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01:00 He was known as "Berul Stern" in his hometown of Buschwaret. This was a Hungarian town located in the Czechoslovakia domain. It is now part of Russia.

02:00 His family lived in the region for 600 years. At that time it was part of the Austro-Hungary Monarchy. His father was a business man and manufacturer who lived in the Jewish and non Jewish community, He was known for his great honesty and industry. He was a hard working man. He was also the Honorary Mayor and President of the Jewish Community. There were seven children in his family. Five beside the children were adopted, He says that if not for the war he wouldn't have known they weren't his own brothers and sisters. In those days a little boy of 2 1/2 or 3 1/2 went to Heider and learned Hollavaise.

03:00 When it came time to go to secondary school, he was advanced in comparison to others in population. This is because he knew Hollavaise and could easily adopt it to the ABC's. Grammar, writing, and reading were easier for him because of his head start with Hollavaise. Things were very well in these days. Because he was born in West Czechoslovakia, he and his family lived under a Democratic system. The Czechs were very fine people, and they had great respect for the people of the community. The Czechs had come to occupy the area in 1918.

04:00 At the age of six he went to a Czech school. He could therefore communicate with them. At home Yiddish was spoken. He could also speak German because at that time it was customary in wealthier homes to have a German governess. He learned Hebrew at the Heider. In the streets Hungarian was spoken, and there was some Russian dialect. In 1938, modernization occurred, just before Rosh ha-Shanah. Shortly after the Munich Agreement partitioned Czechoslovakia to pacify Hitler.

05:00 He remembers the slogan, "We did all this to have peace for eternity." Of course this wasn't so. It reminds him of the situation in Israel which worries him. That is, when they say give to the Arabs and we'll have peace. At this time in 1938 he was 12 years old - not even.

He felt very strange about what was happening. Jews from the German speaking part of Czechoslovakia ran away from this area because of fear of occupation. They came to his town. The number of occupants in his home doubled. They took in refugees.

06:00 He was worried. He wondered why an established group of people would have to run away and live substandard housing. He wondered if it could happen to him and his family. People in the community became used to it. Things progressed and the Germans occupied Hungary in November, shortly after his birthday. Everyone was worried.

The occupied army was very primitive. They couldn't read nor write. They occasionally plundered on small scale. The community was successful in stopping them. They resisted.

07:00 The elders said they had also done that before. Later, Polish naturalized Czech citizens were deported. Everyone began to fear because the Jews who were deported were never seen again. The situation progressively grew worse.

08:00 Soon the Germans entered Jewish law. Certain businesses and professional licenses were confiscated. It seemed like it was affecting everyone. People started to feel it would be applicable to everyone. People began to talk of leaving, but there was no where to go. His own household was 20 people. One of his brothers succeeded in going to England in '39. His father and his two brothers each sent one child to England. England was considered a country where this could not happen.

09:00 A variety of laws were enacted. Jews were taken out of the Army. Officers and all were placed in forced labor camps. They were used to do local work. They wore a yellow ribbon on their arms. This was in the form of the yellow star. A teacher in 1941 said it was the form of a yellow star and people thought he was crazy.

10:00 This is how it became. Jews were asked to leave their homes, and these were confiscated for military and state purposes. Businesses were taken away. This happened to his father. Although he was luckier than the rest for a time. He was able to maintain his distillery longer than the others. His family was in a better position than others. Eventually, though, they did lose it.

11:00 There are certain things that stick in his mind the most about this time. One of them was the Hungarian occupation and the Germans marching in. The other is the Polish occupation of '39. The Polish Jews fled Poland to Czechoslovakia came with many horror stories. The Jews of his community felt it was Polish propaganda. They also felt that they themselves were civilized. They had lived in the area for 600, 700 years. The Polish people, on the other hand were uncivilized. They said, "We are civilized."

12:00 People were hiding in the forests. When they came out they looked like walking skeletons. Religious Jews looked like skeletons.

The community denied it. They had heard of many being killed by Poles and Ukrainians, but didn't want to believe.

13:00 Then the Poles of Jewish origin were deported. They went to work camps, never to be heard from again. Months later, a child from a neighboring town, who survived this deportation told the story of what happened. No one believed. No one could comprehend the story.

14:00 Propaganda in Hungary was similar to this story. They thought the Hungarian paper was written by "crackpots". It wasn't acceptable. The Jews were not killers. Neighbors couldn't be doing that to them. Then they began to hear of some neighbors joining the German Army - even the S.S. people thought - it couldn't be! These were nice boys - whom, he and other Jews had played with. It was impossible.

15:00 Sometimes his non - Jewish friends ask if he hated the Germans. He says no. After all, what would be accomplished by it? He says, "I'll hate myself - they won't get hurt." He won't buy a German car or any German goods. He won't buy goods from people unfriendly to his people. He says he don't have hate. He can imagine other bad things happening. He could see Jackson enticing the Blacks to burn down half of America. To him, all is possible. Jews won't be the only victims.

16:00 It's not only a Jewish problem. It's a Gentile problem. In April or March of 1944 he was separated from his family. The Germans marched in.

17:00 Two weeks before the Germans marched in, his uncle had succeeded in getting a visa for himself and wife to Palestine. He left behind property, a business, and children. Around this time there was a big gathering at his home. There was both rich and poor - more poor than rich. People were drunk. One drunk man in particular comes to his memory.

18:00 He foretold the whole scenario, before the Germans marched in. All considered him crazy. Only a few gave him credence.

19:00 At this time there were stronger, stricter Jewish laws. Everyday there were new restrictions. For example, there were restrictions on when you could go out and when you had to be in your home. A few weeks later laws changing daily, even hourly. No one was allowed to go out at all. Then the ghettos came and Jews had to go into them.

20:00 His hometown had 25,000 Jews in the Ghettos. There were two locations. The first was a big factory. Here there were 50,000 Jews. The second was a lumber yard. There were 100,000 Jews. The organization process came fast. In the beginning, there were open spaces in the lumber yard, and divisions were attempted. For the first two days there were no latrines and one had to stand behind a sheet held by others. It was public, like the Gypsies.

21:00 It was very difficult. There was no food. They, the Germans, began to count people and take them to the railroad for deportation. Some said it was for "relocation to work." They were herded into railroad cars, All knew. What was most shocking was that no one made an effort to help. He says people lived side by side to his people for centuries. They made no effort.

22:00 He remembers gentiles used to say to him, if not for your father, or uncle, we would have lost our home, farm, or business. What hurt the most was a young peasant boy. The peasant was very intelligent and his (Stern's) parents made every effort to send him to a University to study medicine. He went. But, he never even made an effort to help, He could have, but didn't. He was afraid of being called a "Jew lover". No one made an effort. People felt lost. There was much despair.

23:00 At the railroad station there was an "illiterate animal in uniform". He had feathers in his cap like a cock. This Hungarian yelled, "Hurry up bloody Jew. I kill you - Hurry up! Hurry up!" Even still, he and others sang song of hope in the railroad cars. They were choked with emotion. There was desperation. Jews could only take their belongings.

24:00 Everyone had a Talmud and \_\_\_\_\_ under his clothing - even the non-religious. The trip on the train was undescrivable. If he could fully relive it, it would be enough to make him crazy. Last week, in Colorado whit his wife he saw trains which reminded him of the trains on route to camp. There were 125 people in each car - with a little opening for air. The car doors were locked.

25:00 Barbed wire was on the windows. This was the transportation. They were herded in on Tuesday and arrived on a Friday to Birkenau. There were suicides in the car. The first to do so were the converts, who "walked around with big crosses." They thought nothing could happen to them. They had snubbed at the Jews because they no longer were one, but they became defeated. They ran to the Priests.

26:00 The converts had cyanide, etc. They had no hope. The second group most likely to commit suicide were the assimilated Jews, doctors, lawyers. They couldn't believe it could happen to them. They had powerful Gentile friends. and they didn't do anything.

27:00 There was no space in the car. Everyone had a bundle. People died. Some said let's just sit down on them. There were mixed feelings. It was a very terrifying feeling. Some went crazy. One woman tore her hair out.

28:00 There was no way to take care of the bodies. There was a stench. There was no water. No one believed what was happening. On Friday they arrived at Birkenau. They could smell the stench of bones and flesh.

They were near a crematorium. His older brothers said to each other that this is what they had heard on the radio. He then begins to speak of the time when Germans marched in, everyone had to give up their radios.

29:00 All had to register with the government. Jews had to give up their radios. In the basement his brothers had hidden one and both listened with a blanket over their heads.

They had heard of the burning at Auschwitz over one broadcast. They couldn't tell that to anyone. It meant certain death if it was known they had a radio, At Auschwitz it was learned that it was true.

30:00 He says Auschwitz is impossible to describe, even if he had the best vocabulary and memory. At first they stood for hours in the cars smelling the burning. Then, they heard dogs. Suddenly the doors opened and people fell out. The Germans yelled "Draus!" They had terrible voices. Some people wouldn't come out and were dragged out. There were about 10 to 15 dead and 20 could not move.

31:00 He stood in line with others for quite a bit of time. They faced beautifully dressed high ranking officers. They "could have been guards at Buckingham Palace". Later, they found out who the head man was, Mengele. They all commanded them to come forward and some went to right and some to left. They could figure out the people on the left were old ones, and woman with children. They could tell they were going to be killed.

32:00 He was sent with the others on the right to the delousing stations. They were shaven and sent to work. It was ironic that 2 years earlier his family had received a postcard from a cousin marked from Auschwitz-Birkenau. It was a camouflage.

33:00 He asked a woman if she knew where his cousin's town was and she said "Yes". He asked her what happened to the people from his area. She said they went to the chimney. Later on he saw her again. She had survived and lived in Israel. After 15 attempts to speak with her, she finally accepted. He asked her how she felt. She said he said what she could say. She asked him, "do you think I'd want to talk about it ?" She was Slavic and had been there four years. So, he knew what had happened to him and the others.

34:00 That same night or following night, in the barracks, after delousing, they heard from the commander that Mr. Stern and the others had been chosen because they were healthy, It was very dehumanizing. Father, sons, daughters were shaven. It was terrible.

35:00 They came out of the showers and stood for a long time before receiving a uniform. Short guys could get long ones and tall guys could get short ones. There were exchanges made. Then came the barracks.

36:00 Later, food came in. The food smelled bad. First few days it smelled like garbage. No one wanted to eat. Later someone came in and said we must eat, in order to survive. He said we must defy the Germans or they'll have a victory over us sooner. There were 4,500 people per barrack. On the first or second day he was told that on Saturday they would be called.

37:00 There was a sawed off metal drum to take care of the needs for everyone.

One night, the first or second, he heard terrible screams. "Little voices", that of children. There were transports going on. Still, there had been for years. He ventured out and saw 50,60, 70 yards from his barracks, lit trenches. There were German nurses in white uniforms with red crosses and caps.

38:00 The children would go toward the light and look at the flames near the edge. The nurses would hold hands and push them into the fire. He came back to the barracks and told his brothers. They couldn't believe he had left the barracks because he could have gotten killed by the sentries. At this early time he still wasn't aware of them. His brothers told him to be quiet because if anyone found out he went out of the barracks, he would be killed. It wouldn't be any good to say anything because nothing could be done. There were no arms.

39:00 There was no chance of escape. They were in Polish territory. Pollacks could not be counted on. They were even worse. The Pollacks and the Ukrainians killed for the love of it. The Ukrainians were even worse. The Germans had orders. They felt helpless, and the situation impossible. Children, parents, brothers and sisters burned.

40:00 When the Germans started to call groups of people to be shipped to another area. Brothers were broken up. For four days he and his brothers managed to stay together. They left for Auschwitz. On that day it was raining. They were made to march in the rain and they stood in the rain for five hours.

41:00 He got his number at Auschwitz. His number was A-4133. His group of Hungarians was one of the first. All the other initials had been used in advance for the Polish Jews. They were told by the Gestapo and SS that no Jews would escape. They said, "should one succeed attempt, for every one escaped Jew there will be 100,000 slaughtered." At this point the brothers were separated. One was ripped from him and another brother.

42:00 They were only two and were sent to the coal mines. It was near the Polish. The Polish civilian population was very "primitive". They were the bosses. They could neither read nor write. Sometimes one would ask him to read a paper, and he hoped he'd get something for it.

43:00 Later he found out that some Jews were actually killed by the Poles after reading the paper for them. He was lucky. These people (Poles) always helped the S.S. and Gestapo. Maybe they wanted to prove their toughness. He'd receive a shirt each month and sometimes he and the other Jews should exchange them with the Polish for food. Sometimes the Polish gave nothing in return.

44:00 The Poles used to say they'd (Jews) never get out alive. It was a hopeless, indescribable situation.

In the coal mines his group wanted to be a good, elite group. They thought they might get extra rations. Others in the camp said they were stupid and not to out do themselves.

45:00 The coal mines were like a little city. They'd get 10-12 cars which they'd have to fill using little wide shovels with short handles. The men were exhausted but they were cheap Jewish labor and the war effort was on. They thought if they'd fill the 10 or 12 cars they'd get less but they got more instead - 14, 16 laurels.

46:00 The Germans yelled, "You bloody damn dog beaten horse. You can do better just for a little dog bone - you're going to do without it." Everyday more and more died. They had to take them back to the camp to be accounted for.

47:00 He worked the second shift - 1:30 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. They walked in rain or night. They passed the same 30 to 45 villages everyday. He could remember the size of the rocks in front of the houses. After the war he went back to the villages, and asked if they, the villagers, remembered. "Not one miserable Pollack admitted to the fact."

48:00 He was liberated by the Russians on January 27th 1945. And just out of fear of being caught by the Germans again, he went with the Russian army. Another week and he wouldn't have made it.

49:00 When Birkenau was evacuated, he couldn't get back into the barracks. Every Jew went through the Death March, but I didn't go. The Pollacks and Ukrainians wouldn't let me back into the camp. I had to hide in the dead bodies outside the camp, which had accumulated in that past week. Then he was liberated on January 27th. He then showed how his Jewish background and orthodox background gave him a sense of survival.

50:00 The night the Russians came, he and the others said, "To the Jews with light and joy and gladness." This was like a "blood transfusion". He tried to speak with the Russians but they didn't want to be around a walking skeleton. And even then the Jews still had a problem because the Germans had put up refugees spies among the Russians.

51:00 But with his good luck he met a General who spoke Yiddish and he accepted him. At 83 lbs. he took the clothing of a dead Russian soldier, and he was of value to the Russians since he could read Russian maps and speak Russian. That Monday following the liberation they marched into a Polish town about 30 kilometers from Birkenau.

52:00 Suddenly hard grenades were being thrown at them from rooftops. A Russian soldier fell beside him dead. He picked up his machine gun - this was the first he ever held. He went "berserk". Every Pole or German in uniform that he saw he killed. Later, on Friday, an old man told him "even a murder stops on the Sabbath day".

53:00 So, he admits he did his share to destroy as many Germans as he could. (The interviewer asked, "What does the tattoo mean to you?") He says, "I don't live it everyday." But just the day before he was watching "Hot Seat" on T.V. and the head of the Klu Klux Klan said it never happened and was a hoax.

54:00 It's hard for him to believe it happened, but the tattoo is a reminder to him. He wouldn't remove it, and he has been asked to remove it before. He's not ashamed of it and has no problems with it.

55:00 He knows some Mexicans who liked him to show it to their friends because they knew it could happen to them. Again, he's not ashamed of it. He does not hide it, nor does he go around showing it to all.

56:00 He's remained an Orthodox Jew. After the war, he went to a museum with many valuables and he thought awhile. He came to the conclusion that the war began because of the Gentiles wanting the wealth of the Jews. He took film of it and it gave him comfort.

57:00 He thought about why he had the right to live and not the others. He threw himself into his studies.

58:00 He found most of his guidance and direction in Judaism. No matter where he traveled, he found more fulfillment in it as an Orthodox Jew. The fulfillment came through sharing, giving, and taking. He travelled over 90 countries. The fact that he's here today is a "Jewish obligation". To him it's because he's a practicing Jew. He's not afraid to wear his cap and cord.

59:00 He also contributes it to his wife. She herself was a survivor, along with her mother and brother. She was only two and a half years old at the time. As a Jew he feels a great deal of strength, and direction. He's less confused. He also gives an example of how he's not selfish.

04:00 He was sent to get a long drill in the coal mine. He was young, could speak Polish, and understood German.

05:00 This coal mine had no water. He had to dig a ditch to stand in so he wouldn't break his back. His shoes were made of a wood plank with a piece of rag wrapped around it. When trying to get the drill he tripped on a piece of coal and broke the drill. This was "sabotage", enough to be killed.

06:00 He later went back to the camp and gave his number. He ended up in the infirmary for a short while. His number was caught up and he was taken from the camp with the dead bodies and "Muselmann". The Muselmann were skinny bony bodies. They had no existence, except to be burnt. They were called Muselmann because the Germans hated the Moslem Arabs, just like they hated the blacks.

07:00 He says, a Dr. Kern saved his life by somewhat risking his own life for him at the infirmary. He then goes back to his original thought. The Germans took the Muselmann, the dead bodies, and himself to get out of a truck. About 40 to 50 were dead and 20 were alive. In the cabin there were four.

08:00 He never knew what exactly were the functions of the S.S. and Gestapo in particular. He did know the S.S. wore the S.S. mark and the Gestapo wore the death mark. The Germans looked back at them to make sure they wouldn't escape. It was Sabbath afternoon and they gathered in the camp. They were there until nightfall. They had already had their rations. Then one of the S.S. said "It's time to do something smart." Someone said to pretend we were washing our hands.

09:00 Those who got rations washed their hands. Those who did not received a "mercy". They started to sing. He says the scenario was unbelievable. He did not think he'd be gassed.

10:00 They went through delousing. The camp doctor examined them. The Jewish doctor touched them while the German doctor didn't. Only one of the crematoriums was working at this time. A camp doctor recognized him from a certain family.

11:00 At 2:00a.m. or 3:00a.m. a doctor told him to get out of the barrack he was in, and go speak to another certain commander of a work barrack. He asked if some of the other men could come with him. A few escaped with him from this doomed barrack. The doctor survived and also survived.

12:00 Later he found this doctor in Prague after the war. He was a top pediatric professor. He asked him why he had risked his life for him. He told him that he, at the time, was in his 50's, and that he (Bart Stern) was young. Also, the doctor saved him because he was from a certain family and had much to accomplish. He also

went to see this at other time to check his health during his stay at the camp.

13:00 People ask him why he didn't resist. He was asked this by the American Ambassador in Vietnam the day before Independence Day. He said to the Ambassador that he didn't see much resistance of the American Army to Independence Day. I gave him an example of a man at the camp who was still young, but acted like he was 200. He'd say, "I can't take it anymore."

14:00 Everyone was exhausted. If one laid down, one never got up. One day this man said he wanted to give up. Three men, including himself, gave him a part of their rations. There was nothing they could do. There was nowhere to go. The Polish were murderers.

15:00 It's impossible to describe a day in camp. It was incomprehensible. He was one of the most courageous, Heroism existed. When his brother came back from the camp, on the death track, he was told his brother was making an attempt to take another track so if the brother met him, the brother would try to save him.

16:00 The work in the camps was extremely exhausting. 40 to 50 were lost in the camps because of exhaustion, and the others died on the Death Marches. He lost most of his brothers on the Death Marches.

17:00 During January through March the cold was indescribable. There were no extra winter clothes. The death marches were for hundreds of miles. If someone fell, he was shot and the march continued. Many carried others, diminishing their own chances.

18:00 The workload was in describable in the coal mines. Joe Lewis and the Coal Miner's Union did a study on how much work concentration camp coal workers exerted in labor. In one day they did the work of a seven day period.

19:00 The work on the railroad was unbearable in the summer heat. What 4 men would carry today, normally, 2 men in the camp carried 2 times as much.

20:00 He and the others were building a generator with one of the highest chimneys. The German engineers and workers were very good, The Jews had to walk up this high chimney.

21:00 There was scaffolding around the chimneys - 3 or 4 layers. Most of the work was at the top. Once one reached the top, one felt exhausted. People sometimes fell off and died. The Germans didn't want this because it was very expensive, fine work. The material cost much. Once a man accidently threw away a valuable piece, and he was beaten to death.

22:00 The work was inhuman, The Jews carried bags of cement packed with 224lbs. each. In America, at this time, bags are only

allowed to be packed 100 lbs. each. Later America even reduced it to 80 lbs.

23:00 He feels he can't give a good enough description. (The interviewer then asked him about what the celebration of holidays in the camp.) He spoke of an old Rabbi who was a chimney commander. The Rabbi said to his brother and him that it would be very good to him if he did not have to be their keeper.

24:00 He went to a camp doctor and asked him if he could help out and enable the Rabbi, who was known throughout the camp, to not have to be the keeper, This assimilated Jewish doctor told him the procedure to be used.

25:00 The doctor gave him some oil which if ingested gave a case of heavy diarrhea. He and the Rabbi took it together and ended up in the infirmary, in the same bed, with the same symptoms. They prayed together.

26:00 At one point the Rabbi said to say it very clearly because they had to double for all. When he (Bart Stern) finished, the Rabbi said he would come out and tell others of his (Bart Stern's) wonders. That night the Rabbi's son came and was bitter. The Rabbi said to him that he doubled for all. During Hanukkah the Jews would burn pieces of cloth put together as Hanukkah candles.

27:00 It embarrasses him today that they risked lives to celebrate and today little thought of it. Most of the Jews didn't even know exactly when the celebration days were to take place. In the camp there was a lot of dreaming and planning for escape, but there was no chance.

28:00 They were in the middle of the "bloodthirsty soil of Poland". It was futile. He believes that if the Jewish people had known the stories of what was going on, half the Jewish population would not have been herded off to the camps.

29:00 He spoke to the doctor whom his parents made, and the doctor asked him why the Jews did nothing to save themselves. He replied, "Because you bastard didn't help us." The Americans and Christians ask the same thing. The Jews were dehumanized in the ghettos. They slept on floors with bundles. The Gestapo and their dogs watched them. The Jews did not know what would happen. They did not believe. He and the others didn't think it was possible.

\* Note. Some words and sentences were not understandable because of Mr. Stern's accent. I did the best I could.  
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