

## Angels In The Holocaust

By Chaya Blitzer, M.Ed

### Part Two: My Parent's Miraculous Rescue In Memory Of Kristallnacht, November 9th & 10th, 1938

"If Jewish history has proven one irrefutable fact, it's that the soul of a faithful people cannot be vanquished by those driven to destroy that which is good and right in this world. The forces of evil and tyranny are ultimately no match for those of goodness and sanctity." – Jossi Refson, describing the astounding rescue of his grandmother, Bluma, at Auschwitz.

Having finally, and miraculously obtained their visas, my parents faced a new obstacle – ships bound for America were overbooked, and it would be weeks before tickets would be available for their passage to survival and freedom. My family faced many dangers during their wait. Their lives were constantly in jeopardy as there was still a warrant for their arrest and the Nazi's intensified their search for them. Every Jewish life was in jeopardy, because any flimsy excuse could be used to deport a Jew to a death camp: a minor traffic violation, including jaywalking, for example.



Blima Blitzer, 1960's

During this perilous time, my mother had been crossing a Berlin street. As she reached the other side, a gentile woman suddenly grabbed my mother's arm, and accused her of jaywalking. She threatened to report her. My mother trembled in terror, for she knew that an arrest could lead to certain death. She thought of her husband and two young children waiting for her in

Rotke's attic – escape was her only option for survival, but her accuser's grip on her arm was like a steel vise, as the woman tried to summon the policeman stationed on the other side of the street. However, it seemed that my mother was somehow made invisible – for as much as the woman yelled and screamed at the officer to come over and make an arrest, he was completely oblivious of her existence. When he finally heard the woman say "come over immediately and arrest her for jaywalking," my mother heard him respond, as he gazed in her direction: "What lady? I don't see one – you are holding on to no one!" Finally, in desperation, the woman just let my mother go, and my mother ran all the way home, grateful for her miraculous rescue.

In part one (October 22, 2010) I mentioned *Psalm 115*, in which Hashem promises Divine protection to *Klal Yisroel*. This psalm seems to provide a very specific protection in which Jews are unseen or "invisible" to their enemies. It states that our enemies will become like the idols they worship – "Eyes have they, but they see not... They that make them shall be like unto them." I had also described the account of a young girl at Auschwitz who, while standing in a death line to the gas chamber, was informed by her deceased mother that she was rendered invisible and that she could walk out of the death camp. She proceeded to leave the line, apparently unseen, as she passed a number of SS guards and their dogs, walking to freedom and survival. I believe this Divine protection, described in Psalm 115, miraculously rendered my mother invisible to the policeman, which enabled her to survive.

On another occasion during the period in which my parents desperately waited for their boat tickets for America to be issued, my mother had another harrowing, life-threatening experience. A very tall, muscular man, known in the neighborhood as a prize fighter, followed my mother as she walked down a Berlin street, saying he was going to beat her up because she was Jewish. Frightened, she ran into the lobby of a building. He found her and cornered her in the lobby, preparing to assault her. Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, four huge, exceedingly tall and muscular women appeared and stepped between my mother and this menacing man. They were each about six feet tall, blond, looking virtually identical. In unison, they told the man to leave

her alone or they would do whatever it took to protect her. Their huge size and sudden appearance apparently rattled this man to such an extent that he ran out of the building and my mother was safe. When she turned to thank these kind strangers, they were gone – as if they had vanished into thin air. She was convinced throughout her entire life that these four women were angels, summoned by Hashem to save her life. "The cords of death compassed me... But I called upon the name of the L-rd... I was brought low, and He saved me." (*Psalm 116*).



Chaim and Blima Blitzer later in life

Several days later, in mid-January, 1939, passage for one person to America became available. It was decided that my father would travel first, because of the warrant for his arrest and deportation. My mother and sisters remained in Berlin, hiding in the cold, dark attic. Two weeks later, additional tickets for my mother and two sisters enabled them to board the *Aquitania*, on their voyage to freedom and a new life, joining my father and relatives in New York.

Despite their severe hardships and losses, throughout their lives they retained and intensified their love for, and faith in, Hashem. I am deeply grateful for their rich spiritual legacy which has enabled me to survive and grow through the vicissitudes of life. Rabbi Lazer Gurkow: "The angels created by our deeds and words accompany us through life... the average person does not sense the myriads of angels that accompany everyone. Of course, we are not the only ones who dispatch angels on missions, G-d does too... The mere knowledge of these miracles enhances our gratitude to G-d. Reflecting on them engenders a constant awareness of G-d who sends angels to shepherd us to safety and to protect us from harm."

"...For He will give His angels charge over thee,  
To keep thee in all thy ways."

– Psalm 91

*Walking With Angels* is my book in progress, in which "Angels in the Holocaust" is a chapter. I welcome your experiences and comments at: [tovalightning@aol.com](mailto:tovalightning@aol.com)

## A Rewarding Theatrical Experience: Judge! Song Of Devora

By Yocheved Golani

Israel's cultural scene is rich and Gush Etzion's RAISE YOUR SPIRITS theater group ([www.raiseyourspirits.org](http://www.raiseyourspirits.org)) is part of the reason for it. The 6<sup>th</sup> annual RYS production, *Judge! Song of Devora*, debuted on October 24 2010.



The production is educating an enthusiastic audience about a powerful female figure in Jewish "her-story." Women from Skokie, Illinois, far-flung Israeli communities, plus friends and family of Efrat's own feminine thespians, clap to the songs and sway to the beats. The musical score, composed by Mitch Clyman, ranges from operatic solos to funky rock and timeless

Jewish treasures.

The playbill captures Devora's (Deborah) life in these brief words: "... a charismatic, inspiring prophetess, judge, poetess and military leader and strategist who lived in approximately 1200 BCE, at the beginning of the Iron Age. Her story is told in the book of *Shoftim* (Judges), chapters 4-5. Chapter 4 is the prose description of what ensued during her reign, and Chapter 5, commonly known as *Shirat Devora* (the Song of Deborah)... is considered by scholars to be a magnificent work of literature." It also describes Yael's prophecy-fulfilling female assassination of Jewish genocide's unusually bloodthirsty Sisera. General to King Yavin, Sisera's record for mass murder remains historically exceptional.

Written by Toby Klein-Greenwald and Yael Valier, the production employs the clever device of asides. The audience listens in as heroines Devora and Yael question themselves – from childhood into adolescence and adulthood – about the paradox of social and halachic limitations upon females and their obviously exceptional-to-any-rule spiritual powers and prowess. The characters thus inform the audience of the psychological pressures and process that these women endured in their rise to greatness, bringing audience members into their personal dramas.

The presentation includes artful overhead projections of the English and Hebrew words sung and spo-

ken by the troupe. Impartial narrator "Iron Maiden," clad in a spooky-looking black dress, bedecked with chains and metal spikes, provides social commentary to speed along 20 year's worth of Devora's story. The humor of sharing her insider's appreciation for the "technological advances" of the Iron Age and watching Jewish spirituality defeat Jew-hatred once again lends thoughtful reflection to everyone in the theater.



Rebecca Kowalsky, [www.imagesthroughtime.com](http://www.imagesthroughtime.com)

Dedicating each of its plays in the memory of Israel's victims of terror, the Raise Your Spirits troupe is now three-generational. Mothers, daughters, daughters-in-law and granddaughters take bows as everyone present appreciates the love they've invested in Israeli Jewish life.

Visit [www.raiseyourspirits.org](http://www.raiseyourspirits.org) to purchase tickets for this most rewarding experience.