

December 18, 1992

My dear I.F.,

Your letter arrived by express mail on Santa Claus day (Santa Claus comes to children in Poland on December 6, and then they get presents under the Christmas tree on December 24; this way they get presents twice. Another example: birthday and nameday. No wonder children get spoiled). In fact the Catholic Church does not fully recognize Saint Nicholas as a saint and I am not surprised. What decent Catholic saint would bring as a gift an article about demons and - to make matters worse - written in Yiddish!

Your plans of coming to Poland in April sound great to me. April 13 is Marcinek's birthday. He would be happy to have an English-speaking friend as a guest at his party. Any time is good for us except March 29-31 since I hope to go to this London conference. This will be a good opportunity to update my research on Singer. Zelda Ackerman has sent me a New York Times Book Review review of his most recent book The Certificate. I wonder whether anything else was published? I hope they will have a little display of books and other publications in London. Recently I have been reading a lot of Israel Joshua since three books by him came out in Polish translation. They read very well in Polish; fortunately they were translated directly from the Yiddish originals.

Now it is a good time to read your Hanukkah story to Marcinek. Yesterday we read it twice and he has requested it for tonight.

I was touched by your thoughtfulness when you mentioned the printing ribbon. This letter will be printed thanks to one of the ribbons you brought in August. In the meantime this type of printing ribbon has become available in Poland together with other signs of PROGRESS. I would be very grateful, however, if you could send me (or bring in April) a copy of your shtetl book. This is the only book by you that I do not have. One more request, or rather two, if I may: Would you know the meaning and the origin of the words "Kuzu Bemuchzus Kuzu... An arrow in the eye of Satan.. Yahweh's war with Amalek... Thou shalt utterly detest it, and thou shalt utterly abhor it"? They appear in the story "A Cage for Satan" (in the middle of Part I) in Singer's Old Love which I translated into Polish. Professor Shmeruk is staying in London now and he does not have adequate sources to answer this question; 2) What is exactly The Ford of the Jabbok? It is referred to in "The Power of Darkness" as a book dealing with death and mourning. I need this information for a glossary at the end of the book.

The sad news is that Wlodek's mother died in September. I know that he received photos from you and was going to write to you. I hope your mother and Shana's father feel well. I hope that when you come to Lublin in April we will have a chance to spend more

1317 אבן 1317

7/2' 227N

time talking since you have already seen most things worth seeing in Lublin.

Tomorrow teachers and students from our department organize a big Christmas show at the University. Jola will be the Master (Mistress?) of Ceremonies. I wrote a short play for this purpose, a kind of political satire in which Chris, among others, is playing the role of an old Western Communist in the first act, turned devil in the second one. I wish I could see one of your Purim-shpils.

Jacek's teething and the sleepless nights that accompany this torture make me think of the benefits of the old age and I am dreaming about quiet retirement at Naleczow. Just sleeping, reading and eating ice-cream at Ewelina's...

I've got your honorarium for "Akcent". It is waiting for you and gaining interest. Maybe you would like more copies of the quarterly? They mention Michael Schudrich's name quite often in the press. He seems to be quite active, doing a good job. I hope your stay in Moscow will be not only an interesting but also a pleasant experience.

With love to you, the O.-F. L. W.,

*Alonka*