

Nothing more to write. Be healthy, all of you. Live happily.

From your father, Y.A.

Village of Komai [circa 1917]

To all my children, my son Simcha, his wife and my little granddaughter Itinke, the same to my dear daughter Shprintze, her husband Yankev and their dear little children, may all of them have long lives, and may you have *naches* from them. The same wishes as well to my dear daughter Hannah, her husband Zalman Kostrel and their little son, the same for my dear daughter Yehudeske and my little grandson Reuven. I pray to the Almighty not to withdraw His mercy from you, your health, livelihood, which I watch, though from a distance, and which gives me the greatest pleasure:

I received the \$20 from you today. May the Almighty repay you a thousand rubles for every 15 kopeck coin. Regarding my health, it was quite poor, but thanks to the Living One, from the time I consulted with doctors in Vilna, my health hasn't been too bad. It's just that as usual in a time like this one is forced to eat one's last ruble. Believe me, it's nothing you'd want to taste.

Regarding the forest which was purchased from Tsekavitz: Chaim Oser and I have 40 percent. The money, of course, is Chaim Oser's. As for making a living from it, if it weren't for all the tumult and chaos there would undoubtedly be a good living to be made from it, but as it is you never know from day to day what the Almighty will do. In the meantime I'm giving Chaim Oser a hand. He's doing pretty well. How long he'll continue, I don't know - but what can someone like me do - I have no cash of my own. It's that time of the year already, and in the Exchequer they have a supply of money. Thank the Living One for Tsekavitz's forest. It's provided some livelihood until now.

Not really any more to write. The turmoil has resulted in wrecking commerce. I know of people going under like sand. Any given day they have nothing to live from - the tradespeople, the craftsmen, the professionals - all of them without bread. Only the Almighty knows where we're headed.

My son Eliohe, his wife and children make a little bit of a living. Poor fellow, he just barely managed to make out for a year's time; after this the Almighty knows what will happen. Eliohe writes that you've written him that you haven't received any mail from me. I don't know what's going on, because I sent a letter and a photo not very long ago and yesterday the money and the five Hanukkah candles arrived. Write and tell me, dear ones, which of you sent me the money.

I sit in the house, go to daven and study. I pray to the Almighty for you, thank Him for sparing my children from the kinds of troubles afflicting so many unfortunate people. No one has enough, inflation is enormous, people are crying from hunger. Even store merchandise is twice as expensive. You should thank the Almighty that you're spared this kind of misery.

Don't forget your old father. May the Living One provide you all that's good in your elderly years so that you won't have to turn to your children.

Write and tell me what's happened with Shayne, my daughter, I've had no mail from her, I don't have her address and I've written to you to send it to me. Yet another thanks to the Living One for standing by her and her husband, sustaining their life. The Almighty cares for us as He has in the past and will in the future. He rules the world well, but we don't know how to thank Him for sparing us from the tragedies around us, in every household. Creator of the World, I thank You and thank You every minute for Your mercy until now, for sheltering us in winter, for sparing Jews from sorrow.

Nothing more to write. I beg you, have compassion on us and write, tell us, each one of you, how you are, how you live. Don't forget that one doesn't buy a mother or a father. Greetings from Auntie to all of you. She's barely making it, she's weak. I got a prescription and the doctors told me that I need to take the medicine a whole year, but as usual when one feels better, thanks to the Living One, since they don't give medicine away for nothing and it would cost me so much in a week, I'll have to do without it. You have to have something to eat before medicine!

Nothing more to write. Be healthy all of you, my dear children, and prosperous and don't forget your old father who blesses you with all blessings.

Amen. Amen. Y.A.

[Date unknown; probably post-1918]

To my dear daughter Shprintze, her husband Yankev, and your little children, may all of you live long years with good fortune:

I wonder at how you, more than anyone, forget to write us here, since after your mother's death you were the one who really took charge of things, kept me and the orphans going as best you could. You looked after the youngest ones and when you went off to America I couldn't eat for three days. It seemed I couldn't go on living without you, it's as if my heart were torn out of me. I know it was also very hard for you when we parted. And now, when I've received letters from all of my children, but nothing from you for so long I ask you my dear one, my beloved, my comforter, since letters arrive from the others, you write too, please. That would be the greatest delight. Auntie says, "What can this be? A child as sweet and beloved as Shprintze, and she doesn't write with her own hand?" Though no more than her children write to her. Maybe its not just the same...

For our own part I'm in good health, thank God, but Auntie is weak. She drags herself around the house and can't really go any further. She's weak. We live well now, though; not hungry and not "naked", many thanks to all of my children. The Living One will pay you all back in your old age, with satisfaction from your children.

From your father who wishes you all the best from deep in his heart.
Y.A.

[Letter fragment from Panevezys, date unknown; probably post-1918]

I'm sure you'll receive this letter quite soon and I hope it will find you in the best of health. I would like to give you a little news about the rich folk here in Fashtef. The city caught fire and the fire fed on thick dry grass full of snakes. Now they're burning grass as a precaution. Little by little they're building little houses measuring 8 [undecipherable measurement] which cost 50,000 to construct, and there are very few who can afford them.

Fargament and his children have been in Vilna, but they're coming here to give some support. Luba Fargament and his family are at his father-in-law's just to make sure they have something to eat. Kotler is in Disna with a relative of his so that he'll have a little bit of bread. Really, the whole world is topsy turvy here, the sky has fallen beneath our feet. To this very day the hunger in Russia is horrible - a thousand or more for a loaf of bread, people are falling like flies, Jewish blood runs like water in pogroms.

The Living One has protected us, for the time being, from this misery. Thanks to Him for bringing us to Panevezys. May His mercy continue to follow and not abandon us, to protect us from suffering. Here the one who has rubles lives well, still, everything is so expensive. Matzoh meal costs 130 a pood, meat 20 per, a hen, a goose, 60. Little things are also very high.

Nothing more to write. Be happy and healthy and send us photos of you and your children, that will be a great pleasure for us.

Thus asks your father, Y.A.

[Date unknown; probably post-1918]

Dear children, Shprintze and your husband Yankev. May all of you live happily with your own children:

I'd written you a letter and walked to the post office to mail it when I found your package there waiting for me. When I brought it home Auntie cried out in joy, "Look what our Shprintze came up with!" From this package we'll be able to hold our heads up among folk, have fine shoes, galoshes on our feet - we won't have to go about barefoot, or in rags. Maybe my son Reuven will also send something. Auntie asks me to thank you all.

We pray for you and for your children that the Almighty will bless you with health and prosperity. The jackets fit Auntie to a "T" - they are a boon to her health. Thank you, thank you so much. Be happy and healthy.

From me, your father, Y.A.