes. "Will you do what I ask of you?" I say yes. "I want you to study



for bar mitzvah, and I want you to be called up to the Torah in the synagogue." I told him, "all right, I agree," and then he looks at me and says, "You know what, I release you from putting on phylacteries, and I shall buy you a watch. Why, because you will never put on phylacteries, and it is a waste of money."

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