

Miriam and her friend went to work as usual. A part of the road was adjacent to a forest. At lunchtime some guards went to get food. „They ate and we only smelled the food!“ she said.

When only one guard was left, they took their opportunity. Miriam grabbed her friend and they started to run. Her feet could hardly walk, but it was a ‘fight for life or death’. „I thought, when only one guard was there, he would not leave the other prisoners alone and therefore would not follow us.“ Miriam shared. „In the forest we found a pit and hid there, covered by branches. In early evening, slowly getting dark, we couldn’t see a lot and didn’t know in which direction to go, but then I could feel wagon-ruts in the ground and followed them, until we came out of the forest.“ From there they walked until they reached a village. A good Ukrainian woman asked us where we were heading to and I, as I spoke Ukrainian, answered that we were on our way to Uman. She didn’t want to leave us two young girls alone at night and took us into her home. She even gave us milk and we slept on the floor in the hallway. This woman had a baby, who was crying. Miriam’s friend slept, totally exhausted, but she herself couldn’t sleep: „Even today I can’t sleep when I remember it,“ she said. Through an open door she could see the husband of the Ukrainian woman and was totally terrified when she realized that he was a police officer. It was already known that two young girls had escaped and therefore they were once again in great danger of their lives. „There is a God and He wanted me to live!“ she said. The baby was crying and in that moment she woke her friend up. „We have to run away!“ There was a very small window. They both were so skinny that they fit through this small window and could flee into the garden. During the escape a God-fearing man helped them and hid them in a haystack, gave them food and cake. Miriam tells: „He didn’t ask us, from where we came, but only asked where we were going!“ „Miriam answered: „We are heading toward my hometown.“ His reply was, „There are no more Jews left!“ But Miriam knew that her father was still alive and the man advised them which road to take. When they came to a village, it was Sunday morning and the people were going to the market. Four or five Ukrainian police officers with rifles suddenly took notice of Miriam and her friend. Miriam thought, „This will be our end!“ and she was terrified. The Ukrainians shouted: „Come up here girls!“ But just at that moment the church bells rang and all the people crossed themselves, even the police officers. The girls also crossed themselves and saw beside them an old woman on her way to the church and they walked beside her toward the church.

This was how they were rescued from these Ukrainian police officers. „There is a God and He wanted me to live!“ she repeatedly said. Suddenly they couldn’t see the old woman anymore! Miriam keeps a little bell with a cross in her apartment for remembrance. „Actually I shouldn’t have this bell“, she explains to us, „because I am a religious Jewish woman!“ But she is so deeply thankful as she remembers this great miracle that the church bells rang just at that very moment, when they were again in great danger, and thus they could flee yet another time.

Finally they arrived at her home town and at Miriam’s father’s place. But had they arrived just 10 minutes earlier, they would have once again confronted death, because the Germans had counted the 20 skilled workers they had left alive. Her father already knew that his wife was dead. Miriam and her friend were hiding in one of the empty Jewish homes.

Her story doesn’t end here: „I wanted to tell you mainly about these miracles of my survival.“ Miriam said. However, she also shared, that she was afterwards again imprisoned for another two years in a ghetto in Transnistria. She described to us, how she didn’t have any hair left, was suffering from having lice and survived typhoid fever. Her father escaped in 1943 and came to the same ghetto, but sadly, only 18 days before the end of the war he died of hunger and illness. ---

In 1992 Miriam immigrated to Israel. She is a real Zionist and loves her new homeland. „In the ghetto there was a woman from Jerusalem, who told me about Israel. Even then I wished in my heart to come to Israel. Miriam told us about a dream she had while still in the Ukraine. „I dreamed that I was standing at the foot of a mountain, with a small path going upwards. As I climbed up, arriving at the top I saw a certain place. Later on, when I was in Jerusalem I recognized exactly this place from my dream!“ Already from the first day I met Miriam I was deeply moved by her deep fear of God and her real faith.

She read a prayer to me, which she herself wrote and she’s praying it daily. The beginning of it, I remember so well: „My God, I have sinned. I shall have no other gods besides you!“

Miriam testifies, „That’s how I live!“



Theology student Johannes with Miriam