

Krinik in Khurbn

Chapter 7/ Pages 97 - 99



Drawing courtesy of the painter, Zdzislaw Nitka

The Escape

<p>ikh bin shoyn zeks teg in zelbn feld-lager. itst bakumt yeder tsu hundert gram broyt a tog un eyn liter vaser farmisht mit shvarts mel.</p> <p>ikh shtey shoyn gut oyf di fis. di vunt vert mit yedn tog beser. der mentsh velkher iz geshtanen tsuzamen mit di daytshn un hot geredt tsu di gefangene oyf rusish iz a gantsn tog in lager. dos ponim zayns iz epes vi a yidishes. ikh bashlis tsu vern mit im bakant un take in dem zelbn tog hob ikh im opgeshtelt un gebetn a shtikl broyt. er hot mir gegeben a shtikl broyt un avek vayter tsu zayn arbet. shpeter, shoyn farnakhtsu hot er mikh getrofn leben der kikh.</p> <p>er hot mikh opgeshtelt un gefregt tsi ikh vil a shtikl broyt. ikh hob genumen bay im a shtikl broyt un mir hobn bayde geredt.</p> <p>-khaver, zolst zayn gut forzikhtik. ikh veys ver du bist, zogt er mir.-ikh bin oykh a yid. fun Minsk bin ikh. ikh hob mayn familye in shtot un do arbet ikh als dolmetsher.</p> <p>ikh bin blas gevorn oysherndik zayne reyd, az er veyst un derkent oyf mir az ikh bin a yid.</p> <p>-zolst far mir nisht hobn keyn moyre. ikh vel dikh nisht farrotn. ikh vel dir helfn mit vos ikh vel nor kenen.</p>	<p>For six days already, I have been in the same field camp. Everyone is now allotted 100 grams of bread a day and a liter of water mixed with black flour.</p> <p>I can already stand well on my feet. The wound is getting better every day. The man who stood with the Germans and spoke to the prisoners in Russian is in the camp all day. His face has Jewish features. I decide to make his acquaintance and actually have stopped him the same day, asking him for a piece of bread. He has given me a piece of bread and turns back to his work. Later, already towards evening, he has met me next to the kitchen. He has stopped me, asking if I would like a piece of bread. I have taken a piece of bread from him and we have both talked to each other.</p> <p>"Comrade, you must be very careful! I know who you are," he tells me. "I, too, am a Jew, I'm from Minsk. My family is in the city, and here I work as an interpreter."</p> <p>I have turned pale when I hear his words that he has realized and knows that I am a Jew.</p> <p>"You don't have to be afraid of me. I will not betray you. I will help you with whatever I can".</p>	
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<p>ikh reyde gornisht. mir varft a tson in a tson. vos vet zayn, az men vet mikh masern? ikh freg im mit trern in di oygn:</p> <p>vuhin hot men avekgefirt di oytos mit di ale yidn? er kukt zikh arum un entfert mir: zey leben shoy nisht mer. men hot zey ale oysgeshosn in vald. ikh hob foroys gevust vos es dervart dem velkher geyt als</p>	<p>I'm not saying anything. My teeth are chattering. What will happen when I am handed over? I ask him with tears in my eyes:</p> <p>"Where have the trucks been taken with all the Jews?" He looks around and answers me: "They are not alive anymore. They were all shot in the forest". I have known in advance what awaits the one who puts himself</p>	
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<p>yid in daytshe merderishe hent.</p> <p>-khaver, oyb du vilst, hob ikh far dir a gute arbet vu du vest fun mir bakumen yedn tog broyt tsu der zat. -vos iz es far an arbet? freg ikh un varf a blik tsi(!) men hert nisht vegn vos mir redn.</p> <p>-ikh vel dir gebn yedn tog a zekl mel un du vest mit mir geyn tsu undz in shtub, mayne eltern, shvester un brider hungern un ikh ken aleyn gornisht aroystrogn. -nu un di vakh? freg ikh im un gloyb, az er makht shpas fun mir.</p> <p>-di vakh-dos iz shoy nisht mayn zakh. ikh hob shoy n opgeredt mit a postn, velkher vet fun mir epes bakumen un ikh vel yedn tog nehmen epes fun der kikh, nor ikh aleyn ken dos nisht trogn, tsu</p>	<p>as a Jew into German murderous hands.</p> <p>"Comrade, if you want, I have a good job for you, where you will get so much bread every day until you are full". "What kind of work is that?", I ask, making sure not to be overheard what we are talking about.</p> <p>"I will give you a bag of flour every day, and you will go with me to our house. My parents, sisters and brothers are starving, and I cannot carry anything out alone". "Well, what about the guard?", I ask him, thinking he's playing me for a fool.</p> <p>"The guard - I've already taken care of that. I have already arranged with a guard that he will receive something from me and I will take something from the kitchen every day, but I alone cannot carry it. Besides, I have to have a</p>	
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<p>dem darf ikh hobn a mentshn fun lager vayl ikh vel zayn farantvortlekh farn mentsh. (1)</p> <p>oyb du vilst, kenstu zayn der mentsh, nor zolstu gedenken un visn, az ikh bin far dir farantvortlekh.</p> <p>yo, un az men vet mikh khapn, vos zol ikh zogn? .keyner vet dikh nisht khapn. ikh hob shoyn opgeredt mitn ofitsir oykh. nor ikh zol aley nisht trogn.</p> <p>-ikh vel derfar bakumen broyt?</p> <p>-yo, du vest hobn broyt un ikh vel dir nokh gebn tabak oykh.</p> <p>-gut, kh'vel geyn, entfere ikh.</p> <p>mir redn zikh op, az in a halber sho arum vet er mir aroystrogn a zekele mit mel un tsuker. fun der shtot zaynen mir drey kilometer.</p> <p>yo, ikh vel geyn un zen, az ikh zol mer nisht tsurikkumen. du halbe sho iz ibergelofn un der dolmetsher trogt mir antkegn a papirn zekl fun tsement-a ful(e)m mit mel.</p> <p>-nu, khaver, du vest nehmen dos zekl un geyn hinter mir. alts vet zayn gut.</p> <p>ikh gey mitn zekl oyfn aksl un di fis brekhn zikh mir unter. ot ot fal ikh in veg. der dolmetsher geyt dreysik meter foroys far mir. ot iz er shoy n geblibn leben dem daytsh, velkher shteyt</p>	<p>person from the camp with me for whom I am responsible. (1)</p> <p>If you want, you can be that person, only you must remember that I am responsible for you!"</p> <p>"Yes, and if I am seized, what shall I say?"</p> <p>"No one will seize you. I have also already made an arrangement with the officer. It's just that I'm not supposed to carry (the sack) myself."</p> <p>"I'm going to get bread for this?"</p> <p>"Yes, you will receive bread, and I will also give you tobacco."</p> <p>"Ok, I will go," I answer.</p> <p>We agree that in half an hour, he will carry out to me a bag of flour and sugar. We are three kilometers from the city. Yes, I will go - and see to find a way, not to come back. The half hour is over and the interpreter comes to meet me with a paper cement sack filled with flour.</p> <p>„Well, comrade, you take this sack now, walking behind me. And all will be well!"</p> <p>I walk with the sack on my shoulder and my legs buckle. And already, I fall down onto the way. The interpreter walks thirty meters ahead of me. Right now he has already stopped next to the German who is</p>	
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(1) (I think, in the sense of having the authority to give instructions).

<p>oyf der vakh baym mashin-gever. ikh shtel klenere trit. ikh ze men tut a makh tsu mir mit der hant, az ikh zol geyn foroys. ot bin ikh leben di shtekhike oygn, velkhe nehmen mikh arum fun kop biz di fis. ikh glaykh vi keyner volt do nisht geshtanen.</p> <p>kh'bin shoyn ariber di lager-linye. ikh gey oyfn frayen feld. a langer, shmoler veg ligt foroys. der dolmetsher dreyt yede minut oys dem kop tsu mir un makht mit der hant, az ikh zol im nokhgeyn shneler. ober vi ikh gey- ken ikh nisht. di fis zaynen opgeshvakht un di vunt iz nokh a groyse, fun velkher es rint nokh blut.</p> <p>ot zaynen mir shoyn tsvishn di ershte heyzlekh fun Minsk. di gasn zaynen pust, vi keyner volt do nisht gelebt. alts iz toyt-shtil arum. es hert zikh nor der opklang fun shnel farbayforndike oytos. mir geyen in a shmol gesele. ot loyft farbay a hungeriker hunt un glotst zayne oygn oyf mir.</p> <p>der dolmetsher iz dreysik meter foroys far mir. ikh bashlis aroptsushteln dos zekele un arayntsukhapn zikh in ershtn hoyf. ot hot er gegebn a blik oyf mir un a makh mit der hant, az ikh zol geyn vayter.</p> <p>ikh shtel arop dos zekl oyf der erd un mit shnele trit, mit di letste kreftn, loyf ikh arayn in antkegendikn hoyf. ikh shpring ariber ibern ployt un gefin zikh in agroyesn gortn.</p>	<p>standing on guard by the machine gun. I take smaller steps until I see that I am being beckoned to go forward. And there, I am standing next to the piercing eyes that are examining me from head to toe. I pretend that I am not even there.</p> <p>I am already above the bearing line, ("Lager-Linie") walking on a free field! A long, narrow path is lying before me. The interpreter turns every minute after me and waves with his hand that I may follow him faster. But in the way I have to walk, I can't do so. My legs are weakened and the wound, from which blood is still running, is large.</p> <p>Now we are already between the first houses of Minsk. The streets are empty, as if nobody is living there. Everywhere is dead silence. Only the reverberation of fast passing vehicles can be heard. We are walking in a narrow alley. A hungry dog walks by and stares at me with its eyes.</p> <p>The interpreter is thirty meters in front of me. I decide to put the sack down and hurry into the first courtyard. But there, he just looks at me and waves, that I should go on.</p> <p>I put the sack down on the ground and quickly run with my last strength into the opposite courtyard. I jump over the fence and find myself in a large garden. It is quiet around me.</p>	
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<p>arum iz shtil. ikh veys nisht tsi der dolmetsher hot shoyn gezen, az ikh bin antlofn tsi nisht. ikh lig a vayle oyfn groz fun gortn. dos harts tsaplt zikh- ot flit es aroys. a shveys iz mir aroys ibern gantsn kerper.</p> <p>ikh loyf shnel oyf eyn fus, vayl ikh hob derfilt a shtarke veytik in krankn fus. ikh loyf arayn in a shteynernem keler durkh an ofenes fentsterl. ot lig ikh shoyn oyf dem shteynernem bodn fun keler. arum iz fintster.</p> <p>dos harts tsaplt zikh un bay yeder shorkh dakht zikh mir, az men kumt mikh tsuriknemen in lager oder tsum toyt, vayl der lager iz oykh a zikherer toyt, ober a lengerer- fun hunger.</p>	<p>I don't know whether the interpreter has already seen that I have fled. I'm lying on the lawn of the garden for a while. My heart is beating wildly - it's about to jump out. Sweat runs down my entire body.</p> <p>I quickly run on one leg after having felt a strong pain in my injured leg. Through an open window, I enter a stone basement. Now, I am already lying on the stone floor of the cellar. It is dark.</p> <p>My heart is racing, and with every rustle I think that I will be taken back to the camp and left to death - because the camp also means certain death, only a longer one, by starvation.</p>	
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