

INTERVIEW WITH DOV ESHEL

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INTERVIEW WITH DOV ESHEL

INTERVIEWER: It's February 14th, 1995. I'm about to interview Dov Eshel, originally born Dov Altshuler (sp?), in Poland. He will tell you the details of his life momentarily. I'm just going to check the recording now. Thank you. (Pause)

Okay, Dov, why don't you identify yourself for us? Your name, age, place of birth, marital status, who are you? The statistical end of this.

DOV ESHEL: My name, is first name Dov, last name Eshel. Previous Altshuler. Born in 26th of November, 1925. Presently living in Israel. Retired.

INT: Where in Israel?

DOV: In Netanya. Which is the central part of Israel. I'm retired; used to work many years as a teacher, and many years later as a...counselor.

INT: School psychologist.

DOV: School, yeah. I would call it in Hebrew, educational psychology. What else would you like to know?

INT: Well, where did you work?

DOV: Oh, I worked in a boarding school -- it was a youth and children's village. Approximately 500 students living in the village, and another 600 coming from other villages around. Only during the daytime. Approximately 1100, 1200 students a day, I mean, during the daytime.

My job was first a guidance counselor, then I was responsible for all the psychological services for the children. I had a staff of psychologists, counselors, social workers, etc.

INT: And where did you receive your education?

DOV: My bachelor degree, I received in the University of Tel Aviv. Master's degree, Yeshiva University in New York.

INT: And are you married, do you have any children?

DOV: Yeah, I am married, I have...

INT: How long have you been married?

DOV: I'm married now...let me remember. 21 years, I think, at least, yeah. 21 years.

INT: Is this your first, second, third marriage?

DOV: This is my second marriage. We have a son. My wife has two other sons from her previous marriage. They don't live with us anymore. The oldest one is married and has a daughter. The other one is still a bachelor. And my youngest, **our**...

INT: How old are they?

DOV: He must be 30 years old, approximately.

INT: And the married one?

DOV: The married one is 32, or 33 years old. I don't really remember now. And our son -- youngest son -- is serving now in the army, and he will be 21 next September.

INT: How old is your wife?

DOV: My wife must be now...53.

INT: And what does she do?

DOV: She's working in the same youth village, as a nurse.

INT: Uh-huh. What's her education from? Where was she born?

DOV: She was born, she grew up in Switzerland. And her education is...biology. First, how you call it, first bachelor's degree, or first degree in biology. And she used to work in a hospital, in research. And when she married me, came to the village, and they needed a nurse. Her experience was...I mean, rich enough to do this job. Assist them, for twenty years, she works in our...what we call there a village hospital. It's not a hospital.

INT: Infirmary.

DOV: Infirmary? Yeah. It's called a hospital, because the sick children, when they are sick, they are hospitalized there. We have ten rooms for sick children.

INT: And if she's in her fifties, that means she went through, when was she born, and...

DOV: She was born in the war.

INT: During the war?

DOV: '41. During the war.

INT: Uh-huh. How did she survive?

DOV: She, as a baby -- I don't know exactly what age, but months, a baby, very young baby -- with other, quite a few Jewish babies were saved and smuggled in from France into Switzerland, and adopted by Swiss families. And she grew up in a Swiss family.

INT: As a Jew or a Christian?

DOV: As a Christian until age thirteen, not knowing at **all** that she is adopted or Jewish.

INT: So her parents were French Jews?

DOV: Yeah, or course. Her parents were killed in the Holocaust. And as a matter of fact, she doesn't even know who she is, who are her family, or who is the biological family.

INT: Does she know if she had any brothers or sisters or anything?

DOV: No.

INT: So...

DOV: Those times in the Holocaust, you couldn't even have, no one was really interested to find out. The family who adopted, they were not interested to know **at all** where she comes from.

INT: Did they know that she was Jewish?

DOV: Of course.

INT: But they raised her as a Christian. Protestant, Catholic, which part of...

DOV: Protestant. Very liberal house. Protestant, not really religious, but she grew up. Only after, they didn't have children of course. That's why they adopted. Only after they adopted **her**, two new children were born.

INT: And you say she knew, she didn't know she was Jewish until thirteen. What happened when she was thirteen?

DOV: Probably. I don't know if the chief rabbi, or the other rabbi in Switzerland who knew about this, those many, many Jewish children adopted in Switzerland, he...

INT: Who facilitated this adoption?

DOV: Who knows? I don't know. I don't know. But it was probably organized by someone. In one hand, it was saving the children; on the other hand, it was very convenient for the families

to have those children, so they didn't have to go to Brazil and pay \$10,000, which is what people do today to buy children. (laughs) So they were very satisfied, and they were not interested to tell anyone that those children are adopted. But he knew, and probably was...

INT: "He" is the village rabbi, you said?

DOV: Not the village rabbi. The rabbi from Bern, or Luzerne, or Geneva, I don't know.

INT: Which city in Switzerland was she raised?

DOV: The French part of Switzerland, because I mean, she doesn't like to talk about it, I don't bother her. I don't ask too many questions. It's not a pleasant experience, she doesn't want to remember all those old times.

INT: But what happened when she was...

DOV: She would like to wipe out the past.

INT: What happened when she was thirteen?

DOV: First she rebelled, like any other adolescent rebels, and now she had more reason to rebel, if she knew they were not her parents. And that she is Jewish. She tried to find out what it **is** to be Jewish. So they sent her to boarding school for girls in Bern, which is the capital of Switzerland. So she has more opportunities to meet Jews and to find out what it is. And she joined the youth movement, Shomer Hatzair, and she wanted very much to make aliyah to Israel. Because she thought that my people live there, and I will find out who I am.

INT: Did she have a good relationship with her family?

DOV: Yeah. I mean, in those times, maybe as a young, at this age maybe it was a kind of, sort of rebellion. To leave the family. I can imagine that no one was happy. They were not happy, she wasn't happy. They didn't imagine. But on the other hand, they had already children -- their own. So they didn't really care what will happen to **her**, because they had, they had two young children, a boy and a girl. So they didn't really oppose to this idea of her to go to Israel.

INT: And that was at age thirteen?

DOV: No.

INT: That was later.

DOV: Of course, it was a process. From age thirteen until eighteen.

INT: Until eighteen.

DOV: Because you are, you are not allowed to do anything before you reach maturity.

INT: So at eighteen she made aliyah?

DOV: Approximately. Maybe eighteen and a half. Finished her studies, I don't know.

INT: Do you know where she was educated? In Switzerland, or in Israel?

DOV: In Bern.

INT: Her fist, her B.A. in biology is from Switzerland, too?

DOV: From Switzerland school. Remember, I don't know the exact dates. Maybe there is some...

INT: In between.

DOV: Yeah, I don't know. I never asked about it. I could see how she feels about it, and I never asked. I never tried to really talk. It didn't matter to me. I respect her will not to talk about this, and I never tried to go to the bottom of the...matter.

INT: Did she ever give you a sense of what was so upsetting about the situation, that she felt betrayed that they didn't tell her, or she felt disconnected from her people, or...

DOV: No, in those times, contrary to our times, today, people wouldn't tell adopted children that they are adopted. It's not because she was Jewish. Usually people would want to have the children as their natural biological child. I mean, they never told anyone. The situation was complicated, because I mean, they were disappointed, she was disappointed, they were disappointed that she wants to run away from home. And she was disappointed that maybe...they didn't treat her as well now after their children were born. She wasn't anymore so important. You know, a first child, an only child, she was a princess. And later on, when the other children were born...(sighs) she lost this (laughs) priority. All the rights. And I mean, it's a natural process. Even if you were a biological child, it could happen. I will tell you later something interesting about the bechora.

INT: About the first-born.

DOV: Yeah. I was always curious. Why all the cultures almost, the first-born children, they inherit the title, the property of the father, and so on. And why not the other children, a part of it? That was the reason why Jacob bought out the bechora, the right. So I spoke to a very interesting anthropologist, and he told me the real reason for it in all the cultures, that the first child suffers more, you can tell, than other children, because on this child the parents learn to be parents (interviewer laughs) and make all the mistakes with their first-born child. And he has to be re-compensated.

INT: I see. That's a very interesting theory.

DOV: Very interesting, yeah.

INT: So when she came to Israel, what did she do?

DOV: She looked for a job. And she didn't speak Hebrew, it was very difficult, and she was close to the medical profession (laughs) so they gave her to clean the, how you call this, glass...

INT: Test tubes.

DOV: Test tubes. That was her job in the laboratory, to clean test tubes. Until someone discovered her, her boss, very well-known professor for his research on blood disease, he somehow discovered that she could do something better than this. This is how she got the job. In the hematology laboratory. And then she married, her first marriage...

INT: Of what?

DOV: It's called hematology.

INT: No, which hospital or institution?

DOV: Ah. Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem, yeah. And then she married in Jerusalem, and she used to live in Jerusalem. One year, after this, after one year she came to Hadassim, where I met her first, and then she changed places, because her husband used to change places every year. She couldn't take...

INT: You mean change jobs?

DOV: Change jobs, yeah. Of course. She couldn't take it anymore. And how they divorced. And I don't remember how many years they lived together. At least now, I don't remember. I don't recall exactly.

INT: And she had children from this marriage?

DOV: Yeah, sure.

INT: The two boys you mentioned before. And how would you describe your socio-economic level?

DOV: On the Israeli (?), what you call, the...

INT: The standard.

DOV: The standard, I would call this middle class.

INT: Lower middle, upper, middle middle?

DOV: It's middle middle. Our salary is like the salaries of teachers, which is not a very high class in Israel, economically speaking. This is the proletariat of the intelligence.

INT: I see. What kind of place do you live in?

DOV: The place is very nice. The neighborhood is not, is completely different (laughs) from our economic situation. I mean, it's a neighborhood, a very exclusive, in Netanya, at least in Netanya, according to the Israeli standard, as I said before, it is a place where well-situated people with a high education, or a high profit live there, like lawyers, and judges...

INT: Apartment, private homes.

DOV: It's private homes. Private homes, which for itself is very expensive in Israel, in comparison to apartment, condo. But it was my dream, because for many, many years I lived in a village, saving money. We didn't pay rent, we didn't have any expenses. Just not to be forced later to live in a condominium. But I needed land around my house.

INT: Why is that important to you?

DOV: It's important to me, I like...country. I like earth. I like to feel with my feet, walking on earth, walking in the garden. Not to live only in four walls, only in bricks and so.

INT: What are your hobbies now that you're retired?

DOV: Oh. I do everything possible, but I like first of all, this gardening. I like to repair everything at home. Carpentry. I have all the tools, necessary tools at home. I like to do, I have a theory about this, also. It's similar to the theory why all through generations very few women were artists, like sculptors, or painters, or...it has to...why is that? So I heard also this theory that men, women create life. They don't need, they don't have the need to create something else. They give birth to children, and especially in those times, every year was with childbirth. They had their satisfaction, they had their...they were busy. Men didn't create anything. Except for working somewhere at sometimes very dull jobs. So men, males, they had this need for creativity. And those of them who really succeed, they are artists to create. And maybe I like very much manual work, because really, all of my jobs were mostly not to do anything, just to sit and to listen to people, if I wanted to listen, sometimes even not that. I didn't do anything **really**. That I have this **need** to do things with my hands. To see results immediately. To see something growing under my hand. And that is probably why I like so much to build. For instance, I built really a new wall in my garden, just from bricks, like building a wall. People ask, "Why do you need a wall?" I said, "I don't need the wall; I need to build something." And this is also with gardening. You see results. You see something growing. Oh, I like flowers, I like to see how plants grow. I see it's like children. It's my creation, it's my...that's why I like it.

Besides all this, I like to travel a lot. I like to meet people. I like people. I...film, and make pictures, and write a little bit about my travels, only for myself. Maybe for my next generations. But meanwhile no one is reading it. (laughs) Only for myself.

INT: So you have many albums and journals, diaries, things like that?

DOV: Yeah. Journals and diaries. Albums, and videocassettes, with all those memories from our, a document of our trips, like to Far East, China, or India, which is very interesting. And I am very glad, because it happened, it just happened, that all those people who went with us on this trip, liked my film very much, and they asked me for copies, and I make copies for all the participants in this. We usually travel with a group, which gives me a lot of satisfaction, because other people do also make films, but they prefer **mine**. (Interviewer laughs) Although they have **theirs**. So it's like flattering my ego.

INT: So it sounds as if you, how would you describe your life now?

DOV: Now? I am satisfied. Only what I need is health, good health. Because I was quite worried before I retired. What will I do? I mean, people scared me. "You will not have a job, you're such an active man, you like to do things. What will you do with yourself?" It was quite scaring. Scaring you say?

INT: Scary.

DOV: Scary. But...it just came out that I, strangely enough, have less time today than I had when I used to work the full-time job. I don't know how to explain it. I do more things. I like to go and swim, in the country club. I'm too busy. I like to cook sometimes something to help out my wife when she goes to work. I am busy with my son. I don't know. I have no time. A lot of things that I plan to do when I will retire, I didn't do them. I postponed, and it's almost two years, and I ask myself, "When will I do it?" And I think, when I will retire from retirement probably. (interviewer laughs) Because funny, I don't know. I have no time. (laughs) I say, people ask me, and I say, "I have no time." "You're a lucky man." Okay, I'm a lucky man.

INT: Do you belong to any organizations?

DOV: No, not at all. Organizations? No.

INT: So how would you describe your social life?

DOV: It is a problem. You see, I have my friends, previous (?) and some neighbors, in the neighborhood where we live. We meet people, we meet on holidays. We meet people who I know every year new people with whom we travel. Then we meet later on, we keep on...But...I wouldn't know how to describe really, it's nothing like on a steady basis I mean, except a very, very small circle, very, very close friends, whom we don't have to meet every week to remain friends. If you meet once a month, or once in a half a year, we know that we are still good friends, we can always...people are busy. And...my wife works very often, changes shifts day

and night. They have evening not as free. Or for instance, every second Shabbat, every second weekend she has to work. I have only 50% of weekends free, so we cannot really travel every weekend or meet people every weekend. So it somehow minimizes our social activities. But no one complains. And really, whenever I want to see you, I can see anyone I want. I have free time.

INT: And how...do you go to synagogue? How would you describe your religious affiliation?

DOV: (pause) None. You know (trouble with tape)

INT: (laughs) Go ahead.

DOV: I am not a religious man. I mean, I am deeply...aware of my Jewishness, and of belonging to the Jewish people. I know a lot about our tradition. I've learned, I've studied a lot, and I know a lot. My family...

INT: Where did you study?

DOV: I studied at Tel Aviv University in Bible Studies. And even you don't have the study...

INT: That was a minor field of yours, or a major?

DOV: At that time, it's not like in U.S. At that time, in order to get a bachelor's degree, you had to take two majors. Even if they didn't have to do anything with each other, psychology and Bible studies have nothing to do, nothing in common. Now they don't do it anymore. I complained a lot about this, because it was very difficult; to major in Bible studies was **very** difficult. But I learned a lot. I knew even before. I mean, I grew up in a religious family, like in Diaspora, each Jewish family were religious. Also my father, he was a scholar, but he also didn't observe all the mitzvot of Judaism. And as well as I don't do. But I know a lot about Judaism. I respect religious people. I myself, the only thing maybe I do now, at least the last two years, since I moved into this neighborhood, I participate in a circle, like which organizes, or initiated by our local rabbi, once a week, we meet people to study, to have some religious studies, or...

INT: What do you study?

DOV: We began with Tanach, with Bereshit, like dreams.

INT: With Genesis, the first book of the Bible?

DOV: Yeah, first book of the Bible. The subject was the dreams in the Bible. The dreams of our ancestors, the Avot in the Bible. The other year, people ask for, to get more familiar with Kabbalah, or mysticism, and the connection with the Talmud, etc. etc. I've already studied this. Now...

INT: And how are these studies conducted?

DOV: The rabbi, we used to prepare the lessons. And they had the lecture, and the discussions, and we used to read, and whatever he brought us, xeroxed copies of all the...pesukim for all the other...

INT: Passages.

DOV: The passages from other books, relevant to the subject, etc.

INT: How many people participate, and what's the age group?

DOV: The age group was approximately between forty and seventy. Let's say. Adult people, sometimes ten, sometimes eight, sometimes less, sometimes more.

INT: What is their religious background?

DOV: Oh, most of them go to synagogue every Saturday, and they know it very much better than I knew, but he was very pleased to see me there, especially when he discovered that his teacher, or at least, how do they call it, I don't know, it's a very famous teacher in Israel, Nechama Leibowitz, was my teacher also, and we have something in common. He respects her very much, and has some questions, he goes to her. For him, she is the...how you call, the competent, the halachah. The authority of Judaism.

INT: Are there other survivors, or children of survivors in this group, in your community?

DOV: No, not at all. Not that I know, no.

INT: Are they mostly native-born Israelis?

DOV: No, no, no. You know, in any Israeli community you will find from a very little cosmos, a very very...a variety of people, of all kinds of...we have friends from Oriental origin, friends from Europe, friends from the United States.

INT: What do you mean, "Oriental"? Oriental people that are living in Israel, like Chinese, Japanese?

DOV: No, no, Oriental originally means the Sephardim.

INT: Oh, the...

DOV: Mizrachi.

INT: Middle Eastern.

DOV: Middle Eastern. Middle Eastern. Orient, Mizrach, so I mixed up.

INT: I'm sorry.

DOV: Like for instance, we have a very good friend who is a judge now. She was our lawyer, she became a judge. She is from Egypt. There is no difference today. We don't see any difference. I have a very good friend now, I have a very good neighbor, she came just from England. She is English, converted to Judaism. She's a real English girl, very interesting. And another neighbor's from Tunisia, is also a teacher. And two other neighbors are from Polish originally.

INT: But not survivors?

DOV: Not survivors, no, they were born here.

INT: They were born in Israel. Do you find that you gravitate towards Holocaust survivors, or do you avoid them...

DOV: No.

INT: Or do you just take it as it comes?

DOV: I don't know any special things about this. I live my normal life. I don't avoid. I know some other survivors, but it's not an issue. We don't talk about it. I mean, we don't consider us as different from all other Israeli-born. At least I don't feel like difference. Maybe because of my Zionistic background and knowledge of Hebrew language, and the fact that my parents were in Israel, before I came, they came to the British, when the British were still in Israel. So I came like home. I wasn't really...an immigrant which has to go through all this...absorption centers, etc. etc., and the difficulties of a new immigrant. I came home, an Israeli, I spoke Hebrew. I never felt a stranger in Israel. I never felt like a new one.

INT: When did you arrive to Israel?

DOV: '48. 1948. My parents came a year before Israel's state was established. I mean, they still came when the English, British were ruling there. And...

INT: And where did you come from?

DOV: I really came home. I came from Germany, from DP camp in Germany.

INT: A displaced person's camp?

DOV: Yeah, a displaced person's camp where all other Jews lived in Europe.

INT: So how old were you? You'll do the math for me? '48 minus '26, that's...

DOV: '48, I was 23. I was 23 years old.

INT: 23 years old. So tell us about...

DOV: Less than 23, because I am in November, and it was in April.

INT: I see. So tell us about, let's work chronologically, although the temptation for me right now is to ask you to work backwards. But let's start from the beginning. So what are you, where were you born, what kind of community, what do you remember? We'll start from the beginning. Once upon a time...

DOV: About my childhood. Yeah, I was born in Eastern Europe, in a small town.

INT: Called?

DOV: Husiatyn. As a matter of fact, I was born in a village next to it.

(END TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO)

INT: Okay, we're continuing our conversation. You were telling us about being born.

DOV: Yeah.

INT: A small town called Husiatyn.

DOV: Husiatyn.

INT: How would you spell that? H-o...

DOV: H-u-s-i-a-t-y-n. Husiatyn. It's a Polish spelling, which means "a place of goose." "Hus" is goose.

INT: I see. And where is it in Poland?

DOV: Today it's Ukraina. You know what we say. He was born in Austria, he lived in Poland, and he died in Ukraina. He never left home. (Interviewer laughs) This is such a place. Because the border town, which we used to say, when I was asked, where are you born, I say I was born a place that people had to go out in the morning to look what army's in the town to know what flag to put on the roof, because the regimes changed so often there. The Ukrainians wanted their independence. The Polish wanted to rule there. The Austrian, it was the Austrian-Hungarian empire, then the communist Russians came in, so we had many, many, I myself served in three armies. Three different uniforms. In six wars. I'm still alive and tell jokes.

INT: Well, tell...how come you can tell jokes?

DOV: I like jokes. I like to laugh. Humor is healthy. Keeps me alive. And I don't know. It's a kind of drive. I feel it. I like to laugh.

INT: Do you remember a time when you couldn't laugh?

DOV: Of **course!** Even today sometimes, sad situations. Not **tragic** anymore, like it was before, but very sad...events happen. How you say, how Yushka [?] said, what is her name? Your mother's help. That life is not...

INT: A bowl of cherries?

DOV: Yeah.

INT: That's an English expression.

DOV: Yeah, but she says it in Polish.

INT: (laughs) So what do you remember about, what was your family like, how old were your parents when you were born, where were you in the scheme of things? Were you the first born? Tell us from the beginning. What did your parents do?

DOV: You see, I didn't know for many, many years, that my biological mother died after she gave birth. And I grew up with another mother. I think until age thirteen I didn't know anything about this. Even **this** in those times was a secret. I don't know why. So I grew up, and I had a younger brother, five years younger than me. It was a little Jewish town, a shtetele. My father was very active in the community, in the Jewish community, in the Polish community, because it was under Polish regime.

INT: What did he do?

DOV: He was a member of the city council. No, what did he do for a living -- he had...how you say, a store, not detail, but how do you say...a small store, is a retail...

INT: Retail, right.

DOV: But he has a larger...

INT: Wholesale.

DOV: Wholesale store of...liquors and all kinds of drink stuff, I don't know.

INT: Alcoholic beverages?

DOV: Alcoholic beverages, yeah. Beer, alcohol, other things.

INT: Needed a license from the government for that?

DOV: Yeah.

INT: Did people also drink on the spot?

DOV: No, no, not at all.

INT: No. Just wholesale.

DOV: Never opened a bottle. Closed bottles. He used to sell to restaurants, to all the pubs, so-called public pubs, because they're called differently in Poland places. And he never dealt with the individual, but with the merchants. He used to come, mix orders, and he used to import from other countries, or from other cities different wines, or whatever is necessary, and this was his business.

INT: What was his education?

DOV: He was a self-educated man. Autodidact. He, in those times Jewish boys received education, only Jewish education.

INT: So he went to cheder?

DOV: He went to cheder.

INT: What kind of Jewish family did he come from?

DOV: A traditional Jewish family like your grandfather and my grandfather were. I mean, Jew, with a beard, with a dark kapote. Davening every morning, or three times a day. Going Shabbas to shul, observing kashrut, and whatever necessary, all the Taryag mitzvot. That's how he grew up in this family.

INT: All the 613.

DOV: 613. Yeah.

INT: Did he have any brothers and sisters?

DOV: Of course. He had...three brothers. They were four sons in my grandfather's family. All of them married, and all of them had two children.

INT: What was your father's name?

DOV: Moshe. Moses.

INT: Altshuler?

DOV: Altshuler, yeah.

INT: And your grandparents' names?

DOV: My grandfather was Eliyahu Enoch.

INT: Enoch?

DOV: Eliyahu Enoch. You remember, they used to call him Eliyench (sp?). I never understood what's this Eliyench. It's two names. But Eliyench. And my grandmother's name, my father's mother, was Hannah. And I still remember them.

INT: Do you remember her maiden name?

DOV: At the moment I don't, I used to know it. At the moment, Reinish (sp?), I think. Reinish.

INT: And where were they born, where was your father born?

DOV: Also in the same village where I was born.

INT: Husiatyn.

DOV: I mean, I was born, it's next to each other, but they lived all the time in Husiatyn. They moved to...So both grandfathers, my both grandfathers lived in Wasylkowce.

INT: How do you spell that?

DOV: Which is a village close to Husiatyn.

INT: How do you spell this?

DOV: It's W-a-s-y-l-k-o-w-c-e.

INT: So your both grandfathers, they knew each other?

DOV: Of course.

INT: The families knew each other?

DOV: The families knew each other. As a matter of fact, my father was a tutor of my mother. He taught her Hebrew. It was a **rare** thing in those times. Girls didn't learn at school Hebrew. It

was too modern, too progressive. I don't know how my grandfather came to the idea to give her, his daughter, who was a sixteen years old girl, a private tutoring in Hebrew.

INT: What was her name?

DOV: Rachel. That's how they met first. I mean, they knew each other growing up in the same village.

INT: What was her whole name?

DOV: Rachel Schechter. But real love grew up from this relationship: teacher/student.

INT: What was the age difference?

DOV: He was eighteen, she was sixteen. I assume so. I mean, I don't really know the details, because all my life never, nobody wanted to talk to me about my mother who died when she gave birth to me.

INT: How old was she when you were born?

DOV: I have no idea. I can't tell you. I really don't know. She was very young.

INT: Do you know when she was born?

DOV: She was very young. No.

INT: Do you know when your father was born?

DOV: I know very, very little. As little as possible about my mother.

INT: Were there any pictures?

DOV: Thanks to my uncles and my aunt, **no one** talked to me about this. I have one picture. I know how she looked, because my uncle, one day when he was already eighty years old, I think...

INT: Your uncle, meaning, on whose side? Your mother's brother?

DOV: My mother's brother who lived in Montreal.

INT: What was his name?

DOV: Alexander. Before he died, he sent me a picture of the whole family. His father, I mean, my grandfather, grandmother, the whole family, my mother, his brother, his late brother, and his younger sister who died, was on this family picture.

INT: Which was taken when?

DOV: It was taken probably in 1925, or '24, something like this. I found another picture of my mother in my father's papers later after his death, which is also taken something like 1920, '21, something like this.

INT: So your father was educated, by the way, where was he in his family: oldest, youngest?

DOV: He was, I think, the youngest son.

INT: Do you remember your aunts and uncles on his side?

DOV: Yeah. All the uncles. I mean, his brothers and sisters-in-law. Sure, we had a very close relationship. During holidays we used to come to visit the parents. They didn't...one of them remained in Wasylkowce. He took over his father's, my grandfather's, ah, how you call it in English, inn. Inn, where people come to drink a beer, to eat something. Inn. He was an innkeeper, my grandfather.

INT: On your father's side.

DOV: On my father's side. And his son, he was the second youngest, I mean, he was a little bit older than my father, Pinchas Altshuler. He remained in this house where my grandparents used to live, before they moved to Husiatyn, which was very close -- like five miles.

INT: Do you know your aunts' and uncles' names?

DOV: Yeah, of course.

INT: What were they?

DOV: Let us begin from the eldest son. Eldest son's name was Chaim, and his wife Shaindel. They used to live in a town, Probusna, which is also not far from Husiatyn, Wasylkowce, close, like ten miles, or maybe fifteen miles.

INT: Could you spell that please?

DOV: Yeah, of course. P-r-o-b-u-z, with the dot under, because it's Polish.

INT: Z. Z with a dot.

DOV: Z. Yeah. Z with a dot. With a "Zh" and n-a. Probusna. He was an owner of a mill, and he was quite well-situated. I knew his children, my cousins. As a matter of fact, one of them lived in Israel until recently he died.

INT: How old were the children?

DOV: What do you mean, how old, when?

INT: Relative to you, I meant to say.

DOV: Oh, they were elder, because he was the first son.

INT: Obviously, but do you know how much older?

DOV: I can't tell you exactly. I really don't remember. But he was my first cousin, Michael, he was the oldest cousin. Then the second brother, his name was Avrom, Avraham. They used to call him Bontsche (sp?), an abbreviation of Avromshe. Bontsche Altshuler. He was very beloved person. His wife was Frieda. They also had a boy, an elder boy, and a daughter. This boy, which is my first cousin, still lives in Israel today.

INT: The name?

DOV: The name is Mordechai.

INT: Altshuler.

DOV: Altshuler. Changed to Eshel, also. Today. He lives in Israel with his wife, and with two daughters in Israel. And grandchildren, etc. He is also obviously retired. He's approximately three years older than I am. Then another brother, the next one...

INT: They had a daughter, by the way, you just said. What was her name?

DOV: You are talking about Mordechai, he has two daughters.

INT: Yes, what was their name?

DOV: One is Hedva (sp?), and the other is Anat. Hedva means, Hedva is like Freud, means Joy. This is her grandmother's name. Joy. Freda, Freuda is Hedva. And Maaya is what they call...

INT: Eynat?

DOV: They say Eynat. Eynat is like Maayan. Eynat comes from Aayin is a spring. Not eye, but also a spring.

INT: I meant Mordechai's father. Your father's brother. What did he have? He had a boy, Mordechai, and...

DOV: He has Mordechai and Yentel, another younger daughter, who was killed by the Nazis, whom I know very well, because we were approximately the same age. We went to school together. And I remember her almost to the last minute when the ghetto was liquidated.

INT: The ghetto in that town?

DOV: No, there was a larger town, the district town, Kopyczynce. Your father's hometown.

INT: And there was a ghetto there?

DOV: There was a ghetto there. They made a ghetto. They concentrated together all the Jews who still survived. All the other Aktions of...how you'd call this Aktions...

INT: Extermination.

DOV: Extermination Aktions, yeah, and they used to gather all together, and to concentrate them in one place in order to keep control about them, until the next extermination Aktion followed, and, who was, I don't know how, to my luck or alert enough, or had luck enough, or had a place to hide, could survive again and again and again. That's what happened to me. I was maybe **very** alert, very quick reactions, and had a lot of luck. I survived many Aktions.

INT: How old were you when the war started?

DOV: Oh, I was fourteen years old.

INT: In 1939.

DOV: Yeah. Approximately fourteen years old when the Russian army came into our town, and this was for two years, the communist regime.

INT: So that would be 1941.

DOV: '41, the German army entered and took over, and then the hell began. Then I spent a lot of time in Wasylkowce with your father.

INT: Hiding together?

DOV: Yeah. The first time. Yeah, you don't know **many** things. I didn't know many things, they told me now.

INT: I see. Getting...

DOV: What question? What do you want to know?

INT: Well, to get a sense of the family that you remember growing up with. So you had your uncle Avrom, Avraham, then who was next?

DOV: In Husiatyn. And uncle, the eldest Uncle Chaim was in Probuzno, Uncle Avraham was in Husiatyn, Uncle Pinchas was in Wasylkowce, only two brothers lived in Husiatyn: my father and Uncle Avrom. And we **were** very close. The whole family was **very** close.

INT: What do you mean by "close"? How did that express itself?

DOV: They visited mutually, almost all the holidays. Either we went to Probuzno, or they came to Husiatyn to see the grandparents. And the cousins used to spend the week or two in the family like this, and it was a very warm family. I remember it really. Even now, we remain two cousins. But we don't see each other very often, but we call each other, and we are really happy to see each other. The older we became, we were stronger, more intensive, this closeness. Or the need to be close to something.

INT: So what do you remember most of these family gatherings? How did the kids play? What did you do?

DOV: Kids, most what I remember, to tell the truth, the good cookies we used to eat. (laughs) Because my grandmother used to bake wonderful cookies. I still remember, I can **see** the cookies, I can feel the taste of the cookies. Honey cookies.

INT: Do you want to describe it to us?

DOV: No. (laughs) It's not to go into much detail. But we used to play, all the children. I mean, it was always a happy time, because there were holidays, when people meet, on holidays. Smachot, Yom Tov, Yamim Tovim.

INT: So what did a typical day look like as a kid? That you remember?

DOV: Pardon? I didn't understand the question.

INT: A typical day when you were a child.

DOV: Ah, a typical day? Oh, it's not easy to be a Jewish child. Especially not a child of Moshe Altshuler. Who was a Zionist. He wanted his son to get a Hebrew education. So in the morning I had to go at 8:00, attend a normal public school, Polish school, like any other good child, of a good citizen. And my father had to be a good citizen, because he was on the city council, one of the members.

INT: Was it common for Jews to be on that?

DOV: No, no, no. It was very rare. Of course not. But he was well, he was known for his integrity and intelligence. He was very respected by Jews and by Christians in the city. Very often when two peasants, Ukrainian peasants, has a fight, instead to go to the court, they used to come to my father, and decide. Whatever he will say, we will accept his judgment.

INT: How large was the town, population?

DOV: Oh, very small. Maybe 2,000 people.

INT: And how many Jews?

DOV: Maybe 900.

INT: Oh, so close to half.

DOV: Yeah. Sure.

INT: So what was the general...

DOV: I was told that there are 350,000 Jews in Philadelphia, which is a big surprise to **me**. It's a big, it's almost more than Tel Aviv.

INT: What would you say, how would you describe relationship between the Jews and the Poles in general?

DOV: It was so, it was interesting. The Poles were only the officials, the high class. The simple peasants were the Ukrainians, and all the merchants, and the professionals, like lawyers and doctors were the Jews. And they lived separately always.

INT: When you say the Polish were high-class, what does that mean? They owned estates, or...

DOV: They owned estates. They, as a matter of fact, they conquered Ukrainia, this part of Ukrainia, so they were landlords, or government officials, like judges, policemen, and all the army. We had an army camp in our city, because it was the border city. So we had the army camp.

INT: That must have been good for business.

DOV: Officers and their wives. Yeah, it was good for business. Certainly. (Take it away somewhere. Hide it.)

INT: We're talking about cashew nuts that we're taking away from the table. Yes.

DOV: And I went to school, with all the Polish, Ukrainian kids. And it wasn't easy for a Jewish boy.

INT: Why not?

DOV: I didn't have it very difficult, because I was my father's son, and I was also very adjustable. I could handle all the schutzemlach (sp?). But...

INT: All the little...how do you say schutzim in English? The...hoodlums. The little hoodlums.

DOV: Yeah. But some of the Jewish kids were beaten up when they went. After school, they used to wait for them. Ambushed the Jewish kids.

INT: Did the Jewish kids wear kippot, the boys, did they wear kippot to school? Were they visibly Jewish, or the people just knew?

DOV: No. I don't remember kippot, but everyone knew who is Jewish, who is not Jewish. You could tell immediately. But...

INT: You could tell how? Tell how?

DOV: They were dressed differently, more clean.

INT: More stylish, if there's such a thing?

DOV: Not stylish, but I don't know. I can't really tell you exactly what was the difference. You see, I spoke Polish very well. And since I was a good student, it was not a big difference between me and the Polish high class child. Mostly, the only difference was I was probably more intelligent, and I could help them out in mathematics, mostly. So they needed me. So my gain of all this was that on Saturday was day school, school day. And we Jewish kids, we didn't write on Saturday.

INT: Did you go to school?

DOV: Yeah, sure.

INT: You went to school, but you didn't write.

DOV: We went to school, we only listened. We didn't do anything. We were not asked to write on the blackboard. So we didn't have the homework, we didn't know anything. I had to copy it on Sunday from someone. Which wasn't so easy for a Jewish boy to go to the Ukrainian neighborhood. This was a risk (laughs) of almost his life! But I had my connections. I could ask someone, I mean, you give me the homework, or you copy me in school, and I will help you out in mathematics. Next day you will copy from me the homework. But they used to come to me to sit with me, and I still remember...I used to rush on time to put on tefillin in the morning. I don't think that every day, but I still remember this incident, that the Gentile boy came to me, and asked me, "Come down, we need your help. What do you put those leather bells on your hands? What do you need it for?"

INT: From the phylacteries.

DOV: "Take it off and come down. We have to do some homework, that I don't know how to do it, I need you." It was, of course, before school, in the morning. And...afternoon, in the afternoon, instead of playing football, my father decided I have to go to the **Hebrew** school, despite the fact that the community was very poor. Nevertheless, my father and two other, they established a Hebrew school, brought a teacher. Once, one of them was your late uncle, Leibel, my mother's brother. He was also my teacher in Hebrew school. They kept two teachers, and all, not all Jewish children, most of the Jewish children went to Hebrew school.

INT: Which was every day after school?

DOV: Which was a private school, because the government didn't support the school. Afternoon, every afternoon, two hours, it depended what class, what grade you were in, later, the higher the grade, it was later. It began at say 3:00, I used to go even at 7:00 at night, or 8:00 in the dark. In wintertime, I remember, with the...lamp, I used to go to school. It was cold. Every child has even to bring a lump of wood to put in the oven. I used to carry with me, and with the books (laughs) and a piece of wood to put in the oven, in order to be able to teach. I mean, the teacher couldn't teach in a cold class.

And then I had to work. On Sunday, I had the Hebrew school, on Saturday I have the Polish school, I have no one day off. And twice as much homework, and I was a happy child. I always remember my childhood. We were happy children. We played football with the ball of eych omrim smattutim?

INT: Ball of rags.

DOV: Rags. Ball of rags, we used to play, machachta, ball, running after a ball. Who could afford a real ball? I don't remember...

INT: Where did you play?

DOV: Oh, there were many empty plots, because the city was, many buildings were ruined in the First World War, so between the houses were **large** empty spaces.

INT: What kind of house did you live in?

DOV: It was a private house. It belonged to a Ukrainian, and my father rented it. It was a two-story house, and we lived on the upper floor, and on the first floor was the store, where the business was.

INT: You want to describe your house? How many rooms?

DOV: Don't remember. There was a hall, then the kitchen, which was **very** large. The whole life used to run in the kitchen. Not like the kitchens today, small...spaces. It was the main, the whole, the main, largest part of the day we used to spend it in the kitchens, like living room. In wintertime was very warm there, because they used to cook. We had a maid, a Ukrainian girl.

My father used to get up in the morning, go down to the business. We two children, my brother and I...

INT: What was his name?

DOV: Yaakov. We went to school. We got our sandwiches, we went to school, and two women, I mean my mother and the maid, they used to make this whole house everything. Laundry, everything by hand. We didn't have any machines. The kitchen, you had to make fire, like you see from 1800, 18th century, you see it in the movies. To cook in the kitchen where this was fire made, and we didn't have a faucet and running water in the house. We used to go to the well to carry two buckets of water on such a device.

INT: How far was the well?

DOV: Oh, it was maybe half a mile.

INT: And you had an outhouse, I guess? Where did you take, where did you do toiletries?

DOV: Ah, out, I mean, it was next, maybe twenty or thirty yards from the house, in the garden, we had a garden outside. There was a...

INT: Did you garden as a kid? Do you remember that?

DOV: Oh, yeah, I liked to garden. I made even a small garden for myself.

INT: Who taught you?

DOV: At school you have these lessons, agriculture lessons, third grade or fourth grade you already know what to do with seeds and how they grow. That's all.

INT: Did your father or mother or brother ever work with you together in the garden?

DOV: Oh, other kids did. It was...my garden. My brother, I don't know. No, I don't remember him. He didn't like this especially.

INT: Did you have much in common? You were five years apart, you said.

DOV: No, I mean at this age, five years is a lot. So I didn't like him to go with me anywhere. Who needs a little baby with you? And he was killed when he was twelve years old, or eleven years old. It was really...very tragic. (sighs) He was caught by a Ukrainian peasant. I mean, this peasant was, later on, brought to court and sentenced to death. But that doesn't bring my brother back to life. I think it was maybe the only case where murder, a Ukrainian murder was really brought to court, and how you say, mishpat.

INT: Judge?

DOV: Judged, sentenced, normally the court, an act of revenge, just like...maybe other, because he didn't escape. He didn't believe that Jews would still remain alive, or someone will know about what he did.

INT: What do you...you mean, he caught him under what circumstances?

DOV: Yeah, I mean, I jump the part...A certain time in the head, it's not chronologically, really, but just you remind me of my brother. They, when the last place where we still survived, your parents, I, and some other Jews, and at night we were attacked by Ukrainian police, and by the German Gestapo. We tried to run away. It was early in the morning, the dawn, was still a little bit dark. We tried to escape running into the fields, where the high...it was...

INT: Wheat, or grass?

DOV: What, it was, what do you call this, rye.

INT: Rye.

DOV: Yeah, rye. It is higher than wheat. We run into rye, and what we found out later, that there was a speculation. Someone knew about it, or we were told, that some bullet hit my brother, he had a flashlight on his chest, a bullet hit the flashlight. But he wasn't hurt, and he wasn't killed, but he got scared, and instead to run with us in our direction, he changed his direction. You know, he got a bullet, it will scare you. You change the, so he run, but into rye you don't see anything. We were lower, trying to lower, and not to be seen.

INT: To bend, you tried to bend.

DOV: Tried to bend, not to be seen. So we didn't see him anymore since then. Since he was a blonde...

(END TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE)

INT: Okay, tape two, of Dov Eshel. February 14, 1995. You were describing how your...

DOV: Brother.

INT: Younger brother was killed during the war.

DOV: As a matter of fact, I never knew the details exactly. It's also from hearsay...after the war. (sighs) Or not after the war, after we were liberated by the Red Army, the Russian army, we...I was immediately mobilized to the army. I always say that the rifle was heavier than I was. After all this hunger, months of no food, no...any kind of normal life.

INT: You were drafted by the Russian army when they came in?

DOV: Yeah. Yeah. I really didn't...

INT: How old were you?

DOV: I was seventeen. Seventeen, maybe eighteen. I don't remember, approximately. So I didn't really know what happened there, but probably my father was told, or find out what happened to my brother. So he was...walking around at night in the fields as we did, they were searching for food, as you know probably, from your parents' stories. It's not, it's difficult to describe, and more difficult even to understand how, what people can survive. The human being is probably stronger than steel, as long as you don't kill a person, it can survive **everything**.

So he was caught by a Ukrainian peasant, probably when he was in the field. I was told that it was a pea, how you call this little green...

INT: Yeah, peas.

DOV: He was eating peas. Probably the peasant...I was told that the peasant killed him. Only two days ago, your parents told me that he didn't kill him, he just handed him over to the Ukrainian police, and there he was killed. So I don't know exact details. But he was, instead of saved by someone, he was killed. And...as a eleven-year-old boy, we hoped all the time that he would survive. We didn't believe that we will survive. As a matter of fact, we were about to commit suicide, and we wrote a letter, and this letter I found later, and I still have it, this letter. But we hoped that a blonde, blue-eyed boy, someone will take him in as a...he will be a...

INT: Servant.

DOV: A servant, or how you call...this goes with the cows and...

INT: A shepherd.

DOV: A shepherd, a shepherd, yeah. They knew German, the Russians...

INT: What about your own appearance? You want to describe your coloring?

DOV: Yeah, I used to be black, with dark eyes, and dark skin, and more or less, I mean, relatively in comparison to the Polish, Slavic, it was difficult to...to disguise as a Polish child. I mean, it was more Semitic type. And I had no chance to survive as a Gentile. There was no hope at all. So...I don't know where we stopped.

INT: Well, I just asked how you got along with your brother, going back to the previous years now.

DOV: Oh, so the difference between us was quite, at this age is a big difference. He has his friends, he had his friends, I had my friends. You couldn't get along really. Two brothers always fight in a house. And I was always, I felt always that I am treated unjustly.

INT: Unjust?

DOV: Unjust, because his mother...was his biological mother, and I was a stepchild, and the elder one.

INT: But you didn't know that yet, you said.

DOV: I am talking about later, in...I mean, generally speaking, always the older one is guilty. Every time something happens: "You're older, you should understand, blah, blah." I was always the one that was punished. You never punish the younger child. You punish the older one. Which is supposed to understand, and to be more...

So anyway, I still remember that I was sometimes very upset and angry with him, because I had to be punished because of him. But of course, later on, I still remember this letter which I wrote, we wrote a letter to him, also, hoping that he will survive and get the letter. I apologized for all what I did to him, if I, whatsoever, even talking now about him, I feel real pain. I mean...I would give a lot. I mean, my mother suffered a lot, my stepmother, because **her** child was killed; **I** survived. It's very complicated. Not easy. And I really...I try not to think about it. I mean, it's difficult to live with this, remembering a child, eleven years old child, killed by...I mean, lonely, with no, I mean, all, in Aktions was all together, **many** people were killed. I mean, you were one of many. Not one, one little child surrounded by Ukrainians, and you don't know, I don't even know **how** they killed him. So I never, I never asked more questions. It was too painful to my father. I never asked them, they never talk about this.

INT: But going back to the family relationships before the war, so you remember that he was favored? That's a memory of yours?

DOV: That was only when we had a fight.

INT: Oh, only when you had a fight.

DOV: Usually, maybe, listen, it's normal. A younger child is always, he needs more attention, and a bacher has to give in. That's why we got yerusha, the title.

INT: The inheritance. To compensate.

DOV: Yeah.

INT: What do you remember about the relationship between your parents?

DOV: Oh, they were very correct. As a matter of fact, my stepmother **worshipped** my father. Her head was something that she couldn't normally dream to marry such a man. But he didn't have a choice. I mean, he was a widower -- a young widower, with a child.

INT: How old was he when your mother died?

DOV: Very young. I think twenty and something. With a child. He didn't know what to do. The whole family was pushing him. "You **have** to get married, you **have** to get married." I mean, those times was in the family, marriages with cousins, removed cousins. As a matter of fact, somehow, he was, she was a niece of his sister-in-law. Avrom's, Bontsche's (sp?) wife Frieda was her aunt. Her mother and Frieda were sisters. So my father was a brother-in-law. She brought her niece, it was "Marry this man. He has a child, but it's a good match. You will be happy, and you will never find such a man." I can imagine. So she was eighteen years, beautiful girl. Aliza was **very** beautiful.

INT: Your stepmother was very pretty?

DOV: **Very** pretty. Blonde, with blue eyes. Very, very, exceptionally, in this Jewish neighborhood. I mean... (laughs) That's why my brother was blonde and blue-eyed. Very good-looking woman. Very pretty, and my father was only a young man. He really didn't know what to do. I know that he loved my mother, and he never forgot her, because I found in his pocketbook, this picture, and even invitations to the wedding. He kept **all** life, all his life. That one invitation to the wedding, after he was married to the other woman for many, many years. So he never forgot my mother, but he respected her, Aliza, I mean, my stepmother, for her being a wonderful, devoted wife, and a good housekeeper.

INT: Was she educated, or...

DOV: No, no. Just in those times Jewish girls didn't have real education. Especially, she was an orphan. Her father died early. Her mother had to raise four children, in a very poor village. She was a very poor village girl. Very simple, simple-minded. But she was a very good wife. **Very** good wife for him. A **great** housekeeper. Good cook. And in those times, I mean life, he was, I think, very satisfied, happy. So I never remember any **fight** between parents at home. Any disputes, any discussions. Nothing. Maybe they had, but never in front of **me**. Never.

And then I was very little. I mean, in the Holocaust and after it I wasn't home anymore. I didn't see their lives anymore.

INT: Yes, let's, so you described a typical day, and you'd come home, if you didn't get beat up. (laughs)

DOV: Yeah, and on vacations -- I had vacations -- I used to go to the village of my grandfather in Wasylkowce where I used to climb trees and eat the fruits always straight from the tree, and it was a village, it was a lot of land around, a lot of playground to play, and to go places. A village is different like a town. It was real freedom. And other vacations I used to go to the other, to my

stepmother's mother, which is a very small village there. And also, since I could get along -- I spoke Ukrainian very well -- I wasn't a strange Jewish child which is afraid of a dog, of a horse of something. Usually most of the Jewish children were very afraid of other Gentile kids.

INT: Why do you think you weren't afraid?

DOV: Because I grew up in the village. I mean, I was in the village, and our house was a little bit outside, and that's why I had a garden. We didn't really live in the, what is called city where the Jewish quarter was, with the small narrow alleys and...only houses with only a piece of green land, like you know, the Arab villages, their very dry, house by house, one stick to another. I lived in a more...outside of the, a little bit outside of the city, the center of the city, like suburb. And I had this Ukrainian maid in the house. I spoke Ukrainian very well. And I was close, I knew their style, their way of life, and I wasn't a strange, it wasn't strange to me, and I wasn't a stranger to them.

And then spending the vacations in villages, where I met only Ukrainian peasants, I knew how peasants live, I spoke their language. So I was different, a little bit, from a typical Jewish child.

INT: How **did** the peasants live?

DOV: They're very poor, most of them. They're very poor, very simple life, very primitive. They lived in houses with the roof were covered with straw.

INT: So what did they do when it rained?

DOV: It didn't, it was a thick, you can see it even today in some villages.

INT: I've seen it, but I always wondered about it.

DOV: And the floor was just...

INT: Dirt?

DOV: Clay, clay. How you call this?

INT: Clay.

DOV: Clay, where you make sculpture with it. Clay, they dry it out, and it was very, you could clean it with a broom. Handmade broom.

INT: Was there any electricity?

DOV: Who know what electricity is at all? I mean, I never grew up with electricity. I'm telling you, when I was in the States, and studying here, and my cousin's wife, she used to call me this is the 400 years old man, because I remember this primitive time. The civilization gap between

New York and the village where I lived is almost 400 years of civilization, of development. I remember people living like in the 18th century, or maybe 17th century. They didn't need anything except salt, and kerosene to light the lamp in the wintertime, and sometimes they needed matches. But mostly they used to use this, how you call, I don't know this...

INT: Flint?

DOV: Flint, and then to light the cigarette with this. And they had everything made by themselves. Shoes, this...

INT: Clothes.

DOV: Clothes. They did everything by themselves. Life was very poor, very primitive.

INT: Did the Jews live the same way?

DOV: Most of the Jews were very poor. Especially in our...country, down in the east. In the big cities in Poland, like Warsaw or Lodz, or Cracow, it was different.

INT: Did you ever get to the big cities? What was the closest big city to you?

DOV: Lemberg. Lvov.

INT: And did you ever get there?

DOV: No. When I was a child, I was once operated. I don't know exactly what it was, until now even. I don't know what operation it was. You know, in those times, people didn't **talk** to children at all. Children lived in their own world. Parents didn't talk to children, unless they had to tell them what to do. We never had a **conversation** with a child.

INT: You don't remember any conversations with your parents?

DOV: No.

INT: At the dinner table?

DOV: No.

INT: What was the dinner table like?

DOV: We had a different way of life. The main meal was at noon, at lunchtime.

INT: Did you come home from school for it?

DOV: I come home from school, was lunchtime, but the lunch was, even in the Polish language, this...meal had a special name, which is called a lot of food in Polish. Obia (sp?). A lot of eating. Because it was the main meal in the day. Breakfast was to break the fast of the night, like today, but then there was a warm meal, a rich meal, with soup, and the main dish, and the dessert, and this and that.

INT: So the table was quiet, in other words?

DOV: The table was quiet.

INT: People didn't talk?

DOV: We eat, sometimes we ate before my father. He didn't have time to come up. He has clients. So it wasn't really a family. In the evenings, in the same thing, in the evening, it was, the evening was like lunch in America today. Very...something light, not...

INT: Quick?

DOV: Quick. Like two boiled eggs, or two scrambled eggs, with two slices of bread, with butter, and some cocoa, the children. The father used to have a tea. And like this, we didn't have, we didn't have tuna fish. We didn't have canned food **at all**. The only...food that we had was not canned, but we made it ourselves, was pickled.

INT: What about kashrut?

DOV: Oh, it was kept. Kashrut was kept. All Jews.

INT: Tell me, was there a shochet in the town, or where did you get your meat from?

DOV: Of course! I mean, Jewish towns in those times? It was kosher. It was, it was a normal situation. Everything was kosher, because all Jews lived together in the Jewish community with a shochet, and a rabbi.

INT: Do you remember your father praying, or going to shul? Do you remember going to shul?

DOV: Only on holidays.

INT: Only on holidays. Not at home.

DOV: Not on Shabbat. Not at home.

INT: And not on Shabbat?

DOV: Not on Shabbat. We didn't go to Beit Kneset.

INT: You did not go to Beit Knesset?

DOV: I didn't go. That's why I really feel very strange sometimes on Shabbat. I didn't go to Beit Knesset.

INT: What kind of home did **he** come from?

DOV: A very religious home. He was...

INT: But he, why...do you know why he didn't practice?

DOV: The same thing, I think for the same reason why I didn't. He didn't believe in this external observing of all the mitzvot. I mean, he believed in his heart, if you, a good Jew is first of all a good human being. Honest, and all the other things which is the Torah, I think, (Hebrew) they say, kal haTorah al regel echad. And all other things he didn't really.

INT: All right, I'll just translate that. "On one foot, the essence of the Torah boils down to: Don't do unto others what you don't want being done to you."

DOV: Yeah. Or "Lehavta leracha kamocho."

INT: Or, "Love your neighbor as thyself."

DOV: Love your neighbor. That's all. And that's what he was, that kind of a person. The other things, it's what I say always. Like Yishayahu, the prophet said, "Who asked you to come to my court and to pray? Be honest." (Hebrew)

INT: Support...

DOV: Give me the Yishayahu, Perek Aleph, and I will cite everything.

INT: Jeremiah.

DOV: No, Yishayahu. Not Yirmiyahu.

INT: Oh, Yishayahu. Whatever the English of that is. Isaiah. Isaiah, chapter one. Taking care of the orphan and the widow. In other words, good deeds.

DOV: Be just, be righteous, and not...I mean, I don't need your prayers, I don't need your holidays. I don't need you to come to my court, and Beit HaMikdash in the Temple, and to pray, when you are sinful, your hands are dirty with blood. So that was, not this is important. Not the external observing of all the mitzvot, but how do you really, what kind of person you are.

INT: How typical was that response among Jews in that town?

DOV: Not really. It was really exceptional. This was very rare. All other Jews, my father's brothers used to go to shul, and all the Jews went to go, because they were very...maybe sensitive to what people will say. Even today the same story. Why people go in a kippah, because the neighbors will tell...

INT: How did the Jews respond to your father?

DOV: He was so respected, and so beloved by other people, no one will really criticize. I never heard from someone a critical word about my father.

INT: Where do you think he got that respect? Why was he so respected? How would you describe it? How would you describe it?

DOV: I don't know. Maybe because of his integrity. He didn't have, he didn't need to give **in** anything. I mean, to compromise on anything. Even his own brothers, his elder brothers, used to come to him to ask for advice, which is very rare. Elder brothers don't come to a younger brother. He was educated more to them. He was a soldier in the Austrian army during the war.

INT: During World War I.

DOV: Yeah. Then he remained in Vienna, and he studied bookkeeping, and he saw the world. He came back to the village with knowledge, with external, he knew more than people in the shtetl did.

INT: Why do you think he came back to the village after cosmopolitan existence?

DOV: Well, he came back to his family, and first of all to his beloved wife, I mean, whom he promised to marry. Rachel. He used to send pictures from the front. I still have a picture of **him** sending to her, written on the front, in 1918, in Italy. He was in Italy, an Austrian soldier. This picture I have. He looked so young. He was a boychik. Skinny. (laughs) In an Austrian uniform. I looked the same at this age. So he looked very similar. And people say that my son more looks like he was in this age.

INT: Oh, my.

DOV: They say it, people who know my brother say, "He looks like your father."

INT: So he was more sophisticated, more knowledgeable.

DOV: More knowledgeable.

INT: But integrity is something else.

DOV: I know. This is besides all this, what you said now. He was a man, trusted by, I told you. Peasants used to come to him, they trusted him.

INT: Do you know any stories, how did he develop this reputation?

DOV: I don't know. I can't tell you, because I was a child. Who am I to judge exactly what happened? I only know the result; I know what I saw. I mean, a Jew wasn't elected to be a member of the city council unless he was something...known as an...honorable man.

INT: How often were the elections held?

DOV: I don't know. I don't remember as a child. I only remember...

INT: But you said that he had this job for as long as you can remember?

DOV: I think so. And then I remember, he was the one who initiated the Hebrew school. He was very active in the Zionist...

INT: Which Zionist organizations did he belong to? Right, left, do you remember the names?

DOV: Of course. It was in the...I mean, it was a center. It wasn't right, it wasn't left, because he was...a businessman. He didn't, belong to the working class. But he was certainly not a right, in Zionism what we call Betar. They used to be called the Algemeiner Zionists.

INT: The general Zionists.

DOV: General Zionists. It was somewhere in the middle. Like later they had the liberal, very liberal party.

INT: How did this organization function? Do you remember if he was out at meetings a lot?

DOV: I don't really...exactly know what the adults did. I know what the **kids** did, you know. We had our plays, we meet, we were kids, we used to meet with the counselor.

INT: How often?

DOV: Always, every, every evening, we meeting, every meeting, we had free time, we used to go there to meet, to plan, like (?), you know, all the activities. Each party had its youth movement. The leftists had the Shomer Hatzair. The right had the Betar, and we were the HaNoar HaTzioni.

INT: So what did you do there on a formal basis in the evening? I'm sure the kids played, but...

DOV: Yeah, on a formal basis we used to have lectures...

INT: Discussions?

DOV: Discussions about aliyah to Israel, what it's all about.

INT: Moving to Israel.

DOV: Yeah. Moving to Israel, what it's all about. Why we want to be there. Or what, you know, all the same stories. And we went to summer camps in the summer, which were HaNoar HaTzioni.

INT: The Zionist youth.

DOV: Zionist youth, yeah.

INT: What kind of an impression did all of this make on you? These meetings, and...education that you were getting, the attitude towards Israel.

DOV: It was like part of a normal life. It was nothing special. **Everyone** did it.

INT: No, but did you accept what you were hearing, or...

DOV: Yeah, yeah. Oh, of course.

INT: What impression did it make on you?

DOV: I was very, I mean, I was influenced by my father, by my uncle from my mother's side. My whole family on both sides were very Zionist. It was, we were, that's one thing, that we were not fanatic religious. Because the religious extreme religious people didn't accept the Zionist movement. They were opposed to those. Since I lived in the liberal atmosphere, my father was a liberal, and very active in the Zionist movement. He used to also collect money for campaign and Keren HaYesod, was some kind of president or...

INT: In the Jewish National Fund.

DOV: Yeah, local. He had many titles...like...and he was, there's an expression, "beit vaad lechachamim." Or something. "A house for the..."

INT: For the counsel of wise. Wise counsel.

DOV: Wise counsel.

INT: The counsel of the wise.

DOV: In our house I remember many of the evenings they used to come to sit with my father and discuss all the matters of, and even twice in a year they had balls, a Purim ball, and on Pesach, they used to have a ball. All the Jewish people. So my father, everything was programmed and planned in my father's house. And I grew up with this atmosphere.

INT: Did your mother participate too?

DOV: No, no. It was not for her. She wasn't able. Two reasons. Women didn't, were not active almost at all, and she wasn't enough educated maybe even to take part, or to help out.

INT: What were her religious attitudes?

DOV: She was very passive. I mean, even less than my father. She grew up with a widow, without a father. She didn't know very much about...she knew what a Jewish girl had to know, about kashrus, and about all the holidays, and about lighting candles on Shabbat evening.

INT: So you remember that?

DOV: Yeah. The candles were every Shabbat. And the meal was a special meal on Shabbat. But my father didn't go...

INT: Did your father say Kiddush?

DOV: No, he didn't make Kiddush. He wouldn't believe that I'm making Kiddush. It was only a different meal, with a clean table, with a white cloth.

INT: Was there challah?

DOV: A challah.

INT: Was there a Hamotzi, a blessing for the bread?

DOV: I don't remember. No, I don't think so. This is very, but it was completely different than a normal weekday. The food was different, the whole setting was different.

INT: Did your mother cook on Shabbat, your stepmother?

DOV: No. There was a maid.

INT: Was the store open or closed?

DOV: Closed.

INT: Closed. So what did you do on Shabbat, if you didn't go to shul?

DOV: I went to school.

INT: Oh, you went to school. What did your father do, or your parents?

DOV: Maybe they slept a little bit longer. They read the paper. Had time for each other once in a while. People were very busy those times. So I was in school, I don't know really. It never bothered me.

INT: Were your parents ever affectionate, to you, to each other, to your brother? Do you remember, what kind of tone...

DOV: There was very little speaking. I mean, those times, I told you, people, parents didn't discuss, parents didn't kiss or hug children very often. You know, what I see today, movies, the child has to say to his father, "Sir," in English. "Sir." I didn't call my father, "Sir." I'd say to him, "Pa," "Papa," or whatever, I could feel his love. Ask your mother. She will tell you how I used to, as a child, I spoke about my father as something, you know, abnormal, superman. I loved him very much, he loved me, but it was never really shown. Not like today. I hug my son and kiss him. Whenever he lets me do it. And he knows exactly that I would do **everything** to help him and to do for him. Those times, we had to **obey**.

Oh, I had my problems. I had fights sometimes with my stepmother. Worse, I run away from home even.

INT: Because?

DOV: Because she hit me, I don't know what.

INT: Oh, so there was physical punishment?

DOV: Yeah. Of course. I was hit very many times. By teachers.

INT: Were you a troublemaker?

DOV: Oh, you can imagine.

INT: This is for the record. (laughs)

DOV: Yeah, yeah, of course. I was a very hyperactive child. Now I know what it means.

INT: Oh, really?

DOV: Yeah. I couldn't sit still a moment, and I always had to do something, or to make some remarks, to make some remarks in the classroom. I was a very...you know, a brilliant student doesn't sit, I was bored. And probably until the teacher explained to the peasant what it means, I forgot already what he's talking about. I **had** to do something. They used to have to punish me from time to time. My poor father always got notes. He has to come to school. And when he put in a corner and forgot to talk to me, I was praying, "Hit me, but stop talking!" I couldn't take it anymore. He said, "What are you doing to me? What a shame." I said, what can I do.

INT: So what kind of punishment? You were hit, like a spanking in the tushy, or...

DOV: Not by my father.

INT: Oh, your mother was the disciplinarian?

DOV: Not disciplinarian. I really could drive her crazy. It was my fault, always. What a difficult child. It wasn't easy to live with me, to raise me. Not at all. She couldn't...

(END TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO)

INT: Side two. How difficult a child you were. So types of punishments. So there was corporal punishment. You'd be hit in the buttocks, or the face, I mean...

DOV: Yeah, I still remember (laughs) what kind of a chase it was. Even to **get** me, it was very difficult. She got angry, she took something to hit me.

INT: "She" is your stepmother.

DOV: Yeah. They used to board, the...what's it called? Maria was her name.

INT: The servant?

DOV: The servant. From one side of the table, and she was the other side of the table, we were running around the table, and then when I was really between two fires, caught by two women (laughs) and I was so...even now Rosemary says, my wife says, that my reaction was so quick. I grab so quick what to do. So when they were approaching me, I said, "Whoop!" beneath the table, and they used to clash together, and the child was disappeared. They couldn't find me anymore. Ran outside, and (laughs) the end of the porch, which was on the second floor, and I used to (makes a whizzing sound) like the firemen go down on this.

INT: There was a pole?

DOV: Yeah. And they didn't even **know** where it was. And it happened almost every week. At least once a week. Then she used to complain to my father, and my father was helpless. He will punish me now. Then I used to go to bed very early, he will not take out a child from a bed to punish him. I knew when he will come home...

INT: What time did your father come home from work?

DOV: At 7:00.

INT: So did you all have dinner, supper together, or was that everybody...

DOV: Mostly not. Mostly the children ate separate. But I remember, the small, like little things, like little happy souls. My childhood, I used to go early to bed not to be punished, because I figured, he will not take me out from bed, to say, "Hello, come on, what did you do? Why did you upset your mother?" Okay, so he talked to me later, maybe. I saw he was unhappy, very unhappy. He was always between...

INT: The devil and the deep blue sea?

DOV: Yeah. Because she was right, and I was right, and he didn't know what to do. I gave him a hard time.

INT: So how would you describe your feeling? You said you loved your father very much. How would you describe your feelings towards your stepmother?

DOV: (Pause) When I was a child, I was...there were moments of hatred. I didn't like. But when I grew up I respected her, because I knew she had a hard time with me. She did every possible, I mean, she did everything what a mother has to do for a child. Then I appreciated it. But as a child, I was...it was a vicious circle. I was a difficult child; she used to punish me, I didn't like it. I used to upset her, and you know, it could never fit. But it was finished by the Holocaust. At age fourteen, I wasn't a child anymore. Finito.

INT: How was your brother's behavior, by the way?

DOV: He was a good boy.

INT: Did you resent that?

DOV: No. I liked him. He was a good boy. I remember I liked him. We had sometimes fight about stupid things, and...I was always blamed for it, but usually he liked me very much. He was a good-natured boy. But he got some candies, or chocolates. He used to give me -- I didn't give to him. I was always...the mean one.

INT: Can you remember why?

DOV: I can **imagine** why, I can't **remember** why.

INT: (Laughs) That's an interesting distinction.

DOV: I consider myself, a deprived child. I don't know why. I mean, I was discriminated or, I have to take care of myself. But I have to be tough. I remember.

INT: When do you remember thinking like that?

DOV: Yeah, because I had a friend, a very close friend, which, we were together always. We grew up together, two families. We were very friendly. So I remember whenever he was upset, or something was hurt or something, he used to run to his mother, and to embrace his mother, and he cried in her lap. I don't remember myself crying over anything to a mother **at all**. I didn't have anyone to run to. My father wasn't home. My mother...I couldn't **imagine** even **me**, embracing Aliza and crying in her lap. So I saw how children react. He was my friend, and he always, was close to his mother. And...I wasn't close to her at all. It wasn't her fault. It was something...

INT: Well, was there a personality clash?

DOV: Yeah, probably.

INT: So you don't remember much warmth between the two of you.

DOV: No, not at all. Our relation improved and developed only after my father's death. I took care of her and everything else, and this was completely different.

INT: Now, what about...how did you find out that your mother had been...your biological mother had died?

DOV: I don't remember exactly, but probably by age thirteen. I had to say kaddish, a prayer.

INT: Oh, because you were, after your bar mitzvah.

DOV: So my grandfather probably told me.

INT: What do you remember about your bar mitzvah?

DOV: Nothing. At this time, bar mitzvah was just a ceremony in the Beit Knesset, in shul. They gave a leikech, a cake, a honey cake, and a bottle of Bongover (sp?), they called it, alcohol, vodka, and they made a kiddush, and I was finished, that's all. No parties, no gifts, no nothing.

INT: But you got a pair of phylacteries, of tefillin?

DOV: Sure.

INT: But you didn't choose them, you said.

DOV: Yeah, yeah. I took several weeks, I don't know, just to please my grandfather. To please my grandfather. And that was all. It wasn't all, your father says, why they make so big parties here by bar mitzvahs? Because it's two parties. Because it's the first time and the last time he puts the tefillin. (Interviewer laughs) You have to make a big party today.

INT: I see. So what's your first...first recollection of...well, no, let's backtrack. You talked about your father's family, and your aunts and uncles on that side. What about your aunts and uncles on your biological mother's side? Because...

DOV: Oh, we were very close.

INT: How were these people introduced to you, if they weren't your real mother's parents?

DOV: I don't know. I don't remember. It was, for me, completely normal that I have to go and see another grandfather in Wasylkowce.

INT: But you didn't figure out who he was.

DOV: No.

INT: You didn't think about it.

DOV: It didn't matter. A child doesn't ask questions.

INT: Uh-huh. (laughs)

DOV: My aunt, she herself was often, my grandmother died, your grandmother, I mean, our grandmother...died. So your mother was an orphan at age sixteen, I think.

INT: No, 26.

DOV: Impossible. 26?

INT: 26. (pause)

DOV: I can't believe it. She is ten years older than I am.

INT: Yes.

DOV: So she couldn't be 26 when her mother died.

INT: Well, what do **you** remember about that?

DOV: I remember her, an orphan when I was a little child. I remember when my grandmother died, it was before the war, before '39.

INT: My mother was born in 1915.

DOV: '15. And as I say, 1915...

INT: Her mother died in 1936, if I'm not mistaken.

DOV: Okay. So 15 and 15 is 1930, and another 6 years, so maybe she was 20 years old, but not 26. Maybe she was 20 years old. So I still was a ten years old boy, child, and she was already taking care of a family. She was twenty years old, taking care of a house, housekeeping, and three men, to serve three men. Two brothers and a father. Very demanding men, by the way.

INT: All, each of them?

DOV: Each of them.

INT: What do you remember about your visits to that household?

DOV: I caused trouble always to your mother. I didn't want to eat anything. At those times a child had to go to vacation to gain weight.

INT: Well, how would you describe...

DOV: And she was so worried, your mother. I will come home, and not gain weight, Aliza my stepmother will say, "That's how they feed the child. Look how he looks! They don't take care of the child." This was her whole concern.

INT: How do you remember your...

DOV: It was wonderful. It was a big house.

INT: How do you remember your physique? Were you a little boy, a big boy?

DOV: I was a little boy, very skinny little boy. Who never wanted to eat, like your Danny. The same type. Eat? Who eats? Who wants to eat? Who invented food at all, I didn't know why. Most of the, by the way, of our fights with my stepmother was about food. She was always scared what the neighbors will tell, looking at me, they will tell, "Oh, stepmother! She doesn't run after the child with a banana, she doesn't feed the child." This was her big concern. And your mother's the same. I used to sit at the table, I remember today. One side your mother. The other side uncle Samuel, talking to me, "Please, this is such a good soup." (interviewer laughs) Uncle Sam used to play a game, just to convince me to eat. And I don't like it. There was very few things that I liked.

INT: Do you remember our grandmother?

DOV: No. Way...grandfather I remember very well.

INT: How would you describe him? Personality, appearance.

DOV: It's very difficult for me today to say, because I saw him as a child, so he was a respectable Jew with a beard, and a merchant, an owner of a store, considered as a rich man in the village. Was very, he was a rich man. Pinchus Schechter. It was a yichus in the village. He was in the Beit Knesset.

INT: Yichus means he was...considered nobility, so to speak. Special.

DOV: Yeah. Yeah. (pause) But...I can't really describe him.

INT: What personality, what was he...what are some adjectives that come to mind to describe him? What kind of a man? You said your father was a man of integrity.

DOV: I grew, I lived with my father. But I didn't live...

INT: Well, I'm just talking about impressions.

DOV: No, I didn't even see my grandfather often...even if I visited the house, he was too busy man. Only in the morning he used to run after me with a little prayer book with a green cover, and he used to ask me, "What's with the little green book? What's with the little green book?" And I made myself, I don't know what he's talking about. I didn't want to pray in the morning. I used to run away. He was very...he was very easy with me. He didn't really...I felt it. Still, now I remember, I felt all of them felt pity for me. They treated me like a poor orphan child. They always, they were very silent in the house. You could **feel the pain** in the house, when I came.

INT: Did you know what that was about?

DOV: No.

INT: As a child?

DOV: Later, I understood.

INT: But you felt something different here, that there was a sadness?

DOV: Of course. Yes, it was always a sadness. They used to stop talking when I came in in the room, also, and your mother were crying. Always I remind them always of this tragedy of the death of my mother. It was **always** in the air. Always. Whenever I came over for vacation. But a child is a child. I used to run after, you know, the cows and the sheep, and the shegutzimlach, and climb all the trees. Where did you see a Jewish boy climbing on a tree? First, they were afraid. Second, they didn't have a tree. Third, they would have been beaten up. They didn't have grandfathers with trees. I had a grandfather with trees.

INT: Did you give them, did our grandfather and my mother and your uncle give you freedom to play like that? Or were they worried that you would hurt yourself?

DOV: They were worried, but they knew, I played, Uncle Benny used to play with me.

INT: How long was a vacation there?

DOV: Sometimes two weeks, sometimes three. I didn't spend the whole, vacation was two months. But...it depends. I don't know who decided how long I stay where.

INT: Do you remember, was there any talking with you, do you remember any conversations, any other games? Did you read? Did they read to you?

DOV: Uncle Alexander, he used to play with me, talk to me. He had the time.

INT: Why did he have the time?

DOV: I don't know. I mean, he didn't have to take care of the house. Your mother was too busy. And the grandfather didn't...grandfathers don't talk to children. Grandfathers don't talk. He could tell me, "Please pray, lay the tefillin." But anything else, you didn't talk to a grandchild about secular things. But I remember...the only house where I saw an encyclopedia was in my grandfather's, our grandfather's house.

INT: What language?

DOV: Polish. And I liked the book, because I could always find things there that I didn't know before, and I didn't know what, and I never saw an encyclopedia before, anyhow.

INT: Your father didn't have one.

DOV: No.

INT: Do you remember many books in your home?

DOV: No. Jewish books, Hebrew books, but not any other books.

INT: And in our grandfather's house?

DOV: The first person who introduced me to books, book reading, was our Uncle Leo, because he was the only educated, formal education, with a degree of a teacher. Warsaw, which is the capital of Poland, he was the only one. So he brought books home. And I remember many boxes of books in the attic of our grandfather's house.

INT: Why were they in the attic?

DOV: Well, maybe they were old already, or books that no one used, there was no place. There was no bookshelves. I don't remember bookshelves. But I liked to, a child likes to go in the

attics and look for things. So I used to sit there, and take out books from boxes and look at the books. I always had a weakness for books.

INT: How did you see?

DOV: Oh, there was light, through the, you could see some...

INT: Skylight?

DOV: Yeah. Skylight. Sometimes I go down, take some books and go down. I even remember I began to study English because there was some book with English, and I never succeed anything but at least two, three, words.

INT: How do you remember my mother? How would you describe her? That was Dinah Scherz. Dinah Schechter.

DOV: Always worked. Always busy. Always taking care of something in the house. From the morning to night. Always working. I never saw her relax. She did the cooking, and the laundry, and then to iron the three shirts for Shabbat.

INT: Didn't they have maids?

DOV: It was in her house. Yeah, Katerina was her name. I remember her very well. It wasn't enough. I mean, you did everything at home. You used to bake your own bread. You didn't buy bread. You baked it. To cook all the meals. To make laundry, to clean the house, to iron the, I remember...They used to ask, "Where is my shirt? Before I went to Beit Kneset," The last moment. I don't know. She was always busy. I never saw her sitting and reading a book. And she was, she was...I would say, too eager for a book. She was probably very envious of this, that she didn't got a proper education that her brother. Uncle Alexander, the oldest one, he taught himself. Whatever he knew, he knew, and he knew a lot. The youngest brother was sent by my grandfather to study for other reasons.

INT: Why was that?

DOV: There was a story with a love, which my grandfather didn't approve. He thought if he will send his son far away, to Warsaw to a big city, he will forget his...love. He did not forget his love. My father didn't have a choice. He didn't like this match, but he didn't have a choice. But meanwhile...

INT: What do you mean, he didn't have a choice?

DOV: They didn't ask him. They married. (laughs)

INT: Without him at the wedding?

DOV: No, I don't remember the wedding. He approved, finally. He saw that it didn't help anything. That distance didn't heal his son's love. It's very complicated family. Very complicated history.

INT: What do you remember about the way **they** got along?

DOV: Who?

INT: My mother, her brothers, and father?

DOV: Oh, they were very good-looking young men.

INT: Who?

DOV: Uncle Samuel and Leo. Leo was a very...he used to sing beautifully. Sammy used to play mandolin, and Leo used to sing.

INT: So did they have little concerts sort of?

DOV: No, just singing at home. Your mother sang also. Had a voice. She liked to sing, I remember. Very rare. And maybe after the Kiddush, Yom Shishi, it was a little bit relaxation in the house for **her**. But she used to work until the last minute to make everything, Shabbat on time, because the day was very short in wintertime. I used to have winter vacations also, to come.

INT: Do you remember anything about **her** personality? What are some ways you would describe her as a person, my uncles as a person? As people? Happy, sad, serious, silly, stupid, you know, adjectives.

DOV: She looked to me always unhappy. Always sad. Samuel was more or less happy. Happy -- he was in a good mood, he liked jokes, he talked a lot. He...at least he tried to appear as a happy person. He was very...variable. He liked people.

INT: You mean lively?

DOV: Yeah. And...another uncle I knew less, but also...you could see that he was different. He grew up in a big city. He was well-educated. As a teacher he behaved always properly. He never lost his temper, never lost control of whatever he said. Or whatever he did. Very...he's...I remember him, he was very loved by his students. He lived, like Samuel lived in Husiatyn. He lived, as a matter of fact, with my uncle and aunt. He rented a room there. And he wanted me...

INT: These are your father's brothers?

DOV: Yeah. I remember him, I remember him buying me the first book that I ever had and read. It was Cervantes, "Don Quixote." (pause -- trouble with tape)

INT: Hello. Okay, we're about to resume our interview with Dov Eshel. And before we get to the actual war part, Dov, do you remember any special relationships in your childhood with any particular people other than the family members that we have already talked about, or if you wanted to discuss any of those relationships in more detail?

DOV: I'm not sure that I understand exactly what you mean. Any relationships with other persons and family members?

INT: Yeah. Like special friends, either Jewish or not Jewish. Anything, something really that you cherished. You didn't **have** to. I'm just curious. Even a little pet or something.

DOV: I had friends, of course. Many friends, as a matter of fact. We used to play, many Jewish boys together. But there was a neighbor, a widow who had three children. I mean, she was an elder woman, the children were already, one of them married, one a bachelor. And a daughter still not married. And I don't know why I used to come, they lived across the street, I used to come there. And on Thursdays, it was usually people used to bake bread for the whole week, and for Shabbat. So she used to make little challahs, like three inches large, they were like toys, little challahs, (?), she used to say.

INT: Rolls.

DOV: Yeah. Today we call it rolls, but this was little challot for Shabbat, used to give me, and they liked me very much, I don't know why. Maybe later I understood, everyone liked me very much. People felt sorry for me because, everyone knew that I am an orphan. I didn't know. (interviewer laughs) And people used to spoil me. I was probably very...

INT: Charming.

DOV: Weitel, or charming. I didn't want to say charming, but...

INT: I'll say it.

DOV: What you call, like Dennis the Menace. A menace...

INT: A shobav.

DOV: A shobav. Yeah, in Hebrew a shobav. And with a kind, probably, of charm, what you call in English, you could get away with a murder. Whatever I did. But this was a special relationship we used to come, we called her like my Babcha. (phone interruption)

INT: Yes, Dov, to continue, you were telling us about this special relationship with a widow. Now was it with the widow, or with her children, or with everybody?

DOV: No, I used to call her "Babcha," (sp?) which means Grandma. Also she knew, and I knew her, but she was no relationship. Very far, far related somewhere. Even later on her son made aliyah to Israel, I mean many years ago, before Israel was established. He lived in...a village, Kfar Vidki (?), and when I came to Israel, and my parents came, we were very close. And we visited them. Even now I am closer, more or less in a relationship with his daughter. The old lady's granddaughter, whom she never saw, because she died in the Holocaust. The son survived in Israel. He married here in Israel a woman and became a farmer, in this village Kfar Widki (?). And now his daughter lives there. His grandchildren live there, his wife is still alive, and I'm very close with them. This was a very special relationship.

INT: Can you think of why? I mean, sure it was, was it just the challah? I mean...

DOV: No, I didn't come for the challah. It was, you know, I liked the house, the atmosphere in the house.

INT: What did you like in that atmosphere?

DOV: I can't remember. You see, sometimes...

INT: There was no husband.

DOV: No husband. And the elder one, maybe, there...(pause, break in tape)

INT: Yeah, so...

DOV: So, that's about it.

INT: I was just wondering if you could remember something specific about it. Was she warm?

DOV: She was a very warm person. I felt very easy. No one told me what to do and what not to do. How to behave, not to behave. You know, you were, a guest, you were a guest in the house, you feel, they spoiled you.

INT: Was she a kind of counterpoint to your stepmother?

DOV: Exactly. Yeah, exactly. I was allowed to do whatever I wanted to do.

INT: And she was very affectionate, this woman?

DOV: Yeah, I think so. She was a very poor woman, but she liked me, I don't know. I felt very comfortable there. I can't tell. Because it was just the neighbor kids, you know. The kids from the neighbor. I was a very curious child. I used to go all places to watch. Across the street there was a smith, for instance. A Gentile.

INT: A blacksmith?

DOV: A blacksmith, yeah. A blacksmith. I could spend **hours** there, listening to the talk. The peasants used to come with their horses, and people used to walk on the horseshoes, and put on the carriages to repair all this what is necessary. I remember myself as a kid watching all kinds of...vocations, workers, all kinds. Shoemakers, blacksmiths, carpenters. Maybe that's why I know how to do today everything, to fix. I fix myself at home everything. And I remember myself as a kid, I remember they used to send me with a pair of shoes to the shoemaker. I was to come back after fifteen minutes, like it was walking distance. I came back after three hours. No one at home knew where I disappeared. I used to sit and to watch how it was working with the nails and hammers, and with his glue, and with his sharp knife. I liked to see how people use their hands. I was always intrigued by this kind of work. I knew about work, even agriculture. I think more than any Jewish child in the city. And this is what I remember at least now. I remember their names, of all those workers, of baalei melacha, what you call. I don't know what the English expression is.

INT: Workers, but...

DOV: But skilled workers.

INT: Skilled workers, skilled laborers. Artisans, you might say.

DOV: That's Umanim, not Omanim. Umanim.

INT: Right. Artisans, rather than artists.

DOV: Yeah. I didn't know this expression.

INT: I hate to take you out of that comfortable memory, but...

DOV: Okay. That's fine with me, we have to go.

INT: Let's start with the hell. Let's start with...what's your first memory of trouble?

DOV: You mean the Holocaust?

INT: Yes.

DOV: It began before, even. Strangely enough, in 1939, when the German troops invaded Poland, it was on the west border, the west side, our family lived, Husiatyn was on the border. As a matter of fact, half of the town was on the Russian side, the other half on the Polish side, the west side, and the river, the Widas is two parts, and two...

INT: I know about that river because I think my father swam across it.

DOV: No, the other one.

INT: This was a different river?

DOV: Different river. I know about this river also. It was also a border river, but not this one.

INT: How big was the whole town that it could be separated into two?

DOV: Listen, it was a small town, but if there's a river in between, it separates it. So far, if I may tell you some...anecdote about this. Some families were divided. Like a part of the family lived on the Russian side, the other part of the family, brothers or sisters or cousins, used to live on the Polish side. And if you know, Russia, this...times of Stalin were closed up, the Iron Curtain was real, completely isolated. You couldn't write, you couldn't visit, you couldn't call. Just people wanted to know what's happening there with the families. They couldn't get in touch. No way. But...

(END TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE)

(Long pause)

INT: We were talking about background. What your first memory of trouble is, and you started to talk about some Rosh Hashanah.

DOV: Oh, yeah, about the (?). It was the last war.

INT: Yes. Because you were talking about how the city was divided, and that Jews lived on different parts of the city, but on Rosh Hashanah...

DOV: People went to the river.

INT: Making tashlich, that is the ritual of throwing bread crumbs into the water on the New Year, to symbolize a...

DOV: The sins, to get rid of your sins.

INT: A purification of sins, right.

DOV: Yeah. The people used to take their prayer books and pray loudly on one side of the river. The other families were on the other side of the river, and they used to shout loudly, between the prayers, "What does" -- in Yiddish, that the soldiers, the Polish soldiers on one side, the Russian soldiers, the guard, the border were on guard, couldn't understand -- "What is the Aunt Basya doing?" Or, "What does Uncle...vos macht," this way they used to pray. (shouting) "Baruch atah, was machst bis Uncle Moshe?" And you know, the soldiers didn't understand what it's all about. They're used to Jews, Jewish people pray very loud.

INT: I see.

DOV: That was the one way of conveying...

INT: Did you actually participate in that?

DOV: I didn't have any aunt on the other side.

INT: I see. Okay.

DOV: To convey any information, or to get information. But finally probably, they grasped, they understood, and after several weeks, I remember, it was forbidden to go near to the river, and the Russian side, they built a wall, which is just, the synagogue was very close to the river. The other Jews on the Russian side couldn't even see us anymore. Should not be any contact on one side to the other side.

INT: Why?

DOV: Why? Why Stalin wanted to, he was closer, I mean, even after the Second World War, there was an Iron Curtain. Why he built in Berlin a wall? Why? This is the regime. This is the way they...(laughs) they don't want to have any connections with the other world.

But there where the trouble began. In 1939 -- I am coming back to the invasion of the German troops to Poland.

INT: Right. September.

DOV: After the Ribbentrop-Molotov agreement. By the way, it was 1939. The Russian troops invaded eastern Poland. They divided Poland in two halves. The eastern half of Poland was occupied by the Russian troops, the Communist army, and the western was by the German army. There was an agreement, the Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement. But since it was war already, we were afraid. We had a cellar -- I told you, we lived a little bit far outside, not in the city, like in the Jewish quarter. I had a garden, which I mentioned before already. And we had a cellar, at those times, a cellar, you used to dig a hole, a deep hole underground, and cover it up. Make the hole with steps to go down. And my stepmother said to my father, "We have to hide all the silverware, the candlesticks from silver, everything valuable, before, we don't know what will happen. We will dig in our cellar," which was earth, somewhere a hole, and put it, dig it in. And cover it up, and whatever will happen later, we will see. Maybe some other valuable things that you could, like people usually do in the wars. And I was supposed to go with the maid, with the Ukrainian maid, we began the war the day before. The next morning...

INT: When was this?

DOV: September, '39.

INT: Right after the invasion.

DOV: No. The German troops were walking, were marching toward east.

INT: So you had heard about it.

DOV: We **knew** it. I mean, there were a lot of refugees coming.

INT: But they invaded September first.

DOV: Yeah, yeah.

INT: Oh, so they were in Poland already, but they didn't get to where you were.

DOV: Yeah. We were on the east border, they were on the west. Poland is quite a country.

INT: I understand. How big is Poland, by the way?

DOV: I don't know. Maybe 500 miles.

INT: Width?

DOV: Or more. I have to look up.

INT: Okay, more or less.

DOV: But no one really expected the Russian army to invade. It was a secret agreement between the two. We didn't know that time. The next morning we knew already. So we didn't finish the digging. We left all the silver in the cellar, and went to sleep. The next morning we heard shootings. So we thought maybe the German paratroops, parachuters, already tried to capture the Polish Army which retreated to close up the retreat, I mean, to catch the Polish Army. We didn't know what the shooting is. So stepmother said to the maid, "Go quick," -- it was maybe 5:00 in the morning. I was in my pajamas yet. "Go to the cellar and finish the work, because some soldiers are here, strange shooting in the town." So we went out, and we still didn't reach the cellar. We were, somebody shoot at us. They were running back to our house. We heard some voices, soldiers were shooting. I could hear the bullets whistling in my ears, and I, as a child, we used to play war games. You know, children play. We knew that we had to run in zigzags to make it difficult for the other, for the enemy to shoot you down. So then what I did, falling down, up, and I reached the door of the house, because the cellar was outside in the garden. After a minute, soldiers opened the door, with their guns in front of us. My father was still in a pajama. Everyone, we were undressed. "Out, out, out, out!" It was Russian soldiers. We couldn't understand what's happening. We expected **German** soldiers. It was Russian soldiers. They took me, and my father, with our hands up, and then I saw a neighbor also marching with his hands up, put to a wall, with the, with their guns, and I thought, this is the end.

We knew about the Russians, the cruel Russian army, what they did to the Jews. I didn't, as a child, I didn't realize that the Communist army is going to be a little bit different, but anyway, we were accused of shooting at them. I said, "Look at us. Do we look like soldiers or what?" "Yeah, we were attacked." What was the real story? Next to our house was the police station, the Polish police station. They were shooting from the windows. The soldiers, the Russian soldiers, they know who is shooting. They saw me, and I was running away to escape. The first thing is to catch, and they couldn't know from which windows, so they took out the neighbors and us. But the other neighbor, fortunately, he was a Russian Jew. He knew Russian. So he tried to explain to the officer. He saw, we were pale and trembling. He said to the Russian, "Do they look like heroes, shooting at soldiers? Look at the man in the pajamas, (interviewer laughs) trembling, white with the one," he said, "pale, white as the wall. How can you believe it?" So the Russian officer was probably a mensch, a little bit, he says, "No, we are not invaders. We came to liberate you from the Polish capitalistic regime. And we came here to bring you freedom, and blah, blah, blah."

Anyway, one of my good friends -- a girl -- saw from the window, standing there with the hands up, and they let us go after an hour, but she meanwhile, people go out already from their apartments. It was a liberation army. It was not an invaders army. And she told all my friends, you know, I became a hero. "Dov was almost executed, put to the wall, with the hands up, and the Russian soldier wanted to kill him." I became a hero this day. But that's where the problem began. (laughs) From this day, from this day, the Russians were for two years in our part of Poland. Since my father was not a worker, but a merchant, a businessman, he belonged to the middle class, and not the proletariat, so he was not kosher, how you say it. I mean, not for the Russians. He was always this...how you say...danger to be sent to Siberia, which they did to many, many rich families.

INT: He was always in danger.

DOV: In danger, yeah. But fortunately, he got a good job, and his boss, a Russian communist, a member of the Communist party, liked him very much, because he was a very good worker. He was lucky, even in the Russian regime, he was very respected by his boss. And he said to my father, "I will not let you touched by any..." What was called (?).

INT: KGB.

DOV: KGB. Then it was called (?). "I am a high member of the party. They will never do to you anything as long as I am your boss." And that's what happened.

INT: What kind of work did your father do there?

DOV: It, he did mostly bookkeeping, but it was the head of the office. It was the ministry of supply, food supply or agriculture supplies for the army. It was very important. They had to take from all the peasant whatever they had, the crop. They put some taxes on the peasant, but in nature, but in products, they had to...the way they forced the peasant to work, because the

peasant didn't **want** to work. But if they have to give like a pound a wheat, or a pound of others, pounds of meat, so they had to work. And this was supplied to the army. And my father did probably very well job. This office was the best organized office in town. And he was very praised for it, his boss, the Russian boss, that he works. But of course, he knew that Father does a good job. He didn't do anything. He was the boss. He was only a party member. That's why he was the boss. He didn't have any real...so to speak, skills to run this office. But in Russia, that's the way. If you are not a party member, you are a head of the office. The story is, if you are lucky, then you have good workers, then you are successful. This is what happened.

I went to Russian school. Because I was only thirteen and a half years old.

INT: In other words, your school was taken over by the Russians?

DOV: Sure. The teacher, the Polish teachers were sent to Siberia, or to prison, or whatever, the Polish, they were the Polish oppressors of the Ukrainian poor peasants. I mean, they came to liberate us, the Russians, from the Polacks. So new teachers, they didn't have to be very smart teachers, but there is also a joke about it, but I will tell it later. Because the people who took over, were not all qualified people. But they took over, because they were sons of workers of poor peasants, or something, whatever it is. They didn't have to have education. It was more like...like you say this theater play, which is not a burlesque, but...

INT: Vaudeville?

DOV: No, not a specific, but this kind of a play, humoristic play, a farsa.

INT: A farce. Okay.

DOV: It was more like a farce, the whole school. All those officials, people without any education. But good communists, because they were poor. They didn't know about communism anything anyway, but they are poor enough to be trusted. It was enough. If you said your grandfather was a shoemaker, or a blacksmith, or a very poor one, it was the nobility, the yichus. G-d forbid if you said your grandfather had a store or something like this. It was not...that's how the terror began. But in comparison to what came later in '41, I mean, it's not to compare. Then we really knew what happened.

INT: Well, were your actions restricted by the Russians? How else did life change?

DOV: Not really. I mean, you couldn't travel anywhere. You couldn't even go over the bridge to see the other part of the village, of the little town. Even now, you couldn't speak to your relatives on the other side. They were afraid, the other people living in Russia shouldn't see how we lived under the Polish regime, because they told them stories that we are suppressed, and whatever.

INT: So did you continue any family reunions, like you talked about at that time?

DOV: Only illegally. I was caught twice crossing the ice in the winter. In the winter storm, we couldn't see anything in front of your nose, we school children, we, three friends of mine, yeah, we didn't know what is fear. We tried to cross the river, many smugglers used to do it, but for economic reasons. To smuggle bread, or other food, to sell from this side to the other side. We did it just for fun, for adventure, for excitement. So I was caught twice on the ice, because in the winter was very cold. We had a very cold winter. The river was frozen. We always chose the bad weather, when the soldiers are too tired. It still was a border, although we were called the Western Ukrainia, and this was the eastern Ukrainia. So we used to go to look what's on the other side. We were curious. So we couldn't really pick up there family reunion. It wasn't such a thing at all. (pause)

So some of my friends were sent to Siberia. (Pause) Now, let us, I mean, skip the two years.

INT: Of the Russian occupation.

DOV: Ken. (pause) And begin with the German. I don't think you want to know the historical facts or details, what really happened.

INT: Whatever affects you, whatever affected you.

DOV: You see, when in 1941...

INT: By the way, backtrack. Backtrack a second. What do you remember about your feelings during this Russian occupation? Were you afraid most of the time? Did it affect your general disposition?

DOV: No. As a matter of fact, as a matter of fact, after my father was so successful in this, I mean the tension or the fear to be sent to Siberia, or to jail slowly, slowly...how you say, declined. So I, being a good student, I had Russian friends, children of the Russian high officials, I was very popular among them. They liked me. We spent a lot of time together.

INT: Were classes taught in Russian now?

DOV: Yeah.

INT: So how did you learn Russian?

DOV: (laughs) You **had** to learn. How long does it take for a child to learn? I still speak Russian.

INT: Do you read Russian, too?

DOV: I read better than I speak, because this is the passive....

INT: You read Cyrillic.

DOV: Yeah, yeah. You see, Jewish children, I remember when I went in Israel, the first year to a teachers' college. We had this teacher who spoke about difficulties of the Israeli child in the first grade. He has to learn the big letters, printed, and the written letters, which are different in Hebrew, and in Latin too. Then the final four letters, and I looked at him I say, "I don't understand what's difficult." I was six year old. I had to learn the Hebrew A,B,C, with all the difficulty you are talking about. The Latin alphabet. At age thirteen I learned the Cyrillic alphabet, and then the old Gothic German alphabet, and I was fourteen years old, and I knew of four different alphabets, and I don't remember any difficulties. As a matter of fact, now they say that children of age grade three or two or four will learn much easier English in Israel than in high school when they begin to learn English. For a child, we grew up trilingual children. Immediately, in the first year, we spoke three languages. With Ukrainian, Polish, and Jewish, and then Hebrew. This was, I mean, Yiddish and Hebrew. It's like four languages. I used to always say when I was born, I cried in three languages the first day. (interviewer laughs) So we didn't have this problem. I'm just reminded, because when I went to hear the graduate center in New York, in Yeshiva University, the head of our department was always talking about me as a genius. "He speaks four or five languages. Meet please, this is Mr. Eshel. He speaks five languages." So I said, I didn't understand what it's all about. I mean, I always spoke (laughs) more than three.

INT: Was that typical among the Jews in Poland?

DOV: Yeah. You should see. What will happen in our family. You know, our cousin Bernard. When we met together, Rosemary, Bernard and I, we spoke a little bit English. Then he had to say something in French to Rosemary, she answered in German, and to me he spoke Yiddish, and sometimes we spoke Hebrew. It was one conversation in five languages in ten minutes. And your Uncle Alexander used to write letters to me. So he began to write Hebrew. And then he had to say something which was in English sounds better, so he put an English sentence or two in the letter, Hebrew letter, and then he turned to Yiddish, because he wrote a very good Yiddish. And he reminded himself something, some saying in Polish, or Ukrainian, so I could read the letter, I used to show to Rosemary, "Look. This man writes to me in five different languages in one letter." This is typical in Diaspora Jewish families. So what can I do? (laughs) Of course, in America and England, they speak one language. If they know two languages, it's already an educated man.

Stop it [the tape] for a moment.

INT: So you were saying about...(pause) But I was asking you about, if you remember any feelings, of living with more tension, or increased fear, or what were your personal emotional reactions?

DOV: I was just telling you, after the first period, the first, let us say, nine, ten months, I felt more relaxed. The fear wasn't anymore. I even enjoyed. I became very popular. I got this, I finished my tenth grade. The Russian system was different. With the outstanding excellent student, a special diploma with Stalin and Lenin's picture on it, and I remember my father tore it

to pieces (interviewer laughs) when the Germans came, because there was a picture of Stalin, they shouldn't think that I am some who knows what? A party member. I still regret it. It was a diploma for at least (?) means an excellent student. I mean, it was a pleasant thing to feel. You were popular among the Russian kids, which were not very...they themselves did not feel very comfortable in the strange population. The Ukrainian didn't like them; the Polish **hated** them. The Jewish suspected them. I felt very fine. I felt good. I am an adjustable animal.

INT: By the way, did you have any girlfriends as a teenager? Was that, did people do those things?

DOV: Oh, ho, of course. Even one Russian girl. I fell in love even with the teacher, the Russian teacher. They sent to us an eighteen years old Russian teacher. **Beauty!** I was already fifteen at that time. Beauty. If you are a teenager, this is the right age to fall in love with a teacher. Oh, I wrote her poems -- what didn't I do for her? She was smiling. She was very embarrassed. She didn't know what to do with **me**. How to get **rid** of me. She was such a beautiful blonde. Terrishishe shiksele (sp?). Beautiful. And of course, there were girlfriends at my age, in the group. In my age group.

INT: The Algemeine Zionist group?

DOV: Yeah, first them, and then the Russian girl, a daughter of some Russian official, with big blue eyes. So innocent, mama, she liked me very much. I didn't...I was, how you say...a shaygetz. (laughs) Not really. I was like...what do you call?

INT: A Romeo.

DOV: Parpar.

INT: A butterfly.

DOV: A butterfly.

INT: Okay, getting back. So in other words, during the Russian occupation, the quality of your life didn't change that much?

DOV: No, not at all. I felt quite comfortable. The year 1940, '41, until one day...we heard this shooting of cannons shooting, and bombing, the city was bombed by airplanes, by German airplanes. My aunt, Mordechai's cousin, mother's brother's son, she was leading the family. She was a dominant person in the family. She was a huge woman, like a Cossack. We used to call her "the Cossack." (Interviewer laughs) What she said, it has to be done. So she came over to our and said, "Take whatever you can. A small package on your back, and we'll leave the city. We go to the country, to the village. We don't stay here." And as I told you, whatever she said, the family did. So we took everything, what we could, some clothes, the valuable things were hidden in the cellar, we couldn't even take it out.

INT: The valuable things, yes.

DOV: And we left Husiatyn. And we hide...in some Ukrainian peasant's house, who was a good acquaintance of my uncle. They make business together. They knew each other very well. And since he was a Ukrainian, and a very respected Ukrainian peasant in this village, we were quite safe from the Ukrainians. The next two days, the German troops, the first troops, came in; we didn't know what happened, because we were sitting there hidden in this house, with the Ukrainian peasant. Only after...

INT: Did you pay him, or did he offer to do this?

DOV: No, he was asked to just...it was a temporary shelter. Just until the front will move a little bit. After several days he told us, "Now you can go, you may go, but don't go to Husiatyn back." He didn't tell us why. He said, "No, it's better, you have relatives in Wasylkowce." So I remember, I came to grandfather, "Don't go back." We couldn't understand why. So we sent our maid -- she was with us together, the Ukrainian girl.

INT: Why?

DOV: She belonged to the family. She was an orphan. She grew up in our house. She was a member of the family, almost. She didn't have any other place to go. She stayed with us. So we sent her to Husiatyn, to bring some, to see if the house is still there, if there is some things that she could bring us. And my aunt went with her. Women was more secure to go by foot. Four or five miles through the fields. Even German soldiers will not attack two Ukrainian, dressed like the peasant women. It was not a big danger for them.

INT: Really? I thought women, were not at risk of being raped?

DOV: Not. They were not so beautiful. (interviewer laughs) Not very stimulating.

INT: I see.

DOV: And...what happened really, the first day when the German troops came into the town, it was the only town in the whole area where they killed all the Jewish females. From the one year old child to the old, old man. The reason was probably this. That since there was a border line...

INT: Where was this, in Husiatyn?

DOV: In Husiatyn. This was the first killing they did in the whole area. They didn't touch any other places. Except when on the front when people were killed, not intentionally. Just by accident. Civilians. But in Husiatyn, they did it on purpose. They went from house to house, with Ukrainian boys used to point out which house is a Jewish house. They took out all the male, all my friends were killed in this day. Only those who were not in Husiatyn, like we, who left incidentally, left Husiatyn because we were afraid of the bombing, not of the killing. No one could imagine that the army comes in, goes and kills people like this.

INT: You said before, "females," meaning...

DOV: Males. They killed the males.

INT: Oh, they didn't kill the females.

DOV: They left the women and the girls alive. The whole, the whole city was only widows and orphans. Female orphans.

INT: Were the bodies buried? What happened? They took them out to the fields, or...

DOV: They took them out to the synagogue place, the rabbi's place, whatever it's called, dem Rebbe's Hoif (sp?) the rabbi's court, and there they shoot all the men. This is a massacre (he pronounces it in the French way), this was the first one in the whole area.

INT: Massacre. (English pronunciation)

DOV: Massacre, yeah. And the reason for it I was told later, is because the Russian army -- you know, this was a very strategic point. Husiatyn was on the border, on the river. The fight was very difficult there, on the front, and many German soldiers were killed. By the Russians. And probably it was a kind of reprisal or revenge. Or just to let off steam, or to do something. So the SS troop, the regular army didn't deal with this killings. Only with special troops. SS, which is Sturmstahfe. They did it. So of course my father, my uncle and I was told to hide, not to go back anymore to Husiatyn. And I didn't go back.

INT: So were any of your cousins killed, or...

DOV: The one who lives now in Israel, wasn't in Husiatyn anymore, he left Poland in '39 before the war broke out. Illegally.

INT: How?

DOV: There was an illegal immigration to Palestine in those times. And this is a different story. So he was here. Only his father and his sister remained in Husiatyn.

INT: And his father was killed?

DOV: No, his father was together with me.

(END TAPE THREE, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE THREE, SIDE TWO)

INT: All the Jews, all the males in Husiatyn. So you're talking about what, 500 people? Something like that.

DOV: Maybe, yeah. Yeah. Even babies were killed. One of our neighbor, she had her baby at her breast, feeding it, the baby. They shoot the baby and injure the mother, because she didn't let them take it away. They killed the baby on the mother's hand. That's what the SS did.

I didn't go back to Husiatyn because I wasn't **allowed** to go back. Neither my father. We stayed in Wasylkowce. The stepmother...

INT: With this peasant.

DOV: No, no.

INT: Then you left the peasant, and you went.

DOV: He tell, told us, you may go. He didn't want to keep us. He was also afraid. He didn't want to get involved with Jewish people. A saver of Jews, he was afraid of his own people.

INT: So you went to Wasylkowce?

DOV: We went to Wasylkowce. I stayed with my grandfather.

INT: My grandfather, too.

DOV: Yeah. I think Father stayed also there, or with his brother, because his brother was the innkeeper.

INT: The other...

DOV: The uncle of the father. The father's brother, yeah. We had troubles enough, I will not go into details. But one day...

INT: What do you mean, what kind of trouble?

DOV: I mean the Ukrainians, they celebrated. They were now the Germans promised them an independent Ukrainian state, so the first thing to do is to kill Jewish people. Separately from SS, they had their...

INT: Agenda.

DOV: Party, yeah. They had to celebrate also, somehow. How did the Ukrainians used to celebrate? (Ukrainian) What means, "Kill the Jews, save your own country." This was the...

INT: So were you hiding in Wasylkowce, or...

DOV: We were hiding, we were beaten up, it was all kinds of different stories. It's really not the time to go into all of the details. It wasn't a...ball to live.

INT: But you lived in my grandfather's house?

DOV: Yeah.

INT: So with my mother.

DOV: Yeah.

INT: And my uncles.

DOV: Yeah. No. Your uncle, Uncle Alexander was somewhere in Russia.

INT: Right. He was drafted.

DOV: He was mobilized. Your other uncle lived in Kopycynze, so he didn't live in Wasylkowce anymore, but your father was there.

INT: Because my parents were married already.

DOV: Yeah. So we used to hide together with your father.

INT: He built the bunkers?

DOV: No, we were in the upstairs, in the attic. I mean, this time they still didn't search for us specially. So for you to get out of sight, just not to provoke anyone, just to invite any trouble.

INT: So how did you live, was my grandfather still selling stuff from his store, or...

DOV: No. The store was liquidated a long time before the Russians, and he couldn't. But they had some hidden stuff, which from the store, they could change into agriculture products with the peasants. You know, like leather.

INT: A barter system? They sort of traded?

DOV: Yeah, trading system and so on. I really didn't bother, because I was young, and it was...I didn't know exactly how they managed to survive. Neither how my father did, or how my grandfather did.

INT: Your father was with you, too. Your father and your stepmother...

DOV: Yeah, but then we came back to Husiatyn, because...

INT: How long did you live in Wasylkowce with my...

DOV: I can't remember. Weeks, several weeks.

INT: And there was you, your stepfather, your father, your stepmother and your brother.

DOV: No, no, they went back.

INT: They went back before you.

DOV: Yeah.

INT: You stayed longer.

DOV: Yeah.

INT: Why?

DOV: Because I was...quite a grown up boy, not a child already. And this German troops went farther to the east in the front, I mean, the area went back to more or less normal life, with only a station and two or three Germans. There was a camp. And all Jews were already with the star, with the Magen David, the David star.

INT: Yellow star.

DOV: Not yellow, was blue, white with a blue star. A white strip with a blue star, and we were not allowed to walk on the sidewalk, but only on the streets, where there was mud. Not asphalt road. No, the sidewalks was only for the Germans and for Ukrainians. Jews shouldn't walk on the sidewalk. Shouldn't walk at all. I mean, they took the girls and the women to work. There was a labor camp. They used to beat them, to molest the women, and one, was especially a sadist. They used to call him "Major." I heard only stories what he did to the women. And I was...

INT: My mother went to those labor camps, too?

DOV: No, she was in Wasylkowce. I'm talking about Husiatyn.

INT: Oh, this is after you went back to Husiatyn. No, backtrack a second. In Wasylkowce when you were living...

DOV: Nothing really happened, because it was a village. A village, it depends how the villagers...treated you.

INT: So do you remember, since you were a little bit older at that time, so what was the atmosphere in the house? What was family dinner like? Was there ever any...

DOV: There was less food. You...

INT: I meant more the atmosphere.

DOV: The atmosphere was fear. Always fear. What will happen. Insecurity. Total insecurity. You couldn't tell what would happen tomorrow.

INT: So is that what people were talking about over dinner, "My G-d, what's going to be?" How would you characterize the mood? Constant lamentation, any sense of defiance: we're going to make it, the hell with them? How would you...

DOV: No, no chance, no chance. The victorious German army... (phone interruption)

INT: Okay, Dov, so you went back to Husiatyn. I was asking you about the atmosphere in Wasylkowce. I mean, how were my parents and my late grandfather coping? I mean...

DOV: You asked already and I told you already.

INT: Yeah. Tell me again.

DOV: We lived in permanent fear. In permanent insecurity. You never could tell what will happen tomorrow. No one really knew what will happen. Even I think the Germans didn't have a definite plan.

INT: So how did this insecurity manifest itself?

DOV: The insecurity was there because the whole population, the Ukrainian population, was a hostile population. We were out of law, I mean, not protected by **any** law. Any Ukrainian child could kill a Jew, and nothing will happen to him. Our lives were free to everyone. So can you imagine how people live? It just...

INT: No, I can't. That's why I'm asking you.

DOV: Of course you can't, but one can, as I told you before, unless you are killed physically, you can -- at least this is my opinion -- you can survive **everything**.

INT: Well, was there any discussion around, certain plans, contingencies, that if something happens, we'll do A, B, C, D?

DOV: No. You couldn't have any plans. If something happens, it means they will take us to a labor camp. No one knew or spoke about those concentration camps. We didn't know.

INT: Well, they didn't exist.

DOV: They didn't exist that time. So we thought, we used to discuss it, if it comes to worse, then we will work very hard. It will be **very** hard, but after the war, no one really believes that Hitler will win the war. It was a very naive belief.

INT: Even, even...

DOV: Even the victorious German army was already on the...

INT: The Eastern front.

DOV: Moscow and Leningrad. So we knew it's impossible. It's impossible that the evil can...how you say, victory...

INT: Triumph.

DOV: Triumph or...to win the war. I don't know why we took this belief. We believed, we strongly believed, the Germans will lose the war. Will finally be defeated. But in the meantime, we will work very hard.

INT: And you kept, were informed of news by the radio, or how did you get news?

DOV: What radio, what news?

INT: No news.

DOV: Later on, there were papers, German papers, we could understand, we could read. The army, the soldiers had some newspapers, and we knew more or less. And...but speaking about myself, when I came back to Husiatyn, there were two boys, or three boys alive. I am only one. Then I met the third one. So you can't imagine the feelings. You go on the street, and a woman approaching you, a mother of a best friend, and looking at me, and bursting, and crying, and because I reminded her always of her son, "So how come you're alive whereas my boy..." and it happened to me many times, many different women, because all my...

INT: Did they say that actually? No. But you could **feel** it.

DOV: No, no, but you could feel it. This was my feeling, that I'm here, I mean, meutar -- how you say meutar?

INT: Extra.

DOV: Extra. I can't...I don't belong anymore here. I shouldn't walk in the streets, shouldn't meet people, because I remind them of their children. And how come a Jewish boy is still alive? It was terrible. It was maybe the most difficult feeling for me at that time. But slowly, slowly,

you got used to it. I had only girlfriends then, no boyfriends, only girlfriends of my age, fifteen, fourteen, fifteen, and we used to meet and talk, but it was a very sad meeting. It wasn't parties. We used to talk about what will be and what we will do.

INT: Did you resume school?

DOV: No! What school? Chaos, completely. Jewish people were outlaws. Nothing was normal. You were not supposed to work and earn money. I don't know how people survived. Everyone sell, somebody handed the peasant a pair of shoes, have a pair of other things, a ring, some other jewelry, whatever one still had. I mean, they lost their husbands and their sons, but they still have their homes, and their property. We didn't have anymore the house, not anything, because we left, everything was ruined, burned, burned up or...taken away. We didn't have anything. Except this little poor things.

INT: Was there a German presence in the town?

DOV: Yeah. This is this camp, the labor camp with the two or three German officers and some soldiers, and Ukrainian police. They ruled the town, the Ukrainian police. They left the Ukrainians. They knew the Ukrainians will keep everything under control. "Under control," it means they will kill everyone that they want to kill. They didn't have to worry, the Germans, in Ukrainia. It wasn't a Holland or Denmark. The population was very hostile. This was even worse, because you didn't have any help or sympathy from the local people. And the local people already did whatever was possible to kill Jews.

And finally...the Aktions of the extermination began. One day they took away, they used to take away, every time some people, send them away. We heard only that there are some labor camps, concentration camps, that no one still could escape and come back. It was very unclear, the situation. And we had to move to other town. What the Germans did, usually, when they liquidated one of the small villages, the small towns, the survivors of all these Aktions, they used to gather in a bigger town. To concentrate them, it was easier for them to control and to kill the people. They never left other people around the villages and little towns. That's why we came first to Probuzno, where my eldest brother of my father, and that's where they finished the ghetto.

INT: Your uncle, you mean.

DOV: Yeah, they finished the ghetto of Probuzno, they liquidated. We came to Kopyczynce, but my father and I and eight other Jews from Husiatyn, somehow -- I don't know, because I didn't deal with all this, I was the youngest one -- bribed the officer of this Husiatyn camp, who was a real Nazi believer in Hitler. He didn't believe that Hitler knows about all this. He was so, worshipped Hitler. But he agreed to keep us.

INT: What do you mean? He didn't believe that Hitler knew about what?

DOV: About all this extermination Aktions and so on.

INT: So where did he think the orders were coming from?

DOV: Hitler's assistant. But Hitler is not a murderer. Hitler doesn't kill people just like that. He was, it was beyond his apprehension [sic]. He was so...a Nazi, such a deep and devoted Nazi. He worshipped the Fuhrer, but he was a good-natured man. I mean, he really couldn't understand why the Gestapo, he said, "It's the Gestapo. It's not Hitler, it's the Gestapo. Why the Gestapo kills the Jews, he couldn't understand. So he said, "You I will save." He kept us as workers, laborers, in this camp. We used to do all kinds of jobs there. Our mothers and wives, the wives were in the ghetto. So you couldn't keep them. When we knew something about some Aktion, we always had all kinds of...signs.

INT: Where is this by the way?

DOV: The women were in Probuzno or Kopyczynce. We were in Husiatyn. Ten, I am talking about ten people, ten survivors. Today only two still are alive. Two of us. Still alive. One in Los Angeles, and I.

INT: From Husiatyn.

DOV: From those ten last people from Husiatyn. Men. Males.

INT: Are you in touch with this person in...LA?

DOV: Unfortunately, I don't know why he didn't visit me when he was, I was with him when I was in Los Angeles last time, in 1969 or '70. I went to visit his brother, I didn't know that he is there, that he still lives. He never tried to get in touch with me. I didn't know that he survived.

INT: Were you the same age?

DOV: No, he's a little bit older, maybe two years older.

INT: Were you friends at the time?

DOV: Not very close. He was not very popular among...he was a little bit crippled. One leg was...at school, we didn't like him. I don't know why. But his brother, which was this age of our Uncle Samuel, I think. He was...he used to keep in touch with my father. Every Rosh Hashanah he sends greetings.

INT: The brother of this man.

DOV: Yeah. So I knew his address, and I used to continue the correspondence every Rosh Hashanah. When I was in Los Angeles, I decided to see him. He was a landsmann, from the old town, and maybe he wants to know something, to ask me questions. So I went to visit him. I spent an evening with him. So he said to me, "You want to meet my brother?" I said, "What do you mean, Herschel is still alive?" He said, "Of course. He lives in Los Angeles. We will call

him up, he will come over." So he did, he came over, so he brought up the old memories and so on. And then he never wrote, I never wrote to him, and one day my cousin Mordechai told me that he is visiting Israel. Herschel Herschkovitz. And he met my cousin, but he didn't...

INT: Oh, Herschkovitz.

DOV: Herschkovitz. Your father knows him.

INT: Oh, I know who you're talking about.

DOV: Yeah. In Los Angeles. He lives in Los Angeles.

INT: If he's still alive.

DOV: If he's still alive, I don't know.

INT: Oh, sure. So he was the only other person who survived Husiatyn?

DOV: Yeah. This Leibel Herschkovitz. Herschel Herschkovitz, and Leibel Herschkovitz.

INT: Right, Herschel. I met Herschel.

DOV: Herschkovitz. So. Until one day this camp was liquidated, the Gestapo didn't let this German to keep Jewish people, and it was liquidated, he was sent to the Russian front, and we went back to Kopyczyncz ghetto. And then we went through all what you know from your parents, the same stories, I mean, the same what your father told to the other man who interviewed your father, I don't know who it was. Aktions and Aktions, taking the men were taken away to camps. You have to, we went to hide every second Monday and Thursday. I mean, twice...

INT: Proverbially speaking. And you were with your father and your stepmother and your brother.

DOV: Yeah.

INT: You're all together.

DOV: All together. Through the year '42, '43.

INT: What kind of living conditions, did you say?

DOV: Oh, terrible living conditions. Fifty people in an apartment, laying out on the floor. We have a, could have a place to sleep. Nothing to eat. We used to eat...how you call this, radish? Radishes. Not the red, the small ones, the big ones, which is cheaper.

INT: Turnips.

DOV: Maybe. It's...

INT: Turnips, it's in the same family.

DOV: Ken?

INT: I think so.

DOV: With a little bit oil, and it was the food. Even horses had better food. And all kinds of illnesses, typhus and...all kinds where people died of hunger, people were starving. People died of typhus. People died for oh, I mean, it's really...very difficult to understand how people survive. But nevertheless, I still had, strangely, I mean, with one of our, my mother's, my stepmother's sister, had a brother-in-law, who lived alone, somewhere in Poland. He was a refugee, he came to Kopyczynce with his daughter. His wife was killed, her mother. The girl...

INT: By the Nazis.

DOV: Yeah. The girl was about my age. So we were two young people in a house of fifty people. We fell in love with each other. Probably we didn't have anyone else. So we always used to be together, next to each other. And among all those adults. So I remember, we used to hide together, very close together, embracing ourselves, and being ready to die if they find us, the Nazis and all of them.

INT: Did anybody have any poison?

DOV: No. We would like to have -- you couldn't get it anywhere. We were talking about this. You need money. I mean, only doctors or pharmacists they knew where to get it, or how to get it or what to get. We didn't know.

INT: That's one of the things people talked about, though? How they would kill themselves?

DOV: Yeah. This was the closest possibility, how to escape tortures, or other death. I mean, no one really believed that there is a chance to escape. On the other hand, we had some strong drive for survival, despite all this. To be able to see the...defeat of the Germans, and to be able to take revenge. I mean, the only reason to survive was to just, not to survive because I want to live, because I want to see the Germans defeated, and be able, have the opportunity to kill a few Germans at least. That was the power that kept us.

INT: So that was a discussion that people talked about.

DOV: Yeah.

INT: Anything else? Was there any, were there families? These were fifty people who were families.

DOV: Yeah, family, yeah. But broken families. I mean parts of families. I mean, women without husbands, children without parents, not children...

INT: Did people, did people sort of reconstitute families in the sense of breaking...

DOV: No.

INT: Not in a technical sense, but did you see that like, you gravitated towards this young girl. Did other people, say, a husband without a wife, and a wife without a husband gravitate...

DOV: No, they were too busy with trouble. I mean, there was not real family life at all. It was, everyone make all possible effort to survive.

INT: I meant in terms of people looking for companionship.

DOV: No. I mean, we young people, you know, a young person still has this, probably even in this...in this terrible time, there were love stories, and love affairs, among young people. But the older people...

INT: But young people had love affairs?

DOV: Yeah.

INT: Yourself included?

DOV: Yeah. My cousin's, Mordechai's sister, the one who lives in Israel now, his sister had a boyfriend, and he tried to save her. They went away, they left their parents, and they went together somewhere to hide, but she was found, she was killed. He was, I met him in New York last time when I was there. So young couples were created, trying to escape, trying to build up something. I mean, life is strong. I mean, the emotions, they are stronger.

INT: But you didn't see that kind of thing among older people?

DOV: No, older people didn't do it. Very rare. Mostly, the troubles were too much, the misery was too big, too great, just to think about creating new families. What for? I mean...after the war, I mean, after the war, those who survived, you could see new couples. They were trying to rebuild families. It was very interesting to see how the people tried to build a new life.

INT: So at the risk of being a little blunt, but I think it's an interesting question for the project. So you were going to say, you lost your virginity in the middle of the war? Or not yet?

DOV: (pause) Not yet. We did everything, but this was a little too much. You didn't have the chance. You were always surrounded by people.

INT: Now, did you see other people making love in these circumstances?

DOV: No.

INT: Okay.

DOV: No, it was not in our head. We...kissed each other. We made all the kinds of...but you couldn't do it. Just, you didn't have even...

INT: The space.

DOV: The space to do it. We were very close, hiding together, very close, embracing each other, kissing each other, but that was all what you could do. Maybe other people, not that I recall any young couple in my...I think...it happened because children were born even in the Holocaust. Even in concentration camps.

INT: Oh, I know that.

DOV: But if you asked me, we couldn't do it. I mean, the parents were around all the time. And...

INT: What were your feelings about G-d, religion? Anything, did you think about it at all?

DOV: We didn't believe in G-d. We **couldn't** believe in G-d. At those times? Where was G-d? It was impossible to believe in G-d. Because even G-d couldn't remain indifferent to what was happening to his creatures. So if you **were** religious, you could lose it. Especially if you didn't believe much, very much before, we really didn't believe in G-d.

INT: Was there any attempt...

DOV: I am talking about myself. I don't know how other people, maybe they prayed, but I don't remember...

INT: Each person speaks only for himself, herself. Was there any attempt at maintaining rituals in these circumstances?

DOV: No, it was impossible.

INT: Shabbat, did you know when Shabbat came?

DOV: What are you talking about? No! Not at all! What's the difference? Every day is the same day. Maybe we knew, because of Sundays, we knew when Sunday is. But what could you do? To make a cholent, to make challah, to light the candles? Nothing.

INT: Were any people in your complex religious? Men?

DOV: Yeah, yeah, they were religious, but...

INT: Did they daven every day, did they pray every day? What did you see around you?

DOV: I didn't see anyone praying. I don't remember such things like praying, or any or...nothing. You couldn't do anything. It was impossible to lead a normal life.

INT: Now I know that Kopyczynce had a Kopyczynce rebbe, it had a, what was the rebbe doing?

DOV: He wasn't there. He wasn't there.

INT: Where was he?

DOV: The Kopyczynce rebbe was in Vienna, he was saved by the wife of my cousin, by Joe's grandfather. He convinced him to come to Israel. To leave Vienna, to go to Israel.

INT: The Kopyczynce rebbe went to Israel?

DOV: Yeah.

INT: What year?

DOV: I don't remember. I mean, I know the story only from Joe.

INT: But at this time, the Kopyczynce rebbe had already left.

DOV: He already left. That's why he survived.

INT: Vienna was safer than Poland.

DOV: He left probably before really '39 probably.

INT: Oh, I see.

DOV: So, no, there was no community life. I mean, you couldn't go out on the street and meet with other people. Or the evening, go over, pay a visit to someone. I mean, this was a matter of death and life. You went to work, this you had to do, you were forced to do. And then you came home, and you didn't have the strength to go and to live any social life. At least, I'm talking

about Kopyczyńce, about the small ghettos. In Warsaw were different. There was a theater, and a school and an orchestra, and I don't know what, and a money in the ghetto. This little community. The only thing you had to do is every day to go to labor, and then to hide, so we build, in our house we build a bunker, a very sophisticated. They really never discovered us.

INT: Who's the "we"?

DOV: The inhabitants of this complex. There were many families, maybe seventy, eighty people.

INT: Do you know, how did you manage to do that?

DOV: Yeah, it's technically too difficult to describe now. It's for itself very interesting, how we knew, whenever there was an Aktion, which was supposed to be, we used to spend, we used to have our watchman's, I mean, every night have someone else, every four hours changed. Once, I saved the whole house, because I was, to understand what's going on, I was standing on the attic, and watching through the roof what's going on, and I saw coming in and trucks into the city. So I understood immediately what's going on. I went down and woke up all the people. It took half an hour. The last person went into the bunker, the shooting began. They killed a lot of people that night, but they didn't find **anyone** in our house. We were underground.

INT: What did you build the bunkers with?

DOV: We build the bunkers beneath, or under the cellar. You came in, you could see a cellar, but you could never find which rock, or which stone or brick, is moving out and in. It was on wheels, metal wheels. It's very sophisticated.

INT: Where did you get the materials?

DOV: We had someone in the building, he was a real engineer. I don't know where they got it. But I know that I was very often the one who was the last one to go in to close the wall from inside. And no one could, and then we put earth there, a box with earth, and even if they moved the stones, they will see this is a wall. There is nothing there.

INT: How did you get air into the bunker?

DOV: That was the problem. People didn't have enough oxygen, and they saw once people get blue, you begin to die. So I said to my father, I prefer to die from a bullet, and not to die from lack of air, because it's a terrible, terrible death. I saw the people dying. So I said to my father, "Let's go up. Open the bunker, and I leave. If I will get killed, I will get killed." No one wanted to go. He went with me. We opened the bunker, the air came in, but we went up. Fortunate enough, it was lunchtime for the Germans. It's lunchtime, they don't shoot people. They went to lunch. So it was quiet upstairs. We looked around, and we saw the Germans eating...

(END TAPE THREE, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE FOUR, SIDE ONE)

(Long Pause)

INT: They said that had they known that the war would continue for so long, they wouldn't have hid you.

DOV: Yeah, because they couldn't take it anymore. They were **so scared**, so afraid. They lived in such a tension. Keeping Jews was very dangerous. And not having food enough to feed themselves.

INT: Now, while you were in the barn, so you were in the barn all day? All day and all night?

DOV: In the stable, yeah.

INT: In the stable. So what did you do there?

DOV: We didn't move. You know, after the liberation, I couldn't walk. The muscles were completely out.

INT: So how did you pass the day? What did you do?

DOV: I don't know. What do people do in jail? We didn't have books or TV.

INT: Did you talk to each other?

DOV: Ah, I did something interesting thing. I asked the boys for books. I studied chemistry. I had an interest, I have probably intellectual curiosity. I like to know things around, where they come from. And chemistry is a very interesting, I mean, subject. It explains you, I remember some of it. When I was in the Russian school, I was an excellent student. So I remembered many things. So I asked him if he has books that I could study by myself something. I remember Father was proud, astonished. I had a reason to live, to survive. I was busy. I was studying. And sometimes he brought us a newspaper. They had newspapers. Their newspapers. Of course, it was news which were printed by Germans, but we already knew what is going on, and we planned, plans what will happen after the war. We will go to Palestine, and certainly probably, I mean, we will have a state after all this Holocaust, the world will give us, just like, you know, like a present. We will get in our place to live, the Israeli, Jewish state. I remember we used to discuss all this, what will happen. And we discussed about my brother. Ah, we asked if maybe he heard something about the Jewish child, adopted somewhere. They didn't tell us. They knew probably, but just didn't tell us anything. And...sometimes they would come over to take care of the animals, and they would talk to us.

INT: Who, the boys? Talked to you? What about your stepmother, do you remember her participating in the conversations?

DOV: I think so. I don't remember. (Pause) She was probably worried about her only child, not knowing where my brother is. My father, we never talked really about this. We only, always from time to time expressed our hopes that he was the only one who will survive from all the family.

We were there **nine months** probably. Not nine months, maybe less. August, September, October, November, December. January, February, eight months. March. March, '44, the Russian army came in. They took nine months. We...[tape stops] which is a mystic belief. I don't know. I mean, I can prove it with facts. It's not only...

INT: What?

DOV: It can be proved with historical facts.

INT: Okay, we'll stop. I wanted to see, to hear what was said before. We're working with the wrong...(pause, tape stops)

DOV: And then the people didn't let us go. They were still scared, "You never know what will happen. Please stay another week or two," even, and they were right, because many people, survivors, were killed, in the first two weeks when the Russian army came in. There were Ukrainian partisans, and all other people who tried to kill Jews, being afraid that we will tell the story, what they did. So they tried to kill. And so after two weeks, maybe after the liberation, we came out of the hideaway, or what you call the place, and went to Husiatyn. The next day I was mobilized.

INT: The Russians drafted you.

DOV: Yeah. To the Russian army.

INT: Okay, that's tomorrow's...

DOV: And I didn't know anything else. Yeah, it's 12:00.

INT: That's tomorrow's story.

DOV: Okay, stop it. (Pause)

INT: Okay, Dov, so we're continuing, and now we're up to the Russian front. Do you have a date on this?

DOV: A what?

INT: A date?

DOV: No.

INT: When did this happen, give us a year?

DOV: A year. '44.

INT: Do you have a month?

DOV: (sighs) Maybe April. I can't remember. It was a very...very difficult experience.

INT: Why? Especially considering what you'd gone through. (laughs)

DOV: Not only this. You expected being liberated, to survive Hitler, and...the people, the army who liberated you were Hitler's enemy, so to speak. My...(looks for English word) allies? But unfortunately...all the soldiers with me, around me, were Ukrainian. So I still felt the danger.

INT: By the way, what does "mobilized" mean? Could you describe that process? What happens?

DOV: Drafted to the army.

INT: They walk into the village and say to you, "Come with us"?

DOV: No, they register, you have to...to show up at a certain place. You did, you see in the movies, how you draft soldiers.

INT: No, but I meant, they didn't even know you existed, though.

DOV: Yeah, they find out. They saw me walking around. Very few young people were walking around. Everyone was in the army. The Russians didn't have soldiers. Even sixteen-year-old boys were already drafted. I remember, incidentally, I went to see the house where I grow up, and there was the office, what they call "War Office." The officer came out and asked me, "Who are you? Where are you from?" I said, "I am a survivor." He said, "How come you are not in the army?" I said, "I just came **out** from the hole." So the next day, I was asked to come.

INT: What about your father?

DOV: He was, first of all, he was elder already.

INT: How old was he at this time?

DOV: I don't know exactly.

INT: More or less.

DOV: You have to make the cheshbon. '44...he was 45 years. And he was on the position, a job...a very responsible, serving the...so to speak, the war effort, because he was responsible, the supplies, the food supply for the army. So he worked for the army anyway.

INT: That's the job they gave him then?

DOV: Yeah. It was his job before. Two years he used to work for them. So, serving in the army with Ukrainian nationalists, who three months ago were ready to kill every Jew, I very often felt that I have to wear my neck and my back more than on the front. I was less afraid of the bullets coming from the Germans on the front line, than on the bullet maybe coming somewhere from behind, from the Ukrainian soldiers. It is a very strange and difficult feeling. After you are liberated, so to speak, you are already a newborn man. You still don't know if you are alive. Very few really experienced this kind of an experience. Did your fellow man soldiers, who should be your friends, protect you, or save you when they were injured? You didn't trust anyone. I was the only Jew. Then I met another Jew. Never mind. The details in the army are not so important.

INT: Did anybody ask you, how did you survive? Did anybody give you a welcome, was anybody resentful, like how come you survived?

DOV: Not at all. How come you survived. No one, really, no one wanted to know. It didn't interest anyone. Especially not the Ukrainians. Not even the Russians. They didn't...they hated the Jews even more those who survived. (laughs) They were very happy that the Jews were killed by the Germans, or...anyway. As they say, they acculturated, cleaned from Jews.

INT: Cleansed. Like Bosnia, ethnic cleansing. Is that what you mean?

DOV: Cleanse. That was the situation. It was very strange. (pause) This Russian army business was very interesting and complicated. I don't think that's...

INT: So what happened? They gave you a uniform, then what?

DOV: Of course.

INT: Then what? Any basic training, anything?

DOV: Yeah, they take you back deep into the east, and back to training camp, which is far east, behind the front. And then, on my way to the east, deep into Russia, was one train station, incidentally, completely, where I met one of our town. A man from our town. Who didn't believe he was just traveling west to the front, with a unit of the Polish Army. There was a Polish Army as a part of the Soviet Red Army, which fought against the Germans. He saw me there, and he knew where are the other soldiers. "How can you serve with the Ukrianians together?" (laughs sarcastically) "They didn't ask me." If you come to a camp, the first thing you have to do, is to apply for a transfer to the Polish Army. You will be safer. Completely

different conditions. First of all, if you will be sent to the front, you will be in the west front, not in Japan somewhere, Vladivostok. East.

INT: Not Japan literally, but you mean very far away.

DOV: On this front, I mean, yeah. It was against Japan.

INT: Oh, right, right, right.

DOV: The Russians were involved with Japan, too.

INT: Mm-hm.

DOV: Again, that's what I did. I changed my name on the paper. I couldn't change "Altshuler," but I could change "Dov." I said "Dan." Daniel is also a Gentile, Danilo, Daniel. They have Daniels in Russia. And I said I am a Polack. And I found another three Jews in the whole division, brigade, so I told them the story, and they all did the same. We were four Jews came over Polacks. And we found a **real** Polack, also. A young boy. We told him, "Come and apply with us together. It looks better when you have a real Polack and four disguised Polacks." But it doesn't go that easy. I mean, the army during the war, a transfer. But in Russia, if you have a bottle of vodka, you can achieve everything. We couldn't achieve the transfer, but we bought a bottle of vodka for the commander of the training camp, and he left us there. All the groups were trained and sent away, we were still there. Trained again and again, and we were asking, "What will be the end of us? Why don't you transfer?" He probably couldn't do it, but he didn't want to tell us, "I can't do it." He wanted to drink the vodka more and more, so each of us will have a hat, a shirt, or some spare pair or shoes, we used to sell it to buy vodka to give it to him. After three months, we were...stationed at some units. I was fortunate enough to be in a very important unit, which was new weapon. A new kind of mortar. This is...(sighs) which was still on...how you call, experimental basis. They didn't really know how it works. They didn't try it on the front. And you needed a little bit more brain to operate this new weapon. I liked it. I managed to work very quick. I was one of the best in the whole brigade. My officer was a Russian, young officer, he liked me very much. And he didn't understand why I wanted to leave the Russian Army, and to go. He told me, "Listen, you're here..."

INT: To go where?

DOV: To go to the Polish Army. Because we wanted to go west. But we already decided, I mean. After I think nine months, no, less, I don't remember, because I didn't have, I can hardly explain you all these kind of conditions in the war and in the army. It was terrible. Difficult. We had a shower once in a month. Also in the fields, cold water. Difficult. Like in a concentration camp.

INT: What about food?

DOV: Who had food? We were starving. Didn't have what to eat. That's what happened to me. I went to the fields to look what if I can steal some potatoes, and I was caught, and brought to a commandant, and I thought I am a Polack, blah, blah, blah, and then the whole story came up, and they said, "What are you doing here in the Russian Army?" I said, "I don't know. I don't want to be here." Then they decided to send me to the west. So I said, "There is three other, I know other." They told me, "Here in Russia you are not allowed to talk in name of a group. This is organized crimes. (laughs) You talk for yourself." But anyway, they found all other three. And...

INT: Appropriately we are having this conversation over a glasse tea, a cup of tea, so if there's any clinky-clanky sounds registering on the tape, that's what it is.

DOV: Sure. So one day, it took a week or two, we got the permission to leave the Russian Army, to go west. Of course, escorted by a Russian sergeant, which had all our papers, all our documents. We shall not disappear somewhere. Because without the document, a soldier, if you were caught, you were executed as a deserter. A death sentence. I saw one execution like this.

INT: What do you mean?

DOV: You take a, you catch the deserter, it was against a tree, the whole brigade was standing there, and they shoot the guy. It was a Polish soldier. It was in the Polish Army, but it was the Russian system. Always the same. We knew it. We knew the danger. No one wanted really to desert, but what we wanted is somehow to go west, to go and go by and see our families. It was a little bit complicated, because we were at least two or three hundred miles north of where our families lived. Our route from east to west went completely out of, so you had to convince this Russian sergeant to go down, to the south, and took, is this the right way to go. He probably wasn't very good in geography when he was a student. (interviewer laughs) He was completely, mostly drunk. We tried to keep him drunk.

And this now comes to a very dramatic event. We were very close to Husiatyn already. I stepped out of the train. The train stopped, we went to the toilet, or the washroom, I went to wash my face or something, I came back, the train wasn't there anymore. So I was in the status of a deserter, because I didn't have any documents, and the other four, three or four, they went, of course, to Husiatyn, because one of them knew my parents. Was from Kopyczynce. Your father knows who he was. So he knew, assumed that probably I will show up there. I could get killed, also, but can you imagine this dramatic appearance of three Jewish soldiers, one Polack, one Russian, at night in my father's house? "Yeah, who are you?" "We are friends with your son." "So where is my son?" "We don't know. We lost him on our way." My father told me later, that he got crazy. He knew what's the danger.

So I had to hide, because always the military police, the MP, were looking for deserters. So I heard...I was...I mean, how you say, I hid, I hide?

INT: Hid.

DOV: Hid myself in a train wagon, and I heard MP talking to themselves. They were looking for some deserter.

INT: MP, military police.

DOV: Military police. Russian military police jumped on the train, went to the locomotive. Went up, and in order to...somehow to convince the engineer that...I'm not trying to hide, I just told him I'm terribly cold, I'm frozen. Please let me in to warm up a little bit. I will help you to put the coal in to the furnace. They were good guys. "Okay. Do a bisel arbeit. Work a little bit. Warm up yourself." That's how I saved my life. And I said, "Where is the train going?" He said, "West." Okay. "Can I go with you?" "Okay." Since it was dark, they couldn't even see if it's a soldier, or just a young man. I was very young-looking. Even much younger than my age. Even after I was released from the army, I still was like sixteen years old. Very skinny, very young.

So we came to the station in Husiatyn, in the middle of the night. Now, how you come home? I didn't even know exactly, I could guess where my parents live. I wasn't sure. It was not far. But it was a **big** danger to go at night. It was wartime. Wartime people don't walk at night. I thought to myself, "This will be my end. I survived Hitler, I survived all this Ukrainian, and now I am home in my hometown, and I don't know where to go, and how to go to find my parents." So I saw women were walking in wartime, and all kinds of jobs that were usually for men. So on the railway, I saw a uniformed woman, a young woman, a...I went over to her, I say, "Are you from Husiatyn?" She says, "Yes." "Maybe you know Moshe Eshel, Altshuler." She says, "Yes, of course I know him." "Maybe you know where he lives." And she looked at me, and she said to me, "Whom are you kidding? You think I don't know you? We went to school together." It was a girl, we went to school together. I didn't recognize her. She, after...I was asking for the address, she probably recognized me. So I told her, "Listen, I'm on my way to the front. I got permission from my commander for one night to see my parents. Tell me where they live." I couldn't tell her the truth. She said, "It's not far from here. Three blocks, here, you have to walk 500 yards to go there from the station." The most difficult 500 yards of my life passed in the middle of the night. I came, I woke my family, and all the...you know who except my father of course, who was the second happy man there? The Russian sergeant, when he saw me. He was scared. He was responsible for the soldiers. He was, on the list he had four soldiers, he cannot come with three. Where did he lost. This was how I...there I met your mother first time, after the war. I didn't know that she's alive.

INT: She was with your father?

DOV: She was in Husiatyn. No, next morning.

INT: Ah. But someplace else in Husiatyn.

DOV: Yeah. She lived with (?) Yetta, I think.

INT: Yes. Because my father **also** had been drafted.

DOV: Yeah, I know. There I was told, there I knew that there is still a couple of Jews that were alive, and who and where and how, I didn't know anything.

INT: What was her reaction?

DOV: I didn't know anything. I didn't get mail. I mean, I wrote letters from the army, but I was always transferred. No letter could, you know at that time...

INT: Reach you.

DOV: Russian military mail, nothing works there even today.

INT: How did my mother greet you?

DOV: She knew that I am alive. I didn't know that **she** is alive. (laughs)

INT: She knew from your father.

DOV: She wasn't surprised; I was surprised, when I was told, your father told me, next day, "Tomorrow you will see Dinah." He told me everything.

INT: How did she look?

DOV: The most difficult thing was to convince the sergeant, even he saw me come in, say we go. I said, "Now, let me spend at least twelve hours with my father!" They were already 24 hours there, I think. So my father bought all the time bottles of vodka to give him (laughs). To keep him a little bit in a low profile. (interviewer laughs) So he said to him, "Listen, let me see my son." So we took pictures together. I have the pictures. Me in uniform with your mother.

INT: What were your father's first words to you?

DOV: Pardon? I don't understand.

INT: What were your father's first words to you? Or first reaction, do you remember?

DOV: I don't remember. I saw a happy face embrace me. I don't remember.

INT: And your stepmother?

DOV: I don't remember. I remember embracing my father. I don't remember anything else. He was crying, he was so happy. Then the trouble began, because then I was on my way west. West, it means on the front. I think...all my strength came first of all from my deep affection and being so close to my father, and being together with him all the time. And...the fact that I didn't have any responsibility. I wasn't the head of the family. I didn't have children, I didn't have a

wife. I didn't have anything to care about except myself. That's why I probably also remained more sane than other people who had the responsibility. Had to worry about their families. I didn't have to worry about anything. Just to stay alive.

INT: Just.

DOV: (Pause) About Victor Frankel, was "The Search for Meaning."

INT: "The Search for Meaning."

DOV: I still have it here. So...then, listen, we cannot tell the whole story of my army service. I finally deserted from the Polish Army, and met my cousins in the Jewish Brigade from Palestine, in the American Army in Berlin. We have an historical, it's only unique for Jewish people, historical picture. Three soldiers, three different uniforms, and three different armies, allied forces. Because we all three fought the Germans. How many people do you know that can...show such a picture? So my whole dream was all the time, I mean the search for meaning, we were speaking about this. I had one goal: to go, to survive, and to live in Palestine, or Israel, later, because we strongly believed that we will have our own homeland. We never gave up that hope. I mean, the Hatikvah was not only a hymn, a song, it was a real belief, a very strong belief.

INT: "Hope," which is the Israeli national anthem.

DOV: National hymn, yeah. Hope. (pause) Then when I, how did I desert? I came for a visit.

INT: Oh, so you went back west with your Russian sergeant.

DOV: Yeah, I went to the Polish unit, I became a Polish soldier. It was not less anti-Semitic than the Russian. We had enough trouble. We went on the front, we were attacked, I lost all my friends. Some of them...

INT: Attacked by the Germans?

DOV: The Germans, of course. We were lucky. It was a very cruel battle. On the Oder-Nyssr line.

INT: What?

DOV: It's called Oder-Nyssr. It's now the border between Poland and Germany. Two rivers. The Oder and the Nyssr.

INT: How do you spell that?

DOV: Oder is just, in Polish at least, you spell O-d-e-r. Nyss or Nyssr, it depends what language, let us say N-y-s-s-r, the two rivers. Now they create the border between west Poland and East Germany. There was the borderline. At the time there was a front line, a very hard one,

and the rivers were **red**, completely red from blood. We tried to cross the river, and the Germans were on the other side shooting at us. Two thirds of my battalion were killed. I always make joke, I wasn't killed because I am too short.

INT: Why did you want to cross the river?

DOV: (laughs) It was the way to the west, to conquer. I mean, we had to go to Berlin.

INT: I see.

DOV: To make progress on the front, you cross many rivers. But the fight, but the battle of the rivers is more difficult than in the fields or in the woods. To cross the river with an army is a difficult thing. With a natural...

INT: Barrier.

DOV: Obstacle. Barrier, yeah. And...after the war, (Another voice is audible in the background) on May 8th, which is when the war ended, we were still in the battle, and didn't know that the war ended. Because we were fighting an Ukrainian unit, which joined the German army. The Ukrainians were....

(END TAPE FOUR, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE FOUR, SIDE TWO)

TAPE FOUR, SIDE TWO, HAS TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES. VOICES OVER VOICES FOR A SHORT TIME.

INT: The Ukrainian unit?

DOV: The Ukrainians, because they knew they would be killed anyway. The Polacks would not them alive. So they fought for their lives. And...and it was in the woods, in the forest. And they didn't have any contact with radio, newspapers. I remember today, after a big fight on May tenth, two days after the war, there was a capitulation of German army was declared, we reached some highway.

INT: The surrender.

DOV: Yeah, the surrender. We reached the highway, and I saw tanks. And the soldiers were in such a good mood, and they knew already. And I said, what's it all about, what's all simcha, it was joy. I said, "What are you have joy?" "We're going home." I said, "What home?" They said, "Don't you know? War is over. War is over." We didn't know. We were fighting yesterday night with the...

INT: What happened in the battle with the Ukrainians, by the way?

DOV: What do you mean what happened? They had casualties, we had casualties.

INT: No, I mean who won?

DOV: Of course, we won. Because we were a big army, they were a small unit. But...

INT: Are you aware of killing anybody yourself personally?

DOV: Personally, no. Just times I was sorry that I can't kill. That I **didn't** kill personally. I mean, to have the feeling of personal revenge, it was a dream all the time when I survive, I will kill Ukrainian or German. But on the front, you don't know whom you kill...you just shoot. You don't see. It's not like in the movies, the Indians, you shoot personally each other. You shoot. All of us shoot. We don't know who kills us, we don't know whom we kill.

INT: There are a lot of songs about that point.

DOV: (pause) I can tell you many stories. Different events on the front, but it's too long story. This is beside all this interview, maybe one day. I will tell you all kinds of adventures in the front, and in the army. Anyway, we came back, we were sent into the mountains, to chase the Ukrainian partisans who didn't want to surrender. So we still didn't have peace, at least not my battalion. We were the chosen. We were young soldiers, originally on an officers school, which was called, but they never let us finish this course officers. And they used us for special assignment. And then...

INT: Why didn't they let you finish?

DOV: They needed us. When you are...always training for officers, and you have no time to fight. They needed each one man. At the end of the war, they really didn't have soldiers.

Anyway, meanwhile, was an agreement between the Polish and Russian government. The Polish government was anyway controlled by the Russian. Until five years ago. That...eastern part of Poland, which were conquered in '39 by the Russians, will be Russian, but the eastern part of Germany, which were conquered now by the Polish Army, will remain Polish. By the way, the switch was very (?) for the Poles, because the eastern part is not so good as the western. So...

INT: I'm sorry, what did you say, that it was not an advantage for the Poles?

DOV: It was.

INT: It was.

DOV: Yeah. But anyway, according to this agreement, the Polish population were transferred from this part to the German part. It was a big transfer. Millions of people. Only Russian regime can do it.

INT: Oh, Russians.

DOV: Yeah, you could take with you whatever you want. They gave you the trains. You came, they took over, all of the German houses and everything where the Germans were kicked out. The German refugees went to West Germany. Anyway, no one cared at that time. No one felt pity for Germany. This is war. The Germans did the same. They killed 20 million Russian or more. So I heard that all the Jews leave also. Your mother, too. I mean, your parents, my parents. And went to the west. Now I began to receive letters, because it was after the war already, and we had a steady base. So I received a letter, and an address of my parents in east, eastern Germany, former eastern Germany, it was now western Poland. It was a city called Lignitza. Lignitza.

INT: Spelling?

DOV: Spelling, in German, its spelling L-i-g-n-i-t-z. In Polish it's with a c at the end. Lignitzca. So I decided one day I have to go, I have to get a leave. After two years serving in the army, you want...to visit your parents. But there I became very popular, and again my officer liked me very much. I said to him, "Listen. Give me a week time to go and see my parents. You know I am a survivor. And they transferred from Ukrainia to there." "Next month, next month." Always next month. "I need you here." And I started to work in his office, so I used the opportunity one day. I took some forms, and I, he was sleeping, I think. He was very often drunk. He trusted me anyway. I took the stamp, how you say it?

INT: Stamp.

DOV: Put the stamp on several blanks, which soldiers used to get when they are on leave. And they kept it.

INT: Right. Passes.

DOV: Passes, yeah. And they kept them for, (Yiddish) what you say in Yiddish. "Not for..."

INT: For not till you need them.

DOV: Until he agreed to give me leave, one week leave to go home. And another soldier. I went home, I met my parents, I met, I saw Jewish people. Many Jewish people concentrated in several cities in the west, and youth movement, and illegal aliyah. All this. I mean, a new world for me. I didn't, I couldn't imagine there remained Jewish young people still alive. And they began to talk to me. Five nights they talked to me. "How can you go back? Where? You fought enough. You survived Hitler. You survived the war. Now we are still fighting there with the partisans. Why? What do you do? You just take off your uniform, join a group of illegal immigrants to Israel, cross the border to Germany, to Italy, and go away from here." And they said to my father, yeah, and then I met also my cousin from the, he's a Jewish Brigade, the British Army. He came over to look for some survivors. And we met together. We have a very

nice picture together. He said, "Don't be silly." So my father was older, he was very...yeke as far as I. I admit, I have only one big leave, but I knew that I have more papers. So I decide to postpone my leave for another week, having the papers, and to look around, what's going on. I went to the next city, where there was a group of young Israeli, Jewish young people, preparing themselves, and I met another boy who was a deserter or two, and he told me, "Listen. It doesn't make sense to go back. Join us and hopefully we will..." So I didn't go back anymore to the army. I took off my uniform. And I joined the group, and all that was very complicated. I cannot go into the details, how we crossed the border, how I was caught again and again. How I finally reached the camp, the DP camp, displaced person camp in Germany, in south Germany. First I went to Bergen-Belsen. It was a big DP camp there.

INT: Did you see the concentration camp, too?

DOV: No.

INT: A different part of the city?

DOV: No, it was a different part of the camp. It was very close, but I don't know. Probably it was not allowed to go there, it was English. This area was English. Because Germany was divided in four different areas. There was the English zone, the American, the French, and the Russian. So first I met the American cousin in Berlin. Then I crossed the border to the English part. And I was caught **every** time, and escaped every time. And this is a story for itself.

INT: Well, but in short, but in short, what do you attribute your ability to escape to?

DOV: I don't know. I really don't know. I was so careless. Not careless...how you say careless?

INT: Reckless.

DOV: Not reckless. I didn't care.

INT: Oh...not carefree. Indifferent?

DOV: Indifferent. Not afraid of anything. I mean, it was like mysterious feeling. If I survived Hitler, all these Aktions of this extermination, what can happen to me? I believe that my mother is watching me. People used to say my mother is watching me from the heaven. She is in heaven, she is watching me.

INT: By the way, when did you find...I don't think we got this. When did you find out that you were...

DOV: When I was thirteen. When I had to say Kaddish.

INT: Oh, Kaddish. What was your reaction to that?

DOV: I don't remember today what was my reaction, because you don't remember feelings. Maybe you remember facts.

INT: No, I...

DOV: But feelings, I don't remember. I mean, I can't tell you. I certainly was sad, but...I don't know. I just told your mother today. I remember whenever I used to visit in my grandfather's house, there was an atmosphere of sadness. The moment I entered the house, they all were already sad. Because I reminded them of the big loss, of the tragic loss, of their sister, of their...daughter, and so on. So I could feel all the time that I am something special. I mean, different. Not as all the other children.

And then...you know, since you don't care, you don't care, you are not afraid, you risk more. You have more self-confidence. You are more successful in escaping, in doing things, if you are not afraid of doing things. It's a vicious circle, you know? The more you are afraid, the less...as we say always on the front, it's the cowards who get killed. The brave men, they somehow survive. Which looks like a paradox, because the cowards always try to hide. But they got killed.

So what happened to me, I don't know. I wasn't afraid of anything. What can happen to me? Nothing. I know myself, I have no responsibilities. What will they do to me? I mean, I couldn't believe that someone will kill me now, after...I am a survivor. A survivor is like...a protected person.

INT: That was your sense.

DOV: That was my **sense**, yeah. I remember. So I finally reached the...my original group from Poland, which went to south Germany, in (?). The real reason for this was because there was a girl I wanted to be with. They succeeded in Berlin somehow to...since I was caught, I couldn't go with them. So I always changed my route. It's not so easy.

INT: You were caught by whom?

DOV: Polish police.

INT: And they asked you what?

DOV: Oh, I don't want to go into it, because...

INT: Just a little tiny question. What did they ask you? How come you're not in the army?

DOV: They suspected something, yeah. I mean...I succeeded. I mean, the train, right, they took me off the train. The group went with the train. This girl, and her mother and sister, they were very unhappy. They thought, "Okay, this is the end, we will never see Dov again."

INT: Who were these people?

DOV: As a matter of fact, their name was Shechter. She still lives in Palo Alto in California. I was her first love, she was my first...she was fourteen years old when we met. I was eighteen, she was fourteen.

INT: Where did you meet?

DOV: In the group preparing for aliyah, for illegal aliyah. When I deserted, took off my uniform, joined the group, she was there with her sister, because their father survived, and he was in Palestine. And they survived as Gentiles. Her mother was a maid, in some Austrian family, with two girls, and a woman, you cannot prove if she is Jewish or non-Jewish. That's how **they** survived. And don't ask me why their father was in Palestine, they were here, because we will never end stories. I can tell you a million stories, interesting stories, but not tonight.

So I wanted to join the group again. I could start another group in Bergen-Belsen and not risk anything. But I wanted to see them. And all the other friends in the group, to go together to Palestine. So I finally reached the group. They couldn't believe that I am alive. It was such...they looked at me like a phantom.

INT: Ghost.

DOV: A ghost.

INT: How, where did you reach them?

DOV: Not far from Munich. It was Deggendorf on the Danau. On the Danube.

INT: On the Danube.

DOV: Yeah. A camp, a Jewish camp. Later I became the Hebrew teacher in this camp. Not because I was a teacher, but because I was the only one who knew Hebrew, and somebody has to teach the children Hebrew. So they suggested I shall do it. I still have a certificate, as a Hebrew teacher in Deggendorf Lager. Camp. From the head of the camp.

INT: Who ran this camp?

DOV: The UNRA. I don't know. UN. United Nations Rehabilitation...

INT: Right. But the Jews organized themselves. Were there people there other than Jews?

DOV: No, no. UNRA camps were on national bases. There were Polish camps, Jewish camps. I mean, we had to have kosher, and a synagogue, and all, a school. Jewish people organize very quick and very well. Black market, everything was organized there.

Then came other stories, aliyah, and again...it's too complicated. I came to Israel after a year, or I don't remember. No, I remember the date when I arrived in Israel, but it also not normal illegal immigrant.

INT: What was the date?

DOV: The date was 19th of April, 1948. April 19th, 1948.

INT: Before or after Pesach, Passover?

DOV: I came for the Leil Seder. This was the reason why I came. To surprise my father. To give him a very nice Seder night.

INT: He had already went illegally.

DOV: He didn't know. He went legally.

INT: He went legally. How was that?

DOV: Because my cousin, Mordechai, who lives now in Israel, was a British soldier. A Jewish Brigade, but it was a British soldier. He had the right to bring his parents. So he told them, "Those are my parents." They got a formal certificate to go to Palestine, as a British, as the parents of a British soldier. And that also gave me the strength. I thought, I have parents, I have a home, and in Palestine, I'm not something like all those refugees. I'm not a refugee. I didn't behave like, I didn't feel like a refugee. I go home.

So what happened. I was very close with all the Israeli shelichim. Missionaries, I mean all the officials who were working in the camps. So one day one of them came over and said, "Dov, you want to go home?" "What do you mean, aliyah is a big thing. I have to go to Paris. From Paris to Marseilles. The ship, all the ships for aliyah. How can I go home now?" No, he said, "You want to go home for Seder?" I said, "What do you mean, for Seder?" He said, "Tomorrow, all the shelichim who are here in Munich, we got a plane," I still remember, the Dakota. "Plane from the American Army at our..." How you say...

INT: Oh, at our disposal.

DOV: At our disposal or disposition. They fly us to Israel for a leave, for Pesach, for a week. This Chofesh Chagim. For the holidays. I like the idea to surprise my father. And I think I never lived a minute without thinking about my father. I was so strong attached to my father. Even now, I never stop. I sometimes dream about him, that we talk together about the whole thing. (Emphatically) I never accepted the fact that he died so young.

INT: How old was he when he died?

DOV: 67. I'm older. A short time before...

INT: How did he die?

DOV: A heart attack.

INT: A heart attack. Had he had a heart condition, or was it sudden?

DOV: He had a heart condition, he had a heart, what do you call this?

INT: High blood pressure?

DOV: No. It was like...

INT: A thick esophagus?

DOV: How do you call this, I forgot.

INT: Oh, hardening of the arteries?

DOV: Yeah, you know, they are small, and they stop, they block the blood.

INT: Yes. Hardening of the arteries, or blocked arteries.

DOV: Blocked arteries. He smoked a lot.

INT: Really?

DOV: Yeah. Anyway, I came home -- which was also an adventure, because from Lod to Hadassim, it was not less difficult than to come from Munich to Lod.

INT: Lod being the Israeli airport.

DOV: Airport then, yeah. And I came home, my father couldn't believe his eyes. Because I didn't write before. I think before he received a letter from me, not mentioning at all that I am planning to come. He knew that I am working there with the youth group. I was a madrich.

INT: A counselor?

DOV: Yeah, and the Israelis at those times, the Palestinians, the Israelis, they used me. I mean, they told me, "We are not afraid. We know you will go far. Eventually you will land there. Meanwhile we need you here for work."

INT: This is in...

DOV: Your aliyah is secured, anyway.

INT: This is in Germany, in the DP camp, with the Jewish children.

DOV: In Germany, in DP camps, to recruit more children to go to Israel, more people, to convince more people. To do this work, what the Zionist movement does everywhere. Not like here. To be a Zionist is to convince another Jew to give money to the third person, so the fourth person will make aliyah. (interviewer laughs) This is what mostly they are yordim.

So anyway, I came home, and I was home. I felt at home. I never felt like a new immigrant. I never was a griner in Israel. A new immigrant has difficult times, new immigrants. I didn't sleep one night in a tent, in a transit camp.

INT: Your father was at Hadassim already?

DOV: Yeah. But no one knew...

INT: What was he doing there?

DOV: No one knew where Hadassim is. And it was, I told you, it was an adventure from Lod to Hadassim, more than from Munich to Lod. By plane. But since then...

INT: So wait, you went back to Israel with the Israeli people on the American plane.

DOV: Yeah. With another friend and his wife, or his girlfriend, they were not married yet. With whom I'm still in close, very close relationship. He lost a boy, a son, in the Yom Kippur war. He blames me for it, because I schlepped him to Israel. He said, "Because you didn't have the time; you wanted to go to Israel." I convinced him to go to Israel. Me and his wife. "You both, you wanted to go!" And he's very unhappy. To lose a son is something which I really, I didn't understand it until I became a father.

INT: How, does he have any other children, by the way?

DOV: A daughter who lives in Australia today. This is also (Yiddish).

INT: The corner of the earth. Okay. So you're in Israel, and you feel at home. Then what do you do?

DOV: Then, my father and my mother lived in one room. They didn't even have a third bed or mattress where to sleep. I slept on a chair where you put usually on a seashore. You know what this...

INT: Oh, a lounge chair.

DOV: A lounge chair. It was my sleep, a lounge chair. And asked my father after the...holidays, "What shall I do? I need a job. Where shall I work?" He said, "We will see." So I became an assistant of the vegetable garden management. (laughs) Ozer leYarkan. Or yerakot. You know.

INT: An assistant to the vegetable gardener.

DOV: Yeah. Because in the village in Hadassim, we had the vegetable garden with stable. And then I did a good job, he also was a very intelligent man, and not what I used to, was used to seeing peasants in Ukraina, you know, a gardener, a vegetable, a peasant is a peasant. But he was different. He was a very intelligent man. And he...liked me.

INT: An Israeli? A sabra?

DOV: Of course, sure. I'm not quite sure if he was a sabra, but...

INT: But not a survivor.

DOV: But he was also not a survivor. He was also in a Jewish Brigade in the army. He fought somewhere with the Jewish Brigade in Italy. He was in, I think Monte Casino, the big fight, and he met an Italian Jewish girl. Fell in love, he brought to Israel, and she was a very pretty girl. Just really Italian, the dark complexion, the black hair. I don't remember her name now. But this guy liked me very much and he used to teach me. So he finally found someone listening to him. That he wants to teach, but all his assistants before were just verstoppe keppe.

INT: Stuffed heads. (laughs)

DOV: And I liked this job. My duty was also at night, always to water. You water at night the garden, because no wind, and it doesn't, it's no waste of water. Because if there is a wind, it takes away the water from one place to another place, and this is not really very efficient.

One day they needed me some other job to do, to help the electrician. And it came out that I am very skilled with this also (laughs) so I left the garden and left to be assistant to electrician, to whom we still are good connections. He liked me very much. I liked him. And it was the preparation for Shavuot. For Bikkurim feast, for the harvest feast.

INT: Festival.

DOV: Festival, yeah. They needed all the illumination of the stage. And then came summer, the summer camps, I told you already, so I was asked to help out in the summer camp. Then the director of the village and the teachers decided that I waste my time working with the electricians and with the gardener. I am a born educator. I have to work with children. I didn't tell anyone that I worked already a little bit with children. They couldn't understand how all my approach to children is like someone with experience. And they talked to me and talked to me **every** night. "Are you going, you have to study. Go, register in the seminar. The teacher's seminar."

INT: How were you feeling when you were in the garden, and with the electrician? Did you...

DOV: I felt very happy, as a matter of fact...

INT: Did you feel like you wanted to do something else?

DOV: No. As a matter of fact, maybe it was just, I prepared myself that in Israel, I forgot about intelligence, I mean, forget about professionals. They have doctors enough, they have lawyers. The professors from Germany worked on the construction, you know, work. (Yiddish) all the jokes. So I said, who am I? I went to ORT school, which was the vocational school in the camp. I used to teach in the mornings, in the afternoon I was a student. And I learned this locksmith, and then fine mechanics, that's what I knew, why I still know how to manage those delicate mechanical works, because I know what Israel needs is workers. Simple workers. Doesn't need doctors, is enough. You know the pyramid. The Jewish people are the base of the pyramid, are the intelligence, and the workers are the small...

INT: Percentage.

DOV: Yeah. So I felt very happy. (phone interruption) [From here to the end of this tape seems to be a story from a previous part of the interview. There seems to be a gap in the story between tapes three and four.] Food for the cow or for the horse. So the dog, how you call this little house for the dog?

INT: Doghouse.

DOV: Doghouse was next to the stable. The dog was on the chain. To watch, they shouldn't steal the cow or the horse. So he used to bring a pot of potatoes, which is the only thing they had, dry potatoes, and in order to enable one of us to pick it up at night in the dark, he used to tie the very short dog, so we could reach it. It was as if he brings the food for the dog. If someone sees, so he's carrying food for the dog. No one would suspect. And in the dark night, I used to crawl out to take away from the dog. And we used to eat this.

INT: The dog didn't bark?

DOV: No. And if a dog barks, it's normal in the village. At night, dogs bark. I mean, dogs bark. This was the system how we get where, finally after a month, they didn't have enough food for themselves, even. And they were very worried what will be. We will starve there, or one of us will get sick. And the, they told us, frankly, they said, if they knew it would take such, a special winter was very cold. And it was a cold winter, and the Germans were coming up, and they were looking for agriculture products for the army, so they searched everywhere. Because the peasants used to hide. So they even not searching for Jews, they couldn't find us. It was a very, very hard time for them, and for...

(END TAPE FOUR, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE FIVE, SIDE ONE)

INT: So you were very happy doing manual labor in Israel, but the people around you were encouraging you to get an education. So this is in '48, shortly after your arrival to Israel. Okay, then what happened?

DOV: They tried to convince me to go to teacher's college to study and to become a teacher. And they **succeeded** to convince me. I worked hard all summer to prepare myself, because the school year begins in September. And I wasn't sure if I will be admitted to this seminar. After all, I didn't have the formal education, because of the Holocaust. But I was accepted.

INT: Now, what do you remember doing with the Holocaust in your mind at the time? Did you just...well, you tell me.

DOV: I came home. I began a new life, a normal life. I just excluded, is this the correct word for this? Put it away somewhere, and didn't have, and didn't want to know about it anymore.

INT: Were you thinking of starting a family of your own?

DOV: Not immediately. I mean...it's normal, if you reach this age. But first of all, I wanted to...establish myself. I mean, economic base for family life. And since I didn't have a real vocation or profession, to get a job, I was, I decided to go and to try to...I mean, I didn't know exactly what it means to be a teacher in Israel. As a matter of fact, I have to confess, being this voluntary teacher in the camp, I promised myself never in my life to be a teacher. Why I didn't keep this promise, I don't know. So I became a teacher. It wasn't like a teacher in Europe, or even today in Europe a teacher has...

INT: And by the way, you're only 22 at this time, anyway.

DOV: Yeah, yeah. Even now in Europe a teacher has more respect and gets more money than in Israel. The Israeli kids, like American kids, a teacher is nothing special.

INT: When do you remember starting to think about having your own family?

DOV: Oh, much later. It's all, again, it is probably nothing to do with the Holocaust. It just was time, I didn't want to commit myself, to make any commitments to...family life, unless I will be sure that I have the economic means, which maybe was wrong. Because many people get married, begin together to build up their lives. I saw that I have to be prepared, well-prepared. I am a perfectionist, probably, in this, and I will be, I will secure my...economic future, to speak. I don't know if I use the right language. Then I have to marry. Meanwhile, I wanted to marry someone whom I loved. I mean, I have to fall in love first. I wouldn't marry just...which some of my acquaintance did. They decided, they come to Israel, they have to begin a new life, they have to build a family. They had a proper candidate, they married. They didn't necessarily think of love. I'm the romantic type, you know?

INT: I know. It runs in the family? Where did you find your first wife?

DOV: Oh, this is really complicated. I met her in Germany, when I was still in DP camps. She wanted to go with me to Israel.

INT: What was her, where had she survived from?

DOV: She was from a...how you call, a mixed family. Her mother was a German, and her father was a Jew. Her father was killed by the Nazis. Her mother was saved, with two children, brother and her. They lived a Jewish life. They were registered in the Jewish community there. But they had relatives, non-Jews. So they saved them. After the war, her brother volunteered and came to Israel to fight the Independence War. And she wanted very much to go to Israel.

She was then maybe seventeen years old, maybe less, I don't know. She was a girl, fell in love with me, and it was a very strong love affair. But she even wanted to marry me, I said, "I don't know where I am going, even. I don't know what I will do there. I am going to a country which is at war. I will probably be a soldier. How can I marry someone at all?" Because her mother didn't agree. Didn't let her go to Israel anyhow. She said, "I have a son there, it's enough. I lost my husband. I don't know what is happening to my son, and I..." it was much more complicated. So she didn't let, unless you will marry someone. So I was the candidate. I didn't marry her. We kept in touch, we wrote letters. Beautiful love letters. I still have a full carton of these, a box of love letters. I can't decide what to do with it. (interviewer laughs) It's very difficult. I decided maybe I will get the stamps, collect the stamps. And...after some, I don't remember, how many years, one day, this is a real long, very romantic story. It doesn't belong to here. I thought I told you about her, Jeanette. Oh, maybe I told Joe. I remember I spoke to someone last week.

INT: Not me.

DOV: Ah. So you don't know anything about Jeanette.

INT: I know she was very pretty, I remember her picture.

DOV: That's my weakness. I like pretty women, what can I do? A familiar failure. (laughs) Anyway, Uncle Samuel also liked pretty women, young women. My father liked pretty women. What can I do? This is in the family.

We lived together for five years. I went to Germany to work there. I told you how I went to Germany.

INT: Yes, I know. Tell us again for the tape. You went to Germany after you got your teaching degree, to be a youth director?

DOV: No, I was already a principal of a school on the kibbutz.

INT: Oh, wait, how did you end up in a kibbutz?

DOV: Because after finishing my studies as a teacher, I met...some kibbutz members who were in Germany working there as shelichim. Whether we met there, or we worked together, they knew me, and this girl, whom I wanted to see...

INT: From youth aliyah.

DOV: Yeah, went across the border, she, her sister was married to one of them, in this kibbutz. So I went to visit her. They asked, "What are you doing?" "I just finished studies." "Listen, we are looking for a teacher. We need somebody to build a school in our kibbutz." They didn't have a school there.

INT: Which kibbutz was this?

DOV: Nevei Yam, it is on the northern part of the country, on the seashore. Nevei Yam mean "Sea Oasis." As the first kibbutz...

INT: South of Haifa?

DOV: Yeah. South of Haifa. And it was a challenge for me. My father was wondering why you are going to build a school. "You still, you are unexperienced. You don't know what to do. You work with here, in Hadassim, you will be surrounded by experienced teachers, and everybody knows you here. Everybody will help you." Oh, no, I prefer to be myself, a master of myself with what I'm doing. And I devoted all my time, as a matter of fact, I left this school. I built this school up from nothing, and it was all my life. I didn't have my own children. I didn't have my own close family, except the parents, and school, and the children of this kibbutz was all my life. Probably they were, they appreciate it very much.

INT: What, did anything about kibbutz life itself appeal to you, or was it just the opportunity of a job?

DOV: No. No, the opportunity. I didn't really want to join as a member. I was too much an individualist to join as a member. I was offered many times, asked many times. Other kibbutz also. "Please, join us." I said, "No, I will do everything." I lived exactly the same life. I ate the same food, I slept on the same bed, I even lived in one room, in one room with a member of the kibbutz. I didn't even have my own room there, because it was too, they were poor. Which I could ask as the principal of the school, "I need a room to work." No, I...everything was enough what I had. You know, I came to a kibbutz with a small suitcase. That was all. That was probably two pairs of trousers, and maybe three shirts, that was all what I had. All my property, and I didn't need any more. I had everything.

And later on, I don't remember even in what year, I think '56, after five years being in the kibbutz...

INT: So you're thirty years old.

DOV: I was probably somehow invited. My...future wife or my romantic love from Germany, she came without knowledge of her family in Germany where she is going. She was supposed to go to Paris to visit an aunt, and she landed in Israel. At the end of the story we married. It was a very, very interesting wedding there. An extraordinary, beautiful, because the brother of Moshe Sharett, who was the foreign minister, Yehuda Sharett, was a member of the kibbutz, and he was a musician. You know, he composed the "O Kineret sheli." It was his song, and Rachel was, and he composed...

INT: Rachel was what?

DOV: The words of the song is [written by] Rachel. Rachel on the Kineret.

INT: The poet.

DOV: The poet Rachel, yeah. But nobody really...Rachel is enough. Everyone knows who Rachel is. Not mention her last name. I don't even know her last name. It was Rachel. There was only one Rachel. Like Hashulamit, or Hashunamit. It was one. And so he prepared a program with the children for the wedding, which we were not used. A wedding is a simple ceremony with a rabbi. And that's all. Then it begin, all the children, a performance, and the contact, and I don't even know what it was, I was so excited. And my parents were excited. The guests from Germany came over, and all my relatives in Israel, and the whole kibbutz. I was very...I mean, they never made a wedding for someone who was not a member of the kibbutz, but I was, it really was something special there. They appreciated, they wanted me very much to stay on the kibbutz, not to leave, and they did everything possible to keep me there.

INT: And so you got...what did you like about your wife, aside from the fact that she was beautiful?

DOV: First of all, she was very beautiful. Secondly, she loved me very much. And...

INT: Did it bother you that she was only half Jewish?

DOV: No, not at all. Didn't bother me. She was...she was at all the documents as a Jewish girl. I didn't have any difficulties to marry her, because now it's very difficult. If you don't have all the proofs, if your mother is not Jewish, it's very difficult. (pause) It was, I mean, the first three, four years were...it was difficult for her to be in a kibbutz. She had to work, many works.

INT: What was her own background, educationally? Did she have a profession?

DOV: She didn't have **any** education, and she was a girl who survived the war. She didn't go to school as a Jewish girl. Hardly finished basic education, eighth grade, maybe, that was all. But she was a smart girl, a beautiful girl. And, but it was very gentle, very fragile, also. Little. She...on the kibbutz you have to work. You just can't be a wife of a school principal, or sit at

home and entertain guests. The only job she could get was in the plant, we had a can factory. Sardines. It was...herring and sardines. This was **dirty** work.

INT: Smelly.

DOV: Smelly work. She hated the job. She was very unhappy. Maybe I wasn't enough understanding husband. And I wasn't that smart as I am now. You know, you get too late too smart, too late. And we had disagreements, and conflicts and fights, and...

Anyway, once I promised her to, if I will have the chance to work in Germany, I will go. She should be close to her family. And I got this job to be a director of a Jewish youth center, of a community center in Frankfurt. I was offered this job for two years. So I said, "Okay." I received from the ministry of education, a leave of absence for two years, to go to work in Germany. And they kept my, for me the job in Nevei Yam when I come back. And that's why I went to Germany.

INT: Did you have any children?

DOV: No, there was another problem. We didn't have children. We couldn't have children. Anyway, when we came back from Germany...

INT: How did you feel being in Germany? How did **you** feel in Germany?

DOV: Not very...comfortable. I knew I am doing a job in the Jewish community. I had only Jewish people around me. I thought I'm doing some good job. I don't know if it's necessary or not. Anyway, I was probably the first one who returned to Israel. That's what I was told. All my previous...how you call this...not successes, but...

INT: Failures.

DOV: No, not success. Successors.

INT: Oh, successors. Predecessors.

DOV: Predecessors, yeah. All of them working in the same position, didn't go back to Israel. They make, open some business in Germany. I was the first one who after two years returned back.

INT: By the way, did you share much of your war experiences with your wife? Did you tell her what happened to you?

DOV: Yeah, sure. She knew exactly, of course. I mean, she herself had quite a hard life and difficulty. I mean, losing a father...

INT: Where was she from?

DOV: Cologne. Cannes on Rhein.

INT: Oh, yes. Cologne.

DOV: Cologne, yeah, beautiful city.

INT: So you got back to Israel, then what happened? What year was that, when you got back to Israel?

DOV: '59, '60?

INT: So you were in Germany '57 to '59?

DOV: No, I think it was '58 to '60. Even this I don't remember. See, if it comes to dates, time, after the Holocaust, I don't remember dates **at all**. Not even my own birthday, or even the birthday of my son, I don't remember. I don't know what happened. It has something to do, the time when I was hidden there in the stable, time didn't have any dimensions, have any meanings. I don't remember times. Time doesn't mean anything now to me. Timeless. I can't explain it. So I don't remember.

INT: But you're getting better. You remembered my birthday this year.

DOV: Ah, because it was written somewhere. Rosemary took care of it probably. She put it on the calendar, and I saw it. How do I, really remember it? I don't remember her reminding me. What did I do?

INT: You sent me a card and a letter.

DOV: Yafeh. Yafeh. Very nice. A good custom. I don't remember. I swear, I don't remember all this.

INT: So getting back to, you get back to Israel. You were uncomfortable in Germany, but you had a job to do.

DOV: I had work, I had a job, I had a well-paid job. Three times as much as in Israel, with German marks, I could buy **everything** -- all the equipment for the house, for Israeli.

INT: Washing machine?

DOV: Everything, for Israeli it was **very difficult** in those times. There was no place for it in the kibbutz. And my father **begged** me, finally go, come back, come to Hadassim. Live here. You will get an apartment and everything.

INT: But let me ask you something. Did you do any travelling to -- I don't know if it was allowed, but -- to any of the German concentration camps? Did you go to Poland when you were there?

DOV: No, no, no such thing. Didn't want to know **anything** about this. I didn't want to live again all this trauma.

INT: So you get back to Israel, then what?

DOV: Then I settled in Hadassim.

INT: Uh-huh. And when did you get divorced?

DOV: I think a year later. No. Again, what was it? '61? Probably a year later.

INT: Because it was hard for your wife to readjust to Israel after Germany?

DOV: She was very unhappy. It didn't work out. We couldn't live together anymore. She went back to Germany. Yeah. And I met Rosemary. That's the story you know already.

INT: When Rosemary came to Hadassim.

DOV: Ken.

INT: Right. How did you feel about being divorced?

DOV: Myself, it wasn't such a tragedy. My father was very unhappy.

INT: Did he like your wife?

DOV: Yeah. She was...she was cute. She was very...I mean, it was very easy to like her. But...to like someone, or even to love somebody, and to **live** with somebody, is a different story. You see what's a tragedy. You fell in love with the face, and you have to marry the whole woman. (interviewer laughs)

INT: So being divorced didn't bother you so much? I mean, look, divorce, I know that it's no fun, but...

DOV: Yeah. For me, it wasn't so difficult. No children. I mean, it was still easy. So I am a bachelor again, like I was before. I can always fell in love again. I did. It wasn't a big deal. As a matter of fact -- which is not important -- I had a student, I had a big romance with a student.

INT: What did you feel any...how did you...how were you affected by your **father's** sadness at your divorce?

DOV: Oh, I was really unhappy about this.

INT: Did you feel like you disappointed him?

DOV: Yeah. I still feel like I...I didn't accomplish what really he deserved.

INT: What do you think his goals were for you?

DOV: He wanted to see me happy with a family, with children, with all this, and he didn't see any grandchildren, and he saw his son, his only son who survived, not married, divorced. I mean, after all this, finally, parents want to see some joy.

INT: Did you ever talk to him about it openly?

DOV: No. (Pause) I think in all our life, we've had maybe one open discussion. It's before our marriage. I wanted to explain him why I marry her, and not all those girls who I knew in Hadassim, or in Israel, who maybe were more educated, higher in qualification, blah, blah, blah. But just...

INT: How did you explain that to him?

DOV: Love.

INT: Four letter word.

DOV: I prefer to marry someone less educated, whom I **really** deeply adore and love, instead of making a rational choice. I'm not a rational man in this area.

INT: Okay, so what did you do after you got divorced? Did you think in terms of remarriage?

DOV: Yeah, yeah. I, very often, since we didn't have children, I thought, or at least we thought that it's my fault. And so I was prepared to marry, Israel was full of young widows with children. I met some very often. My friends took care of everything, just to see me married. They couldn't see me wasted, a man with all the equipment, with the washing machine, with the refrigerator (interviewer laughs) not making some girl happy. I was kol kach mesudar.

INT: You were so organized.

DOV: So organized. Everything is here. What you need is a woman in your house. So but it didn't work. I was very...choosy, very cautious. You know, after such a romantic affair. You know. Until, even after meeting Rosemary, just fell in love with her. I told her yesterday, I think, that it was far away from thinking of **marriage**. So I didn't marry, till I came to the States, and then came back, and met Rosemary again. It took another five years. I think I was ten years single. Ten years is quite enough. And my father was very unhappy. And the only wish I had, even we talk about it often with Rosemary. How happy he would have been, seeing her as a

daughter-in-law. He loved her also very much. He knew her from Hadassim. He knew...he knew that...I would like her very much, and **this** he understood. There's a big difference between Rosemary and Jeanette. I mean, higher class, completely different.

INT: So how did you feel when you had a son? After all these years?

DOV: I was completely surprised. If it wouldn't be for Rosemary, I wouldn't believe it is my son. But she's such a woman. She's something. I mean, I still trust her completely. I don't trust myself, but I trust her.

INT: Now, when you had this son, did you think that you would tell him one day about the Holocaust? What was your sense of...

DOV: I, it came naturally. He learned about it at school. He was, I was the man in school talking about this to other children. He knew who I am. Every Jewish child in Israel knows about the Holocaust. So he knew that I am a survivor. It didn't bother him, and he didn't ask more questions.

INT: Did you tell him gratuitously, just, "Sit down, Mor, I want to tell you something"?

DOV: No, you can't do it to a child. I only hope that one day. He knows about the book. He saw, maybe he read something. I only hope that one day he will read it to his children. But you cannot force a young child to listen to all of the sad stories.

INT: Why do you think he didn't want to know?

DOV: It's not that he didn't want to know. Many young Israelis don't really...who is interested in such sad stories? It's not a pleasure. It's not a pleasure what we are doing three nights already. It's difficult. So why a child which is happy and has two parents, and married happily two parents, and he lives in a completely new environment, which is natural, his own country, his own language, he doesn't even know what the Diaspora means. He knows what the word means. But he doesn't have the real...He went several times to Switzerland with his mother, with me. But...for him, Israelis is a people, a nation, like all other nations of the world. Nothing special about this.

INT: What values did you want to teach him? What childrearing practices did you...

DOV: The only one, I mean, the most important one...

INT: One second, were you conscious of...wanting to do things the way you were raised, or what was your approach to raising your child?

DOV: You see, how strangely, my son these days, people have very little control about how children grow. There is school, there is friends, and other factors influencing children. But what he saw, I hope very much what is called in German a concept like, Kinderstube. It means a

home, gives you something indirectly, a child grows up as a certain atmosphere, and he absorbs. Our son knows that we both, my wife and I, are great patriots, great Zionists. We love our country. We wouldn't leave our country. We both had the chance to live somewhere else. Even today we could live somewhere else, and we don't have all the limitations. And he knows. He heard it even today. He was, he is told all the time, that Israel is my homeland, my country. It is the place for us to live. And he used to travel with us all over the country. He knows, I mean, as far as I know.

INT: What about religion?

DOV: Not at all. Except Friday night, until last week, before I left, we had some...little crisis, especially Rosemary. He used, he knew that every Friday night, no matter what happens, where his friends go, he comes home. We make this kiddush, the prayer over wine and bread, and we eat together, and the candles are...and there is an atmosphere of Shabbat. Now he's a soldier. It's more difficult for him. Last time, there was a misunderstanding, and he went to his room, he didn't want to come to the table, and blah, blah, blah, his brother was sleeping, he also didn't come to the table. His mother was having a big discussion with him. It was a big crisis about this. So I took me a week to convince both parties. I told them, I am not leaving until I see you embracing each other, and kissing and hugging. He was really and truly doesn't need her dinner. So I don't know what, she was very hurt, and he was hurt, and she treated...

INT: Are you saying "hurt"?

DOV: Hurt. That she treats him as a child, and he has to everything only what she said to him. He always obeys her.

INT: So you think the conflict was more about independence than about religion?

DOV: Yeah, he is now fighting...

(END TAPE FIVE, SIDE ONE)

(TAPE FIVE, SIDE TWO)

INT: So...but did you teach him about, does he know the kind of religious family that you came from?

DOV: Yeah.

INT: But you're not interested, and he's not interested, is that what you're saying?

DOV: Yeah.

INT: In the continuity.

DOV: Yeah. He knows that I respect Jewish traditions, and that deeply I am proud being a Jew. I am proud of our Jewish values. Of all the Jewish culture. But I am not involved in the particular mitzvot, those taryag mitzvot, exactly what to observe or not observe. I mean, to be a Jew for me means to be, first of all, an honest man of integrity. And to love Israel. All the rest are details which you, some of them more or less observe, but living in Israel, you know all the holidays, and you know everything.

INT: But did he ever have any religious education per se? You know, Tanach, Talmud...

DOV: Yeah. Tanach you study at school.

INT: But no Talmud.

DOV: No Talmud. He knows what Talmud is, if he remembers. Unfortunately, after they finish high school, they forget everything. They don't want to know, to remember. But I hope very much he will grow up. I mean, after he will calm down a little bit with his fight for independence, he will...I know it from experience of two other sons, and many, many other young people from other families. They always said, "Oh, blah, blah, blah, we will leave the country. It's too difficult to live here. Why do I have to be an Israeli? What I am different from other? I can live everywhere in the world." And all of them came back, all of them lived in Israel.

INT: Now, what about your childrearing practices, if you will? Do you remember doing things the way you remember your own childrearing, or, it was obviously a very different world?

DOV: No. I think...I made a lot of mistakes, because I probably did the same thing which my father did to me, probably. I forgot all the books what I studied about modern education. Or secular understanding of the child. You know a shoemaker goes barefoot always. And the doctor doesn't treat his own family. So I was always told in the family, you don't hear many things, they used to say. You don't understand the psychology of **anything** that normally (Hebrew). Because he was not very satisfied with my reactions, probably. But I think I did my best. At least now I understand some of the mistakes.

INT: Well, how old were you when he was born?

DOV: I think 48. I have to make a cheshbon.

INT: Do you think that had something to do with...how do you think the age difference...

DOV: I think about it a lot, and I try, check myself, and I check him. I behaved not as at my age, you know. He didn't really suffer.

INT: You're a very youthful person.

DOV: Yeah, that's why I say. I think he, he never questioned the fact that maybe his father...first of all, he has a young mother.

INT: He never what?

DOV: He never questioned.

INT: Questioned.

DOV: Why he has an older father. He didn't, not even him, his elder brother considered me as a young person. I mean, people never believe me when I say I am retired, or I am almost seventy. They say, "You are kidding. Whom you are kidding?" I mean, I don't know why they don't believe it. I had trouble lately at the bank. Retired person has...you know, what they call...

INT: Privileges? Discounts?

DOV: Yeah, some privileges. There's a senior citizen. And discounts. And so I came to ask for this. And I was already four year retired. They say, "What? You are retired already?" I said, "What do you mean, 'already?'" (laughs) I am retired four years already." They said, "No, you're kidding." So I had this problem, and he probably never had really...all our friends and social life was with younger people.

INT: Are there any particular things about the way you raised him that you regret? Any particulars?

DOV: Yeah, maybe sometimes I was too strict. I probably raised him like in the old times. Maybe sometimes too overprotective. Even now, probably. That's what he complains. He say, "You always mix with my life," he say. "Inyanim sheli." You're always in my business. When I ask him, "How was your day? What did you do?" I mean, he became...so defensive. He doesn't tell **anything** about himself. All his secrets now. His friends tell me about his life more.

INT: Does he have a girlfriend or anything like that? Do you know anything about that?

DOV: Yeah. Many girls call.

INT: He's very good-looking.

DOV: As a matter of fact, I shall leave his picture to you. I don't need it. But it is in your mother's house. He has a lot of friends. He is very popular. They always call him. "Eyfoh Mor?" I mean, they never go out without him. I told him already, "You don't have to go out **every** night." And there is a girl calling always, and another one. And...they talk to me more than to him. I don't know. They talk to me on the phone. They know me, because I was their teacher. On a special subject.

INT: Now what was it like, were you in any of the wars in Israel?

DOV: Of course. All the wars.

INT: You mean, an active soldier? On the front?

DOV: An active soldier. Yeah.

INT: So what was that like to be in the army **again**?

DOV: Oh, beautiful. My own uniform. That's the difference between us. He can't understand how I was proud to wear the uniform. He hates the uniform. He comes home, **immediately**, off with that. He doesn't look. He says to me, "I'm allergic to green."

INT: Does he, from political reasons, or just for the hardship of it?

DOV: No, for the hardship of it. It doesn't have any **meaning** to him. He says it's wasted time. He doesn't understand. He say, "I don't contribute anything to the security of the country, and the government doesn't **deserve...**" They don't like the government. I don't, they don't like the politicians.

INT: Because **all** politicians, or he sees it as a right/left?

DOV: All politicians. No, no, all politicians. No special political....

INT: Affiliation.

DOV: Yeah. You see, it's all the generation, all the politicians. They are not worth, they don't deserve. They...keep us three years for nothing.

INT: And what did you feel when you were in the army?

DOV: I felt proud that I finally can wear a uniform of my own country. I liked the army. It was something...

INT: Were you afraid of dying?

DOV: No. I never believed that I can die. I told you. (laughs) If I survived Hitler, I will never die. At least, not in the army, not in the front. It's something mystical about this. I told you, I believed in my mother. And I went to Kever Rachel, when we conquered, the next day when Jerusalem was liberated, I was already there as a soldier. On Kever Rachel and I put a petek there, a prayer for my father's health. It didn't help.

INT: So how would you summarize your...how would you summarize the successes of your life, the failures of your life. Let's ask another admittedly hypothetical question, but, what do you think you would have done, had you stayed in Europe, and there had not been a Holocaust?

DOV: Ah. I know exactly what I wanted to do. I wanted to study aeronautics. I wanted to be an engineer, building airplanes. It was my dream as a kid.

INT: Did you play with model planes? Did they have those things?

DOV: No, at that time we didn't have that. But I even applied to Russian school. I mean, I got the information, I tried to get the information about...because we didn't believe that in '41 the Germans will attack the Russians. And that's what I wanted to do: to be an engineer. I was always interested in science. And the realistic...strangely enough, what I became then a humanities, you know, majored in humanities.

INT: But you majored in biology or something? You did some biology work.

DOV: Yeah. That I remember one of my girlfriends used to say, "You are very strange. You are such a humane person. You like this better. But you show interest in science." And all this. You know, I told you yesterday, I studied chemistry in hiding, because I...I have a great respect for the achievement of the human brain. The human brain is something very...I mean, how we discovered all this? How we built? I still don't understand the computer. I mean, I know how the principal, but for me, was all this...what we accomplished in the last twenty or fifty years in this field technologically. It's always interested me. And I would probably study this.

INT: So are you disappointed...so how would you, I'm sorry, let's back track. How would you describe or evaluate the difference between what you wanted to become, and what...

DOV: Wait a minute. I will tell you something more. Going to study to be a teacher wasn't really because I wanted to be a teacher. As I told you before, I promised myself never to become a teacher. And going to Nevei Yam, in the background was the thought that being a teacher, working in Nevei Yam close to Haifa where was the only Technion in Israel, I planned to...try, at least, to study, again, in the Technion. But I was told by all the kibbutzniks, that will be impossible, because in science studies, you cannot work, have a full-time job, a responsible job, and to take all the courses, because it's not like humanities, you can...

INT: Because you'd need laboratories.

DOV: Yeah. That's laboratories. It's special hours. It's not like...they give lectures in the Bible Studies, or History, you can come one day, and you can study five years long until you get all the credits. Here you have to be, and this is, forget about it. Either you have all the money, and not to work, and to study, and...since I didn't even have the background in mathematics, which is very important, I somehow gave up the idea. And still was a very unhappy about this. But I was very successful as a teacher.

INT: How did you choose Bible Studies, by the way, as a second major?

DOV: It was...you see, Bible Studies in Hebrew, it's called Mikrah. And I call it Modaa Mikrei, which...

INT: Oh, "by accident."

DOV: By accident. I mean, not a real accident. I met someone in the corridor, and he said, asked me, "What do you suggest, what do you think about Bible Studies?" Oh, he say, "Bible Studies, ah, you need to know German, because many, many research was done."

INT: Biblical criticism.

DOV: Biblical criticism in German. I said, "Oh, German, I have no problem." So he say, "If you don't have a problem with German language, German and English, okay, it's good for you." So that was the end of that.

INT: It was a coincidence, but nevertheless...

DOV: But I enjoyed it.

INT: ...was there any sense having to do with wanting to know about Jewish heritage, or...

DOV: No, you see, it had to do with this, that I was a teacher at school. I could use it. But I never taught Bible, later. Tanach at school. One day I was asked to do it, but I was then asked by my student, who knew me, he said, "Oh, no, you are too good friend to us. Don't..." I was asked to substitute another teacher who went, had an operation of something. They told me, I still remember, "Please, don't take this job. You are such a good friend of ours. We don't want to lose this friendship." Because they didn't like this Bible Studies. They didn't want to have me as a Bible teacher.

INT: I understand.

DOV: Moreh leTanach.

INT: So how would you evaluate what you wanted to become and what happened to you?

DOV: Listen, I accepted the reality. After all, I was happy to survive. I was alive. I...after all, got some higher education, and I could become a peasant in Israel, a kibbutznik, and would be happy with being a kibbutznik also. Not having **any** degree. I am, regard myself very lucky, and very successful after all. I mean, the scholarship, coming to the States, having this degree, the Master's degree from Yeshiva University. I mean, who could really, as a survivor, it was a gift from...from heaven.

INT: Well, what do you attribute these successes to? Honestly?

DOV: I don't know. Maybe my optimism. I don't know. I really don't know. I am lucky, no?

INT: Well, what role do you think **you** have in this, or does it just happen randomly?

DOV: I probably contributed to the success something. I mean, success doesn't grow on trees. You have to make some efforts. How we say, "Nothing succeeds like success." But...you don't remember, even **you** had a part in it. You and Joe were that year...

INT: No, I remember a lot. I have my own interpretation. But this is for the tape.

DOV: You tried to convince me to...to apply for the scholarship for the National Council...

INT: I wrote your letter, what are you talking about? Or I corrected it.

DOV: Yeah, yeah. So I was really pushed by other people. People gave me more credit than I myself. Even going to the center that teachers scholarship wasn't my idea. I was completely satisfied with my job as an electrician or as a gardener. But they always said, "It's a waste, I mean, you are such an intelligent person. You have to do something with your life. Blah, blah, blah," And then my father began. I always was pushed by somebody. Because maybe I made a good impression on other people. Even if I was interviewed for the job in Germany, there were seventy candidates for the job, who wanted the job very much. I was chosen; I don't know why. My personal charm? I don't know why. And then the scholarship to...I wasn't the only one applying. Many...

INT: What role do you think competence has in what has happened to you? You said "luck," you said "charm." What about competence?

DOV: Maybe.

INT: How do you consider yourself?

DOV: I consider myself as quite intelligent. I mean, intelligent, not educated.

INT: Not **only** educated.

DOV: Not only educated, but a very...that's why I probably survived. I can very quick grasp things very quick. I understand things very quick. I adjust very quick to new situations. I don't feel comfortable to talk about myself in this way.

INT: I understand, but it's important.

DOV: But that's the truth. Rosemary knows it. She said, "Your reaction, your reflexes, you react so quick, and always in the proper way." She said, "Mor has from you. I never can catch him. He's always on the surface, whenever he's in trouble." He's out to wit out?

INT: Outwit.

DOV: Outwit her. I mean, she couldn't think so quick as he thinks. She says, "It's from you." (laughs) She say, "Yesh le mimcha."

INT: So how would you describe your coping mechanisms? Have you ever had moments of despair since the war?

DOV: Oh, yeah.

INT: No, I mean after the war?

DOV: Yeah. I had some very sad, moments of despair, but it was more connected with my future life, family life. I...there were times that I didn't believe that I will really marry someone. That I will be successful in the family, having my own family. I had **very**, very, deep, I was in very deep depressions. But no one really could see it or know about it.

INT: How did you deal with it?

DOV: I worked. It was in Nevei Yam when I was, before I married my first wife. Five years. I did...I didn't really have any relationships with other young women. And the kibbutz was...I had, but it was something which really substantial. So there were moments that I...I liked my work there. I was completely devoted to this job. But I didn't see how will I build my own family here? I never lived in a city. I went on weekends to my parents, it's again a village. No young people there. It was a vicious circle. I say, I will never meet young people. I will never really...I have to stop. And I couldn't. I liked the job. I liked this work. The children were all my life. Was the school in Nevei Yam. And I was in a catch. This was the only moment. Later on, or after the war, directly after the war, nothing.

INT: Do you feel that you have any unfinished mourning to do?

DOV: (pause) Um, probably. Yeah. Difficult for me just, but there is something.

INT: How do you think you'll resolve that?

DOV: I don't think about it. I don't know. It's somewhere behind.

INT: What gives you the feeling that it's unfinished?

DOV: (pause) Even this is a difficult question. You see, concerning my...whole family, and who were killed in the Holocaust, etc, etc, it's unfinished because I pushed it away. I closed it up. I...it was hidden somewhere. I didn't really finish with this. And the same with my father. After he died, I didn't want to accept this, that he is real, he is really not anymore with me. Because I think thanks to him I survived...sane. I remained sane as far as possible. And all of a sudden I lost him. And we began, we began, we became good friends already. I was already

forty-something. And we were two grown-up people and good friends. He enjoyed very much my studying in Tel Aviv University. I began my studies in age fourteen. He was very proud.

INT: Forty.

DOV: Exactly forty. Yeah. Forty. So...exactly like Rabbi Akiba. I said, "I am, Ani kemo Rabbi Akiba."

INT: "I am like Rabbi Akiba."

DOV: I am like Rabbi Akiba. It's never too late to begin studies. And he was very proud of me. And since he was **very** educated in Jewish and Bible studies, we used sometimes to do homework together. I was very happy. We were sitting discussing...for me, life began, together with my father. We could live together, still have a nice time. And all of a sudden...Go away, finished. He didn't even live long enough to see me finish getting the degree. The Bachelor's.

INT: Do you have any...guilt about surviving? Shame, or...do you think it makes a difference that you're in Israel rather than America regarding feelings like that?

DOV: No. The only guilt feelings, sometimes I couldn't really call them guilt feelings or sorrow, that why I survived and not my brother, which was a biological child of my stepmother. She would be much more happy to have her own child. But this is how it was. I said, "Why did I survive? Why couldn't **he** survive?"

INT: So how do you answer that, those questions?

DOV: I can't, I have no answer, but I would prefer him to survive than myself. I feel guilt. I mean...how could such a young child die in such a cruel way?

INT: Are you angry at G-d?

DOV: Yeah. Very.

INT: So you believe in G-d, but you're angry at Him.

DOV: I believe in G-d, because as a child I was brought up to believe in G-d. But I claim all the time that I **don't** believe.

INT: Right.

DOV: I always say I am an atheist. But I still have some cheshbon, an unfinished account. An unfinished business with G-d.

INT: How do you conceive of G-d?

DOV: (pause) As an unconceivable power. Someone, something, somebody **had** to create all this. I mean, when I lie down on my back, on our lawn, in my home, and watching this beautiful Israeli sky, which is in summertime so **clear**, you see **millions** of stars, and I ask myself, "What is behind all this?" **Must** be something that the human mind doesn't have an answer. So I have this feeling, there is a power.

INT: Do you believe in an afterlife? What do you think happens when people die?

DOV: No. I used to believe as a child, and even I believed, also, why I believed? Because I wanted very much to meet all the people, I want to meet them. It's a wish/dream. But when I really think realistically speaking, I don't...it's impossible. I don't believe it. I don't believe that I will meet someone somewhere. But I used to dream of this. I would like very much to meet my mother, to meet my father. We, I am too sentimental. It's not easy to live that way.

INT: So do you feel that you suffer a lot, emotionally?

DOV: Yeah. If I were less sentimental, maybe it would be easier for me, not to think so much about my father, about my brother.

INT: But you seem to cope.

DOV: Okay. I'm...I live the reality. I see that life has to go on. I seem to cope. But very often with myself, maybe too often, I feel the pain. That they are not here anymore. That I don't see them, that I can't talk to them, can't share with them all my...happy hours.

INT: In what way does having a family of your own... affect the pain?

DOV: (pause) It doesn't really minimize the pain. It should, but it doesn't.

INT: How come?

DOV: I don't know. (Pause) I should be happy. I've got a wife, a son. Why I miss my father or my brother, I don't know.

INT: So would you describe yourself as a happy person? How would you describe yourself?

DOV: Most of the time I see, relatively speaking, in comparison to all the people I know, I am happy. I have no reason for blame. And I always remember my father saying, "Ayzeh hu ashir, hasameach bechelko." Which you have to translate.

INT: Sure. "The one who is wealthy is the one who is satisfied with his life." That's from Pirkei Avoth.

DOV: Ken, Ken.

INT: Ethics of the Fathers.

DOV: Yeah. And if you want to have a scientific formula of happiness, which is similar to this, I have to show you, how you call this fraction. The value of a fraction change when the numbers, how you call the numbers above?

INT: The numerator and the denominator.

DOV: Yeah. If the numerator is larger, the value is larger. If the denominator is larger...

INT: The value is smaller.

DOV: Yeah, is smaller. Then this is the reality, what you have, the matzui.

INT: The denominator is the reality.

DOV: No, different. The numerator.

INT: The numerator.

DOV: Is what you really have. The reality. And the denominator is what are your wishes. So if you wish more than you can get, your happiness is...

INT: Diminished.

DOV: Diminished. But if you wish not more than you can get, you are quite satisfied. If you get more than you dream about, you're a happy person. This is the mathematical formula of happiness.

INT: Very interesting.

DOV: So you learned something from me, too.

INT: Just this.

DOV: You see, you were married to a mathematician.

INT: He wouldn't know that.

DOV: (laughs) He wouldn't know the problem. But you can tell this to your friends.

INT: I will.

DOV: Remember this formula. Why I remember it, because I liked it.

INT: On a less metaphysical or existential level, how do you think, has the Holocaust affected your politics?

DOV: Politics?

INT: Politics.

DOV: Not at all. What do you mean, my preference?

INT: Your politics, politics in Israel. You know, your political choices.

DOV: My political choice?

INT: Your sense of what society should be like. How government should be. And in Israel in particular.

DOV: No, I don't think so. I don't think it did affect it. I don't think. I am a liberal more tend to the left, because it's just, socialist. First of all, because the first leaders who really contributed to establish and build up the Jewish State, Israel, was the Labor Party. They were the real leaders. We don't have anymore such leaders like Ben Gurion, Golda Meir, etc. And they built really the country, all the kibbutzim. Not the right-wing parties, but leftists. They built the country. And I still don't understand those people, on the right, extreme right, like Bibi Netanyahu, just sending out messages without any substantial backing up what he is, all his only demagogic speeches, but not something real. He doesn't have **any** alternative plan, besides criticizing only Peres and Rabin, he doesn't have **anything** else to say which really, some solutions to it.

INT: But you don't think the Holocaust per se affects your politics?

DOV: No, not at all.

INT: So would you describe yourself as hopeful or pessimistic?

DOV: I think I am quite hopeful.

INT: How about trusting or suspicious?

DOV: Oh, I trust people sometimes too much. This is also very strange. Holocaust survivors should be suspicious. I really couldn't understand myself sometimes. How, even immediately after the war, I trusted people who, I wasn't cautious enough. I don't know...

(END TAPE FIVE, SIDE TWO)

(TAPE SIX, SIDE ONE)

INT: Just finishing up on these attitudinal questions. So you don't know where this trust comes from?

DOV: No. It was probably from the basic education, which I got as a child.

INT: Before the war.

DOV: Before the war. This probably...the affection of all my environment gave me the strength to trust people. I was very well-treated by all the, except my, maybe stepmother, but all other people. I felt everyone loves me. I don't know how and why.

INT: Are you a worrier?

DOV: Who from? What do you mean, warrior? Fighter or...

INT: No, not warrior. Worrier, like worried, to be concerned about things.

DOV: Yeah, I am sometimes too much worried about things.

INT: And how do you handle it? Does it ever paralyze your life?

DOV: Not to that extent. I mean, I worry.

INT: So what do you do with your worries?

DOV: I worry because I am a perfectionist, probably. I want things to be...done, everything okay and perfect. So I worry. I worry always maybe too much. I always get blamed from my friends say, "Mah atah doeg? What are you worried so much?" And even my son said to me always, says to me always that I worry too much.

INT: Do you feel that you're capable of joy, then? Are you capable of joy, are you capable of relaxing? Are you capable of pleasure, feeling pleasure?

DOV: I think so. Listen, I have a great sense of humor, which you know, probably. And in my social contact with other people, I am always in the center of the party. Sometimes I create the atmosphere, even, and people like me. And maybe it is just a device, a direction to cover up my worries. I don't know, probably.

INT: But it works?

DOV: It works very good. People like me, I like people. But I know that basically I am a worrier. Yeah, it doesn't fit the scheme. (laughs)

INT: I think it's in your genes, though. It runs in our family. (laughs)

DOV: Yeah. This is for sure. Our family was always worried about something. Once I was told by one of my employees in Germany in this community center, I was a madrich, a counselor, and he saw me always worried that things will be done...the one thing he was very upset that I always check on him if everything's okay. He said, "You know, Dov, even if you will not have **any** worries to worry about, you will worry why you don't have a reason to worry about." (HEBREW)

INT: You will worry why you don't have worries.

DOV: Yeah.

INT: Do you feel like you're generally safe, or frightened? Do you feel secure?

DOV: Oh, today, of course. I have really no reason not to feel secure. I mean, as far as in Israel you can be secure. Every day something can happen.

INT: Do you have any flashbacks or nightmares?

DOV: Very rare. Very rare. But some days I have dreams.

INT: Is it the same dream again and again?

DOV: No, no. It's not like a nightmare. It's dreams about danger, danger of Germans. Something which has to do with the Holocaust. You wake up...

INT: Real events?

DOV: No, not real. I mean, they were real, but not real happened to me. Probably the same...close to, and then...you wake up and...realize that you are home, and wet from a cold sweat.

INT: Yes? You are woken up in a cold sweat?

DOV: Yeah. But it's very rare. Much less than...

INT: Once a year, once...a month?

DOV: Lately I could say it's much less. It's, in previous years it was more.

INT: Lately, means how?

DOV: I think since, maybe since Mor was born. No, you see, it's very difficult for me to trace back.

INT: Do any events, as far as you're aware, trigger these reactions?

DOV: No. Maybe, maybe. As usual dreams, why people dream about something. Maybe something happened, or I saw, or I heard, or maybe there was a discussion, like a film, like "Schindler's List," and I didn't want to go. And maybe I could dream about...

INT: Do you read books about the Holocaust? Do you go to movies about the Holocaust?

DOV: No. Not at all. I read only one book, which was an interesting man, Rosemary read the book, and she recommended it, I didn't want to read it. But my friend, a young, I think I told you about that I was, she was working with me. A very good friend, and I consider her as my sister. I mean, she's very close to me. She read the book, and the book is, what's his name? Samuel Pizar? "From Ashes," something like that.

INT: Oh, "Out of the Ashes."

DOV: "Out of the Ashes."

INT: I forget the author's name.

DOV: Samuel Pizar. The one who got, came out of the concentration camp, and then made a great career. And she said to me, "Listen, you're a person. You went through all this, and in a similar way to build up a career and you made it, and you really...you have to read it." So I read it. And I envy him, but I didn't have the rich uncle start that he had, who took care of him. I had parents, but they were also in DP camps. They couldn't do very much for me. I tried, to study in Germany. To finish high school, and to go into a university then. And I couldn't. I didn't have the means for it.

INT: You mean economic means?

DOV: Economic. I had to do something else to survive.

INT: Where do you think you get your energy to continue, in the face of the depression that happens every now and then?

DOV: I don't know. This is always for me a miracle. I am a very vital person. Very energetic. But also very...alert and cannot, I cannot rest. I cannot relax.

INT: So you can't relax.

DOV: Hyperactive. You know, people tried to hypnotize me, he couldn't succeed. He said, "You can never fall asleep." I sleep only...it's very...tiresome.

INT: Tiresome. Do you feel tired a lot? Emotionally?

DOV: Oh, yeah, sometimes, yeah. My life is really too rich in events. It's...one lifetime to go through, even now, I mean, it's not easy to be a father of a soldier. And my marriage is also complicated. It's not easy. We have two other sons.

INT: Your wife is, what's the age difference, by the way?

DOV: Sixteen years. So I joke about this, because people say, "You are still so, behave so young." I said, "I have to. I have a young child, I have a young wife. I have to, at least to pretend that I feel young." If not really to do all the efforts, to remain young.

INT: Well, what do you think about this interview? How has it affected you? Or maybe you need time to think about that.

DOV: First of all, I need time. Secondly, if you speak, if you talk all this, I have to listen to all what I said to make some judgment about this. But first, my reaction to it is, it's tiresome. It's difficult. I mean, what I always say, you squeeze out of me all the things that maybe I wouldn't tell to anyone before. And...on the other hand, I feel somehow...that I am contributing to some very important project. So I am glad to participate in this project.

INT: Would you have done this with a stranger?

DOV: Not in this condition. I would take more time, and more relaxed, and not after midnight.

INT: (laughs) I meant in terms of the content. Do you think you would have been more or less open?

DOV: Yeah, I would have told, I mean, not the remarks in between. I speak to you like to someone who...is very close. Could be more formal, more conscious about all my sentences, and not joking around. But basically, I would agree to be interviewed and to give all the information, all of the answers I am able to give.

INT: Do you go to any conferences on Holocaust survivors in Israel?

DOV: No. Not at all. I told you. I just shut up all this life experience. This part of my life is somewhere in storage. It's...it doesn't fit my contemporary life. I mean, I want to live normally without memories every day. What do I need that for?

INT: What do feel about death?

DOV: Death? Now, I would like to live long. I didn't care before. But I have a young son, and a young wife, especially speaking about my son. I don't believe that I will see him married or with grandchildren.

INT: How old is he now?

DOV: He's twenty years old. It's possible. But as the suggestion is now, I don't see him being married. He doesn't even...he doesn't dream about it. He doesn't want it. He wants to be so much free that he does not want to commit himself to marriage. He speaks about it. He says, "Mah pitom? I don't want to think about it."

INT: Where do you think his desire for freedom comes from? Do you see it as excessive, or...regular for people his age?

DOV: First of all...it's regular for people his age. Especially Israelis who finish school, they don't have even the time to relax from, to rest from school, they already have to serve in the army. And he said, he says, "Since I was born, I am always told what to do. People push me around all the time, as a child, as a student, as a high school student, in school."

INT: As a soldier now.

DOV: "As a soldier now, and now my mother's commanding I come home. And I have a sergeant major at home. She is saying, do your room, and do this and do that. I hate all this. I want." He says to me, "When I will be released from the army, I will disappear for fifteen years. You will not see me anymore. Freedom. I go to the jungle, to Brazil." I mean, it's, but this only shows you how the big desire for freedom. And so I believe it will last several years until he will commit himself to more serious. So I...

INT: Do you think that the Holocaust background has anything to do with it?

DOV: No, not at all. I don't think that he absorbs something. It was very superficial. I never, he never saw at home anything to remind him of the Holocaust.

INT: No pictures?

DOV: No. Except a book, and he knows what the book is about, and he doesn't read it. It's not a book to read. And I mean, he is very, even uses, when he wanted me to write a letter to the army, that me being a Holocaust survivor, and he would be able to shorten the service time in the army. He's using the fact that he's a son of a survivor. But when it's convenient for him. But really, it didn't affect him, because I don't behave, I don't **live** the Holocaust.

INT: Does that bother you that he uses it?

DOV: Yeah, sometimes, yeah. But on the other hand, I will tell you some curious fact. He wanted to make a tattoo on his shoulder. A new fashion.

INT: I know. Here, too.

DOV: He knew how all the family will react to it. To make his life easy, he made his decision already, but he wanted our approval. So he came to me, he say, "Abba, Father, I want to have this tattoo. I don't want to hurt your feelings. I know that it may remind you about the

Holocaust, and the numbers. Please, I want your approval." I didn't see it that way. It had nothing to do with (laughs) the Holocaust at all. I see it completely different. I see the criminals and all the underworld. The Mafia. This what is my association, not the...but if his association was maybe I will be hurt by this blue print on his shoulder. He had this in blue, not color. He was very surprised. Even his brother said to him, "Mah?" Anyway, he's aware of this, that I am a Holocaust survivor, and he has to be cautious about sometimes kids, they are angry, they call their officers, "Oh, he behaves like a Nazi!" He will never call a Jew Nazi. You can tell whatever you want. But no Jew can be compared to a Nazi. What do you want, Professor Leibowitz, is Yehuda Nazi. So what do you expect from young people who adored him? The word Nazi...

INT: So what's the last, how would you sum yourself up? You know, Somerset Maugham, the writer/doctor, has a book called, "A Summing Up." How would you sum up your life and your sense of who you are?

DOV: This is the most difficult question you ask. To sum up.

INT: To end.

DOV: I see myself as a lucky person. To be lucky to survive. To be lucky to survive with parents, not only to survive, because many people survived lonely. One only in the world. And...to be lucky to achieve after the survival what I have achieved. And to be able to lead, how you say, a normal life -- normal, as far as possible. I don't think that those people who grew up in Israel or in America **not** being survivors, are **more** normal life, have more normal life.

INT: So you don't feel that there's a real distinction between you and a non-survivor?

DOV: No. Maybe I am an exception. But I don't feel it. Did you ever feel about me something?

INT: No, never. Never. I think you're extraordinary.

DOV: If you didn't know the facts, you wouldn't guess that I survived.

INT: No.

DOV: Many people are...surprised to hear about this.

INT: If you had to -- since you have scientific inclinations -- if you had to put the proportion to luck and your own...

DOV: Skill.

INT: Skill, initiative, how, what, how would you proportion that? Apart from, obviously, the luck of physically surviving. I mean, people died just because they got sick. Aside from that. In terms of other features of survival.

DOV: You mean, the mere survival or the whole life.

INT: The whole life.

DOV: Ah, the whole life.

INT: How would you proportion that?

DOV: I don't know. 50/50. Yeah. I was lucky. I came home to Israel. I never suffered, really. And yeah, maybe in the army. But...in the Russian Army.

INT: Well, it sounds like you suffered in the Polish fields. The Ukrainian fields.

DOV: Yeah, yeah, I say then. But no, I mean, for all my life, I my...fifty years after the war, is much more than the first twenty.

INT: So what proportion of your...consciousness would you say the Holocaust occupies?

DOV: A very small part. Very small. As I told you before, all the time, it doesn't really interfere with the day by day life. It's my, otherwise I wouldn't, I don't think that I could make it at all, remain sane, or finish, or accomplish what I accomplished. It doesn't...it's not there. I don't live it.

INT: Particularly with your own training in psychology then, do you think that that's a good pattern for people to follow in order to transcend any kind of trauma? The way to deal with trauma is to shove it aside?

DOV: No. It's not right, but this kind of a trauma you cannot deal with. I don't think you can.

INT: Why?

DOV: (Pause) Because it's...this is a unique trauma. I don't think that ever in the history of the human race this, such a...I mean, of course, such events were...usual traumas in day by day life, is a death of a member of a family, an illness of someone. So you have to overcome it. You have to deal with it. You have to talk about it. (pause) Here, I really don't know. At least with my case, it helped. I shut it out.

INT: So you don't feel that talking about...

DOV: I talk about this as if a stranger lived always. You see? I am outside it. I now, I am completely relaxed talking about all this. Maybe this is what cured me, I don't know. But I

couldn't say that this works for other people, too. I don't know if there is a way to heal it at all. Some...I know about people who **never**, never mention, survivors who never, never mention the Holocaust. It was forbidden to talk about it in the house. Children didn't know that their parents were survivors. Because they wanted to save their children all this traumatic experience. I don't know. Maybe this is the only way.

INT: Do you have any secrets of your own?

DOV: Secrets? I have some little secrets, not very important. Yeah, I have some secrets, because we shouldn't have. I'm talking about secrets, only between my wife and me. Because if we were married, the first marriage, not such a complicated marriage that I have, having other children. You cannot, there is. I feel there must be some barrier between, as I told you before, about what will happen if...I cannot tell everything...probably Rosemary also has her secrets with her children, from a previous marriage, which she doesn't feel comfortable to share with me. But this is only due to the fact that it's not the first marriage. We didn't build up our home from scratch, but on the ruins of previous marriages. But there are some, not already the same. Like a couple married only lives first time. I say always, "Bayit Rishon, Bayit Sheni. "

INT: First Temple, Second Temple.

DOV: I sometimes say there's a Pre-Columbian era. Pre-Columbia, when I speak sometimes, and at home, pictures, say, oh, this is me Bayit Rishon, or this is Pre-Columbian.

INT: So what do you want the world to remember? What do you want people to remember, future generations, when they hear these tapes?

DOV: First they will remember the historical facts. Which is now also in danger. The denial of the Holocaust is something which I really, it turns me, I can't...And unfortunately, I don't believe that humanity will learn something from this, because we see what is happening now, and you know probably the picture, "The Wave," which proves to us that you can always have a generation, in the human race, where how you say...

INT: The evil inclination.

DOV: Yeah, in the human beings are probably basically evil. I mean...

INT: Do you believe that, by the way?

DOV: I mean, as an optimist, it's not a deep belief, but I see it. I see that human being can be much, much more evil than any other creature in this world. No animal will attack its own species. Or no animal will attack at all if it's not hungry, if not for food. People can kill for nothing. Just for nothing, not even to hold up. In America you see today, USA, you can be killed for anything. Just because somebody drove a car and wanted to shoot at you. Which is terrible. And of course, the world is completely indifferent to what is happening in Yugoslavia today. No one really cares, no one does anything real to stop the killing. And of course, here

and there, a few efforts, but the human race didn't make any progress from the cave man, what I say always, (Hebrew), in Haifa, the Carmel, there are caves of prehistoric man. It's called Homo Palestinensis. They found there, and they found there a proper type of, it has his name, Homo Palestinensis, like the Neanderthal. Nothing really changed. I don't, unfortunately, I came to this conclusion. That there were ups and downs in the human history, but basically people, the human race, remained as it was at such times. Much worse than the animals, unfortunately.

INT: So what do you want people to know from these tapes in addition to the facts?

DOV: (sighs) I would like people make the effort to improve life. I mean, why I am proud being a Jew, because I believe that Judaism, pure Judaism, I'm not talking about...the external values like observing kashrut or not kashrut. It doesn't have the meaning. For my opinion, it's based on a misinterpretation of a passage, and even Rambam said something like this. This is not important. What is important is the basic Judaism. The main, the basic idea of love your own kind. Of love people as you love yourself. And if people will follow. Try. I mean, I am not naive. I know people are not angels, and cannot be really so sweet all the time. But to make the effort, to try to be just...I mean, people should learn from the Holocaust.

First of all, the lesson is that...Jewish people are almost in...how you say it?

INT: Extinct?

DOV: Yeah. I believe. I mean, look what happened, and after all, we're still not alive. We're a very important factor in the human race today. Jews are active everywhere. We are so alive. We build a new homeland after 2,000 years. After the Holocaust. I mean, "Am Yisrael Chaim ve kayam."

INT: Jewish people are alive and well.

DOV: Yeah.

INT: And will be alive.

DOV: And will be alive.

INT: And how do you explain that?

DOV: You cannot explain it on a rational basis. You say we are...but it is something which I have difficulty to deal with. Because on one side I claim I am not religious, and I am an atheist, I don't believe in G-d. On the other hand, it is such a mystical deed to believe in my heart that we will live forever. Because we believe in it. Our belief is our protection. We survive because we believe in our existence. And I say like, I will say what Achad HaAm said: More than the Jewish people observe Shabbat or preserve Shabbat, Shabbat shamrah aleihem. Our faith guarded us more than we kept the faith. And because I sometimes, I really hate many...shticklach of these...of the...how you say, the Haredim, the extreme religious groups in

Israel. They really make our life miserable. And I feel some, really I feel pain. Because I want very much my son or other young generations should really be proud Jews. And you cannot be proud if you see sometimes what they do, or how they mix religion and politics. I mean, it's dirty tricks. But on the other hand, I always say to Rosemary, to Mor, if not for the religion of the religious Jews, the observant Jews, we wouldn't exist anymore. Who kept all the traditions 2,000 [years].

(END TAPE SIX, END OF INTERVIEW)