

The Last Days Before Embarking to Chelm and the Garden of Eden

At the previous meeting of **Our Yiddish Club**, located in **Yenemsville**, we decided that we would visit Chelm, Poland and learn more about our past history, for all of us traced our family roots to Chelm. We had things to do and things to learn about Chelm before our final monthly meeting.

No longer were we meeting in each other's home, for our Our Yiddish Club was now too large and we had already joined IAYC and attended the last conference in Baltimore. Our meeting place is now the JCC in Yenemsville.

As each day passed, our phone calls among the group increased and one could feel the excitement in each household as the meeting day approached. Even the spouses were caught up in the activities of preparing for our trip to our ancestral homeland. No longer would we say "Next year in Chelm."

Since we were going back to learn more about the birthplace of our parents (in some cases it was our grandparents or even great-grandparents), the question arose where did our family live before they came to Chelm. This seemed to be the overriding question as The Yiddish Club date approached.

It was our last meeting together before our trip. When the day arrived, and the telephone squad had made its calls according to the telephone tree, the exchange of information showed that everyone was ready for the journey. Passports were in order, clothes were packed, extra medicine tablets had been ordered, copies of their personal medical records had been secured, a second pair of glasses was packed and cell phones and laptop computers were in order. Gifts of Yiddish books were packed—including an extra copy of *Der Bay*.

Discussion hinged on what we would do once we arrived. Should we stick together in a group, or should we each go his or her way and make our own contacts? It was decided that not only would we go to learn about our ancestors, but each of us would try to be good ambassadors and help to bring the latest information about our own skills and knowledge of our trade or profession. This way it would be a wonderful way to return the favors the Chelmers undoubtedly would extend us.

Nar the Narrator said, "I shall take my video camera and film our trip. We could give them a copy and sell copies when we get back. Maybe the IAYC will buy a hundred and send them to all the member clubs."

"Yes, but don't make the same mistake you did last Peysakh and forget to erase the old copy and we saw your visit to Disneyland", said **Heshy the retired Chocolate Maker**.

"Chelm needs an old-fashioned Jewish Deli," piped up **Pincus the Pickle Maker**. "I'll show them how to make great pickles that snap when you break them."

Perele the Pearl Peddler said, "I'll show them how to buy the best pearls from Japan. That's the best place to buy them."

"Yes, but I can really make a difference. Everyone knows that they love beer, and I can show them how to use those hops like those that grow west of the Front Range of the Rocky Mountains in Colorado" countered **Benny the Beer Brewer**.

"With all those wooden houses they have a lot of fires. I'll show them how to use Knox boxes for the offices and businesses so they won't have to break down front doors," added **Fayvl the Fire Fighter**.

"English is important internationally and I can help the English teachers," said **Tova the Teacher**.

Leybl the Librarian then reiterated Tova's words.

Gitl the Gardener said nothing, for her mind was on her girls, Gella, Gerda, Gussey, and Greta.

"The hospital at 22-100 Chelm, ul. Hrubieszowska, near a route to border crossing to Ukraine in Zosin is in bad condition," muttered **Danny the Doctor**.

Rokhl the Raykhe offered to finance the hospital repairs as Our Yiddish club's contribution to Chelm.

"We'll need to computerize the hospital. I'll teach them the latest technology," was **Mendel the Computer Maven's** input.

Everyone except Gitl had said how they expected to aid Chelm in their effort to come into the 21st century, or if not, at least into the 20th century. Lest you think **Gitl the Gardener** was shallow, you are here and now being assured that her time to shine will come in a future chapter. It will be a surprise to her, her daughters and the rest of Our Yiddish Club.

So we leave Our Yiddish Club to do their final packing before embarking on their visit to Chelm, Poland. Next month we shall go along with them on their journey to their ancestral home.