

June 14, 1989

Dear Iris,

As a granddaughter of Miriam and Zalman Bloom of Frumusica, Rumania, who were your father Frank's parents, I wanted to share with you, in writing, an experience that I had Memorial Day weekend which I thought was quite unusual.

A while back, Beth Gladstein a local young woman whom I have know since childhood, asked me to officiate at her wedding to her Israeli boyfriend Dan Zekser. When I met Dan and Beth about a month before the wedding, I asked Dan where his family came from before they went to Israel. Dan indicated that his mother was from Rumania as was his grandmother. I asked where specifically but he did not know.

On the Saturday night before the wedding, Ingrid and I were invited to Ansel and Ruth's Gladstein's home, probably in order to be able to speak Hebrew with Dan's parents and grandmother. Upon arriving at the Gladstein home (the bride's parents) and being introduced to the grandmother who is about 80, hard of hearing, speaking only Rumanian and Yiddish which made communication a little bit chancy between us, I asked her where she was from and to my great surprise and astonishment she said that she was born in Frumusica. I had chills up and down my spine. I indicated to her that that was where my grandfather, Yekutiel Zalman and my grandmother Miriam, lived; that my father Samuel was born there and lived there until he left for the United States at age 19 in 1914. She was surprised. But when I mentioned some of our familiy's names there was no recognition.

She said that as a matter of fact she had gone away to school and only came back to Frumusica for vacation. Her family asked me to bring some photos to the wedding which took place on Monday, Memorial Day - which was, by the way, an absolutely delightful wedding. Beth and her new groom just danced wonderfully and everyone had a superb time. I didn't bring any pictures then but asked if I could bring grandma Beraru home so I could show her some pictures that I had of the family in Rumania. I was hoping against hope that there might be some recognition. I took the picture of the 1899 wedding which you have, (and if you don't I will be glad to send one to you), of Levi Blum from the wall, showed it to her and I pointed out who my grandfather and grandmother were in the picture. She asked me what my grandfather's name

was and I told her it was Yekutiel Zalman Bloom. She showed no recognition. I then pointed out my grandmother's picture and again, no recognition. She then asked again my grandfather's name. I remembered that all the Bloom's that had the name Zalman were called just plain Zalman. I said, this is Zalman Bloom and she as she pointed she took a deep breath, almost a gasp, and said in Yiddish ***"and this woman is Zalman's Miriam"?!***

She then poured out everything she knew about the family. She knew that Miriam was Zalman's widow, thus the name Zalman's Miriam. She put her hand over the pictures and said "let me tell you without looking at any more of the pictures who is who. Zalman was already dead by the time I was born (she was born in 1908 and our grandfather Zalman died ca.1906 when my father was 12 years old), they had four children...one who was married to a Clara (your father's older brother Frank) and had a whole bunch of children (Iris, Ella and all their brothers and sisters) then they had Leah and Adele and a young one by the name of Samuel." I then pointed to myself and said 'I am Samuel's son'. I again had chills run up and down my spine and it was hard for me to contain my excitement. I called Iris on the spot and had this lady talk to Iris to see what both of them remembered. After she got off the telephone she resumed telling about the entire family; about Leah's children who are now in Israel. (Moshe Meirovicz, now deceased, Chaim Tirer, his children Rachel Reisenberg and Aharon Tirer, and Adele's children, Chentza, Moshe Meirovicz's widow, Zalman Bolocan, etc.) I took out the pictures of Meirovicz and his wife Chentza. She knew that they were first cousins who had married each other. She knew how Esther (Iris's sister) had come to be raised in Frumusica by Zalman and Miriam. She started to tell me all kinds of stories from Frumusica. She was the daughter of Tzili and Levi Riven and lived next to my aunt Leah.

Mostly she told stories about your great-great-grandmother; about what a generous, kind and wonderful woman she was, how she would feed the entire town giving food even though her family would try to get her to do less than that, to anyone who needed it; how she would gather the other women around her in the Synagogue and as the service was going on she would explain to them what was going on and lead the service for them; how she made sure that bride's had dowries for their weddings; how she always wore a kerchief on her head. She pointed to the picture of the wedding and said, "here she had a sheitel but later she always wore a kerchief with a very nice little lace design in front". She repeated over and over again what a wonderful woman she was and all the acts of kindness, generosity and piety she did. She repeated a number of times "you come from a very baalebatisch family", which translates roughly to a

respected and respectful family. She then told me about how the relatives from Hirlau used to come out to Frumusica to get "out of the city" and the people from Frumusica which was just a few kilometers distant, used to go back into Hirlau for holiday celebrations, etc. Hirlau was the center of all the rest of the Bloom family. Only this particular branch of the family was from Frumusica, which was a small town of probably a couple of hundred Jews who supplied the businesses and services for the surrounding countryside of Rumanian peasants. The odds of having met this lady were just astonishing. She repeated with some awe how amazing it was for her that it would be Miriam Bloom's (your great-great- grandmother) grandson (me) who would officiate at the wedding of her grandson and how thrilled and excited she was by this.

I gave her the names of some of the relatives in Israel for her to contact since some of them are still around. She saw some pictures from the 20's and 30's from Rumania and she identified some of the people; Hiram Tier who is still alive and who is Rachel Reisenberg's father and other people. It was a most unusual story.

I became aware that many of the things we do in our lives come as an inheritance from those who went before and how my officiating at this marriage, being a Rabbi and Psychologist were part of this inheritance. I wonder what you have inherited from Miriam and Zalman, (more about him in another letter) and how they have influenced your life, personal and professional.

I wanted to share it with you and for you to have it on paper. It is a part of our legacy.

Love,

PS At a later time 4/5/95 I ran into Mrs. Beraru at the bris of Danny and Beth Zekzer's newborn son Tomer Philip. Mrs. Beraru, recognizing me from the earlier experience, told me of how Miriam Katz Blum and her grandmother, Sora Rivka Kramer would go from house to house in Frumusica to collect money to marry off poor girls etc. She declared what a baalebatish person Miriam was. Miriam was known as Miriam de Balances. She then asked about Froyim, knew his wife Clara's name and asked about Esther, Adele, and the other children. She remembered that the sister's names were Adela and Leah. Miriam was known as Zalman's Miriam.

Clara Beraru's mother was Tziviah and her husband Levi Riven.

A few years later in 1995 I was in Rehovot Israel, with my extended family, the Egers. She was the daughter of Chentza Meirovici, who had been widowed. I happened to ask her in Hebrew if she knew a Clara Beraru. Chentza blurted out in Yiddish,

Zi Labt noch!?

Yes, I said, she is alive and well in Beersheba.

She knew Clara when they were very young girls. I gave her Clara's address and they made contact. When I returned to the States, I sent Clara the following note;
May 1, 1995

Clara Beraru
Rh. Max Nordau 15/4
Beersheva Israel

Dear Clara;

It was good to see you at the B'ris of your grandson Tomer. Dan and Beth are a lovely couple. You can be very proud of them.

While you were in the United States, I was in Israel. I was visiting my cousin Chentza Meirovici, who is living at her daughter and son in law's home. When I mentioned that I had met you in the U.S. and that you were from Frumusica, Chentzah was thrilled. When I told her that you lived in Beersheva she was doubly thrilled. I gave her your address, and now I am giving you hers.

Chentzah Meirovici
c/o Eger
16 Pinsker
Rehovot, Israel

I hope the two of you can make contact with one another.

Sincerely,

Jack H Bloom Ph.D