Early Memories: Recollections Concerning the Settlement of Jerusalem The Old City and Its Environs During the Last Century (Zikhronot rishonim : zikhronot ʿal ḥaye ha-yishuv ha-Yerushalmi ba-ʿir ha-ʿatikah umi-ḥutsah laḥ ba-meʾah ha-ḥaronah)

David Cook
Translator
Eliyahu Porush

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Comments
Translation by David Cook of Eliyahu Porush Zikhronot rishonim : zikhronot ‘al ḥaye ha-yishuv ha-Yerushalmi ba-‘ir ha-‘atİkah umi-ḥutsah lah ba-me’ah ha-aḥaronah (Early Memories: Recollections Concerning the Settlement of Jerusalem The Old City and Its Environs During the Last Century)
EARLY MEMORIES
(Zikhronot Rishonim)

Recollections Concerning the Settlement of Jerusalem
The Old City and Its Environs During the Last Century

by

Eliyahu Porush

Elul 5723 (1963)

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Translation and annotation: David G. Cook, M.D.
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מאת
שלמה פרוש
Photograph of the Author, Eliyahu Porush
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1 Translator’s Note: The term “Rav” means Rabbi and is the title provided to spiritual leaders and teachers. In this and many other texts, it is used as a more general honorific connoting respect for the named individual.
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\textsuperscript{2} Sha’arei Tzedek was the first large hospital outside the Old City Jerusalem. After the
Ottoman Turks gave permission in the 1890s, and with funding from European donors, the hospital
was built on Jaffa Road, two miles outside the Old City. Its opening ceremony took place on January
27, 1902. Dr. Moshe Wallach was the director from then until 1947. Its founding was prompted, in part,
by the perceived need to counter the English missionary medical institutions whose stated goal was to
convert those Jews (usually poor) who required care.
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On Completing this Book

Illustrations

Rav Menachem Mendel Kamenitz
Rav Israel Brimat
Rav Moshe Salant
The Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital Celebration on the Author’s Eightieth Birthday

The author’s appreciation goes to Binyamin Ben Rav Eliezer Rivlin who assisted in the editing and preparation of this book.

³ (z”l) refers to the words zichrono (or, for a woman, zichrona) l’bracha which means “may his or her memory be blessed”. (zt”l) refers to zichrono tzadik l’bracha “may the memory of a particularly righteous person be blessed” – usually reserved for rabbis and scholars.
CONCERNING THE BOOK

From Professor Dr. Yosef Yoel Rivlin
With God’s Blessings

To my Dear Rav Eliyahu Porush (May God Bless and Sustain You):

Even as I was still acquainting myself with the history of the Yishuv in your book, “Sha'arei Tzedek”, your second composition arrived. I began to absorb it upon receiving it. Only the recollections of the early settlers themselves can provide such a picture of Jerusalem. You have recounted, one by one, Jerusalemites in their occupations as workers, manufacturers, merchants and teachers, doctors and pharmacists - with an important listing of physicians, one benefiting from amplification. All in all, it provides an image of Jerusalem and its inhabitants.

A special benefit is provided by the chapters “On the Family” (read families), since not only the Porush family, with all its activities in Jerusalem during a century, but also the family of Rav Menachem Mendel, from Kamenitz, represented as author of “Korot Ha-Itim” (Events of the Times) and his descendants. I recall with honor the name of his son, Rav Lippa Kamenitz, “father” of the “Hotel”, the most pleasant place in Jerusalem, where I was privileged to meet him.

It appears to me that you have much more to tell. Do reveal your fountain of thoughts and, thus, be blessed in the recounting of Jerusalem’s settlement.

Your honored friend,

Yosef Y. Rivlin

Jerusalem 19 Elul 5723 (1963)
COMMENT

Upon the publication of his first book - “Sha’arei Tzedek” (Jerusalem, 5713), I wrote concerning the book and its author: “Rav Eli Porush is neither an author, an investigator nor a simple gatherer of memories. A Man of Jerusalem who, at the request of his relatives, wrote of what his eyes saw and ears heard, spoken truthfully, - with this book as the result. A work of the first order - from the source”.

The same comments may be said of “Memories of Eliyahu” which you have in your hands and which I perused even when it was in galley form. In the meantime he passed the milestone of a decade and reached the maturity (may he live to 120) of 80 years in Jerusalem, the fourth generation of those returning to her. The aim of this book is broader, more inclusive, one which attracts the heart and the mind.

Books concerning the founding of Jerusalem, such as these, from reliable and kindly men, writing with diligence and with depth of history, yet modestly, are much needed.

May the writer of the book of memories be blessed.

Zvi Harkavy

Jerusalem, Elul 5723
INTRODUCTION

(Eliyahu comes only to gather those who are distant and recall the forgotten)

In 5712, my book “Sha’arei Tzedek”, concerning the history of Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital in Jerusalem and its first Chief Physician, Moshe Wallach (z”tl), was published.

Thank heaven that my book was greeted well and kindly by many of my friends and loved ones who prompted me and requested that I add and amplify on my book of memories of life in Jerusalem and the history of my family.

I have responded to them and attempted to gather many chapters of my memories, as I had described previously, in my first book. Here I clarify, once again, that I am neither an author nor the son of an author. I have not come only to recall, in memories for which I hope the blessed Lord will pardon me, those who are forgotten, and to gather those who are distant – to describe to those who have only recently come to our holy land and who are unaware of what transpired during the generations which preceded the founding of the state of Israel – from what my eyes saw and my ears heard. There is “neither early nor late” in the stories of my memories and I will not specify exact dates in every instance.

My first book was published at the completion of fifty years to the founding of Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital and my work there.

On the 15th of Elul, 5723, I reached 80 years (with the help of God) and the publication of this book is in honor of that celebration. I thank God and Jerusalem for the joy that I have reached the maturity of 80 years, accompanied by my helpmate, and mother of my children, Mrs. Dvorah Gittel, (may she live) daughter of Rav Yosef, son of Rav Gedalyahu David (scribe of books, tefillin, and mezuzot) Makofky (z”l) and her mother Malka (may she rest in peace) daughter of Rav Yehudah Lev Zambrover (z”tl), and to have raised our sons and daughters and see our grandchildren and great grandchildren. May the Lord allow us to see the improvement of Jerusalem, the building of our country and the full salvation, may it come soon in our lifetime.

Eliyahu Porush

Elul, 5723
ON JERUSALEM

A. IN OLD JERUSALEM

The Four Quarters of the City

The old city is surrounded by a wall with gates: Jaffa Gate, Lions Gate, Zion Gate, Shechem Gate, Dung Gate, etc.

The population in the old city is divided into four different quarters: Jewish Quarter, Arab Quarter, Christian Quarter, and Armenian Quarter, although there were places where Jews, Arabs, and Christians lived together.

The Christian Quarter lay to the left side, after entering the city by way of Jaffa Gate, which is located on the west side of the city. Located there is a large and pleasant building serving as a tourist hotel, Grand New Hotel. To the side of this building were located stores selling antiques and souvenirs for tourists, a Greek church, schools, hostels, etc, extending to the entrance to the “holy” Christian grave (Church of the Holy Sepulchre) and to the new gate which is on the northwest side of the old city wall.

Opposite the Christian Quarter, to the right side after entering through Jaffa Gate, is situated the Tower of David next to which is the Army and Police Building since the days of the Turkish Sultanate, known by the name of “Kishle”.

From the Kishle, to the south the Armenian Quarter, begins a road which continues to Zion Gate in the south and also reaches the Jewish Quarter.

Jewish Quarter

The Street of the Jews (extend South) begins on the east end of the Batrak at the intersection from which one enters Chain Street. The stores and apartments on this street belong to Jews, and in the center - towards the east side - was the Hurva Square - Hurva of Rav Yehudah HeHasid - in which stood the large synagogue “Bet Yaakov”, next to synagogues which antedated it: “Menachem Zion”, “Sha’arei Zion”, and the Talmud Torah and Yeshivah “Etz Hayyim”.

From the Street of the Jews, another street forked off in which lived, mainly, Sephardic Jews, and called by the Ashkenazim in Yiddish “Die Frankische Gasse”. Located here were the main synagogues of the Sephardim, known among them one in the name of the Tannai Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkaia and school and yeshivah “Beit El”. Also located here was a courtyard of Karaites with their special synagogue, below ground, entered by going down steps. They had there a very old Sefer Torah.

From the street of the Sephardim one reached the great Hasidic synagogue called “Tif’eret Yisrael”, known commonly as the synagogue of Rav Nisan Bak (Rev Nisches Shul) who was the chief of the “Mishtadlim” among us.

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4 Now called Damascus Gate
5 The Batrak was an (market) area in the Christian Quarter just north of and near the east end of David Street. Batrak Street extended north from the end of David Street.
At the southern end of the Street of the Jews, near Zion Gate, was a large and wide square from which one could descend the length of the southern wall to Dung Gate. In this descent, one passed the square of the Sephardic Talmud Torah “Tiferet Yerushalim” and after it “Batei Mahseh” (“Housing for the Poor and Guests on Mount Zion in the Holy City of Jerusalem”) known as “Der Deutscher Platz” (the German Square) built by the efforts of Jews from Germany. After the Batei Mahseh was the square containing the Sephardic Yeshivah “Porat Yosef”.

Exiting from the city through Dung Gate, the road leads to Kidron Springs, K’far Shiloah and Mount of Olives.

This road was very narrow and its passage, especially difficult for those carrying a bier during the funeral of an important person which would attract crowds. On the side of the road, on descending, one found (according to tradition) the grave of Rav Kolinimos Ba’al HaNes (z’txl), one of the first Ashkenazic wise men. On top was a large pile of stones, onto which each passerby would throw a stone according to Rav Kolinimos’ wished to prevent his being stoned. Next to such were also Yad Avshalom and the tomb of the prophet Zachariah, etc.

After the Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel and the further growth of Jerusalem, the passage by way of Batrak Street, Chain Street and their nearby alleys on the way to the Western Wall became crowded and dangerous; the way descending from Zion Gate and Street of the Jews to Dung Gate and north from there in the direction of the Western Wall, became the main road to the Wall.

Outside the wall, near Zion Gate, lived Arabs under whose supervision were the graves of kings of the House of David. They did not allow passage except on Shavuot, and the day after, upon payment of some “tenth” coins (asiriyyot).

Every Friday morning Arabs would pass in prayer and joy from their neighborhood outside of Zion Gate to the Mosque of Omar in their main holy place.

David Street and Chain Street (called by Ashkenazic Jews in Yiddish “Die Finstere Kleiten” (The Dark Stores - as the street was roofed and shadowed), was lined on both sides by Arab apartments and stores, among which were stores of Jews, especially devoted to manufacture, decorated more in the Arab style than those of the Arabs.

The Jews in the Arab Quarter

Outside the wall, near Schechem Gate on the North was a Jewish neighborhood built under the auspices of Rav Nissan Bak and named after him.

Inside the wall, in the northeast area of the city was the Arab Quarter, also home to Jews, particularly on Hebron Street. Special Jewish courtyards included those of Rav Moshe Wittenberg, Yeshiva Torat Hayyim, Rav Mendel Rand, Rav Issachar Be’er and the Kollel Ungarn (Hungarian Community), which included a school. My parents and their ancestors lived in this Quarter, opposite the Austrian Church. Also, in the area of the Kollel Reisin Synagogue, Jews lived beside Arabs in peace and traded with one another.

From Schechem Gate we entered Bab Khan al Zayt Street is which were found Arab food and vegetable stores. Jews also lived in this area, including Rav Yisrael Frumkin, editor of “HaHavatzelet” and the press of Rav Yisrael Bak, where the above-mentioned newspaper was printed. Additionally, located here was a courtyard named after the soap factory within, one
owned by Rav Gershon Mirar and his brother-in-law Rav Avigdor Zambrever, father of Rav Yitzhak Arieli.

Rav Gershon Mirar taught at Talmud Torah “Etz Hayyim” located in the Hurva courtyard and I studied with him when I was 13. I recall that when repairs to the Talmud Torah were needed, we would go to Rav Gershon’s house and study there. Despite the area being Arab, we were not afraid to go there by day or night as the Arabs did not bother us.

In one of the nearby alleyways leading down to Yeshivah Torat Hayim was a Greek monastery, one wall of which showed an depression just about the size of a woman’s pregnant abdomen. The Christians would recount that his depression was created when Jesus’ mother passed by while she was pregnant and struck the wall during labor.

To the East of Schechem Gate, is Lion Gate (Bab el Huta) through which one enters the city on a street also called Bab el Huta. A few Jews lived in the vicinity including the parents of Rav Mordechai Bulis who was the chief watchman of the Arab municipality and the parents of Rav Modechai Wittenberg, a merchant who sold Singer sewing machines.

Nearby, in a building in the wall, was the pottery factory of Rav Yisha Tafar which I visited a number of times when I went to school with his son.

Before the Western Wall

The open area near the Western Wall was never empty of tourists and Jews who came to offer their prayers and entreaties. Many wrote their names on the stones of the Wall or wrote their heartfelt requests on papers which were placed in the holes and cracks of the wall. From the north face of the Wall one entered an open area in which stood various tables upon which were laid volumes of the Psalms, prayer books for the use of those coming to pray and two lights of oil and wax which were lit in prayers for the departed according to the wishes of those who came to pray at the Wall. Caretakers received contributions for tending to these items.

From time to time benches and chairs were set up to allow those praying to sit but after the Arabs began to denounce those Jews who came to pray, they restricted the movement of the Jewish pilgrims and forbade the setting up of chairs and benches in the area of the Wall.

Many came to the Wall on Shabbat and holidays. More specifically, Hasidim and others came to greet Shabbat near the Wall and to express their joy with singing Psalms during evening prayers at the end of Shabbat. The greatest number of visitors came for Musaf prayers on the three pilgrimage festivals. Additionally, many came to visit the wall on the eve of Rosh Hodesh, the eve of Passover, the Elul days of mercy, the 10 Days of Penitence and, especially, the eves of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

A special impression was provided on the eve of Tisha B’Av near the Wall, as many came to mourn the destruction of the Temple. Various known lamenters earned fame with elegies causing many to come to tears which moistened the ground near the wall. Among such was Rav Simcha Yanver Diskin (z’l) followed by Rav Ben Zion Yadler (z’l).
Merchants

Wholesale grocery stores lined the Street of the Jews in the Old City. Among the owners were: Rav Yosef and Yitzhak Elisher, Rav Meir Konig and Ben Zion Natan, Rav Alter Antipoler Benzamin (salted fish, clay pots, etc.), Rav Aharon Keiler Turever (who sold all kinds of groats without any hint of “new”), Rav Hayyim Rachover (he sold sugar specifically for Pesach), Mrs. Gittel Dinowitz and others.

The larger butchers were: Rav Zoisl Katzav - beef, and Rav Nathanael Luria - lamb.

Moslems ate only lamb. The Jews would slaughter the sheep for the Moslems and would buy from them the front parts, etc - which did not require deveining - from the animals found to be kosher. Beef was not found here. Beef was slaughtered by the Jews for their own use, with the nonkosher parts being sold cheaply to Christians. Thus, beef was more expensive than lamb.

Manufacturing was conducted mainly by Jews who had their stores on Batrak Street and Street of the Jews. Among these merchants were Rav Yosef Malater and Rav Ze’ev Safir and his wife Gena. It was said of her that she always wore a pin with a top stuck in the top of her head scarf and whenever she wanted to convince a buyer that she was selling the material at a price below the usual, she would touch the top of the pin and swear by it. In time, my brother, Naftali, bought this store from them. Other manufacturing merchants included Rav Yaakov Pesach Vigolik and his wife, Hannah Raizela, wife of Rav David Feinstein (who was a scribe in the American Consulate) and Rav Yisrael Goldweicht and his wife (whose store was in their house).

These merchants would travel a few times each year to Beirut and bring back goods purchased from agencies there. The Elstein brothers also ordered goods from Europe, via agencies, with payment by bills of credit. These bills were available for payment from the Deutsche-Palestine Bank. Joseph Hachmi Shevili - who was then a young boy - worked at the bank as a messenger and was involved with the valuation of the bills, thus beginning his banking career during which he reached the position of bank manager.

Rav Simcha Torever-Mandelbaum and his wife sold thread which they dyed and used for knit trousers and caps. With time, their store grew to become the Mandelbaum stores in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv. They built a large and beautiful house in the northern entrance to Jerusalem, at the corner of Shmuel HaNavi Street, between the house of the Hungarians and the Shimon HaTzadik neighborhood (Arab, Sheikh Jerach). During the battles of the War for Independence the house served as a very important command post and was destroyed. Today, it is the location of the Mandelbaum crossing between Jordan and the State of Israel.

A writing implement store on Street of the Jews belonged to Rav Ben Zion Silberstein and his brother-in-law Rav Nahum Nathanson (z’l). Rav Ben Zion was the father of the brothers Ze’ev and Reuben Silberstein, mentioned below, whose store outside of the old city wall developed into one of the largest stores in the city, with branches in Jaffa and Tel Aviv.

Workers

Workers in the city had regular hours and set aside time for prayer and study of Torah. Rav Samuel Levi, a tailor who had come to Jerusalem from the United States, established a center for workers where they could come to pray and learn. The study leader was Rav Zaul...
Rav Samuel (see above) also founded a reception center for guests on Jaffa Road in the Machaneh Yehuda neighborhood, opposite the Etz Hayim Talmud Torah, in a high, four or five story, building called “HaMigdal”. At its top was a synagogue named “Zaharei Hamah” (The Beams of the Sun), in which those praying did so by sunlight entering through the east-facing windows of the synagogue. He also set up on the facade of the building a series of sundials in order to determine prayer times exactly. This building is still standing today. The reception center is managed by the grandsons of the founder and on the first floor the center serves those coming and going in the central area next to Machane Yehuda.

The efforts of Rav Samuel Levi lead to the construction of Nathan’s Houses, named after a Jewish philanthropist from the United States, near the Shomrei Homot area (Hungarian) to the north of Meah Shearim, to serve as a residence for those lacking work.

A famous Jewish (tinsmith) metal worker by the name of Rav Beinish Solovetchik lived in Jerusalem and was known by the name of his occupation, Rav Beinish Blecher (metalworker). He was faithful to the Torah and commandments, praying regularly in Beit Midrash “Sukkat Shalem” located in the courtyard of Rav Isaiah Bordekai and there attended the lectures of Rav Avraham Hayim Chasim (z’l). He did the metal work and plumbing during the building of Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital. On one occasion, when he had work in Bethlehem and wanted to return for minchah prayers in the congregation and for the scheduled lesson at the Beit Midrash mentioned above, he rented a special wagon at a very high price, so that he would not have to wait for other travelers, in order to arrive in Jerusalem on time.

When the Dormition Church and Monastery of the Germans near Zion Gate were finished, they invited him to manufacture the likeness of a large copper rooster to be placed on the roof of the church. He asked the wise Rav Shmuel Salant (zt’l) if this was permissible and Rav Shmuel allowed him to do so only if the figure was an external symbol and not an icon for use inside.

Rav Avigdor Steinberg, a furniture maker, lived in the Yemin Moshe neighborhood. He made the furniture for my house including: a large cabinet with drawers, a five-drawer commode (a low cabinet with large and small drawers) on top of which there was a glass bookcase, a round table with wings (which one could fold down) and a large mirror standing on a fashioned small table. All this cost me 16 gold Napoleons. Some of this furniture remains in good condition in my house.

Rav Nissan, the shoemaker, (they said of him that he was one of the 36 holy men) would sit on the steps leading up from the Street of the Jews to the courtyard of Rav Yeshayahu and repaired shoes. Once he earned enough money for the day he would gather his tools and go into the Beit Midrash.

Another shoemaker on the Street of the Jews was Rav Uri Schuster. In his shop various shoemakers worked and apprentices learned the trade from him. They called this store “The Yeshivah of Rav Uri Schuster.” Any of the students from the Talmud Torah who did not do well in their lessons were said to be appropriate for the yeshivah of Rav Uri Schuster.

There was a tailor in Jerusalem by the name of Rav Shmuel who would sew kaftans and djubas (jackets). He was a “hasid”, very handsome, and would wear a silk kaftan with a djuba as well as square shoes and white socks. It is said that when the holy gaon Rav Yitzlah Balazar
(z’l) came to Jerusalem, he summoned the tailor Rav Shmuel. When Rav Shmuel came before him, Rav Yitzlah thought that he was among the most learned men in Jerusalem and began to discuss Torah with him. When Rav Shmuel told him that he was a tailor who came to measure new clothes, Rav Yitzlah was surprised and said: “If this is how a tailor appears in Jerusalem, how do the rabbis appear?”

Other businessmen then in Jerusalem including agents who dealt with the Arabs bringing their products for sale from the villages and other cities ... and the Jews who wanted to purchase them. These agents included Rav Mordechai (Mota) ben Noah Schulman, Rav Tzvi Amdorski, Rav Zeidel and others. The Arab peasants trusted them more than the Arab agents.

At grape harvest the Arabs would bring grapes from Hebron in large baskets on the backs of camels and sell them with the help of these agents after determining the appropriate price. The price of a kuntar of grapes (trans. about 300 kg) was usually 1 gold Napoleon. The Arabs also brought for sale wood charcoal in sacks on the backs of camels; on each camel were two large sacks, one on each side, and a small sack on top. The price of all of this was about 1½ “mijidot”, 6-8 shillings. Eggs were brought from Hebron and Gaza to specific dealers in the city. The price of eggs was 10-15 bagroosh, that would be 2-3 shillings per hundred.

The Doctors

Before there was an eye doctor in Jerusalem, a man by the name of Yehoshua Yonah also served as such, dispensing eye drops known as Yehoshua Yonah’s Water (eyedrops). In cases of the eye disease, trachoma, “blue material” was sold having been imported from Egypt by Rav Yehoshua ZeigerMacher (watchmaker) who worked on ships. He built homes known by his name near those of Rav Moshe Wittenberg.

Shmuel Albernis was an expert optician, having a store on Batrak Street. He had a large case divided into sections in which he exhibited various lenses and appropriate glass frames.

Ear infections were treated by placing leeches (called “fifkas”), under the ears, which drained blood until they fell off.

Pneumonia was treated by cupping on the back or chest and more serious cases with blood-letting using a special knife.

Stomach aches were treated by spreading out a handkerchief soaked in alcohol with ground pepper spread on the abdomen.

The first eye doctor in Jerusalem was Dr. Erlanger, sent to Jerusalem by the Committee “LeMa’an Tziyon” (Organization for the Sake of Zion). After him came the well-known doctor Avraham Tico. Next to the train station, on the Bethlehem Road, was hospital with an English eye doctor but since mainly Arabs came to him it was difficult for Jews to go there.

The first hospitals were Bikur Holim and Misgav Ladach - in the Old City. Outside the city was Darbellah Hospital supported by Baron Rothschild which, in time, became Hadassah Hospital.

Among the first doctors in Jerusalem were:

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6 Copper sulfate (a blue compound) was used as a treatment for trachoma with some moderate success

7 These hospitals as well as the Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital were all built to counter the missionizing performed among the poorer Jews while undergoing care at the English (Protestant) Hospital(s).
Dr. Fufallas - a Russian Jew - who worked in the Bikur Holim Hospital
Dr. Anschler - a German Christian - who also worked in the Bikur Holim Hospital.
Dr. Mizraka - a Greek Christian - who worked in the Misgav Ladach Hospital
Dr. Sandretzki - also a Greek Christian - he had a private clinic
Dr. Hoffman - a German Christian - he had a private clinic.
Dr. Moshe Wallach - A German Jew - who worked in his own infirmary and Bikur Holim Hospital before Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital was built.
Dr. Yermas - a Russian Jew - who was initially a doctor in Hebron, then Jerusalem and worked in the Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital
Dr. Mizai - worked in the Bikur Holim Hospital
Dr. Feuchtwanger - a German Jew - who worked outside the city but who did not adapt to the area and left the country after a short time.
Dr. Krisouski - who worked in a clinic of the committee “LeMa’an Tzion” outside of the Old City.
Dr. Aboushadid - a Sephardic Jew - who worked in the Misgav Ladach Hospital.
Dr. Nieman - Jerusalem native - worked in Bikur Holim Hospital
Dr. Oflatka - a Sephardic Jew - who, over time, served in the Health Department of the Mandate Government.

Among the surgeons were: Dr. Grossendorf, a German Christian, who worked in the German Templar Hospital and Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital, and his assistant Dr. Kanan, a Christian, born locally. After him came a Jewish doctor from America named Biskind who worked in Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital and various other hospitals in the city.

Dr. Hoffman (see above) was a good doctor but became drunk rather often. A patient once came to see him and instead of palpating his pulse, he took the patient’s hand and said: “You are not sick, just drunk from much cognac”.

Our translator was Mr. Mendel Karmer who succeeded in befriending the Effendis and government officials such that he served as a go-between between the officials and those seeking their help.

Most of the first Jewish doctors were religious. In addition to working in the hospital or community they also had private practices.

Pharmacists and Medical Assistants

The first pharmacists in Jerusalem were:
Rav Aryeh Lev G’verilovitch, Rav Avraham Rokach, Rav Feibel Libaal, Rav Yehoshua Solomon (the last three served as pharmacists in Bikur Holim Hospital), Rav Mordechai Heusendorf, Rav Lev Notkin (Shaarei Tzedek Hospital), Mr. Yosef Halbertsam and Mr. Prazi (in an Old City infirmary), Rav Velvel Yerushalmi, Rav Zalman Solovetchik, Rav Yaakov Melumad, Rav Fischel Levi, Rav Mordechai Levi and Rav Yosef Goldberg., Mani Oflatka (all of them were private pharmacists and many also served as orderlies serving medical needs): Rav Benyamin G’verilovitch (Pharmacist for “LeMa’an Tzion”) and Rav Yehezkel Blum (Pharmacist of Misgav Ladach).

In addition to the physicians were medical assistants in the city and many were in the
habit of turning to them for care more than to the physicians. Such included Rav Avraham the Pharmacist in Bikur Holim Hospital who knew much about medicine and would give medications to those coming to him for advice. My father (z’l) also specialized, as a result of his work with Dr. Wallach, in the treatment of eye diseases, throat tonsils and various injuries. Similarly, there was a well-known medical assistant at Bikur Holim Hospital whose name was Rav Libisch Zeisa. Rav Mordechai Yerushalmi, Motel Optiker, Rav Zalman Solovetchik and Rav Yaakov Melumed treated patients in addition to their work as pharmacists, providing medications. Also to be remembered is Rav Zadok Creuz who was the secretary of the Hungarian Community (Kollel Ungarn) and knowledgeable about medicine. He was an excellent flute and violin player, also played the piano and appreciated listening to cantors. He was always cheerful and made others so.

Post Offices

There were two Post Offices in Jerusalem – those of the Turkish Government and the Austrian Government. Working as postmen in the Austrian Post Office were Rav Hayim Yisrael Scheinbaum and Rav Meir, son of Rav Avraham Aryeh Ha-Levi Hamburger. The manager was Rav Mordechai Weisenstern. The remainder of the managers were Armenian. The Turkish Post Office was located outside of the Old City walls but had a branch inside on Street of the Jews. The branch director was Rav Eliyahu Hoenig and the letter sorters were Rav Mordechai Glick and Rav Beryl Meir Tannenbaum. A Hebrew postmark was available in that branch. Turkish package mail was sent by train, in a special car, from Jerusalem to Jaffa. Austrian packages were transported to Jaffa in a 3-horse wagon with the adjutant of the Austrian consul sitting, armed with a rifle, beside the driver, to protect against thieves.

With time a German Post Office was opened with German clerks and among its mail carriers was Rav Avraham, the grandson of Rav Yoel Moshe Solomon.

French and Russian Post Offices also opened. The manager of the Russian mail was Mr. Avraham Solomik, a Jew, who also served as Russian vice-consul in Jerusalem. At first, Mr. Solomik worked on Shabbat as well, prompting the Jews of Jerusalem to boycott this office. The boycott was lifted after it was promised that he would not work on Shabbat. These Post Offices also sent packages in special, guarded, wagons similar to the Austrian mail.

Wineries

Located in a cellar off a courtyard which opened out on Bashtatas Street was a winery belonging to Chaya Rachel, Die Scheinkraka – (Wine Seller), mother of Rav Pinchas Grayevsky (z’l). After the grape harvest, Arabs would bring grapes to this wine-press, place them in large vats in which the grapes were pressed and squeezed, straining the juice from which the wine was to be made.

In the Old City was a plant for the production of sesame oil.

On the floor of a large cellar a pool was excavated and above which were placed large millstones, top and bottom. One would pour the sesame seeds, after heating them in a nearby oven, into a large funnel cut out in the upper stone. A camel, blindfolded with leather, was tied
Early Memories

The oil would drain into the pool by grooves in the stones. The clean oil flowed into copper cans, each containing 15 Kg. (5 “Rotel”). Afterwards one of the Arabs would tread on the material remaining in the bottom of the pool in order to extract the remaining oil and from which they would make loaves of the residue to feed animals.

On Street of the Armenians was the printing house of Rav Yitzhak Nahum Loewi and “Roheled”, a community courtyard, the courtyard of Rav Naftali HaLevi, also “Roheled”, the courtyard of the Kollel and the courtyard containing the infirmary and pharmacy of Dr. Wallach, in which he also lived.

B. BEYOND JAFFA GATE

Business Establishments

Outside the Jaffa Gate was a large square from which extended 3 roads. The first turned to the West, along the length of the city wall, leading to Jaffa and was called Jaffa Highway or Jaffa Road.

On the right side of the road or highway were a row of stores - in order: an Arab coffee house, a Greek pharmacy, the building supply store of the German Erlander and Paul Abrelah and others of Blum and Levi. Following World War I, Rav Eliezer Slobis bought the Erlander business and that of Paul Arbelah was purchased by Rav Shaul Levi who was among the first tinsmiths. They called Rav Shaul “Blecher” as he helped in building the Russian Compound and thus enriched himself. After these stores were Jewish-owned businesses: Rav Yosef Silbertsein - kitchen and home goods, Yehoshua - clothing, Shachor - medicine, Rav Yitzhak Sharion - writing implements, watches and household goods, Rav Mordechai Edelman - (who was the director of the fellowship “LeMa’an Tzion”) - coats, hats and other clothing. That store had a clerk by the name of Kaplan who later went to work at the Anglo-Palestine Bank. Also a clerk named Yitzhak Levi, who, in time, opened his own, similar, store, a business still active to this day in his son’s hands in the Columned Building on Jaffa Road. There was also a building supply store owned by Rav Shlomo Perlman and his son, Rav Eliezer. Among these stores were various Christian ones, for example of the “Moroms”, etc.

After the stores of Blum and Levi was the Credit Lyonnais Bank above which was the Turkish Post Office and the Tobacco Tax Office. Above the Yishayahu store was a coffee house owned by a German.

There were stores on the left side of Jaffa Road, among them one for brushes owned by Rav Yisrael Koker, a small store for writing implements owned by the brothers Ze’ev and Reuben, sons of Rav Ben Zion Silberstein. Their business developed over time such that they built a row of offices on top of the stores of the Armenians, along the continuation of Jaffa Road. Here there were also clothing stores of Veit and Sephir, a watch sales and repair shop of Rav

8 Trans. note: Transliterated term – not identifiable.
9 Trans. note: Unclear meaning; transliterated as above and may refer to Maronites or Mormons.
These stores continued until Barclays Bank across from a garden then called “The City Garden”. An army band would play there on Saturdays and Sundays.

Neighborhoods and Buildings

The city’s garbage was dumped in the location now occupied by the business center and Shma’a neighborhood.

From Jaffa Gate, to the South, the road led to Bethlehem and Hebron and passed in front of the neighborhoods of Mishkanot Sha’ananim and Yemin Moshe, built with the contributions of Rav Moses Montefiore, and the houses of the donor, Yehudah Touro. The neighborhood was surrounded by a fence and iron gates which were closed at night due to fear of thieves and robbers.

From the area adjacent to Jaffa Gate ran a street, called Mamilla Road, in the direction of Mamilla Springs which was below the former Moslem cemetery. Between Jaffa and Mamilla Roads, with time, some buildings and stores were constructed, among them the Past Hotel - belonging to some Germans, and the Herod Hotel - belonging to some Englishmen.

Over the length of Jaffa Road, starting from the Russian Compound, were built the first Jewish neighborhoods outside of the Old City walls: Nachalat Sheva, Even Yisrael, Ezrat Yisrael, Mishkanot Yisrael, Mazkeret Moshe, Ohel Moshe, Zichron Tuvia, Bet Ya’akov and Sha’arei Tzede.

Next to Mishkanot Yisrael and Mazkeret and Ohel Moshe on Jaffa Road were the buildings of the school “All Israel Are Friends” (Alliance).

Across from these buildings, on the north side of Jaffa Road, was the large hotel of Rav Lippa Kamenitz, which excelled in its modern facilities and hosted most honored guests. Dr. Herzl stayed here during his visit to Jerusalem as did Kaiser Wilhelm during his stay.

The Wagon Station and the Journey to Jaffa

A passenger wagon station was located in the square outside of Jaffa Gate, used by Jews and Arabs, for transport to Mea Shearim area and its environs and to the neighborhoods along the length of Jaffa Road up to Machane Yehuda.

Also, there was a station for the larger coaches for journeys out of town. These coaches held 10-12 passengers.

The journey to Jaffa, in these large coaches, would usually start out about 2 hours before sunset. During the afternoon hours the passengers would gather. The chief coachman was Rav. Hirsch Milech, who was a large, strong and healthy Jew. The wagon would reach Motza early in the evening and the wagon and horses would rest before the ascent to Kastel. On the ascent to Kastel the passengers were asked to alight from the coach, due to the danger of its rolling back, and the coachman would also alight while holding onto the reins as he would walk beside the horses, hitting and urging them on. Sometimes the passengers needed to push the coach from behind, until it reached the summit. From here the journey continued to Sha’ar Haggai (Bab El-
which was reached around midnight. They would rest there for about 2 hours, drinking coffee or tea at a Jewish café there. By dawn, Ramle would be reached where a rest was taken and about 2 hours after sunrise they would reach Jaffa.

Those Jerusalemites who came to Jaffa and did not have relatives or friends there would stay at the hotels of Mrs. Miriam Cohen or Rav Moshe Salant. The more important ones would stay at the hotel of Rav Bezalel Kamenitz, son of Rav Lippa Kamenitz, owner of the large Jerusalem hotel.

C. WAYS OF LIFE

Daily Lives

Apartments were usually one room with or without an entry-way. In the apartment were two adult beds, a clothes closet, and a table with chairs or a bench. The children would sleep on feather pillows and cushions spread out on a mat placed on the floor and covered with blankets of cotton wool.

Laundry was done by the mother of the house. Water had to be brought to the house from neighborhood wells and placed in large clay pitchers which would stand in the kitchen or nearby. All of the work of the house, child care, feeding and clothing them, cleaning, laundry and the like fell on the housewife, as the husband would leave for work from morning until night.

Breakfast consisted of bread with cheese or halvah or salted fish and a cup of coffee with milk.

Lunch for the household members comprised a vegetable salad and fried egg, one for a number of children (after their wedding, my parents lived for a time with my uncle Rav Shlomo Zalman, and at noon my mother would wait for my father to return and fry one egg for the two of them).

In the evening they ate their main meal of the day at home. It was usually a mixture of lentils or beans, whose top thick layer would be spread on bread and eaten as a first course. To the remaining soup they would add grits, groats or dough. Twice a week they would eat an inexpensive cut of meat such as from the head or lungs. In honor of Shabbat they would prepare fish, meat, soup and compote, each family according to its finances. Chicken and white bread were given to sick persons only. When others saw chicken being bought, they understood that someone was ill and asked after them.

Cooking was done on stoves built from stones and cement in the kitchen with space for 3-4 pots which were heated with coals. They placed rags dipped in oil under the coals, using them to move the coals, and used a bellows made with imported turkey feathers to blow on them until flames rose. From time to time they needed to add coals to the stoves.

In order to keep food and water warm for Shabbat, they prepared, under the stove, a thin layer of coals (called shishke) which they would cover with earth after which they shut the stove only after inserting the bottles and pots and covering them with special hot rags called “chaunt schmates” (warming rags) to keep in the required heat.

During those times it was difficult to bake bread. At the end of the harvest and threshing,
when wheat was inexpensive, they bought wheat for the entire year and stored it in a storehouse. From time to time they would remove a quantity of wheat from storage, clean it and take to the mill, mill it into flour, sift and sieve it, remove the bran and separate the regular from the finer flour. The regular flour would be baked into bread for daily use and the finer flour was used for cakes and “challot” for Shabbat, baked in ovens located in every neighborhood.

**In Talmud Torah “Etz Hayim”**

During my youth I studied at the Talmud Torah “Etz Hayim” in the Old City of Jerusalem. It was customary for the students to remain awake throughout Thursday night (until dawn on Friday) studying in the school and reviewing the lessons covered during the week. The sexton of the Beit Midrash, Rav Schmerl Hatzloa, would prepare warm tea and juice from dried figs for the students which each would drink along with food brought from home.

Adults were also among those studying there at night and I recall among others Rav Lev Benzamin, Rav Mendel Hochstein, Rav Mendel Achi (z”l), and, may he be long lived, Rav Aharon Chayot. I recall that this Rav Aharon brought with him a banana - (called by us “Eve’s Fig” - since banana leaves are long and wide and must have been used by Adam and Eve as coverings) - which, in those days, was expensive (2 asiriyot). Rav Aharon sliced the banana into small pieces and gave them to his friends.

Those children who came from outside the city to learn at Talmud Torah in the city would bring with them bread and 2 asiriyot (tzenterlich - silver coins from that era), with which they could buy a meatball or plate of soup from the cookhouse of Rav Yoshe-Yosef Mohaliber (father of Rav Yerachmiel Amdorski (z”l) who was the owner of a well known hotel in Jerusalem) or Rav Leib Dayan Hershler.

(Rav Aryeh Leib Dayan was a member of the Religious Court of Rav Shmuel Salant [zt”l] and was well respected also among the Arabs and by the government. He was also a member of the “Majlis Adra”, the Arab religious court, sitting in judgment with the Moslem kaadis and muftis. He was one of the founders of the Bet Yisrael neighborhood. He died without sons.)

Those who were careful with their money would go to a nearby street to a store selling salted fish in open barrels. They would dip their bread in the fish brine and then eat it and for 1/4 of one asiriyah would buy a cup of carob water from Yoshke “Susnik”. He was called this because of the drink called “soos” which he sold from a leather water bottle he carried on his back, using cups attached by a special belt to his waist. In one hand he carried copper cymbals which he would clang in order to announce his presence. They could also buy a cup of lemonade from a Sephardi by the name of Hacham Nissim.

In the morning, girls would study in the house of the Rebbetzin who taught them, among other things, to read from the Siddur. At home they would help their mothers with housework. During free time they would knit trousers, hats, etc. and would compete to see who could finish their work first.
The first to teach the children the alphabet was Rav Moshe Horodner (z”l). The Rav HaGaon from Bresk, Rav Moshe Yehoshua Lev Diskin (zt”l), learned from him as a small boy and praised him in his presence about his having learned from him the basis of his knowledge.

From the classroom of Rav Moshe the students went to that of Rav Shalom to learn prayer and introduction to Bible and, from there, to that of Rav Feishl Rivlin for Chumash (Pentateuch). Before finishing the Five Books of Torah they went on to Rav Yaakov Neudorker to begin Gemara. He used to distribute cheese, halvah or salted fish (as well as clothing and shoes) to the needy students of the Talmud Torah.

From Rav Yaakov the best students would go to study with Rav Yaakov Rav Lishka (Rav Lishka was the Rav of Rav Eliezer Dan Ralbag [zt”l] who was the head of the Yeshiva Etz Hayim and among the sons of Rav from Bresk [zt”l]). The students who did not excel went onto the class of Rav Moshe Rav Munaas who was strict. (The brother of Rav Moshe Rav Munaas, Rav Yaakov, also taught in the Talmud Torah). From Rav Yaakov - Rav Lishka’s class they went onto the class of Rav Hayim Mann and from there to the Yeshiva.

One of the important teachers in the Talmud Torah was Rav Dov Be’er Ettinger (Rav Beryl Markas) (z”l).

The Prophets and Writings were taught in Talmud Torah. Writing was taught by special teachers who gave afternoon lessons. One was Rav Yosef Turatsky (z”l), who was very proficient in Tanach (Jewish Bible) and who read to the students from a letter-writer’s handbook (Briefenshteler) while the students would write in their notebooks, after which he would review and correct their errors. Rav Avraham Binyamin, son of Rav Moshe Rivlin (z”l), was the second writing teacher. We were not taught grammar until another writing teacher came, Rav Yitzhak Yaakov Yellin (may he live a long life, amen), who was known as an important grammarian and authored grammar books for student use.

In the Yeshiva, Rav Efraim Hochstein (z”l) read lessons to the younger students and between Mincha and Maariv presented a lesson from Shulchan Aruch “Orekh Hayyim” (Way of Life). Those who attended the lessons would receive a new Mejidi (Turkish coin). In the small Yeshiva, presenting the lesson, was Rav David Taktin followed by Rav Mordechai David Levin.

Weddings

It was customary in Jerusalem to arrange wedding celebrations of the bride and groom at the neighborhood well, near the synagogue, as a favorable sign and reminder of Eliezer’s finding Rebekah at the spring, Jacob’s meeting Rachel at the well and Moses finding his mate at a well.

In 5626 (1866) there was a severe cholera epidemic in Jerusalem and to foster a cure for the epidemic a wedding was held in the cemetery on Mount of Olives. The wedding was that of Rav Yosef Lutziner (Danker) and was most joyfully attended by many.

Weddings were usually arranged in Jerusalem for Friday afternoons, with the ceremony performed prior to lighting Shabbat candles. On Shabbat evening, after the meal, all would gather at the festival hall to celebrate the groom and bride with songs and dancing which continued to a very late hour. The celebration continued during Shabbat, in the synagogue and at
the two main meals of the day and reached a climax at the end of Shabbat, in “Nitzadeh”,
marked by more singing and dancing. The many guests who came to the hall were provided with
seeds, nuts and dilute wine, etc.

Some of the Jews of the city were expert in arranging such celebrations and parties. One
well remembers the brothers Rav Nahum and Ran Avraham Binyamin Bergman who were also
excellent mohels and heads of the burial society. They excelled in the mitzvah of the wedding
celebration with wonderful dances and the like.

At the height of the celebration, at the end of Shabbat, the announcement of the presents
brought for the wedding couple was carried out with merriment and great joy by special
announcers who would climb onto a table and rhyme their words. The announcers were, during
my childhood, Rav Yosef (Yoshke) Moheliber, father of Rav Yerachmiel Amdorsky (z”l) and
Rav Herschl Mordechai Schnitzres, who was also a gravedigger. The announcer would raise in
hand the item or coin brought as a present and would say: This was given by the uncle of the
groom, and in the joy of his sons may such return to them again and again, “metashtala”, without
understanding the meaning of the word (this phrase, from North Africa, means “with the help of
God”).

Afterward the special bride’s dance (know as the Kasher Tanz) (Kosher dance) was
performed. The closest relatives were honored with this dance. The bride would hold onto the
end of a handkerchief and whoever was honored to dance with her held onto the other end,
dancing a few turns with the bride, then switching off to others.

At noon on Sunday as special celebration was arranged related to the bride’s hair cutting
and in the evening all would raise a toast 7 times. With the 7th toast the celebration peaked,
ending the wedding festivities.

The celebration was usually divided, with men and women in separate buildings. At the
height of one celebration involving the Porush family, a few women were attracted to the men’s
building and entered it. Inside was Rav Benzion Yadler (z”l), the well-known preacher, who
after the women were told to leave and did not listen, climbed onto a table, took off his coat.
After the women still did not leave, here began to loosen the belt of his trousers whereupon the
women fled back to their building.

To continue entertaining and amuse the group he announced and asked: “Do you want to
see how I can lead the whole city holding onto its nose?” When everyone said “Yes”, he
climbed down and grabbed hold of and pulled on the nose of Rav Reuben Shlomo Jungreis
saying: “Here I am leading the whole city holding onto its nose”.

I was once invited, as part of a Porush family wedding, to the Se’udah Shlishit (Third
Meal) of Shabbat. They had served fish without providing forks. I asked them to provide forks.
They asked me why I was waiting and I answered that I needed a fork. They said to me:
“Our ancestors’ habit - using our hands!” I took the serving of fish and was bringing it to my
mouth when they exclaimed: This is our fork!

Births and Brit (Circumcisions)

In previous generations women gave birth at home and not in the hospital. The mother

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10 Trans note: The term is transliterated and may be of Yiddish origin.
would lie on a bed with poles at the 4 corners from which hung curtains surrounding the bed and obscuring the view. They called this bed “Himmel Bett” (Bed of the Heavens). On the curtain would be hung a sheet of paper printed on which were songs, sentences and names to allow for protection against the evil eye and called “Shir Hama’alot” after a section in “Shir Hama’alot”: I will lift my eyes to the mountains, etc; May the Lord watch over you, etc. If a boy was born in the house, it was customary for the small children who were learning in the “Heder” of the neighborhood, to come, in large numbers, before evening, when they were let out of “Heder” to go home, to the house of the newborn and call out the Shema said at night in bed, then they would receive seeds and peanuts. On the evening before the Brit, they called out “Die Letzte Kriat Shema” (The Last Saying of the Shema) and received candy. On Shabbat eve of the 8th day (of circumcision), friends and relatives were invited to the house of the newborn for a meal called “Greetings Man”. At dawn on the day of the circumcision they would come to study from the Book of the Zohar and call out the Shema. This night was called “Wachnacht”.

It was customary to eat chickpeas (as in humus) and other pulses at these meals, cooked and roasted with salt and pepper, calling them “Arba’as”, seeing in this a hint of what God said to Abraham “I will greatly multiply your seed.”

The father of the child would arise early on the morning of the Brit, as it is said: “and Abraham awoke early in the morning”. The Brit was arranged in the neighborhood synagogue and, as is appropriate, Tachanun was not said on that day. The lights in the synagogue were kept lit until after the Brit. The mohels in the city did not work for profit, each wanting to be honored in the performance of this “mitzvah”, and did not hesitate in traveling far, even on Shabbat and holidays. If they traveled to the “Brit” on a weekday, they would refuse to take the cost of their fare. The first Mohels in the city were Rav Natan Hirsch Hamburger, Rav Yaakov Rav Lishkas, Rav Hayim Yisrael Halperin, Dr. Wallach, etc.

Shofar blowers and torah readers also performed their work as a mitzvah and not for payment.

Pesach (Passover)

Preparations for Pesach were begun immediately after Purim. The “guarded” wheat would be lowered from its storage in sacks hung from the ceiling (so that it would not become moist) then culled and cleaned. It was then hand ground and the flour was sieved, removing the bran and separating the semolina (finer flour) from the regular.

For baking purposes, water was drawn up from the well at dusk and kept overnight - “Our Water” - being careful to bake the matza with the first lighting of the oven in the morning. Various people took part in the baking of the matza. One made the dough and passed it through rollers until it was soft and cut it into pieces. On the top of a long table on which a stone was placed the dough was rolled out until it was as thin as possible and then rows of holes were made using a roller with teeth. It was then placed into the oven (so that it would not leaven) using long-handled sticks.

On Passover Eve they would bake the “Matza HaMitzvot” for the first night of Pesach; in recollection of the Pesach sacrifice they would recite the Hallel while doing so.

Some, in older bakeries, still follow this practice.
The housewife was very much occupied just prior to the holiday with cleaning the house and preparation for all that was needed for the holidays. On the eve of the holiday one would go, as usual, to the Mikveh and, on returning from synagogue they would find all in order and prepared.

The whole family would gather for the holiday meal in the house of the head of the family to read the Haggadah, eat and sing Hallel and songs until very late.

Various matza bakeries were located in the city. Rav Chaim Talitnik had one, in a cellar on Hebron Road, on the way to the Western Wall. In the vicinity, near some warehouses, was the bakery of Mita, the dairy woman. During the year she kept milk cows there but before Purim she removed the animals, cleaned and arranged the place thus making it kosher for baking the matza.

These bakeries baked only hand made matza.

Large matza bakeries were built outside of the Old City - those of Rav Hayim Israel Cohen Halperin (z’l) - in the Knesset Yisrael neighborhood and of Shimonovitch Brothers in Givat Shaul. They were the first to introduce machinery for matza production.

Lag B’Omer and Walking Trips

On Lag B’Omer Jerusalemites would travel to the valley north of the city, near Sheik Jarrah, where there was a cave, in which, according to tradition, Shimon HaTzadik was buried. The day or part of it was spent in prayers and petitioning as well as resting in the shade.

Special tents and stalls were erected there for the sale of drinks, sweets, fine foods and toys for the children. People began to arrive in the morning, some in vehicles and some on foot, most particularly the Sephardim, family upon family, taking their places in the shade of olive trees, on mats, rugs or blankets and would spend the day in food and drink, in relaxation and rest and well as prayer and games. Prayers were conducted in the cave, lit by candles.

Above the cave were two rows of houses belonging to communities in the city. In one of the houses Rav Moshe Eliyahu Sacks showed off his gramophone, the first in Jerusalem, with a large speaker. He played cantorial and similar types of records. The price of admission was 2 Asiriyot and only those who paid for admission were able to listen to the music by way of rubber tubes exiting the gramophone and leading to the ears of the listener. It was one of the first “machines of wonder” in Jerusalem.

On one Lag B’Omer a few young men from among the students of the Yeshivah “Etz Hayim” gathered for a horse ride to Ramallah. Among the participants were Rav Menachem Mendel Hochstein, Rav Avigdor Adna Shuv, his brother, Rav Mendel as well as myself and a few others. On the way, the horse carrying Rav Avigdor ran wild, dropping him to the ground and running away. Once we got off our horses we saw that a large snake was lying in the road, which had likely caused the horse to bolt. We chased after the horse until it was caught by an Arab who returned it after receiving a tip. We then continued on our way until Ramallah, there sitting in a café where the Arabs conversed with us in a friendly manner and behaved very well towards us.

On one occasion we went on a trip to K’far Malha and Batir located southwest of Jerusalem. Rav Eli Glickman Porush, supervisor of Talmud Torah “Etz Hayim”, organized the
excursion. The meeting place was the Valley of the Cross at the foot of the Sha’arei Chesed neighborhood, from which we walked the way which passed between fields and vineyards until we reached Malha and, after resting, we continued until we reach Batir. We sat near a spring and looked out on the fields and vineyards of the village. The children of the village offered us ancient coins for sale and I bought a few for a few “perutot”. Somewhat later, I showed the coins to Rav Shmuel Raflovitz, who investigated and was an expert in ancient coins. He found, among my coins, one from the days of Bar Kochba which was not in his collection. He took the coin from me and in return gave me another which I have kept to this day.

Elul and Days of Awe

The days of awe and penitence began, every year, on the eve of Rosh Hodesh Elul. The Sephardim would rise for “Selichot” from the beginning of the month and the Ashkenazim from the last Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah or from the ending of the Shabbat before. Beginning 1-2 hours before sunrise, the sextons of the synagogues would walk about in the streets and neighborhoods of the Jews, with lantern and walking stick in hand. They would knock on the doors and windows of the houses to waken the congregation to come to synagogue to recite “Selichot”.

During the entire month of Elul, and especially during the Days of Selichot, many would come to pray and recite “Psalms” in front of the Western Wall and also travel to prostrate themselves on the grave of Rachel, our mother, south of Jerusalem, on the road to Bethlehem as well as onto the graves of the fathers in the Cave of Machpelah in Hebron (the Jewish settlement in Hebron was both Sephardic and Ashkenazic, particularly, Chabad Chasidim). Many dealt in business with the Arabs as well as administered Talmud Torahs and Yeshivot as well as guest houses in the city. The Jewish settlement in Hebron was very seriously attacked during the bloody riots which the Arabs inflicted on the Jews in 5689 (1929), during which Rabbis and important persons among the Jews of the city were slaughtered like sheep. Among them were a number of students and teachers from the Slabodka Yeshiva established in the city. When the bloody riots started again after a few years, the last of the Jewish presence in the city left. Many also went to pray at the grave of holy men on the Mount of Olives or traveled to the Galilee to prostrate themselves on the graves of holy ones in Safed, Tiberias and the area.

The journey to Safed and the Galilee was on the backs of mules, taking about 3 days. There were instances of injury and death among the riders. Such happened to the wife of Rav Yithak Lifkin (z”l), known by his nickname of Abu Batzel, who fell during the ride and died. Among the mule owners who were donkey drivers and guides were also Jews.

The days of Rosh Hashanah were especially difficult for the women who were required to prepare food for two days - and at times, when the first day of Rosh Hashanah fell on Thursday - also for Shabbat thereafter. There was no refrigeration or ice. In order to preserve the cooked food so that it would not spoil in the warm days at the end of summer, they would leave the food outside under a roof of palm-branches or hang them in a basket or bucket in the well found in the courtyard. At the end of the first day of Rosh Hashanah they slaughtered roosters or chickens for the meals of the second day or the Shabbat thereafter (the butchers were given an egg instead of money for their work). They then had to work at plucking the feathers, preparing and cooking
the bird. In addition, the women, dressed in white, also went to and stayed at the synagogue during all the prayers. From time to time the stove fire or the wicks of candles on which they were cooking would ignite and soot would rise. Until they could bring a gentile person to douse or put out the fire, the kitchen, even the whole house, would fill up with smoke and soot.

Leaders in Prayer

The cantors and leaders on prayer of the days of awe in the various synagogues in the city excelled in their piety and talent.

When my parents lived in the Old city, we prayed at the Beit Midrash “Or HaHayyim”, whose leaders in prayer included Rav Lipa Vigolik and his son and Rav Yaakov Pesach (z”l). Their prayers were tearful and prompted such in the congregation.

The chief cantor in the Great Synagogue “Bet Yaakov” in the Hurvah courtyard was, in those days, Rav Shlomo, son of Rav Yishayahu Bordekai (z”l). The grandson of Rav Yisrael (may he be blessed with long life) filled his position after him as cantor in the Great Synagogue, today serving as director of the Jerusalem Burial Society.

In the “Sukkat Shalem” Synagogue, which stood in the courtyard known by the name “Reb Yeshia’s Midrash” (after the name of Rav Yishayahu Bordekai, brother in law of the Gaon Rav Yisrael Mechkilov [zt”l], among the heads of the Prushim in the country who bought the land for Rav Akiba Laharon [zt”l], one of the officials and administrators from Amsterdam who collected money for the support of Jews in the country), was known by the name of “Reb Yeshia’s Midrash”. The leader in prayer was Rav Avraham Lev Enda (z”l) (residents of the square at that time included: Rav Lev ben Rav Zundel Salant, Rav Moshe Yitchak Goldschmidt, Rav Yaakov Blumenthal, Rav Yehoshua Salank, etc). Among the congregants were Rav Yechiel, the carpenter and Rav Beinish, the tinsmith, who, even though laborers, were also learned students. It was said in humor that in this Synagogue there was a Rav of wood and a Rav of metal. (In Yiddish: The Woodworking Rav and the Metalworking Rav).

In the old Synagogue in the Hurvah courtyard there was a cantor, Rav Abravamel Brisker (z”l) who was an honorary officer of the Bikur Holim Hospital.

One of the most well-known and excellent cantors was Rav Yitzhak Vinograd (Matmid) (diligent one) (z”l), founder of the Torat Hayim Yeshiva in Jerusalem.

In the synagogue located in the “Batei Mahse” (Shelter Houses) (Die Deutscherer Platz), Rav Yaakov Rav Lishkas Sherzaon (z”l) prayed before the Ark on High Holy Days. He was also an expert Mohel and among the better teachers at Talmud Torah “Etz Hayim”. In the Synagogue of the Russian Community it was Rav Gershon Merir (z”l).

Choir singers also performed with the cantor in the larger synagogues.

The cantors of synagogues outside of the Old City were: at the Great Synagogue in the Mea Shearim area - Rav Yosef (Yosele) Weisfisch (z”l) (for Musaf Prayers) and Rav Alter Anti-Foler-Binzamin (for Shacharit Prayers). In the synagogue of the Yemin Moshe neighborhood - Rav Avraham Aharon Ziegermacher (Watchmaker). Rav Yosef Weisfisch (see above) also served at weddings and among other duties delivered invitations to weddings, which is now done by mail.

In addition to services in the varied and many synagogues, prayers were also said in the
open area in front of the Western Wall, in various minyans of Ashkenazim and Sephardim. Benches were placed there for sitting. Torah reading was held in a small room just north of the Wall area.

**Sukkot**

Preparations for raising of the Sukkas (booths) began immediately at the end of Yom Kippur, along with the purchase and sale of the “Four Species”. Etrog merchants would bring the etrogs after they completed their foreign shipments from Jaffa. The main merchant in those days was Rav Shmuel Salant (z’l); also involved with the sale of etrogs in his store was Rav Yodel Monish Yodlevitz (z”l), who was skilled in choosing etrogs and setting their price. Palm and willow branches were brought by Arabs from Jordan and myrtle was brought from Safed.

During the days of Hol Ha’Moed Sukkot, the synagogues would celebrate, after the evening prayer, the libation ceremony. They read songs Shir HaMa’alot from Psalms, after they had “sold” the honor of reading to those who were generous (the price took the form of drinks and cakes given in contribution). Between songs they would dance to the songs especially devoted to the libation ceremony and the holiday.

From the evening of Hoshana Rabbah they would stay awake all night - reading Deuteronomy - until midnight - and Psalms - after midnight.

Simchat Torah began in the evening of Hoshana Rabbah. Synagogue members would gather at the house of the Gabbai in a parade of dancing and singing. They were greeted with food and drink, completing the celebration of Sukkot and residing in the sukkah. As the time for evening prayers neared, they would proceed in a joyful parade from the house of the Gabbai to the synagogue. Before evening prayers, they would “sell” the “(Torah) honors” for the day of Simchat Torah - “Groom of the Torah”, “Groom of Bereshit” and Groom of “Meonah” with all the Young Men”.

**Hanukah**

Care was taken to light the Hanukah candles at sunset with the sign, in the Old City of Jerusalem, being the Moslem muezzins climbing to the top of their towers and calling the Muslims to evening prayer. In those years, when the month of Ramadan overlapped with the month of Kislev, they listened for the cannon signaling the end of the (Muslim) day of fasting and then lit the candles.

Hanukah candles were lit outside, to the left of the entryway, using a special lantern made from tin and glass, so that the light would not go out due to wind and rain. The lights were made of olive oil and wicks of straw and cotton wool. On the Shabbat eve of Hanukah they delayed the lighting of Shabbat candles as long as possible, until they could light the Hanukah lights. At the end of Shabbat, evening prayers were said as early as possible so as not to delay lighting the Hanukah candles.

During the days of Hanukah, the Talmud Torah students were free from their studies during the afternoons and evenings. They would play a game, using cards upon which the letters

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11The first word of the Torah passages to be read on that occasion [Deut 33:27]
from 1-31 (apparently since when they were printed there were no large numbers except the ones used for wall calendars for the days of the month), and would divide the cards among the players. One player would place a card on the table and the player with the next or previous card would take it. The winner was person collecting the most cards. They also played various games with dice and the older students allowed themselves to, even, play cards and spend the evenings of Hanukah in friendly meals comprised of pancakes and toasts to health.

Shabbat “Mishpatim” and Adar 7

Every year, on the Shabbat of reading the Parasha “Mishpatim”, in which is found the commandment “If you loan money to my nation...”, a festive banquet was prepared, with a special “Kiddush”, in the synagogue of the Sha’arei Chesed Charitable Society in the Old City, attended by all its members. My uncle, Rav Shlomo Zalman Porush, was among the founders of the Society and his wife - my aunt - prepared the food, including cakes and noodle pudding for this “Kiddush”.

The seventh of Adar, the day of Moses’ death, was known as the day of the Hevra Kadisha, during which its members would fast and gather together for morning prayers, reciting a special “Selichot” of the day. They prostrated themselves on the graves of holy men and discussed matters of the Society. At the end of the day they partook of a festive meal.

I still recall the banquets served in the house of my uncle, Rav Shlomo Zalman Porush (z’t’l), who was the leader of a group of 10 members of the Ashkenazic (Prushim) Burial Society in Jerusalem. I was then a boy of six and accompanied my mother as she would help my aunt in preparing the banquet. The banquets consisted of exceptional food and drink, included singing and dancing, and, after the banquet, each member received a package containing a roast pigeon, a can of sardines, a bottle of wine and fruit.

Other group heads included Rav Yitzhak Nahum Levi, the printer, and Rav Nahum and his brother Rav Avraham Binyamin Bergman, among others.

Purim

On the eve of Purim, after Mincha (afternoon) prayers, they placed a few plates on a table in the synagogue to receive the “half-shekel” and Megilla money contributions. To represent the “half-shekel” - in one plate were placed 3 silver coins - Russian or Austrian - which would be bought with donated money. Another plate was devoted to contributions for the Megilla given to the poor or to the reader of the Megilla.

The reading of the Megilla in the evening and morning was accompanied by much noise from the children, striking with sticks and using noise-makers, etc, every time the name of evil Haman was called out.

The poor and those collecting charity would go from door to door during the day of Purim to receive contributions; among them were also poor Arabs who passed among the Jewish
homes.

The housewives, for Purim, baked cakes “Haman’s Ears” and, prepared, for the Purim meal - meat and fish and soup with stuffed pastry (Kreplach) in the shape of Haman’s ears.

The exchange of gifts (Mishloach Manot) began immediately after morning prayers. One sent cakes and sweets to others. The children who carried of the food would receive candies or coins as payment for their effort.

The owner of the neighborhood bakery and his assistant who usually delivered and returned baked goods between the oven and homes, would go to the various homes in the area and were honored with some of the cakes they had baked in honor of Purim.

The celebration of Purim was noted most in the streets. Many people undertook the obligation to be in costume for a real Ad Lo Yadah (“until one does not know”) and, thus, many, especially children, would dress in costume. They would gather in the neighborhood at the house of the Rabbi and choose one among the clowns as “Purim Rav” (Purim Rabbi) who would humor the gathered. They would also say afternoon prayers with special ceremony and songs of Yom Kippur though in a special spirit of happiness.

Studying in Shifts

The Beit Midrash of the Shaarei Hesed Benevolent Society scheduled various hours of study at night time for the benefit of those who had contributed to the society. Every shift was comprised of a “Minyan” of students, one studying from the start of the evening until midnight and the second from midnight until after morning prayers. When one of the members would die, the other members of the shift would study in the house of mourning; if there was not enough room they would study in the school. My father (z”l) was a member of one group, and on those occasions when he could not participate in study, I took his place. They served tea during the study hours; one doing so was Rav Yisrael Freiman (z”l), an honorable man. He drew the well water for the Etz Hayim Talmud Torah and Yeshiva. Due to this he was known by the name “Rav Yisrael Wassertrager”. He also was the beadle of the great Hurvah synagogue; during his free hours he sat in the school, wrapped in tallis and tefillin, and occupied himself with study and prayer. His son, Rav Yaakov (z”l) was the Ashkenazic beadle and guard at “Rachel’s Tomb”. Together with the Sephardic beadle, they occupied themselves with the preparation and lighting of the candles and arrangement and sale of the string around the grave site, which were to be tied around the elbow or neck. His grandson, Rav Shlomo Freiman (z”l) continued the tradition until Jews were prevented from visiting there.

There was a person in Jerusalem called “Rav Shalom Tehillim Zeiger” because he would gather the children to the great synagogue every Shabbat before dusk for the recitation of a chapter from Psalms. He would then distribute candy. He also was in the habit of arising at midnight and going out onto the city streets, lantern in hand, and awaken those who were to pray and study while calling out a particular song: “Get up, get up to worship the Creator, for such you were created”. As his father did, so did his son, “Rav Ephraim Kalcher” in the Mea Shearim neighborhood.

Night Study

12 Night Study

Early Memories
Nabi Musa

During Spring, which included the Jewish Passover and the Christian Easter, Jerusalem was particularly host to many Jewish pilgrims, Christian tourists and pilgrims who crowded the wall of Jerusalem. The Moslems had also set festival days during this time, with pilgrimage to Jerusalem and to one place on the way from Jerusalem to the Dead Sea, understood, in their language, as the grave of “Nabi Musa” (prophet), that is our teacher, Moses.

From many towns and villages the Moslem Arabs gathered together and traveled to Jerusalem, some by vehicle and some on foot, entering gates of the city in spirited dancing and demonstrations. The most striking among them were those coming from Hebron in the South and Shechem in the North. The Arabs of Jerusalem would greet them with demonstrations of joy and happiness and continue in a large parade to the Mosque of Omar. After praying there, they exited as a large crowd, at the head of which was the carriage of the Mufti and others so honored, with banners in hand on the way to the place called “Nabi Musa”, remaining there for 7 days in tents while celebrating, in festivity and revelry, with banquets and drink. The departure to there occurred on Thursday and the return on Friday of the following week. An army band also accompanied the parade with its tunes. Jews and Christians lined the sides of the streets to watch the Arabs.

D. Miscellany

Relations between Jews and Arabs

Relations between Arabs and Jews in the Old City of Jerusalem were decent for the most part. However, in the neighborhoods outside the city and on the roads, theft, robbery and murder would occur from time to time. As is well known, in Mea Shearim, a man known as “Der Paraselnik”, that is, Rav Shmuel Hayim Scheinbaum, (z”l) was killed. In the Even Yisrael district, across from the metalworker’s house, lived an old couple said to be wealthy; one night robbers came, robbing the house and killing them.

Less severe occurrences were known in the Old City; one example being of an Arab becoming angry and spitting in the face of a woman while arguing over the price of something he wanted to buy and the like. An event concerning the Tzaddik Rav Yosef Zundel Salant (z”l) was recounted. On one occasion while walking to Beit Midrash, wrapped in his Tallit and Tefillin, he was met by an Arab of the Bushtim clan who dumped a full sack of coals on him.

When my mother was a girl she once went to help her mother to grind wheat at the mill located near Shechem Gate. As she was passing an Arab café, one effendi sitting there, stuck out his leg, tripping my mother and she fell. She was able to arise and took the slipper she was wearing and struck him on the face. All the Arabs there shouted and applauded as it is forbidden for Arabs to raise a hand against a woman.
In a cellar underneath the large Bet Yaakov synagogue in the Hurva Courtyard of Rabbi Yehudah HeHasid lived a special old woman by the name of Rech’ka Lifalas. She supplied small Talitot to poor children and would guard the door of the synagogue, listening for the Kedusha, Barchu and the like. On the eve of every Rosh Chodesh she fasted for the entire day and would walk, in wooden shoes, to Rachel’s grave and return by way of the Western Wall, the location of much praying. Her son was Rav Asher Lev Brisk (z”l) who recorded the graves on the Mount of Olives in order, divided up by sections and rows, and published these important lists, which also included copies of the lettering on the head stones and information listed, in the files of the Burial Society known as “The Engraving Section”.

Rav Hayim Yehoshua Kosovisky

Rav Hayim Yehoshua Kosovisky (z”l), the author of the Talmudic and Tosefta Concordance, etc, was, in his youth, one of the outstanding teachers of the Etz Hayim Yeshiva. I remember that he would sit alone studying diligently in the Doresh Shalom Talmud Torah, in the Old City, on Sephardim Street.

Houses of Entertainment

We, of course, had no houses of entertainment. Once a Purim play, “Ahashueras Spiel”, was presented in the Or Hayim courtyard of the Old City, in the house of Rav Moshe Pach Rosenthal with the participation of his sons and Zvi Amdorski and Yehoshuah, son of Rav Mordechai ben Noah Shulman. Couples of men and women came to see the performance, despite such being forbidden.

“Amalek”

There was an Arab from the village of HaShiloach who was called “Amalek”. He sold, to the Jews of the Old City, special sand for kitchen stove repair, particularly around the time of Pesach when everyone was repairing their stoves. Every Passover eve he would bring a head of lettuce with its root, to serve as the bitter herb, to Rav Shmuel Salant. He would say: This year I bring the vegetables. may the new year bring the Messiah so that you will supply us with vegetables.

Charm

When I was twelve, we lived in the Shkulah Courtyard on Armenians Street in the Old City of Jerusalem. I became ill and the upper half of my body swelled up to the point that they

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13 Times during the service when congregants usually stand and latecomers are customarily not allowed to enter.
could almost not recognize the appearance of my face and ears as well as my fingers. They call for Rav Yisrael Moheliber (z”l) who was known for his stature and physique as well as loud voice and his knowledge of “charming” an illness. He came and stood at my side, passed the palm of his hand over my body, whispered an incantation and suddenly declaimed loudly: “Depart!. Depart! PooPoo! PooPoo!” and spat behind him a few times, continuing to mutter. Afterwards he spread castor oil on my body, took his fee and left. Within a few hours the swelling diminished and I returned to health.

The Courtyard of the Ari

Next to the courtyard of Rav Yishayahu Bardekai was the courtyard called that of “Ha Ari”. I recall that one of my friends lived there. The cradle which the “Ha Ari” used as an infant was on a shelf in display.

Spirits and Demons

As a boy I heard that, near the Mea Shearim area in Jerusalem, there was a flour mill owned by an Arab by the name of Ramas. The mill was thus called “Ramaskas Mill”. The mill was powered by horses which would walk on a tilted round wood board. At night the horses were boarded in a stable. One morning it was found that the horses were very tired and that the hair of their heads and tails had been plaited. It was said that this was the doing of devils. After some time, Rav Mendel Cohen and Rav Shabtiel Millner (Miller) bought the mill and changed it to one powered by machine.

I also heard, from my parents, about a Jew named Rav Yosef Blank who lived in the old Montefiore neighborhood. He made his living as a translator of letters and requests from Hebrew to Yiddish or Arabic, which required delivery to the government. One evening Rav Yosef went out of the Old City to walk home. He met a man who asked where he was going. After Rav Yosef answered him the man said: “Come, I want to show you a short cut”. He took him to the trash dump of the city, in an empty area near Jaffa Gate. When they reached the trash pit, which was deep, the man jumped to the other side of the pit and disappeared. They claimed he was a demon.

I also heard from my father (z”l) that at one time he lived in the “Hosh” in the Old City. One would reach the place by way of a dark and low alley about 20 meters long. One night he was passing there, on his way home, and saw along the length of the alley that there were packages hung and a large pot filled with laundry standing on a large fire, something he had never before seen in that place. My father was frightened and entered a nearby courtyard in panic and related what he had seen. When the people from the courtyard went to look at the sight they saw nothing. It was said to be the work of demons.

Next to the Bet Yisraiel neighborhood were the Shaarei Pina and Yemenite Nahalat Tzvi neighborhoods. The Yemenites would spread piles of cow dung out on stones in the neighborhood which they would later collect and use to light their ovens. Nearby lived a German Christian - in the courtyard now belonging to the Bucharest community - who had a garden. Once one of the Yemenite boys from the neighborhood climbed the fence to pick fruit
from the garden. The owner caught and hit him. The boy died later due to the injuries he had received and the German left the area.

The neighborhood of the Bukharin Streets was not built yet and the area was desolate, filled with boulders and caves. At night, the inhabitants were fearful of animals which roamed there. Once, as my father was returning from work with Dr. Moshe Wallach (z”l), late at night, he passed by the house of Rav Shmuel De Bobaas. He saw the figure of a donkey and thought that it belonged to Rav Shmuel, one which he used to transport meat from the butcher. Nonetheless, as he went closer he saw that it was a hyena (Da’aba). He was very panicked and began to run until he reached home, falling on the ground from unspeakable fright. Similar occurrences happened to others in the area.

Balloon

I recall that, while living in Mea Shearim, a balloon fell in the area known as: “The Pouring of Fat” as it was accepted to have been the location where the fat from the altar was poured in the days of the Temple. Afterwards, houses of Hungarians were built there. Everyone from the area ran to see the balloon that fell. It was thought that it had floated from the German settlement south of the city, near the train station.

The First Autobuses

The first autobus for public service in the city of Jerusalem was introduced by Messrs. Yosef Hachmishivili and Moshe Hazan, who were among the first settlers of the Romema neighborhood, northwest of the city. The autobus ran there, its owner was Shalom Greenberg who, to this day, is a member of Egged in Tel Aviv. He would travel from Jaffa Gate to Romema and back, during the days when the horse wagons reached only to Machane Yehuda. With time, they added buses which reached more distant neighborhoods - such as Bet HaKerem, Bayit VeGan, Talpiot, etc - until the creation of the drivers’ and owners’ cooperative which developed into the “HaMekasher” cooperative still serving Jerusalem to this day. The intercity cooperative, “Egged”, was developed in the same way.

Oil Lamps

My mother (may she rest in peace) told me of the time when Rav Zelig Hoyzenborf (z”l) came to Jerusalem from outside the country and brought with him the first oil lamps which allowed for the wicks and the light to be raised and lowered by means of a “motor”. Prior to such we used more simple lamps called “ Gaziklicht” (after the name of the gas - the oil) made of small tin cans with a small opening at the top into which was inserted a wick made of doubled rope and which required the use of hands to raise and lower it. Oil lamps, then, had wicks made with thin straw wrapped in cotton wool. We ate and learned by the light of these poor lamps.
The War Against the Locusts

A plague of locusts in Jerusalem was combatted in two ways: We dug trenches, filling them with the larvae on the ground and then with water to drown them or burnt them with torches. Those who were flying were met with loud noises made by banging metal cans together to keep them from remaining on the ground. No interventions helped when the plague was at its most severe as they ate all the trees and grass in the field, also reaching the houses where they ate the doors and windows made of wood and penetrated into the beds, among other places, laying eggs. The government issued a decree for all to go out to the fields and gather the eggs, bringing them to be burnt. Despite all this, the eggs hatched and a new generation of locust larvae ate what remained from before.

Stone Pillars

Near the Bet Yaakov neighborhood, in a place where the Machane Yehudah market now stands, was a round stone column on the ground, wide and long. The noted writer and investigator, Rav Yechiel Michal Pinz (z”l), who lived for a time in the area, used to say that this was the stone (Even HaZohelet) upon which Adonijah ben Haggith crowned himself.

A stone column similar to this is still to be found in the area of the Russian Compound, surrounded by a fence.

Also, in the courtyard of the Hurva of Rav Yehudah HeHasid in the Old City was placed a stone column upon which some would sit and discuss secular and political issues between Mincha and Ma’ariv. Rav Shimon Shamash would sit on it and distribute the letters received through the Russian mail and Rav Eli Minsch would distribute, from a sack filled with silver coins, the monies received from Moses Montefiore for the poor of Jerusalem according to the list in his hand. After the death of Rav Shmuel Salant (zt’l), Rabbi of the city, they moved the stone and placed it at his grave on the Mount of Olives.

The Coming of the British

When the British army neared Jerusalem, during the days of World War I, the Turkish forces faced them at the front which is now the location of the Romema neighborhood, near the Shaarei Tzedeck Hospital. We lived during those days in the Abu Batzel area, near the hospital. The Turkish army was camped in that area with its equipment and vehicles. Their wounded were brought for treatment and hospitalization to the hospital. At the end of Shabbat Hanukkah, around midnight, we became aware of much activity in the army camp. They were loading everything for departure and took the patients out of the hospital, fleeing in a hurry. In the morning, we saw the first British soldiers descend from the mountains and reach the metal workers’ neighborhood (called thus as the houses were made mainly from metal), just south of the hospital. Its inhabitants were among the poorest. The men of the British army began buying food and drink from the Jerusalem population and paid very handsomely for such - a pound sterling for a bottle of wine, half pound for a loaf of bread, two shillings for an egg, etc. Even Hanukkah pancakes (it was during the days of the holiday) were sold to them. Those who had
something to sell made a profit. Following the stressful siege of the days of the Turkish army, commerce gradually flourished and widened with the British army, beginning with the sale of fruits and vegetables as well as clothing, etc, improving the overall economic situation.

After the British government forbade selling to the army, trade began with vegetables, which were purchased in Arab villages near Jerusalem. After the economic situation improved they began, once again, to buy clothes, white goods and bedding. During days of the war many sold everything in the house, even sheets to be used as shrouds for the dead.

Coins

The coinage in the days of the Turkish sultanate in the country:
“Kabak” - copper coin worth around 4 perutot - divided into halves and quarters. A quarter “Kabak” was called “sachtotal”.
“Asiriyah” (tenth) (Tzeneral, in Yiddish) - about 10 perutot. A small coin covered in silver which was divided into halves.
“Bishlik” - a large coin, covered in silver, worth about 2 ½ -3 “grush”
“Vazara” - a silver coin worth 5-6 “grush”, divided into halves and quarters.
These coins were strung as beads on a necklace to be worn as jewelry by Arab women.
“Mejidi” - a pure silver coin, about 20-23 “grush” (shuruk), also divided into halves and quarters.
“Napoleon” - a French pure gold coin - about 100 “grush”.
“Turkish pound” - this coin was worth about 1 1/4 Napoleons.
Additional gold coins were known by the name Hiras which would be strung and serve as jewelry among Jewish women, calling them “Salbeh”, given as presents to the bride by the groom’s family.

There was also a large gold coin, named “Nabil”, worth about 5 Turkish pounds, also made into necklaces.

During World War I, when we were hungry for bread in Jerusalem and could not provide bread to the poor, the General Council of Israel, in Jerusalem brought out special copper coins, about 1/10 or an asiriya, on which was written “charity”.

The Turkish sultan brought out during the war paper bills as money of: 1 grush, 2.5 grush; 5 grush, 10 grush, 25 grush, 50 grush and one pound.
I still possess examples of almost all the money coins and bills from the days of the Turkish sultanate in the country, along with various antique coins which I purchased, as I had mentioned in another part of this book, when I had hiked with friends to Bitar village southwest of Jerusalem.
CONCERNING THE FAMILY

A. MY FATHER AND MOTHER

First Residences and Occupations

In Chapter 6 of my book “Shaarei Tzedek” I recounted a number of particulars from the lives of my father Harav Rabi Gershon son of Harav Rabi Naftali Tzvi Porush and my mother, Mrs. Pearl, daughter of Rav Yisrael Brima’t (acronym for ben Rav Yaakov Mordechai Twersky) (z”l). I will here add a number of further particulars.

When my parents first married they rented an apartment in an area then known by the name “HaHosh”. There were a number of courtyards there: of the Vilna, Horodna, Minsk and Holland/German Communities. Their apartment consisted of one room under the stairs. Their furniture consisted of: a bed, table with one chair, and a chest for clothing which also served as a seat and the bed for my father.

They later moved to live in the courtyard of Rav Issachar Baer, on Hebron Road. This was a large courtyard with many residents. Next to the courtyard was the jail for prisoners under death sentence and they could be seen occupying themselves in knitting Arab caps. From time to time, some prisoners succeeded in tunneling to reach the sewage pipes located underground on their way to escape through a toilet in one of the apartments. This happened in my parents’ apartment and my mother, when surprised, miscarried her first pregnancy.

My parents then supported themselves with a grocery store which they opened on Hebron Road; next to “the stores” was one of the locations in which the Sanhedrin met after being exiled from the Temple. My mother would bake bread and cakes for sale and my father, a stone cutter, would make images of holy places known to the tourists. As I had previously recounted in my book “Shaarei Tzedek” (p. 83), my father, for a short time thereafter, served as a teacher of this craft at the “All Israel Are Friends” (Alliance) School.

When they could not support themselves with the store, because of competition, they transferred the right of “Ownership” to Rav Brent, father of Mr. Alter Levin (z”l), and moved to live in Mea Shearim. My parents sent me the ownership payment for my necessities and food which came to 2 Majids (Ottoman gold coins) per year.

My Father’s Journey to India

My father traveled to India and stayed for two years with my mother’s rich uncle, Mr. Sassoon Gabai. On his return, he sold the goods he had brought from there - silk cloth, mirrors, tea, silk handkerchiefs, etc - and bought a house in the Bet Yisrael neighborhood which was then being built north of Mea Shearim.
After His Return from India

After his return from India, my father went to work in the hotel of his uncle, Rav Lippa Kamenitz. There he met Doctor Rav Moshe Wallach, who was residing at the hotel during the period shortly after his arrival in Jerusalem. My father, thus, became Dr. Wallach’s assistant, particularly as a translator between the doctor and the various residents of the city, Jews and non-Jews, as Dr. Wallach did not comprehend their languages nor they his.

During those days my parents lived in the Bet Yisrael neighborhood, already having had 6 children. Their apartment consisted of one room which was kept extremely clean with whitewashed containers holding plants and flowers in the courtyard. My father would return home late at night from his work in the Old City, leaving all the housework in my mother’s hands. In addition to this, she would be brought infants to massage and for limb strengthening. From time to time she was also a midwife. She also knew how to “blue” the eyes in cases of trachoma.

As a result of his work with Dr. Moshe Wallach, my parents returned to live in the Old City, this time on Armenians Street, in a courtyard known by the name “Shekulah”. Also living in this courtyard was the preacher from Preslov, who was a Gabbai (officer) at the Etz Hayim Talmud Torah and Yeshiva, Rav Avraham, the hospital pharmacist, Rav Yisrael Elfman and his son, Rav Avraham, who were bookbinders and two other, Arab, families.

B. MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS

My Brother, Naftali

My older brother was Rav Naftali Porush (z”l), owner of a manufacturing shop. His wife was Mrs. Feiga Tuvia daughter of the Rabbi and Scribe Yaakov Goldman (z”l) from Jaffa.

My Brother, Menachem Mendel

My brother Rabbi Menachem Mendel was a very bright student and the chief of slaughterers at the slaughterhouse in Jerusalem. His wife, Scheina Gittel, was the daughter of my uncle, HaRav Rabi Shlomo Zalman Porush. He was active in the community and, in his ambition to raise money for Torah students in Jerusalem, founded a House for scholars and Agudat Bnei Torah whose members were among the best of the Torah scholars in Jerusalem. He was among the first members of the Religious Zionists in Jerusalem and worked enthusiastically for the honor of HaRav Kook and HaRav Harlap (zt”l) against those who fought with and humiliated them. He published various articles and pamphlets concerning the study of Torah and social issues as well as, most importantly, a large book named “Inside the Walls”. He was an elected officer of the Minsk community and, at his suggestion, an area was leased by the community upon which important buildings were erected and which became communal property after the end of their leases.

My brother, Menachem Mendel, had 3 sons and 3 daughters:
His son Rav Mordechai - Senior porger\textsuperscript{14} and supervisor of Kashrut for the Tel Aviv Rabbinate.

The second son - Rav Shlomo Zalman - is in the United States. The third son is Rav Gerson - one of the directors of “Mifal-HaTorah” and founder of Kupat Holim for settlers in Israel.

Mrs. Haya Sarah, daughter of my brother Rav Mendel, was married to Rav Shimon Berner from the United States and Mrs. Esther (may she rest in peace) was married to Rav Eliezer Cohen (may he be chosen for a long life), porger and senior official in the Rabbinate in Jerusalem. Their son, Rabbi Yaakov was considered as one of the brightest young teachers in Jerusalem and was chosen to be among the scholars at the Rav Kook Institute.

Mrs. Ashirah-Rachel, daughter of Rav Mendel, married Rav Yerucham Karelenstein, director of a Haredi school in B’nei Brak. Their son, Rabbi Tzvi was also an outstanding teacher, among the best of the Ponivez (ph) Yeshiva in B’nei Brak and wrote a book called “Ma’agalei Tzedek” (Circles of Righteousness) on the Talmudic Masechet “Hallah”.

My Sister and Brother-in-Law, Rav David Solovetchik

My sister, Chaya Sarah, was married to Rav David Solovetchik, son of Rav Beinish Balacher (z”l). He was one of the students of the righteous Rabbi Zerach Braverman (z”l) and studied at the school of tradition (Musar) located in the Strauss Courtyard in Jerusalem with Rav Naftali Amsterdamer (z”l). This same sister died within two years after she married and Rav David married my younger sister, Chipa, with whom he had sons and daughters. One daughter married Rav Ze’ev, son of my brother Rav Naftali (z”l). He was a teacher and administrator at the “Netzach Yisrael” School in Haifa. Because of financial difficulties, Rav David traveled to the United States as a representative of the various talmud torah and hospital institutions in Jerusalem. After a time he sent for his wife and children. He authored a book “Hadrat David Otsar HaDranim” (David’s Glory and Treasure of HaDranim). After he died in the United States, his coffin was flown to be buried in the Jerusalem Cemetery (Har HaMenuchot).

My Brother, Rav Yaakov Mordechai

My brother, Rav Yaakov Mordechai, a student at the Etz Hayim Talmud Torah in Jerusalem, apprenticed in pharmacy with Rav Lieb Notkin and worked in the pharmacy department of Agudat “LeMa’an Tzion” along with Rav Binyamin Gavrilovitch (z”l). When the time came to be drafted into the Turkish army, during World War I, he fled, reached Paris and became a furniture merchant, staying there till the present. Two of his son, Gershon and Naftali, were killed by the Nazis during World War II and his third son remains wounded from the war. His one daughter, Gittel, married in Paris.

\textsuperscript{14} One who cuts away of forbidden fat and veins from kosher meat.
C. MY FATHER'S FAMILY

Rav Naftali (the first)

My father’s father, Rav Ha-Tzadik Naftali, son of Rav Eliezer Lipman Feldman Porush, came to Israel in 1855 together with his wife Lea, daughter of Rav Eliyahu HaCohen (may he rest in peace) and 2 sons: Rav Shlomo Zalman and Rav Gerson (z”l).

The story of Rav Naftali is presented in “Encyclopedia of Pioneers and Builders of the Settlement” by David Tidhar, Vol. 8, Page 3098.

My Uncle Rav Shlomo Zalman Porush

My uncle, Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Porush was a very learned person and involved with the community. He was the appointed leader of the Minsk Community and Gabbai of the Ashkenazic Jerusalem Burial Society. He founded the Shaarei Hesed charitable society and, with his participation, the Minsk Community Center buildings were erected near the Knesset Yisrael neighborhood, itself built by the Knesset Yisrael General Committee on Jerusalem.

His Sons and Daughters

Rabbi Zalman Porush’ oldest son was Rav Naftali Porush (z”l). He served as the secretary to Rabbi Shmuel Salant (zt”l), the Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, together with Rabbi Eliyahu Mordechai Eisenstein (z”l). After his father’s death, he took his place in the administration of the Shaarei Hesed charitable society with Rav Zavil Spitzer (z”l). He was also an expert in building construction and under his supervision were built the houses of the Knesset Yisrael neighborhoods, Minsk houses, the Shaarei Hesed neighborhood and others. He was in the habit of saying: Our forefathers said: “Whoever wants to lose money will hire workers and not sit with them” and I say: “Whoever wants to lose his energy will hire workers and sit among and supervise their work”.

Rav Naftali’s wife was Yocheved-Yochke, daughter of Rav Moshe Rivlin (z”l).

Rav Naftali Porush’ son is Rabbi Moshe Porush, among the leaders of Agudat Yisrael and vice-mayor of Jerusalem.

Rav Moshe’s son is Rabbi Menachem Porush, also among the leaders of Agudat Yisrael and, today, a member of the Knesset from that party.

A few years ago, during the preparations for the election to the Knesset and the local councils, Rav Moshe Porush and his son Rav Menachem organized a dinner for the family members, in order to influence them to vote for Agudat Yisrael, on whose list their names appeared. In charge of the banquet was Rav Shlomo Zalman Sonnenfeld who was the son of the daughter of Rav Naftali Porush. He announced that the oldest member of the family would speak. Because I myself was older than he, I did not stay quiet and I complained that I was surely the oldest of the family and that being the son of Rav Gershon and just as Rav Shlomo Zalman was worthy by virtue of the descendants following in his path, so Rav Gershon, my...
father, was likewise worthy of such. 

(MISSING TEXT)... (likely reference is to Sara Lieba, daughter of Shlomo Zalman)... married Rav David, son of Rav Yoel Moshe Solomon (z”l), owner of the publishing house which is still administered by his sons, Shlomo Zalman and Mordechai Solomon.

The second son of Rav Shlomo Zalman Porush was Rav Yehoshua Mordechai who served as a clerk at the Bikur Holim Hospital in Jerusalem. His wife was Freidel, daughter of Rav Avraham Hayim Wineberg (z”l).

The third son of Rav Shlomo Zalman Porush was Rav Eliezer Lipman - Rav Lippa - Porush, who was among the first inhabitants of the Shaarei Hesed neighborhood and the owner of the first grocery store there. His wife was Hadassah-Hodes, daughter of Rav Ephraim Fischl HaCohen Weichmann (z”l).

The fourth son of Rav Shlomo Zalman Porush was the righteous (tzadik) Rav Akiva Porush (z”l). He was a student of the righteous (tzadik) Rav Yehoshua Tzvi Michal Shapira (z”l), a scholar of Torah, in both its evident and hidden (occult) facets. His first wife was Sarah, daughter Rav Tzvi Hirsch Yellin (z”l) and his second wife was Haya Raizel, daughter of Rav Mordechai son of Rav Baruch Tzvi Friend (z”l).

Sheina Gittel, daughter of Rav Shlomo Zalman Porush was the wife of my brother, Rav Menachem Mendel Porush.

The fifth son of Rav Shlomo Zalman Porush was Rav Aharon (z”l), treasurer of the Etz Hayim Talmud torah and Yeshiva. His wife (may she be chosen for a long life) was Haya Gnasha, daughter of Rav Meir Hirsh Herschler (z”l).

The sixth son of Rav Shlomo Zalman Porush was Rav Eliyahu (z”l) who served as the supervisor of the Etz Hayim Talmud Torah. His wife was Golda, daughter of Rav Hayim Moshe Rodnitzky (z”l).

The daughter of Rav Sholom Zalman - Tzviya - was the wife of Rabbi Hayim Yehuda Lev Auerbach (z”l), a scholar of Torah, in both its evident and hidden (occult) aspects, and one of the founders and directors of the “Sha’ar Hashamayim” Yeshiva in Jerusalem, where they also learn the occult Torah. Their older son (may he be chosen for a long life) is the Rav Ha Gaon Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, head of the “Kol Torah” Yeshiva in Jerusalem, one of the great Torah scholars of our age.

D. MY MOTHER’S FAMILY

Rav Menachem Mendel Kamenitz

Is all not recounted in his book “Korot Ha-Itim” (The Events of the Times) concerning the travels of my honored forefather, Menachem Mendel Kamenitz (z”l) and his wife Chipa (may she rest in peace) and all they suffered on the way as well as during the earthquake, looting and cholera in Safed?

A short history of Rav Menachem Mendel is presented in the “Encyclopedia of Pioneers and Builders of the Settlement” by David Tidhar, Vol 2: Page 561, also listing his sons and daughters.
The history of Rav Eliezer Lipman-Lippa son of Rav Menachem Mendel, owner of the famous hotel which was in Jerusalem, is recounted in the above-mentioned encyclopedia, Vol 8: Page 1200.

Rav Aharon, son of Menachem Mendel Kamenitz, traveled to India to visit his sister Simcha and her husband, Mr. Sasson Gabbai, and died there. His wife had stayed in Jerusalem and was pregnant when her husband died; the son who was later born was called Aharon Lippa. This Aharon Lippa, after growing up and marrying, worked in the Kamenitz Hotel in Jerusalem. His sons, on growing up, traveled to Cuba and became rich, purchased a house and orchard from their father in Petach-Tikva. Over time, they changed the family name to “Shaked”.

Menachem Mendel Kamenitz

His Sons and Daughters
One of Aharon Lippa’s sons, Hayim Mandelbaum, was exiled, as a Turkish citizen, from Eretz Yisrael to Egypt during World War I, where he learned to drive. After the war he drove Dr. Chaim Weizman from Egypt to Jerusalem. Afterwards, he taught the first vehicle drivers here.

Rav Menachem Mendel Kamenitz had three daughters:

1) Guta, wife of Rav Baruch son of Rabbi Mordechai Gimpel-Yaffe (z”l), who refined gold and silver in Jerusalem.

2) Rosa Dina, wife of Rav Yisrael Salant (z”l) who was a wise student and outstanding teacher, and, by her second marriage, the wife of Rav Yisrael Brima’t (z”l) from Hebron. The son of Rosa Dina and Rav Yisrael Salant was Rav Moshe Salant (z”l). Yisrael Brimat had a son named Rav Mordechai, from his first wife, and Rosa Dina gave birth with him to my mother Pearl and Lea, wife of Rav Eliyahu son of Rav Aharon Jaffe, who served the courts and was a municipal worker in Jerusalem.

3) Simcha, wife of Mr. Aharon Gabbai Sassoon (z”l), of the rich Calcutta Jewish family. Their wedding was in Jerusalem, and since she was then only 12 years old, the Rabbinate of the city did not allow the wedding to take place inside the walls of the city, so they arranged it in a field, north of the city, near the cave containing the grave of Shimon the Righteous. It is said that when the bride was riding on a donkey to the wedding place, she fell off the donkey, and since then it is jokingly said: “Joy (Simcha) in your land and Merriment (Sasson) in your city” (since the bride was Simcha and the family of the groom, Sassoon).

When Simcha traveled to India with her husband, her sister Rosa accompanied them, along with her husband Rav Yisrael “Brima’t” (Ben Rav Yaakov Mordechai Tversky). They stayed there for two years after which they returned to Jerusalem, and, with the goods which they brought, bought a house in the Bet Yisrael neighborhood.
My Uncle, Rav Moshe Salant

My uncle, Rav Moshe Salant (z”l) and his wife Dina Labit Lotziner (Denker)(may she rest in peace), after their wedding, had a grocery store on Hebron Road in the Old City although did not succeed in business and went to work in the Kamenitz Hotel in Jerusalem. Since their
income was not sufficient, he planned to leave the country. Upon reaching Jaffa, the Schmerling family members and Rav Bezalel Lefin (z”l) advised him to open a hotel. This they did and succeeded as, from Jerusalem and the settlements, travelers, including the etrog merchants, came to stay in their hotel, giving it a good name.

During World War I, when the Jews were banished from Jaffa by the Turkish Government, they came to Petach Tikvah, and bought a house and orchard. After the war, they returned to Tel Aviv and opened a new hotel on Herzl Street, opposite the Herzilyah Gymnazia.

One of his sons, Tzvi Hirsch (z”l) died in Africa, and in his memory and honor his parents contributed a Sefer Torah and its decorations to the Neve Shalom synagogue in Jaffa. After they moved to Jerusalem, they brought the Sefer Torah with them and gave it to the synagogue in the Shaarei Tzedek Hospital. As the automobile was nearing Kfar Lifta, at the entry to Jerusalem, the vehicle overturned and the passengers injured but Rav Moshe with the Sefer Torah in his hands remained safe. During his last years, Rav Moshe lived in Jerusalem until his death at age 96, on the 10th of Shevat, 1948 (5708).
A) Menachem Mendel - born in Hebron and, after growing up, traveled to South Africa and then to the Belgian Congo. After his wife and one of his daughters died during World War I, he returned to his father’s house in Jaffa along with his two small daughters. He tried his hand at
business but again wandered, this time to Ethiopia. Towards the end of his days he stayed with his daughter Lea at the Bet HaShita Kibbutz in the Bet Shean Valley. He died there. His daughter, Chaya, married the scholar and well-known bibliographer Mr. Abraham Yaari, of the National Library at the University in Jerusalem.

B) Esther Rivka - wife of Mr. Hayim Yagnes, who came, in his youth, in 1900, from South Africa and settled in Petach Tikva as an orchard grower. One of their sons is the lawyer, Eliyahu Yagnes, and their daughter, Chaya, is married to the brother of Mr. Abraham Yaari (see above).

C) Zipporah-Feigl - wife of Dr. Baruch Tamari (z”l), the first dentist in Petach Tikva and who later settled in Jerusalem. During his time in Jerusalem he would come every Shabbat to pray in front of the Western Wall, even during the days of the disturbances and riots he did not avoid doing so. His sons in law are the lawyers Michael Caspi and Lombroso. Their son Judah is a director with the ministry of transportation and Yaakov is the principal of the agricultural high school in Ein Karem west of Jerusalem.

E. MY FATHER- AND MOTHER-IN-LAW

My Father-in-Law Rav Yosef Makofky

My father-in-law, Rav Yosef Makofky (z”l) was an outstanding student as well as Reader and Preacher of Torah lessons at the synagogue named after Rav Eliyakum Gatzil (z”l) located near the Mea Shearim neighborhood. He served as a teacher in the Shafiya Moshava near Zichron Yaakov, but due to the health of his children he was obliged to return to Jerusalem. He supervised the building of the Beit Warsaw neighborhood in Jerusalem. His wife helped support the household as well, designing and sewing socks on a machine which she had in her house.

Rav Yehudah Lev Zembraver

I have already mentioned, in the early part of this book, that my wife’s mother was Mrs. Malcha of the house of Rabbi Yehuda Lev Zembraver (zt”l). The righteous Gaon, Yehudah Lev, was one of the important personages and students of the Gaon Rav Moshe Yehoshua Lev Diskin from Bresk (zt”l) and studied along with his son, the Gaon Rav Yitzhak Yeruham Diskin (zt”l), with the Rabbi from Bresk, mentioning him in Responsa published in Jerusalem. After the Rabbi from Bresk came to Jerusalem, Rav Yehudah Lev taught in the community of Prushim founded by Gaon Rav Yitzhak Elhanan Spector (zt”l) from Kovno. He knew the entire 6 Sidrei Mishnah by heart and Rav Aryeh Lev Binzamin (z”l) recounted that Rav Yehudah Lev reviewed the entire Mishnah with his elder sage Rav Zvi 13 times, every month reviewing all the six Sedairim.

He came to Israel during his youth, in approximately 1878, and devoted himself to God’s work in holiness and purity. He founded, supported and directed, in the synagogue of the Mishkanot Yisrael neighborhood in Jerusalem, a group of learned students named “Beit Avraham” and for about 25 years was supported by monies received from his students outside of...
Rav Avigdor Zembraver (z”l), son of Rav Yehudah Lev, was among the better students of the Etz Hayim Yeshiva. They tell the story that when he was Bar Mitzvah he knew all of Masechet “Gitin” by heart. He was a faithful member of the house of Rabbi HaGaon Eliyahu David Rabinowitz Tumin (zt”l), when he served as the head of the rabbis in Jerusalem.

The son of Rav Avigdor was the Rav HaGaon Yitzhak Arieli (may he live long), among the great rabbis of learning in Jerusalem, a Rabbi in the “Knesset Yisrael” neighborhood and among the heads of the “Mercaz HaRav” yeshiva and institutions of Torah in the city as well as the author of important and well-known books on Halacha and Aggadah.

6. MY SONS AND DAUGHTERS

1) My oldest daughter, Esther, worked, when she was younger, as a secretary to the Postmaster (an Englishman named Hudson) during the days of the Mandate Government in Jerusalem. She married Dr. Ben Zion Schneiderovitch Shani* who was born in Tel Aviv and who completed his engineering studies in Italy. Today he works as one of the electrical engineers for the Electrical Authority. Two daughters were born to them: Ora, wife of Mr. Baruch Ronen, management engineer at “Amcor” in Israel. and Malcha Edna, wife of Yosef Langotzky, who works with the Geological Institute of the Israeli government.

(* His father, Rav Meir Schneiderovitch (z”l), came to the country more that 70 years ago, to work in the holy soil. With time he had the idea of founding a Jewish settlement in Beer Sheva. He left his family in Jaffa and traveled to Beer Sheva and allied there with an Arab who had a rather primitive flour mill. He brought in modern machinery, another Jew and even a Kosher butcher (shochet) in the hope of founding a Jewish settlement. They remained there until the riots of 1929 when the Arabs advised him to leave. He returned to his home in Jaffa and spent most of his time focused on the study of Torah and charitable deeds. He dedicated a Sefer Torah to the synagogue in the Neve Tzedek neighborhood in Tel Aviv - Jaffa. He died at age 93 after a full life.)

2) Rabbi Dr. Yisrael Porush - studied at Talmud Torah Etz Hayim, excelling in his studies, as he also did in the small yeshiva. Upon the advise of Dr. Aherman, from Frankfurt on the Main, I sent him to the yeshiva of Rav Breuer in Frankfurt on the Main and, thereafter, to the Rabbinical Seminary of Rabbi Hildesheimer in Berlin, where he received more instruction. After completing his school studies he entered the University of Berlin, receiving there a Ph.D. in Mathematics. He had good opportunities in Germany but, in the meantime, Hitler came to power. He then traveled to England to complete his studies and obtained a rabbinical position in Finchley. After Rav Herzog (zt”l) left his position as rabbi in Dublin, Ireland, he was advised to take the open position. However, the Chief Rabbi of Britain in those days, Rabbi Hertz (z”l), suggested that such was not appropriate for him, as if he were to go to Ireland he might not be able to return to Britain for a rabbinical post, just as occurred to Rabbi Herzog following his...
Meanwhile, the war escalated - World War II - and it seemed best to emigrate to Australia for a rabbinical position at the Great Synagogue in Sydney as well as a member of the Bet Din. He still serves successfully in those positions to this day.

During his stay in Berlin, he married Bertha, daughter of Rav Link of Berlin.

Their older daughter, Judith, is married to Dr. Benjamin Bert Mond, previously an American Army chaplain, who currently lectures on Mathematics at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio. His second daughter, Naomi, is the wife of Rav Uziel Liebler - a jewelry merchant and active in the community of Melbourne (he has visited Jerusalem a few times as a delegate of the Mizrahi Congress).

3) My son Shlomo Zalman - studied at Talmud Torah Etz Hayim and then began to work with me in the office of the Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital. He completed his graduation degree with night school studies and, in time, began to work for the “Shell” oil company, which became the “Paz” company. He continues to work there today. His wife is Shoshana, daughter of Rav Zalman Binzamin (z”l), owner of the Binzamin winery. Their son Adiel studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, their daughter Ofra is in the Army and their son Ariel studies at a high school in Haifa where they all live.

4) My daughter, Lea, studied at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem where she met a young man, from America, named Theodore Cook. They married and went to the United States. He first worked as secretary for the Jewish Agency and, afterwards, for “B’nai Brith”. Their sons Daniel and David study in university there and also came for one year of further study at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

5) My daughter, Rivka, married Mr. David Dembo of South Africa. They own a work clothing factory there. They have 2 sons, Alon and Ron, and a daughter, Sharon.

6) My daughter, Sarah, is married to Mr. David Rowland of London. He serves as chief officer of a manufacturing agency. They have three children: Jonathan, Daniel and Michael.

7) My daughter, Shoshana, after completing her studies at the Landau School and the English College in Jerusalem started to study law. She is married to Mr. Yeruham Ben-Dror who worked in the Registry Office of the Department of Labor as assistant director. He was sent, 2 years ago, to the United States in order to undertake special fund raising. Their children: Yuval, Ilana, Irit and Yosef.
CONCERNING WORK

A. Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital

Dr. Moshe Wallach

I have previously recounted, in my book “Sha’arei Tzedek” (page 81) the work of Dr. Moshe Wallach during the days of Jamal Pasha’s edicts and World War I, in trying, as much as possible, to free Jews from Turkish army service or prevent their expulsion from the country. I recalled that when an expulsion order was applied to Dr. Tico, the ophthalmologist, he turned to Dr. Wallach for his assistance. Dr. Wallach went, together with Dr. Tico, to the office of Jamal Pasha. As they entered his office, Jamal Pasha called out: Here comes the Devil to cancel the edicts. However, after Dr. Wallach explained to the Pasha about Dr. Tico’s important work and his service to the citizens of Jerusalem without heed to religion or nationality, the edict was rescinded.

When the hospital opened, the budget called for 10 free beds. However, after a few years, when Dr. Wallach succeeded in enlarging the budget to 20 beds, the clerks and workers requested additional salary. Dr. Wallach told them that he would consider it. After some time, when they asked him, he said: “Yes, there will be a raise. Instead of the current practice of saying three Psalms everyday, from now on you will recite five”. The discussion was closed.

At first, the hospital nurses were not allowed off from work to leave the hospital except during one half day per week. With time, they organized themselves and requested more free time with the issue escalating until a strike was called. Public opinion was on the side of the nurses, but Dr. Wallach did not consider this. The negotiations continued until a compromise was reached, holding that every one who wanted time off was required to receive special permission for such from Dr. Wallach himself and those who returned late would not be allowed in the gate of the hospital without Dr. Wallach’s personal permission.

Letters of Hospital Support from the Wise Men of Jerusalem

During Sivan 5672 (1912), a number of letters on behalf of the Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital administration were sent to the important personages in Frankfurt on the Main. The leading letter was that of the Rav Ha Gaon Rabbi Shlomo Breuer (z’t’l) in which he recounted the hospital’s situation and requested an increase in assistance to the hospital in order to broaden its activities. The letters were signed by all the Rabbis in Jerusalem at the time, from all denominations.

Copies of the letters from the leaders of the Sephardim and other eastern congregations are still in my possession. Here are the names of the signers:
(trans. note: I have omitted from the translation of a variety of honorific and laudatory acronyms)

The younger Shmuel Nissim
The younger Hayim Eli
The young Avraham Gegin
(location of the stamp of the Beth Din of the Sephardim)
Yosef Bachur ben Zenisti
The younger Avraham Philosoph
Yaakov Mordechai HaLevi
Eliyahu Mordechai Sirango
The younger Eliyahu Lag’imi
Avraham Big’ago
Yitzhak Michael Badhav
The younger Avraham Antavi Edim
The younger Hayim Shaul Devik
BenZion Mordechai, chazan
The younger David Surnago
Yaakov Hayim Elifa
The younger Hayim Yaakov Borla
(location of the stamp of the Beth Din of the Sephardim)
Rafael Shlomo Lanido - Head of the “Ohel Mo’ed” Yeshiva (his seal)
The younger Shalom Yosef Araki
(location of the seal of the Beth Din of the Yemenite Holy Community (Kehilat Kodesh)
Yosef Said HaLevi
Hayim Saria
The younger Avraham Suri Zaha
The late S’char Yechia Elendof
The younger Nachman Batito - Rabbi of the Western Congregations (his seal)
The younger Eliyahu Me Finizal (his seal)
Avraham Aminoff
Shlomo Mosayouf
Natanel Dudof
Moshe Cohen Malkiouf
Shlomo David Shauliouf
Binyamin Shauliouf
(location of the stamp of the Bukharan Kollel committee)
The Wise Among the Men of Jerusalem: Moshe Franko (his seal)
David Popo (seal of the Sephardic Kollel)

The Opening of the Hospital

In the last chapter of my book “Sha’arei Tzedek” (Chap. 10, Page 87) I wrote concerning the hospital that: “Among the things requiring work in the hospital... are: repair of the elevator for patient transport from floor to floor, repair of the central heating... and a special building for the School of Nursing”.

Thank God that, with our continuing efforts and the blessings of the Director of the
Hospital, Dr. F. Schlesinger, the above mentioned tasks have been successfully completed in addition to many other improvements in medical and general equipment of the hospital. In those days construction of an additional building was started on the campus of the hospital for laboratories, administration and offices in order to provide more space for patients in the main building.

Recently, the hospital infirmary was transferred to one of the wings of a large common building, constructed by a private contractor, in an area on the southeast side of the hospital, also for the purpose of increasing the space for patient departments in the main building.

B. My Work in the Hospital

My Being Chosen as Rabbi of the Hospital

During the days of World War I, with the required mobilization on Ottoman subjects in Israel, rabbis were exempt from required service. When I was about to be drafted, I was appointed by Dr. Wallach, director of Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital, where I worked, as rabbi of the hospital. For this reason, the Beth Din of Jerusalem had me undertake the task of visiting the patients in their sick beds and instructing them in the recitation of “Vidui” and the writing of wills.

Between Dr. Wallach and Myself

Working with Dr. Wallach, as is known, was not the easiest, due to his intensity and strict organization. My father, in his era, suffered not a little from him, though handled it all with affection and patience.

However, for myself, there were occurrences which I could not tolerate, regarding the doctor’s behavior and attitude and I will recount a few of such:

a) Initially, my work at the hospital was at the side of the administrator Mr. Yonah Marcus (z”l) who would address me as “Mr. Porush”. However, Dr. Wallach would turn to me simply by my first name “Eli”. By his example, the hospital workers would also call me “Hajeh Eli”. In addressing the hospital pharmacist, Mr. Aryeh Lev Notkin and Rav David Moshe Epstein (z”l), he would use the title “Adon” (Mister). (In the same manner he, afterwards, addressed the clerks Aritzieli and May.) Once I became a father to children, I could not longer tolerate this. Once, on Shabbat eve, on exiting the synagogue after Evening prayers, Dr. Wallach exited after me and called out, as usual, “Eli! Eli!” to which I did not answer and I continued on my way. When those who were walking with me alerted me of such by saying “Is the Doctor not calling you?”, I answered them out loud, so that all would hear: “I am called Adon Porush and not Eli” and from then on he began to call me “Adon Porush”.

b) Before World War I, I once suffered from a stomach ailment and the doctor recommended that I be admitted to the hospital for a few days of tests. I went home and returned with my Tallit and Tefillin and my father (z”l) climbed the hospital steps with me. Dr. Wallach met us and warned my father that he would be allowed to visit only during the set visiting hours.
I said to Dr. Wallach: “If that is the case, I will return home”, which surprised him and I continued, saying “If my father whose work is in the room next to my patient room cannot visit me as he sees fit, I do not want to be treated in the hospital”. I said goodbye and I left. When my brother, Rav Naftali (z”l), traveled to Beirut on business, I went with him and visited a medical professor there. He gave me certain medications and set a diet for me. When I returned and showed Dr. Wallach the medications he said that they were not proper and it was forbidden for me to take them. The World War soon broke out and, as a result, I ate only black bread and this served to alleviate my illness.

c) Dr. Wallach did not allow the clerks to smoke in their offices although both I and the late Mr. Yitzhak Aritzieli were smokers and on more than one occasion we had conflicts with Dr. Wallach regarding this.

My Membership in the “Worker’s Union”, etc.

As a clerk in the Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital, I was registered and accepted as a member of the clerks’ and workers’ general union of Israel from the early days, in 5670 (1910). Those active in this matter were Rav Meir son of Rav Avraham Aryeh Hamburger (z”l), and another of the clerks of Hadassah Hospital who explained to me the goal was the improvement of the economic, social and spiritual conditions of the workers. A letter dated Adar 27, 5670, still in my possession, contains the membership approval in the clerks union. After I paid the necessary dues, I received a card numbered 146. On Shevat 3, 5671 (1911), I received a card as member of the General Histadrut, number was 3696/16. The clerks who had signed this were: H. Rechev, Emanuel Yellin and H. Lotzinsky. As a member of the Histadrut, I was given the opportunity to buy a plot of land in the Bet HaKerem neighborhood of Jerusalem. However, when the taxes to be paid as owner of the plot increased, I sold it and placed the profit into an apartment which I purchased, on credit, in an inexpensive neighborhood on the eastern border of the Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital (See my book “Sha’arei Tzedek”, page 66, concerning my participation in the founding and development of that neighborhood.)

Around the same time, Rav Mordechai Tefferburg (z”l), the noted alcohol merchant, advised me to join the “B’nai Brith” organization and Rav Zeidel Binzamin (z”l), the “Achava” organization. I chose “Achava” in which, over time, I served in various positions and remain a member to this day.

My Travels for My Work

When it was necessary to purchase fodder for the cows in the shed at the Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital, I would travel by train to Hadera. If I was not able to obtain such from those in charge there, I would travel to Binyamina and, from time to time, I even reached Giv’at Ada. The director of the agricultural office in Hadera was then Mr. Shmuelim and, in Binyamina, Mr. Halmer.

During the years of Shmita I would buy what I needed from Arabs in the area of Petah Tikvah. The middleman was Rav Hirsch Lev Dinovitz, who would travel with me to the Arab villages of Sheik Abu Kishk or to the German settlement, Wilhemina.
Regarding the subject of my travels during the first pause of the War for Independence, to bring food supplies to the Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital from Tel Aviv and vicinity, I have already recounted such in my book “Sha’arei Tzedek”, page 76. I add here that I traveled in a Jeep on the new road which was broken through during the battles, known by its nickname of the “Burma Road”, on chains and netting stretched between the hills such that vehicles could safely pass. We would travel by way of Masmiya (junction) and Rehovot. When we reached Rehovot and saw, in the stores, all types of food in good supply and without end, we became very excited, after having suffered deprivation during the prior months of siege in Jerusalem. We fell upon the food supplies which we received and ate to satisfaction, even taking food for the road.

Until I was able to acquire vehicles for material transport from Tel Aviv for the hospital, I would be delayed there a few days and I took the opportunity to participate in a trip to Beer Sheva which was conquered during the battles by the Haganah. On the way we saw the results of the destruction from the previous days of battle, as well as the military positions and the various settlements on the way which were fought over, in addition to what happened in Beer Sheva and its environs.

Other Travels

About three years ago I was privileged to participate in a trip to Sodom, Masada and Ein Gev. This time I saw Beer Sheva, built and settled, with new, well paved, roads leading in all directions. In Sodom, I saw the Dead Sea works. I attempted to join the climbers on their way to the summit at Masada, but was compelled to be among of those who did not succeed. At Ein Gedi we saw the men working on its development, the waterfall, the green and fruitful gardens and the many vistas.

This year I was privileged to travel to Beer Sheva, taken there in his car by my dear son-in-law Ben Zion Shani. I saw the great development of the city and its surroundings. May the Lord be blessed that I was privileged to see it, not only in its destruction but in its return.

My Relations with the Hospital Workers

When Dr. Wallach was very old, and the leadership of Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital passed to other hands, the good relations between the administration and the clerks and workers changed.

During the absolutist rule of Dr. Wallach in the hospital, the clerks and workers organized themselves with the aim of pursuing an improvement in their condition. A meeting of the clerks and workers was called, to which I was also invited. It was my honor to chair the meeting at which the clerks’ complaints were presented. I told the clerks that the first concern of those employed at the hospital should be the proper work, although they complained about the conditions of their families. I then told them that I could not join them and I left the meeting. With time, the clerks and workers did succeed in obtaining some of their demands with the help of the workers’ Histadrut. Since I had left the workers’ group, they began to encroach on the tasks which were mine to perform since they were afraid that I was of the same view as Dr. Wallach, who then still had influence with the administration.
My Retirement from Work

After I also reached 70 years and completed 50 years of work at the hospital, and it was difficult for me to tolerate the changes which had occurred in the hospital, I began to consider retirement. Nonetheless, those close to me advised me not to do so, saying that I was used to working and that, if I retired, I would not feel well. I traveled to speak with the Righteous Gaon of “Hazon Ish” (z’t”l) to ask his advice. I told him about my life, particularly concerning the many opportunities over the years that would allow me to work under conditions better than those at Sha’arei Tzedek but that I repeatedly chose to work there, since only there could I continue to lead an observant life in the best way possible. I explained that because of the recent changes, I had begun to consider retirement, in spite of the advice of those close to me. He asked me if my income would suffice if I were to stop working. I told him that such was the case as we are among those who make do with little. He told me that I would be able to stop working and wished me success. I continued and asked his blessing so that I could return to Torah study as I had in my youth, as that had been my goal from the outset. He asked me my mother’s name and I told him. He then said: “Eliyahu, son of Pearl, go and succeed”! and I did as he advised.

After I stopped working at the hospital, I considered moving to live in the Sha’arei Hesed area where many of my relatives live and where there are houses for study and various lessons in Torah. Nonetheless, the Rav Gaon Rabbi Eliezer Y. Wildenberg, among the important young Rabbis in Jerusalem and a leader of the Beth Din, who lives in my neighborhood and whose place of prayer, as for myself, is in the synagogue of the Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital, said to me that given my years of experience as Gabbai and Prayer leader and Shofar blower in the synagogue as well as teacher of Mishna lessons given specially to those who have contributed to the hospital, it was forbidden for me to leave the synagogue and cease my activities there as it is written that such can lead to a shortening of one’s days. Because of this, I stayed in my place and continue (with God’s help) in prayer and holy service in the hospital synagogue.

Rav Eliezer Wildenberg

Rabbi Wildenberg, after establishing his place of prayer as the synagogue of the hospital, began, at my request and with my assistance, to present lessons (in the synagogue) on the Shulchan Aruch (Orech Hayim) with Mishna Berura. After completing such, he is currently presenting lessons on “Ein Yaakov” and after completing such, we plan to study Talmud. He also preaches, with great erudition, every Shabbat in the synagogue, before evening prayers, concerning the Parasha of the week. May the Lord give him many years to add to and expand his learning of Torah and of the many great books containing questions and answers regarding important and central matters necessary for life in the State of Israel.

“Encore” (Hadran)

Over the last few decades during which I have been giving Mishna lessons, every morning, in the synagogue of the Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital, I have completed studying the 6
books of the Mishna more than once.

During Hanukah, 5722 (1962) at a feast celebrating the completion of the Mishna, I said:
“This is not the first “Hadran” concerning the Mishna which I have said and I hope that it
will not be the last.”

In the Mishna which ends with the comment of Rav Yehoshua ben Levi “The Holy One
Blessed be He will, in the future, provide each and every holy person (Tzadik) 310 worlds”. It
was then asked if there were categories of holy persons as he had said “to each and every
Tzadik”. In truth there are two categories. There is a tzadik who sits and learns Torah by
himself and one who helps and hold the hands of those who are learning. As such, it was felt
necessary to give only one-half of 310 worlds but God gives every one 310 worlds and not half
thereof.

Similarly, I learned from Rav Eliezer Wildenberg, Rabbi of the hospital synagogue,
concerning a sentence from Psalms “You are benevolent, God, as you reward a man according to
his deeds”. It was asked, what kind of benevolence is this is he rewards each according to his
deeds? The reply was: Is it not the case that one cannot perform any deed without the help of
God, therefore man should not receive a full wage for his deeds, as it is the benevolence of God
wherein he gives each his full wage as if he alone was performing the deeds.

We have finished the Six Sidrei Mishna, the last of which are Sidrei Kadishim and
Teharot, concerning the laws regarding the Temple which we daily and hourly pray will soon be
built in our days so that we may perform our obligations. Known are the words of scholars
concerning the sentence: “In every place incense is offered to my name... - even more so when
those wise students concern themselves with the laws of sacrifice, I consider it as if they are
sacrificing to the heavens.”

With the completion of Seder “Teharot”, we return and start with Seder “Zeraim” which
opens with the law: “When do we say the Shema during evening prayers? We say it at the hour
when the priests were beginning to eat their portion”; associated with the time when the Temple
was standing. May it be thy will that just as we were allowed to be present at the beginning of
redemption, we should will soon be allowed full salvation and the sight of the Temple on its hill
with priests and Levites worshiping with songs and praises and Israelites by their presence,
Amen.

Upon My Reaching Eighty

On Elul 7, 5723 (1963) - one week before the day of my completing 80 years - the
workers of the Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital prepared a banquet and invited the doctors and nurses
of the hospital as well as my family and close friends in Jerusalem. Those speaking at the
banquet included Dr. Schlesinger - Hospital Director, Rabbis and Gaonim, Rav Shlomo Zalman
Auerbach and Rav Eliezer Wildenberg, the vice mayor of Jerusalem - Rav Moshe Porush and
his son, M.K. (Member Knesset) Rav Menachem Porush, Mr. A Mai - a member of the board of
directors of the hospital - who reviewed the various activities for which I had responsibility in
their era and which were performed admirably, and Prof Yosef Yoel Rivlin - who recalled the
work of my father (z”l) during the years of Dr. Wallach (z”l) even before the hospital was built.

In addition to the speakers and well-wishers, I also spoke at the banquet and said:
“I did not work for only 50 years at the hospital but have served the institution for 62 years. I was 18 when I left the Etz Hayim Yeshiva in Jerusalem and began to work in organizing the hospital, even before it opened, as an assistant to my father (z”l). At the head of the hospital stood Dr. Wallach and his assistant was Mr. Yonah Markus (z”l), who, after seeing the good quality of my work recommended to my father that I stay as a regular worker. I agreed to such.

In Masechet Hulin (Talmud) (Page 24, Line 72) it is said: Speaking of Rav Hanina, even when he 80 years old he would stand on one leg and remove and put on his shoe. Rabbi Hanina said: “The hot water and oil that my mother applied to me in my childhood by my mother stood me in my old age”.

If I have also reached eighty with God’s help, I say that the satisfaction which I have had from my work at Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital stood for me; that I was occupied with three things upon which the world stands: Torah - in my participation in the Torah lessons in the hospital synagogue, especially the morning Mishna lessons, which I provided, Work - that is, Prayer - in the synagogue (and I was worthy to be a prayer leader during High Holy and Festival Days, and Charity - by my work in the hospital whose central feature was an act of charity).

I concluded my speech with words of thanks and blessings for the participants and speakers at the banquet, especially for the Hospital Director, Dr. Schlesinger, and his assistants who work for the development and improvement of the hospital and to Rabbi Eliezer Wildenberg, Synagogue Rabbi, who inspires, with his spirit, and wisdom those who come to the synagogue for his lessons and sermons.
Author’s Eightieth Birthday Celebration in the Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital
A. Rich Men from Misers

During my youth I heard the following story concerning the rich notable from Jerusalem, Rav Moshe Wittenberg:

On one occasion, when repairs to the “Mikveh” in the Hurvah courtyard were needed, a collection was arranged to help fund such. Rav Shmuel Salant and the Administrator of the Hurvah courtyard, Rav Zalman Hayim Rivlin (z”l) went to Rav Moshe Wittenberg to request a contribution from him. They were welcomed well and asked of their request. After explaining such, Rav Moshe said: “Do you honorable people not know that I am not in the habit of giving contributions? Thus, why did you come?” Rav Shmuel answered: So that you will receive blows in punishment. When Rav Moshe expressed surprise, Rav Shmuel explained: “When you arrive in heaven, they will ask you why you did not give charitably and they will surely punish you accordingly. If they asked why you did not contribute to the repair of the mikveh, perhaps you will say that no one came to request such. Thus, we have come, so that you will not be able to complain so and, thus receive blows.” This pleased Rav Moshe and he gave a respectable donation.

Similarly, I heard that they told the story of Rav Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin (“HaNatziv”) who was told of a rich but very miserly man who did not give to charity. HaNatziv traveled to this rich person and was received with great honor. After some conversation, the rich man said to the Rabbi: “Surely, the honored Rabbi comes to me to request a large contribution to the Yeshiva of which he is the head.” The Natziv said to him: “No! I came to visit a sick person.” The rich man said: “I am not sick.” The Rabbi said to him: “You are surely dangerously ill, since you are rich but are a miser. The wise men tell us that he who visits an ill person and is of the same age will remove one of his 60 illnesses and thus I came to remove 1/60 ....” Thus, the Rabbi left with a decent contribution.

15 “HaNatziv” is the acronym formed by the initials of his name.
B. “To Think Thoughts”

I heard them speak of the Gaon Rav Hayim Movalushin (z”l), who would repeatedly go himself to the doorways of contributors to receive contributions for his famous yeshiva. The Rabbi once became ill and sent his aide to visit the contributors, according to the list he gave him to carry. Rav Hayim would usually travel on foot but the aide, in honor of the special task given him, dressed in fine attire and traveled in a wagon with bridled horses, in order to make an impression. One of the rich men saw the aide coming and did not want to provide a contribution. When the aide returned to Rav Hayim who saw that the contribution of that rich person was missing, he was most surprised. The next year, Rav Hayim met with the rich man as usual and expressed his surprise that he had not donated when the aide came to him. The man said: “You come to me with only a coat and walking stick, thus not taking excessive expenses, but the aide came to me riding on horses. It is not my desire to give money for such expenses.” Rav Hayim said to him: “Concerning the construction of the Tabernacle it is written ‘Behold, I have called the name of Bezalel ben Uri ben Hur ... to make designs in gold, silver and copper’. How do we understand “to make designs? To know and understand what the contributor thought when contributing. If the generous one gives in pure charity (for the sake of heaven), his contribution became the holy instruments, such as the Ark, the table, the Menorah and the like. However, if one gave his contribution to honor himself, they would make his contribution into those things whose holiness was not of the first order. It is so regarding the yeshiva. If you give you contribution purely as charity (for the sake of heaven), it will surely be used for the needs of the Yeshiva students and definitely not for extraneous expenses such as coaches, horses and the like.” This found favor in the eyes of the contributor and he doubled his contribution, even for the prior year.

C. The Privilege of Saying “Kaddish”

I heard of an amazing occurrence from Rav Yehoshua son of Rav Yaakov Shapira who heard it from some who had heard it from Rabbi Yosef Hayim Sonnenfeld (z”l):

In the city of Pressburg (Hungary) there was an important merchant who would daily separate out one tenth of his profits and give the remainder to the town’s yeshiva so that someone would say Kaddish for those departed and buried souls who did not leave behind anyone to say Kaddish after them. Even after the condition of his business worsened, he struggled with all his might to continue this work and did so until he died. Even after his death, his wife continued in his work despite the difficulties of her material situation. One day she was descending the steps of the yeshiva with a broken heart and upset about her condition. She met an old Jew who asked her why she was so sad. She spoke of her life’s difficulties and that her two daughters had not yet grown up and she had no funds for their wedding. The man asked her how much money she needed and, after she answered, he wrote her a check for the sum of 1000 Gulden (Guilder) or Kroner. At the same time Rav Hayim Sonnenfeld and his friend Rav Akiva son of the Rabbi of Presburg were leaving the yeshiva. As they were passing the old man and the woman, the old man stopped them and requested that they serve as two witnesses to his signature on the check. For additional proof he signed his name on the papers of the witnesses.
so that they could compare signatures....

The next day the woman went to the bank to redeem the check. Since the amount was much larger than usual, the clerk brought the check to the director for further inspection. He became very emotional when he saw that the signature was that of his father who had died less than a year before and asked the woman how and when she received the check. When the woman said that she had received it the day before, he did not believe her, until the witnesses and testified as to how they saw the old man give her the check after he had signed it with his own hands and for further proof had signed on their papers so that they could attest to the matter. The bank director sent to his house to bring pictures of various men, including one of his father. When the pictures were presented to all of the witnesses by themselves, each pointed to pictures of the father and said that this was the man whom they saw sign and give the check to the woman. When the woman told him of her and her husband’s activities on behalf of saying Kaddish for the departed souls who had no one to speak for them, the man confessed that he had not observed the saying of Kaddish for the departed soul of his father who had died that year. He believed that by virtue of the woman who pursued the issue of the saying of Kaddish at the Yeshiva for the departed souls, his father revealed himself to her and placed the check in her hands. The bank director gave her the money and repented.

D. The Wise Man and Servant

My father (z”l) told me:

The Sephardic community in Jerusalem once voted and chose a wise man, learned in the Torah, pleasant and active in the holy community to serve as a Rabbinical emissary to Jewish congregations in the Diaspora. However, this man did have a good external appearance and he was not handsome. In his place, they chose another man, tall and exceptionally handsome, who would serve the wise man in his dealings and who would wear the rabbinical cloak.

On the way, the wise man thought and said to his servant: Let us switch our tasks. Whenever we arrive somewhere, I will say that I am the servant and you the wise person. You will make yourself appear ill and I will suggest that I preach in your place due to your illness.

Thus they did and when the congregation heard the excellent sermon of the “servant” they were astounded and said: If the servant of the wise man is so great in his knowledge of Torah, how much more so is the wise man. They then pressed the issue and went to visit the “Sick Wise Man”, bringing their contributions to him, requesting that he bless them. He said to them: I can bless you only with my learning but not with my health.
APPENDICES

A. Letters of Congratulation Received When I Became Sixty

In my book “Sha’arei Tzedek” (Pages 68-69) I recounted the celebration held in my honor, in the Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital, when I became 60.

Here I provide copies of a few letters received at the celebration, and of comments of my departed brother, Rabbi Menachem Mendel (z”l) at the celebration party.
To those organizing the anniversary celebration of the Honorable Rav Eliyahu Porush (h’yv)16
Jerusalem:

Most honorable gentlemen:

My heartiest thanks for your gracious invitation to participate in the anniversary celebration noted above. As I will be occupied with another important matter at the same time, I will not be able to attend. I therefore send my blessings in writing.

My esteemed and sincere blessings to the committee organizing the important anniversary party for our honored friend Rav Eliyahu ben Gershon (z”l) Porush who continues his important work and the tradition of his departed father (z”l) on his 60th anniversary. May it be for life! May it be well prophesied that God with lengthen his days for good and his years in pleasantness.

I hereby write and sign my blessing for a blessed and successful year of building Zion and the Sanctuary of Ariel.

With honor and blessing:
Ben Zion Meir Chai Uziel
Rishon LeZion
Chief Rabbi of Israel

16 Acronym for a Hebrew phrase meaning “May the Lord watch over and sustain him”
Talmud Torah and Yeshivah Etz-Hayim
The Great and General

In the Courtyard of Our Rabbi Yehudah HeHasid (z’t’l)
In the Holy City Jerusalem:

*It is a tree of life to them that grasp it and its supporters will be rewarded.*

On the 21st of Elul 5703 (1943)

Blessings and Life to Our Friend
Rav Eliyahu Porush

I participate in all the congratulations being offered by family and friends on the days of his completing 60 years, a major portion of which has been given to the great hospital Sha’arei Tzedek. It is the only hospital in Eretz Yisrael which fulfills “The ruler listens to the truth and all its servants are righteous”; the only hospital whose head, even its clerks and workers, are observant of the Torah and commandments, fearful of God and among the faithful of Israel.

Here, a student who grew up in our holy yeshiva as the son of learning and fearful of God, is fulfilling a great position at this special hospital.

My God lengthen his days and years, that he may enjoy the satisfaction of old age. May his days be doubled, 120 years, within his family. May God’s learning and peace be fostered in him and his children. May he be worthy of seeing the salvation of our nation. May God provide him and all Israel a good year and a year of our salvation.

With deep heartfelt feeling and blessings,

Yechiel Michal Tokzinkski
Menashe Ch. Elishar  
Chief Agent  
Misafro Company (Israel), Ltd.

Jerusalem 19 September 1943

To: The Chairperson of Committee of the Anniversary of Rav Eliyahu Porush  
Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital  
P.O. Box 6032  Jerusalem

Dear Sir:

Due to my trip to Tel Aviv, I will not, to my great dismay, be able to attend the anniversary celebration of my friend Rav Eliyahu Porush, upon his completion of 60 years. Please pass along to the anniversary “groom” my best blessings and wishes, that his days will be lengthened and that he see the rebuilding of David’s fallen house and the salvation of our land and people.

His love and devotion for the good of the institution and those dependent on it, to whom he has devoted most of his life, should serve as an example, to every faithful and honest worker, that the good of the community comes before private interests.

I conclude with a double blessing for a good and rich New Year for the anniversary groom.

With the blessing of a faithful friend,

Menashe Ch. Elishar
Yisrael Cherbinsky

Ramat Gan

Elul 28 5703 (1943)

For the honor of:
Rav Eliyahu Porush, Jerusalem

“Our land soon in our time”

I was pleased to be informed of this 60th anniversary celebration - I also rejoice. May we all be worthy of the 70th anniversary of our old friend Rav Eliyahu Porush (to 120 years). May he, his house and all his celebrate and enjoy in doing the will of their maker, each man under his vine and each man under his fig tree. May the salvation of Judah and Israel be assured, leading to a redeemed Zion, as our fathers were redeemed.

Please deliver my greeting and blessing to his wife as to himself, a friend to friend, within their blessed house, seeing sons and descendants with peace in Israel. May God give him the strength and power to listen to his pleasant melodies and rich songs for years before the Ark.

I will conclude, from the depths of my heart, with a blessing for the year - May a Good Year be written, for a good life.

His close friend,

Israel Cherbinsky
Jerusalemite
13 Tishre 5704    12/X/43

To: The Honorable Gentleman
Rav Eliyahu Porush
Sha’arei Tzedek

I regret that, due to my illness, I was not able to participate in the anniversary celebration which was prepared for you recently. However, I wish, belatedly, to attach my blessing and my best wishes to all your dear ones and friends who have sought the well-being and good fortune of you and your family. Please continue to contribute to the building of the institution of Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital, which you have served faithfully and successfully for many years, and for many years to come.

I also wish you a good year and blessings for a good, long life.

Yours,

Y. Kisilov
My Dear Brother,

I can readily envy you, as there is sometimes jealousy between brother, as it is written “and he was jealous of his brother”. But you are also my student, whom I taught in the “Etz Hayim” Yeshiva from Masechet Beitzah and several topics from the Mishna. Our fathers said: “One can be envious of all except one’s sons and students..”

There is something that allows me to be jealous of you. Not for the honor which you are receiving today. We are not desirous of honor and, even more so, we do not chase after honor. No, I am jealous that you have succeeded in completely fulfilling your mission.

You were able to continue to work for the improvement of the Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital and to fulfill the task of righteousness and kindness in this great institution, to which our father (z”l) devoted many energies during his lifetime and sacrificed the best years to, from the day of laying the cornerstone until his last days - his privilege will stand you and us in long years and in seeing more good times which our father (z”l) was not, regrettably, privileged to see.

The head of the institution, the respected Dr. Wallach (z”l), whose great work in building and maintaining this great hospital are known to us all, along with his wonderful and exacting standing in the general administration and his own medical area. But, it is thanks to you and father that the hospital succeeded in fame with a good name, with good management and finance. A special blessing on your deeds and one on the richness of the institution in which and in your deeds did see the blessing from the Torah come to pass “God will bless your harvest and all the deeds of your hands”.

This great building has withstood crises and various hours of siege. Most particularly in such time you completed your even greater tasks, saving numerous lives.

They hired you to work at the hospital as a young aide... but you rose and grew and here, today, your job is large and important. In you has it come to pass “The words of all who fear the heavens will be heard”, and all those who turn to your words do that which you ask out of love and not fear. Your good eye and good heart are aware of all that seven eyes might see, supervising this large administration and directing this large machine in excellent order and exacting vigor...

The honor which is brought to you today is the honor of the Holy City Jerusalem and the humble sons of Jerusalem. You have not accrued glory nor have you walked with great men. You persevered in all constraints, but the future honor has come to you now. You have been privileged to be greatly honored from your son who is very learned in Torah and wisdom and is the Chief Rabbi of a great country. You have been privileged in having others know of your worth and work in this great building. May it be that you will be privileged to spend long days and years and see happy satisfaction from all your family and from the great institution to which you have given your life.....
B. Letters and Articles Commenting on my Book “Sha’arei Tzedek”

Letters Which I Received Following the Publication of My Book “Sha’arei Tzedek” and Articles Printed in the Papers: “HaTsofeh” and “Shearim”

Office of the President of the State

Jerusalem, Sivan 23, 5714   June 24, 1954

3511/6670

To the Honorable Mr. Porush
Rehov Sha’arei Tzedek, Private House
Jerusalem

Dear Mr. Porush,

The President of the State has instructed me to thank you for your wishes of good health and the book “Sha’arei Tzedek” which you provided.

With Great Honor,

David Bartov
Office Secretary
Rabbi Yisrael Porat

Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A.

26 of Sivan 5713 (1953)

To the Friend of my Youth,
The Honorable Gentleman Rav Eliyahu Porush
In the Holy City of Jerusalem

Greetings,

I was pleased to hear of your health after a prolonged silence of decades. I have read your book “Sha’arei Tzedek” and found that it is the “little which contains the many”. Truly, you are not a writer or son of a writer but your work has risen to excellence. You succeeded in carefully drawing, line by line, a clear and excellently colorful personal picture, illuminated and amplified. If there were only more writers such as yourself in Israel, not professionals, who will depict and write about their lives for the next generation, from which will be reflected the excellence of those exceptional people, expressed plainly and from personal knowledge. There is much blessing in simple and plain writing such as this. May your hand be strengthened.

Yours in friendship

Yisrael Porat

Please pass along my best regards to Dr. Wallach.
Rabbi Shmuel Baruch Werner

Member of the Chief Rabbinate of Tel Aviv - Jaffa District

Tel Aviv 2 Kislev 5713 (1953)

To the honor of my dear wise friend and writer
Rav Eliyahu Porush

May Blessings Emanate from God.

Congratulations on the presentation of his important book “Sha’arei Tzedek”, which adds a wonderful link to the literary chain of the history of the settlement, allowing the next generation to know who laid the foundation stones to the building of the state. He has faithfully presented those strong in spirit, our rabbis and those concerned with our society from the old settlement in the last generation.

From “flower bed to flower bed” he has given us the “roses” of instruction and daily conversations of the those wise persons who have brought blessings on themselves. Concerning this our Rabbis said “..whose leaves do not wither” [Psalm 1 - i.e. there is much to be learned from] even the casual conversation of Torah scholars” (Masechet Sukkah 21, 72) - you and your dear ones are to be blessed from beginning to end. May you be as a tree planted by the waters, etc and may you succeed in all that you do.

Your honored friend

Shmuel Baruch Werner
To: Mr. Eliyahu Porush  
Jerusalem  

Dear Mr. Porush,  

Many thanks for your pleasant book “Sha’arei Tzedek” in which you described well the life of our admired friend Dr. Wallach, as well as his work in Jerusalem, to which he dedicated his life. His words remain alive before the eyes of my spirit as all these things had transpired during my days. When I was a child in my parent’s house in Nahalat Sheva I became ill with influenza and Dr. Feuchtwanger came to visit me accompanied by Dr. Wallach.  

I spent time during 1908 in Berlin in order to complete my university studies. I went to Cologne to see the Rhine River city and its famous church. As I was leaving the train station, much to my surprise and pleasure, I met Dr. Wallach who generously served as my guide in the city of his birth. He brought me to the cathedral, I went in and he stayed outside. From there he brought me to the home of the young woman to whom he was engaged. She, however, did not agree to leave her birth city and travel to the land of the fathers which she did finally visit in her old age.  

During the years of the first Arab riots I met, in Dr. Wallach’s office, Musa Kazam Pasha, his wife and Daviana (ph.). A nurse entered to call Dr. Wallach to the hospital and we remained alone; the Daviana (ph.) began to slander Zionists (I am not sure that he would have dared to do so in front of Dr. Wallach). In order to cut the conversation short, I told Musa Kazam about an occurrence in Jerusalem of many years prior:  

My grandmother, Geiga Daya Baba, was a famous midwife in Jerusalem, and she also assisted his mother to bring him into the world. When he was six years old he became ill with typhus. My grandmother went to visit the patient. The father of the patient, Said Effendi el Hussein, who was the mayor of Jerusalem, requested of my grandmother that she go with a minyan of Jews to the Western Wall to pray for the health of the patient. She fulfilled his request. During the night after this happened the illness reached a crisis and he slowly returned to health. When the boy left his sick bed, his father invited the minyan to a kosher meal in his house. In order to do this he brought utensils and food from a Sephardic Jewish restaurant on the Street of the Jews. Musa Kazam and his wife were pleased to hear the story despite all that had occurred…..  

I wish Dr. Wallach that he may see Jerusalem fully rebuilt; I bless his honor with a long and good life.  

With much honor,  

Y. Peres
Daniel Uster, Attorney

Jerusalem 13/11/52

To Mr. Eliyahu Porush
P. O. Box
6032
Jerusalem

I am honored to confirm the receipt of your book “Sha’arei Tzedek” and to thank you from the bottom of my heart that you remembered me and honored me by forwarding this volume.

I am sure to read it with great interest, as you and the members of your family, particularly Dr. Wallach and his life’s work, are very dear to me.

More than once did I attempt and act for to the best of my ability to act for the good of the institution and its founders.

With thanks and blessings,

Yours,

Daniel Uster
M. D. Gaon

Jerusalem Adar 18 5713 (5/3/53)

To the Honored Rav, Branch of the (Desolate) Trunk
Author of the book “Sha’arei Tzdek”
Rav Eliyahu Porush
Director Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital

Dear Sir!

Much praise upon your kindly enabling the forwarding of a copy of your pleasant book “Sha’arei Tzdek”, which includes many memories of interest not only concerning the history of the hospital (see above) but also to general happenings in holy Jerusalem and to its famous men.

His book is a well-organized volume concerning his deeds and work as well as the honored institution, which he led, honoring Torah, carefully and wisely for decades.

Blessed are those who work to provide a history of Jerusalem (the Holy City) so that such will not be forgotten and be swallowed into a vacuum. Every fact and happening adds a course of bricks to the building, the history of those first in Zion and serves as a small but mighty brick in the history of the older settlement in Israel.

I pray for your health and good fortune, length of days and years of life reaching to a satisfying old age and sign with all sincerity,

M. D. Gaon
Peace and All the Best, Selah
To my friend and neighbor Rav Eli Porush.

I was very pleased to receive the book, “Sha’arei Tzedek”, with which you were kind enough to honor me. I enjoyed, most pleasantly, reading it, particularly the “small containers” which you pitied and placed in your book and I praise you for that.

I am sure that you are aware that I very much love the memories of all men of Israel who have fulfilled the commandment of settlement in Israel with their persons and acted, not being satisfied with vacant words. I have already confirmed such in my book “Memories of Eretz Yisrael”, in 2 volumes, in which I amassed, one by one, the best of the books of those working in Israel. Your book “Sha’arei Tzedek” serves very nicely to fit into this package of memories. You have done well and properly so. May your strength remain.

I was very distressed regarding the matter of the death of your poor brother, Rav Menachem Mendel Porush (z”l). I was informed of it only after the seven days of mourning had passed and I regret not having participated at his funeral as I very much treasured him while he lived and read his books with pleasure. I appreciated his forthrightness and liveliness as well as this great love of Israel and I always enjoyed conversations with him, the conversations of a wise student, born of Jerusalem and heard from him a number of pleasantries regarding HaRav Kook (z”l). May his soul be bound in the bonds of life with the holy ones of Israel. May the Lord console you among the mourners of Zion and Jerusalem. May you, in the future, not know pain or suffering and may you be allowed to see the best of Jerusalem all the days of your life.

As a friendly soul who seeks your good fortune with all my heart,

Avraham Yaari
Excerpts from an article reviewing my book “Sha’arei Tzedek” by the now departed Rav Shimon Glitzenstein (z”l), printed in the newspaper “HaTsofeh” on 23 Kislev 5713:

“In ten chapters of memories, the author, Rav Eliyahu Porush, paints a lovely picture of Sha’arei Tzedek Hospital, from its founding until the present...

...The author, a very typical Jerusalemite, may the mercy of God be upon him, tells us of the chapter of happenings during the days of the founding in clear, natural and charming language and highlights instructive episodes from the lives of the founders and those concerned with the institution who have raised it....

....Thus the author provides us with memorable stories from Jerusalem’s folklore...”

Excerpts from an article by HaRav Dr. Tzvi Harkarvy, from the newspaper “Shearim” 14 Shevat 5713:

...Rav Eli Porush is neither a writer, investigator or diarist. He is a man of Jerusalem, who, for 50 years, accompanied Dr. Wallach, the well-known physician, and served as a diligent secretary of the hospital. He recently retired and, at the request of his friends wrote down from what his eyes saw and his ears heard, in simple honesty, and this book resulted...

The central figure - Dr. Wallach. Love of him does not prevent (picturing him with) justice; the old man.... appears to us in his true form.

The founding of the “Sha’arei Tzedek” Hospital - one of the stages in the battle of the mission to settle (the country), when Eretz Israel teemed with Turkish patronage, weighed in against the missionary English hospitals. And it, this hospital, has retained its Orthodox character even until now. Orthodox physicians gather here and here there is an Orthodox nursing school. The congress of religious doctors from around the country meets here. This hospital proves the interest of the Ashkenazi Orthodox Jews in what has happened here over the last 50-60 years.

Concerning the passages of memories - there is “neither early or late” here in the presentation of information - appearing before you are pictures from the time of the Jerusalem settlement over 50 years, institutions, people... not only in Jerusalem but also Jaffa, the Galilee and settlements... all has been filtered through a Jewish heart warm with erudition, lover of Israel, a one who lives all the commandments in the holy city.

A lovely book. Good to read - thus, the rest follows! A proper witnessing of the sons of Jerusalem. who occupied themselves in Torah and settlement of the world - as in the words of Prof. Yosef Yoel Rivlin - in them the book is complete.

To the author - Eli Porush - May your strength remain”
C. Copy of the Deed to a Store in the Old City of Jerusalem Given to My Ancestor Gershon, son of Rav Naftali Porush (z’t’l)\textsuperscript{17}

Here, in the Holy City of Jerusalem, may it be built and readied, there is in “Harat Elouad”, on the right side, leading to the Schechem Gate, after a market of stores, a large courtyard belonging to Ibrahim Taahar, thereafter three stores, enclosed with stones under the above-noted. Afterwards there is one store which belongs to Ishmael Ibd Kasmiri. After the store owned by Rav Nahum Yosef Kirschbaum, shoemaker, opening to the east side, with the fame of the place sufficient to bound it, here come before us knowledgeable people, the undersigned 2 witnesses, reliable and faithful, to witness according to the law of the Torah that for four years Rav Gershon son of Rav Porush (z’t’l) has rented the specified store from the owner of the Moliki by a contract of 6 years duration (he still has two years of rental) and with the intent of maintaining this rental as is customary among landholders here. And since we did not hear that of someone of Israel rented such prior to the named Rav Gershon, as testified by the witnesses ------. Here comes Rav Gershon Porush to request of the court on this.

We have thus come, empowered by the authoritative court, to empower and give the needed ability to Rav Gershon, to receive in return the required ownership fees due him according to the acts of the first Gaonim (May the memory of our wise ones be blessed and may their memory protect us) from every son of Israel who will rent a store from the owner HaMoliki since it was not rented previously in the appropriate time according to Torah Law and formally guarantees that no son of Israel will rent this store from owners HaMoliki without the permission of the holder, the named and present Rav Gershon, and will not overcome the limitations placed by the first Gaonim (may their memory protect us) and without trespassing as the severity will fall upon the violator without cure and anyone overstepping its gates will be bitten by a snake. Those who hear our words will rest peacefully. The valid authorization of the possessor, Rav Gershon, of this store as is the custom among all leaseholders and will remain in effect for him and his heirs. Signed 12 Iyar ‘Tarmach” (transliteration of the acronymic alphabetized designation of the Jewish year, 1885) in the Holy courts of the Ashkenazic Kehila in Jerusalem, the Holy City.

Attested to by Binyamin Bamo’h.(acronym) Shmuel
Attested to by Binyamin David Vilner
Attested to by Wolf Bamohr’i (acronym)

Signed in the Holy Ashkenazic court
The Holy City of Jerusalem (N.B. some acronymic phrases skipped)

D. Will of My Grandfather Rav Yisrael “Brimat” (Ben Rav Yaakov Mordechai Tversky [z’t’l])

In the presence of witnesses (who have signed below) come Rav Yisrael son of Rav

\textsuperscript{17} Trans. note: Translation of this section was very problematic. I believe that I have provided some sense of the content but did not succeed in properly understanding the italicized words.
Yaakov Mordechai Markowitz (may his light shine) and his wife Reiza Dina daughter of Menachem Mendel Kaminitzer (z”l) have said to us: Provide us with faithful and proper witnesses and obtain from us in a complete and orderly fashion, writing and signing as proof in our hands and those of all the final inheritance which we have completed in good will to be explained for the below.

Thus said before us Rav Yisrael (may his light shine) (see above): In so far as one never knows his time, (as when fish are caught, etc.) and happy is the man who is always fearful, thus I am here to arrange before you what to undertake upon my departure with that which remains after the length of my days and years. I do this all with full health, may it continue until one hour before I am to die. Once I have set this, so it shall occur and it is not to be expanded upon or lessened, even with support of the name of God, as I have done this in the most efficient manner (according to my knowledge); all with a clear mind and after much consideration.

A) The Lord gives kindly to his servant and I have one half interest in the Bet Yisrael Society (may it develop and grow), that is the house in which I reside (No. 1). This one half interest and all the furnishings which will remain after me, including the silver and copper utensils and clothing, from small to large, will belong to my wife, Reiza Dina daughter of Menachem Mendel (see above) certainly for all the days of her life. She does not have permission to give as a present anything which remains after me, not to my sons or others, except she herself, requiring such for her support, has the permission to sell or pawn as she desires. She even has permission to sell or rent the house if (Heaven Forbid) she requires such to sustain her life. None of my sons or daughters or others can prevent her from doing so if she faithfully states plainly that she requires such of her support, thus also fulfilling the Ketubah. 

B) She is exempt from swearing a vow, even to my other heirs, as everything belongs to her for all her days (see above), as she is faithful to her word in everything.

C) All the expenses which will accrue after the length of my days, those relating to burial and the erection of a grave stone, etc., as well as for the hiring of a minyan to pray for 30 days in my house, my wife is obliged to provide from this remainder. The 10 men who will pray in my house will be pious and peaceful men, free from their work, who will pray for 30 days, morning and evening in my house; after the morning prayer they will study a Mishna chapter together. After the study they will say the prayer “Anah”, will recall my name and say Kaddish DeRabannan (lit. "Kaddish of the Rabbis") for the well-being of my soul. They will pray at my house, even on the holy Shabbat, taking a Sefer Torah from the synagogue on the 30th day; my wife will contribute to the synagogue for this. Also, after Mincha prayers, the 10 will study, together, a lesson from Shulchan Aruch or Ein Yaakov, thereafter saying Kaddish DeRabannan in the same manner.

D) When my son HaRav Yaakov Mordechai marries off his son, my wife will give him, for his son, my new “paltan” and a good kaftan from the two good “kaftines” which I have and one sash along with sets of Mishna and the large Chumashim (Five Books of Moses) with the Or Hayim interpretation as well as those volumes of the 6 Mishnayot found in my house. And if funds remain whole, give him a gift of a silver goblet.

E) After the completion of the days and years of my wife, everything that remains from the time of our leaving, all household utensils and clothes as well as silver and copper, also the one half of the number mentioned above and whatever survives me is to be divided into three
parts. One part to my son, Ha Rav Mordechai Yaakov, one part to my daughter Pearl, wife of Rav Gershon and one part to my daughter Liba Lea wife of Rav Eliyahu, all parts to be distributed among them. I hereby warn my son and my daughters that if the half of that noted above remains, they do not have permission to sell or rent it except insofar as they themselves may live there alternately for three years.

I have prepared all the above with careful thought and as my soul desires and I hope for myself and everyone to have the privilege of the gift of health and an easy passing.

My wife, Reiza Dina, has stated her good and focused desire that she receives this for her Ketubah and by the terms clarified above, she does not have permission to sell or rent or give as presents to any man except for the purpose of her support and after the length of days and years all that is explained above, even beyond this page, and does this in the most efficient manner according to the wisdom and there will be no hesitation or quarrel with these requests from my heirs, as she is satisfied with such. We witnesses (signed below) have reviewed all the above from Rav Yisrael and from his wife regarding the wife’s possessions and her husband’s adornment, signing as such in witness 14 Elul 5649 (1889) in Jerusalem, the holy city, may it be built and readied.

Attested to by Ari Lev son of Hav Rav Rabbi “Edul”
Attested to by Michael ben Yaakov Yavrov

For further support, I, myself, have come to validate and support the above with my actual signature on the above noted day,

Yisrael Brimat

With the court of 3 acting as one, the two above-signing witness came before us Rav Ari Lev and Rav Michael will witness the signatures above and validate such.

In the Holy City on the date and year mentioned above,

Attested to by Binyamin Bamo’h Shmuel (z”l)
Attested to by Binyamin David Vilner
Attested to by B. Wolf Bamohr’i
Signed at the Ashkenazic Bet Din in Holy city of Jerusalem

I, the undersigned, received all completely from the hand of the woman Reiza Dina, widow of father and grandfather Rav Yisrael (z”l) all contained in the will of my father, noted above, the paltan, the kaftan, the belt and books and all noted in the prior pages; there is nothing remaining. There are no remaining claims to be made by myself and my heirs regarding any legal matters against the woman noted above. As signed 15th of Adar II in the holy city of Jerusalem.

Ben Zion Ben Rav Mordechai Ben Rav Yisrael Brimat
In presence of the witnesses signed below comes the groom Ben Zion (see above) regarding the absence of further claims on the day and year mentioned above.

Attested to by Ari Lev ben HaRav A’D (z’l)
Attested to by Michael Ben Zion Ben Yaakov Yavrov
Upon Completion of the Book

This year was declared, by the Government of Israel, as the year of the “First”, to recall the first who came and renewed the settlement in our country during the past generations and through whom we reached the establishment of our independent nation. However, to our regret they are remembering only those who came less than 80 years ago and were among the founders of the first agricultural settlements, as if those who came before are of no importance.

But, truth be told, all those who came and settled during the generations before them, students of HaGra, the Hasidim, etc. had as their goal the settlement of the holy land and revitalizing it from its desolation and to live in it in holiness and purity, to foster Torah, prayer and mitzvot in preparation for final salvation. Much to our dismay, since the conditions of living during their time were very hard, they could not survive except by relying on moneys sent from their brothers outside the country, divided up in “Halukah”, but because of this they did not need to denigrate themselves.......in the name of Halukah “Fressers” (Those Greedy for the “Halukah”). Is it not also true that those came after them, living in the settlements, received support from the funds of the Baron Rothchild, they being called “The Baron’s Children”? There were some among them who used the support for a life of luxury and more.

Equally so, in every generation most of those coming came for the sake of heaven in order to settle in the country and build it, fulfilling the commandments dependent on such. Because conditions were so hard, they needed support.

Thank God, by the merit of the first (settlers), we have reached the current level of development in the country and our prayer and hope is that in so far as we have arrived at this dream, may our salvation rise and flourish, widening our borders, in order to advance the greeting of our full redemption to come in our own time.