

ZIWA
LEGACY OF A HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR

WRITTEN BY
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"How do you unveil horrors without offering at the same some measure of hope?"
--Elie Wiesel 1977 (in Bergmann, 1982, p. 3)

"You shall see your children's children, and peace upon Israel."
--Psalm 128:6

CHILDHOOD

Ziwa was born in a little town Vyzuonos in Lithuania in 1918. The tiny town of about 500 had only 28 Jewish families, including many of Ziwa's relatives. Her family had a farm with his brother and cousin on which they grew corn and wheat and raised chickens and cows. Ziwa's father also had small leather shop in their house and co-owned a fertilizer business with his brother. Their neighbors called them the "Tsarske familial" (the Tsar's family) because they owned land and businesses, and employed others, but wealth is relative. Life was difficult and there were no conveniences: no indoor plumbing on bitterly cold winter nights, no running water, little money, and a lot of hard work. Ziwa remembers slaughtering chickens, calves and lambs in the winter and keeping the meat on blocks of ice. In summer, with no refrigeration, there was little meat, and they ate mostly dairy products which they produced on the farm. Meat had to be brought from the kosher butcher in another town, and was usually reserved for Shabbas (the Sabbath, Friday night).

Ziwa had 4 brothers, 2 older and 2 younger, all with "very important" names: her oldest brother Avraham (Abraham) was followed by Mordechai (from the Book of Esther), Moishe (Moses), and Halevi (after a prominent Jewish educator). She was named Ziwia (Tsivia) after her grandmother, and she recalls her brothers teasing her about her name having no grand association, as theirs did.

I went to my father and I cried, "They say my name is nothing." So my father says..., "There is a saying in Hebrew, 'Moishe rabenu tsiva lanu' (Moses the rabbi instructed us). Your name Ziwa [Tsiva, Tsivia] is very important." So they started to call me ZiwaMy father ...oh, he really liked me.

Although there was a school in the village, the Lithuanian schools were anti-Semitic. "They used to make tricks on the Jewish children and beat them up." A few Jewish families wanted a Hebrew education for their children. They hired a tutor who lived with each family for a month and conducted classes in their homes. When Ziwa was 5 or 6 years old, she began studying Hebrew as well as arithmetic, history and other subjects along with 6 or 7 other children. By the time she was 9 years old, she was trilingual: she spoke Hebrew in school, Yiddish at home, and Lithuanian with the Gentile children she often played with.

When she was 10 years old, Ziwa's parents, who greatly valued education, decided that the tutor was no longer sufficient for her, so they sent her to a bigger town, Utena, to a private Hebrew school.

I was very very upset, because I was lonesome for home. I was just a child. So I roomed with another girl [in the girl's aunt and uncle's house] who also was sent, and in the night I used to cry; the first year I used to cry in the night because I wanted to be home, but I got over it.

On weekends they often made the two-hour horse and buggy trip home, "but that was worse--I had to go back." For 7 years Ziwa studied at the strictly Hebrew-speaking school, and when she was almost 18, she graduated from gymnasium (high school) in Ukmerge. To her original three languages, she had added German, Polish and Russian. "Everybody talks the 4 languages because you are right on the border and you mix with them, like going to a resort in the summer. It's not a big deal. Everybody was like that," she reported modestly.

Most of Ziwa's memories of early childhood reflect the love and security of growing up in a warm, traditional family. But one story taught her the harshness of the world outside her little town. Ziwa's mother had a brother who lived in the Crimea. She had gone to live with him many years before, and while there, she married. Her husband was killed in 1905, leaving her pregnant, so she returned home to Lithuania, where she married Ziwa's father, "the handsomest fellow in the whole little town." Ziwa's half-sister, Chaia, was born in 1905. When Chaia was 8 or 9, she went to visit their uncle in the Crimea; while she was there, World War I broke out and she was unable to go home. When the war was over, her mother didn't know if they were alive, but finally got in touch with them, and they managed to return to Lithuania.

They had a horrible time. They came by train. It was a hard winter. They didn't have coals for the train, so in some places the train was standing a long time and they got frozen. The old grandmother died on the way. My uncle's feet were half frozen; they amputated. My uncle's wife died shortly after they came.

He had a daughter Chaia's age and two sons. One was in medical school when the revolution started. He ran away because of the pogroms and came to Minneapolis, where he became principal of a private religious school. Chaia eventually emigrated to Israel, where she died in 1985.

THE PRE-WAR YEARS

After graduating from gymnasium, Ziwa returned to her home village. Her father thought she had had enough education for a girl, especially because he had been paying for private education as well as room and board for 5 children for many years. She was 18, a very pretty, petite girl with thick braids. That summer, she met a young Jewish medical student named Nachum who was

vacationing at a nearby resort. She dated him twice, for two hours. When he left, he wrote her letters and asked her to go to the town where he was studying, but her father wouldn't allow her to go. Many tragic years later, they met again.

A cousin who was the principal of large Hebrew high school in a nearby town invited Ziwa to stay with them that winter. There was not much for her to do in her little town, so she went, thinking that she might find a job and certainly have some fun. At Purim there was a big ball at the high school. She didn't have a dress to wear, so her aunt gave her some black taffeta to make a skirt, and she bought a little white sweater with short sleeves and a little collar. At the ball, she met Avigdoz (Victor), an electrical engineer from a wealthy manufacturing family. He was good friend of her cousin, 9 years older than she. They dated a few times, but she did not know if she liked him (she described herself as a late bloomer). Her cousin was delighted that he was interested and started calling her Cinderella. After all, she did meet him at a ball. Soon he had to leave for Israel to buy some property for his father. Ziwa's half-sister, Chaia, lived there, and she gave Avigdoz crocheted pillow to take her as a gift. He visited Chaia and her husband, and borrowed a picture of Ziwa. He wrote several letters, telling her how much he looked forward to seeing her again.

At Passover, Ziwa was at home with her parents. Avigdoz returned from Israel and came to her home to see her and meet her parents. He went to synagogue with her father, and quickly becoming the talk of the town. "People said they didn't know what he sees in her. She's a pretty girl but not like her mother." They became engaged, although his family was not pleased; his mother had hoped he would marry someone with a large dowry. They had a small, plain wedding. It was 1939, and Ziwa was 19 years old. A year later, the war broke out.

THE WAR YEARS

Ziwa's summary of the war years is chilling in its simplicity: "The Germans came in, they took me to the ghetto, they took me to the concentration camp, and I survived. You don't know what kind poverty, they tell now different things; what I went through, it's unbelievable."

When the war broke out, Ziwa and her husband were away from home, as were her brothers, and they all wanted to go home. "My brothers came to their destination [home] but for a girl it was dangerous because the roads were with soldiers and I was a pretty girl." Ziwa and her husband were sent to a ghetto in Lithuania where they remained for nearly 4 years, living first under the Russians and then under the Germans.

We lived 7 to 10 people in a room. The food--you know what kind. Some people where we worked knew we were starving... they would bring a little sugar, a piece of bread, a little butter. When they caught us, they used to hang the Jewish what they caught, a lesson that you should not carry food. They wanted to starve us. Many people died of starvation.

Ziwa did hard manual labor. She worked building airport runways and in construction. "My hands were bloody from passing bricks, lumber" She also worked in a leather factory where she and another girl had to carry the big stills where the skins were fermented. "...The smell, how messy we was." Life in the ghetto was brutal and many people died.

I was not physically very strong but I was raised on a farm. We didn't have a toilet or hot water. We were used to a rough life. We were different, we could stand some things. From town, they could not take it, kind of finicky ...sheltered. But I could take it. Rich people could not resist.

Ziwa had her first child, a little girl, on July 24, 1940. Both parents had to work, so the baby stayed with Avigdoz's mother, who couldn't work, because she was in her 60's.

They didn't have use for old people and children ...they used to take them to the outskirts of the city and kill them. I came from work--no girl, nothing. The little crib is empty. It's very hard for me to talk about that. He came from work--he had ...his big job stillI remember his face when this little girl was gone. We were sitting a whole evening and cryingThe thing is that we thought that we are not going to survive anywayThey took his mother, they took the little girl, another month, another half a year we are not going to be alive anywayvery hard to talk about that. She was so pretty ...she was gorgeous.

Ziwa had no way of communicating with her family back in the little town. For a long time she didn't know what had happened to them, but eventually she learned of their fate.

I worked in a leather factory and there was a cobbler who came to buy leather from our town and he told me how it happened. My brothers and parents--the Lithuanians killed them. The Germans came in and they gave a free hand to the anti-Semites. They could do with the Jews what they want. When my brothers came home...we were more prosperous. We had land--we were like farmers, but all the children were away, so we had 2 families living on farm, and farm the farm (my father-brother was already not so

young) and profits went to us, so they didn't like us. We were like rich in comparison. So they took all the Jewish people to the outskirts, all 28 families.

Such pogroms and mass execution were occurring in all territories as the Germans advance. "Those areas where native the population aided the Germans has the highest death toll of Jewish population. It is estimated that ninety percent of the Jewish population of the Baltic countries, including Lithuania, perished during the war" (Fisher, 1991, p. 73).

In 1944, as the Allied armies were closing in on Poland, the Americans from one side and the Russians from the other, the Germans liquidated the ghettos and took all the survivors to concentration camps. On June 10, 1944, Ziwa was sent to a camp near-Stuthoff, where she remained for 9 months. Her husband, Avigdoz , was taken to Dachau, where he died. She described the journey and the horrors of the first day:

They took us out; we drove in the cattle cars maybe--I don't know how many days ...without food. People was relieving themselves right there, they never take us out until we came in a place... they told us we had to go unlousing--maybe we had lice; we had to go to the showers. We went in. It was not running water. We had to stand naked because they took all of our clothes. I had some things in my clothes. I wore a sweater that in every button was something in the back-jewelry, a gold coin. That's why they took. They gave us a bar of soap... and they separated us, the ones who they looked at them more healthy to work and the older ones and the children to other side. I was standing with a cousin, and the cousin had a little 6-year-old girl. She was also a strong girl cousin]. They told us to stay in my side and the little girl they didn't have use for. They put her on that side. She said to them, "Where are you taking the little girl?" They said, "To another camp." She said, "I want to go with her, she's too little to be by herself." They said, "All right-you want to go with her, go with her." She never came back because ...they went to the crematorium. I was standing a long time and waiting and then we went out through another door and I can feel--I can hear like burning chicken feathers ...not too far from the crematorium. For the work they separated us out, but the bulk went into the crematorium. They gave me a sack, dress, without underwear. I still remember, a brown, beige. There was a number ...my number was 54,238. You see how many people they had already... we didn't have a name, we had a number.

This dress, with a grey blanket and wooden shoes, was all she had. Every morning they were given a piece of bread and hot water, and at night, "they gave us a little soup--milky water with a few potatoes. That's all." Ziwa was young, so she was put to work digging deep trenches for the

soldiers. When they finished the trenches at one location, they were forced to walk to another location. Ziwa's sister-in law was with her in the camp; during one of these "death marches"

she was holding my hand and all of a sudden I felt that she's kind of--cannot walk so fast already, and all of a sudden I see that the hand fell down and she fell down dead right in front of me.

As they marched , she saw hundreds of dead bodies lying on the ground. "They used to leave them, not even bury them... I never thought that I will survive. We used to envy the people who were laying there because that was unbelievable."

They slept in tents, wrapped in a blanket with only straw for insulation. "In winter my blanket used to freeze to the ground ...because of the warm bodyMorale was so low that one from another they used to steal the straw. Everybody wanted to survive." There was no sanitation, no water for bathing and no clean clothes; people were covered with lice. A typhus epidemic swept through the camp, and "people died like flies." Ziwa contracted typhus in the spring of 1945, just days before liberation.

LIBERATION AND THE POST-WAR YEARS

As the Allied armies advanced, "all the Germans ran away. They left us. They didn't have time to kill us." Because of the typhus, she does not have a clear memory of what happened, but knows that another survivor took her to the trenches as bombs began falling. It was March 25, 1945, 9 months after Ziwa entered the concentration camp.

I was liberated by the Russians. And when the Russians took a look in the trenches laying women, not I by myself, also other ones. They stick us with a stick to see if anyone was moving. I don't remember. They had handkerchiefs because the smell was terrible--for 9 months we didn't wash ourselves. The camp had originally held 1,500 to 1,600 women. Not more than 200 survived.

Ziwa and the other survivors were taken in trucks to a hospital in Gdansk . "I only remember I woke up, I find myself in a hospitallying in bed." She was there for two months, recovering from typhus and regaining some of her strength. When she got well enough to walk in the corridor, she met other people who had been rescued; they were all Jewish. The war was over, but they did not know that, and they did not know what the Russians were going to do with them. Finally they were told that they would be transferred because they did not need to be in a hospital, but they were not told where they were going.

A few hundred people were loaded into 2 cattle cars. "In the night they used to let us out to relieve ourselves because in the cattle cars couldn't go out." They were guarded by Russian soldiers, and one was Jewish. Ziwa and a few other young women started talking to him. He was sympathetic, and told them they were going to Siberia to be shepherds.

We didn't like it at all. We are not going to Siberia. Who knows ...maybe somebody is alive. I knew my family didn't survive but maybe an uncle or aunt. We wanted to go to Israel.

They talked it over and decided to escape. The train was crowded and they were not heavily guarded. "One evening when they let us out ...we took our blankets out. It was a cool evening in May or in the beginning of June, and we didn't come back. We escaped... stayed there shivering all night."

In the morning they started to hitchhike; they were picked up by a farmer who took them to Bialystok. "He could have killed us, but he was nice. We were without hair, I weighed maybe 80 pounds. Nobody took advantage of us. We looked very ugly."

In Bialystok they found an American Jewish relief organization helping displaced persons. They went into the building and "on all the walls was written 'I am alive ...and I am searching for my family' ...I wrote my name too in case ...somebody wants to find me." Ziwa registered for food and a place to sleep. Accommodations were sparse, but "at least with Jewish people who care." When they asked her about her skills and education, she said she knew Hebrew very well, so she was asked to teach Hebrew to little children who had been hidden in churches in Poland. Although it was still illegal, they were going to be sent to Israel. She taught 4 hours a day and also worked in the kitchen, making lunch sandwiches of bread and cottage cheese. She traveled to Katavitz and then to Bitten, teaching for a few months in each town so that the children would know a little Hebrew. From Bitten they were supposed to go to Israel, but while traveling through Germany, Ziwa developed an itchy rash that covered her face and hands. She was still undernourished and was told that she was not well enough to travel to Israel.

Ziwa was sent to a hospital in St. Ottiliem, near Munich. There she found Nachum the medical student, now a doctor, whom she had met years earlier in her home town. He had been in Dachau with her husband, who had been his fraternity brother before the war, and he told her that Avigdos was dead. Nachum had married a nurse while he was in the ghetto, but he thought she had not survived. He asked Ziwa to marry him, and she agreed, but two weeks later, he got a letter from his wife, who had survived the concentration camp.

Nachum introduced Ziwa to his friend Chaim, who had been a member of the same Zionist fraternity. He had studied chemical engineering and was then working for the Allied occupation forces, editing a newspaper for displaced persons. Although he said he was too busy to date, he came to meet her and it was "like fate, right away." They saw each other every weekend and married a year later, in 1946. Ziwa was 28. She joined Chaim in Munich, and there she put on weight and started menstruating again after years of malnutrition and deprivation. Her hair started growing again, "like a boy, but pretty and curly." Her health and strength returned, and soon Ziwa was pregnant. Joe was born in 1948.

They lived in a room in the home of a widow. Because Chaim was working for the Americans, they had plenty of food. "My husband used to get food from his work. They didn't pay with money... they paid him in Care packages." They had canned meat, cheeses, powdered milk, and cereal. "I remember the first time I opened up a box of cereal I didn't know what it was, and I thought what is this, little cookies?" They paid for their rent and for household help with food, which was in short supply in Munich.

In 1946 Ziwa was able to get in touch with her half-sister in Israel. She sent packages of food; "they had no food ...I had plenty." She and her husband planned to emigrate to Israel, but her sister told her not to go there. Conditions were bad, and war was a certainty. Chaia told Ziwa to go to America, where there were relatives, but Ziwa was not convinced.

Ziwa's mother had two brothers and a sister who had moved to the United States before the war. Ziwa knew their names and that they lived in Minneapolis/St. Paul, but she did not know how to contact them. Through her husband, she got help from an American chaplain who put a notice in the American Jewish newspapers giving her name, her parents names, her place of birth, and the names of the aunt and uncles. A cousin of her father's in Winnipeg saw it in the paper, and called them with the wonderful news. "They thought it was a miracle because they thought everyone was dead." Her relatives urged her to come to the United States, but she and Chaim still wanted to go to Israel. They finally decided to go to America first, and to Israel later. "We came here and you know what happened. The United States is a pretty good country."

COMING TO AMERICA, 1950

Ziwa, Chaim and Joe arrived in Minneapolis in 1950 with little but their will to succeed and the confidence that they could. Their adaptation to life in America parallels that of many hopeful immigrants who have come to the United States to build a new life from the ashes of the old. Still, adjusting was not easy.

We came here and you know what kind of life here in America. We didn't have in Europe this kind of life. They used to call us "Tsarske familial' but even the common people here you can't compare with the poverty in the Jewish community in Lithuania before the war. I came here and I was wondering how many coats has to have a person. And the food people throw out. It's a different story altogether.

For the first 9 months after they arrived, they lived in 1 room. Chaim got a job three days after they arrived, packing boxes for \$38/wk. They bought a rusted out car so that he could go to school in the evenings to learn English; without English he had no hope of getting a better job. One of the owners of the company, a man with a "warm Jewish heart," found out that he was an engineer, and offered to send him to school to study business. It took him a long time to finish because he could attend only in the evenings, but when he did, he became the office manager and then comptroller of the company. Ziwa is proud that "he worked himself up from the bottom to the top."

Most of Ziwa's relatives could not offer financial support, but they helped by offering what was most valuable, friendship. "Every Friday night we had dinner with different cousins, and always we spent holidays with family." On Jewish holidays she would invite all the cousins to her house, where she could be certain that everything was kosher.

As was customary, Ziwa did not work outside their home. She devoted herself to keeping a traditional Jewish home and to raising her son Joe. She recalled with pleasure how delighted the old kosher butcher was to hear little Joe speaking fluent Yiddish, something few American-born Jewish children of his generation could do. "The old people used to love him." After Chaim finished school and had a better job, her cousins encouraged her to have another baby, because "one child, like one shirt, is not good." Although Ziwa was 38, she thought it was a good idea, and in 1956, Neil was born.

Chaim contracted cancer in 1966, the same year became comptroller of company. He was sick for three years, and Ziwa cared for him at home. In spite of several operations, he passed away in 1969. "It was hard, very hard, but still he lived more than some people."

WIDOWHOOD

Chaim's death was a great blow to Ziwa. "For 2 years I was devastated, I didn't know what to do with myself." Theirs had been a very traditional marriage, and Ziwa had never even written a check. She was over 50, but she learned to drive, manage her finances, and take command of

her new circumstances. She had absolutely no experience, but she learned to do it because she had to.

Chaim left her just enough money that she did not have get a job. The house and car were paid for, and there was some insurance money as well as Social Security. They lived in very modest fashion. As Joe explained, after surviving a Holocaust, surviving on little money was no problem. Her resiliency and strength of character were her mainstay during this period of readjustment.

Neil was 13 when his father died, and Ziwa worried that he might be influenced by the hippie counter culture and experiment with drugs. She encouraged him to become involved in the synagogue, and took him to say Kaddish for a whole year. For a time, he planned to become a rabbi. Joe was finishing college and had been offered scholarships to several law schools. He wanted to study outside of the Twin Cities, so she encouraged him to go to the University of Chicago because could come home for holidays. After finishing law school, Joe "had job offers but chose to come home because of me and his little brother."

Ziwa became very involved in her synagogue and began doing volunteer work for the synagogue and Hadassah, a Jewish women's charity organization. As Joe explained, "After my father died she needed something to give her some kind of connection. I don't think it's the religion or the God, it's more sociological and identifying with the group. Her comfort is the community."

Shortly after Chaim died, she was at the synagogue with Neil saying Kaddish, and the Rabbi's wife remarked on how beautifully she spoke Hebrew. She had recently formed a Hebrew class for the congregation, but 30 people had enrolled, and she needed another teacher. Ziwa agreed to teach, and for the next 13 years she taught Hebrew twice a week and often tutored in her home. She would not accept payment for teaching; this was her contribution to the synagogue. She would get small gifts from her students, and they sometimes took her out for dinner, but her great reward was to hear them recite prayers at their childrens' bar and bat mitzvahs. One gift that she especially treasures is a talis (prayer shawl) that she received on her 60th birthday.

1972 the cantor asked her to read Haphtarah (which follows the Torah reading). This is a great honor, but it is very difficult, even for someone who speaks Hebrew well, because of the melodies and cadences. She took classes for 12 wee-s and has read in the synagogue more than 40 times.

Ziwa's pattern of adjustment to widowhood reflects the three phase model proposed by Heinmann and Evans (in Brubaker, 1990). Phase 1, preparation, began when Chaim was

diagnosed with cancer and continued through several operations, temporary remission and eventual death. Although Ziwa had time to prepare herself for his death, "research has shown that anticipating and planning for loss does not affect the intensity of the grief when the loss occurs, but does have a positive effect on long term adaptation to the loss" (p. 145). Phase 2, Grief and mourning, is expected to take one to three years. Ziwa reported being "devastated" for two years before she was ready for Phase 3, adaptation, in which "the individual begins to develop new skills and abilities ...new goals are set and life begins to have meaning and purpose again the individual negotiates and reestablishes salient reference groups and social roles into systems of support that meet a variety of needs..." (p. 147). Ziwa's involvement with her family (sons and relatives) and in the community provided by her synagogue allowed her to build a social support network that gave her great comfort, purpose, a sense of belonging, and important work to accomplish.

REMARRIAGE AND CURRENT LIFE

After Nachum's wife died, he and Ziwa began corresponding, and they decided to marry in 1986. He lived and practiced medicine in Poughkeepsie New York, but Ziwa did not want to leave Minneapolis. "I have here Joe, Nancy and my grandchildren, 12 cousins families here, second cousins.." and of course her synagogue. Nachtm moved here, and they now live in a lovely apartment which Ziwa finds very convenient and comfortable. It's a friendly building, with pleasant neighbors and holiday parties.

After 17 years of widowhood, marriage has required a lot of adjustments. "He's a companion ...a nice man, an intelligent man, but it's not the same, it's different. I cannot explain."

He is not as social as she is, and would prefer a traditional relationship with her staying home to take care of him instead of having outside interests. She has tried to get him involved with synagogue and helping Russian Jewish immigrants, but he is not interested and does not support her involvement.

In spite of this, Ziwa keeps very busy. She is on the boards of both her synagogue and Hadassah. She chairs the synagogue scholarship committee, is involved in the sisterhood, and does some fund raising. Last year she had Haphtarah again for Rosh Hashana.

ANALYSIS OF THEMES

Ziwa's life reflects several themes, expressed very poignantly, that are common to her cohort and culture. These include the importance of family, education, Jewish identity and traditions.

Devastation and loss have marked her life, but her resiliency and strength of character have

allowed her to maintain a sense of continuity despite multiple tragedies; she exemplifies Erikson's concept of integrity (versus despair) as the goal of the final stage of development.

Family:

"Children and grandchildren, that's my nachas [pride and joy]." Ziwa is very proud of her sons, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren and takes great pleasure in their educational and professional attainments. She also maintains close contact with her cousins and other members of her extended family, both in the United States and in Israel. Eastern European Jewish families traditionally place great emphasis on the importance of the family, intellectual achievement and financial success (McGoldrick, Pearce & Giordano, 1982) and Ziwa, like most Eastern European Jews, sees family as central to her life and identity. Because of the great losses she suffered, her family may be especially precious to her, representing a continuity with the past and a link with the future.

Joe and Nancy have been married for 16 years. He is a successful lawyer, a graduate of the University of Chicago School of Law. Nancy is a special education teacher by training and currently owns 3 maternity boutiques. Ziwa regards her "like a daughter to me." Nancy and Joe have three children: Heidi, 11, Carly, 9, and Tyler, 4.

Neil is a geriatric physician at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. He is also a musician and khazen (non-professional cantor). He and his wife Caryn have 2 daughters, Talia, 3 and Hannah, 6 months. Caryn is a speech therapist but is not currently working. Ziwa is very proud that Caryn had an adult Bat Mitzvah two years ago and is now a Torah reader at her synagogue.

Joe described himself and his brother as both having a good sense of who they are. They are comfortable with themselves, confident, happy, and doing what they want to do. "That to me is a success. To the extent that the proof is in the pudding, she was a fabulous parent."

Ziwa's life repeats the motif of "the stories of both Naomi and Jacob... in kind, if not in detail. The old person had had great cause for sorrow throughout a difficult life. Solace, joy, and hope for the future are engendered by grandchildren" (Wechsler, 1985, p.186).

Jewish Identity and Traditions:

Ziwa was raised in an orthodox Jewish family and received a Jewish education. Both the joys and tragedies of her life revolve around being Jewish. Traditions have always been important to her as a source of identity and strength, and maintaining Jewish traditions has helped her to cope with overwhelming loss.

I think when I was liberated and ...I really didn't know how to sort it out, my feelings and everything--why I am alive, why my brothers are not alive, why 66 people from my father's family are not alive. Why I am alive and they are not I could not sort it out, and I thought when we came here in the United States to settle and my husband and I talked it over and we said let's keep kosher, let's go to the synagogue ...let's hold on. Maybe it's something, a God we don't know how he looks, what he does. But something, a force kept us alive and we lived and later on we had the children... like something looked out for us We tried to live Jewishly and we tried to do good.

Ziwa considers herself traditional, but not ultra-orthodox. She raised her children in a kosher home and they attended a Conservative synagogue. She is proud that both of her sons have a strong religious education and maintain Jewish traditions within their own families, passing their heritage on to their children.

Loss, Change, and the Need for Continuity:

Throughout her life, Ziwa has had to cope with change and loss. She has relied on her personal strength and her ability to create a supportive and nurturing environment when possible and to endure when it was not. Her son Joe credits her resiliency, strong character, and good family upbringing. "It's her chemistry. She ...has been able to adapt to any situation. I don't think there's any kind of extrinsic kind of philosophy or belief system that has kept her going ...it comes from inside."

"To the extent that change builds upon, and has links to, the person's past, change is a part of continuity" (Atchley, 1989,p. 183). Ziwa has clearly tried to maintain what continuity she could through circumstances over which she had little control. She was introduced to Chaim by Nachum whom she had met in her home town and later married. She established and has maintained close ties with her remaining family and derives strength through religious traditions that she learned as a child. Since coming to Minneapolis to be with her relatives and make a new life, she has developed continuity in her environment. "Environments contain the physical and organizational infrastructures needed for continuity in meeting all sorts of needs" (Atchley, 1989, p. 188) including a secure social support network consisting "of people one can count on for mutual aid, affirmation of one's identity and goal structure, a sense of belonging, and opportunities for intimate self-disclosure" (p. 189). For this reason, Ziwa did not want to leave Minneapolis when she remarried. Her life was centered here, and all support systems, including family and synagogue, were here. She did not think they could be replaced in Poughkeepsie.

Integrity Versus Despair:

Ziwa's strong sense of family, tradition and continuity have culminated in what Erikson (Weiten, Lloyd & Lashley, 1991) referred to as integrity--being able look back on one's life and find meaning, satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment--as opposed to despair--looking back with bitterness and dwelling on past mistakes and injustices.

This achievement of integrity is especially noteworthy in view of the extensive psychological literature on Holocaust survivors which focuses on survivor guilt and psychopathological syndromes and is based largely on case histories and research conducted on people who experienced severe adjustment problems. "... The most widespread distortions of the composite picture of survivors have occurred ...because almost all mental-health professionals conducting their psychotherapy operated from a psychoanalytic viewpoint, notorious for its emphasis on psychopathology." (Hass, 1990, p. 17).

Rather than experiencing guilt and psychopathology, Joe thinks his mother feels special and has transmitted that sense of specialness and privilege to her sons.

We've always felt that our family is special. When they immigrated they were pretty poor, but very educated... We felt we had unlimited capability to do whatever we wanted ...never felt limited in any fashion. Maybe that's transmitted through the survivor concept, that people who made it through were special and as a result their families were special and their children were special.

Many survivors have, like Ziwa, displayed great strength, resiliency and adaptability. "It is likely that people who survived had great psychic strength to begin with. Many have achieved remarkable success and, perhaps because of their need for continuity and compensatory life-affirming attitudes, have inspired their children to be energetic and dedicated..." (Bergmann, 1990, p. 11).

Integrity is achieved through an active, ongoing process of interpreting and giving meaning to life events. "Reinterpretation is an important adaptive process through which individuals create coherent pictures of the past and link the past to a purposeful, integrated present." (Atchley, 1989, p. 187). Ziwa acknowledges the tragedy of her life, but rather than dwell on anger and bitterness, she interprets it as fate and chooses to focus on the positive aspects. "How life is going is fate. It's the way it turns outI would never visualize that I would live, have children, grandchildren."

For Ziwa, passing on the legacy of the Holocaust is important to maintaining her sense of continuity and integrity. She wants her children and grandchildren to understand and remember the horror she lived through; it is part of their personal heritage. Equally important is to share her story with others so that people truly understand the enormity of what happened. If we forget our history, it can happen again. She has something to tell the world, and we need to listen.

Notes

1. Ziwa is pronounced "Tsiva"
2. All quotations unless otherwise attributed are from interviews with Ziwa. Long quotations are double-space in accordance with APA style.
3. Interview questions were adapted from Allen, pp. 134-140.

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