

Anya Friedman Spector

Mama's Diaries {with footnotes}

Translated by Bassya Maltzer Bibel (daughter of Mica Spector and Benjamin Maltzer – niece to Mama) from Yiddish to English

1963

My daughter¹ demands of me to write my biography. She is not only beautiful but wise and wants me to occupy my lonely hours. It is difficult to go back these many many years, but what does not a mother do to please her child.

I was born to poor parents². They were very happy with me, their first child. Showed me love and affection on many occasions and let me know that I brought them much luck with my being born to them, and naturally I bathed in their outspoken love towards me.

I was born in a small town in the Ukraine in Russia....Tchernowitz³.....April 15th 1893.. I am now seventy years old and it is definitely time to write about my life...one never knows what tomorrow will bring.

My parents were fine, sincere people. They thought that no one had a more beautiful daughter than they. Neighbors used to tell my mother that my name did not suit me, Annie, because there was a woman that was not very popular in Tchernovitz that had the same name and that made my mother terribly unhappy.

I was a good child, but at night I cried and my father not wanting for me to awaken my grandparents⁴ with whom we resided, he used to push my cradle back and forth all night long as that seemed to pacify me.

I seem to remember myself since I was two years old. I remember when my brother Samuel⁵ was born, he is two years younger than I. I remember when we moved to another small town, Kopaigorod⁶, to live with my father's parents. My grandfather Ephraim was a Rabbi but he had many disagreements with the leading Jews in town. He decided not to be the Rabbi in town, instead he was a sales representative of Wissotzky Tea⁷, which sent out orders all over the small towns. My grandmother had a small store of groceries, thread, needles etc. and in this way we lived together, the four of us⁸, my grandparents⁹ and their four daughters¹⁰, the oldest one is to become my mother-in-law many years later...their three sons were already married...that is, my father and his two brothers¹¹. The youngest son, Moishel¹², he slept at a cousin's house nearby. The house consisted of three rooms. One can imagine how crowded we were, but my father was not working yet¹³ and we had not a choice. As poor as we were, my parents dressed me very nicely. I remember when I was three years old, I wore a beautiful red blouse and a light blue skirt. When I was four years old, it was a beautiful summer morning my second brother Zalman (Solman)¹⁴ was born. Seeing the tiny baby, I asked where did he come

from, the answer was God had brought the baby through the window...I ran out outside to see if there was a hole in the sky from where God had thrown down my little brother. Since the sun was very bright, I tried to look up and I said I could not see anything. When I ran outside, I was naked and my grandmother's sister made me come in and get dressed. Coming in I remember watching the baby being bathed in a wooden barrel. I remember this as if it were yesterday.

I remember playing with dolls as all little girls do, but I did not have many dresses for my dolls, like myself. I dressed my dolls when I got dressed, only on holidays. On Thursday, my mother washed me and my brother's hair for the Sabbath.

Once when my parents went to visit some relatives nearby, they left me and my little brothers alone. My brothers fell asleep and I sat in bed playing with my doll. Soon I noticed a mouse playing with pieces of paper on the floor. I got scared. I began to cry and scream and woke up my brothers, who also began to cry. The neighbors ran to get our parents, by the time they came the mouse disappeared and since then our parents never left us alone.

When I was five years old and my brother Sam¹⁵ or as he was called Shmulikel was three, we were taken to a Cheder, a school, a religious school. They put a Talis (tallith) over my brother and then they threw raisins and candies at us. Shmulikel was a very good student. By the time he reached five years old, he knew the Chumash (five books of Moses) by heart, and when he reached 12 years, he was assistant teacher in Hebrew and Religious studies for the young children in the Cheder.

An episode I remember when I was five years old was when Sheva¹⁶ got married. The wedding was right across where we lived. My mother had a beautiful dress sewn for me by the new tailor had in town. I remember I insisted on having the first dance with the bride and she did dance with me first. My dress was so pretty that my mother kept it for many years, so that when Clara was born, she wore it. {????}

When I was six years old, I was taken to a teacher who taught me Russian, Yiddish and arithmetic. When my girlfriend and I misbehaved, the teacher locked us in a closet. We played there and when we got hungry, we saw some jars of pickles, so we helped ourselves. Since then, the landlady would not let us be locked up in the closet. Soon after I was taken to a public school. In the first grade I fell in love with a Christian boy, Mitya. We shared our lunches, sat near one another in the school room. I remember when the class had their religious period, the Jewish children were sent out in the school yard to play. Once the Priest came out to the school yard, he saw me playing. He took my hand in his and called me little mouse and we became friends. Every time he saw me, he talked to me – gave me flowers. I loved school and I was a good student.

During school vacation, during the summer, my parents were planning to send me to this Yiddish teacher who had a reputation of being very severe and very admonishing. I was scared to go to him. When it was time to start, I faked a sprained arm. So, my parents put a bandage around my wrist, but at night when I thought my parents were asleep, I got out of bed and took

my hand out of the bandage. My parents saw that and understood why I faked and I was not sent to this teacher.

My father's sister Brucha studied in the big city Odessa, but during the summer she came home and she taught children. My brother Shmulikel and I began going to her classes. He was very intelligent and together we did our homework. I was better than he in poetry, but he was much better than I in arithmetic. When my Aunt Brucha went back to Odessa to continue her education, our parents sent us to a teacher who used to keep the girls on his lap when he taught them individually some subjects. I did not like that, but my brother begged me not to quit or tell my parents...because our parents couldn't afford sending us to separate teachers. So, seeing how anxious he was to continue his studies, I stayed.

Each summer when my Aunt Brucha used to come home, she would teach me poetry from Krilov which I loved and still remember after all these many years. Since my father could not afford many luxuries, I could not go to another city and continue my studies as many of my friends did.

As I grew older, we had a dramatic group and performed many times. And since it was always so easy for me to cry, I always got to play dramatic roles. We never had a library in our town, so now that we played theater all the money, we made we established a library, and Shmulikel became the first librarian. This went on for quite a while. Those were interesting times.

Until I was five years old, I was never photographed, my father was against it, I never learned why. Perhaps because we just couldn't afford the extra expense. One day when my mother heard that the town photographer was leaving town, she took me and my two brothers through the window so that my father would not know, and we were dressed in our nicest things, and we went to the photographer and had our first picture taken. I was five, Shmuel three and Zalman one years old. The photographer sat us up on a table. I began playing around with my legs, the next day the photographer told us the picture did not come out because my legs were moving and he left town. We did not have any photographs taken until I was eleven years old. When I was eleven years old the whole family decided to take a picture together, even my father who was against it, joined the family...except I did not let my brother Shmuel take the picture with us because he had some pimples on his face. He was nine then, and I thought it would spoil the picture. He must have hated me for doing that to him. I have taken many pictures of myself since then. I loved being photographed. I was pretty, so everyone told me and I could see from the photographs they were right.

My mother never spanked us. When we were little, she used to warn us if we don't behave, she will hurt us with a rag (shmate), and that used to scare us, of course when we grew older we know that one can't be hurt with a shmate! I was very obedient and very good natured. As I grew up people took advantage of my good nature. The family always asked me to do something for them and they liked me. I remember I loved to bathe, but in Kopaigorod we did not have a bath at home, so when my aunts went to the Bath House, they took me along. I was very grateful. Once while I was in the bath tub I kept adding more and more hot water and I

passed out. The fellow that worked at the bath house after that told everyone he saw me naked. I was so ashamed every time I saw him on the street I used to hide.

I have helped raise all my aunts' children. It seemed they just couldn't get along without me. Although they each had help, they still asked my mother to send me over to help. My Aunt Bassya, my father's sister had given birth to three abnormal children. After ten years she finally gave birth to a normal little girl, her name was Paulia. I remember that when my aunt found out she was pregnant again she was unhappy and anxious thinking she is going to have another abnormal child, but thanks to my mother she had the baby...she did not go through an abortion. She promised she will help her with the baby as long as she will go through with the pregnancy.

When the little girl Paulia was four years old she fell off a chair while drinking something from a glass. The glass cut on top of her forehead near her hairline. They ran and got the only doctor Kopaigorod had. His name was Hatshkowski. She was a wise little girl, the doctor knew her very well and he talked to her gently telling her if she lay very quiet the cut will not show, but if she will cry the cut will show. She listened and said, "I will not cry." During the night she got a high fever, the doctor was sent for and my Aunt Bassya ran to the cemetery to pray to her near and dear dead to help the only child she had. Paulia opened her eyes when the fever subsided and asked where her mother was. When she was told that she was on the cemetery praying for her life, "I hope she will pray that I never die," the small child said and sighed deeply.

I remember on Saturday afternoon just before spring, several of us young people decided to go ice-skating on the frozen river, but when we came to the river we decided the ice was too thin and would not take a chance, but one young man, the only son, his name was Itzikel Yarmilinsky, he would not listen to us and began skating...the ice broke and he drowned. We could not do anything to save him. He was fished out dead, they put him on a horse and let him run, thinking that running the horse will somehow get the water out of his body, but nothing helped. He was dead. It was a sad Saturday afternoon, the whole town dried, the school comrades. It was sadness that hung over the little town for a long time.

As I have mentioned before, my grandfather Ephraim was a very religious man, he could have been the Rabbi of the town, but chose to sell tea to all the towns around, and I mentioned my grandmother's small store consisting of almost nothing at all. As I think back now, I cannot figure out how did we all exist and mange in my grandfather's three rooms; ten people, grandfather, grandmother, their four daughters, my father, my mother, my little brother and I. The table was narrow and stood in the hallway. We could not sit and eat all together. My grandfather seemed always to collect money for a poor family who did not have enough money for the Sabbath, or a poor bride, or a sick man or woman.

But one time my grandfather felt that he committed a sin. It is not known exactly what it was, perhaps he forgot to wash his hands before praying or something like it. To punish himself he refused himself the pleasure of sexual intercourse with my grandmother, and although he loved

her very much, he never touched her again. He was only thirty-five years old and grandmother, thirty.

I remember an episode where my future mother-in-law, who was my oldest aunt, father's sister, Yocheved was marrying off her eldest daughter, Miriam or Micah (Mycah) as they called her. I was then no more than eleven years old. My grandmother was making preparations, baking many cakes and cookies, and while baking she fell down and was instantly paralyzed. Since that day the poor woman lay paralyzed in bed for sixteen years. Every year she was taken to Odessa to see a doctor, but he could not do anything for her. Her son Moyshe paid for a woman who would stay with her day and night and bathe her and feed her. We also helped all we could. In later years my sister Clara and I did all we could for her and grandfather, we cooked and cleaned. They love me very much.

I remember my father always asked me with whom I had spent the evening and when I mentioned that I walked with the teacher who, when I was a child wanted the little girls to sit on his lap. "Oh, him," my father said. "So, what happened?" He asked. "After walking a while, he asked me to sit down, and I did not want to." "You did well," said my father, "from a sitting position to lying down is not very far."

Not having a lot of clothes, I usually wore the red skirt I liked so much. Once my friend mentioned, "You know, people recognize you from afar in your red skirt." I told this to my father and he answered, "It's funny, no one mentioned it to me in the Synagogue."

I remember when I was ten years old, I was the housekeeper because my mother was in the store. I cooked and washed and cleaned. I washed all my brothers' hair. My sister, Clara, was a redhead and when I referred to her as Royte (red), she used to cry.

When I grew up, I was a very attractive young lady and young men wanted to come to the house. I would discourage them because we lived in such small quarters. It used to pain me to not be able to invite my friends over, so we usually met at my friends' houses or in the street. Only the very close girlfriends I invited over. My cousin, who later became my husband, his name was Itzchak, to him it did not matter if the house was small or large as long as I was in it. He loved me dearly. He was the son of my father's oldest sister, Yocheved. It happened we had a fire in the house, and we had to move, and we moved this time into a big house, but by this time I did not see any more young men. It was Itzchak and I. In 1919 we got married. These were troubled times. First our wedding day was delayed because Mycah's husband Ben Zion died, a young man of thirty-three. He died of typhus.

It was during the revolution and traveling was very dangerous. I remember that the bride, groom and his parents who lived only about nine miles away had to be brought in the company of a soldier who was kind enough to bring them.

When I was in the ninth month with our first child, I had to cross a frozen river in the middle of the night to Bessarabia. My husband went away a month before me to find a room for us.

Within a year after our wedding our first child was born. I remember what a terrible night it was my crossing over to Bessarabia. The soldiers were shooting at each other, the one that tried to help me got shot. It was a terrible night. It is even now too painful to remember.

A week later, October the twenty seventh a little boy Avraham was born to us. Soon the rest of the family had come to Bessarabia. When the baby was five months old, we all left for Mexico.

Mexico was terribly hot during the summer. We stayed there for two and a half years then we came to America. When Avrahm was six years old, our little girl Lily (Lea) was born.

The children brought us much joy. Financially it was a struggle, but we lived happily. We did all we could for our children. They were our life and joy. We even tried to educate them in music which was a hardship in our circumstances. At first, we gave piano lessons to Avraham, but after a while the teacher said he had not much talent for the piano, so we stopped him and began giving piano lessons to Lea, the teacher was delighted with her. I encouraged her to practice even though she wanted to play with her dolls better than practice. She did achieve much in music. When she was nine years old, she attended the Conservatory of Music in San Francisco where we lived for twenty-nine years. The teachers at the Conservatory liked Lea, they gave her much time and attention. When Lea was a little older, she joined Hashomer Hatzair organization. She got very much involved and practiced less and less her music. We knew she was talented, but what can parents do? Besides, it pleased us that our children were Zionistically inclined. Lea became an organizer. She spent her days and nights lecturing to the Jewish youth. It became her way of life. Many a time she brought home young girls and boys from different cities and they found food and a night's rest in our house. It was rewarding to us that our children were such Zionists, since we both belonged to Zionist organizations all our life.

I remember, how could I ever forget, when Lea left home and began writing us her beautiful letters, we shared them with her piano teacher who loved Lea. We also helped her out a lot since we were in the grocery business, we were able to help her (this was war time-rationing in the forties' LH) She used to come to us often and we would phone one another. It happened we did not hear from her for a while. I phoned her and found out she did not feel well. I asked her if she would like me to come and spend the night with her. She said she would appreciate it, so I came over. She told me that she had some trouble with her stomach and she was to take pills every four hours. We went to sleep, I woke up at three A.M., saw it was time to give her another pill, but when I tried to wake her, I saw to my surprise that she was dead. That was a terrible experience in my life. I could never free myself from that awful experience.

1964

It is my daughter's birthday and since she always talked me into writing my impressions and to visit the Ulpan, I thought I would write about it.

Since I started going there, I am a new person. I can't understand what happened to me. I get up six in the morning, cook my dinner, have my breakfast and can hardly wait to 8:15 to start

learning I am ready in the classroom. Sometimes it is hard for me to go there, but it is harder for me to be alone since my dear one passed away.

I am in my classroom, it is difficult for me to learn the dic-duc-grammar, but I see there are people in my age that it is even harder for them. They never learned Hebrew. I learned when I was a little girl. It is true, it is very difficult for me to learn how to speak in Hebrew, but I am beginning to understand many words. Those that live at the Ulpan, naturally have more advantage. There is always something doing there. It is difficult for me to go there in the evenings.

Yesterday we went on an outing. I saw a lot. The day was beautiful. We started really early in the morning, it was hard for me to walk and see everything, although the young people helped me a lot.

Eda came here this week. It is the first time since her accident in the taxi. Poor Eda, how hard life is for her, but it could have been worse, I guess. May God keep her from any more bad experiences.

Lea called me on the phone yesterday and told me that she had gone to Miriam Soloviev's concert who is not in Israel. Lea tried to explain herself to Miriam. She told her that they were once neighbors but it seems she did not remember her, but she remembered me and said that she intends to come and see me. I told Lea that I am afraid I would cry right away in front of her remembering the tragedy that happened in her life when she was so young. So Lea said, "Why don't you cry today so you won't have to cry when she comes." My daughter and her humor.

My son came and took me to his place for Purim. It was a beautiful day. I stayed with him and his family from Thursday until today, Saturday. As he brought me home and left, I was so all alone again. The telephone rang and I talked to Lea and the grandchildren, that helped but I felt even more alone after.

Lea begs me to write, but I can't. It is difficult to put on paper my loneliness. I don't know what to do to make my loneliness less painful. My heart is heavy, nothing seems to interest me. Lea keeps after me to keep writing every day, make it a part of my daily routine. I know she wants to break my loneliness, she is wonderful and wise, but I can't always write. I feel so depressed it scares me often. I sleep so badly; the nights are so long. I am so nervous—went to the doctor, he gave me some pills to pacify my nervousness. I stopped going to the Ulpan, nothing seems to interest me anymore, even the coming of Doron's Bar Mitzvah depresses me.

It is after Doron's Bar Mitzvah. It was nice. It was good to see Ephraim and Dagmar and Fred Gologorsky, Eda and Adolf, and Itzchak Ariel. I worked hard the whole week, waited impatiently for the family in Jerusalem. The sweet grandchildren have given much pleasure. When everyone had gone and I put everything in its place I began feeling again depressed, nervous. I took some of the pills to pacify myself. I am so terribly lonely and everything depresses me—

what is going to happen with me? I keep thinking about the beautiful speech Doron delivered on his Bar Mitzvah and that my dear Itzachak, his grandfather was not there to hear him.

For Passover I went to Lea in Jerusalem. It was good being there, although my legs hurt, I felt good. Lea is the most interesting person and she is good and compassionate. She does beautiful work with the children of newly immigrated families. She teaches them manners, how to write, to draw. Even when her own children resent that fact at first that she brought them into her house, she explained to her own children that one must be compassionate and one must help others. They understood now and don't resent the children anymore.

Today I am alone again. Mania and Eliezer Goldenberg have gone to see their friends, I am alone and nervous and depressed. What will happen with me? Perhaps I should live with people my age, perhaps I would not feel so lonely. The doctor advised me to take a trip to America. I would go if I had someone to travel with. I know very well that each has his troubles, his hardships, perhaps even worse than I have, but that does not make my loneliness any easier. I just don't know what to do. Should I remain alone? Will there be company for me or will they disturb me? Shall I go and live with other people my age? When I ask Lea if I should go and live with other old people, she says no, Avraham, my son, so do; what you think will be good for you. What shall I do? Oh, what shall I do?

I received a letter from Lea, how beautifully she writes, what an interesting person she is. I read the letter to a neighbor and she said your daughter is a great person, and that made me feel good. It is no wonder I keep all her letters, in fact since she was ten years old. There are letters to her music teacher----her letters are an inspiration to me.

This week Miriam Voloviev phoned me, she said she came to see me but I wasn't home. If she will have a chance to come again, she will phone before coming. But evidently, she could not make it. I never saw her, but her telephone call brought so many tragic memories of the past---everything seems to upset me---to make me feel blue. Oh, God, how depressed I am.

Yesterday was Friday and as every Friday the children phone to tell me Shabbat Shalom. How good it is to talk to them. Avraham told me they are finally moving to their new home and that he'll come next week to take me to visit with them a couple of days.

Lea came with the children; it was so good to visit with them.

A week ago, I was with Eda and Adolf. It is so good, so warm to be with them. It is funny, when I talk about Lea to her, I tell her how impractical Lea is.... she won't let me say anything. Lea, she says, has too many, many good and wonderful attributes, which makes me feel good. I do love my daughter so much and am so proud of her.

As usual Lea just phoned me to tell me Shabbat Shalom. How good it is to hear her voice, better than any letter. I remember when Lea and a girl friend of hers were looking at my album---and the friend saw my pictures when I was young and she said, how beautiful your mother is---Lea

turned and saw me and she came over to me—"My friend just said how beautiful you were when you were young as beautiful as you are now on the inside." How beautifully she put it.

I don't write often now. I can't make up my mind what to do. Should I give up my home, a place that once was a happy nest for me? I don't dare tell my children how depressed and lonely I am. It will only make them unhappy, and what can they do? They are trying to help me all they can.

Today is black day for me, it is my dear Itzchak's Yahr Zeit. My children are here. Lea decided to take along the children to show them where their grandfather's body is buried. We will all go today on the cemetery and plant some flowers. Each Yahr Zeit I am full of pain. How I miss him, my dear one. The little grandchildren are so sweet. It would have been so wonderful if we could have been together watching them grow.

I can't find a place for myself---I don't know what to do. Why and I so lost? Other people are left alone. Do they feel like I do, so helpless, so forlorn?

Last week I went to a wedding. One of the Ulpan teachers got married. It was a joyous affair, but how long did that satisfied feeling last? Once again back alone among the four walls, no one to speak to. My friend Eliezer is against me going to a home for elderly people. He said it would not be good for me.

It is two months since I have written last. Doron came to stay with me. We painted the house inside and out and I was so busy. It was good I had no time to think—to feel lonely. And so passed the summer. Doron is difficult to get along with. Not once he made it painful for me. Ans many times I felt I could not take it anymore and told him to leave, but changed my mind when I thought what would happen in Hadera if I sent him back. So, I made up with him. I was hoping he would change in time. With much trouble an anguish he was finally accepted in a school where the principal told him to behave. This will be the last school. Let's hope he will become a good student there. Actually, he is not responsible for his actions. He was brought up in such circumstances. As far as I am concerned, I do all I can to help him at any time. I remember an incident after the house was painted, he said to me it looks nice, but why did you wait so long. You are old now. My eyes filled with tears. What is wrong? Why are you crying? What did I say to hurt you? I hope you live until 120 years, I just thought that old young people should paint their houses. I said to him you know I am so pleased you were accepted at the school and if you behave and become a real good person I'll take you on a trip to the states. That'll take a long time, he said, and you are not young anymore. Once more he reminded me of my age. How difficult it is for me to live with him, only God knows I am trying so hard to teach him that in order to get----one must learn to give. I expect so little from him yet he will not give of himself at all. No wonder Shoshana and her mother don't want him.

October 16, 1966

So long I have not written.

Doron is again with me. He is 15 ½ years old. He changed, but still not easy to live with. He is wise and sensitive. He is truthful and a moralist. My heart goes out to him—life was never easy for him. It seems a child of divorce is to be pitied. He pays the price. The child is sacrificed, what a pity.

1969

The days I spent at my children's house in Jerusalem—will I be able to visit them again? Who knows? After three weeks in the hospital—and not I am two weeks in Jerusalem with my dear children. It was very hard for me the past few weeks. Now I feel a little better. I can lie on my right side. My children and grandchildren are helping me morally and physically. I hope the doctor is right and that it would not take more than a month for me to get back on my feet. Eda came to visit me. I feel so good in her company, I am so sorry for her, there seems always something wrong with her. Now it's her eye. Today I had a lot of mail—and answered some of the mail already. I try to help my daughter as much as possible sitting in my bed.

This week I'll have Manya and Eliezer visiting me. I am looking forward to it. I am so anxious to see them. It is not easy for me to lay in bed day after day—but my dear sweet daughter, she tried to be with me as much as possible. She even irons upstairs to keep me company.

May 5th, 1969

Last night my granddaughter cried when she overheard her father talking to a friend about their plan to go to London. She is very unhappy. She does not want to leave Jerusalem. And I feel that she will cry many tears more before they will leave.

Yesterday a nurse was sent by the doctor to take a sample of my blood. I was so nervous. Another day past—my bones ache from laying so much in bed. I try to sit up—mend some things for my dear daughter or write some letters, ¾ when I get tired, I lay down again. It is now almost a month since I fell. How good my Lea is to me. She washes me and does everything for me—and I feel she does everything with love. I am so lucky to have her. The Grossmans are coming to see me. I am lonely for them.

It is three weeks since I have been with my children. It is so pleasant to be with them. We just had a guest, Genya, she is a very interesting person. She sang a Russian song she sings very well. I am going to show her (Betty's) Bassya's book of poetry—see what she thinks about it. I like to have her opinion.

Today is exactly a month since I fell. Lea is sweet and helpful as usual. I am beginning to feel stronger. Manya and Eliezer came to see me. We had a very peasant day together. After they left I wrote some letters. And so another day passed.

May 12th, 1969

Lea just told me the good news that my sugar is now low and I don't have to take any more pills. I hope I can get out of bed. I am sick and tired of staying in bed. I wish I could get back on my feet real soon.

Doron just phoned and told me he is coming to see me Saturday. I am glad, I miss him.

A letter from my sweet grandson Alon letting us know he cannot come home on Saturday as he planned. I am so sorry. I should have loved seeing him. (Alon was serving in Tzhal)

May 13th, 1969

I feel so sad today listening to the terrible news. So many young people losing their life. My brother Sol asked—until when? Will this go on forever? It is so sad. And what can one do. I hope a week from now I'll be on my feet—then I'll see what to do.

May 16th, 1969

I have not written for several days. Somehow, I couldn't. It is Friday—my daughter helped me get ready for the Sabbath. How pleasant it is to be with my Lea and her sweet family. It isn't easy to picture them away in London—away for two years. I have grown so close to them these past weeks. What lucky children my grandchildren are to have such wonderful parents, to learn from them how human being should behave.

May 17th, 1969

Today we had guests—they came up to see me and then went down for refreshments. It is good to have company. I get so lonely when I am left alone. The Grossmans and Doron did not come as planned. I am so sorry. It would have been so good to see them.

It is possible that in one more week I shall be examined and given permission to go home. My son Avraham phoned today and told me he is planning to come with Doron to see me. I have not seen them for a month. I miss them so. How I pray for peace. The Holidays are coming—I pray they will bring peace.

How I enjoy Lea's company. How interesting it is to listen to her talk. How beautiful she explains herself. It gives me so much pleasure...what a beautiful family each with their own attributes—a sweet dear family. Tomorrow they will bring the Television—we will see how it will work. I am looking forward to the Television—it will give me something to do. I keep myself busy writing letter. I get a lot of mail and I answer everyone.

At last here we have the Television—tomorrow we shall try it out. Tomorrow I shall be examined. I do hope I'll be alright. I haven't heard from Eda. I am worried about her.

May 19th, 1969

Yesterday they took me for the examination. Everything seems alright. I'll have to learn to walk slowly each day. Yesterday I could not walk at all, they had to carry me like a small child. Poor Moshe and his friend had quite a job carrying me. Today I am expecting Avraham and Doron. Alon will not be able to come until the end of the month.

Avraham and Doron came. I worried; they came late. Doron does not look well. He keeps close to me, compliments me. They all decided to carry me downstairs so that we could eat together. My legs hurt terribly—the left leg is worse than the right. I push a chair in front of me so that it helps me walk a little. The children—an grandchildren are wonderful. Lea asked me to stay another month with them—and then they intend to rent their home before leaving for London. Lea begs me to write about the time when I was young because she likes when I tell her things about the days when I was young. Since she does so much for me how can I refuse her.

Lea just finished massaging me—changing my bed—what a beautiful person she is. She is happy when she can help people. May God watch over her and her family. It is not wonder they have so many friends—they are such wonderful hosts How wonderfully they bring up their children. I just learned from my son about Beverly—poor girl—after three operations. She inherited this terrible sickness from her mother. I hope her children are spared. My poor brother Sam. I can imagine what he is going through.

Today I am so blue I try not to show it. I don't want to upset ea. She does not deserve it. She is so wonderful to me—but I cannot help wondering if I will ever get better. She keeps begging me to write about my younger years—about the relatives about the way of life in that little town, but as much as I like to please her I can't do it...i can't bring myself to go back that far away. That all seems unreal—a dream.

Dear Alon came home today. He looks so tired. He works so hard in the Sinai building shelters. When will peace come? When will we be able to live here a normal peaceful life?

Last night Moshe, dear kind Moshe lifted me up and carried me down to have dinner together with Alon and the rest of the family. It was a Friday night—as he carried me I wanted to cry out— “Oh, God, will I ever walk again?”

Alon had left six in the morning. I am so sorry I did not have the opportunity to take him in my arms and kiss him good-bye.

I am so terribly depressed. Today I feel I am now in the way—Lea has so many things to attend to before leaving for London. I know I should leave—but where shall I go? Avraham phoned me—he went to look at a place in Netanya for me to move to—but he said he did not like it. Yesterday dear, dear Moyshe was not feeling well, but today Thank God she went to work. Lea just bathed me—cooled me off in these hot days. She told me how fortunate she was to have the opportunity to do things for me to help me—wonderful—wonderful Lea. Avraham and Eliezer found a home where they thought I would be contented to stay—not far from Netanya. Lea and Moyshe will go and look at it—and look it over—meanwhile I am so upset. I would like to go to my home. I would feel much better there, but I don't want to say anything, I don't want to say anything. I don't want to upset Lea. She worries about me when she leaves with her family for London. She wants to be sure I am taken care of. I finally after a sleepless night, discussed my problem with Lea and she listened—understood what I was driving at—but she said it would be the worst thing for me to be alone—to be depressed. Tomorrow Lea and Moyshe are going to look at the Pension. Moyshe just phoned and told me they visited the Pension and they liked it.

Today is another black day in my life. Today is my loved one's Yortzeit—9 years since he left me alone and forlorn.

It has been since months since I am with the children. How difficult it must have been for them, but they never showed it. God bless them.

I had a good day today. After two months I was outside today. How good it felt to feel the fresh air. How difficult it is for me the upstairs and downstairs. Will I ever be able to climb the stair? And when I will be able, I will not be here anymore, so it really does not matter.

Today I went by myself to the bathroom. How wonderful I feel. Lea will not have to carry my bed pan; how uncomfortable I felt these two months. It reminds me of my mother telling me that when I did not have to use diapers anymore, it happened my father was in another town and she was writing to him and she asked me what shall I write about you? And I proudly told her to write fici-cici. Tell him I did not need any diapers anymore. I could go on the toilet by myself.

Next week they will move me to the Pension. I cannot help but wonder how I will feel there? It will be so difficult to be away from the children after two months with them—being so close. And now, being with strangers and they (the children) so far away. I am so upset. I hope I can control myself and not show how I feel. I don't want to upset my dear Lea.

I had a letter today from my brother Sol. He assures me that after I'll be about a month into Pension, I'll be able to go to my home, but as much as I want to believe it, I doubt it.

Alon was supposed to come home for Sabbath. It has been quite a while since he was home, but instead a letter came from him that he was punished because he was found asleep while on duty. I started to cry and Lea said, "Why are you crying? It is best that he was found asleep by his own officer than by an Arab—by the enemy."

It is the seventh of June and I am at the Pension already. It is the third day now. The owners who run this Pension are very nice people, also the people who stay here seem to be nice. Doron comes every day to see me. I am hopeful of going home in the near future. I feel depressed again today. I am waiting to hear from Lea to tell me how Avraham feels. Tomorrow will be a week since I heard from Lea. I am so worried about Avraham.

Eda came to see me, also my daughter-in-law. It was good to see them.

Today one of the patients fell and broke a hip and they had to take her to the hospital, poor woman.

The last few days I noticed my legs were swollen. Mr. Brown brought a doctor who after examining me said that it had to do with my heart and in a few days I will get a cardiogram, and then we will know for sure.

I wonder I have not heard from Lea. I want so much to hear how Avraham feels after his heart attack—poor Gita, how upset she must be.

I should write everyday as I promised Lea, but it is difficult. I sit around with the women and tell them stories and they like it. There I one woman who is very kind. She does not understand Yiddish, so I have to interpret everything in English. She tried to help me with whatever she can,

also the Browns, they do everything for me. Once I did not have to call them, but tried to sit down on a chair by myself. I fell with the chair. Thank God, I did not get hurt, but the Browns were very angry with me, and since then I did not try again. It really scared me.

I don't understand it. I have begged Lea to write me and tell how Avraham feels. She knows how I worry, also I have not heard even once from my son.

Today my dear son Avraham came to see me, also my grandson Alon. How sweet he is. He promised to come see me again soon. I hope my dear Lea will forgive me for not writing everyday as promised, but many days I just can't bring myself to write. It was good to hear from Lea. She called to say Shabbat Shalom. She said that everything was in order. Thank God. I tried to walk a little at a time with a little walker that I push around. Eliezer came to see me. He told me to forget about thinking of going home for quite a while. I keep thinking of him, Doron, being alone in the house. I feel so sorry for him.

Today Iziekel and Bruria came to see me, also Rachel Grossman. It is good to have visitors, it breaks up the long days. Doron left with his group for 3 weeks and Mr. Brown promised to take me to see my house. I wanted to see what had happened to my house all this time, and I needed some things. So, he took me. I started to cry seeing how everything was so lonely. The plants are dried up. The garden all brown and dried up—my beautiful bushes and flowers. It just broke me up. I am sure Mr. Brown won't take me anymore, seeing how hard I reacted.

There are all kinds of people, I am learning fast. I found out today what an awful—bad—person Mrs. Kliman is.

Dr. Bender visited here his mother in law. I asked him many questions about my diet. He was very nice and talked to me. Also, his wife is very nice. She helped establish a place for diabetic children and put in all her time there. But it seems that no one is without problems, they have a son who is in a psychiatric institution.

I never thought how difficult it is to do nothing. All my life I was busy with one thing or another. My legs are still swollen. I wanted to see the doctor only he is on vacation. So I have to wait patiently. My son phoned me today and told me he heard from Doron, that he enjoys his work at the kibbutz.

After we eat our meals we sit and talk. Mrs. Rosenfeld tells us many sad and tragic stories that happened to them during the Hitler period. Mr. Rosenberg is a quiet man. He has little to say. He suffers with his heart. He often offers to help me.

Mr. Brown took us all out to the beach. It was good to be near the water, but when we came back, I did not feel so good, perhaps it was too much for me—and the doctor is still away—he'll be away 3 weeks. I worry about my heart; my legs are still swollen.

I have received today an interesting letter from Betty I must see to it that I answer while I am still over the impressions of her letter. I am waiting for Lea to phone me soon and say Shalom Shabbat Shalom. She phoned and told me everything was fine and asks me to thank the Browns for taking care of me.

It is more than a month that I am here at the Pension at the Browns. They are still very nice to me. They are good people, and try to help me all they can. I still can't walk. I take a few steps with the help of two walking sticks. Eda came to see me, as usual it was good to be with her. Poor dear, she does not feel well, there is always something wrong with her.

Today I am so depressed, so lonely when I start thinking about what has become of me. I keep crying—the tears flow. Mrs. Brown warns me to stop crying. She says it is not good for my heart nor my eyes—but I cannot help myself. I am expecting soon my children from Jerusalem. They are leaving for London the 15th of this month.

Today I looked into my album. So many people in their youth including what has become of all of us. It broke me up. I cried and cried.

It is a week since the children from Jerusalem came to say good-bye. I wonder if they knew how it tore me inside—in my position to have them so far away? But I tried not to show it. They don't deserve to be made unhappy.

The heat is unbearable. The nights are especially hard—have to change the night-gown several times during the night—the sweat—I am wet all over.

I am looking forward to hearing from Lea, also I have not heard from Alon. My feet are getting worse and I have less strength. I am very sensitive to other people's behavior. Someone else's pains affect me so. When Mr. Eisen(?) comes outside and he is asked some questions—and if he does not give the right answers, everyone laughs and it hurts to see them laugh—and I think to myself: "Oh, God, don't let me get that old that people should laugh at me." Sometimes he is alright. I asked him why does he go around with a stick in his hand and he said, "So that I might hit our enemies." At the same time when I look at dear Shyna, she is like a young woman. My strength, my youth has left to soon. I have to walk with two canes and even that I can do only twice across the room.

I surely thought I would hear from the children by now. It is just before Rosh HaShana. I know I'll hear from them soon. I could so like to hear from them—have they settled yet? How the children like their new school. Thank God, it is cooler now. It was so terribly hot.

It has been a month since I have written. I just couldn't. It is not easy to get used to a new way of life. It isn't easy for anyone. Everyone cries in his own corner—in his own room—so one should see—no one should hear. And it does not get easier.

Today it has rained lightly-freshened the air. Still waiting for a letter from Lea. I am worried—it is not like her at all. I don't understand it at all—every day I wait—maybe today a letter will come.

It is four days later—I finally got a letter from Lea. Thank God, everything is in order. I have worried so. Now, I wish I would hear from Alon. My son's position hurts me. I see he is going through a lot. He is in pain. I feel it in his quiet attitude. I can't stand my neighbor. I have never met anyone like her. She is such a pest.

It is raining hard—thundering and lightening. Eliezer and Mania came to see me today. How I love to be with them. They seem so tired.

The winter is coming. All of a sudden it has gotten so cold. It is too cold to sit outside. So we visit for a short while with each other and then we go back to our rooms. We go early to bed...

Eda came to see me. She is so good to be with. I wrote four letters to the relatives and she too wrote a few words, poor dear, her hand hurts her so. Always something hurts her. What a shame.

It is so sad today. Everyone seems to walk around and sigh, and I with them. I feel so sad—so lonely. I try to think that one day I'll feel better and go home—to my corner.

I don't hear very often from Lea. What hurts, she promised that she will write to me more often.

I visited the house and brought back with me my picture albums and letters in as far back as 1935. Such interesting letters. I could hardly stop reading them. Letters from Don Calic—Better—Donya Gologorsky. It took me back to my younger years.

It is so difficult to watch these old people around me----day after day, without a reason—without a purpose, that is when they are well. When they are sick, then it tears you apart to watch them. To be old and sick—that is a tragedy.

I just can't keep writing every day—everyday some of these people around me tell me their heart-breaking stories. They can't hear very well, and I try to speak loudly—my heart goes out to them. I try as much as I can to keep them company. Some of them live two in a room and they don't get along. One wants the window open—the other wants it closed—and they come to me with their problems. There is a new neighbor, this poor woman, cannot write nor read. All she does is sit and stare into space. It makes me nervous watch her.

I am so happy today; I got a letter from Lea—her letters give me courage. Whoever I show her letters to say she has great talent.

Mrs. Blechman follows me around, no matter where I am—she is there too. She gets on my nerves—but what am I to do? I can't hurt her feelings and tell her not to follow me around.

Today I got so much mail, letters from Lea and from Alon.

The nights are cold and uncomfortable and my neighbor Mrs. Blechman doesn't leave me alone---talks and talks. She drives me crazy. In the whole month of November, it did not rain and now in December it just rained for the first time. It is cold—but it is better to be cold than to use these gas ovens(heaters)—they smell so---and give me a headache.

People around me—everyone with his or her pain. What can you expect of old lonely people, they have to cry out. Some hold it in and some complain out of pain. But what can we old people do when there are so many young people dying—being crippled for life—they never even had a chance to a normal life.

Did not sleep a wink last night---haven't seen Eda or Adolph for a while. I am so troubled about them. She did not answer my postcard.

Mania was yesterday to visit with me. We talked about many things. I was expressing how I felt sorry about poor Eda, and she thought nothing was wrong with Eda---I got the feeling they did not get along.

These people around me make me sick. I feel, many times like running away---I don't know where and then I realize that I can't run---I can't even walk. Haven't had a letter from Los Angeles. Sol used to write every week---lately haven't heard from him---and Sam doesn't write at all—poor Sam. How tragic his life is. Maybe I'll get a letter today from Lea. Her letters always cheer me up. How terrible it is to be old. How much work I used to accomplish during a day and now---I can't even take a walk—no strength.

My son came to see me---how good it is to see him. He told me Izikl doesn't feel well. I hope and pray he'll feel better soon.

My heart pains for Mrs. Rosenfeld. May God help her. Her nerves are all tangled up. It is hard to watch her. Poor Soul.

I am waiting to hear from Eda—I am so worried about Adolf---why doesn't she write? How can she let me worry so? I wouldn't do that to her.

I am very grateful to my daughter Lea for making me keep a diary. When things become unbearable, I write it down and somehow, I feel a little better.

My brother Sol wrote that Chanele is coming with her husband. Sol writes such warm letters; he has no idea what they mean to me. I wonder if I will get today a letter from Lea. I know it is difficult for her to write while traveling.

Finally got a post card from Eda. Thank God Adolf is home from the hospital. How I worried about him. I hope Eda keeps well. She has gone through so much with Adolf. I wonder when Chanele will be here. Maybe Saturday.

I am planning to take a test on Diabetes, it has been a long time. And perhaps at the same time see the eye doctor, maybe I need new glasses.

Mrs. K. is all nervous and upset. She is getting ready to leave, and she is scared. She does not know how it will be at home. My heart goes out to her.

Saturday is my worst day. I have nothing to do as usual, but during the week-days I at least can write, but Saturday I don't write. I get so lonely. I can't stand it.

I seemed to get in the habit of humming a tune to myself. Somehow it helps get through the day. This seems to irritate my neighbor. She gets crazy: "Stop that hollering!" And the other day she almost hit me. She gets crazier each day. I am scared of her. I would run away, but where shall I run? And how shall I run? Mr. Brown assured me that I don't have to worry, that she is not dangerous. I will not tell my daughter about this; I don't want her to worry. The last two nights I could not sleep. I locked my door; I was full of fear. It is not difficult when people around you are not normal, imagine not being able to hum a melody. What kind of crazy human is she. Oh, God, how I wish I was away from here. Who am I hurting when I hum a melody to myself in my own room? It makes it somehow easier for me just writing in the diary helps me.

It is over a month I haven't seen Doron and today he surprised me. He looks good. He is content to be in the Kibbutz. It is a beautiful life there he said. I asked how come your brother never comes to see me? He answered how can he come to see you, there isn't one language the two of you can speak. It is your mother's fault. I begged her to speak to him in English so that he and I may understand each other.

My door is; most of the time open so that I could get more air into the room and all the people come right into my room, never asking if they can visit.

I had another letter today from Sol where he told me Chanele is not coming with her husband. He suddenly got sick, and she took him to the hospital. I guess no one knows what tomorrow will bring.. Here they were planning to visit Israel....and a week later in the hospital. I guess that is life.

My son came after not seeing him for 2 weeks. He said he had a cold. Haven't heard from Lea, and that worries me.

What do these women want from me? Why don't they leave me alone. I can't stand them. They get on my nerves.

Haven't seen the doctor for long. He neither comes nor sends anyone down to examine me. I simply can't stand these women around, their stupid conversations—all the same thing. They make me feel sick at heart, but what can I do?

The Nurse will come today said Mr. Brown to take a sample of my blood. I wish she would come soon I would like to know about the sugar in my blood. I am worried. I do not hear anything from Los Angeles, about Chanele, her husband. I wish I would hear from Lea. I only had two letters from her from Norway. I know they must be back for weeks now in London.

The Nurse finally came, had to try three times before she could take a sample of blood. I am all worn out, haven't sleep since 3 in the morning and waited until after 9 for the nurse. Maybe today I'll get a letter from Lea. It is already a month since I heard from her.

My neighbor came in this morning and made my life miserable. What kind of life am I living?

Waiting for Lazar. I want to hear about Adolf.

Today my heart is heavy, what with Beverly sick, Sol fell and hurt his leg Dina is in the hospital--- I can't even go to see her.

How I wait for a letter from Lea. I try to understand that she has no time. She has to get settled—but I so much want to hear from her.

Had a letter from Sol at last. Beverly is again in the hospital----my poor, poor brother San. What he goes through in life. My heart goes out to him.

Friday my dear Shoshana came to see me. What a doll she is. She, too, brought me bad news, Dina fell again—poor Dina. Shoshana promised to keep me informed about Dina. I hope she keeps her word.

Yesterday I had a very bad day. I could not walk—not even when I held onto the wall. I am so worried about Eda and Adolf. Last night I had a terrible time—my right leg began hurting so badly. I screamed but evidently no one heard me, because no one came.

Shaina came to see me and explained to me about Dina's falling as she walked down from the airplane(airoplane)---how they took her to the hospital and operated on her side.

I have written Dina a post card. I know she will not be able to write, poor Dina—all these people and my poor brother Sam, how he must suffer. I just go around and cry. I know that is not good for me, but I cannot help it.

Today I received a New Years card from Itzhak. He writes that Frima is in Israel. I am waiting impatiently to see her. Edda came to see me. Adolf went back to work, thank God. Haven't slept a wink all night---and the sleeping pills don't help.

Yesterday Alon came to see me. Such a joy to see him. He does not look too well—so tired. He is leaving for London for a month. My children will be together, that will be good for all of them.

This evening is Rosh Hashanah. May the New Year bring peace and we should not have war anymore ever----any may God help my brother, Sam about Beverly.

I had two Aunts named Brucha—my mother's sister Brucha was very wise---not learned, but wise. She was married to a pharmacist—and although she did not take any courses in pharmacy, she was clever and helped her husband in the pharmacy with the medicine prescriptions. The only thing about Brucha, was that she was very stingy---and a poor housekeeper. When she used to bake bread, she also put pots of cold water to heat up while preparing the oven for bread, then she washed her clothes with the hot water from the pots, and with the soap suds from the wash she washed the floors---so she made everything count. And so everyone that came in the house and saw how clean the house looked they knew that today she baked bread. She knew what their smile meant when they looked around and noticed how clean the house was.

Today I will write about my grandfather Avraham..my mother's father. He was learned but very stingy. My grandmother loved him, and in order to not upset him whenever she went to the city and brought back many things that she bought—and he would say they were beautiful. How much did they cost he would ask, and she would tell him a quarter of the money it cost. He had no idea what it should actually cost so he would congratulate her on her bargains.

Now I will write about my father's father, my grandfather. He was a very religious very learned man. He finished a Rabbinical College. He did not practice being a Rabbi. He became a business man. He represented a tea company and my grandmother had a small grocery. That is how they made their livelihood. He would go around the town collecting money for the poor and if someone rich did not give him what he thought they could afford---he used to take the money and throw it in their face.

To please my daughter Lea I am going to write about her grandfather, Yankov(Yaakov). He was the kindest, sweetest man—tall and thin—very handsome. He had one fault. He was always afraid of dogs---that belonged to the peasants—of thunder. He used to rent orchards and take the fruit off the trees---dry the fruit---package the fruit and sell it all over Russia. When the peasant had a dog in the front of his house he would never venture go in, so scared of the dog was he. No matter how his wife Yocheved talked to him to get the fear out of him---it did not help. He had that terrible fear all his life. He was a learned man and had a sweet voice. He used to help out with the Chazanut Chazones in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

My mother was a very clever and energetic woman. She always suffered with her feet—but even when she was old it did not stop her from organizing a club where poor people could come and borrow a few dollars. She used to go from house to house and make members and collect dues. My father used to go every morning to the shop for the whole day to be with my brothers to see what he could do to help them. Poor people were told of this club. They came to my

mother borrowed money----when they were able, they brought it back, so others were helped. My father was not aware of all of this. The members made her a life time president since she organized it. She arranged every time a member married off a child—or had a Bar Mitzvah or any other Simcha---they donated to the club—so that the money grew and they were able to help substantially. The members she made were all young. She did not like old people. It was more interesting for her to deal with young people. She was both president and treasurer...kept books to show who gave- who borrowed---who returned the money. She was thorough and energetic. One day she had to go to the doctor, so she asked my father to stay home in case someone wanted to borrow money. He was pleasantly surprised to hear of the good work she was doing. When she came back from the doctor and he heard from the people who came to borrow money----how they were helped time and time again----my father went up to her-told her how proud he was of her and asked her to share half and half in the Mitzvah (good deed). She told him he can have all the Mitzvah. My parents had a very good life together.

When my Lea was five years old, she said---Mother I am going to marry a very rich man so that I will have a lot of money and build a hospital for sick children and I'll be the nurse, and I will build a temple where my daddy will be cantor.

And now about my son Avraham—when he was 2 ½ we were then in Mexican, and he noticed I did not know Spanish. He tried to teach me---Mama see he said in Yiddish-mama Zey----mama mira---esta ariba he showed with his little hand showing it up. We spoke in Yiddish; my brother Sam did not let us speak even one word in Russian as a protest to the programs----in the Petlura times. When we came to San Francisco we spoke English all the time. I am sorry no—if we would have spoken all the time Yiddish the children would have known the language.

It has been more than a week since I have either heard or seen my song. I guess he is busy—maybe he will phone Lea---and she will come Thursday to see me.

Both my son and my daughter could not come. They both have colds. What can I do? I have to be patient. I looked forward so.

My father met my mother at a wedding. He saw her and became a bridegroom. Coming home his sisters anxiously asked what does she look like. You are prettier he said, but she is wiser. My mother was all her life a very fine person.

Yesterday my dear Lea came to see me and when she left; my son Avraham and his Shoshana came. It was so good to be with them Lea told me they will call for me and bring me to their house for Pesach and after the holiday they will have me visit with them for a month.

This Sunday I had my family from Hadera. Thank God Avraham looks better. When I told them that Lea comes every Thursday to see me---Shoshana said----You have a very nice daughter----and also a very nice son I said.

1970

October the 27th—will be my sons 50th birthday. How fast the time goes. I wonder when I'll see Alon. He is now spending a month in London. My son hasn't been to see me for weeks, also I have not seen Doron. I am so lonely, so depressed---I would just run if I could, but where shall I run---and how?

I just remembered that this is the week that I got married 51 years ago, and my first born, my son is 50. My God, how the years fly. How much I have gone through in these years.

Poor, poor Beverly---what will happen to her sweet daughters? My poor brother--- what he must be going through.

I looked over my album yesterday, oh God, how few are left of the people in the album. I am so grateful to my daughter for insisting for me to keep up the album and the writing—it keeps me a little busy. I am awaiting Alon to come soon from London, then he can tell me about my dear ones.

Today is my son's 50th birthday---I had hoped he would come to see me---but he didn't—my heart is so heavy. Last night it rained. I tried on my slacks---they don't fit. I wish I could lose a few pounds---nothing fits me right.

I feel today a little better---last night was bad---I guess the weather---it rained.

The same story---the poor nervous Mrs. Rosenfeld---how can one stand it all?

My son was (came) to see me yesterday and told me that the Maltzers left for home. Poor Dina, and poor Sy how he suffers on account of her. I thought they left Israel---so I wrote her a letter, but there seems to be a strike and they could not leave---nothing seems to go right for Dina and Sy.

I can't stand my neighbors---we have new people I hope they will be nice.

Last night I had pain in the right side of my stomach and I thought it was my appendix---but Mr. Brown said that the appendix is at the left side.
The pain subsided---I feel better this morning.

Manya and Eda don't like each other. I can't stand it when they speak badly of each other. I don't think I'll see Eda soon again. She does not feel well and Adolf does not feel well. I feel sorry for both of them.

I had a letter from Lea---a very interesting letter as usual. She wrote me about Alon—that they had a long conversation and he admitted that Moshe was his father more than his own father. Poor Alon, what he must have gone through all these years yearning for love. How beautifully she writes. She should be a professional writer.

Today I had a very pleasant day. I spent it at Rachel's who is a lovely person. She called together all the neighbors. It was good to see everyone. My heart ached for Lea Kessif who just lost her son. She looks terrible---what can one say---this is how the crazy world goes. Rachel is so sweet--I love her. All the neighbors told me how good I looked.

After the visit I felt badly my legs hurt, maybe because I climbed the few steps to my house. I had to get a few things. I couldn't find them---everything in the house is so mixed up. Their (Rachel's) house is not finished yet---they took my place for six months. I hope their dog did not spoil anything.

The winter is coming---it is getting cold. Mr. Brown has put electric little heaters to keep us warm. The gas heaters were terrible last winter they gave us headaches.

I am sitting in my room and reading old letters. I haven't heard from Better. I wonder how David is after breaking up with his Catholic girl?
I found a letter from my dear one---(father-Itzchak) how beautiful he writes about the grandchildren---how he loved them, --what a pity he could not see them grow up. How much it would have brought into his life.
I read Lea's letters over and over again. They give me the courage to go on with my life. How I would love to see her and her family. I am so lonely for them.

My son hasn't come to see me for two weeks. Everyone is busy with his daily life.

Today we celebrated Mrs. Frankfirster's 95th birthday.

Yesterday my son came---we spent about an hour---then he goes home.
How I wish I could lose some weight.

Mrs. Blechman is so anxious for me to talk to her. Who need her? When she starts talking, she forgets to stop. I have no patience with her.

Since it has gotten cold, I can't go outside. The days are so long.

It is good that Mr. Brown gave us these electric little heaters---it makes the room warm.

Had a letter today from Sol. He reminded me of my father's yahrzeit, also my brother Sam wrote a few words. He mourns the fact that his daughter (Beverly) is so sick. Why? He asks. I am also worried about Eda and Adolf.

Finally, I got the little walker to walk with. I get tired pushing it---but at least I can walk a little with it.

Eda came over and as usual we talked about everything and everyone.

My son and Doron (father and son) came to see me. Doron asked me if I could give him a few liras and when I gave him 5 liras he said: "No grandma, not that much" He thanked me so much. In January he will go into the army. I hope he will be alright. Please God, bring peace to Israel.

I wrote to Lea. I wonder how long she will wait before she answers. I had a letter from Better. She sent me pictures from David and his wife. Better writes she is a very cold person---as long as she is warm with David it does matter.

It is raining hard all day. It is so lonely.

Manya and Laizer (Eliezer) were over and told me not to take more than one sleeping pill at night. I told them that no one can tell me what to do. I'll take as many as I want. I am my own boss.

Had a letter from Sol. Beverly is again in the hospital----very bad. Oh, God, my poor brother. I can't stop crying. I can't write. I can't think. I wish I was in America and be of some help to my poor brother.

Last night I fell off my bed. Thank God, it was not worse---I fell on the blanket.

Every day it seems harder for me to walk. If only I could lose some weight. It would be easier for me to walk.

I hope tomorrow my son will come. Had a letter from Sol—not a word about Beverly. I don't understand---not a word from Clara or Sam. Don't they know how I worry?

I feel so depressed today. I have been here 1 ½ years. I feel I am getting worse. Why does one hope to live a long time? Who needs it.

Tomorrow will be May 2nd. Two years since I came to the Brown's. I did not sleep a wink last night. I was very nervous. It is two weeks since I had a letter from Lea. How I would like to see her and the sweet girls. They must have grown so. It has been so long since I saw them.

Had a letter from Lea. She lets me know that Beverly is not among us anymore. I wished I could die instead of her. I would not have left any small children. Oh, my poor, poor brother. What can I write to him? What can I say? His grief is so deep. It must have been so hard for my dear Lea to write and tell me such terrible news—but Sol wrote to her and told her that she should write about Beverly's death.

Every day I feel weaker. I have no more tears to shed---it is so difficult to accept all these tragedies.

Lazer was here today and told me that just because Beverly died of cancer does not mean that her daughters will also get cancer---for example he showed that Leah Lanfeld never got cancer even if her mother Yiska died of cancer.

Here it is November again. The children came. How good is it to see them—to be with them (Melila and Naomi have arrived from London 1971).

It is May again. I told Lea—until the room that they are building for me at their house (Jerusalem) is ready I will not come to them, no matter how much I want to be with them. I thought I would surely have a letter today from Lea. Is she angry because I told her I will not come to her home until they build the room they promised---or perhaps something is wrong and they don't feel well. Her silence hurts me so much.

Manya came to see me today---told me how many weddings she has to attend. I knew what she wanted. "I don't have a decent dress," she said. She wanted me to say that I will give her some money, but I made up I did not understand why she was telling me this.

[there is a mix up here in the order of the entries that Bassya possibly has made---so we seem to be back according to the translation back in time when the Hellner family is still in London—never mind the threads are never lost—the main themes of Mama's life continued all the time]

After waiting 3 weeks I got a letter from Lea. She was so busy and didn't realize how the days past. She writes how the girls are already planning to leave London and return to Jerusalem.

Doron came to see me. He said the army is not so easy. I asked him if he needs some money---"Sure, why not" he said. What a strange boy he is---15 (he is at least 18 years old at this point) and acts like a bay.

Every week my son comes to see me. The first try he asks to see his sister's letters.

Mrs. Rosenfeld is such a wild one---these neighbors---they make me sick. Sometimes I think I can't stand it anymore, but I have no alternative. I must stay and take it I can't understand Eda's silence. She doesn't write. She doesn't come---not even to get her money. (Money was sent to Mama by her brother to help support Eda in Israel). I am terribly worried.

Mrs. Arbuch is a crazy woman. It makes me sick to be with her. We have to sit at the same table—what can I do?

How the days fly. My son just phoned---I should be ready Seven in the morning. He will come and take me about. It will be a good change for me. I am looking forward.

I enjoyed being on the Kibbutz {Must have been an outing for the guests at the pension}, but Mrs. Goldwin---nothing pleases her---what a miserable person. Poor Eda, no wonder I did not hear from her, Adolf was again in the hospital for a week.

I spent a pleasant Saturday with Lazer's family. It was Lazer's 78th birthday.

Alon has to be five more months in the army.

Today I started talking to Mrs. Rosenfeld—after many days of not talking to her. She is so difficult to be with, such a nervous woman.

It is almost two weeks I haven't seen my son—what is he so busy?? Once a week he can't find time to see me. He must be busy..and Shoshana is more important. He must make time to help her out.

Yesterday I received a letter from my sweet Lea...her letters put me always in such a good mood.

It is January 8th---my son's and Shoshana's 10th Anniversary---may God give them many years together. I hope they will come to see me today so that I may present them with a check.

I wish I could see Alon---I miss seeing him so much. I should write to Sam---my poor brother---but God knows I can't. I waited all day for my son and Shoshana—but they did not come. I can't understand why---I wanted so much to see them.

The people here go around and sigh and sigh. It is so depressing. My son came. I gave him a check. He told me they finally have a telephone.

It is now August. Just had a letter from Lea—from Rome. She writes how beautiful it is there. It is hard to believe that in a week we shall see each other. How I waited for this a long time. She mentioned her father in the letter with such love---of how many languages he spoke.

I am sure my daughter Lea would like to be with me—spend the day with he, but she just came and has so many things to do. I must be patient. She phoned me and told me that she is coming Thursday to see me.

(THERE WAS NO PAGE 39)

She came. We had a wonderful day together and promised to come back every two weeks.

I have not written for a month (in the diary). Somehow I just don't feel like writing. I wish I could lose some weight---nothing fits me. Lea asks me to lose some weight but it is difficult. My son came today and told me he is on his way to Jerusalem to see his sister Lea.

I look forward to the day when my daughter Lea comes. It is so good so pleasant to be with her. I love her so.

I fell and I am black and blue. I hope I'll be alright.

I am made of iron if I can stand these women around me. They drive me crazy---day and night.

It is getting cold. My heart is heavy. I don't know what to do----to remain here or move to Lea. Everything has its good points and bad points. At Lea's it is so good to with the children—but

they have a small home to share. I will feel in the way. I will not be able to walk outside---they have little stones and it will be impossible for me to walk. My daughter says: "Who will walk in the house." But it is such a small house---what to do---what to do??

Last night it thundered and rained all night. In the morning I put on a pair of slack—it felt warm. The people here are terrible. Some are so stupid. I can't even look at them. They walk around like shadows.

Tomorrow my dear daughter is coming. I will not let her give me a bath. I'll let her rest a little. Maybe she will take a nap or maybe she will not come because it is raining....

It is beautiful outside—but I am so lonely. I don't know what to do. Writing is not bad but what to write about---what subjects??? My left knee as always still hurts---although I rest and don't walk much. I live on pills to take the pain away---have I any other choice? I am looking forward to seeing my son---maybe he'll come tomorrow...