

I live in an Arab house whose inhabitants have fled or been expelled. There was a scented jasmine tree in the yard and a water pump next to it, I was used to swinging on the handle while the water was pumped. And There were guava trees and lemon and pomegranate and olive and a huge vine. The family who lived there left it all and fled from the Jews.

The Jews are my father, who came to occupied Jaffa with his friends from the army. Every one of them seized an empty home for his family. When Dad served in the Army, Mum and I lived in Nahalal. Dad came from the Holocaust. Ember survived the fire.

His wife and daughter, his parents, brothers, and sisters were all burned alive while hiding from the Germans in the basement under beds and mattresses, and only Dad survived.

Father, orphan, widower, bereaved - began a journey through the forests, trains, snow and famine .. And enlisted in the Russian army. When the army arrived in Iraq Dad defected and went on foot to Israel. Thus came to the Jezreel Valley, which was a dream, to start a new life.. Mother immigrated with Aliyat Hanoar* and was detained in British detention in Atlit. Dad met Mum in Nahalal later, in the girls' boarding school. They gave birth to me and started a new life.

The War of Independence broke out and Father joined the Israel Defense Forces. The Arabs fled or were expelled, and Jaffa became empty of its Arab inhabitants. My Dad, a soldier in the Israeli army who conquered Jaffa, whose home and family were burned, now lives in the home of a deported Arab family. He brought me and mom to this house to live a new life.

And another family came from the Holocaust. Father-Mother Samek and Hannah. They had no home. Samek's father knocked on our door and asked Mama to let his family live with us. Mom panicked and didn't agree. Samek's father pushed the door, pushed Mom aside and entered forcefully. Mother was crying. My dad wasn't home. Samek's dad brought his family with all their luggage and that's how they became our neighbors. And Samek and I used to play in the yard with sand.

After the Six-Day War, the days of open bridges, two women came and knocked on the door. One said: I am from Jaffa, and this is my sister, she lives in Amman, this house was hers. Can we visit the house? I put them in, and the woman from Amman said: Here was the Jasmine, and here was the lemon tree. Did the lemon give fruit, she asked. They wandered quietly around the house for some time and left.

Dad didn't want to go out of Israel. This is my home and I have nothing to look for elsewhere, he told me.