

EAT, PRAY, NACHES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Waverley Council, NSW

MORRIS ESKIN AND NATAYANA, Oral History Transcript

Interviewees: Morris Eskin and Natayana Gross

Interviewer: Ashley Roan

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Interviewer: Can you tell me your name and when and where you were born?

Morris: I was born Morris Eskin, or to clarify that, Moshe Eskin, Moshe ben David, in Shanghai, China, in 1936, which makes me a rather proud almost-octogenarian, which is not bad, seeing that I'm still active and fairly[unclear], the way I see myself anyway. My mother and father had come to Shanghai from Harbin, my mother had been born in Harbin from Russian-Polish parents, and my father had migrated for his second time to Harbin from Belarus, around 1918.

That was about the time that the Trans-Siberian railway was terminating in Harbin, which was becoming a major trading city and the home for many Russians that sought to emigrate from Russia, from imperial Russia at that time for various reasons, including of course [pogroms that were targeting the Jewish community. My father was brought out to Harbin by two uncles, Max and Gershon.

The uncles themselves had gone across earlier to Harbin and established their business, a well-known department store called Eskin Brothers, and many people still, that hail from that area, in Australia, remember the Eskin Brothers department store. As it happened, of course when he arrived there, he was put to work in the department store, and my mother happened to be working at the same store as a cashier.

They met, they fell in love, and they got married. A few years later, my father decided to seek broader horizons, and at that time, for young people, it was a case of, "Go South, young man," not, "Go West, young man," because nobody wanted to go West back towards Russia; and they both came down to Shanghai, where my father went to work for a large Chinese textile company, which was based in a building that still stands today, and which our daughter, Natanya, and our granddaughters visited just this January. The Hong-Kong-Shanghai Bank building.

I was born in '36 in the Cosmopolitan Apartments, which also stand today, an eight-story building actually made up of two towers and a few side buildings, and considered by the Chinese as a tourist attraction, and I noticed in January, after an absence of 20 years from Shanghai, that a lot of the older buildings still standing have now been nominated as tourist items, and have a significant plaque attached to them, as do certain other places, such as any synagogue still standing that still date back to the earlier days in China.

Interviewer: What we want to do is ask your daughter exactly the same question. Can you tell me your name and when and where you were born?

Natanya: My name is Natanya Gross, and I was born in Sydney, Australia in 1964. I'm a born and bred Sydney girl, started on the North Shore, and when I was about 10 years old, we moved to the Eastern Suburbs, and I've been here ever since.

Interviewer: Fantastic. Now if there is any kind of opportunity for both of you to contribute from here, because that might add a different dynamic to it all, otherwise we might as well do you separately.

Natanya: I didn't know. Separate, true, true.

Interviewer: If you've got anything to add while Morris is talking, if you remember a story or something when you were a child, certainly, by all means, just at the opportune time, just feel free to get it in. I'm going to ask you a question now. Can you tell me what was happening in your country that led to the circumstances to your family coming out to Australia?

Morris: In Shanghai, we lived a life that could be termed a colonial existence. It was a relatively comfortable life. I mentioned we lived in Cosmopolitan Apartments, which had two bedrooms, a balcony, and even back in those days, two elevators that took us up from a very attractive marble lobby that many years later, when I went back to Shanghai, was regrettably used as a parking area for motorcycles and bicycles.

I went to the Shanghai Jewish school for a short while, and not really liking the tone of the classes, I asked my parents to move me to the Shanghai British school, where a number of our friends also were studying there, and I was then a student at the Shanghai British school right up to World War II, and the Shanghai British school took us to [unclear] Cambridge standard at that time, and with World War II breaking out, most of the teachers would have either left before hostility started or were interned in camps where the Japanese interned people with what they called allied passports there.

We were more fortunate in that my mother, having lived in Harbin, had a Soviet passport, and under Soviet legislation, a child is included in their mother's passport, so my mother was Soviet. I was regarded as Soviet, and my father was stateless white Russian.

The Japanese, fortunately and for their reasons, decided to classify us and people with Soviet passports or Russian stateless people as neutral, which meant that we were not subject to any deprivations or any difficulties that afflicted a lot of other foreigners. For example, our neighbors in our apartment building and their son who was a very close friend of mine were British and were interned in the so-called allied camp on the outskirts of Shanghai.

We continued through the Japanese occupation, that is up until 1945, fairly, from my recollection, normally, in that we were not subject to any restrictions on food. We were not subject to rationing, even though certain items, I recall, were difficult to get, and my father's business was allowed to continue.

By that time, after the earlier years, [my father] had left the large Chinese textile group that he had been involved with, and opened his own import business for textiles, and also worked from a room in the Hong-Kong-Shanghai Bank building. That business was allowed to continue, and I remember visiting him during those years, where he and a staff member were always very busy cutting up various lengths of fabric and branding them.

Natanya: Do you want to explain how you got to Australia?

Morris: Right. With the end of World War II, the Americans came into Shanghai. Prior to that, we were affected to some degree by air raids, because towards the latter half of the war, American bombers, principally the B-29s, were coming over Shanghai and seeking to bomb Japanese positions there.

My recollection is that we were always shooed off to the so-called air raid shelters, which were the lower corridors on the ground floor of the building that we were living in there, and I recall at one time that some shrapnel from anti-aircraft fire from the Japanese shooting up at the B-29s, though they never managed to hit a single one of them there, did come down and graze the arm of a lady who was one of our neighbours in the building there, and I remember that caused a lot of consternation, that somebody actually had been affected by that there.

At the end of the war, with the Americans in Shanghai and the PXs being opened, we of course met American servicemen, and we met quite a few of them in our synagogue, which is the Ohel Rachel synagogue, still standing today as an educational institution that we visited in January, not far from where we lived there, and we would invite some of the servicemen back home for dinner, especially Friday night Shabbat dinner.

Because the British school, of course, had closed down, my parents looked for another school for me to continue my education, and I then entered a Catholic Jesuit college, St. Joan of Arc, a very well-known school, and was a student there for the next four years with the brothers there, an excellent school, excellent.

Natanya: Dad, would you skip to the part where you're talking about how you got to Australia?

Morris: Right, okay. Towards 1946, the latter half of '46, the American presence started to dissipate in Shanghai, and the Chinese Nationalist government came back into power. They had survived through the war, their headquarters being right out in Western China in Chongqing, a little too far for the Japanese supply lines to allow the Japanese to take it there. At the St. Joan of Arc school, which I was very happy in actually, and in fact, I came home one day, and said to my mother, "Mum, I want to be a Catholic," and I showed her a set of rosary beads that I had proudly bought with my pocket money from the [unclear] shop over there.

Natanya: She would have loved that.

Morris: She didn't really quite take it very well, but I continued my studies there. As the Nationalists continued their rebuilding of China in their way after the Japanese occupation, it became apparent that there were a lot of things that they had difficulty with. In particular, corruption flourished and a great number of Chinese were showing signs of poverty, and it also became apparent to the foreigners that that government would not last.

At the same time, the Chinese Communists, who had been active in the North against the Japanese, together with the Nationalists, were starting to make advances southward, and people that had longer sight started to think that this was a wave that would come down and would not be stopped at all, so towards 1947 and '48, a lot of our friends were leaving China. A number of families were traveling to Israel. At that time, of course, before 1947, it was still Palestine, but ...

Natanya: Is that when your uncle came to Australia?

Morris: At that time, also, my mother's brother, my uncle decided that he would leave his business in Shanghai, and migrate to Australia. It was probably getting towards the end of the time when Commonwealth countries were still offering visas to people from the soon-to-be-Communist block.

The United States were already getting very fussy with issuing visas, but our friends were migrating either to Australia, some to Brazil, some to Canada. My father was a great optimist, and felt that the Communists, if they ever did come South, would be another passing phase; after all, he'd come from Russia, he'd gone to Harbin.

From Harbin, he'd gone to Shanghai, and who were these people coming down to make him leave again? My uncle found that leaving Shanghai with an Australian visa was becoming very difficult, in that the Communist regime from 1949 was demanding exit visas. You had to apply for a visa to leave. If you were running a business, and if you had funds overseas, you would not be allowed to leave unless you either liquidated your business, left it in somebody's hands, and of course repatriated some funds back to China there. It was then decided ...

Natanya: Your uncle left the business in your dad's hands.

Morris: He asked whether my father would take over the business. I suppose he would call it almost a hostage situation, and take the responsibility on his shoulders, letting my uncle and his family, two children and his wife, leave for Australia, and offered then on coming to Australia, to arrange a sponsorship for us, a visa for us.

When they arrived in Australia, he did exactly that, and with the help of relevant authorities, there were negotiations on our behalf in Canberra, and sure enough, we were classified as being from a Communist block, and there was very little quota, if no quota at all. You must remember that it was a time of McCarthyism in America, and the Prime Minister at that time, Robert Menzies, was famous for his term, "Reds under the beds."

Fortunately, it took some time, but a visa was granted to us, and about the same time, relatives in Canada that my father had contacted also had arranged a sponsorship for us, and so on the same day, the remaining Commonwealth authority left in Shanghai, which was the British consulate, the British council, advised us that we had two visa, and asked us, "Where do you want to go?"

Because my mother prevailed, with her brother being here, we said we will take the Australian visa. Then, of course, came the problem of getting out of China. By that time, things were getting pretty tough already. Foreign people leaving, for example, Shanghai, could still take a boat from Shanghai to Hong Kong, because it was the only way to get out of China, was to go through Hong Kong, which was of course, a British element still, and my father found some difficulty in securing the exit visa there. My parents then decided that they would find a way to let me go first. Fortunately or unfortunately, I had about that time, contracted yellow jaundice.

Natanya: How old were you, dad?

Morris: I was 16, and with a medical certificate and some more detailed discussion and assistance with Chinese friends, I was granted an exit visa, and I managed to get one of the last boats from Shanghai to Hong Kong.

In 1953, I traveled to Hong Kong and stayed with friends of my mother. In fact, the lady of the household had been a correspondent with the South China Daily News, and later on, the family came to Australia. I lived in Hong Kong for a year, because even though I had an Australian visa,

there were still certain formalities to be concluded before I was able to sail to Australia, and part of that formality involved the Joint organisation.

Early in '54, I sailed from Hong Kong on the [Chang-tee], long since broken up, to Sydney. To give you an idea of the time there, the boat was full of New Zealand soldiers and nurses who were coming back after the end of the Korean war, and they were returning back home to New Zealand there. I landed in Sydney March, 1954, at Woolloomooloo, and I remember standing at the railing of the ship with a few New Zealand soldiers and looking up at the green hills and the trees, and saying, "This is so beautiful."

It's nothing like the waterfront in Shanghai that we knew at all, because it really looked like a park, like a parkland, the old Woolloomooloo, and we actually landed, from memory, and I've been there just to get my thoughts back, at the wharf, which is now of course a hotel and filled with some very high-profile restaurants.

Interviewer: When you first got here, how did you find a place to stay?

Morris: When I came to Australia, my parents being still in Shanghai, I was met by my aunt and uncle and taken to their home in Dover Heights. My uncle had already established himself with a [unclear] business that he ran in a building in George Street, [inaudible] Hunter street.

Natanya: How long had they been here already?

Morris: They had been here probably I would say three to four years, already here, and he also had one of the very early Holden cars, and I was surprised to see that my uncle had learned to drive, and was driving himself. In Shanghai, some families did have cars, but they all had chauffeurs, being a colonial style life, they were all chauffeurs over there.

Soon after I arrived and making me very comfortable in their home, my aunt took me to the Department of Education where I recall she insisted that I be enrolled in the school of her liking, which was Sydney Boys' High School, and I was, in late March 1954, allowed to enroll in Year 12 at Sydney Boys' High.

I recall that within a couple of weeks, our class together with a lot of other school children were taken to the Sydney sports ground, I think it was, or was it Randwick race course ... To see the Queen, because Queen Elizabeth was visiting Sydney, was visiting Australia. I think it was her first Commonwealth visit from memory, and I recall seeing her in her car. It was a brilliant, sunny day, in a blue dress, and that was my first sight of royalty at the time.

After taking my Leaving Certificate there, I went to do holiday work with other friends from school, and then had two years at Sydney Technical College at Ultimo, with economics, which I broke off, because my parents had already arrived in Sydney, and I wanted to work to assist the family with their income.

My father had arrived literally with very little, only what he had managed to be able to take out from Shanghai with various means, and some of the money that had been sent overseas that did not have to be repatriated back there. They moved into a house that had been arranged with the help of my aunt and uncle in Bronte, and on, I think, his third day here, he went to look for work.

Fortunately, he had good knowledge of English. Running an import company in Shanghai, his English was better than a lot of other people, Russians, that had migrated at that, or even a later time, from Shanghai. His first job was with a refrigeration company which may have been the Kelvinator company. I just can't quite recall. That name seems to ring a bell there.

I went to work first for a chocolate making company called Master Craft, and then seeking something better, I looked for a job at the time when it was relatively easy for young people that wanted to work, and that had sufficient education and good knowledge of English, to find jobs, and I talked myself into a trading job with a small company in Sydney, a branch of a Melbourne company, that was involved in import and export of various products, plastics, chemicals, and interestingly enough, coal, the early days of coal exporting, when exports were still loaded on a boat in slings, cranes and slings rather than containers over there.

From there, I then graduated to better forms of work and was accepted into a very large Japanese trading company. Japan was just starting to make waves in Australia with their products here, because there were still a lot of anti-Japanese feeling, and it wasn't easy to go out and offer Japanese products there, but I was quite successful in that company and eventually became their first foreign associate director, and started traveling regularly to Japan and various other Asian countries.

Morris: Can I just go on just up to the time when I met my future wife?

Interviewer: By all means.

Morris: Okay, that can lead on to other things then.

While living with my aunt and uncle, I depended on my social life through their daughter and son. The son was too young. He was a lot younger.

Through them evolved into their social group there, and there were a number of Jewish youth organisations flourishing at that time, and one evening, I was taken to such a group, a Jewish youth organisation, with the name of Blue and White, at the time, and it so happened that that same evening my future wife Ruth, who was visiting her aunt and uncle ...

She was English, and she had come from England with her grandmother to visit her aunt and uncle living here in Sydney, was also taken to the Blue and White club there. As I was sitting, playing chopsticks on the piano, this lovely image with a ponytail came and sat down next to me and said, "Would you like me to join in and play 4fourhands?" There was no looking back after that.

Interviewer: You played four hands for the rest of your life, right?

Natanya: Yes. I didn't know mum could play the piano.

Morris: She probably didn't.

Going back ... One of the reasons that the uncles that were now settled in Harbin and running their department store were bringing out young people of their family from Russia, especially the young men, was because at that time in 1918, both the growing Red Army and the White Army that was still fighting and still being assisted by the British in the hope that they may

stop Communism taking hold in Russia, were drafting anybody they could get their hands on, and to avoid my father being taken into either army, the uncles sponsored, and I suppose the means of sponsorship was by sending enough funds across for my father to be able to get on a train and go ride across Russia to Harbin.

Interviewer: Okay, that makes sense. That makes sense. That was a really nice part of the story. Now we're going to skip forward to ... , this whole local area, what were your first impressions of the area?

Morris: We lived in the house at Bronte. It was, I think, 437 Bronte road, which ...

Natanya: Is this before your parents came out, when you were with ...

Morris: No.

Natanya: No, but when you were with Emilio and Sarah?

Morris: No, with my parents already, yeah. My parents came here, and we all moved into the house in Bronte, and I continued going to Sydney Boys' High School on a tram from Bronte to Anzac Parade. Actually, there were trams running then, and the beach was quite close by, right down below, and that was, for me, something quite unique, having grown up in a very urban area.

Natanya: You wouldn't have been able to swim.

Morris: That's right. No, I did learn to swim. I had been forced to learn to swim back in Shanghai, because at one stage, which I didn't go into, the aunt that brought us out to Australia, aunt and uncle there, were members of the French club.

Natanya: That's right, you've told me the story of her throwing you in the water.

Morris: The summer, I would go to the French club, and my mother would come there, too, and we would sit around the pool there, and I had not learned to swim at all, and I was rather frightened of the water, and unbeknown to me, my aunt had asked two or three older boys that my cousin knew to quietly come behind me, take me by my hands and feet, and throw me, perhaps in the shallower end of the water, which happened, and I can still remember it very, very clearly. I went down like a stone, and suddenly found my self crawling in the water, and crawling out, and coming up to breathe, and that's how I learned to swim.

Natanya: Just as well.

Morris: Just as well, but Bronte beach was just an amazing place, and before long, the social set that I was friendly with were all hiking it from either Coogee, Bronte, or somewhere in Waverley where most of our friends lived, and some in Dover Heights, to Bondi, and the Bondi steps, the famous Bondi steps were the meeting place and the place where you came to meet your friends, hopefully make a date and meet your girlfriends.

Many, many years later, I was with another friend regularly going to Bondi Beach in very early mornings, and jogging from Bondi to Bronte, and then doing stretches on the sand, and one winter we were very cold, because we did it all year round. One cold winter, we were lying on the

cold sand, and a couple of North Bondi Club members that we knew purely by sight and whose names I won't mention at this point, came up to us and said, "Would you guys like to join the club?" For the last 30 or 35 years, I have been a member of North Bondi Surf Club, today a senior associate member.

Interviewer **Congratulations. That's a great, great story. That Bondi to Bronte walk is obviously a very famous walk now, but was it the same back then?**

Morris: It was pretty rough. It was pretty rough. There weren't the nice steps all around. There were some steps over there, but we were young. We were young, and we ran, and we didn't mind, and we ran whether it was rain and sometimes it felt like snow, but it wasn't actually snowing, but it was very, very cold at times. We would come back to the club, and at that time the locker room still required 20 cents into the machine to get hot water for a few seconds, and that was very welcome.

Interviewer: **Can you talk about some of the challenges that you and your family had when you first arrived in Australia?**

Morris: Yes, challenges were mainly with my parents. My father was working, which in effect, was in a form of manual labor, because he was working in a factory. He was also, for many, many years, quite fit and kept himself that way, never overweight and always watched his food carefully. The greater challenge came when my mother's sister and her family, who had until then been living in Harbin, right through to probably 1956 or '57, decided to leave.

By that time, the Chinese government made it very clear that they did not want foreigners staying on in the country, and for people that were Russian, unless they had visas to go elsewhere, the country that was welcoming them, so-called with open arms, was Mother Russia.

We even had that experience ourselves, because while we were waiting in Shanghai, going back now, for our Australian visa, we were summoned one day to the Soviet consulate, and a building by the way still stands today. We saw it in January there, and we were told in no mean terms, comrades, your motherland is welcoming you back, which was of course the very last place my parents even wanted to consider going to over there.

The same things happened with my aunt and uncle in Harbin. My uncle, the uncle and aunt here in Australia, again wove their magic, and arranged for their sponsorship, which was very, very fortunate, and they were granted a visa, and came to Sydney at that time with two young daughters. My uncle, who had been in the lumber business in Harbin, unfortunately had not had any experience with English. He could speak some Chinese, some Mandarin. He could speak some Japanese and of course Russian, but not English.

When they arrived, they also moved to the house in Bronte, which was barely large enough to accommodate us there, but it was. It was large enough to accommodate us. There was nowhere else for them to go, because they also, probably being in a slightly worse situation than we, had left it too late to take anything of value out of China.

When I say anything of value, I'm wearing a ring here which has a big Chinese character on it, which says, "Long life," in effect. This was brought by my parents to me, and was one of the items that they had arranged to melt down from cutlery and sugar pots and various other things, not being

able to take them out, and had smaller things made that they could bring out as personal items, and the ring was one of them. This other family brought hardly anything with them, and the uncle, late uncle, found it very, very difficult to get along, and so we all pitched in to assist that family for quite a few years.

Interviewer: Sounds like a pretty huge challenge to me.

Why do you think that the local area was a popular place for settlement for Jewish people in the first place?

Morris: Firstly, there were a number of synagogues, and like in so many countries, a place of worship can be a meeting point, a gathering point, and a point where the community, whichever religion they are linked to, form some sort of assistance, especially to newcomers there. The other reason that we, of course, settled in Bronte was because the only relatives that we knew at that time that were in Australia were living in Dover Heights, so we were all within ... I suppose you would call it half an hour of each other.

Natanya: There wasn't a North Shore community at that point, was there?

Morris: There was a small North Shore community, but nothing like the influx of the South African Jewry, which came much later of course.

Interviewer: How do you think that the Jewish community has shaped the area?

Morris: Very strongly, I would say.

Yes, for the Jewish community was, by the time that we got here, was quite prolific already.

Natanya: Well-established.

Morris: Well-established, reasonably established. There was a synagogue that is no longer there in Grafton Street at Bondi Junction, called the Central Synagogue, that now of course, is in a slightly different address.

Natanya: I didn't know that.

Morris: In Bon Accord Avenue, and in fact where Ruth and I got married. There was a synagogue, which is called today the South Head Synagogue. I think it was still called that at that time, in Old South Head Road towards Rose Bay North, just opposite Northcote Avenue there.

Natanya: Also the Great Synagogue in the city, there would have been.

Morris: In the city, yes that's very historical.

Natanya: Yes, yes.

Morris: The South Head Synagogue was the place where the English community had decided that this would be their synagogue, their communal meeting place there, and Ruth's uncle and aunt, never mentioned previously that she had come to visit, were members of that synagogue, and in fact, her uncle Nat there, who had come from England and settled here in George street, Dover

Heights, was a cabinet maker, and being a cabinet maker, he assisted the community by repairing and updating the pews and seats in the synagogue.

Natanya: I never knew that.

Morris: Yes.

Interviewer: Thank you, fantastic. We've just got a final question about your family's history before we get to more contemporary situation, and that was, "How has your sense of culture or overall lifestyle changed through living in Australia?"

Morris: I can only say one word that really ... I consider myself fortunate in very [unclear] matters, fortunate not just for myself, but at that time, for my parents, my family at that time, and of course my future family at that time, my current family over here.

We came from a totally foreign environment where we were in the full sense foreigners living a colonial life, and we lived through a number of historic and very painful world experiences and events there, where unfortunately, and we will feel it for a long time yet, so many people lost their lives, and those that didn't lose their lives have such painful memories. In fact, we had a part of this in Shanghai, though not to such a degree as people in Europe experienced also.

I always say, and I mentioned this to Simone later on, that I consider that I and my parents fell through the floorboards, the spaces in the floorboards, in that at relevant times, I was too young to be drafted. I was too young to even volunteer into a fighting force. My parents were designated neutrals at a time when others were taken into camps, and my father had been saved for surely being drafted into either the White or Red Armies there, by two uncles who had the foresight to establish a business in Harbin, and bring relatives out to safety over there.

Added to that, of course, my father's very, very hard work ethic. He was a worker. He believed in very strong family values, and he believed that, apart from anything else, family comes first. Australia gave us the chance to grow these feelings and to benefit from them, and it now affects us from the point ...

It now results in my wife and me and our family giving, trying to work to give back to the community through community work, and helping others that may be experiences similar problems that we could have experienced then, and one of these institutions is the asylum seekers work that we done.

Interviewer: That's a great way for you to section off. Again, there's some common threads there, isn't there? I think that something I have certainly learned is really the charity and generosity of ...

Natanya: Family and friends.

Interviewer: Not just family, but community and also the affinity that you feel with the asylum seekers, because that's not the first time that I've heard that this week.

This is our food section, the Eat aspect of the program. Of course, food is a very important part of Jewish culture, so we'll be exploring that in a few different ways.

The first question is, "Tell me about your native country's foods and a memory about eating your favorite food." I guess Morris, this might be a good question to talk about the sort of food, a memory that you've got of eating food back in Shanghai.

Morris: I got to love Chinese food. I still do to this very day.

Natanya: When you were a child?

Morris: When I was a child, and I would eat more Chinese food here if our friends and Ruth could exist on that diet. I like Italian food, too, but ...

Natanya: I remember you telling me that your mother never allowed you to eat the Chinese food.

Morris: Yes, but I ate Chinese food, and one of the nice memories, and I mentioned that when we were in Shanghai, was going to visit my father when he was still working with the large Chinese textile company, in the Hong Kong Shanghai Bank building, and that would have been perhaps in between the schools where one had closed, and before I went to the other school, or during the summer holidays, and I remember trying to go there as often as possible, because I would go there at around the lunch hour, which is around mid-day there or a little earlier there, and it was a very large organisation.

The staff were sitting at large round tables on benches then, and I would always be invited to join them there, and I would tuck into the food with great gusto. I used to love it. That was about the only time that my father would let me ... I think he was a little easier on me with Chinese food, rather than my mother, who preferred me to eat her food.

Natanya: It was the street food that she didn't let you eat?

Morris: That's right, yes, but there were at that time, some excellent restaurants, Chinese restaurants in Shanghai, and the [unclear] and there was a restaurant called Jimmy's that was a mixed one, not just Chinese food over there, that we used to go to, and that's still remembered by old Shanghai-landers, as we call it there. There was very, very good and ample food available in Shanghai.

Interviewer: Can you give me an example, typically one dish? What would be your favorite childhood dish?

Morris: I still love, and I still do, noodle dishes with beef. I used to love, and still do, the Northern dishes, the Szechuan dishes, the hotter dishes over there, and dare I say so ... I also use to eat sweet and sour pork, for which you will gather, that even though my father was reasonably orthodox, we were conservative enough that I ate sweet and sour pork. I hope my rabbi doesn't ... I'm sure he's used to it.

I don't recall anything to do with kosher, and strong orthodox values. We were members of the Sephardi synagogue that was very close to where we lived, that still stands today. I mentioned it earlier on, I think. The Ohel Rachel synagogue that is still actually today, I understand, allowed to have gatherings on Jewish High Holydays, but they don't classify it as a religious gathering.

It's a cultural gathering, and they do allow that, just on the High Holydays. The synagogue that I had my Bar Mitzvah in, and there's some photographs that I can show you there, no longer stands, and that was in the French concession.

Natanya: Would it be right to say that your family was more traditional than religious?

Morris: My father was ... He considered himself reasonably orthodox, to the point where he spoke good Yiddish, and he understood all the prayers.

Natanya: You didn't keep kosher.

Morris: He would. He could write Yiddish, too, there, but we did not keep kosher at home.

Natanya: You didn't keep ...

Morris: We didn't keep pork at home.

Natanya: You didn't keep Shabbat, and you didn't ...

Morris: I don't recall Shabbat with candle-lighting and Shabbat with prayers. I just don't recall it. That came about, of course, after I had family in Australia.

Natanya: Maybe you should talk a little bit about your mother's food and your memories of that.

Morris: My mother was renowned, and I say this without any hesitation, for being one of the most hospitable housewives that I've ever known. In fact, it got to a stage where her friends used to joke about her phrase one day, saying that, "If you don't sit down and have something to eat, you are insulting me to the point of spitting my face." This was actually a term that was used.

Natanya: Because she kept wanting to serve them and fussy.

Morris: She always had food at home. She always made sure that there were cakes baked and ready and food, and nothing pleased her more than friends that would come in and she could lay the table cloth down, and put something on the table, no matter what time of day it was, and one of the crowning glories that I remember that I got to love, probably because of the noodles in it, is the fish cake.

Natanya: Fish pie.

Morris: The fish pie, which my wife Ruth later learned to bake, and today our daughter Natanya does a wonderful, wonderful cake, wonderful pie of the fish pie. It's not really noodles. It's called ...

Natanya: Vermicelli.

Morris: Vermicelli, yes.

Natanya: Maybe that's why there's noodles in it. Maybe she put them in for you.

Morris: It could be. That's quite possible. Yes, it is, and also the housewives at the time I remember ... My aunt, the aunt that brought us out to ...

My Auntie Sarah there ... Her specialty was the multi-layered Napoleon cake. In Russian, we call it [unclear] there, and that was something that you could just die for.

Natanya: I have to learn to make it.

Morris: Maybe in your next book, you and your teammates could do that.

Natanya: Definitely, yes.

Morris: The housewives in the era that we lived in, and on our level that we lived in Shanghai, thought that wasn't entirely true, because my aunt who had been trained as a dentist, did actually have a small dental practice in Shanghai, because I recall going there, and she had worked on my tooth, because I remember the old wheel that dentists used to pedal, and that made the drill go around, but largely they didn't work.

We all had servants. We had an ahma and a cook boy, and most apartments, including ours, had at the back of the apartment, a servant's room where they lived, actually, and slept, so that room was adjacent to the back stairs. All apartments had main stairs, elevators, and back stairs. In fact, in our January visit to Shanghai, I took the children up those back stairs, and explained to them what the door was there, and for them, it was really something that they had not heard of before, or known before.

Interviewer: We might explore how you have come to be so passionate about food, and I guess also explore that link between recipes that have been passed down from Shanghai and Jewish culture recipes, and how you came to being so passionate about that.

Natanya: I think on a whole, the Jewish community, and not just our Jewish community, all Jewish communities in the world, have a fairly obsessive relationship with food. It's always about the food. Every festival that comes across, there's specific foods that you need to cook and eat, and the women spend weeks before the festivals planning, cooking, comparing the foods and the dishes, and how many people they're going to have at their table.

When someone is sick, people in the community make chicken soup and then send it over. When someone dies, flowers are not sent. Meals are baked and taken over. There's always something happening with food, so I think I've just been born into that, and it would have been unusual for me, especially with my grandmother's background, not to have had a passion for cooking and feeding my children and food, generally.

I think that's where it comes from. I remember some of my earliest memories, standing in the kitchen next to my mother, who was always cooking and baking. I think she had a love for baking, I think, because I just remember hearing that Mixmaster going all the time, and seeing her standing there with a wooden spoon and a bowl.

I feel like it's just part of me, and I remember, for my 18th birthday, all my friends grouped together and bought me a Kenwood mixmaster, so I must have been pretty passionate about baking, even at that time, and it's just grown, and I'm lucky enough to have fallen now into working pretty much as full-time with food.

Morris: That's really interesting, because one just reminded me that one of the gifts for our wedding, some friends banded together and bought us a Sunbeam mixmaster. I that was our first mixmaster.

Natanya: I think it was Kenwood. Was it Kenwood?

Morris: No, it was a Sunbeam that we've now replaced.

Natanya: See, it's in my blood.

Interviewer: What sort of food did you eat as a child?

Natanya: When I grew up, we grew up on the North Shore, and what do I remember? I think we were fairly healthy, because I do remember always wishing that we had a pantry like some other people where there was packets of biscuits and packet cakes, and I don't remember having that in our house. It was sliced white bread, but my mother baked and cooked, and there wasn't a lot of ...

We weren't hippie-healthy, but we certainly weren't fast food, chocolate either, so we lay somewhere in between, and some of my favorite meals as a child ... I remember the traditional meals more. I remember on Friday nights traveling to the East where my grandparents lived in Rose Bay, and eating the more traditional foods. I have a very clear picture of my grandmother's table, dining room table, laden with food, always, as my father said.

Morris: Chicken soup was always the order of the day.

Natanya: I remember the traditional food very well and the dinners, and day-to-day, I think I was just a normal child, school lunches, etc.

Interviewer: This is going back to when you first arrived in Australia. What did you think of the Australian food, and how has that changed to current day?

Morris: After I arrived and was settled in my uncle and aunt's home in Dover Heights there, it was very comfortable. They continued to a degree, the same level of diet that I was used to in Shanghai and for the year that I had lived in Hong Kong, because in Hong Kong I lived with my mother's friend.

They were also a Jewish family. Hong Kong, again, had no rationing, no deprivations either, there. At school, I started of course, got very quickly into the delights of junk food, and I think in early days, I got to like the pies, the meat pie, and there were some very, very good, some very well-known names, but I'm just trying to think ...

There was a Big Ben, I think, and there were a few others that I just can't recall, but to this day, I will still have a meat pie at Woolloomooloo if I can find a parking spot and stop there at Harry's. I enjoyed whatever I was eating. I enjoyed going to school, where my aunt would help make up some sandwiches in the morning that we would take in a lunch box to school, as my cousins did, too.

There was no difficulty there at all, and my aunt and her friends would still, from time to time, have the lovely afternoon teas or dinners with the Napoleon cake and the fish pie and other delights, and also ponchiki. They were like cream puffs with cream in them.

Natanya: Cream cheese?

Morris: Cream.

Natanya: Doughnuts?

Morris: Similar. Ponchiki could be doughnuts, yes. That of course did help us put on weight, as we later found out, and it took many, many years to realise that we weren't eating everything that was terribly healthy, because the diet that was brought across there still involved chicken soup, and chicken soup ...

Natanya: There's nothing wrong with chicken soup.

Morris: Properly done. Today, we strain most of the fat away. In those days, fat was not strained away as much. It was part of the diet, and that was it.

Interviewer: How has Australian food changed from the time that your first got here to today?

Morris: It's become a lot more sophisticated, a lot more international, of course, but then I was fortunate with catching up with international food, because as I mentioned earlier on, when I started to work for the Japanese group there, I started traveling a great deal, and after 20 years with the Japanese group, I joined an Australian multi-national group on a level that also took me to most Eastern regions and areas, including some European areas, too. I discovered new types of food. For example, we did have a lot of time in Thailand. I had a lot of time in Vietnam.

Natanya: The food in Australia.

Morris: The food in Australia then started to catch up, or food from the other countries, from other countries around Australia, started to impress on Australian diets, and restaurants would open up, and we would go to the [unclear] café at King's Cross, which in those days was frequented, because it was owned by a Jewish family, and it was run by a Jewish family, and was a very popular meeting place there, and the cakes that we were used to also kept on over there, but at the same time, we would also go and have fast foods that were getting more and more. I remember us being amazed by the influx of the pizza, and got to like it very much, and to this day, love it. I'm not allowed to eat too much of it, but I do like it.

Interviewer: Natanya, what we want to do is discuss why you think it's important to actually keep traditional recipes alive, and after that, why don't you tell us about what you've actually cooked today?

Natanya: I think the importance of food is that it really can connect you to your heritage, to your heritage generally, and then specifically to your family heritage. For me, to reproduce food, even if I tweak it in a more modern way, that my grandparents ate and their parents ate, what I feel I'm doing is I'm passing down now only the food to my children, but a history and the stories that go with it about their ancestors, and I feel that ...

I feel like it is almost my duty to pass on, to find the recipes of my parents, my grandparents, their parents, with the stories that go with them, and recreate

them, and write them down, and pass them on to my children, because it give my children basically their history of their family.

It keeps their memories of their parents, their grandparents, alive for them. This morning, I baked a fish pie, and when I took it out of the oven and smelled it, I was immediately transported back to my grandmother, which is a beautiful thing that food can do. I feel that is what is so important about food and recipes.

Natanya: There are two dishes that really stand out in my mind of my paternal grandmother, Betty, and that is one, the fish pie, which I just can see at the center of her dining room table so clearly, and the other one is a cake. It was a nut cake that she covered in a mocha cream, and she iced it with spaghetti squiggles of icing all over it, and I have such a clear memory of it.

I've never seen it again, and I don't have the recipe for it, which just kills me, but I am working on trying to find it and recreate it. The fish pie, my mother then learned to make from her mother in-law, and now I make it, and actually we've documented the recipe in a cookbook, which is just wonderful so I can pass it down to my children.

Interviewer: That's lovely. What can you tell me about the Monday Morning Cooking Club and your involvement in that?

Natanya: About nine years ago, I got together with a group of women. There were six of us, and we were named the Monday Morning Cooking Club, and really the point of us was to collect recipes, and most of these recipes were recipes that had not been written down, from the generations before us, and also from our generation for future generations, measure them, test them, recreate them, and then preserve them for future generations.

So many recipes from the older generation were never written down and were lost. Even if they were written down, they were written down in a form that was not reproducible, because a pinch of this and a handful of that, and a teacup of something doesn't work for everyone, so we've spent a lot of time trying to get the recipes in their original form, and make them work and preserve them for the future, which is wonderful, and the thing that we've also done is we've attached the story of the person whose recipe it is to the recipe. You hear their connection to food, how the recipe came about, what it meant to them, and it's a really lovely thing to have for the future.

Interviewer: The Monday Morning Cooking Club ... Is that just something that's shared through books to other people? Is it a website, or how is that actually disseminated to everyone?

Natanya: To date, the Monday Morning Cooking Club has two published cookbooks, which are beautiful books. When we got together and decided to write the books ... We're a not-for-profit company, so all money goes to charity, but we decided we didn't want another ring-binder community cookbook, which has its place in a wonderful ...

We wanted to do something really special. We wanted a book that would sit on the bookshelf in the book shop next to the best cookbooks, and we actually are very lucky to have achieved that. We've worked very hard. At the moment, we're working on book three and four, and we do cooking demonstrations. We have a website, we're very active on social media, and we really

are trying very hard to get as many recipes as we can from Jewish communities all over the world now, and get them written down and preserved for the future.

Interviewer: That's fantastic. Obviously the world is a smaller place now, with the Internet.

Natanya: Absolutely.

Interviewer: It's actually easier to connect with other people with similar passions and find recipes from Shanghai or other places around the world that would have been very, very difficult.

Natanya: What we're finding is that we get a lot of recipes. Australia is really just a melting pot of communities from all over the world, so we get a lot of recipes of the same dish, but done in a different way, that's taken on its own history from where its come from. Even something like chicken soup. It's really interesting. It's been amazing and a wonderful project to work on.

Interviewer: Again, Natanya, are there any special foods that you prepare during family get-togethers or Jewish holydays?

Natanya: There's always a special food for a Jewish holyday. It depends what it is. For Friday night, something more traditional would be chicken soup or an egg dish to start the meal, then you'd go on with some sort of baked chicken dish, and in our family, the most important course is always dessert, and it always is something chocolate.

Morris: Very popular.

Natanya: That's just how it goes in our family, but also it's very traditional to start the meal with the plaited bread, which is known as challah, and you say a blessing on the challah, and you cut it, and you eat it. In our cookbook, we have a fantastic recipe, so I have taught my children, my daughter, specifically, how to make it. If we have time, that's what we do for Friday night, and it's a very special thing to do.

Interviewer: That's fantastic that you actually make it, not just but it.

Natanya: Yes, it's definitely easier to buy, but it's very special to make.

Yeah, I think one of the most food-centered festivals, although they all are, but really the one that people go all-out for would be Passover, and that's the one there's a lot of competition involved with it, where everyone compares how many people they're having at their Seder table, which is the first night of Passover, and, "What are you cooking?", and, "How much are you cooking," and then there's the special dishes that you cook for it.

Then there's the whole religious side of it, where you need to remove all ... It's not just bread from your house, but wheat products from your house, for the seven days, and then cook all these amazing meals without using wheat products. It's a lot of fun, and it's ... People get very caught up in it.

I think one of my favorite recipes at that time of the year would be something that my mother makes every year for us, and I'm very happy to say, that my son waits all year for. He loves it,

and that is something called gefilte fish. For someone that's never had it and was not brought up on it, it is quite unusual tasting foreign food to put in your mouth.

It's minced fish that's made into balls and then poached in a fish stock, and you eat it cold. People do look at you and think, "What's the attraction there?", but if you've been brought up on it, it's a really special food and something very delicious and something that my mother makes very well, and actually something that every family thinks their mother makes the best.

Morris: The consistency, the shape, the taste, and of course then you spice it up with either red or white horseradish, and some people love it very, very hot. Our son in-law likes it very hot, Natanya's husband. The guy likes it very hot.

Natanya: I do remember my grandmother making it. I remember when I was a child, my grandmother making it, and even though my mother makes them very well, my grandmother was the absolute expert in gefilte fish, and again, I've never seen them like they used to make them.

They were much darker than how my mother makes them, and I believe that she used to make them in the stock. She used to boil the stock with brown onions with the skin kept on to give the stock a lot of color, so the balls were much darker, and the texture of them was very fine. I've never tasted them again, but I loved them.

Interviewer: Fantastic. That's lovely. What do you think your favorite Jewish dish is?

Morris: The kids love schnitzels. Is that a Jewish dish?

Natanya: No, it's not my type of dish.

I think my favorite Jewish dish, and I don't know if it's essentially Jewish, but it's definitely part of a Jewish repertoire today, and it would always have to be something sweet, my favorite, because I've got a very sweet tooth.

I would say the chocolate kugelhopf, which I think probably would be more German than Jewish, but it's a yeasted kugelhopf, so it's got this beautiful crunchy, crispy outside, and then the yeasty bread layers inside, and then inside of that is a beautiful melted chocolate center. It's really good, and on the spot, I think. That would definitely rate in my top five.

Interviewer: What about you, Morris, what's your favorite Jewish dish?

Morris: My favorite Jewish dish is gefilte fish, which I love with red horseradish, not terribly, terribly hot, but hot enough, and I also like the chopped liver, which is a great favorite, and is also handed down in its different consistencies and formulas from parents, grandparents, and great grandparents, and my dear, dear, late mother in-law, Ruth's mum, made the most wonderful chopped liver, and passed it on through Ruth to the family, and actually would give lessons to some of the grandchildren in making the chopped liver.

Natanya: Yes, we stood with her and watched her do it, and wrote down the recipe, and actually that's another food that everyone thinks their mother or grandmother makes the best of.

Morris: Just in complimenting my mother-in-law, Sarah, a remarkable woman who passed away just short of 101 with all her faculties intact. Actually we were talking about Australia and Australia welcoming new people, one ...

Mother-in-law Sarah was one that I call the happiest migrant I'd ever come across, and I've come across a lot of migrants in a professional capacity as well as a friendly capacity, and she would get up most days, and say, "It's another day in a wonderful country, and how I love being here." She just thought Australia was the ant's pants, and it is. Sure, it is.

Interviewer: Natanya, who taught you how to cook?

Natanya: I think I learned probably the basics from my mother. I think, as I said before, that a natural affinity with cooking and baking, I think, has been passed down to me from my grandmother and from my mother, from both grandmothers and my mother, and probably once I was married and started to have children, I probably drew on my mother's knowledge to reproduce more traditional foods, and often I'd ask my mother to come over if I'm making something, to make it with me. Still today, this morning she came and helped me with the fish pie, and that's a really lovely thing, and I hope that I'll be doing the same for my daughters in the future.

Interviewer: That's lovely.

Natanya: I spent my time with my mother in the kitchen, not really my dad, I have to say. I think it was a sign of the times. It was more a mother/daughter thing, and you weren't really involved in the kitchen at all.

Interviewer: Besides eating it.

Natanya: He is now, yea.

Morris: I am interested in cooking, no wonder at all, with all the wonderful cooking going on all around, and Natanya's team, and the cookbooks, and in fact, a couple of years ago, we had a holiday with friends up in Bellingen, which becomes a workshop for a whole week, and Ruth and I took a cooking course there, and I enjoyed it immensely, and I do try to wangle in to help with cooking at home. I'm not always allowed to there, but I probably erroneously call myself the sous chef.

Interviewer: Are there any recipes in particular that are real signatures of the family that are passed through the generations?

Natanya: There's a dish called lokshen kugel, which is similar to the gefilte fish in that if you're not used to it or you haven't been brought up on it, it's quite a strange thing to eat. It's a sweet dish of cooked noodles that you then mix in ricotta cheese and sultanas and grated apple and eggs, and you bake it.

I have very fond memories of my grandmother, my mother's mother, making it, and your mum as well, and eating as a child, and of my mother cooking it later in life, and really growing up on it. My children don't love it. Maybe I didn't cook it enough for them when they were young, but they don't love it as much as I loved it as a child, so I'm going to have to really work on that one with them, or maybe it'll just skip a generation and go straight to my grandchildren. I'll see how it goes.

Interviewer: Have any of your children got a bit of an affinity for cooking like yourself?

Natanya: My daughters love ... I spend all my time in my kitchen. If I'm not working on the cookbook or I'm not driving someone to school, I'm in the kitchen, so they love to be a part of it. They love to come and taste. I'm always testing a recipe for a cookbook, so they love to be involved, and my daughters, I think, will take on what I've started. My son loves to eat, not cook.

Morris: Religion has played a certain role in our family, not a very strong role in that we have always been members of a synagogue. In the main, the synagogues have been orthodox synagogues, probably because of my father's membership and me following with that. With the grandchildren, the grandson being Bar Mitzvah'd and granddaughter Bat Mitzvah'd, so [inaudible], in the orthodox services at the synagogue, however Ruth and I do not regularly attend services.

We attend High Holyday services, and we also attend services in both the orthodox synagogue which we are a member, as well as the more conservative synagogue, the more liberal synagogue here in Woollahra, where our grandson, Oscar, actually participates by playing in the small choir band that accompanies some of their services over there, so we are fairly flexible that way, and we find that most comfortable as we go on towards our more seniors years.

Interviewer: How does that compare to when you were originally back in Shanghai?

Morris: Probably the same, because my father, who always did attend synagogue on High Holydays and sometimes on the Sabbath, but when he ran his own business, both in Shanghai and here in Australia, when the business required him to be there on a Saturday, on the Sabbath, he would do that. However, as I said earlier on, our dietary laws still remain fairly orthodox, except for the pork outside of home, of course.

Natanya: Except for the pork.

Morris: I'll say in more recent years, the tendency from the Jewish religious side tended to swing across towards the Israeli side, and the reason for that is our youngest son ... We have three children, two sons and our daughter Natanya here.

Younger boy, Graham and his family made aliyah, that is moving from Australia and settling in Israel, about seven years ago, and so our mindset then switched more from the local religious side of things towards Israel and more pragmatic Israeli aspects, rather than just the religious aspects. We also tended to move away from the total community involvement in the Jewish community towards the greater community, and one of these is being involved with the asylum seeker center, here at Newtown, which we are doing more and more work with now.

Interviewer: That's nice, and how would you, from your own family's perspective ... I'm not talking about your father. I'm talking about your own family. Your religious practices now, how would you describe those?

Morris: I would describe my religious practices as being traditional more than religious, so I feel it's very important to pass on to my children some traditional parts of the Jewish religion.

For example, we always have a Friday night dinner, where we will always light the candles, and we will always have the traditional challah bread. The dietary, we don't stick to the dietary rules,

where I don't keep a kosher house, and I do mix meat and milk, but I wouldn't have ... I would have non-kosher meat in my kitchen, but I wouldn't bring pig products into my kitchen, so there's certain things that I feel are important to pass down to my family, and I suppose what happens is you just do what works for you, and pass on what's important to you.

I would never let my son not say the bracha on the challah on a Friday night and my daughters and I stand together with my mother to say the bracha for the candles, and that's very dear to me and very important to me, and it's more important for me to pass down those things than to be very strict about what you're allowed to do and what not you're allowed to do, and then again, really we focus more on the traditions of the food than anything else, all year-round. That's how I like to impart my knowledge on the Jewish religion, and I hopefully pass on those things to my children, and they'll pass them on to theirs.

Interviewer: You wouldn't attend synagogue?

Natanya: Yes, I definitely go for the important festivals. When my son was doing and my daughters were doing Bar and Bat Mitzvah, we attended more regularly for that, and I've got another one coming up, so I suppose I'll be going back again, but really we mostly ... just for the important festivals we go. As nice as it is to go on a Friday night and sit in synagogue and listen to the service, it's very meditative, but I don't often have enough time, because I'm always cooking the meal.

Interviewer: I think I'll ask each of you this question, starting with you, Morris. What learnings, beliefs, and traditions do you feel are most important or you're most passionate about?

Morris: From a family viewpoint, and I think we should speak from a family viewpoint, certainly from my part that's most important to me, is the aspect of respect for my parents, for my wife's family, and also on the same level of importance is respect for my children, and I think that carries through there, because I think we're very fortunate that, certainly from my part and my wife's part, in showing respect for our children. It is reciprocated, and I think that is so important. Unfortunately, in our modern world, I think from time to time, it goes missing so often.

Interviewer: I think you're probably right.

The questions is to Natanya ... What learning's, beliefs, and traditions do you feel are most important or you're most passionate about?

Natanya: Obviously, I'm very passionate about food, so I hope to pass on those traditions to my children, and for them to pass them on, and that's not just my food, but the food of their ancestors, so my grandparents, my parents, what they've taught me. I've had all those wonderful, traditional foods, that I'm writing and are in the cookbooks.

I hope to pass them on to all my children, and also just I suppose the importance of family and the memories that, as I said before, that are passed through food of their family and their past. I supposed that holds very dear to me and what I'd like to pass on.

Interviewer: That's nice. Thank you.

This question, again, is to both of you. How does it feel to belong to a group of people with a common history and traditions.

Morris: You're talking about family, here.

Natanya: And community.

Morris: And community. It's what we grew up in, what we are used to. We are fortunate that we have got a community and family with common traditions and beliefs, and I think that equates to an overriding of love for each other.

Natanya: I hope so, yes. I feel very fortunate, being part of a relatively small community, growing up in it, and now my children growing up in it. The school I went to, I still see people always around me from the same school, and my children are now friends with their children, and I walk down the street, and I bump into people I know that I've known since I was a child, and we all share memories.

I think it's a really ... I'm very lucky to have that, and I really appreciate it, and I was just talking to a friend the other day who said she's just become sick, and she can't believe the support that she feels from people that she's always known but not necessarily close to, and that's what comes from living in a community, and that's the wonderful side of it.

Morris: You just feel that you help each other, and that you're involved with each other. You don't have to impinge on their privacy or impinge on them in any way at all, but you just care sufficiently to perhaps simply pick up a phone and say, "We know your grandson was in the hospital. How is he?" That brings you closer together with people around you.

Interviewer: Nicely said, nicely said. I think this might be a question for Natanya. What Jewish traditions have your parents and grandparents passed on to you?

Natanya: I think the Jewish traditions that my parents have passed on to me are what I've talked about already, and that they're the ones that I'm passing on to my children, which is to always have a family dinner on a Friday night.

I'm quite strict about my children having to be present now that they're older and have their own social lives. They fight me on that a little bit, but they know that they need to be there with the family on a Friday night, and I think that's really important and a beautiful family tradition to have.

The Sabbath traditions of lighting the candles and having the challah and drinking the wine are all things that I have grown up with and am now giving to my children. Then there's the festivals, the major Jewish festivals and all the food that surrounds them. It's what I grew up with, from my grandparents, to my parents, to me, and now what I'm passing onto my children.

Morris: I just would like to add something.

Yes. I just want to add to that, that a lot of this, and this is going back to earlier comments about coming to Australia and enjoying the new life in Australia over here, is that a lot of what Natanya has said and what I have said there, is really thanks to being in a country that is so wonderfully welcoming and free, and has so much opportunity to follow your traditions, to follow

your beliefs, and to be able to structure your family with you and around you, and I think we're a very unique country in that regard.

Interviewer: Morris, what do you think the best thing about being Jewish in Waverley is, in the Waverley region?

Morris: It's a Jewish environment. There is a Jewish environment, within a secular environment, and I like that idea. Personally, I don't like to be pushed into a particular religious or any form of mandatory rule or regulation, and our family has grown up here in Waverley.

Waverley welcomed us and gave me a lot of opportunities to build and have a happy life here, as it did for my parents, and as it did for our children, too, even though we've been scattered through various municipalities, here, and we lived, Natanya said on the Northside, and then came back to Waverley, and then moved to Killara, and then came back to Waverley again, and I'm happy to say that today, no matter where I live, I'm still a Waverley rate-payer. Enjoy the wonderful service that Waverley gives, especially being a Bondi Beach lover, with the ability to be able to come and park my car right on the beach.

Interviewer: Natanya, the same, what's the best thing about being Jewish in Waverley?

Natanya: I think my dad summed it up very well, that we lead a wonderful life here. I grew up, for the most part, over here, and my children have, and really when you look at the whole world, we are blessed, and we are incredibly lucky.

Morris: Yes, we sure are, yes.

Natanya: We lead an amazing life, and we have a wonderful life, and I'm very thankful for that, and just the fact that we can walk the streets on Sabbath, and for the most part, go unnoticed and have the freedoms of speech that we have here.

Morris: Freedom of speech, freedom of belief, freedom of religion.

Natanya: Yes, that's right, all the freedoms.

Morris: Freedom of worship. It's just, as I said earlier on, a unique country to be in, and a unique area to be in here.

Natanya: One more thing that I think is just really stands out, and that's that we have, in Waverley, the Wellington Street Cake Shop on Bondi Road, and their traditional cakes. They're pretty good.

Interviewer: We'll check some of them out. This is really the last question on the praying thing, and that is, and this might be more of a collaborative answer, but do you think Bondi has become a melting pot for different cultures, and do you think this has influenced the character of the local area?

Morris: I think it is, actually. Yes, I think Bondi has become a melting pot of cultures, and I think an example of that, to us, very close to us, is our eldest granddaughter who came back from Israel for

her studies here and work here, and is living in a house that she shares in Bondi with a non-Jewish family around her.

Natanya: A Lebanese family, Muslim Lebanese family.

Morris: Yes, and loves it, and gets on wonderfully well with her neighbors over there, and wouldn't live anywhere else. Somebody very close to us is actually experiencing this melting pot syndrome, which I think has benefited in so many ways to community here, but probably in a very large way with the range of food and restaurants that's available. Where else would you go, except to Bondi to find something new to eat.

Natanya: Absolutely. That's right. That's right. I often say to my friends now that really, you don't have to leave Bondi. Everything's there.

Morris: Exactly, Waverley, generally, because you have some wonderful places along Bronte road now, and Bronte beach. Right through Waverley, really. It's become very multicultural in a good way.

Interviewer: Every Jewish person wants naches in their life, and naches can also be seen as success, and learning, and giving back to the community. What does the word naches mean to you? Morris, first.

Morris: The very obvious, which is our family. Ruth and I have a family. We have three children and 10 grandchildren, and we feel overwhelming naches with them, not just in perhaps what they may individually achieve, and that's quite a lot there, but the fact that we and they are close to each other.

Some are right on the other side of the world. Four grandchildren and our son, right on the other side of the world that takes innumerable, terribly difficult hours to fly to over there, but they are close to us and to our grandchildren, Ruth is nana, and I am Morry, and the naches there stemmed down from the eldest grandchild, who lives happily in Bondi, in Waverley, and she was the first one, as a baby, to call me Morry, and it then stemmed from her down to every grandchild, and I'm a Morry.

To me, to hear the word Morry, whether it's written in a text or whether it's said on the phone, or when they embrace me and give me a kiss or a hug, then to me, that's the greatest naches I could ever ask for or hope for.

Natanya: That's beautiful.

Interviewer: What about you, Natanya?

Natanya: Naches, for me, is similar to what my dad says. It's family. It's all about family. Standing in the kitchen this morning, making the fish pie with my mother, is naches. Planning a challah with my two daughters is naches. Lighting the candles on Friday night with the family around me is naches. It always comes back to family. That's just what my son eats gefilte fish, it's naches. It's always about family and often about food.

Morris: May I extend my interpretation of naches to something else, and that's the word luck, and I would extend my view of naches. The luck that allowed me to come to Australia, the luck that

allowed me to meet Ruth, my wife, purely by chance, and I don't think there would be a greater naches there, because out of that meeting stemmed our family and the naches that I spoke about there, too. Naches can extend from just the immediate, just what you have around you, perhaps some achievements, but really it is a matter of luck, and that I hold very close to my heart.

Interviewer: How do you think you would describe naches to someone who doesn't know what it means?

Natanya: Some would say when you're standing, watching your child play a sport, and they kick the winning goal, that could be naches. When you bite into a warm piece of kugelhupf oozing with chocolate, that also can bring naches. When you kiss your child goodnight, and they give you a kiss back, that's naches.

Morris: When our grandson puts on Facebook his first cover album, and it sounds terrific and gets a lot of responses that they like and they buy, that's naches.

Natanya: You're so modern.

Morris: I learned it from the grandson.

Natanya: That's naches.

Interviewer: Very nice. I guess we can ask both of you this question, but what do you hope for your children and grandchildren?

Morris: For my children, I hope continuing good health. I think that is so important, because if you're healthy, most things follow well, because it gives you the strength to continue, to build a better life, and it gives you the strength to help others when you see you are able to help them there. I think that's really my primary point, so health, to be healthy.

Again, I am biased, since I'll turn 80 in a matter of 11 months or even less there, and will have to seek alternative travel insurance, which is a pity there, but it just shows that I think a healthy in the physical sense, and I think probably a little bit more difficult, healthy in the mental sense, really is the most important thing that I can look forward to for myself, for my children and grandchildren.

Interviewer: Natanya, what do you hope for your own children?

Natanya: I think I grew up in a very fortunate situation. I've had a very easy, happy life, and I'm very thankful to my parents for giving me that. I hope the same for my children, and I hope that they grow up with an all-knowing that they are the lucky ones, and they need to give back to the world around them for what's been given to them. I think that's really important.

Interviewer: Nicely said. Natanya, I might make this a question for you. Tell me about a time that you've given your grandparents naches.

Natanya: When I was young, it used to give my dad's mum, nana, great naches to eat as much food as she put in front of you, so I remember, and you could never eat enough, but if you sat at that table and you ate her food, you were giving her naches, so I remember that very well, and with my

mum's mum, she just loved having us around to go and visit her, to sit with her, for me to bring my children to see her.

We would sit and play Rummy Tiles together. That gave her a lot of naches. That's all, and my children have great memories of sitting with her and being with her, and so it gave them naches, too.

Morris: An early recollection of naches in regard to our daughter Natanya is that the University of New South Wales, which we attended and Natanya in a gown and a waterboard hat, graduating in psychology and other matters there of some repute. That is an early naches experience.

Interviewer: I'll ask you both this question individually. Morris, what do you think your biggest achievement in life is, and why?

Morris: Biggest achievement in mine would be to be a good husband, firstly to my darling wife Ruth, and by then realising and giving her the credit with to be such a great motivator towards having a family that we are so grateful for to have a family with three children and their families, that to me, having the wherewithal, working towards that wherewithal, achieving that wherewithal, and making it happen.

Interviewer: Nice. Natanya, your biggest achievement?

Natanya: It's two parts, so one, my biggest achievement would be my family and my children, creating a home and a beautiful environment and a loving family and three healthy, happy children, young adults. I think that really has to be my greatest achievement so far, and then the second part would be my work side of things and the two cookbooks, Monday Morning Cooking Club, that's really a passion that I've worked hard at, and I continue to work hard at, and I hold very dear to my heart, and I love very much.

Interviewer: The last question is, what activities are you involved in for the wider community that also brings you naches. Morris, first up.

Morris: Firstly, what I've spoken about before, and that is the work that we do ourselves and together with others that we coordinate with for the asylum seeker centers. That, to me, is very dear, because going back a number of years, I was involved in professionally helping asylum seekers and new migrants come to Australia, and settle in Australia, during a number of years when I held a migration agent's license, which was some of the work I did after I retired from corporate life.

The other community work I do is in the Jewish community with helping with food parcels for elderly people and kosher food parcels, and also community work for Israel, for the paramedic and blood bank service in Israel. These are some of the things with which we are involved with.

Interviewer: Natanya?

Natanya: Through the Monday Morning Cooking Club cookbooks, because it's a not-for-profit company that we've set up and all money that is earned through the books is donated, we donate a lot of money not just to the Jewish community, but to the wider community as well.

We've held functions and raised a lot of money for, just to name one or Oz Harvest, the brain cancer foundation, the national museum in Melbourne we've done some work with, so we're actually happy to donate money to whichever charity that ... We're happy to align ourselves with any charity that wants to use our cookbooks to raise money, so we do a lot of good work there.