

Eliezer bar Judah

THE STORY OF BELLET

Let me tell the story of my eldest daughter Bellet: She was thirteen years old, and as chaste as a bride. She had learnt all the prayers and songs from her mother, who was modest and kind, sweet and wise. She did her housework quickly, and always spoke the truth. She worshipped her Maker, she weaved and sewed and embroidered, she was filled with reverence and pure love for her Creator. For the sake of Heaven, she sat down with me to hear my teaching.

And that is when she and her mother and her sister were killed, on the night of the twenty second of Kislev, as I was sitting peacefully at my table. Two wicked men broke in and killed them before my eyes: they also wounded me, and my students, and my son.

Now let me tell the story of my younger daughter: every day she would recite the first portion of the Shema. She was six years old, and she knew to wave and sew and embroider, and to delight me with her singing.

O my lovely wife! O my sons and daughters! I weep for them. I put my trust in the Judge who decreed my sentence; He has crushed me for my crimes. O Lord, the right is on Your Side, the shames belong to me, I shall bless You and sing in your honour; And I shall bow down before You.