

Good evening. My name is Toby Ticktin Back, the director of the Holocaust Resource Center. And this evening we have a guest with us, and his name is Samuel Friedman. He was born in Lvov, Poland, in 1920, and he's going to tell us his story.

Sam, could you tell us what your life was like in Lvov before the Russians took over?

Before the Russian took over in 1939, when Poland was split between Germany and the Russian, our community was a nice Jewish community, from 130,000 Jewish people. I went to day school. And then I went to a public high school, which I finished in 1939, where I should start to go to the University of Buffalo, just-- oh-- the University of Lvov.

To a university there.

Just the war started in September, and my school was gone. And it was a beautiful Jewish community with a lot of organizations and a lot of communital work, with a hospital, and schools, and Hebrew schools, and Talmud Torahs, and yeshivas, and daily papers, and weekly papers.

Very cultured.

Very high cultural stuff.

And what was your family like? What was your family made of?

My family, my father did have a business. And in my home was seven children.

What kind of business did he have.

We have a wholesale of paper products. And we were middle class, like you said, a middle-class Jewish--

Comfortable.

Yeah, we lived nicely. And the kids have private teachers for religion. And it was a nice Jewish life.

And when did that all change?

And that all changed in September when the Russian come over, took over our city. And everything is gone. The Jewish organization have to close up. And it was a whole change in structure of life.

Your father's business? What happened to that?

My father's business were took over. It was nationalized. And all of the kids went to work because my father couldn't work more. Just, it was-- this life, home was the same like before. It wasn't the same in the street. The community wasn't the same.

Because the Russians were there.

We didn't have more the Jewish federation, like we used to have. We didn't have no political organizations. We didn't have more Zionist work. Just in home life was the same.

You felt safe.

Yeah. The Shabbos was the Shabbos, and the holidays was the holidays, and the family were together. It was the same thing.

And then what happened when the Germans came?

And then, when the war started between Germany and Russia in 1941, then everything changed, really. Then the Germans took over our town. And three weeks later, they organized the ghetto, which means that we all have to leave our--

Your own homes?

--homes and everything. And couldn't take out anything.

You couldn't live in your home and have somebody else come in your home, or wasn't your home in the ghetto area?

No, no, our home wasn't in the ghetto area.

I see. We had to leave the neighborhood and move in in the ghetto.

Did any of your neighbors protest?

No. Everybody was happy.

Yeah. They took over.

They took over. They took the furnitures. They took the things.

Every family in Poland was hundreds years old, and accumulated. Every home have some accumulation from their parents, and grandparents, and--

Silver and china.

Silver and china, and Shabbos [INAUDIBLE] things, and Pesach [INAUDIBLE] things.

So you couldn't take any of this into the ghetto.

Nothing. You have to leave just what you could put in your pockets. And then you move in in the ghetto. And we move in in a house from our friends, where already 10 families lived there.

In one apartment.

In one apartment.

What was that? A two-bedroom apartment? Three-bedroom?

A three-bedroom apartment.

And how many people were you altogether?

30.

30 people in--

Maybe sometimes. Some more. You slept on the floor one next to the other.

And how long did that last, and what was it like?

I wish they would-- this would last for the rest of the war. Just it didn't. And three weeks later, I lost my parents. The German come in and took them away.

Took the older people away.

Older people. They took away in this building, where I used to live, they took away 137 people.

All older people.

All middle-aged people.

Do you know what happened to your parents?

Because my father at this time was just 50 years old.

So he's middle aged.

And we find out later on, in 24 hours they all were killed.

Just killed. They weren't taken to camps. They just killed out in the--

No they were not. Just out of the city. They took them with the trucks out of the city, and they killed them.

And a week later, I was-- they caught me, send me to Auschwitz.

How did they catch you? You mean, they had a roll call?

They have-- I used to work for the Germans.

What did you do?

I used to work on the airport. Clean. Help. Repair.

And one day, they come in. They took all the young-- we used to be all young. And they took us away. They send us to Auschwitz, just like this.

How many days did it take you to get to Auschwitz from Lvov?

Three days.

And you were in a cattle car?

Yeah.

What was that like? Do you remember?

And how I remember.

Things you don't forget. Did they give you food?

If you're a hundred people in the van--

A hundred people in one car.

And you cannot turn around.

Did you get food in your car?

They give us a little bread, yes. They prepared us to tell us how Auschwitz will look.

Did you know where you were going?

No, I didn't know really what a concentration camp is.

What did you expect or what did they tell you?

To go to work. Instead of to work here, we have to work for the Germans in a factory.

And you were all young men, or were young men and women?

We were all in the 20s.

Were there women?

All men.

All men.

In our group was all the men.

And they were all from your town.

They were all in my town. Right. And they send us to Auschwitz, and they give us the number on my-- in our hands. And for four years, my name stopped with Sam Friedman, and it was 113-351.

But I know-- you told me before that your number was changed.

The guy who made the numbers made a mistake. And he put in two guys with the number 113-352. He'd make the mistake. He forgot.

And after three weeks, the Germans, through their control which they used to keep--

Their meticulous control.

Yeah, ridiculous.

Meticulous control.

Exactly. They found out that there are two guys in Auschwitz with the same numbers.

So you were both prisoners, and you both had the same number, and that couldn't be. So you had to get-- so what did-- oh, maybe would you show it to us?

One day, the SS comes in, on the Appell. And they screaming, Haftling number 113-351 come forward. And I didn't, because I know my number was 352, because you have to remember, the number, they didn't call you in your name. They call you in your numbers when they need you.

And he repeats. And he screams, Haftling number 352, come forward. And I didn't. And then he come to me. He said,

what's your number? And I say, 113-- and he started to hit me, because he said I did it myself.

How could you do it yourself? Well that's what you wanted to know.

You don't ask questions.

You don't ask questions when they're so brutal.

And when he hit me, I fessed-- woofed up, and I said, this is my number. And he looked on and said, you did it yourself, and he hit me some more.

And then he changed. He scratched the 2.

He changed the 2 and he made the 1?

Scratched the 2 and put in 1 on top.

What about the one that did it? He wasn't punished for it?

No, he wasn't punished, because he was a German.

Oh, dear. So there is a picture of it on the screen there. Yeah. So it looks like a 1, and you can't see the 2.

You can see I have a 2. Yeah, you see the 2. They were scratched like this.

Scratched out.

And put in 1 on top.

So like an animal, you were branded there.

Yeah, this was my name. You didn't remember your name. Who called you by your name?

In the barracks did you call each other by names? Did you know--

Yes, yes, in the barracks between us, we call our name. And between us. We try to keep the spirit of the Jewish men a little bit higher for those people who could do it.

How did you do that?

Who could organize, who have this faith in God. This-- the end will be.

You could an end.

We will come out from it. And we tried to organize. "We" means this group of people who felt a little better, who have the faith, who didn't ask questions. The main thinking in Auschwitz was not to ask questions.

How can I wash with cold water in wintertime? How can I live on this dry piece of bread and the water soup all day long? After a 14, 15 hours days of work--

You worked 15 hours a day?

From 5 o'clock in the morning to 7 o'clock nights.

What kind of work did you do?

It was building. Mainly was built in this building, it was really construction.

Was it constructive or nonsense building?

No, no, it was constructive. And it was coal, coal, to take out coal.

Oh, to take coal out.

Yeah. And it was a chemical industry which made from coal oil. This was a very big industry in Auschwitz, where 80% of our people used to work to make from coal oil. And it was hard work, and there was no food.

So how did you keep your morale up? It's so interesting that you said--

Faith.

Just faith. Not "just." I mean, faith.

Yeah. That's all. You just. There was really nothing else to hold onto.

That's what kept you going.

The faith does eventually-- rightness will be the winner.

You told me a story about keeping your fellow prisoners clean. Maybe you would tell us that.

A lot of people just didn't have the strength. After coming in at 7 o'clock from 5 o'clock in the morning, after a day's work, and just this little soup, they just fell down on their beds and they didn't want to move. And we know--

Who's the "we"?

This group which we organized, who have a little bit more strength, who didn't give up the hope that one day it will happen. Try to help those other people. We organize our groups, which we took out, plain by hand and feet, these other people who give up. Took them in in the washrooms and washed them.

Oh, you physically picked them up and carried them--

Picked them up by hands and feet, two by the hands, and there were-- and washed them, and clean them, and clean their shirts, and wash their shirts. Has to be washed every day.

How did you dry them? And you didn't have another shirt to put on?

It was frozen dry.

Frozen dry. Oh, dear.

You dried overnight. Next day, you put them on. And this way--

You think people stayed alive--

We helped a lot of our people.

--because of sanitary. We help a-- yeah, this was the most important thing in Auschwitz, really, to keep yourself clean.

And if you are a little cleaner, you have a little bit better spirit--

Sure. You feel better.

--which was very important in Auschwitz, not to let yourself down. Once you start to ask question, how can I live on this piece of bread and soup? It's impossible-- you were lost.

You just have to come and say, I will live through. Better days are coming. Another week. Another month.

It takes a lot of strength to do that.

It takes just a--

And you had a whole group of young men--

Yeah, yeah.

--with you.

We organized in 1944, a little late. Just we did. And it helped a lot of people, which it, thanks, got us now in Canada, and Israel, and the United States, which thanks to this efforts of this small group.

Would you tell the story that you told me about observing Simhat Torah?

And we found in the place a little Torah. In Auschwitz were 40,000--

Inmates. Prisoners.

Inmates. Prisoners. And this thing went from hand to hand.

Where did it come from? Oh, somebody brought it in, and it wasn't taken away.

They brought it in, and it wasn't-- it was very small, really. And there we were singing and dancing. And the SS was thinking that we went crazy. They were really thinking this. We were crazy.

And they didn't shoot you for that?

They didn't shoot you. And what I want-- this is why. They were really thinking-- the people are just dancing without thinking what will happen. I mean, they were really-- it would happen without the responsibilities.

Spontaneously.

The other thing that I want to bring out, a very interesting thing which can happen now in Auschwitz, is one day it really committed. We couldn't have. And the SS was watching every place of us. And we couldn't come together.

So it was late, 10 o'clock nights. We were already in-- in our--

In your bunk beds?

--beds, now. Really, it wasn't that bad. There was a-- three high.

Oh, the tiers of bunks, the bunk beds. The wooden pallets.

This is a better word for it. And one guy just start to sing for himself a Hasidic song. If I will live 500 years, I will never forget this. And another guy started singing with him. And after a few minutes, 240 people--

Were all singing.

--were singing this song. It was a [NON-ENGLISH] without words, which you could put in your own wishes to it.

What you did, I'm sure.

Which we did. And the next day-- no. The fact is the same night, maybe an hour or two-- we used to sing quietly for the session-- a guy come in to me to-- was sitting on my bed, and told me, Sammy, I was never a believer. I didn't believe in all these stories with God will take us out, and God will help us, and God will see to it that we should come out alive from it. I didn't believe it. Just this song tonight--

Changed him.

Changed me. Brought me back. This, I can tell you I am a new person.

This song tonight gave me so much spirit, so much faith. It was a beautiful song.

Do you remember it?

Well, sure.

Could you sing a--

No, I wouldn't sing it now. It's just a--

Just a little bit of the cadence?

A fact is, [NON-ENGLISH], as I was davening in our shul, and I was the chazzan. And you know, [NON-ENGLISH], you have a special prayer for rain. And I was saying this prayer with this song.

Much later on, a few people come over to me and tell me, I know this song.

Oh. Do you think they from the same source?

And they heard it. The song is on some plates from the ghettos, is this song made out later, after the war.

And things like this--

So you had your own form of resistance.

--brought back. Yeah. Brought back, give the people a lot of faith and belief. And really hope that eventually it will end, that we will be free.

Did you have any word of the outside world? We did a little bit, because a lot of Polish people used to work in these plants--

Oh, so they worked there.

--with our people. So we really did know what's going on. We did know that Stalingrad fall, and Germans have to go leave Russia, and they're coming close every time.

And we did know that American start in Normandy the invasion. And we did know eventually it will not be forever.

So you had faith there too.

That Hitler will, in the end, he will be a loser.

But did you know that--

[CROSS TALK].

--that Auschwitz had crematoria?

Sure, we did know. What do you mean? You did know? You feeled it in the air. The smell was 24 hours with you.

So you knew it.

The smell of this burning corpse, which burned 24 hours. It was there. You could feel it. You can touch it with your-- with your fingers.

And this was the whole action. I was to help. We know it, in the end, this will happen to you if you will not watch yourself, if you will not take care of yourself.

So this was the main thing.

Did you ever meet Dr. Mengele?

No, I didn't. I didn't. He was mostly between women.

Oh, for choosing the strong ones and the weak ones?

Choosing the strong, yeah. Really, he was the most-- no, I didn't. I never met him.

Do you have any more stories to tell us about the resistance. That's something we haven't heard about too much.

The resistance, what I want to bring out is how the Jewish population behaved. How they did, how they live in the ghetto and in concentration camp. I think it's very important to know that when the people went in a neighborhood where before the war used to live 15,000 people, now was squeeze in 130,000 people.

It's hard to imagine.

No food, little bread and water-- just enough to go on with life.

And in the feat of all this, they organized school for kids in cellars. They organized concerts.

What happened if you were caught by the Nazis? Or you just didn't get caught?

No, they're permitted to do it. The Nazis themselves was afraid to come in in the ghetto because they were afraid to catch some kind of a sickness, because then I will soon pass 130,000 people who live in the same place where 15,000 used to live before, is still any kind of sickness shouldn't come in.

They didn't know the Jewish people, that the Jewish people can withstand thing what a normal person cannot, because they still used to wash, and clean in the walls and the floors 10 times a day. Try really to go on with life.

And this what I think it's during. And they really, really try one for each other, to help each other.

In some bad times, people didn't live just for themselves. Yeah, they were always thinking to share with somebody else, even this when they didn't have it. Share this faith, and the hope, glass of water. Have a piece of dry bread.

So you felt that helped to keep you--

I think this was very, very important. I think this-- to keep the morals, and to show this. Even in bad times like this, when other nation would murder each other and either-- we did still have our high, moral, and ethic life, which means to share and to help. And there--

On Simhat Torah, we didn't have the Torah. We used to dance with the children on our thing. And this was our Torah. We know we have to try for them, because we will not live, they will live. And they can tell the story of the heroism of the Jewish people in bad times like this.

And the Nazis didn't prevent it, because they just didn't want to be part of it or come in.

They didn't want to-- and they couldn't believe that there's-- something like this can happen.

And you were able to continue this in some part in the concentration camp.

We continued to somebody was killed. He continued to do it, except if he was killed. He couldn't do it. So how long he was alive, he really try to know when Shabbat is, and to easy up a little bit work. The SS didn't work on, and--

You worked on Shabbat.

Sure. Oh, yeah. We worked seven days a week. We work on Sundays too. There was no day off.

Did they work too? Didn't they get-- oh, they had a different shift, I guess.

They didn't have. Just the SS who was watching us, just a steady of every day one SS was for 20 people. Then, on Sunday, one SS was for 50 people.

So they didn't know. They didn't know we can-- we cannot do anything. Who have the strength to do something?

And to ease you up a little, to go a little slower on Shabbos. To sing some prayers.

[INTERPOSING VOICES]

To make a little bit of a difference.

To make a little difference, the Shabbos.

I know a lot of people who this little meat, this was in the soup. And it was a joke. It was three little pieces. They took this out. How hungry they were. How undernourished they were. I mean, they took it out. They didn't want to eat.

Not kosher.

Not kosher. I mean, this is heroism. Looking back, I myself sometimes are amazed, and many times I think about it, how great these people were in Auschwitz.

Really, we saw the Polish people-- not just other nations. But it is really was so selfish. And they were just living for themself, trying to steal from each other.

And here was a people in the same waters with the other groups, and they tried to help each other, to share with each

other, and to help each other. This is heroism. It's like fighting on the front.

It's resistance. It's virtual resistance.

Resistance. Right. And I think--

What amazes me--

I was very glad--

--is that you stayed alive for three years in Auschwitz. That's quite a record, isn't it?

Well, it was a little mazel too, a little luck. No question. God was good to me, and he felt that I should stay alive.

Did you have any more food than anybody else?

No. When I was freed from the American Army, I weighed 90 pounds.

And what was your normal weight? About 140?

130, 140. 90 pounds. I couldn't walk. The American soldier who'd found me picked me up by the hands and put me in on his Jeep, and he took me to the hospital.

You stayed in the hospital for a while? The Americans send me to Switzerland for three weeks. So I come back a little bit--

That must have helped tremendously.

--to myself. Sure.

Did you have any friends or relatives with you in the camp?

I have my brother.

Your brother was there all the time?

My brother was together with me. We found each other in Auschwitz. He was arrested after me.

And one day I was in washroom washing my hands. And somebody took me by my ears, and I looked back, and I looked at him. I didn't recognize him.

He had gotten so thin already.

And he said to me, Sam, don't you recognize me? And his voice I recognized. And we didn't see each other just a year before. It was just the one year.

He just changed so much.

He changed so much during the few weeks what he was in Auschwitz.

How many of you seven-- you were seven altogether.

We were seven altogether at home.

So how many of your siblings--

Three.

--remained?

Three.

Three.

Yes. And we were all together. Me and my brother were together in Auschwitz all the time.

And the third one?

And the third one was the oldest, my sister, which lives now in Australia. She left our town. She was a Polish girl. She took herself a Polish name, and she went to work for a cleaning women for a German family.

And then she must have gotten picked up, I guess.

No, she was--

Oh, she came into the camp as a Polish person?

No, no. She was not in camp at all. She was never in camp. She was just all the time in Vienna working for a German family.

Later, after the war, they said that they did know that she was Jewish, just they didn't want to say nothing. Just she said no. It's not true that they didn't know.

You don't believe them.

No, he was a typical German. If he would know that she is Jewish, she would have went to the Gestapo and would give her up.

Maybe my sister said his wife, maybe. So he positive. He was so--

She must have been frightened every day for her life.

She was. She was. Just thanks God she was-- she went through. And she's alive, lives now in Australia.

Are there any people in Buffalo with whom you were in Auschwitz?

Yeah, there are a few. There are a few people in Buffalo. We were together in Auschwitz all the time. And I recognized them. They didn't recognize me, because-- just I recognized them. And when I saw them the first time, Buffalo, I went, and I said we were together, and we are very good friends.

Do you remember liberation day? My liberation day? My liberation day was 1st of May 1945. It was Patton's army. The war was still on.

And we were in a town near Munich in Germany. And the Germans just left us, in the middle of the field.

Wait. What were you doing in the town? You weren't in Auschwitz anymore?

No, no, we were evacuated from Auschwitz on the 18th of January '45.

Were you in one of those marches?

One of those marches.

Through the snow.

Every day we walked. Later on, they put us on railroad trains and took us deep in Germany. And we went from one camp to the other.

Why do you think they bothered, all that waste of person power and trains?

Good question. I cannot understand till today why did it.

They could have been fighting the war.

To the day--

Because they were following orders. Somebody gave an order.

Somebody gave the order, and the Germans don't ask questions, and they follow the orders. And they took us from one place to the other.

I bet quite a few died along--

All this time-- a lot of them. I would say from the 6 million, what we lost during the war, we sure lost a half a million--

Just on these forced marches.

--at this time, from January the 18 to May of the same year.

What kind of clothes were you wearing then? Did you have a coat?

No.

You just-- well, what did you have?

This Haftling. This-- did you ever saw this Haftling clothes?

The striped pajama top and the bottoms.

Striped pajama, and that's it.

And underwear? Did you have underwear?

No.

No underwears. And clogs for shoes? Wooden shoes?

Yeah, wooden shoes, right.

So you didn't have an overcoat.

No, we didn't

And you were marching in very cold--

Yeah, and we warm ourself up, And we link one and each other.

While you were walking.

Yeah, while we're walking.

It's amazing. And now we wear down coats.

For eating, we have snow.

Oh, they didn't give you any food.

A little.

A little bit.

Bread. Not enough. This is why I weighed 90 pound, because how long you were sitting in Auschwitz. They give you a little less food.

Just you sit the kind of place. You have your bed. You can lay down. You have your washroom. You get your wash every day. You get used to it, even to the worst things. You get used to once you live with it.

Just this evacuation was terrible, because you didn't have a-- you didn't sleep. You didn't eat. You didn't have a place.

Where did you sleep? Where did they take you? In a barn or something?

In a barn. Right.

And did any of the townspeople try to help you?

There was-- no, you couldn't. The SS didn't let. And this was to-- we came to a small town near Munich, May 1. Two days earlier, already, the German left us alone. The SS left us.

Oh, they left, and--

They know what's going on. They left us.

They didn't want to be captured.

They wouldn't be-- and where could we go? We were just-- didn't have the strength to go any place.

So where were you at this point?

We were sitting in a field in this town. And then the American Army came in. And they start to take care of us. It wasn't too many leftovers from us.

How many of you were left?

When we left Auschwitz we were 28,000, and we-- when the American Army freed us, we were 5,000. So it was really not too many to take care of.

Were any of your friends or relatives among those that died along the way?

No. No, I didn't have. My brother was staying in Auschwitz because he was a kid. They didn't evacuate the kids. They evacuated grownups--

Oh, he was much younger.

--the grownups. So they left him in Auschwitz. He was there when the Russian Army come in to Auschwitz and freed them. So he was there.

So the Americans liberated you. And then you were-- what did they do with you?

And then the marvelous DP camp, Feldafing, which was very famous DP camp, because the first Yom Kippur after the-- after General Eisenhower come to visit us, and didn't like it, what he saw. It's again a camp, and it's again 10 families in one house, and every room.

So what did he do about it?

So he put in an order that the town should be evacuated, and we should move in in the town. It was a summer town with summer houses in this town.

A resort town.

A resort town where the rich people used to live only in summertime. In wintertime they used to live in the-- in other parts of Germany. And when General Eisenhower visited the town, the town was an empty town because the people didn't live.

So he put in this order-- it's a famous order-- to open up the houses so this people from the DP camps can move in over there.

And the houses had furniture and linens and were for--

Oh, it was the most beautiful villas.

So you all went into different--

Oh, we moved in.

And you to?

No, I was not living on this time in Feldafing. I was already living in another town privately, a room by the German family.

Must have been so good to get away from--

It was.

--from the camp.

I just couldn't stand it, my DP camp. And again, this communal kitchen where you have to stay in the line again with your food. It was just too much.

You mentioned that you were so ill that they evacuated you to Switzerland?

Yeah, they send me for three. I was very, very sick. And my luck was the first person who met me was a doctor, a Jewish doctor, but was with the American Army. And he looked at me, and he said, you know that you're very sick?

You didn't know you were very sick?

And he spoke a little Yiddish. So we could communicate. And he told me, I have to go with the Army. I cannot stay here. So he give me a name.

And he told me, the next group comes in, ask just for this name. Show everybody this card. Tomorrow will come another group, and he will help you. And then this group, and then come another doctor.

And he told me, I have to go too, just with the tour group. There will come, and somebody will help you, because this is their job-- to help the American soldiers which are sick or wounded. And he have all this.

And so it happened, as I was just laying there on the floor, on the third day this group comes in. And he told me, you know, I send you with the American soldiers together to Switzerland. Don't say anything. Don't open up your mouth. You just go with them. And then they sent me to Switzerland.

You were probably too weak to protest, I guess.

And for three weeks I was there, and they build me up, and they send me back to Germany. So it was an experience.

A lot of thanks to American Army, just I am still alive too.

Thank goodness that they liberated.

Because I am sure if that wouldn't have happened in another-- in Bergen-Belsen, there's 150,000 people died after the war.

Because they weren't taken care of?

Because they didn't take care of that.

Isn't that something, to live so wrong?

Like this doctor told me, you shouldn't eat nothing. You shouldn't touch food. Even they will give you. Your stomach is not used to the American food. And you have to be careful.

Oh, so you started with soft food, baby food, pap food.

Exactly. And this is what happened in Switzerland. They really try to give me a little bit at a time. And this way they built me up. Just a lot of people overeat.

Sure, they didn't know.

And then they died. So sad--

It was a big tragedy--

--to be through that.

--after the war to see some people dying just because nobody was there to take care of them. Because you have to remember, that in this time the war was still on. The war wasn't finished till May the 9th, when I'm talking May 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, which the war was still on. The Germans were-- the American Army still have to fight the Germans.

Until June. Until June 6.

Right.

What happened to your brother? You said your brother-- you left your brother behind.

Yeah, we left my brother behind. And then, after the war, I went to Poland to look for him. And when I came to Poland I found out that he left already for Israel. So he went right away. They organize it.

So in 1945 that was illegal.

Yeah. Yeah, it was illegal.

So he went illegal immigration. So the British must have--

Immigration. And they took him to Cyprus.

They picked him up.

And he was two years in Cyprus.

From one camp to another camp.

In 1947 they smuggling in into Israel.

Into Israel. Into Palestine. It wasn't Israel yet.

To Palestine in this time, yes. Yes. And he lives now in Israel, wife, two beautiful children. Very happy.

Everybody has an interesting story of-- a different kind of story. And did you find anybody else besides your brother? Oh, your sister. How did you get--

Yeah, I found my sister. I found her after the war through the Jewish organization, because the Jewish organizations after the war organize it very, very good, the names in a book.

Was that HIAS?

You could-- no, no. the United--

JDC?

JDC.

JDC.

United Jewish Appeal. I mean, Joint.

Joint.

Right, they're called-- organized a book. Every month, they put out a new book with new names. They were just with your name. That's all they were.

These were names of people who survived.

And my sister found my name and one of those books, Samuel Friedman, born in Lvov. And she knows this is it. And right away, she wrote me, and I went to Vienna to see her. And this way-- and after a few years I went to Israel to see my brother.

That must have been quite a reunion.

| Sure.

Have you been to Germany?

No.

You can't bring yourself to go to Germany.

I really wasn't interested. It wasn't for me why to go to Germany. What is the point?

Well, I understand now--

If I go I go to Israel. And if I stay, I stay in Israel. Not really interested to see more of the world. It wasn't too nice to us during the war time. And I think we people should remember this, that nobody was nice to us.

I remember the first time when I went to Israel in 1956, I make reservations to see our friends in Belgium on the way back from Israel.

From the camps or from the home.

From the camp. And I was two weeks in Israel. And it was the day to leave Israel for Belgium. And I canceled my visit to Belgium, and I say, every day I'm not in Israel is a lost year for me. And until today, I'm happy I did it. I didn't miss nothing in Belgium. I call my friends, and I say, you want to see me, you come to Israel.

Did they?

We saw each other later on.

You saw it eventually.

Yeah, later we organized to be the same time in Israel. I didn't feel I should visit Europe.

So you don't have any feelings about going to Germany, to Auschwitz to see--

Not any place.

Some people go there to make a sentimental journey.

People should go. Yeah, it's nothing. I don't criticize. Nothing wrong. I even told my brother when I was in Israel two years ago, I say, if you decided I would go to Auschwitz, I go with you. I wouldn't go alone. Just--

Well, some people take their children.

My kids ask me one day, Daddy, you want us we should go to Auschwitz? I say, no. I want you to go to Israel. It will give you more than Auschwitz. I give you enough Auschwitz.

So you're seeking only from the positive aspect.

Enough already to see there. And really, you cannot [NON-ENGLISH]. How do you say it in--

You can't reconcile. You can't straighten out what--

It's how it was, when we were there at this time, how it looks now. I mean from the reality to a museum is a big, big difference.

So when you see the movies on television--

If you live for three or four years with one thing in your mind, and this one thing has to have enough a piece of bread tonight, and to have left over a little bit for tomorrow morning, it could never happen.

So hunger was with you.

This was the dream. It wasn't a dream to have a woman, to go to a concert, to live like a person. No. The dream was to eat enough bread, and to have a little bit left over for the next day.

So basically, taken so much for granted.

So how can you see it when you go now to Auschwitz?

Yeah. The feeling isn't there.

Exactly. How could you feel to say in Auschwitz, in wintertime, in February, in March, in bitter cold, on the Appell place, where they count you--

The roll call.

--when you-- what?

The roll call.

Roll call. When you walked in after all day long, cold, bitter cold work. And you're staying there because they missed one man. Instead your 43,100 was 43,099. So they let you stay three, four hours--

In the cold.

--in the cold, frozen, because one man was missing. Now can you see it now if you go to Auschwitz?

No, no. You just see the bare outline.

So I don't feel for me it would bother me that you don't see it. The reality in Auschwitz was really, really very difficult to understand.

And your question to start was a good question. How did you stay alive with this kind of-- how did you? Question was, God was good to me. This was-- not another answer. It wasn't better from somebody else? I didn't have more food from somebody else because it didn't exist.

It was just God was good to me, give me the luck to stay alive. So I can sit here and tell the stories, how it was.

And just like I say, the most important thing is that the people today who are not there, or their grandparents or their uncles, can be proud of the behavior, of the spirit, of the high morality at the--

Even in the camps.

--of the Jewish people in this kind of timing.

That is amazing, that--

So this is how--

--the morale, or the morals, didn't change.

Sometimes I myself am amazed how people behaved in this kind of times, when really everybody should be in himself, and try to live through, and steal this piece of bread from somebody else so you should have a little bit more. Could never happen. It did happen. Other groups. Not in the Jewish group.

When you see pictures or scenes from the camps or from the ghettos, like we have on television, do you think they present the picture accurately?

They try.

They try?

Maybe not. It's the same thing. You either have the spirit, how it was there. I mean, you don't recognize that at 10 o'clock nights in dark, everybody's hungry. I mean hungry. Not hungry with the meaning tomorrow morning I expect a good lunch. Just knowing that tomorrow morning I don't expect anything again.

And seeing this [INAUDIBLE], who. Just close your eyes and think about it quietly. The session they had outside, 240 people, with all crying their heart out with prayers. Why? Why is this happening? It's hard to understand. Just it's a high-

Of course, these songs were songs of your home.

They're high spirited.

It kept you--

It's a story. It shows you this greatness. I don't know if you saw it. We have the [PERSONAL NAME] rebbe today in New York. He's a rabbi, a man in the 70s. He was in a concentration camp in my town. My town have a concentration camp too. They organized after they send me already down.

And he says, tells a story, that in this town, in this camp with him, was another Jew which wrote a letter to him through another man. A man wrote him a letter. He opened up this letter, and the letter was 50 American dollars.

And the man writes this-- in half an hour I will be dead, because they're taking us now to the death camp. Please, for this \$50, see there should be written a Torah in my name and in my wife's name.

And with the rebbe-- grand rebbe come to New York. And the first meeting when he came, they were called a meeting in New York. And he wrote this. And he was telling about this letter, and the organizer to write a Torah. And the Torah is now one of the big yeshivas in New York.

And the name of this man and his wife.

And the name of this. It shows you, what were people thinking in this kind of a minute? Now who would believe it, that in this kind of a minute when he faced death, he was thinking this, to write a Torah in his name and in his wife's name.

That's quite powerful--

It's amazing.

--to perpetuate the life.

It shows you the standard of living in the ghetto and in the concentration camps.

Sam, I know this is a little inane compared to what you were just talking, but how are you affected by food today?

At my house must never throw away food. Never.

You just can't--

Never. Never. It didn't exist to throw away something. Every little bit was-- we couldn't finish it--

So that's a remainder from the camps.

Firstly, we always teach not to put in too much in front of the kids, in front of us. Just enough so you should--

To satisfy yourself.

Just if it was leftovers, always put away, and I have it the next day. It didn't exist. I learn my kids. Daddy will never forget. And you picked up with your fingers the little pieces, and I put it on your mouth, every little piece.

Well, that's a yerusha. That's an inheritance from the camps.

Yeah.

Do you tell your children these stories?

Oh, yes.

They know.

Yes. I always just to talk about it. I always--

Some people can't. That's right.

I always was thinking it's very important to kids to know their heritage. They didn't have grandparents. They have to know why. Everybody from their friends have grandparents. Everybody from their friends have uncles, cousins.

Why Dad didn't have it? It was important to explain to them why-- just because they were Jewish. We didn't have a war against nobody. We didn't fight against nobody. Just because they were Jewish, they were killed. They should know this, how important it should be to them.

And they do know it if you tell them. They're good children.

They do know. I think this is why my daughter loves Israel. That's why she lives in Israel. And my kids are very Jewish minded. They try to keep--

And they have the morality that you-- that kept you alive.

They understand. Morality and ethics is very, very important. You are not born just to eat and to have a good time. You

have a mission in your life.

I usually end and ask people if they have a message to give to us, but you've already given us the message. And I thank you very much for coming. I know it's very difficult to talk.

Thank you very much for being invited. I was glad if I can explain, hoping that the young people who watch this, and will learn something from our experience.

I hope so. Thank you very much, Sam.

Thank you for being inviting.

Thank you.