

Dear Dr. Werner Dreier,

I received your inquiry by way of my friend, Dr. Lerner, regarding the articles I wrote on the 60th anniversary of my experience in the Shoah. The articles were written in Hebrew and translated by friends into English. They contain thoughts and memories from that terrible, unbearable time. They constitute a **supplement** to the book I wrote, which has been published in three Hebrew editions, as well as in an English translation. By the way, I am the sole distributor of those books; they are not available in bookstores, not even through Yad Vashem.

I understand from the inquiry that you sent to my friend Dr. Lerner that you are involved in deepening awareness of the Shoah and making it better known. I would be happy to cooperate with you if you think that the translation of my book into German and its distribution among readers in your country and other German-speaking countries would serve your purpose. For the meantime - I have attached the four articles to this email. The first of the articles was written on 19 March, 2005, exactly sixty years after the detestable Eichman entered Hungary in order to destroy its Jewish population, a community then numbering 800000 souls. Of them, about a half a million were exterminated in a period of two and a half months, while an additional million-or-so Jews were being murdered elsewhere. The four articles were written in the course of fifteen months, the same amount of time as the duration of my own experience of the Shoah - when I was a mere thirteen to fourteen years old...

I will be happy to maintain contact with you as needed and as circumstances permit, and in keeping with my abilities and understanding.

Wishing you success in your important work,

With great respect,

Moshe Porat

Identity number 108080, Mauthausen

**March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

**60 years since the beginning of the  
Holocaust of my family and community. (part 1)**

Dedicated to the children of Shluchot who  
were on the Poland Holocaust- tour.

**January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2004**

The year 2004 struck me suddenly as to say “Moshe - you’ve begun the 60<sup>th</sup> year since the beginning of that dramatic and most tragic period of time - a time of grief and indescribable suffering.”

The upcoming date does not relent from its hold on me. Could it be that 60 years have passed already? My head is like a blender, like a whirlpool, a processor that had just had accumulated massive amounts of information regarding the Holocaust, and in particular regarding myself personally, my family and community.

**Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1944**

*“Desolation, devastation, and destruction!  
Spirits sink, knees buckle, all loins tremble” (Nahum 2:11)*

My head is spinning with one of the important questions - an acute and practical issue - remembrance of the Holocaust.

True, I am well aware of the impressive change that has taken place in the last two decades - the awakening that has manifested itself in increased interest and activity amongst third generation youth - an awakening in virtually every group framework there is. Even among the younger students an impressive amount of attention is devoted - some to a greater some to a lesser degree - in almost every school throughout the Jewish world and in Israel in particular – in youth movements and other group organizations - to establishing strong Holocaust awareness.

The methods are many and varied:

- 1) Learning the subject as part of the regular school curriculum while studying Jewish history or world history - including World War II. In many schools it is included in the matriculation exam.
- 2) Relentless searches - which generally end successfully - for Holocaust survivors - who can visit schools and appear and speak with the students.
- 3) Organized educational visits to institutions and other establishments that are dedicated to this subject – “Yad Vashem”, The Ghetto Fighters Museum, Bet Ha’eydut in Nir Galim and others.
- 4) Extensive reading of books and viewing of films which deal with the topic.

One of the impressive high points which contribute to the deepening and expanding of awareness of the Holocaust are the trips to Poland made by 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders. It would be difficult to adequately discuss this group now.

Without a doubt the results of these activities and others like them - have had an impact on parents and other family members (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation) - which serve to further widen the circle of those for whom this issue is significant. If we try to compare the extent to which the subject is being dealt with now as opposed to 15 or 20 years ago - we can certainly say that it has successfully permeated into the consciousness of the Jewish world community more than it ever has before.

I'd like to move from the macro to the micro, from the general subject of the Holocaust to the events surrounding my own personal experience and those close to me - and who now re-experience as I do - a beginning which took place during these very days 60 years ago.

*“May it not befall you,  
all who pass along the road!  
Look about and see:  
Is there any agony like mine?” (Lamentations 1:12)*

The Hungarian people as a whole and the gentiles in my hometown Hajdunanas in particular welcomed the German invasion of Hungary with “open arms”. The Hungarians were well aware of the existence of the Holocaust, of the planned, organized, methodical annihilation of its country's Jews. In addition they recognized that the government and its leader, Hortis, opposed the extermination of “their” Jews - and so thanks to the good relationship between the two governments - the Hungarian head of state succeeded in thwarting the evil decree, for a number of reasons which I will not detail now.

As to the “willingness” of the Hungarians to accept the invasion of the German army - there are some clear and obvious reasons:

Not a few blood libels occurred even in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century in Hungary and the city of Hajdunanas was most prominent. These blood libels were well-known and publicized, digging and deep crevice in the hearts of the masses and just waiting for the incendiary German spark.

Neighbors with whom we had a very decent and amicable relationship quickly changed their skin, and watched with great elation at the unfolding process taking place because of the edicts that had been lowered upon us. Some of them accompanied the convoy of 1,300 of the city's Jews –previously neighbors and friends - with uproarious cheering as they were marched to the train station. Only a minute few expressed any sorrow about what was being done to us.

### **Sunday, March 19<sup>th</sup>, 1944 - The day of the German invasion of Hungary.**

The “arrowhead” for us was the villainous Adolf Eichmann - the seasoned “man of action” that had been appointed to complete the task of exterminating European Jewry by setting as his prey the large and illustrious community of Hungary which numbered 800,000.

During my many discussions with youth, which are generally on the topic of the Holocaust, I often throw out a rather thought provoking question: How does a holocaust begin? Usually there is a strange awkward silence because they have trouble conceiving of reason for a question of this sort. Therefore I normally broaden the question,

“They don’t take you immediately to Auschwitz! They don’t immediately open fire on you!”

And I add “What do you think are the first steps, the first acts, the first edicts that the an enemy of this sort will place on you?”

At that point all kinds of ideas are suggested, most of which are correct, but are offered in a confused and unclear way - and following their lead I try to recount for them, to tell them in my own limited vocabulary, the course of events, more or less in the order that they occurred and as related to the decrees which were made.

- 1) Closing of the Jewish educational institutions - the government Jewish school - the “Cheder” and the “Talmud Torah” since Jewish children have no need for education and do not “merit” this particular luxury.
- 2) Revoking the Jewish right to earn a livelihood - on personal terms - the closing of two of my parents stores, stores which had respectably supported my family for decades, which had allowed for a more than adequate standard of living - and an ability to act charitably and to earn the appreciation of those who benefited. Two soldiers appeared, one Hungarian and one a German Nazi soldier, surveyed and checked the contents of the two stores, closed them with a padlock, sealed the doors with a wax sealing and declared out loud as an absolute order this is no longer the property of the Frisch family but rather the Great Reich. As simple as that!! A store that had been given to the Rabbinical student Yosef Levi Frisch and his young wife by the grooms parents, Rav Tzvi Arye Frisch, as a dowry for their wedding was, with a simple wave of the hand, with a scribbled signature - the entire estate no longer existed. This in addition to the edicts and other unusual and difficult commercial limitations that had had already been put into effect.
- 3) It was forbidden for Jews to travel on the roads (not necessarily a “curfew” but simpler - less frightening, less tension producing) - not by bicycle, not by train, not by bus, not by car (if one had).
- 4) The edict of the Yellow Badge - the “Shield of David”. And according to the German rule “Ordnung Must Zayn” (according to exact order) - the star must be exactly so and so centimeters from corner to corner, must be sewn on the chest from the left side, not too high and not too low not too far to the right and not too far to the left - must be flush against the upper garment and not to try to outsmart them and apply to your shirt... (Afterwards to wear a coat to cover it and so that no one will recognize you or identify you as a Jew). Of course one must write on the center of the badge clearly in the native language “Jidu” Jew.
- 5) Many other varied edicts, the next to last of which was - before exile from country, homeland, and homestead - the concentration of all the town’s Jews into a ghetto, a central area in whose streets had lived for many generations a considerable portion of the Jewish community.

*“For these things do I weep,  
my eyes flow with tears:  
Far from me is any comforter...” (Lamentations 1:15)*

And now, dear readers, forget all that you knew about the ghettos, all that you heard, saw read and learned about the ghettos in most countries in Europe - Warsaw, Krakow, Lodz, Theresienstadt, and so on - these ghettos massive walls, tall and terrifying, that wreak unpredicated terror and fear.  
And for what!?!?

In the months of March and April 1944, Eichmann had no time for this “nonsense” because of the critical fact directly related to the diabolical plot to exterminate Hungary’s 800,000 Jews. One must remember that the status of the German army at this point was quite bad and no one doubted that the Germans were losing the war. Eichmann could not afford to miss the chance to carry out on of his great goals and aspirations - the extermination of Hungary’s 800,000 Jews. He couldn’t allow himself to not fulfill this dream. And so for Eichmann the most crucial issue at this critical period was time. Every day of delay in the extermination process - placed the entire operation in doubt. Simply put - there was no time to “play” with ghetto building. He did have to concentrate each Jewish community in order to provide for the easiest most efficient way to load the cattle cars - and off to Auschwitz!  
And so, within about a day, they had surrounded the ghetto streets with barbed wire and posted fully armed Hungarian and German soldiers at every point, all to prevent anything that might jeopardize the execution of this operation. The stay in the ghetto was short, between two and three weeks. The crowded living conditions were unbearable, and there was a terrible shortage of food (all comparable to the “classic” well-known ghettos) this was indeed a horrible and intolerable life.

And here I write before you – “So that you may tell the last generation”: On Monday the second day of Shavuot 29.5.44 we were taken from our home where I was born, and we were moved to the ghetto Hajdunanas.

The story of my family’s escape from the Ghetto

The escape from the ghetto is the one incident, among the many incidents that occurred in the short-lived ghetto, which is engraved in my memory. Perhaps because of the short time and because of the inability to live with the reality, Five adults from the Gottdiener family escaped. And so it was:  
Not far from where we lived in the home of my grandfather Frisch, may his memory be blessed, I suddenly noticed an approaching ambulance at the opening of the Gottdiener house. A disguised SS officer stands upright, salutes and takes out a “document” from his pocket to “prove” that he has authorization for this specific operation. The driver (disguised as well) goes out and from the back door of the ambulance he let’s out the paramedic and together they take out a stretcher. They enter a house and within a few seconds they leave carrying a woman in an advanced stage of pregnancy. A

“caretaker” (disguised as well) open the back door of the patient and with a wink they leave the ghetto.

Information that I received a week ago: The “pregnant” woman named Aranka, the wife of David Katz, was taken to a farmer at the end of the village. This action became known to the authorities. Hungarian soldiers from the cavalry arrived at the home of the farmer and the head of the household was brutally punished. The Katz family was sent to Budapest. Since we know that the saving of this family was decreed from above we are certain that it will happen. The family succeeded in surviving the atrocities of the war through false papers that they received from the Righteous gentile Wallenberg. Eventually they immigrated to the United States. Aranka from the Goddiener family still lives in the United States. I recently received some of this information from my uncle in Petach Tikva who had a telephone conversation with Aranka.

One other reason that caused Eichmann to hasten his pace involved the transfer of the Jews from each town to the train stations. Within a radius of considerable kilometers from our town were about 20 other settlements whose Jewish population varied in size from several thousand to fewer than a hundred. This concerned Eichmann greatly since he considered what might happen if it were necessary to distribute his forces to so many places - forces needed to remove each community and march them by foot to the train stations, and after that to load them up on cattle cars - for all intense purposes - death cars. For that reason we were quickly ordered to evacuate the ghetto. In a convoy of about 1,300 Jews of our flourishing community we marched (or better said we somehow plodded along) approximately one kilometer until we reached the train station.

This march of an entire community-men, women and children, healthy and infirm, nursing infants, heads of household –they there wives, sons and daughters, the town’s rabbis, judge, Shochet, Yeshiva students and Torah scholars abandon the ghetto and look back in fury... a march like this one had never been seen had never before witnessed by the gentiles of the city. Who knows (I believe I do!!) what was truly in their hearts upon viewing a spectacle like this...

(The continuation is forthcoming, God willing, in the coming months around the dates that marked the specific events during those dark times.)

Moshe Porat

Identification number 108080

Mauthausen Camp

Devoted to  
Shlochet

— [Hilshon's columns](#)

## **60 years since the Holocaust began for my family and my community [part 2]**

My previous article was concluded at the “scene” in which we evacuated our town’s ghetto, marching in a “peculiar” way to the train station in the town’s outskirts.

The train that brought our entire congregation (with the exception of most men over the age of 18, that have been staying in the “work group” for a year or two – more details ahead) to Debrecen, to the “brick factory” in the city’s outskirts, arrived after a couple of hours.

The “brick factory” – what is it? Why were we transported there and captured inside its walls?

Well, this “factory” is a flat land area, its width and length is one or two km, a huge area surrounded by 3 meter high brick walls. With in this huge centered area, there were around 20 congregations from the area condensed. The purpose of concentrating such a huge community of three to four thousand Jews was one: Aichman was concerned and worried to “take care” of so many huge congregations scattered separately. He was concerned of logistical obstacles and various “surprises” with different sizes of communities, starting from congregations with thousands of people and congregations with tens of families in smaller villages. In addition to that, the time also worked against him and caused concerns – Germany was on its way to a sure loss in the war and his concern was that “he will miss the train” and will not be able to complete its plot, to put his hand on his prey, the big community (around 800,000 people) and the last one in Europe, which he has not managed yet to destroy and destruct. In short, a large amount of Jews condensed in a fenced area, will make it easier and assure him that his satanic assignment is fulfilled – to complete the destruction of Hungarian Jews as fast as possible.

\* \* \* \* \*

Our transfer from the city's ghetto in our town to "Umshlag Platz" = the transportation square in Debrecen, was executed on the holy day of Shabbat, that the reading portion of the Torah was "Shelach Lecha" (Send Thou Men") (24<sup>th</sup> of Sivan [5]704 – 17.6.44)

Yes, "Send Thou Men"...

\* \* \* \* \*

Tomorrow, Sunday  
the first day of  
Tamuz, 60 years  
ago, I put on Tefillin  
on my "Bar Mitzvah"  
day, 3 day prior to  
the day we were  
loaded on the  
death wagons, on  
our way to Poland.

Here, in this huge condensed site, occurred one of the most important things in my life, what happens to every Jew – here I became "Bar Mitzvah".

Early on Wednesday morning – the first day of Tamuz [5]704 – it was still dark outside and everyone still sleeping. Did I say, "Sleeping"? Who knows how many mothers had nightmares as a result of worrying about the future!!!! All those people were behind the walls outstretched and laired on the ground. Suddenly, someone is touching me, waking me and whispering softly. "Moishele, do you know that today is your Bar Mitzvah?" I am opening my eyes and I see (even though it was still dark outside) my uncle, my brother – my mother, I see my uncle Yoel Zisman bending over me. I stutter while answering his question: yyyes. And why do I stutter? While he was asking the question, I remembered that on the previous day the young commander Ashmedai – Satan, the cruel and arrogant person announced in the camp that whoever will be occupied with any religious worship – Talit or Tefillin, praying and such – will receive 75 whipping in public. Well, I answered yes to my uncle while stuttering. And my uncle adds and questions – would you like to put on your Tefillin? I took out my Tefillin from the backpack that was lying under my head.



\* \* \* \* \*

About two months before the holocaust (March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1944) my father of blessed memory, May the Lord revenge his blood, returned home for a few days vacation, from the eastern front where he was working hard labor. As we know, tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews, men over the age of 18, were taken about two years before Aichman had arrived – in the beginning for “fatigue duties” for the Hungarian army, and very quickly they were transferred to hard labor, forced labor, wood cutting, placing land mines, digging fortifications and various obstacles – in order to try and stop the Russian Red army from preceding, to the countries under Hitler’s control. Later on, tens of thousands were murdered – tens of thousands of them - “just for nothing”.

During our father’s last visit at home, I am sure he was thinking and was concerned about the future of the family, including his son Moishela that will be Bar Mitzvah with in a couple of months. He bought me a beautiful and elegant set of Tefillin, and had the privilege (I had the privilege too) of teaching me some of the laws of putting on the Tefillin.

Let's return to uncle Yoel Zisman and his question – do I want to put on the Tefillin. I took out my Tefillin from its beautiful case that my mother may the Lord revenge her blood, embroidered. I put it under my left armpit. While my uncle pulled it from me among the sleeping crowd, I noticed that he himself had a set of Tefillin and Talit with him. After dragging our feet and finding our way, I arrived at a “pit”, we walked in and started our secrete “operation”. I took out my hand Tefillin, wrapped it 7 times around my arm – after saying the blessing according to the laws – and after putting on my head the head Tefillin, while saying the second blessing. My uncle did the same, wrapped himself with his Talit and put on his Tefillin. We started to pray... I do not remember what I prayed and how much I prayed. Until this day, when thinking about that situation – I close my eyes and “see” myself, a short young boy, praying in motion... At the end of the prayer – we removed the Tefillin, my uncle removed his Talit and we started heading towards what was left of our family. It was still dark (in regards to when it is allowed to pray at such an early hour). It seems as though, my uncle wanted to have this mission done at this hour, in order to make sure no

one will see us, not the German soldiers not the Hungarians, and possibly also from the "crowd", the less people will see what we are doing, the better...

While getting closer to the "crowd" – I noticed a prominent figure, lying on the ground among the crowd. A few more meters and I noticed it was my mom – sitting, all on her own. My mother woke up and checked if all her children were present: Is Shevach present? Yes. Is Pnina present? Yes. Is Moishеле present? Oh, the child is missing!!! No one can imagine how frightened and scared she was. Can you imagine – one of her children disappears in the darkness!!! When she saw the people coming and noticed me, she asked me in a stuttering voice, almost crying and with fear in her eyes: Moishеле, where have you been?!? When I replied that I was with uncle Yoel (her brother!) in order to put on Tefillin and pray, she cut me off because she was so scared and said: "you could have brought a disaster on yourself and on all of us! Don't you remember the announcement from yesterday"? But my "Yiddishe Mama" (Jewish mother) knew very well that her son is Bar Mitsva today (How couldn't she?!), and was even well prepared for this. Quickly, she took out some candies and chickpeas, arabes in Yiddish, from one of the backpacks, and... we celebrated the Bar Mitzvah.

But this was not the "end" of the celebrations... the following day, Thursday, I put on my Tefillin and also on Friday, the following day.

Early Shabbat morning, once again: when it is not night anymore, but not day time yet – the uncle appeared... "Moishеле, would you like to be called up to the Torah?" I wasn't sure if I am dreaming or hallucinating... He repeated and asked me if I want to be called up to the Torah. I got up quickly (of course in the same clothes in which I was sleeping with...) and him, my uncle, his hand is already holding my hand and pulling me to the same direction in which we were just 3 days ago putting on the Tefillin. After a few minutes of walking in the dark, I notice a black mass, which after a few more meters is recognized as a mass of people. When I uncle noticed "them" he mumbled in Yiddish some words that meant – there is a Bar Mitzvah boy that needs to be called up to the Torah. I instantly see that this mass is a bunch of people. They open circle. In between the Jewish people stood 2 people, one

opposite the other, and they are holding the handles of a Torah – one opposite the other – and I hear the reading of the weakly portion read while whispering. The Torah portion they were reading was Korach – “my” Torah portion – and when they concluded the chapter of which they were reading, the “reader” turned to my uncle and asked him for my name and my father’s name. He then began all of a sudden, in a trilling voice: "Ya'amod hatan Bar Hamitsva, Moishe ben Reb Josef Levi, reviai" (calling Moishe to the Torah)...

I was called up to the Torah on my Bar Mitsva day !!!

\* \* \* \* \*

On that holly day – the holly Shabbat, in which the Torah portion was Parshat Korach [5]704, in the afternoon – the camp's gates opened – at the "brick factory" near Doreen, 2 very very long trains passed through the gates, around 100 cattle wagons, death wagons, were in each one of them. Within a short while, around half of all the Jews that were condensed there, were put into the wagons. The doors were locked behind them with a lock and a latch. Between every 2 wagons, on the roof, sat an SS officer with a machine gun in his hands, a chain of bullets in the machine gun, a bullet in the barrel, an open safety catch, and a finger on the trigger...

\* \* \* \* \*

Yes, with in a short time, we were transferred into the wagons.

If you ever heard the stories of Holocaust survivors that “went” through the motions while on the death wagon, many of them will tell you that this chapter, the traveling of days and nights, in the cattle wagons – is one of the nightmares that no one can easily forget if at all...

Entering into the wagons was done in a brutal way and very wild, while hitting on heads, stabbing with spears on our back, setting on dogs that were trained especially for these purposes, and panicle screaming! Yes, that panicle screaming had a depressing affect... Those screaming were a “method” of communication between the wild animal, oppressing – Nazis,

and their prisoner victims. The screaming drove the person "crazy", suppressed him, suppressed his "ego" – and that is exactly what they were trying to do and achieve! During those moments you turned into a tool in their hands, like clay in the potter's hands...

What does Moishale, the young 13 years old boy do, after he finds himself inside, behind a latched gate? Should I leave the answer for your imagination? Well, as you probably think, he did not look for a space to sit, because there was no such thing. He does not search and yell "mommm" and he does not look for his friends... What does he do?!? --- He searches for air!!! Yes, he looks for some air to breath!!! Yes, air to breath! Not mom, not a space to sit, not friends, - nothing – air!!! I am going to suffocate!!!

There were already some who suffocated even before the gates were locked. Some even began losing their sanity... some weren't able to control their easing nature due to fear... The air makes me suffocate and it is getting worse, worse and worse. We must not forget that we are in the beginning of the summer in central Europe... the temperatures in the wagon are rising, the feeling of suffocation, the bad odor, the feel of loss that many people in the wagon have – and more.

I suddenly feel that the train is starting to move slowly, and shortly after its moving faster. There was some "advantage"; as long as the train was moving, there was some air coming in, some wind, from the only window in the wagon, a window in the length of about one meter and around 30 cm. wide – a window with a metal netting designed to prevent the possibility of jumping out and escaping the horror...

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During many discussions with different populations, and especially with young people on the "Holocaust Day", and on my journeys to Poland, when I get to the "chapter" about the cattle wagons, I "get stuck" and I have difficulties expanding and discussing about those horror and destructive journey days in these death wagons. These difficulties occurred also, when I

wrote this "story". Well, here I conclude the description of this subject.

My third article "60 years since the Holocaust began for my family and my community" is planned God willing in the coming months, once again, "close" to the time in which they occurred during those dark times. The next chapter, the third, will be devoted to, and will be about the events at the forced labor camp, a chapter that lasted around 9 and a half months...

Moshe Porat

The Sixty Year Commemoration of the  
holocaust of my family and of my  
community (third article)

Dedicated to the children of Shluhot  
who give of their time in assisting  
the senior citizens of Shluhot.

"Ernest", hurry! hurry! Get a move on!!

I am trying to straighten my back and to follow the orders of the work manager Francesco, an Italian political prisoner. We are situated in a suburb of Vienna, the capital of Austria, in a building site which was destroyed by allied bombing. It is now being rebuilt. As the one "responsible" for preparing concrete I have become an "expert" in preparing different types of concrete that I was ordered to prepare. "Soft concrete" means a certain amount of cement, sand, gravel, water etc. All this is poured into a big basin. Then it is thoroughly mixed in order to get the right texture as was demanded by the work manager. How was it mixed? Well, everything was done by hand by a stick with which I endlessly stir the mixture... my back hurts, my head is heavy... but the concrete still isn't the way it is supposed to be. "More water!!" And so I lug another pail of water and pour it into the basin, mix again and again...that's great, it's just what he ordered. I did it!!

But all this is only "preparation" for the rest of the work.- Everything in the basin is put into pails. All this is dragged to the nearby building that is being rebuilt, and brought up to one of the floors. Carrying two pails, I slowly drag my feet up the stairs from floor to floor. I carry these pails with my last bit of strength. I feel the skin coming off my hands and my back barely withstands the heavy weight Oh, I am almost on the second floor. Oh, my back!!! A few more steps and I will have reached the second floor. Suddenly I see drops of blood on the concrete. Blood is dripping from my left hand. The wounds refuse to heal. Every time they begin to heal they reopen. On the way up to the third floor, I stumble and fall. I get a bump on my forehead, I hurt my left elbow and my knees, which were hurting already from the day before. But, oh my G-d! Some of the concrete has spilled!! With great effort, I pick up all the spilled concrete that I can, and put it back in the pail, causing myself great pain and burns in my open wounds on my hand.... I don't know how I did it, but suddenly I found myself on the fourth floor, just as Francesco my boss had ordered me.

It's been several months since we arrived at this place of work (11 Hacken Gasse St. in Vienna, the capital of Austria) We got ourselves settled in the barracks on triple tier wooden planks. We slept on bits of straw. As soon as we got to the camp the work manager informed us that from the next day on we would be going to work every morning. We broke up into "work groups". Every group was given their work assignment and the name of the company they would be working for. Every morning at six o'clock we would have to be ready to move.

Every group was to be positioned at the exit of the camp and be ready to march when the work manager called the name of the group. My family (except for father) was still all together. This included my late mother and my deceased eldest brother Shevach (he was with us for a few months, but after the selection he was sent to some unknown place. We haven't heard from him since.) In addition, my other siblings were together: Pnina my older sister, Asher (who passed away two years ago) and our youngest brother Danny. We were all in the same work group called Favrowetz. In groups of three we dragged ourselves behind the work manager, until we got to the tram station. We got on the last car, meant for Jewish prisoners so they wouldn't contaminate the "Aryan" race. After a short ride, we got off and walked for another hour to our place of work.

During nine and a half months, day after day, from six in the morning until late in the evening we were forced to work at very hard labor. Hard? Oh my G-d the work was back breaking and exhausting!!! Although we were given enough hours to sleep, in the morning we were barely able to get up and drag our aching bodies to work. Our bodies had not had enough time to recuperate from the exhausting work of the previous day. Weary and hurting we dragged ourselves to another day of work.

"And the Egyptians made the children of Israel to serve with rigor"

On the first evening when we returned to the camp from work, we lined up to get our daily rations. This consisted of a thin gruel soup, the infamous soup of the work camps that was prepared from filthy rotten turnips and various kinds of weeds. A soup with no taste... but what a smell!! A repelling disgusting smell. Brrrrr!!! In addition, there was a loaf of bread for every eight people (this was ceremoniously sliced into eight pieces). Once in a while we also received some other ration... and once every few weeks we were given a piece of sausage.

[Many stories have grown around this "sausage". First of all, it quickly became known to us that this "sausage" was produced from horse carcasses, that were killed by bombings. "Black Humor" also developed in the camp. When we went to sleep, one of the guys began to neigh like a horse...]

So what!! What does it matter? The most important thing is that we get something else to eat, a bit of energy to strengthen our weary bodies.

Even on the first night when we came back from an exhausting day of work, we received our daily rations. And so it was the next day and the day after. I quickly realized that our work was really important to them and my "dull" brain realized that our daily rations were assured. Although our daily rations were assured, they were too little and meager. In spite of my "confidence" that these would come regularly, I was beginning to feel that my strength was leaving me and that the weakness that I was feeling every day was taking over my body. My mind was beginning to "plan" solutions. I felt that I had to find a way out of this situation, and to "increase" the portions of our daily food (for myself and my family). This idea became planted in my mind, and grew and grew from day to day. I felt that something had to be done.

The carrying out of this decision turned me into a "licensed shnorer".

While mixing the concrete, I felt from time to time that I had to straighten my aching back. All of a sudden my eye caught something, and an idea came to me. That's it, I had the answer. A few hundred metres away I spotted a grocery store. I saw women going in with empty baskets and leaving with full baskets. My mind was made up to sneak up to the store and get something from one of those baskets, "I deserved something" in order to survive. I got close to the store and when the first "victim" came out I asked for a bit of food, saying that I was very hungry. The reactions to a "little beggar" like me varied, from shouts curses and threats of "dirty Jew" (they were able to see the yellow star on my jacket). Others pushed me onto the pavement, threatened to call the police or the S.S. But once in a while someone would take something out of the basket and give it to me...these were raw potatoes, or a fruit that had just been bought or even a hot roll etc.

I felt that my "mission" was successful and decided to go on with it. Almost every day, I succeeded to "shnor" something, some addition to our meager daily rations. My success spread like wildfire throughout the camp. It turned out that I wasn't the only one who did this, but there wasn't a child or adult with such a successful record....

By my "bed" in the camp, there was a basket in which I kept my "loot". It piled up from day to day. I soon realized that my family was assured of having a permanent additional daily ration. This fact caused me to be looked upon by my family as the one responsible for the additional supply of food. This put a lot of responsibility on my shoulders (and I Moishle barely thirteen and a half).

During the first few weeks of our stay in the camp, I realized that the camp commander couldn't care less what we did on our own time when we came back from work in the evening, and until the next day when we had to leave for work. His demands consisted of keeping things in order and of adhering to discipline. When food was given out we had to stand in an orderly line, not to sneak back into the line to get more food but to keep everything neat and clean and not to "spread disease" (it was known that the Jews spread disease and epidemics in the world). We were allowed to bathe anytime we wanted to and felt it necessary (for this purpose we were given some soap). The "beds" had to be made everyday and to the best of my memory we cleaned the floor everyday as well.

The fact that we had some free time for ourselves (if we were able for the moment to ignore our exhaustion and our aching bodies due to our rigorous work, and appalling conditions) allowed us to think about the possibility of having evening and morning prayers. And so it was that some of us decided to get up early to pray. I remember that one of the organizers of the minyan was a man by the name of Yossi Polacsek, a relative of mine. Many of us including myself liked the idea of having a "minyan", in spite of the fact that it was done very very quickly. Some of us still had siddurim from which we were able to pray, and Chumashim (five books of Moses) from which we read the portion of the week. One incident that I especially remember was connected with Yom Kippur. One of us got up the nerve to ask the camp commander if we could get the day off on



Yom Kippur. As expected, he threw him out by the seat of his pants.

When Yom Kippur came, we got up earlier than usual and prayed some of the tefillot of Yom Kippur. To the best of my memory it was Shaharit. I still had a small machzor for Yom Kippur. On this holy day I put the machzor in my rucksack, next to my sandwiches (a sandwich on Yom Kippur!!!) which I had prepared for myself. I decided that I would do the best I could to pray some of the prayers. During the lunch break, I went behind a shed and took the machzor out of my rucksack hoping to gather up the courage to pray (if that was before eating the sandwich or after- I don't remember. I began to pray, if my memory doesn't fail me, the Musaf prayer. After a few minutes I began to panic. Suddenly my "sixth sense" told me that "something" was about to happen... So it was that after a few seconds a tall "shadow" approached me. Behind it was the German inspector, who checked up on our work every day. Here he was standing two or three meters away from me. He caught me red handed. He then asked me "Ernest (my name in those days), what are you doing"?!!

What could I say to him, standing there filthy from head to toe, bleeding from my open wounds? Spontaneously, I answered him simply and calmly-"I am praying to G-d". Our eyes met, both of us stunned by this surrealistic scene. During this time it seemed as if his eyes had softened a bit. He continued to stand opposite me for a few more seconds as if he were "fixed" in place, gave me another glance and went on his way.

Something else that was connected to our attempt to observe mitzvot was connected to Pesach. My dear pious mother, as a result of the terribly hard conditions and forced labor became thin and weak. She continued to be our mother,, my mother. Even in those terrible days she helped us, protected us as much as she could, and even beyond that. With her noble motherly behaviour, she continued to educate us as well as she could. In the days before Pesach Mother managed to put aside a small amount of flour (from where? I didn't know and I will never know). As the holiday approached, Passover the festival of freedom, she "baked" one matza for us. The kashrut of the matza aside- it was the most "educating matza" that I have ever known. I don't know and don't remember if we did anything, and if so what we did the night of the seder.

"And they baked unleavened cakes from the dough which they brought forth out of Egypt"... (Exodus XII, 39) On that night when millions of our brethren sat down to the seder, did we try to sit down and say something? I do not know.

"And it came to pass in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died, and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage. And God heard their groaning and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac and Jacob." (Exodus II 23-24).

Moshe Porat

Identity number 108080  
Mauthausen Concentration Camp

P.S. This is the third article since the nineteenth of March. In a few months I will write another article in which I will write about the end of the forced labor camp and the death march to Mauthausen.

*Dedicated to the "Bnei Akiva Strike-Force"  
of Sheluhot – they are always willing  
to lend a helping hand.*

**Sixty Years Since the Destruction of Hungarian Jewry**

[Fourth article]

**Boom!...Boom!...Boom!**

As on every other evening, after returning from our body and soul breaking labors, I climbed up to my bunk-bed for a few hour of nightly “rest” and sleep. I did not always manage to fall asleep, despite my almost unbearable weariness. A stomach murmuring from hunger gives one no rest. More then once it drove sleep from my eyes. Of course, the lack of sleep and rest left its marks each morning as we set off, exhausted, to another day’s hard labor....

Although we were “dispirited and hard-worked,” sometimes fragmentary news from the fronts reached our ears. Occasionally we would hear of the Red Army’s advance westward, and receive a few reports about the American and British advances on the other fronts. The sources of these reports were various. One was the newspaper pages in which were wrapped the sandwiches I used to get from a certain young woman. I would call her a “mini-righteous” woman of the nations. Dozens of times she managed to sneak her breakfast sandwiches to me on the sly, at risk to herself as well as to me. Eventually I noticed that the sandwiches were always wrapped in yesterday’s newspaper. Only God in heaven knows if that was deliberate or not. A young woman from among the camp’s inhabitants served as an additional source of information. Word had it that she had “sources” in the BBC, which was considered to be a reliable radio station at that time. Finally, rumors of unknown origin were our third source of news.

The combination of these sources afforded us speculation and some knowledge regarding doings outside our closed cramped world. Especially, and most importantly for us, we learned of news from the fronts; the Allied success and the German retreat. These reports were confirmed by daily massive aerial bombings by the Allies, bombings whose presence was all too real and painful for us. All of the radios in the area blared out warnings when the “enemy” bombers approached, announcing their position and direction of movement.

We saw formations of hundreds of bombers fly over us, in the region of the Austrian capitol, Vienna [then part of the Third Reich]. They released their huge bombs upon the city, which had been a beautiful place just two years before...Hearing the sirens, residents in their houses and people in the street escaped quickly to the shelters, seeking refuge from the bombs. By and large, we slave-workers who bore the yellow star upon our chests and

backs were left out in the open, allowing us to view [in a state of tremendous fear mixed with glee] how bombs weighing hundreds of kilograms fell upon the homes nearby our work-site...!!!

During the bombardments, we would also hear echoes of anti-aircraft fire, but the huge quantities of bombs let us know “who was boss,” that is to say – the “enemy’s” might and the Reich’s army’s gradual yet consistently increasing collapse...

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And so, one night [in middle or late March of 1945, if memory serves] while I lay stretched out on my bunk, troubled and aching in every part of my body from overwork and exhaustion, unable to sleep, I thought I heard sounds, muted echoes of explosions – boom...!boom...!boom...! I wondered where the noise was coming from. I was well aware that the night’s silence allowed distant and unusual sounds to be heard, but this time I was left in a quandary. The fact that the sounds had reached me disturbed my sleep and peace of mind.

The following night – again, fairly powerful “booms.” On the third night I imagined that I heard the sounds of war. In my imagination I “decided” these were the sounds of artillery, cannon-fire, and the like. The next night I understood with certainty that these were genuine signs of the eastern front moving towards us. The Red Army [of the USSR] was approaching us from the east.

**I spoke to myself and asked of the Lord of the Universe – please, my God, hasten their advance, help them draw near us, and so, perhaps, hasten our liberation! Please, my God, bring an end to all our suffering and hasten our liberation from this awful and inhuman inferno, from this hell...!**

**After a few days – on Sabbath eve, at midnight – a shrill whistle blew in the camp, and the camp commander made an announcement: “All camp residents must be prepared for the total evacuation of the camp’s population in a half an hour!”**

The camp’s gates closed behind us. We, the “holy community” of Hacken Gasse 11, the forced labor camp in district fifteen of Vienna, capitol of Austria of the Third Reich, stood in a long, long, column, five abreast; all told, about six hundred souls. With the shrill sound of a whistle and a loud shout from the leader of the column, we began to march. So we left our place of “residence” of the past nine and a half months, flanked to our left and right sides by angels of destruction, frightening, terrifying thugs whose job was to “watch over” us and prevent attempts...

At that night's end – a night of the Holy Sabbath – with the breaking of dawn, we began a new episode, a new chapter in our tortured days of the Holocaust – **the death march**. During the weeks that I now recount, four columns of people, four death-marches crossed Austria from east to west, towards Germany.

### **What is a Death-March??**

How did you walk? Where did you walk to? Were there breaks from the walking, as you dragged your tormented bones? Did they torture you, were they cruel to you? What did you eat and drink? Did you get “enough” food? How far did you walk in a day? Where did you stop to sleep? How did the guards who accompanied you behave?

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Since we had no idea why we were marching, a “soothing” thought entered my sick mind. A kind of peace fell upon me...”Lord of the Universe, today we will not work with bricks and mortar, and perhaps – perhaps we will be able to rest our aching bones a bit...” We carried all of our “possessions” in backpacks that we carried on our shoulders or in our hands. In the first hour of our march, I “positioned” myself by my sister Peninah, who was two years my elder. My right hand was in her left, **while my left hand grasped a most precious “treasure” – a collection of food-stuffs and leftovers, the fruits of my begging in the days that we worked at building construction.**

A casual observer would have no doubt witnessed an inconceivable sight, something inhuman – a column of human shadows, backs and heads bent over, thin as sticks, their faces covered with cuts and sores, barely dragging their feet, as if marching to their end. It was clear that no good could come of this unimaginable situation...

Carrying my pack and other items, my back was hard as rock, burning and aching from incessant hard labor, without opportunity for rest. We barely – just barely – dragged our feet.

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It is still dark, but I can discern the first light of dawn. That fact itself pleased me a bit. In one of those moments of daybreak, I raise my head, look above and to the sides, and try to see something of the activities going on around us, around our march. Already in the first minutes I could make out many yellow dots at a great distance to my right. This piqued my curiosity (I was, after all, just a boy three months shy of fourteen). The difficulties of our march overcame me – I dropped my head back down and continued to drag myself ever

onward, following the person in front of me, so as not to attract the attention of the guards to our left and right. After a few minutes I picked up my head again. I looked to my right and in the brightening light I imagined I saw no other than a crowd of people wearing the yellow star. The crowd was moving towards us, slowly merging with our column. I was amazed, but soon discovered a similar picture to our left – hundreds of Jews, all wearing the yellow star of David, approaching our column and joining it. In a short time our group came to number thousands.

Soon we came to know – and this we had been unaware of during the nine and a half months of our camp's existence – that fifteen other work camps had existed within a 100 kilometer radius of our own. Apparently, the “bubble” in which we had lived had been hermetically sealed....

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At the end of the first day of the death march we received something to eat. Writing these lines today I am incapable of recalling what kind of food they gave us, but I remember that we were given something. And so it was on the second day. The two following days – Nothing!!! Nothing!!! My family (my mother and her four children; my eldest brother, Shevah, of blessed memory, may God avenge his blood, had already left us. A “selection” had been held in the camp and males above seventeen years of age were taken from us – we never saw him since); my family had a “breadwinner” an “alms collector” – none other than myself – poor withered Moishele – who held a treasure in his hand – the pack of leftovers from which we drew tiny morsels in moments of need, exercising all due care and responsibility.

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**I Am Hungry!!!**

**After the first week of our march I suddenly realized that the basket of food that I clung to with my left hand was growing empty!!! We are gripped by paralyzing fear – we have nothing to eat!!!**

A day later I (I, Moishele, the “breadwinner” who had developed into the person responsible for feeding the family) decided that...something must be done!!! Food must be seen to!!! But how does one do this in a death march, under the keen eyes of German troopers and their helpers?!? I took my life in my hands (yes!) and together with my cousin we girded ourselves with strength and reached a decision.

At the end of the day's trek, we approached the head guard of the column to plead for our lives and receive permission to "leave" the column and search for food... To our great astonishment – he agreed. He must have thought that we were completely incapable of acting upon our request – he saw that we were exhausted and unable to walk even a few "unnecessary" steps. Besides that, the yellow patches on the left of my chest and on my back were clearly visible, as was the yellow ribbon on my left arm. If we even thought of escape (ha, ha, who even had a drop of strength for that!!!) anyone who saw us would kill us on the spot! In short, despite our terrible, unbearable fatigue – we dragged our legs a few hundred meters, and short of a bit of rotten beets and sorry potatoes – we came up empty. We soon understood that we were not the only children of the Holy One blessed be He, and that others had preceded us in the search...

From that day on, every time we reached the night's camping spot we would go out to search for food. Usually we found a little something. After another two further difficult days we felt that all of our efforts had been practically worthless. We returned disappointed and tired to our families – dead tired. But – the stomach moans (and how! As if a choir was crying out to high heaven: take pity and be merciful!!!). The family is hungry and Moishela, who feels "guilty" over the insolvable predicament, decides that despite all – there is a way out, a deed must be done!!! That can only mean "creative thinking," trying something no one has tried or could try. Not to settle for searching within a hundred or two hundred meters, but moving out farther...

But, Lord of the Universe, who has strength for that?!? Every day we would reach a sleeping area – just barely breathing, lacking strength even to sit, we simply fell on the spot onto our backsides – without exception. We fell like sacks of potatoes thrown off of a truck, or from a rooftop...

**However, life finds a way, hunger nags unceasingly (!!!!!) becoming a terrible pain and we decide whatever happens – we must acquire food!!!** And so, dragging our aching feet we move out a bit farther in our search; indeed, our efforts found recompense and we picked up a bit more food than before.

And meanwhile... meanwhile since the first day of the death march – we have been like prey, abandoned to the beasts (who walk on two legs), to anyone who wanted to taunt us, to beat us and ...to kill us! More than once, they opened fire upon us with rifles or machineguns ("controlled" fire, in order to avoid hitting our guards, God forbid!). A local farmer would open fire, or just some blood-thirsty man-beast.

**The numbers of those walking in the death march dwindled from hour to hour and from day to day by conspicuous percentages...**

**Anyone who felt he lacked strength to continue and tried to rest for a moment was finished of by two “euthanasia” bullets. How many times that recurred! After the shots, a guard would “remove” the bodies to the side of the road with his booted feet, in order to...clear the way for the marchers.**

**Once a convoy of tanks passed through the area. One of them began running over the people, amongst them a young woman from our own community!!!**

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We are in the tenth day of our march. The hunger is painful and debilitating...pains known only to the likes of us!...”The back was stuck to the stomach”...The pressure in one’s stomach became unbearable, like...like a pump sucking out the stomach’s contents, the pressure is tremendous and hurts very very much...

**But, but I want to live! I want to live and survive!  
I must not end my life here, in this way!!**

**Please Lord, save me! I will do all that I can, but without Your help I shall not succeed!**

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I understood that I had reached a crossroads, a genuine “to be or not to be.” Together with my cousin I decided to do anything (!!!), whatever it would be, just in order to get some food. And so, when we reached the stopping point on that fateful day, I noticed that we were situated not far from some mountain. My weakened mind comprehended that the mountain was not too high for us, and that the way was not especially steep. In addition, seen from below the mountain top seemed to form a plateau (and not a peak, as is found on many mountains). **Good, good, but...from where shall we draw strength to make the ascent?!? We have no alternative...we had reached the end of our ropes!!! We felt like a mouse caught in a trap ceaselessly seeking a way of escape, just trying to get lose and run away...a real dead end.**

We took our fate in our hands and decided to climb to the top. Oh, how each and every step pained us...sometimes I found it necessary to “help” my leg take a step with my two hands. First helping my right leg and then my left, over and over again...another step and another step, and we were nearing the top. A few final steps and the plateau revealed itself to us.

**But, oh, no...! What despair! On the plateau we discovered about three hundred senior S.S. officers, each tending to his motorcycle, fueling up and preparing for a**



**trip...My cousin pulled on my hand, as if to say...let's run quickly before they notice us! But I, like that mouse – no! We came to acquire food at any price, whatever may come!**

I quickly identified the chief of those devils, the high commanders of those demons and...I walked some tens of meters straight for him. It took long seconds to reach him; during those long seconds those three hundred pairs of eyes had no doubt seen us. A sudden silence fell upon them, as if they had all been paralyzed...how in the world did these two little Jews get here, right into the lion's jaws?!? Where the hell were the guards?

**And I, nothing that I was – ignored them all and approached the commander.**

There was a great tension between my cousin and myself as well. Suddenly, I noticed drops of blood on the ground between us – the result of my having pressed my finger nails hard into her hand...!!!

I was just four or five meters from him and we stopped, I bowed slightly and said (in German, of course): "We are hungry. Please give us food..." Our great temerity inspired several seconds of great astonishment, of thought...what should be done with us...and he said, "Wait a few minutes!" Clicking his heels, he did an about-face and walked to shack or guard post (apparently his head-quarters) not far from us.

**Have you – my dear readers – heard of the expression, "those were the longest thirty seconds in my life? Indeed, without doubt, those were the longest thirty seconds I had known in my short life!!! However, unusually, my life did not flash before my eyes like a movie, I did not think of my family and relatives. I thought of one thing: food! Food, at any cost and under any conditions!!! After those long seconds he appeared with a wrapped package, about the size of a shoebox, in his hand, which he extended to me. And I, I – what does one do now? Take it from him?? He might take a shot at me, just like that! After all, he was beholden to no man on earth – we were like putty in his hands!!! After a few fractions of a second of hesitation, I reached out to him with my left hand, my hand shaking like a fish out of water, and I took the package fom him.**

**What to do now? To run away? To leave? Again, with my final drop of strength I bowed slightly, said "Thank you," and with terrible fear of the coming seconds – began the walk down to our families, who must have grown very worried.**

Day followed day, and our ranks continued to thin at a troubling and frightening pace.

**When will your turn come, Moishe???** These thoughts passed slowly through my brain, but I remained guided by my resolute decision: **Moishe, you must survive! You must survive!**

**Another day of tremendous effort to walk and tremendous effort to seek food...for in those days there were people who despaired of the struggle for their lives, for their survival. As if they had relinquished their lives!!!** This would find a “picturesque,” blood-chilling – and brain chilling - expression when one of those despairing people would lift his two hands before him and “announce”: **Oy, ich hav nicht keyn koyach (Oy, I have no strength). At that moment a person sentences himself, by his own hand, to death!!! At that moment he gives up his ability to fight and struggle for his life...!**

**From where did God give me the strength to “decide” that I must survive, that I am unwilling to give it up?**

**Why me and not the others?**

The hardest day of the death march...

A column of human skeletons continues, through sheer inertia, on its strange march. We already numbered much fewer than half of those who began the journey only less than two weeks earlier!!! More than once I wondered; what determines the pace of our march?

There were days when we walked more and days we walked less...at a certain point we “decided” that our rate of progress matched that of the Red Army, the USSR forces, which “chased” after us. The commanders of the column were doing their all to avoid our falling into the hands of the Russians, who might finally liberate us from this hell....

And so, one day the Red Army came “threateningly” close. The column’s commander decided to take desperate action. They marched us - ran us – about twenty kilometers in the space of two hours!!! It was not walking or marching, it was not even running, but rather a kind of “floating.” Human shadows, almost without skin and flesh on their bones, driven like a herd of cattle, as one sees in a Safari – **fleeing the lions that chase after their prey...**

In such a race, you are entirely concentrated on the huge effort to avoid tripping, God forbid, on a stone or any other obstruction around – otherwise – your fate is sealed...! You run and your eyes search for a safe path. Again, you do not run, it is something else, something more difficult to define!!! All that you can see is the ground before you, and perhaps the lower half of the person running in front of you...

With indescribable, ineffable exhaustion (I searched but found no appropriate words for it in any dictionary...) – I am holding the hand of my sister Peninah and...we run and float together. My mother of blessed memory, may her blood be avenged, runs next to me. Danny, around eight years old, rides on her shoulders, while my brother Asher, of blessed memory, is to my left...every minute or two shots are fired, a still-warm body is kicked to the side of the road, over and over again...

The guards, yes, the guards – have they also gone mad?

Are they also floating with us and alongside us?

And so, some of them ride horses along the column's two sides, others ride on their motorcycles – also to the sides of the column. The rest – yes, they swoop down and run with us, next to us, as we do, so that they can deal with unexpected situations, immediately taking action. And I, a bony skeleton, take every precaution not to fall while running, not to stumble. For a split-second I raised my eyes from the ground before me, and they met with those of one of the guards running to our right. I was terrified. Paralyzed by fear. I immediately cast down my gaze in order to avoid giving him any “excuse” and...in sheer madness! I raised my head again and...the devil to my right was already near me! Oh! He was already behind us, hitting my sister in the back with the stock of his rifle. Since we held each other's hand tightly, we fell on our faces together, the package of food slipped out of my grasp, and I lost my sister's hand...

Despite the blow and the fall and my expectations of the worst, I did not completely lose my wits. I “said”: Moishe, get up right away, otherwise there will be no more Moishe!!! I looked for my sister's hand, and for the food-package, I grabbed them, tried to get up so as not to “stay” there forever. Before I managed to stand up completely, I took a hit to the head from the bayonet at the other end of his rifle. I fainted and collapsed, losing my sister's hand once more, and also losing the food. Again, as happened a second before – another blow to the head with the bayonet...and so again three times...!

But the fourth time, yes, the fourth time, I girded up the remnants of my strength, again I sought Peninah's hand, I sought the food, and cried out:

Lord of the Universe, it's either now or never!!! Propelled by indefinable forces, I sprinted like a beast chasing prey; galloping, I dissolved once more into the column...

Blessed is He Who grants favors to the faulty!!!

This is the next to the last of my articles.

Remember what Amalek did to you!!!!

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The sixtieth anniversary of our liberation draws near. The family members of the four brothers who survived plan to celebrate it, God willing, and with His help on Thursday, 5.5.05. This year, the Gregorian date of our liberation falls out on Holocaust Memorial Day. In preparation for that great day, I will try to describe in detail, and to summarize, and to...celebrate – together with the members of my family.

Moshe Porat  
Number 108080  
In Mauthausen