



Following Rywka's departure, Josef returned to his home. His soul was empty and desolate - which was something he had not anticipated. But apparently, it had been destined so. Since his marriage to Rywka, there had been times that had shown signs of [being able] to separate from her on friendly terms, as is done among modern people. Here, however – in the manner in which she had behaved - there was also some secret.

Josef tried to discover [it]. He wrote letters to friends and acquaintances in France, in a bid to grasp from whence Rywka's hatred stemmed, and from whence her decision to separate [from him], in such an unpleasant manner, had been taken. But he received no clear answer.

The secret, however, was revealed on its own, as it were. A fortnight or so after Rywka's departure, once Josef had calmed down a little and began coming back to himself, in those same three little rooms, by chance, in a corner of his wardrobe, he found the name "Léopold" on a white piece of cardboard trimmed all around, with strings to tie around a parcel. Looking in his wardrobe for his suit, which he had not worn for a long time, Josef realised he was missing clothes. For the last [few] weeks, it had not been on Josef's mind how he went about dressed.

"Well, well", thought Josef, "it seems Rywka was sending frequent packages."

She had done this immediately from the first days of her arrival here. But that she should do such a thing - to take his clothes and send them to an unknown Frenchman without his knowledge - is something Josef had not anticipated.

It did not take long for Josef to discover to whom Rywka had returned. The pain and shame were great. Indeed, now Rywka repaid him for everything two times over.

He was now at home day and night. He saw no one. The telephone rang, friends called him, but Josef excused himself, "I am unable to attend the meeting. Later, next week."

The work surrounding the *Landsmannschaft* [Yid., Ger., society of fellow townsmen] book practically came to a halt, because Josef was the secretary, and no one was willing to take over his position. And now tragic news arrived. Poland had already been liberated, and it was only now that the dark abyss opened up - the dreadful tragedy of the Jews in Poland. [There were] empty cities without Jews. Some survivors had returned, but they could not remain in Poland.

Jewish communities were formed in Warsaw and Łódź, but not in order to remain there. The [surviving] souls were counted and travelled out to the provinces. The tragedy became even greater. The Poles were astonished and regarded the numbered surviving Jews with hate. The

Poles were very strongly disappointed - "Look at that – they're still alive! And we thought that they had all been wiped out".

