

We're back from our break now. And we'll resume the discussion of the courageous experiences with Eva. Eva, you told us during the break that there was a story about the Warsaw Ghetto that you wanted to go back to that felt was really important to get onto this tape.

The [? kind ?] of this story that threat of the ghetto. This is years.

We'd like you to share it with us.

We was living in a house, and the houses in Poland had big back yards, around these buildings. In the back yard, this big. And across from our daughter's [INAUDIBLE] this in beginning when she was a year in the ghetto. Sometime Germans come to the house just to make trouble. All out from the apartment, they was looking for to steal something or to beat up somebody.

Once they come and we all go down, and across from our apartment was living a young family with a daughter maybe six year. And to her come all part [INAUDIBLE] for now stayed to alone. I don't know that, [? my ?] [? mother. ?] Their daughter not was a religious Jew. The father was an observant Jew and helped the German come and [INAUDIBLE] was staying in davan [INAUDIBLE].

And not can move, it's [INAUDIBLE]. And we all go down and she called tata, tata is not here. He finds him, the German, they beat him up. It was blood all over. And after he went up when high, and he was on first floor.

The second floor.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

Was a lady with three small children. And she was just ready to go out in the apartment. And the baby was still in crib. They took this baby, maybe was a year, they throw this on the second-- this was the third floor-- almost [INAUDIBLE] and they took him, me was standing on the backyard and see this child flying from the window.

You were outside?

He was outside, and she was so busy with the three small children, she not-- she came a little too late. The German commander had an apartment before she left.

Oh, my goodness.

And me standing and this child flying to the--

Ground.

Driveway. And the mother come, the two children, all three were small, and crying and screaming. How many pieces in the child.

Oh my goodness.

And then after we went back to our apartment, this old Jew was a [? wreck ?] with blood after maybe four or five days die.

They left him there to die?

Yes, after he left, the German, we all go back to our apartment.

This all took place at one time? And one--

In one hour.

At one time.

In one hour.

An hour, an hour. Still, I was still with my father, with my mother.

Did you see it? Or did you hear it?

I see it with mine eyes. I was standing in the backyard.

Like in the courtyard?

Yeah, in the courtyard, or the tennis. And she with three children make little slowly, she was after coming down with the two children, after child fly from the third floor. And this Jew that they beat up was living maybe five days more. But died after.

They beat him so severely that this happened?

Yes.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

And this stayed with you--

[INAUDIBLE] at the towers. I only telling you, for this is a story that nobody can believe. I saw this.

Unless you see it yourself. I could understand why you wanted to record that story.

It's important.

Yeah. Well we talked about some of your experiences in the concentration camps. Do you remember the point at which you realized that you were alive, and there was a chance that you were going to get out, and that you might be liberated?

Well, it was know in couple weeks, maybe Germany going back here, there. But I still I not be living this I'd be alive, for they not move when they go out, they should everyone before.

When the Germans left?

Yeah.

They were shooting everyone before. Militant.

So there would be no witness?

Not witness, they not want witness.

But when the Germans left your camp, they left everybody alive?

There was some time what happened was too late. How they liberated Dachau, or Mauthausen, or Buchenwald, it was still people alive. Was accidentally they not have the plan to the end.

And they were in a hurry. They had to save themselves. How did you get food? How did you eat during that-

When? After the--

--After the Germans left.

I telling you, two days I not was eating. I was in shock. I was sick. I was in shock with my life. I was asked knowing is I am alive, and this shocked me.

Who liberated you?

Russians.

The Russians.

That was easy. And after, little by little, we went from just Czechoslovakia to Poland to Warsaw. The Warsaw and to my shtetl.

Was this in transports, they took you out?

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

On my own, met the place, met the [? cars, ?] met all the--

However you could get from one town to another?

Took days and days. After I arrive in my shtetl too, you feel as though you want to see maybe somebody is there.

You knew that's where you wanted to go?

Yeah, and I know, I know but it was still deep, deep in you, maybe I know. I was in my shtetl not long. [? Actually ?] my shtetl it was maybe 70 Jews, 70 or left, little by little.

Did you find your home intact?

My home was bombed before. I only find people what Poles, what know me or she was a maid for us or the generator from the house. What they are not asking me question where is father, mother? This is now you're alive. You are living.

We were surprised to see you live. That action.

They were shocked.

Not us asking why they are they not come back.

But why are you alive?

Yes. I not can say. I was so nervous to stay. I went to Łódź. Łódź I went a kibbutz. I went to Palestine [INAUDIBLE] a year.

You went to Łódź by yourself?

With a friend.

Did anything happen to anybody that you knew when you were liberated once they got back?

Yes, in my shtetl come back-- boy, what I know no matter what-- it was they was living in a village, [? Maidenshtetl. ?] Have a very close and I know the family. They have a mill how you tell? Make a flour A mill

yes?

Mill with flour.

Yes. Yes.

And tell I want to go see how this everything is there. And me begging that me not to go. Went in the evening and the morning we found him in pieces. Pieces, they cut him to pieces, the Poles.

The Poles did that.

And when I was in Poland was the pogrom of Kielce, well maybe you heard about this.

Yes.

I was this time in Poland, that was in my shtetl was in Łódź this time. I left Poland was in end of July, maybe beginning August. I left Poland. We went to Slovakia, Austria, Italian, Palestine, all of this was not legal.

After surviving--

I fled to Palestine not legal.

Did you make the trip--

No.

--without a ticket or without any kind of--

Without a ticket, this was at kibbutz, a group.

Yeah. How did you become affiliated with this group?

This one, from Agudah Israel my father was once a very big macher for Agudah Israel in Poland.

Yes.

And they know me, they not know me, they know was people meant to survive, they know my father. And then they took me in. I was the first group from Agudah Israel that arrived in Palestine. 46 of March.

So in another sense, your father was instrumental in saving you?

Yes, you see as I was working after him. I mean, I could tell you--

You walked in his path?

--When I come to Palestine, this was the first group. They makes a little [INAUDIBLE] a little you know informal tea, coffee, and they--

So the gathering?

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

--At this gathering. Was coming many Jews from Palestine was left and was coming to me, ask "You the daughter?" I was looking for my [? father. ?] You the daughter [INAUDIBLE]? And everyone want something to do for me.

Well I was very ambitious.

And you could follow in his reputation?

Yes, you know how the name go before you?

Sure, sure. When did you finally feel safe?

I was-- you see, I am not-- safe is hard to tell. Look, I live now in America. I have a beautiful house. I have a good husband, [? Gene. ?] But sometime, I prayed by the [INAUDIBLE]. Maybe this is why I was living so, all the time. And any time as it was, then something else.

What you're saying is you never feel fully safe?

No. No.

Wholefully secure.

And when I hear something has happened here or here, or anything, that's not becoming something so catastrophic.

You worry about that happening again?

Yes, sometime I worry. I not want to live over this anymore. And I not believe this can happen again. If I not believe that people be acting this way with me, but you never know. You see them they hijacks the airplane.

What do people doing? They not hungry, they strong. They have high families. The America passport, what do you do? This I think waiting. You not need tell I'm secure. I'm sure, it's not something I-- we need pray.

As you said, and be strong and choose anytime.

You can no longer take for granted, in other words?

No, no. No, nothing.

If you'll survive.

Feel that something could always happen like that at any time.

No, not-- I when was this Yom Kippur war in Israel I not was in Israel. I left in '78. After the Six-Day War, Israel was very proud, secure and was too talking too much. You not need be proud of nothing.

And not secure meant nothing. It's not the Jews.

Yeah.

I tell the same time my children either, thank for everything, and pray the speedy way how you want. There's nothing secure.

What was your life like when you first came to Palestine? I know you said your father's--

Yes. I am--

--name helped you.

--I was with a friend living in a place and working.

Did you work?

Oh, yes.

What kind of work did you do on kibbutz?

No, I not wasn't at kibbutz. I was in kibbutz two weeks. When they transport [INAUDIBLE]. After what I was captured from the England, and they-- you heard about the story from Bracha Fuld?

No.

No? She was killed when mine ship arrived to Palestine. She was from the Haganah, a young girl in Germany. She was in Haganah, a soldier. And they shoot her in Tel Aviv.

The British?

Yes. Is a street by her name, Bracha Fuld. This the ship what I come to say was Wingate. Wingate was a English general what was good for the Jews.

Yes, Wingate.

You heard about, sure, it was two weeks in Atlit was a camp, 'till this [INAUDIBLE] took us out.

And then what did you do?

I went to work little by little, adjusted. You're young.

What kind of work did you do there?

In a factory, what I know to do. I don't know the language either. And the work I have protection too. Somebody now it's not this easy to survive. You see, today when you have a daughter 17, when my daughter was 20, and I was telling her, "Gilda, when I was 20, I was on my own, and nobody helped."

It's hard to describe.

Sure.

And where did you live in that time?

Me took a room, no excuse me. My friend for what I come to Israel with her, she passed away last year. I loved the lady. She had a cousin. And the cousin have a beautiful apartment. And that a cousin went to vacation to Europe for have a daughter, she has just place, give us apartment for asked for three, four months.

And after the three four months, we saved up a little money and we took up took up a room together. After I find the cousin, but I never was living so for family.

No.

I was too proud. I am some time go for Shabbos when they invite me out, for it, I come with flowers.

But you didn't feel alone? You didn't feel--

No, no. Alone--

--Isolated.

--I feeling today, too. This alone, this two meanings, the alone.

I know. Lonely in the sense of being--

Yes.

--forgotten by. And you mentioned also during the break that you met your husband in Israel?

Yes, my husband come to Israel in '48 I think, '48 or, '49, or '48. I not know. He was a soldier. There was no people from our town, and telling us, I am alive. We met, it was [INAUDIBLE]. It was beshert.

And you said you didn't know him from before the war?

I know the name.

You knew the family.

And the family. I mean, you know me, I-- 14 years ago as of date in this time? Today, don't know. Anyway, I have no family, but--

Very religious.

--Religious. I know. I'm sure I know the family. Now after 37 years, I know him.

Now you know him?

Finally.

It's about time.

How long did you live in Israel? I assume you were there during the period of statehood?

12th year. Oh, yes. I was in the state after Israel was in November at 29, I was in East in Tel Aviv I was in May, 15 in Israel.

Yes.

I was 10 April of '58.

April of '58. And then you came to the United States?

No, no, no, no. I went to Switzerland. My husband had family in Switzerland. And he was waiting for the papers for the United States. I come to the United States '64. I left Israel with a baby and I come to America my three children. Just take a little time.

Yeah. Was it always your goal to come here?

No.

To come to the United States.

My husband more, not mine.

More his?

Yes. I have many friends here, but we was together. My husband went to Israel and there was the America was in writing to each other. [NON-ENGLISH]

That's right. Like everything else.

I never-- you never take nothing yourself, even when you take yourself, must happen this way. Something within people, if I not go, if I not went, it is not existed. Your fate.

That's your fate. You told us that you have three children.

Yes.

What do you tell your children about your experience?

The same what I what I talking to you, honey.

You tell them everything?

Everything. I can sit hours with them. Every child is different. Mine-- sandwich boy, the middle one--

Sandwich boy.

--Is most interesting and most sensitive, and most was ready to hear. I want to say my daughter, no. I tell you the little one what I was thinking, no, no, no. Give me -- tell me and grow up in the Holocaust. And my son was very active in the little one in the Zionist organization [Personal name] was the president in [INAUDIBLE] two years.

Was working after in Philadelphia for the American Youth Organization. After went to Israel was a year in school, and I ask you, [? Pardes ?] this is a Jewish studies. And I working to change the status once the [INAUDIBLE].

You children also have a very strong Jewish background?

Yes. Yes. They have a IQ--

You're so proud when you say that.

--Yes, I'm proud. I mean I will tell you something, either are you religious or no? The background is very important. This the reason [INAUDIBLE] children don't have grandparents. You know what grandparents are for children? The fundament. The foundation.

The foundation.

It's all [INAUDIBLE]. And cousins, this is magic. This links, and all of a sudden, the links gone.

It's connections to the past.

My children was very and it's been worse. My why? I don't have a grandmother and a grandpa. After me a very good family in Switzerland. And one aunt was [? Sylvia ?] a grandmother to my children. This my husband's family.

And he was calling her grandmother. For everyone was calling her all my, grandmother. And once was her and my husband have a picture from his mother, and she was maybe 2 and 1/2 years old. And he her, "What is your grandmother?"

She turned, "Grandma Helen." And my husband said, "This is your grandmother." Said, "Yes, I know of it. She never talked to me. She not buy me nothing." Was maybe 2 and 1/2 years old. This a picture was.

Which one was more real? The one that was there?



They would come and bring a chocolate, or a kiss, or a hug. This is the mother anyone.

That's the one they have experience with.

Especially when you are baby, when you were small, when you want the security, you want to laugh. After age, you understand that difference. And I will tell you something.

Don't make one mistake, we supposed to be born by 17, die babies. You make less mistake, maybe smarter. You make a mistake all your life, 'till you smart, it's finished. It's over, the game is over.

By that time, there's nothing more you have to learn.

Oh, yeah. Oh, it's not so think. What more than you see you know less? It's the thought I [? won't ?] stop. You begin [INAUDIBLE].

You begin by [? shaping ?] out.

Never.

It never stops. It's like a person never stops learning.

I can learn from a small child. I miss it much. It's the one thing more than any time was feeling they take away from my life. My old chances what I can do. Anyway, I was a teenager, never was in schools.

This is a very tough question for me to ask, but I'm going to ask it anyway.

Ask, ask. Anything.

I know and I can appreciate your background, and your heritage, and what you got from your Judaism. Was there ever a time when you really felt that maybe there was no God, or God had abandoned you, or why?

You have to you to believe never I was angry at God. I don't know why God was doing. Because sometime, was telling God, "God is all, not listen anymore." Or God don't like us anymore.

But to be so telling you, sending-- those people was cursing God, you'll not be surprised when you see you take a child from your hand thinking, I don't know. I was too stupid maybe to understand this. Or I have so much love in myself and so much Emunah, does not come to the point. I don't know what, how to connect these three things.

Something maybe I was really stupid. Or it was the very strong faith that your parents instilled in you?

Maybe. On the other hand, when somebody is angry, I can understand the person. It's helping you something. It's helping you something. You [INAUDIBLE] what I [? don't. ?]

But even when you were angry and thought God was angry at you, you never questioned that God was there?

I know God is there.

You knew?

Yes.

That he was there?

But I was thinking, don't want to know about this more, [NON-ENGLISH] excuse.

Any excuse? But you never deny that he was there?

No.

That's a very, very strong faith. When you think about your experiences, all the things that you went through, when you think about that today, how do you think about it?

It's something as I tell you before, it's not to believe a person can go over this or what I saw.

And what you lived through.

I can talk to you years, with the little stories. And I still, I think I'm normal.

I think so.

I don't know. And it's something what is behind our mind not to feel as if not to know what you know this answer. And this can be so connection. I not understand this mindset. I still like flowers.

I like a nice home. I like to look good. My [? schmurt ?] is inside.

All inside.

I'm a still--

You're still a human being.

I think I like to help people. I like to listen to people. I have patient to people. One thing I told my children, come the day and I be gone, and when they make me a stone, I want this number, on the stone.

You do?

Yes.

Half of my arm and the number, this I want on my stone. Thus my children, children to be to see and to be living the stories what go from mouth to mouth.

That will always be proof that it happened.

Just my number and my-- I want this.

Well let me ask one more question. Then I think we'll stop. We try to use these videotapes to educate.

Yes.

Both Jews and non-Jews.

Yes, everyone.

Who did not--

Everyone.

--were not born at the time of the Holocaust, and didn't know what went on, what happened, what they can believe, what they can't believe. What lesson would you give them?

Yes, I tell you one thing. You're not supposed to live with the past, but you remember and talk about the

past. And not know the past, you not can have a better future. Until everyone be knowing what has happened, God forbid this can repeat.

And the everyone be knowing this, this what I talk to you, and the children be seeing what I talk, be believing me, the open eyes maybe. This begin and Jews, but it's not-- the end is not the Jew. The beginning is the Jew.

Interesting, now I remind me, you asked me something. I'm sorry. When my children was grow up on college and this now I'm supposed to think on table. And I tell you something was going on in politic, I think I will tell you something.

I was feeling, and I still feeling after this war, all men can go crazy.

That's what you thought at the time?

And I wrote, I thinking, and I believe in this. What you see, I not forgotten about Jews. When from all countries from the third world, from all over, this all begin the-- the lesson was the second war. The bad things a person learn better fast.

The good things you learn a new life, and you not know but the bad, then one day you know to do this. And this effect all the mankind in some way. Tell the children, the generation about coming, be aware. It's very important.

Not only Jews, everyone. Everyone. I was the victim of it, they all need know.

That's a very good outlook for people to know the past will help prevent it from happening in the future.

But no, you're not have a future when you not know the past. And you not have roots what you are.

You're not connected.

What you are. A fly by one fly [? away. ?]

When you don't see that everything has repercussions, that everything is related to everything else, or persecution is related.

Yes. Yes.

And you're right. I think it always does start with the Jew.

Yes. Yes, start with the Jew. Even when you see in television, newspapers, Israel and Jews is every day in television, newspaper. Is countries to what's going on worse things. The Jew is the center.

[? Wars ?] and be in 2000 that year just gone. Gone and go, gone again. Thanks God, we now have Israel, and we have our-- I will tell you, I wish Israel be altogether, not be too much fighting between us. This biggest assault, tragedy--

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

--What is not outside, inside.

Inside.

Inside. Sure.

And this what I said, you see you asked me, I was so afraid that God going to punish us again. I'm afraid. I hope everything be good.

Well Eva, we've asked you a lot of questions here this afternoon. Is there anything that we've left out? Anything that you would like to share with us? Anything else?

One thing, anytime when you want to talk to me, today, you have an hour, I have an hour. I'm glad I was here. And I give the message, it was painful. But any time, for every reason you want to know something, I'm ready to come.

And I never tend to nobody know how long my eyes are open.

Thank you.

And we appreciate that.

[INAUDIBLE].

I know you've done that for other schools.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

I know you've done--

You did most important as the same important thing for I am. You say you can write good. I can talk good.

Very well.

Me all want [? change. ?]

Thank you.

Thank you very much.

[? I'm ?] [? thankful. ?] It was a pleasure to meet you both. And I'm proud of you.

We're proud of you too.

We're very proud of you.

[INAUDIBLE].

And keep telling everybody your stories.

I taking-- I telling, I telling, believe me. I was in so many places. In high school reunion, they have [INAUDIBLE] movie and television every year they showing.

And we really appreciate everything. And thank you for coming here this afternoon.

My pleasure to talk to you. And I know this going, the message going to the right places.

OK. Bernie, thank you very much.

Thank you.

Thank you [INAUDIBLE].