

## 30 March 2013 - Passover Greetings

### Steve Heller, letter to nagypapa

*Szervusz Nagypapa,*

Whenever I cannot spend Passover Seder with you and mom, I think about our seders growing up. Our seders used to go on all evening, with each year being more energetic than the previous one. Five to six hours was not unusual. This year, especially, I missed our old seders.

We spent our seders with friends this year, Leslie and Naomi joining us on the second night. We have often spent second seder with our friends the Lovitz's, where the seder is meaningfully put together, each family having an assignment. When I bring songs to the table, they are welcome, but this year I was somewhat sad. I wondered if this was the first year of your entire life that you may not have had some sort of Passover seder. Even when you were in the concentration camp in 1945, you reported that a piece of matzoh was found, and Jews made Passover such as it was. A few days after Seder this year, mom told me some people brought you some Passover stuff, so even sick in a hospital bed, you made some sort of Passover. I was not surprised.

For me, the part of the seder I most strongly associate with you is *Ho Lachmo Anyo*, Behold the bread of affliction. You taught me the practice of all present standing, supporting the seder plate together with the three pieces of *matzoh*, with those people at a distance reaching out their arm, much as the *Haggadah* says *God reached out to the Israelites, with a strong hand and an outstretched arm*. Each year you explain that it was on Passover that your freedom from the Nazis began, as you fulfill the imperative that we personalize the march to freedom. For you, it was very real. So this year, I asked those present to join in *Ho Lachmo Anyo* as you taught me, and I briefly told your story of Passover transition to freedom.

I mentioned that our hostess Heidi Lovitz assigns families parts of the seder to address. It's a wonderful idea as people get involved. This year, we were assigned *Dayenu*, and Ilana and I prepared a performance. Ilana thought we might relate *Dayenu* to Shakespeare, and we concocted a fun combination of a modern hip-hop song along with iambic pentameter. I rapped the song, and Ilana recited the iambic pentameter. A PDF is included with the verses we recited. We tried to make a video, but it is not of very high quality.

I hope you are feeling better. I have the impression that you will only improve with a fight and full of determination. I'm not sure I know anyone with more determination than you.

All the Hellers send you all our best wishes for a speedy return to full health. I would like to

hear more of your stories directly from you.

Love,  
Steve and the Acton Hellers