



Immersed in work, Josef's life was peaceful. The days and months raced by. Gołda devoted herself to the home, to the housekeeping and became fond of the home Josef had given her – the home and the feeling that it was her own.

In the summertime, Josef and Gołda would spend time at the seaside - at Brighton Beach, Coney Island or even at the farm in Belmar, New Jersey, where his niece Różka, the daughter of his sister Chana, lived with her husband Welwel¹. Różka and Welwel, for the time they had been here, had fought their way to a [good] outcome. The chicken farm provided them with a living.

Josef derived much contentment each time he travelled to his niece at the farm. He was particularly fond of the visits to Belmar on account of their two flourishing little children - Ruche'le and Gitte'le. The two were named after Josef's grandmother and mother. Różka's brother Zalman, who was now called Sigmund, had also fought his way here to quite a respectable income. In this, his brother-in-law Welwel had assisted him.

Zalman became an egg seller somewhere in Brooklyn. He met a girl by the name of Shirley, the daughter of a Jewish working family in Brooklyn. Shirley had been born here, but spoke good Yiddish. She was truly endowed with many virtues and, at the same time, was so unsophisticated and friendly. After knowing each other for a brief period and spending their free time together, they fell in love and decided to marry.

Josef and Gołda attended the wedding, which was held in the finest Jewish-American standard, in one of the wealthiest synagogues in Brooklyn. The cantor, wearing a frock coat and top hat, was accompanied by young lads in festive array. Shirley, the bride, in her white, silken wedding dress, shone like seven suns. She wore a veil, and the long train of her dress was carried by little girls, who accompanied her to the altar. It was a beautiful sight to see.

For Josef and Gołda, this opulent wedding was the first that they had experienced here. It was a great novelty for them that the bride's father - a Jewish labourer, a baker by trade - should be able to allow himself to celebrate the wedding of his daughter Shirley at such a rich and impressive level.

They listened to the singing of a girl, a singer with a fine voice. She sang special wedding songs in English. The Rabbi said the blessings and made an *El Moleh Rachamim*² after the groom's annihilated family members. With eyes filled with tears, Zalman stood next to his weeping sister Różka and his brother-in-law Welwel who, under Zalman's *chuppah*³, remembered the great misfortune which had struck them and all the Jews. Joy and grief were intermingled.

¹ [TN: Diminutive form of Wolf.]

² [TN: Heb., "God full of mercy"; the opening line to the traditional prayer for the souls of the dead.]

³ [TN: Heb., wedding canopy.]

[There were] tears of sorrow and joy – the joy of those, who had, after all, been destined to survive and to find happiness in the new and free country of America.

In the middle of his weeping and that of his sister Rózka, brother-in-law Welwel and friends, and in the middle of the Rabbi's prayers, Zalman, the groom, suddenly fainted. They reanimated him and the ceremony was resumed. Weak and pale, he said the "*Harei at*⁴" and revived himself with the little wine which the Rabbi held out to him.

Zalman later recounted that, as he was standing under the *chuppah*, he suddenly saw, as if alive, the figures of his father and mother, who had been taken in their most blossoming years by the Nazi murderers to Treblinka. His parents, with a joyous smile, wished him *mazel tov* - "*Mazel tov, my child, mazel tov, my child!*" He had heard his mother's voice and his father's blessings clearly and distinctly, and when he closed his eyes, he seemed to fall asleep under the *chuppah*. He thought that he had heard the sound of angels' wings over his head. Zalman recounted all this with a sad smile, sitting at the table, with the bride, during the wedding meal at the lavishly decorated hall.

In his heart, Josef bore affection for his surviving family, who had escaped here. He clung to them and hoped they would do well. He rejoiced with the newborn children, with the new generations arriving. In every child here he saw the "*Netzach Yisroel*⁵", despite the great destruction. Also, in Zalman's little boy - whom Shirley later bore him, and who was named after Zalman's father, Mates - Josef perceived the Polish Jew from Warsaw rising up to the life here, in the land of freedom!

It was not only the relatives here that were dear to him. He also thought frequently about the relatives who he had in the Land of Israel. He longed to see them. Josef often dreamt of travelling to the State of Israel to see the remnants of his family, who were living there in the Jewish state.



⁴ [TN: Heb., "Behold, you are..."; opening words of the declaration pronounced by the groom upon giving the bride the wedding ring: "Behold, you are consecrated to me with this ring according to the law of Moses and Israel."]

⁵ [TN: Ref. to the verse "The Strength of Israel will not lie" (1 Samuel, 15:29). The original Heb. biblical term "netzach", which in this verse is translated as strength, also denotes victory and eternity, and in this context is synonymous with "the eternity of the Jewish people".]