

The eve of Passover, 5705 – 1945 .

Haaretz, By Aliza Lavie

Two young women are on the death march from Auschwitz to the territories of the old Germany. Two friends from the city of Munkacs in Hungary: Toby Trakltaub and Aliza Klein. The Germans are slaughtering the Jews who are dragging along with the last remnants of their strength. Only a few of them will survive. Toby did not live to see the liberation, Aliza did. A moment before her death, Toby handed her friend a tiny booklet bound in blue cloth, its pages folded toilet paper. Aliza will never know where Toby obtained toilet paper in the camp. On the binding Toby had embroidered letters with threads she had unraveled from her prisoner's garments. Around the edge she made a frame. Above, on the right, she embroidered the word "Zion" and in the center, a map. A map of the land of Israel, in its familiar outlines: Haifa Bay, the Sea of Galilee, the Dead Sea. And inside the booklet, page after page - written and vowel pointed in her careful handwriting. Years will go by before Aliza identifies the map on the binding and learns to read what is written in the booklet. For more than half a century her friend's gift will lie among her personal possessions until she decides to pass the legacy along to an institution that documents the Holocaust. Only then will she understand what she held in her hands: a Passover Haggadah. Not the usual,

familiar Haggadah of her childhood home, but rather a personal appeal to the Creator of the World. "And you shall retell," in the spirit of the times. "Toby was very religious," Aliza Klein related many years later, "and so as not to forget the holidays, she made a Jewish calendar for herself. That way she knew when Hanukkah was, and Purim and when Passover was approaching." And thus she also knew to write on the first page that it was written during Passover, 5075 - that is, in 1945. In the Jewish tradition, Passover is made up of two central ideas that reach their climax in the story of the Exodus from Egypt: The one is personal and national freedom and the other is the absolute faith in one God, the God of Abraham. In a situation in which she was left without a shred of personal freedom, Toby expressed her absolute faith. In quite a number of ghettos and concentration camps many tried to reproduce the Haggadah, and even to illustrate it, and to hold a symbolic Passover seder. But Toby did not reproduce the Haggadah. She rewrote it, in the Auschwitz version. In the midst of the inferno, in Hebrew that had been preserved, apparently, from the well-developed Jewish education system in the town of Munkacs)which also included a Hebrew Gymnasium(, she wrote about the hope for freedom "and a better and more beautiful future about which we want to think and not hang our heads." Out of the horror of abandonment she wrote: "And if God saved our forefathers from Egypt, he will also save us from our bitter enslavement

and return us to the land of our forefathers." Faith, she wrote, is the only thing that "they" cannot take away. The inclusion of Toby's Haggadah in the book "Women's Prayer" was accompanied by some linguistic indecision. Toby's language is rich, but in the text there are some errors of spelling, conjugation and vowel pointing. In the end, we decided that we must not change the language of her work, which teaches about the conditions and the times in which it was created. And here is the Haggadah: We want to celebrate but we cannot, we desire to believe and the only thing we have and that they cannot take from us is memory only this can give us hope for a better and more beautiful future about which we want to think and not hang our heads and if God saved our forefathers from Egypt he will also save us from our bitter enslavement. And return us to the land of our forefathers

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