I and Thou: Connecting to Holocaust Survivors and Ourselves

A Curriculum Guide for High School Students and Their Parents

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This Curriculum Guide is dedicated to my friends in Tel Aviv, Chaim, Shmuel, and Shlomo

Who inspired me with their stories of survival and zest for life.

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Rationale

The experience of meeting a Holocaust survivor is powerful. Perhaps this is because they make history become reality or because they are living witnesses to arguably the most horrific crime of modernity. While they bear witness to this event, this is not their only gift. Survivors can offer us a lesson of life, of hope and survival, or of great loss and sorrow. Accounts and artifacts from Holocaust victims and survivors shape the way we think about the Holocaust and the way we connect to the people who experienced it. But, within the next decade or so, we will be unable to hear the stories of Holocaust survivors first hand. Fortunately, we have a wide variety of artifacts that give us insight into their lives and their struggles as they lived through this horrendous time in Jewish history.

The legacies that they pass on to us, through their literature, music, and poetry can deepen the meaning of our own lives while connecting us to the collective memory of the Jewish People. Through the study of these artifacts, the survivors and victims of the Holocaust tell us their stories. This curriculum guide is intended for 11th and 12th graders and their parents in a congregational setting. It will interpret and commemorate these legacies through literary and artistic examinations of the Jewish values of *yediat haEl* (knowing God), *yesh tikvah* (maintaining hope), *tochecha* (rebuke), and *zechut avot* (merits of our ancestors). As students, teen and adult alike, engage with these artifacts, they will inevitably derive their own feelings and questions as a result. This curriculum guide capitalizes on these moments and facilitates deep reflection for the individual family members and families as a whole. As a result of these discussions, families will identify their relationship to the struggles of Holocaust survivors and apply them to their own lives. This guide will allow families the opportunity to engage in

important discussions about values and ethics before the students embark on their journey into college and parents adjust to life without their teens at home.

Holocaust survivors and victims are often treated as one group who witnessed the atrocities of World War II, instead of as individuals with their own experiences. Although we know it is not accurate, the Holocaust is often represented in American society and consciousness in a way that conflates and homogenizes the varied social, emotional, psychological, spiritual and physical experiences of individual Jews. Steven Spielberg's movie, *Schindler's List*, for example, depicts the Holocaust as one collective experience for the Jews, overlooking the individuality of each victim and survivor. The movie exemplifies one attempt to memorialize the Holocaust, but instead renders the Jews as a nameless, faceless group of undifferentiated victims, ironically exemplifying anti-Jewish stereotypes yet again.[1] Elie Wiesel's Holocaust narrative in his book, *Night,* has become representative and shorthand for "the" Holocaust Survivor, and the category of not surviving the Holocaust has been filled by *The Diary of Anne Frank*. Both of these stories are widespread and have become the prototypical experiences of the Holocaust. While these stories do beautifully convey moments before, during, and in Wiesel's case, after the Holocaust, they could not possibly represent all the stories of the horrid event. Relying upon only two accounts of a victim and a survivor guarantees an oversimplification of the scale of the Holocaust and the overshadowing of other stories of victims and survivors of the war. Only through an examination of a wider variety of artifacts from the survivors of the Holocaust can one begin to comprehend the tragedy and complexity of the event.

[1] Simone Schweber, "Victimized Again? The Representation of Jews in Holocaust Units," *Journal of Jewish Education* 65:1-2 (1999).

Holocaust literature produced during and after the war is a compelling way to look at Jewish concepts and deal with theological issues. Many Holocaust survivors were steeped in a traditional Jewish upbringing. Even Holocaust survivors who were not raised in a traditional home were forced to look at themselves as Jews during the Holocaust. As a result of their survival, they struggled with Jewish values. Some responded by rejecting their faith, railing against a God who could not save them from the atrocities of the war. Others had a renewed faith in God as they survived one of the darkest periods to fall on the world. Some relied on hope, others on revenge. Holocaust survivors' voices are quite powerful in articulating how each person was in some relationship with God or clung to the belief in a messianic age, even if they rail against these ideas in their accounts. This discreet body of knowledge expresses the essence of Judaism and I believe that this can be a unique entry point into learning about Jewish values.

The Holocaust changed the reality of the Jewish community and who we are today. The scope of the calamity compares to the fall of the Temple and the exile in Spain in the way that it completely transformed Jews and Judaism. The Holocaust is not a story that comes with a built-in *nechemta* or consolation at the end. It is complex and dark and defies satisfying explanation. We should not feel compelled to make sense of it in our teaching. But, we have to have the courage to teach about it. In Yosef Yerushalmi's book, *Zakhor*, he reflects upon his charge as an historian. He wonders, "Can it be that the journalists have stumbled across something more important than they perhaps realized? Is it possible that the antonym of 'forgetting' is not 'remembering,' but *justice*?" Teaching the Holocaust is more than remembering; it is continually seeking justice for those who were lost and those generations that will never come to be.

The following enduring understandings animate this curriculum guide:

1. The traumatic and unparalleled experiences of Holocaust survivors forced them to reckon with life's existential questions in singularly intense and urgent ways.
2. The art and literature produced by Holocaust survivors offer unique Jewish perspectives on perpetually human dilemmas.
3. The uniquely extreme dehumanizing experiences of Holocaust survivors pose deep and complex challenges to the traditional Jewish values of *tikvah, yediat haEl, tochecha*, and *zechut avot.*
4. Holocaust survivors' responses, as represented by the art and literature they created in response to their experiences, serve as a link in the chain of traditional Jewish interpretations and applications of the Jewish values of *tikvah, yediat haEl, tochecha*, and *zechut avot.*
5. The tensions and complexities embedded in Holocaust survivor literature illuminate the unthinkable dilemmas and challenges that each person dealt with through the course of the war.

Note to the Instructor

Dear Instructor,

I am pleased that you decided to consider this curriculum guide for your class. There are a few important things to consider as you embark upon this journey into the Holocaust. The class is intended to begin after the High Holidays and end around Yom HaShoah. This curriculum guide is structured for class sessions to run an hour to an hour and a half long. The class should meet at least twice a month with time for a few homework assignments in between meetings.

First and foremost, this curriculum guide does not address the Holocaust through an historical lens. While history is included in the content by virtue of the topic, I do not attempt to analyze historical influences or consider the context in which the literature was produced historically. I would encourage you, the teacher, to ensure that you feel comfortable before teaching the class with the history of the Holocaust. This will help you to contextualize where necessary. However, the point of this guide is to analyze the innermost thoughts and struggles of Holocaust survivors in order to learn from them. Therefore, history can play a role in the person's story but is not the focus of the guide.

This curriculum guide attempts to capture Holocaust survivor voices from Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews to challenge the common conception that the Holocaust affected only Eastern European Jews. Similarly, this guide uses memoires, testimonies, art, and literature to address the subject matter. While there are many collective experiences as a result of the Holocaust, preserving and honoring individual voices and modes of expression is one of the main goals of this guide. There are many excerpts taken from individual stories. The goal of selecting from so many different books and modes of expression will hopefully intrigue students

enough to read further. Ideally, I would like the families to own a collection of voices from the Holocaust at the end of this class.

The resources in this curriculum guide are particularly thought provoking and were chosen for this reason. The unit entitled, *yediat haEl*, or knowing God, may prove to be especially difficult. Holocaust survivors struggled and wrestled with their understanding of God as a result of the Holocaust. They ask questions that are extremely troublesome and do not have a clear answer. That is okay. In some way, their struggle is similar to Jewish struggles with God throughout history. However, Holocaust survivors deal with their beliefs about God perhaps even more poignantly than under previous circumstances because of the palpable presence of evil during the Holocaust. On a similarly challenging note, conversations about God may be difficult because there is a chance that this may be the first time God is directly discussed as adolescents and adults in a formal setting. For these reasons, this unit may require more time spent in order to develop a language to speak about God and a way for the students to connect with the conversations about God. As the teacher, it is important to ask questions without giving any definitive answer. In this unit, the questions that the students ask are even more important as they embark on their own journey to unpack their feelings and relationship to God. I believe that the importance of struggling with our relationship to God can be challenging, but quite rewarding as well. I truly hope that the students feel the same way after engaging deeply in conversations about God.

Finally, as I am sure you already know, as you engage with the material throughout the class, it is essential to create a safe space for students to ask the questions, express their opinions, and embark on their struggle with Jewish values and the Holocaust. You, as the teacher, are in a powerful and important position as you help guide your students on this journey that has the

potential to deepen the relationship between parents and their teens, the families and the words of the Holocaust survivors, and their Jewish identities. I hope that you, too, will feel enriched and inspired as you embark upon this journey with your students. I wish you all the best in your undertaking of this curriculum guide.

Unit 1: Introduction

Unit Understandings:

1. The Holocaust reminds the world of man's capacity to do evil. Yet, the Holocaust examined through the eyes of survivors, shows the ultimate triumph of humanity as they continue to choose life over death.
2. Jewish values can play a significant role in Jewish life. However, some of these values may become more prominent and others less relevant in difficult situations
3. Ethical wills capture core values and beliefs of the writer that when preserved for future generations can fulfill the mitzvah of "You shall teach your children."

Goals:

- ✓ To introduce the students to the perspective of this Curriculum Guide.
- ✓ To show the Holocaust survivors as individuals with a collective experience.
- ✓ To provide opportunities for students to evaluate their feelings on the Holocaust.
- ✓ To provide opportunities for students to identify Jewish values that are important to them.
- ✓ To present Holocaust survivors stories as a link in the chain of Jewish tradition.
- ✓ To show students how ethical wills written during the Holocaust can inspire students to think about the ethics and values that we would like to pass on in our own lives through the reading of the wills.

Lesson 1.1: What do I know about the Holocaust?
-Scripted Lesson-

In this lesson, students should be able to:

- Explain their prior knowledge about the Holocaust.
- Explain the sources of their knowledge of the Holocaust.
- Articulate the struggles of Holocaust survivors.
- Compare and contrast different backgrounds of Holocaust survivors.
- Form a hypothesis about Jewish values that they struggle with that are in common with the lives of Holocaust survivors.

Set Induction: What do you expect from this class? (5-10 min)

The instructor will ask the students to answer the following question:

"What do you hope to take from this class when you are finished?"

The instructor may want to record the students' responses in order to help tailor the content to answer their requests.

Activity 1: What do I know about the Holocaust? (15-20 minutes)

The instructor should begin this course with a general assessment of the students' knowledge of the Holocaust. The instructor should record each question on either the board or a flip chart, and record the answers in columns next to each other.

Ask the following questions:

1. What do you know about the Holocaust?
    a. Possible Answers: The Holocaust took place during WWII. Six million Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. Hitler was in charge of the Nazi party. Germany is responsible for the Holocaust.
2. What are the main messages you have learned when studying the Holocaust?
    a. Possible Answers: Never forget the Holocaust. The Holocaust could happen again unless we ensure that it will not. The Holocaust requires us to live Jewish lives in honor of those who were lost. Genocides like the Holocaust still happen today.
3. From where have you learned about the Holocaust?
    a. Possible Answers: Teachers in religious school and public school. My grandparents or family members. A museum. Books.
4. What are your feelings towards the Holocaust?
    a. Possible Answers: The Holocaust is a scary topic to talk about. I don't want to learn or talk about it anymore. The Holocaust has been overdone. The Holocaust is a part of my family's history and therefore I feel connected to it. I don't feel connected to the Holocaust at all because it happened so long ago and my family is not connected to it.

5. What is your impression of Holocaust survivors and their accounts of the Holocaust?
    a. Possible Answers: Holocaust survivors are brave and have tragic stories. Holocaust survivors are inspiring because they lived to tell their stories and often have a powerful message of hope to convey.

Activity 2: Compare and Contrast different accounts of the Holocaust (15-25 min)

For this activity, the instructor should acquire the hard copies of the Holocaust survivor memoirs listed in the annotated bibliography at the end of this curriculum guide. The bibliography includes many different memoirs of Holocaust survivors with all different experiences.

Directions: Ask the students to investigate each book by reading a few pages or the back cover, and classifying them based on the Holocaust survivor's experience. The students should group the books together, several different times, based on one of the following criteria for each grouping:

1. The birthplace of the Holocaust survivor.
2. The age of the Holocaust survivor when the war began.
3. One place where the Holocaust survivor was imprisoned. (For example, where the survivors in a death camp or a labor camp?)
4. If the Holocaust survivor escaped and was in hiding.
5. If the Holocaust survivor's family perished.
6. Where the Holocaust survivor was liberated or located at the war's conclusion.

After this exercise, ask the following questions:

- What does this exercise depict about the journey of each of the Holocaust survivors?
    - Possible Answer: The journey of each Holocaust survivor was varied. Some survivors were in death camps, other in labor camps. Some survivors lost their families along the way, others lost their family from the beginning. Each survivor experienced the war individually, even if they had a common experience with another survivor.
- What can we say about Holocaust survivors as a group? As individuals?
    - Possible Answer: As a group, Holocaust survivors may have experienced similar atrocities. However, as individuals, the survivors experienced the war uniquely and have their own perspectives on the events that took place in their life. The uniqueness of each person is what nuances the stories of Holocaust survivors and requires us to read a variety of memoirs. Otherwise, we could risk one experience, like Auschwitz, as accounting for the entirety of the Holocaust.
- What issues do you imagine or notice as you looked at the Holocaust memoirs that Holocaust survivors struggle within their accounts?
    - Possible Answers: Perhaps Holocaust survivors struggled to maintain hope during the war or struggled to maintain their humanity. Holocaust survivors struggled with issues like hunger and cold, which they had to struggle with in order to stay alive. Therefore, this would cause them to reshape their mindset in order to prepare themselves to continue to live each day.
- Do you think their Jewish identities inform their struggles?

    - Possible Answer: Yes. Holocaust survivors came from Jewish backgrounds and therefore probably struggled with God and a continued belief in God during and after the Holocaust.
    - Possible Answer: No. Holocaust survivors had to deal with unthinkable issues during the Holocaust and learned about their survival instincts more than their Jewish identity as a result.
- What do you think we can learn from Holocaust survivors as a result of their varied experiences?
    - Possible Answer: Holocaust survivors dealt with situations almost unimaginable. They struggled with issues like hope, humanity, and the meaning of their suffering during their experience. Therefore, we can take lessons from their struggles and heed their words to inspire us in our own lives today.
    - Possible Answer: Holocaust survivors were exemplars of choosing life over death. Since the survivors we will study are Jewish, we can learn about how their Jewish identity was affected during the war and even repaired afterwards. Our personal struggles with Judaism may even be expressed by the survivors. Their words may inspire us to find an answer to a question in our life or bring up more questions. Either way, Holocaust survivor voices can inform us in our own lives today.

Conclusion: (5 min)
The instructor will ask the students to come up with one Jewish value with which they struggle that could relate to the struggles of Holocaust survivors. The instructor will go around the room to ask for student responses.

The instructor will explain to the students that during the course of this class, we will examine the Holocaust through the eyes of the survivors. We will look at how they struggled with the Jewish values of *yesh tikvah* (maintaining hope), *tochecha* (rebuke), *yediat haEl* (knowledge of God), and *zechut avot* (merits of our ancestors). These Jewish values were challenged throughout the Holocaust, as they challenged our ancestors and challenge us still today. As we learn about the struggles of Holocaust survivors, hopefully we can gain insight into our own lives and our own relationships.

Lesson 1.2: Jewish Values in our lives

In this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Identify the Jewish values that are most important to them.
2. Justify why one value may be more important than another value to them in difficult situations.
3. Give examples of Holocaust survivors' struggles with Jewish values.

Set Induction:

The instructor should ask the students to respond to the prompt below on a blank piece of paper anonymously. Explain that we will use these situations in the next part of the lesson, so it is important to be anonymous:

- Describe a difficult experience in your life.
- Do not say how you solved the issue that came up or how you thought about it. Just write about the situation.
- Hand in the papers folded.

Activity 1: Evaluating Jewish Values

The instructor will give the students a comprehensive list of Jewish values, which can be found at the following website from the Association of Jewish Libraries. There are many values on this list. The instructor should choose 10 values to focus on in this lesson. See the next activity for possible choices of Jewish values. These values should include *yesh tikvah*, *tochecha*, *yediat HaEl*, and *zechut avot*.

http://www.ajljewishvalues.org/vlist.htm

First, the students will be asked to rank the values in order of importance. The students should share which values were most important and which values were least important.

Second, the instructor should take the stack of difficult experiences that were written in the set induction of this lesson. The instructor should read a few of these situations. The instructor should reframe the question to ask which values would be the most important in difficult situations. The students should reorder the values again based on this caveat. Then, the students should be asked to compare and contrast this list from their previous list. Did their values change? Which value became the most important? Which value became the least important?

The instructor should explain that there are no correct answers to these questions. We all respond to situations differently and hold different perspective in life. It can be challenging to look at other people's situations without passing judgment or feeling challenged by their responses. Nevertheless, it is important to create space for each other to share their feelings

about difficult situations and share openly without judgment. This is how we can learn from each other.

Activity 2: Introduction to Holocaust Survivor Struggles with Values

The instructor will ask the students to brainstorm a list of values that Holocaust survivors might have struggled with during and after the Holocaust. The instructor should compile the list on the board.

- *Gemilut Hasadim* (Acts of Lovingkindness)- This value could have been difficult for Holocaust survivors to fulfill during the war since they were often concerned with their personal survival. On the other hand, this value could have sustained survivors and given them purpose as they tried to take care of those around them during the Holocaust.
- *Sever Panim Yafot* (Being Cheerful)- This value would pose difficulty during the Holocaust as survivors dealt with extremely horrific circumstances throughout the war.
- *Birkat HaMazon* (Blessing God after Meals)- This value would pose difficulty since survivors meals were extremely small and infrequent.
- *Chesed Shel Met* (Caring for the Dead)- This value would have caused much anxiety and difficulty among survivors as there were so many dead during the Holocaust. Often, survivors could not care for their own family members who died because they were not present at the time of their death or/and had no knowledge of the location of the family member who had perished.
- *Kehillah* (Community)- This value would be difficult to maintain since often Jewish communities were broken up almost immediately by the Nazi hands. While sometimes community was created in the camps, they were difficult to maintain because of the death and constant movement that took place during the war.

The instructor will want to read the following assignment and prepare answers to the questions ahead of the class. The instructor will tell the students to read the chapter "Hitler's Imprint" pages 97-99 from **Isabella: From Auschwitz to Freedom** together as a class. This excerpt can be found at the end of this curriculum guide in the Book Resources Section. This excerpt comes as Isabella and her sisters are liberated from Auschwitz by the Russians. As you read, ask the class to identify the following aspects of this story:

1. Isabella mentions her struggles as a result of the Holocaust. What are they and how does she depict them?
2. What values are present in her struggles?
3. What values take precedent for her now and what values are not as important?
4. What is the tone of this excerpt? How does the tone communicate her feelings?
5. What lingering questions does she ask after her ordeal?
6. What is different about Isabella's struggles with values and our own?
7. What lingering questions are you left with as you think about the Holocaust?
8. What can we learn from her struggles with Jewish values?
    a. We can learn from Holocaust survivors just like we can learn from the values in our tradition. Holocaust survivors struggled with their Jewish values and beliefs as a result of the atrocities of the Holocaust. We can learn how they continued to ask questions and struggle with their values in order to bring meaning and purpose back to their lives.

If the class has not arrived on its own to the answer to question 8, the instructor should explain it to them as a conclusion to this lesson.

Lesson 1.3: Ethical Wills

In this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Summarize the concept of an ethical will in their own words.
2. Articulate major themes found in ethical wills from the Holocaust.
3. Connect the concept of ethical wills to the preservation of family legacies.

Set Induction:

Instructor will ask the following questions:

- If you knew that you would die tomorrow, what would you want people to know about you?
- How would you make sure that your message was clearly communicated?

Activity 1: Ethical Will Text Study

Instructor will explain to the group that ethical wills are rooted in the Bible and the Talmud. Ethical wills preserved from the medieval and Renaissance periods had a high literary quality to them; other wills had a high level of content as the style of these will changed. Therefore, ethical wills often take the form of letters that seek to transmit the most important ideals and values to the writer. While the letters were often conveyed during the lifetime of the writer, the letters became ethical wills posthumously.[2]

In order to prepare ourselves for writing our own ethical wills, we must first study what other ethical wills looked like. Especially pertinent to this class are ethical wills derived from the Holocaust. One of the best ways to clarify our Jewish values and core struggles and strategies in life is through the medium of ethical wills. This activity will allow us to identify our own challenges and orienting narratives, before we immerse ourselves in the very complex versions of Holocaust survivors'?

Ethical Wills:

1. A Mother's Will (p. 44, in *So That Your Values Live On*)
2. Zippora Birman (p. 45 in *So That Your Values Live On*)
3. Among the Embers: Martyrs Testiments (p. 47-49 in *So That Your Values Live On*)
4. The Chief Rabbi of Grodzisk (p. 50 in *So That Your Values Live On*)
5. Shulami Rabinovitch (p. 53-55 in *So That Your Values Live On*)

Directions: The instructor will divide the group into five different parts. Each group will study one ethical will using the questions below.

1. What are the main topics addressed in this will?
2. Summarize this will in your own words.
3. Are there topics of the will relevant today? How so?

[2] Summarized from page xiii in ***So That Your Values live On.***

4. Did you resonate with any of the issues brought up in the will? How so?
5. What would you add to or remove from the will if you could do so? Why? How so?
6. What do you believe is the main purpose of this ethical will?

After each group has mastered the text of their ethical will, these groups should split into new group. The new groups should include one person from each of the five ethical will study groups. Each person should summarize their ethical will to the group.

As a new group, they should try to address these questions after they have studied all five of the ethical wills.

1. What did you learn about the people who wrote these ethical wills?
2. How do you think writing something like an ethical will could affect your relationship with your family?
3. Do you think writing an ethical will could do harm to your family?
4. If you were to write an ethical will and read it to your family, how do you think your family would react? Would they know the things you included or would they be surprised?
5. How do you think writing an ethical will might change you? What effects do you see of undertaking such a task?

Activity 2: Beginning Our Ethical Wills

The instructor will explain to the class:

- Over the course of this class, we will each enter into the process of writing an ethical will. After each unit, you will be given an opportunity to consider the points that you would like to preserve in your ethical will. You will decide how you would like to preserve your will, in written form or recorded on a DVD. This process takes time to develop thoughts and ideas. Therefore, there will be many "pre-thinking" activities that will help you develop your beliefs and values that you would like to include in your ethical will.

Another option for this activity would be to encourage the parents and teens *not* to share their ethical wills with each other until they are finished. This would certainly increase the drama and anticipation at the finish of the class when ethical wills are presented. At the end of the course, they would have the opportunity to compare and contrast wills with each other. However, there are drawbacks to this method in that it might discourage sharing between teens and parents over the course of the year. This consequence, of course, would defeat an important purpose in this course, and therefore may not be the best choice. But, the instructor should feel free to choose the method that best suits his/her class and students that he/she is working with.

Directions: Start to brainstorm ideas for writing ethical wills. Preserve these thoughts in a journal. For today's assignment, it is appropriate to think about two points, an audience for the will and the purpose of the will.

These prompts may be helpful:

1. What is the purpose of my writing my ethical will to you?
    a. I write this to you, my ____, in order to…
2. What important family history would I like to pass on?
    a. My parents, sibling, antecedents, were/are…
    b. Events that helped shape our family are…

Unit 2: *Tochecha*

Unit Understandings:

1. *Tochecha*, or rebuke, serves as a vehicle for seeking justice for Holocaust survivors after the war. Although carried out non-verbally, *tochecha* inspired Holocaust survivors to choose life in the worst of conditions.
2. In Jewish tradition, the act of *tochecha* benefits the rebuked person. However, for Holocaust survivors, *tochecha* empowered them to speak out against their Nazi tormentors.
3. Jewish tradition describes a process of asking and granting forgiveness, or *mechila*. This process proved to be wrought with challenge and tension for Holocaust survivors who were asked to forgive their Nazi tormentors.

Goals:

- ✓ To present traditional Jewish views of confrontation and forgiveness.
- ✓ To provide opportunities to discuss moral dilemmas when considering forgiveness.
- ✓ To present opportunities for students to consider times in their life when *tochecha* would be and/or would have been? appropriate.
- ✓ To present the dilemmas of *tochecha* as they relate to Holocaust survivors.

Essential Questions:

- Are their different stipulations surrounding the act of *tochecha* when the purpose of it is to seek justice?
- Should former Nazis stand trial for their crimes despite their age and health condition?

- Can *tochecha* be carried out through action?

- Do actions speak louder than words?

Objectives:

- ❖ Students should be able to evaluate the challenges when enacting *tochecha* and decide when it is appropriate to enact and when it is not.
- ❖ Students should be able to apply the traditional Jewish interpretations of *tochecha* to scenarios in their own lives and determine the best course of action to take.

Lesson 2.1*:* Confrontation

Essential Questions:

- What is *tochecha*?
- What is the appropriate way to perform *tochecha*?
- How did Holocaust survivors perform *tochecha* during and after the war?
- What is the purpose of *tochecha*?

In this lesson, students should be able to:

- Explain the meaning of *tochecha* as a biblical mitzvah.
- Decide how the rules of *tochecha* do and do not apply to Holocaust survivors.
- Apply the mitzvah of *tochecha* to past experiences in their own lives.
- Assess the complexity of *tochecha* when dealing with Nazi war criminals at this point in time.

Set Induction:

The instructor will ask the students to list the pros and cons of confronting someone when you have noticed them doing something that you believe is wrong.

- Explain that confronting people is difficult and comes with a variety of factors that complicate the process even more. Nevertheless, confronting, or *tochecha*, is a Jewish value that is derived from the Torah. In relationship to the Holocaust, this virtue is especially pertinent.

Activity 1: What is *tochecha*? A Text Study

What might be an example of *tochecha* carried out by Holocaust survivors?

- Rebuking Nazis, bystanders, or anyone that helped or aided the Nazis before, during, or after the war in court.

We are going to study what Jewish text says regarding *tochecha*. As we learn about it, we will decide when and if the rules of *tochecha* apply in the case of Holocaust survivors or not. Instruct the students to read these texts either in *hevruta* (partners) or as a class. Answer the questions below and discuss their answers as a class when everyone has finished.

Text 1: Biblical Mitzvah

You must not hate your brother/sister in your heart. You must certainly rebuke your neighbor and not bear sin because of them. (Leviticus 19:17)

Why does the Torah add the phrase "…and not bear sin because of them" to the end of this verse? To teach us not to embarrass others in public when we rebuke them. (Rashi, ad loc.)[3]

Text 2: Who should not be rebuked?

Rabbi El'a further stated in the name of Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon: "Just as it is a mitzvah to say that which will be listened to, so it is a mitzvah not to say that which will not be listened to."

Abba stated: Both are obligations, for the Bible teaches, "Don't rebuke a scoffer, for they will hate you; rebuke a sage and they will love you" (Proverbs 9:8) from Talmud Bavli, Yevamot 65b.[4]

Text 3: Maimonides points out to following issues involved in *tochecha*.

If one observes that another committed a sin or walks in a way that is not good, it is the person's duty to bring the erring one back to the right path and point out that he/she is wronging him/herself by this evil course, as it is said, "You shall surely rebuke your neighbor" (Leviticus 19:17). One who rebukes another, whether for offenses against the one who rebukes him/herself or for sins against God, should administer the rebuke in private, speak to the offender gently and tenderly, and point out that the rebuke is offered for the wrongdoer's own good, to secure for the other life in the World to Come. If the person accepts the rebuke, well and good. If not, the person should be rebuked a second, and third time. And so one is bound to continue the admonitions, until the sinner assaults the admonisher and says, "I refuse to listen." Whoever is in a position to prevent wrongdoing and does not do so is responsible for the iniquity of all the wrongdoers whom that person might have restrained. (Maimonides, Mishnah Torah, Book One: Knowledge, Chapter 6:6-7).[5]

Questions:

1. Why must one perform *tochecha*, according to the first text?
2. How should *tochecha* be performed, according to the first two texts?
3. Who should and should not be rebuked according to the second text?
4. What is Maimonides' justification to perform *tochecha*?

[3] Joel Lurie Grishaver, *Teaching Jewishly* (Los Angeles: Torah Aura Productions, 2007), 45.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Teaching Jewish Virtues: Sacred Sources and Arts Activities by Susan Freeman

5. To what extent should one seek to perform *tochecha*, according to Maimonides?
6. What is the responsibility of the person performing *tochecha*?
7. Do different rules apply when *tochecha* is being done in the context of seeking justice?

Activity 2: Holocaust Survivors and *Tochecha*- The Challenges of *tochecha* for Holocaust survivors after the war.

The instructor will explain the following to the students:

For Holocaust survivors, tochecha was the first step in seeking justice for what had been done to them during the war. At the end of 1942, right after the war ended, the Allied Powers (Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States) declared their determination to prosecute those responsible for the mass murder of civilians.[6] *In 1945, 22 "major" war criminals were tried at the Nuremburg Trials for crimes against peace, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and conspiracy to commit such crimes. While many were brought to justice during these trials, not all of the Nazi criminals were caught and brought to justice. The search to bring these criminals continues even today.*

However, the search for these criminals today brings up some important questions in relationship to tochecha.

The following video is about a recent case of an alleged Nazi war criminal who is being put on trial at the age of 89 years old.

Video Links:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jpjTXgW-uQg&NR=1&feature=fvwp or

http://www.journeyman.tv/?lid=59636

If this video cannot be found, here is the link to the LA Times news article about this case.

http://articles.latimes.com/2009/dec/04/world/la-fg-germany-nazi-trial4-2009dec04

After viewing the video or reading the newspaper article, ask for immediate reactions to the video.
Show the video:

The Last Holocaust Trial- Germany (By Journeyman Pictures, June 2009)

Here is a short description of the video:

Some 170,000 Jews were murdered at the Nazi death camp Sobibor. Only 8 people out of those

[6] http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/article.php?ModuleId=10005140

who survived are still alive today. Now they're calling for justice for the last remaining Sobibor prison guard.

'I am innocent, innocent' Demjanjuk cried 20 years ago when falsely accused of torturing Jews at the Treblinka death camp. But there is now solid evidence that he operated the industrial killing machines at Sobibor. 'I think of her often' says Jules, one of the few survivors of Sobibor. On the day of arrival his wife was sent to the gas chamber. Others were whipped or taken to a quiet place and shot. 'There's no statute of limitation for the crimes committed there' says genocide expert, Johannes. Many have asked whether it's right for Demjanjuk, now 89, to stand trial. But Jules, plagued by nightmares of his wife's murder, will not rest until it's over - 'That is justice, it's not revenge'.

Thermometer Activity-Gauging Our Reactions to the video

Ask the students to stand in a horizontal line across the room, facing the teacher. Ask the students to respond to the questions using the thermometer method. The thermometer method works as such:

1. The line that the students begin on is neutral.
2. When a question is asked, below is how the students will show their response as they:

Step forward once: Agree
Step forward twice: Strongly Agree
Step backwards once: Disagree
Step backwards twice: Strongly disagree
No step: Uncertain.

As the students respond, ask students on opposing sides of the thermometer to share with the group why they reacted in such a way. Ask family members to note which points in which they differed from each other. The families will use these points at the conclusion of this lesson.

These are some examples of statements that the students may respond to:
Statements:

1. *Tochecha* is necessary in all situations when a crime has been witnessed.
2. *Tochecha* is a precursor to carrying out justice.
3. The process of t*ochecha* can change depending upon the circumstances in which it is performed.
4. *Tochecha,* as defined by Jewish tradition, supports confronting Nazi war criminals at all costs.
5. All Nazi leaders are war criminals and require a public form of *tochecha*.
6. All Nazis are war criminals and should stand trial.
7. Putting Nazis on trial is an appropriate form of *tochecha,* despite the age of the criminal.
8. Putting Nazis on trial is a means to seek justice after the Holocaust.
9. Putting Nazis on trial, even today, teaches the world a lesson about the persecution and genocide that happened during the Holocaust.

10. The decision to bring a Nazi to trial today should be evaluated based on his or her health conditions.
11. Putting Nazis on trial will prevent further genocides from happening.

Activity 3: Debate the Argument

Instruct the families to perform the following:

There were statements supporting and refuting the decision to put Demjanjuk on trial. As a family, decide whether or not it is appropriate for Demjanjuk to stand trial. Using the ideas of the text study and arguments from the video, prepare a statement in support of the decision for him to stand trial or against.

After each family has made a decision, create a chart on the board with two columns. One side of the column should be labeled "Support" and the other "Against." Ask families to share their statements with the class.

Conclude the class with this discussion:

1. What was difficult about making your statement?
2. What was easy about making your statement?
3. How did the text study influence your decision?
4. Is bringing Demjanjuk to trial serving justice?
5. Do you think there is ever a time where it is too late to serve justice? Support your opinion.

Lesson 2.2: *Tochecha* Through Action- Resistance As Rebuke
-Scripted Lesson-

In this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Decide which response would be most appropriate when put in a morally ambiguous situation.
2. Explain how *tochecha* was carried out through actions during the Holocaust.

Set Induction: Four Corners (15-20 minutes)

The instructor will ask the students to consider the following scenario-

- You are in a store with a few of your friends. Your friends tell you that they are going to steal something from the store. You do not want to engage in stealing, and you don't want your friends to steal either. What do you do?
- Choose the best option from this list, choosing the corner that corresponds to the response:
    - You tell them, in a stern voice, that you do not condone what they are about to do and will not participate in it.
    - You tell them that you will not participate and walk away while they go ahead with their plan.
    - You ask them why they need to steal and offer to purchase what they want.
    - You explain that as their friend, you cannot allow them to do this. You walk them out of the store.

After the students have chosen a corner, ask them to respond to the following questions:

1. Why do you think your response is the most effective?
2. Which response to you think is most like *tochecha*, as we learned in the last lesson
3. Is there a different response that you think would achieve similar results to your last answer?
4. Do actions speak louder than words?

The instructor will conclude this activity by explaining that during the Holocaust, survivors couldn't always confront their tormentors with words, for fear of death. However, the survivors confronted and rebuked their tormentors through their actions. Their actions could be seen as a reminder to the tormentors that what they were doing was wrong and that they could not strip the survivors of their humanity, as hard as they tried.

Activity 1: Resistance as *Tochecha* (20-30 minutes)

The instructor will ask the students to read the chapter entitled "Irma Grese and Chicha" on pages 52-56 in *Isabella: From Auschwitz to Freedom*. This resource can be found in the Book Resources Section at the end of the Curriculum Guide.

From this chapter we learn much about how Isabella felt during this "test" that her sister Chicha went through in Auschwitz. However, we do not know from this account how Chicha felt.

Directions: Using some of Isabella's thoughts, create a page of Chicha's journal after this event took place. Or, as an alternative option, create a piece of art that illustrates Chicha's inner thoughts as she went through this event. Give the students options of colored or black and white pens to represent their thoughts either artistically or in writing.

Consider the following questions as you write:

1. What motivated Chicha to continue holding the rocks?
2. How did her sisters' presence either strengthen or weaken her?
3. Did she feel like she could teach a lesson about survival to Irma Grese and the prisoners watching her?
4. Did God play a role in helping her maintain her strength?
5. Did Chicha rebuke Irma Grese through her actions? How so?

While Chicha's *tochecha* may have been unconventional, she taught Irma Grese a lesson about her evil ways in that moment that she survived what seemed like an impossible task.

Activity 2: Another example of resistance as *tochecha* (15-20 minutes)

Another example of *tochecha*, done through actions, occurs in Primo Levi's *Survival in Auschwitz*. Read pages 39 (starting with "In the washroom") to 41.

Consider the following questions while reading:

1. What does Levi believe is the "irony" of the inscription on the wall?
2. How does his friend, Steinlauf, live out the inscription?
3. How does Levi describe his attitude towards cleanliness since entering the camp?
4. Does Steinlauf's view of cleanliness influence Levi's view? How so?
5. How does the shift in thinking about cleanliness transfer to a shift in thinking about life?
6. How might this act of maintaining cleanliness relate to this phrase from Pirkei Avot 2:6 "Rabbi Hillel says "Where there are no worthy persons, *strive to be* a worthy person."
7. Explain why you would or would not consider this act to be a form of *tochecha*.
    a. In the camps, survivors often were unable to use their words to rebuke a Nazi for fear of death. Therefore, Steinlauf resisted the Nazis through his actions by striving to remain human even while in the camp. Steinlauf rebuked the Nazis through his actions by not allowing them to force him to be someone that was less than human. He showed them that they were wrong and showed himself that he was still a person of value through his actions.

These activities may need to continue into another class session.

Activity 3: Do actions speak louder than words? Bringing it together.

For homework, research the question, "Do actions speak louder than words" as a family. Derive examples to support your claim. As a class, hold a debate to determine whether actions speak louder than words.

Activity 4: Text Study: Am I ready to engage in *tochecha*?

Do actions speak louder than words? Am I ready to engage in the action of *tochecha*? Consider the following piece of text from the Chofetz Chayim:

Before assuming that a person deserves *tochecha*, reproof, for his/her actions one must be absolutely certain that sh/he has, in fact, sinned. From the command, "Judge your fellow favorably" (Lev. 19:15), we learn that if a person appears to be committing a transgression which is totally out of character for him, we are to seek to understand what transpired in a positive light. If there is any way to interpret his actions as not involving transgression, we are required to do so. If it is absolutely clear that the person did sin in a manner that is out of character for him, then we must assume that he immediately regretted the actions and has already repented. To discuss the incident with anyone constitutes speaking *lashon hara* (evil speech). – Chofetz Chayim[7]

Conclusion:

The instructor will conclude this lesson by explaining the following to the students:

While in some cases it might seem clear that a person is committing a sin, as seen in the accounts of Holocaust survivors when describing their tormentors, but in other cases it is less clear.

Think back to examples in your life where you may have confronted someone. In your journal, reflect back on your actions in terms of this text. Did you thoroughly think through your decision to rebuke him? Were you positive that the person committed a wrong? For what purpose did you rebuke him or her? Did the person take your words to heart or were they ignored?

[7] Joel Lurie Grishaver, *Teaching Jewishly* (Los Angeles: Torah Aura Productions, 2007), 47.

Lesson 2.3: Forgiveness…
Under what circumstances must one forgive?

Homework Activity 1: *The Sunflower*- What difficulties surround forgiveness?

In this excerpt from Simon Wiesenthal's *The Sunflower,* Wiesenthal describes his real life encounter with a dying Nazi on his deathbed, who requests forgiveness from Wiesenthal for his crimes during the war. At this point in time, World War II is still in progress and Wiesenthal is a Jewish prisoner who went from a death camp to work in a make-shift hospital. This account tracks Wiesenthal's thoughts on forgiveness of the Nazi on behalf of the Jewish People and on behalf of himself as well as the reactions of his fellow prisoners.

As a family, read pages 30-57 at home from *The Sunflower*. Using the questions below, analyze the questions that the story elicits and identify the difficulties of forgiveness for Wiesenthal.

Questions:

1. What circumstances in Wiesenthal's account led him to consider forgiveness?
2. What made forgiveness difficult or impossible in this situation?
3. Why do you think forgiveness is so difficult for Wiesenthal? For Holocaust survivors?
4. What can you point out about his experience that points to the difficulty to forgive?
5. What do you think it would take for Wiesenthal to consider forgiveness?
6. Should Wiesenthal have to consider forgiving this dying Nazi? Why or why not?
7. Do you agree with Wiesenthal's decision not to forgive the Nazi? Justify your answer.

Activity 1: *Homework- After reading activities*

1. As a family, make a list of the pros and cons of Wiesenthal's decision not to forgive the Nazi. Did the pros outweigh the cons? If so, what, if any, circumstances might have made it okay for Wiesenthal to forgive the Nazi?

2. Apart from this case for a moment, what are the proper steps in asking for forgiveness? Create a step by step chart of the entire process of asking for forgiveness. Bring it to class to discuss.

Activity 2: Comparing our reactions

Post the charts for forgiveness that each family made around the room. Ask the students to walk around the room to examine each list. Ask them to notice the similarities and differences between the lists that they made and the lists that they are examining and make note of divergences.

Ask the following questions:

1. What was common among the charts?
2. What was different?
3. Were there any ideas on other charts that you hadn't thought of?

4. Would you edit your chart based on the new information?

As a family, make edits to your chart as you see fit.

Activity 3: Forgiveness and Jewish tradition

Jewish tradition, too, provides a framework for how to seek forgiveness. This chart can be found in the resources section at the end of this unit.

The chart asks two questions:

1. Who is responsible for seeking forgiveness, according to this chart?
2. How does one seek forgiveness?

Teshuvah is central to the path to forgiveness, according to Jewish tradition. As the handout demonstrates, *teshuvah* is a process that can take some time to complete.

Evaluate the *teshuvah* of the Nazi that was about to die as he asked for forgiveness from Wiesenthal according to this model. Was his *teshuvah* complete? Is Wiesenthal supported by Jewish tradition or in conflict with the Jewish concept of asking forgiveness?

What would you do? What role does this framework for forgiveness play in your life? Does it work for you? How might you incorporate it into your life?

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT: Ethical Wills

The instructor should tell the students the following:

Many ideas about *tochecha* were introduced to you during this unit. You have been introduced to stories about the ways Holocaust survivors confronted their tormentors while in the camp and after the war had ended, how our Jewish tradition sees *tochecha* as a part of repentance (*teshuva*) and forgiveness (*mechila*), and when it is appropriate to carry out justice and when it is not.

It is now time to consider what lessons you might want to pass on from this unit in your ethical will. Use the following prompts, if it suits you, to begin your brainstorm. If you have another way to brainstorm your thoughts, feel free to do that.

1. These are the mistakes that I regret having made the most in my life that I hope you will not repeat…
2. These are the things that I would like to ask you forgiveness for…and I forgive you for…
3. I would like to suggest the following to you…

Tochecha: A Text Study

Biblical Mitzvah

You must not hate your brother/sister in your heart. You must certainly rebuke your neighbor and not bear sin because of them. (Leviticus 19:17)

Why does the Torah add the phrase "…and not bear sin because of them" to the end of this verse? To teach us not to embarrass others in public when we rebuke them. (Rashi, ad loc.)

Who should not be rebuked?

Rabbi El'a further stated in the name of Rabbi Elazar, son of Rabbi Shimon: "Just as it is a mitzvah to say that which will be listened to, so it is a mitzvah not to say that which will not be listened to."

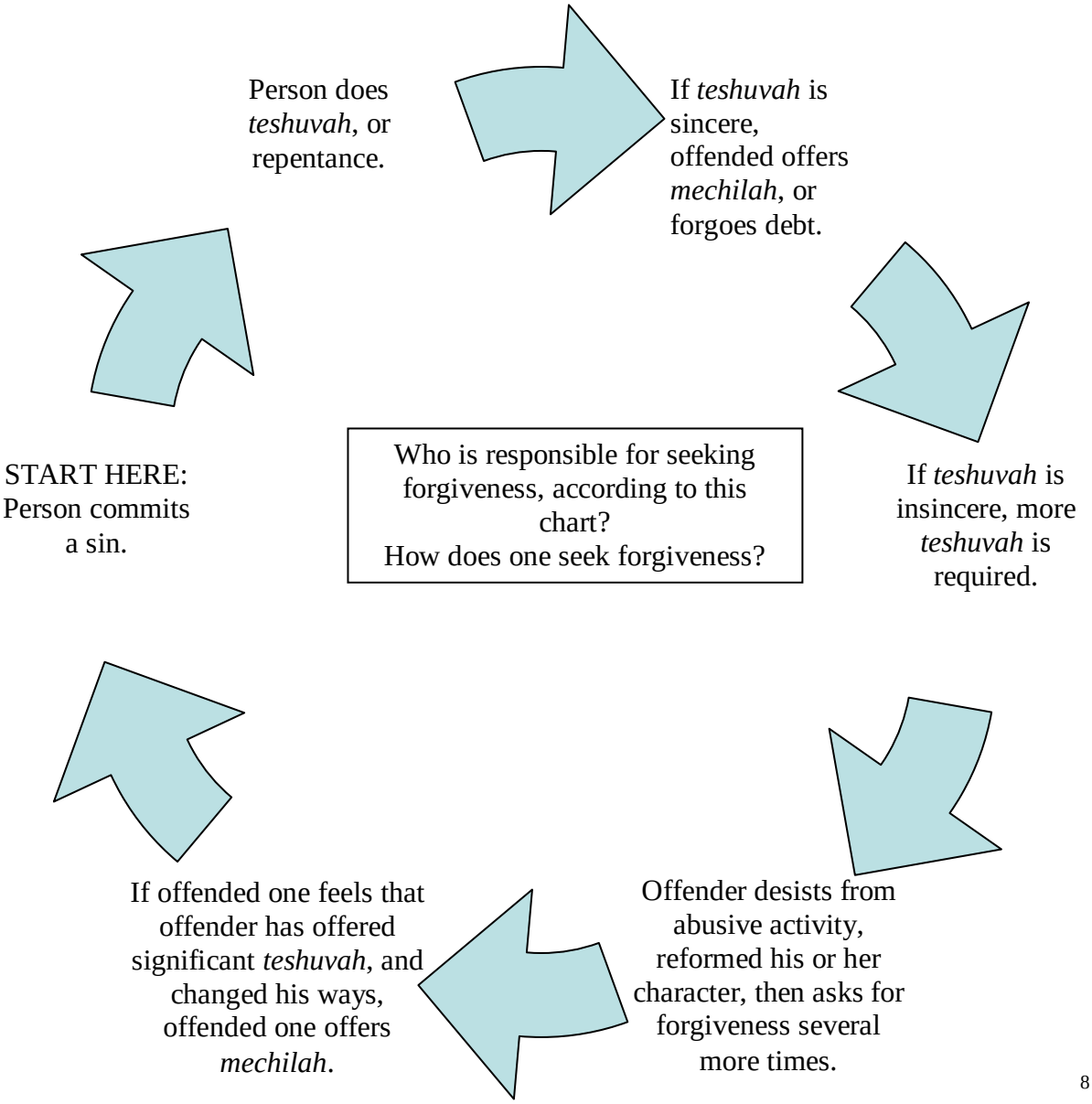
Abba stated: Both are obligations, for the Bible teaches, "Don't rebuke a scoffer, for they will hate you; rebuke a sage and they will love you" (Proverbs 9:8) in Talmud Bavli Yevamot 65b.

Maimonides points out to following issues involved in *tochecha*.

If one observes that another committed a sin or walks in a way that is not good, it is the person's duty to bring the erring one back to the right path and point out that he/she is wronging him/herself by this evil course, as it is said, "You shall surely rebuke your neighbor" (Leviticus 19:17). One who rebukes another, whether for offenses against the one who rebukes him/herself or for sins against God, should administer the rebuke in private, speak to the offender gently and tenderly, and point out that the rebuke is offered for the wrongdoer's own good, to secure for the other life in the World to Come. If the person accepts the rebuke, well and good. If not, the person should be rebuked a second, and third time. And so one is bound to continue the admonitions, until the sinner assaults the admonisher and says, "I refuse to listen." Whoever is in a position to prevent wrongdoing and does not do so is responsible for the iniquity of all the wrongdoers whom that person might have restrained. (Maimonides, Mishnah Torah, Book One: Knowledge, Chapter 6:6-7).

1. Why must one perform *tochecha*, according to the first text?
2. What does the text tell us about how *tochecha* must be performed in the first two texts?
3. Who should and should not be rebuked according to the second text?
4. What is Maimonides' justification to perform *tochecha*?
5. To what extent should one seek to perform *tochecha*, according to Maimonides?
6. What is the responsibility of the person performing *tochecha*?
7. Do different rules apply when *tochecha* is being done in the context of seeking justice.

Framework for Forgiveness



[8]

[8]http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Yom_Kippur/Themes_and_Theology/Repentance/Types_of_Forgiveness.shtml

Rambam's Mishneh Torah- Laws of Repentance: Chapter Seven

1. Since free choice is granted to all people, a person should always strive to do teshuvah and to confess verbally for sins, striving to cleanse his/her hands from sin in order that s/he may die as a Baal-Teshuvah (Master of Repentance) and merit the life of the world to come.
2. People should always see themselves as leaning toward death, with the possibility that they might die at any time. thus they are afraid that they may be found sinners. Therefore, one should always repent of sins immediately and should not say "When I grow older, I will repent," for perhaps they will die before they grow older.
3. A person should not think that repentance is necessary only for those sins that involve deeds such as sexual impropriety, robbery, or theft. Rather, just as a person is obligated to repent of these, a person must search after the evil qualities s/he has. People must repent of anger, hatred, envy, frivolity, the pursuit of money and honor, the pursuit of gluttony, and the like…These sins are more difficult than those that involve deeds. If a person is addicted to these behaviors, it is more difficult to separate from them.
4. A Baal-Teshuvah (a person who has repented) should not consider him/herself far below the level of the righteous because of the sins and transgressions that he or she committed. This is not true. He or she is loved and desired by the Creator as if he or she never sinned.
5. All the prophets commanded (the people) to repent. Israel will only be redeemed through teshuvah.
6. Teshuvah is great, for it draws a person close to the Shekhinah (the part of God that gets close to people) as (Hosea 14.2) states: "Return, O Israel, to your God"… and (Jeremiah 4.1) states: " 'If you will return, O Israel,' declares God, 'You will return to Me.'" Put them together, and you learn that if you will return in teshuvah, you will be close to Me. Teshuvah brings near those who were far removed.
7. How high is the level of one who does teshuvah! Previously the person who did wrong was separate from God, as (Isaiah 59.2) says: "Your sins separate between you and your God." Now that person is clinging to the Shekhinah, as (Deuteronomy 4.4) states: "And you who cling to God."
8. The manner of Baalei Teshuvah is to be very humble and modest. If fools shame them because of their previous deeds, the Baalei Teshuvah, they will hear this abuse and rejoice, knowing that it is a merit for them. It is a total sin to tell Baalei Teshuvah, "Remember your previous deeds," or to recall them in their presence to embarrass them or to mention the surrounding circumstances or other similar matters so that they will recall what they did.

Unit 3: Yesh Tikvah

Unit Understandings:

1. Hope motivated Holocaust survivors to continue their fight for survival during and after the war.
2. The persistent dehumanization of the survivors of the Holocaust in the Nazi camps paradoxically resulted in deepening the hope for some Holocaust survivors.
3. The biblical accounts of the Exodus and Sinai cultivate two frameworks of hope embedded in Jewish tradition.
4. Holocaust survivors derived their view of hope based on their own experience in the war.
5. Holocaust survivors' views of hope intertwine with traditional Jewish perspectives on hope.
6. Hope sustained Holocaust survivors during the most difficult of times and can sustain us in difficult times in our own lives even today.

Goals:

- ✓ To present different Holocaust survivors' views of hope.
- ✓ To provide connections between Holocaust survivors' views of hope and Jewish views of hope.
- ✓ To demonstrate that love could be a way Holocaust survivors found hope.
- ✓ To teach about Righteous Gentiles' role during the Holocaust.
- ✓ To provide opportunities for students to discover their feelings about hope.

- ✓ To provide opportunities for families to share their perspectives about hope with one another.

Lesson 3.1: Hope
-Scripted Lesson-

In this lesson, students should be able to:

- Summarize four Holocaust survivor's outlooks on hope.
- Articulate a definition of hope based on their personal experiences.
- Compare and contrast their definition of hope with the ideas of hope from Holocaust survivors.
- Determine when hope was present in their past experiences.
- Explain a reason to hope even in the hardest situations.
- Identify aspirations that they hope for in their own lives.

Set Induction: (5-10 minutes)

The instructor will tell the students to think of an experience where they felt hope present in their lives. In that experience, how was hope represented for them? An example of this exercise could look like this:

Hope is my belief that the doctors will be able to do their job well.
Hope is the knowledge that I have the capacity to get through this difficult time.
Hope is the feeling that I will meet my *beshert* when the time is right.

The instructor should explain that hope is sometimes based in past experience, hope can be based in a belief in the future, and hope can be based in trust of others. The point is that hope manifests itself differently based on the situation. Hope might be one of the most basic characteristics of humanity, that which motivates us to keep moving forward in our lives.

The instructor will write "Hope is" on the board. The students will be asked to complete the sentence on their own and then share their responses with the class. The students should hold on to their definition as it will be revisited at a later time.

Activity 1: Accounts of Hope- How do Holocaust survivors understand hope? (30-40 minutes)

The instructor will explain that hope, according to Wikipedia, is a belief in a positive outcome related to events and circumstances in one's life. During the Holocaust, it was challenging to hold on to hope. However, many accounts of Holocaust survivors explain that hope was crucial to keeping them alive and motivated to survive the war.

The instructor will explain to the students that they will rotate to four stations. The instructor should allow 5-10 minutes per station. At each station, they will find a short account to read or a piece of art that deals with the topic of hope. After they have finished reading or analyzing the piece of art, they will complete the statement, "Hope is…", using the account to help with the definition.

For example, after reading Mel Mermelstein's account, the sentence may be completed as such: Hope is…a piece of bread.

These are the accounts that will be at each station:

1. Pages 183- 200 from *By Bread Alone*, by Mel Mermelstein
    a. Hope, for Mermelstein, was looking forward to his next piece of bread. He also mentions the *tefilah* (prayer services) that took place regularly in the camp which he attended in the evenings to say *Kaddish* (mourner's prayer for the dead) for his father. Another prisoner, Bram, encourages Mermelstein to continue hoping, that the end is in sight. Then, liberation comes which provides them with a new reason to hope.
2. Page 17 from *Survival in Auschwitz* by Primo Levi
    a. Levi digresses from his story for a moment to reflect on happiness and unhappiness. He discovers that neither is realizable in its totality. He applies this idea to hope and uncertainty. The humanity in each person is what allowed him to constantly vacillate between these two emotions.
3. Pages 88-91 from *Man's Search for Meaning* by Viktor Frankl
    a. Frankl reflects on an experience he had as a prisoner on a particularly bad day in the Nazi camps. At this point in time, many prisoners were committing suicide and had died of sickness. His comrade mentioned, in a speech to the prisoners, the notion that the real reason they had died was because they had lost reason to hope. Frankl then recalls his subsequent speech to the prisoners, where he emphasizes the reason to continue to hope and the meaning of their suffering.
4. Pages 94-96 from *Isabella: From Auschwitz to Freedom* by Isabella Leitner
    a. At this point in Leitner's story, she has been liberated by the Russians and survivors from various camps in eastern Germany walk towards a rumored town. She discusses the hope that survivors still held on to, about their hopes to find their families and learn about their fate, and the hope that their liberated lives will continue.

After the students have completed the rotations, the instructor will post the four "Hope is" posters in the front of the classroom. The students will look for similarities and differences among the definitions of hope on the posters. The students will derive one overarching definition of hope together as a class.

Activity 2: Moments of hope in our own lives (15-25 minutes)

The instructor will break the groups up into the teens and the parents. In the two groups, ask them to answer the following questions:

1. What were the tensions related to maintaining hope in these accounts?
    a. See descriptions of the readings above for the answers to this question.
2. Two of the accounts of hope took place within the Nazi concentration camps and the other two are on the verge of liberation. Do you think these different situations impacted the Holocaust survivors' feelings of hope?

    a. The examples of hope in both of these situations show that hope sustains humanity even in the worst of conditions. However, hope could have seemed more palpable and realistic for those survivors on the brink of liberation.
3. Which of the Holocaust survivor accounts inspired hope for you? Why?
4. Which of the concepts of hope you were difficult for you to connect with?
5. Do you think hope plays a part in your life today? How so?
6. Can you think of experiences from your life where you relied on hope or that hope was present?
7. How would you explain what may be the reason to hope in the hardest of situations?

Concluding Activity: (15-20 minutes)

Create a comic strip or a film strip that describes an interaction, either imagined or real, where someone explains the reason to hope to someone else. Create each scene on a single piece of paper, as this comic strip may be added to as a result of the next lesson.

Lesson 3.2: Hope in Jewish Tradition

In this lesson, students should be able to…

- Explain how hope in Jewish tradition can be based on either the biblical stories of the Exodus or Sinai.
- Determine if either model of hope resonates with them in their world view.
- Apply the Jewish view of hope to a survivor's story.
- Consider the Jewish view of hope as a framework to maintain hope in tough situations.

Note to teacher:
This activity requires some previous knowledge of the Exodus account and the Sinai account from the Torah. While I will summarize the main points of these stories as they pertain to hope, it will be helpful if you have some more background knowledge of these two foundational stories to help the students broaden their knowledge of the events.

Set Induction:

The instructor will play a recording of HaTikvah, the Israeli national anthem, for the class. The instructor will ask the students if they have heard this before and what the song represents. The instructor will tell the students that this song has come to represent the modern state of Israel, but also epitomizes the ancient hope of the Jewish People to return to the Land of Israel. Even though this song is more modern, it encapsulates one Jewish idea of hope that has inspired the Jewish People since the fall of the Second Temple. The hope to return to Israel was often referred to in some of the darkest moments in Jewish history. What are other Jewish ideas of hope that you can think of?

- Possible answer: The phrase found at the conclusion of the Aleinu, "On that day Adonai will become One and God's Name will be One," conjures up an image of a perfect world that is yet to be. This image is one of the Messianic Age in which all delight in God's presence. This concept has been a source of inspiration for Jews over time and space.

Activity 1: Concept Attainnment of Hope in Jewish Tradition

In this exercise, students will be introduced to Jewish ideas of hope rooted in the Torah. Students will be handed the Concept Attainment exercise found in the resources. This activity could be done in *hevruta* (partners), families, or even individually. However, the questions at the bottom might be best worked out in *hevruta*, and then discussed as a class.

In this exercise, the students will determine the two models of hope based on these foundational stories from our Jewish tradition. The idea itself is based on David Hartman's essay *Sinai and Exodus: Two Grounds for Hope in the Jewish Tradition* (included in the Resources for the instructor's perusal). From these two stories, we will determine how hope relates to the two examples of God's role in the world and relationship with Israel. Column A contains pertinent excerpts from the Exodus story and Column B contains pertinent excerpts from the Sinai story. When the students have named the stories, the instructor should help guide them through the questions at the bottom of the resource.

Here are some possible responses to the questions at the bottom of the concept attainment exercise.

1. What is God's relationship with Israel in these columns?
    a. Column A- God is the Redeemer of Israel, rescues Israel from bondage.
    b. Column B- God is the Teacher/Instructor of Israel, guides them by giving them the Commandments.
2. Does God's role change from Column A to Column B?
    a. Yes! God goes from rescuing the Israelites from a situation that they could not get out of themselves in Column A to instructing them about how to be a free people in Column B.
3. How does Israel act towards God in both of these columns?
    a. In Column A, Israel relies on God to redeem them. In Column B, Israel becomes equal partners in the Covenant with God.
4. How could these stories about God's relationship with Israel provide a foundation for hope in Jewish tradition?
    a. Possible Answer: The Exodus story tells us about a God that intervenes in history. In a sense, it didn't matter how the Israelites acted, God needed to be the Redeemer in the story. Therefore, hope essentially would depend on God's intervention.
    b. Possible Answer: The Sinai story tells us about a more mutual relationship with God. The commandments guide us, giving us direction on how to maintain our relationship with God. This story gives more responsibility to Israel to maintain the relationship with God, through following the commandments that God gave us at Sinai. Therefore, hope would rely on Israel to maintain their relationship with God through their actions.
5. Can we hold these foundational stories of hope in our beliefs simultaneously? How so?
6. Do you hold one belief to be true more than the other? Why or why not?
7. How does God play a role in your ability to hope?

Activity 2: Applying these concepts to Holocaust survivor accounts

In the last lesson, the students read four different accounts of hope from Holocaust survivors. Instead of introducing new text, use those accounts once again. Ask the students to apply these two concepts of hope to the Holocaust survivor accounts. The resources can be found in the previous lesson.

Ask the students to use these guiding questions to help apply the Exodus concept or the Sinai concept of hope to each story.

1. How is hope defined by each Holocaust survivor?
2. Does God play a role in their definition of hope? If not, do you see God fitting into any aspect of their story?
3. Which concept of hope, Exodus or Sinai, most applies to the survivors' perspective on hope?
4. Is either of these models problematic when compared to the Holocaust survivors' accounts of hope? Why or why not?

5. How would you elaborate on the Holocaust survivors' perspectives on hope with either the Sinai or Exodus model?
6. What is your opinion of the Exodus and Sinai models of hope? Do they inspire you? Frustrate you? How do they make you feel?
7. After learning these concepts of hope, would you add the Exodus or Sinai model of hope to your comic/film strip? Would you use either model to give advice to someone that needs reason to hope?

As a wrap up to this activity, discuss questions 6-7 as a class.

Lesson 3.3: Love

In this lesson, students should be able to:

- Explain how love could inspire hope during the Holocaust.
- Give at least two examples of love stories that developed as a result of the Holocaust.
- Articulate how love and hope are intertwined.
- Elaborate how love could develop due to the circumstances of the Holocaust.
- Inquire about how the Jewish concept of *beshert* could fit into these love stories.

Note to the teacher:

In Jewish love stories, the two partners will often say that that their love was *beshert* or that they were *beshert*. In Jewish tradition, the concept of *beshert* has inspired Jews to continue their search to find their match that God has created for them, which hopefully leads them to a family life where they can live out the mitzvot throughout their life. While the Holocaust presents unique circumstances, in this lesson, we will look at two love stories that took place during the Holocaust. These stories bring light to a historical event that is generally only filled with darkness.

Beshert can be a difficult concept to discuss in terms of the Holocaust, as students could potentially make the connection that the Holocaust was "meant to happen" similar to how these love stories were "meant to happen." This concept could spark a conversation about the nature of God. While this conversation may be difficult, on the other hand, it could enrich the students struggle as they articulate how *beshert* can and/or cannot be related to the Holocaust and love respectively. As the instructor, I would stress that the Holocaust was *not* inevitable and could have been stopped if enough people had the courage to stand up against the Nazis. This nuance regarding how the Holocaust happened would provide a way to differentiate God's handiwork in love and not in the evil of humanity.

Activity 1: Text Study on *Beshert*- Jigsaw Method

The instructor will split the class into three groups. The instructor will give one of the three texts to each group. The students will learn their text carefully, as they will teach it to the rest of the students in class.

Questions for the texts:

1. What does the text explain about finding one's match?
2. How is God involved in the process?
3. How does this text describe love and marriage?
4. What do you think is the most important aspect of the text?
5. Do you agree with the text's message about how to find a match? Why or why not?
6. Do the messages in these texts inspire hope? Why or why not?
7. Do you believe God is present in your love relationships? Why or why not?

After each group has mastered their text, they should divide up into groups of three, with each member being familiar with each of the three texts. Each member of the group should share their text with the group and answer questions 3-6 on the list above.

When the groups have finished sharing their texts, the students should divide once again back into their families.

Activity 2: The Love Story of Rebecca and Joseph Bau Inquiry Box

This activity includes an inquiry box, full of artifacts that explain the love story of Rebecca and Joseph Bau.

Each family will receive a box filled with items that tells the story of a survivor who was one of "Schindler's Jews." Through investigating the materials in the box and answering the questions, the students will discover the source of hope for these two survivors, their love for one another.

Materials for the inquiry box can be found in the resources for this unit can be found at the end of the unit.
Materials:

1. The Love Story of Rebecca and Joseph Bau
2. Joseph's Survival Story
3. "A Fateful Reunion"
4. Rebecca's Survival Story
5. Our Wedding Album

Directions: Use the questions below to guide you as you discover what inspired hope in Rebecca and Joseph Bau.

1. What did you find in your box that explains something about the life of Rebecca and Joseph Bau?
2. What do you believe is the most important item in your box? Why?
3. How would you describe the love story of Rebecca and Joseph Bau?
4. Which event in the story do you think was the most challenging for Rebecca and Joseph? Why?
5. Is there something in the box that surprised you? What is it and why were you surprised?
6. What role do you believe hope played in the Bau story?
7. How would you describe the hope held by Joseph and Rebecca Bau? Was the nature of each person' hope similar or different?
8. What would you suggest is the most important aspect of this story?

Activity 3: The Love Story of Jack and Chicha

This activity tells of another love story. This story took place near the end of the war. Isabella and her sisters were placed in a displaced persons camp after they were liberated from Auschwitz. They kept hope and eventually met a Yiddish speaking member of the British Royal Air Force, with whom they could communicate. They told them about their father's failed attempt to bring them to America before the war. This member of the Royal Air Force

confirmed their request with the American attaché, so they were immediately sent to America to be reunited with their father. This story is set on the American cargo ship, the *SS Brand Whitlock*, which was on its return trip to America after the war.

Ask the students to read pages 148-158 from *Isabella: From Auschwitz to Freedom.*

Answer the following questions:

1. What can you say about Isabella and her sisters' experience with the American attaché?
2. What memories did Isabella struggle with as she said goodbye to Europe? What are her lingering questions as she moves forward?
3. What surprises Isabella the most about the crew of the ship?
4. What challenges do Isabella and her sisters' face with the crew and passengers on the ship?
5. How do Isabella and her sisters begin to regain trust in people again during their time on the ship?
6. How would you explain Isabella and her sister's reasons for instilling trust in Jack on the ship?
7. How does Isabella's describe Jack and Chicha's love?
8. Describe the healing process that takes place on the ship, as Isabella explains it.
9. How would you explain the relationship between Jack and Chicha's romance and Isabella's hope to find humanity in the world again?
10. How would you portray hope in the eyes of Isabella, Jack, and Chicha based on this story?
11. What is the most inspiring part of this story, in your opinion?

Activity 4: What do we now believe about love?

Using the love stories from the previous activities and the text study from this activity, the families should use the messages of the texts and the stories that they read to explain how they believe love happens in life. Families should look for connections between love and hope that they did not see before. This could be a good opportunity for parents to share their own love story or a love story in the family, or their perspective on love. This could also be an opportunity for the teens to ask their parents questions that they have about finding love in life. After this time for sharing, the family should then create a rap or an epic poem that communicates their belief. When each family has finished, they should share their poetry and raps with the class.

Lesson 3.4: Righteous Among the Nations

Objectives: Students should be able to…

- Define the term Righteous Among the Nations.
- Summarize the stories of several members of the Righteous Among the Nations.
- Explain the challenges that these righteous people faced and how those challenges could exist in their own lives.
- Compare and contrast stories of Righteous Among the Nations.
- Decide which qualities of a Righteous Among the Nations can translate into qualities of a hero, mensch, or good citizen of the world.
- Evaluate which qualities are the most important for a hero, mensch, and good citizen of the world to hold.

Note to the Teacher:

This video is of the Director of the Department of the Righteous of the Nations. She explains the purpose of the Righteous among the Nations section of the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum in Jerusalem and the process of initiating a person into the Righteous. This film is a short lecture, with interesting points. I would suggest using it as an introduction to this lesson. However, it would also be beneficial as an overview of the Righteous Among the Nations for one who is less familiar with this distinction.

http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/holocaust/insights/video/righteous_program.asp

Activity 1: Who are the Righteous Among the Nations?

This part of the activity could be done in class or as a homework assignment. Instruct the families to choose one of the Righteous Gentiles from the resources to examine thoroughly. Chart the answers to the questions listed below.
Post each family's chart around the room, like a museum. Ask the students to take notes on each chart, according to the questions found below.

Questions:

1. What is this person's name and background?

2. How was this person described in the Holocaust survivor's testimony?

3. Why did he or she become a Righteous Among the Nations?

4. What motivated this person to rescue or save Jews during the war?

5. What role did religion play in this person's motivation to rescue/save Jews?

6. What is this person's view of humanity?

7. What challenges did this person have to overcome in order to rescue and save Jews during World War II?
8. Explain why you think this person is worthy of this title. Or why not, if not?
9. Have you ever experienced similar challenges when trying to do something that was right? How did you overcome those challenges?

After the students have finished with the museum, bring them together to analyze the commonalities between these righteous gentiles. List character traits that were present among the righteous gentiles that motivated them to rescue and save Jews despite the challenges in their path. How would we characterize a person who holds these qualities today? Possible answers are a mensch, a good citizen, hero, etc.

Memorable Moment: When the class has generated a sufficient list of character traits, ask families to create a 30-second public service announcement about how to be a mensch, a hero, or a good citizen of the world. Record these announcements with a video camera. Upload the announcements to youtube for the rabbis and other synagogue members to see. Set aside a time for the community members to come to class to sit on a panel to discuss the announcements and offer their own opinions on them. The announcements could be used to promote good citizenship within the synagogue during community wide events or even in another class of younger students. These announcements could be used for a variety of reasons; allow the students to decide where and how they would like to feature them.

How could these stories inspire hope in us today and for survivors then?

Activity 2: Short Text Study on the Value of Saving a Life

Set Induction:

The instructor should print out pictures ahead of time from this website on the Yad Vashem Museum website and distribute them to families.
http://www1.yadvashem.org/yv/en/righteous/entire_universe.asp

As they look at the pictures, the instructor should ask the families to describe what they see. Most likely, the students will reply that they see family pictures. The instructor should explain that these are family photos, of the family who was saved by the Righteous. These families would not be possible if it weren't for the Righteous who risked their lives.

The heroism that the Righteous Gentiles exercised by saving countless Jews from persecution, Jewish tradition likens their actions to an even deeper cause: saving a world. This short text study will put in context how the deeds of the Righteous Gentiles are honored in Jewish tradition.

Text Study:

Divide the class up into two groups, the parents and the teens. Ask them to then split themselves up into smaller groups, either in hevruta (pairs) or as a group of three. Ask the students to read over the short text and answer the following questions.
Questions:

1. The text says that a "single person was created in the world." To whom does this refer?
2. To what does this text equate "causing a single soul to perish?"
3. To what does this text equate "saving a single soul?"
4. Who does each person resemble, according to this text? How do we know this?
5. For whom was this world created, according to this text? Why does this text make this distinction?
6. What is the value of one person according to this text?
7. Justify the text's position on the value of life in your own words.
8. Do you agree with the text's perspective on life? Why or why not?
9. Do you have anything to add to the text?
10. How do the acts of Righteous Gentiles exemplify the message of this text?

When both groups have finished studying the text, gather them back together as families. Ask the families to briefly discuss questions 8-9 together. As a family, ask them to finish the phrase, "To save a life is to…" Ask the families to ensure that they can justify their phrase.

Memorable Moment: Invite community heroes to sit on a panel for a class discussion. Prior to the panel, ask students to develop criteria for a hero. Ask the students to generate questions for the panel, including why the person is considered a hero, how the person overcame difficult challenges to become a hero, what lessons did he or she learn from his or her experience, and would he or she do the same thing when looking back on the experience.

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT: Ethical Wills

The instructor will tell the students the following:

In this unit, we have looked at the Jewish value of hope in a variety of ways. We have learned that hope for the Jewish People involved a return to Israel at a future time, but also a relationship with God because of the biblical stories of the Exodus and Sinai. We have learned how Holocaust survivors clung to hope because of words of inspiration or acts of kindness from other people. Some Holocaust survivors even managed to find love to cling on to during and after the war. If we learn anything from this chapter, it is that hope is a basic human need and can be a value that sustains us even through the hardest times in life.

What is your belief about hope that you would like to pass on in your ethical will? Feel free to use the following prompts to help you decide what to write.

1. Events which inspired hope in my life…
2. People who inspired hope in my life…
3. My deepest hopes for you in life…

The Love Story of Rebecca and Joseph Bau

How did they meet?

Joseph worked as a draftsman in the construction office. One day the Nazi supervisor ordered him to make a sun print out of one of the drawings. Nowadays this kind of a copy is done by machines, but in those days it was made using the sun. The original drawing was placed on a wooden frame and a special paper that was sensitive to sun rays was placed under it. The sun rays made the copy and then it had to be developed. Joseph told the Nazi that there was no sun that day, it was winter and very cloudy and that the copy wouldn't come out. But that Nazi who was an expert in murder but not too skilled as a builder said: "Either a print or a bullet in the head**.**" Joseph had no other choice so he went outside with the wooden frame and the map together with the special paper underneath it. There was no sun so Bau aimed the big frame with the drawing backed by the light sensitive paper at the cloudy sky, waiting in vain for the sun to emerge. At that fateful moment, a pretty girl came out of the office and asked him: "What are you doing?" Later on she told him that she thought that he was signaling to American airplanes. Joseph answered her: "I am waiting for the reluc**t**ant sun to come out. Could you, perhaps, take her place?" and aimed the frame at her. She blushed and ran away. This was Joseph's first meeting with his future wife, Rebecca, his life's sunshine.

After she had fled Joseph knew that he had only a few moments to live since the copy couldn't have come out, so he went back to the office and put the drawing in the developer and was very surprised to see that the copy was successful. He understood that the beautiful girl was indeed his sun. On the next morning he gathered a bouquet of wild flowers, which he smuggled inside in his cap, and went to thank her. When he entered her office one of the clerks jumped and grabbed the flowers from his hands and squashed them and threw them into the waste basket and told him: "Get out of here, you nut! Don't you know that the commandant, Amon Goeth, is in the next room? If he sees you with flowers he will shoot you on the spot!" and with these words he shoved him outside.

A few days later, Joseph met his sun substitute while waiting in line for soup. She told him that after Amon Goeth had left the office the clerk took out the flowers from the waste basket and gave them to her telling her who they were from. Later they kissed for the first time, in full moonlight, behind the latrine. Their courtship lasted through actions and selections during which they barely avoided a permanant parting several times. It took a series of miracles for both of them to survive.

What was the wedding like?

One day Joseph told Rebecca: "You know what, let's get married!" She said:"You must be crazy, to get married here inside the camp!" but Joseph convinced her by saying what did they have to lose, who knows how long they would live. So he saved his daily bread of four days and traded it for a silver spoon, and for four more slices he gave the spoon to a jeweler who crafted two rings from it. On the chosen night, when the women came back from their forced labour walking through the men's camp Rebecca whistled their whistle. Joseph put a white kerchief on his head, the way women wore it. (Men in the camp wore caps.) He stood between his mother and his bride and that's how they smuggled him into the women's camp. Beside his mother's bunk they got married secretly. There was no rabbi, no guests or music and no mayonnaise salad. Joseph just pronounced the traditional "Harei at mekudeshet li..." and his mother gave them her blessing. Then they went to Rebecca's hut to consummate their marriage. They climbed up to her pallet on the third tier and waited impatiently for the lights to go out, but they didn't. Someone asked why and the barrack's elder said that the Germans were coming to search if there were any concealed men. Rebecca and her two neighbors covered Joseph with all sorts of rags that usually served them as pillows, and he lay beneath their heads while the three of them pretended to be asleep. Of course, they couldn't sleep because they were filled with terror, and their pillow was shaking under their heads. When the search was over they heard the screams of two boys who were beaten to death. Only a miracle saved him from being discovered.

Then he heard the siren calling all the men in the camp to the mustering grounds. He knew that the Germans would kill all his friends upon discovering that he was missing. So again he covered his head with the white kerchief, jumped down from the third pallet and ran to the gate. But the gate was closed. At this second he decided that he didn't have much to lose, he was considered dead anyway, and he jumped on the electrified fence thinking that that was a swifter and more dignified way to die. And at this moment there was another miracle as he climbed over the fence and the searchlight missed him and only one of his trouser legs was torn.

Rebecca's Survival Story

As my husband describes in this painting, "Life in the Holocaust was like a chess game, one bad move and it was checkmate!'

I survived because I outsmarted this man, Joseph Mengele, the sadistic Nazi doctor who decided the fate of many thousands of Jews at Auschwitz. My story is as follows:

While my husband went to Czechoslovakia to work at Schindler's Factory, I was sent to Auschwitz. During a selection, Joseph Mengele took a red spot on my breast to be a sign of illness and pointed me to the line of those to be gassed. I went in the direction of the line, but circled back to the group of naked women still to be examined. Thrice I presented myself and was selected for death. The last time Mengele recognized her and became furious, but I wasn't afraid. I told him that I wasn't sick, that the red mark was a pimple, because she was menstruating. This was a dubious statement, because Mengele said that women in the camps stopped having periods. Mengele doubted my claims, so he had a Polish woman perform a test with a rag. When the Polish woman verified her story, "the Angel of Death" relented and let me go to the line of the living.

Our Wedding Album

Rebecca and Joseph met and got married secretly in the Plaszow Concentration Camp On Feb. 13, 1944. This is a painting of Joseph and Rebecca's Wedding by Joseph Bau.
It captures the unconventional beauty of our wedding.

A painting of Plaszow Concentration Camp, where Joseph and Rebecca met and were married.

Joseph's Survival Story

When Plaszow Concentration Camp was being closed down, Oscar Schindler began drawing up his now-famous list of Jews who would work at his new factory in Czechoslovakia. Rebecca, Joseph's new wife, visited Amon Goeth's Jewish male secretary to remind him that he owed her a favor for the time she prevented a guard from shooting his mother. Amon Goeth was the sadistic camp commander who routinely tortured the prisoners and shot them for sport. When the secretary started to write down her name on the list, Rebecca substituted her husband's name. Joseph didn't discover what his wife had done until after the movie "Schindler's List" was released in 1993. Rebecca Bau told a reporter that she had had faith in her own survival. "My husband was more important to me than I was, and I wasn't afraid," she said.

Joseph Bau's Painting of Oscar Schindler

Who is Oscar Schindler?

In early 1943 the Nazis ordered the final "liquidation" of the Krakow ghetto. The man put in charge of the operation was a young SS officer named Amon Goeth, the commandant of the Plaszow forced labor camp just outside the city. Jews who were healthy and could work were sent to Plaszow and the rest were sent off to death camps or executed on the spot. When Goeth announced that local industries would be moved inside Plaszow, Schindler proposed establishing a labor mini-camp within his factory that would continue to employ his own workers. Goeth agreed after Schindler bribed him.

In early 1944, however, Plaszow's designation was changed from that of a labor camp to a concentration camp. This meant that its prisoners were suddenly marked for transport to death camps such as Auschwitz. Then came word in the summer that the main camp was to be closed as well as Schindler's factory. Schindler approached Goeth about moving his factory and his workers to Czechoslovakia so that they might continue to supply the Third Reich (Hitler's army) with vital war supplies. After another bribe, the SS officer agreed to throw his support behind the plan and told Schindler to draw up a list of those people he wanted to take with him. Schindler was now faced with the task of choosing those he wanted to save—literally a matter of life and death. Schindler came up with a list containing some eleven hundred names, including all the employees of Emalia Camp and a number of others as well.

http://www.notablebiographies.com/Ro-Sc/Schindler-Oskar.html

Questions for Inquiry Box

Directions: Use the questions below to guide you as you discover what inspired hope in Rebecca and Joseph Bau.

1. What did you find in your box that explains something about the life of Rebecca and Joseph Bau?
2. What do you believe is the most important item in your box? Why?
3. How would you describe the love story of Rebecca and Joseph Bau?
4. Which event in the story do you think was the most challenging for Rebecca and Joseph? Why?
5. Is there something in the box that surprised you? What is it and why were you surprised?
6. What role do you believe hope played in the Bau story?
7. How would you describe the hope held by Joseph and Rebecca Bau? Was the nature of each person' hope similar or different?
8. What would you suggest is the most important aspect of this story?

The Love Story of Jack and Chicha Questions

Read pages 148-158 from *Isabella: From Auschwitz to Freedom.*

Answer the following questions:

1. What can you say about Isabella and her sisters' experience with the American attaché?
2. What memories did Isabella struggle with as she said goodbye to Europe? What are her lingering questions as she moves forward?
3. What surprises Isabella the most about the crew of the ship?
4. What challenges do Isabella and her sisters' face with the crew and passengers on the ship?
5. How do Isabella and her sisters begin to regain trust in people again during their time on the ship?
6. How would you explain Isabella and her sister's reasons for instilling trust in Jack on the ship?
7. How does Isabella's describe Jack and Chicha's love?
8. Describe the healing process that takes place on the ship, as Isabella explains it.
9. How would you explain the relationship between Jack and Chicha's romance and Isabella's hope to find humanity in the world again?
10. How would you portray hope in the eyes of Isabella, Jack, and Chicha based on this story?
11. What is the most important lesson in this story, in your opinion?

Jewish Texts about Love

Rabbah bar Bar Hannah said in the name of R. Yohanan: Pairing a mana and a woman is as difficult as the splitting of the Red Sea, as is said, "When God bringeth single people to dwell together [in marriage, it is as awesome as when] He brought forth the imprisoned [Israelites] into prosperity" (Ps. 68:7). But is it so? Did not R. Judah say in the name of Rav: Forty days before the formation of a child, a divine voice goes forth and proclaims, "The daughter of So-and-so is to be given to So-and-so, the house of So-and-so to So-and-so, the field of So-and-so to So-and-so"? There is no contradiction, however, for R. Judah's statement refers to a first marriage; the preceding two statements to a second marriage.

-Babylonian Talmud, Sotah 2a.

A [Roman] nobelwoman asked R. Yose ben Halafta, "In how many days did the Holy One create His world?" R. Yose replied, "In six days." She asked, "And what has He been doing since?" R. Yose replied, "The Holy One has been busy making matches: the daughter of So-and-so to So-and-so." The noblewoman said, "If that is all He does, I can do the same thing. How many menservants, how many maidservants do I have! In no time at all, I can match them up." R. Yose: "Matchmaking may be a trivial thing in your eyes; but for the Holy One, it is as awesome an act as splitting the Red Sea."

R. Yose ben Halafta left the noblewoman and went away. What did she do? She took a thousand menservants and a thousand maidservants, lined them up in row upon row facing one another, and said, "This man shall marry that woman, and this woman shall be married to that man," and so she matched them all up in a single night. In the morning, the ones thus matched came to the lady, one with his head bloodied, one with his eye knocked out, one with his shoulder dislocated, and another with his leg broken. She asked, "What happened to you?" One replied, "I don't want that woman," and another replied, "I don't want that man."

The noblewoman promptly sent to have R. Yose ben Halafta brought to her. She said to him, "Master, your Torah is completely right, excellent and worthy of praise. All you said is exactly so."

-Genesis Rabbah 68:4, Leviticus Rabbah 8:1, Numbers Rabbah 3:6

A man's marriage partner is from the Holy One. At times, a man is guided to his spouse's home; at other times, the spouse is guided to the man's home.

-Babylonian Talmud, Moed Katan 18b.

The Value of Saving a Life

Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5

This text from the Mishnah is from a case dealing with capital punishment. This text warns the witnesses in the case to consider their observations carefully, because their accounts have dire consequences. The following passage discusses the value of human life.

Therefore but a single person was created in the world, to teach that if anyone has caused a single soul to perish from Israel, Scripture imputes to him as though he had caused a whole world to perish; and if any person saves a single soul from Israel, Scripture imputes to him as though he had saved a whole world.

To proclaim the greatness of the Holy One, blessed be He; for a person stamps many coins with the one seal and they are all like one another; but the King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, has stamped every person with the seal of the first person, yet not one of them is like the other. Therefore, everyone must say, "For my sake the world was created."[9]

Questions:

1. The text says that a "single person was created in the world." To whom does this refer?
2. To what does this text equate "causing a single soul to perish?"
3. To what does this text equate "saving a single soul?"
4. Who does each person resemble, according to this text? How do we know this?
5. For whom was this world created, according to this text? Why does this text make this distinction?
6. What is the value of one person according to this text?
7. Justify the text's position on the value of life in your own words.
8. Do you agree with the text's perspective on life? Why or why not?
9. Do you have anything to add to the text?
10. How do the acts of Righteous Gentiles exemplify the message of this text?

[9] Neil Gillman, "What do I believe?" *The Death of Death: Resurrection and Immortality in Jewish Thought* (Woodstock: Jewish Lights Publishing, 2000), 272-3.

Concept Attainment

Directions: Read the examples in each column. Determine the differences between Column A and Column B. After you have thoroughly analyzed the columns, try to add one or two examples of your own to each column. Finally, label the columns.

Column A	Column B
• A long time after that, the king of Egypt died. The Israelites were groaning under the bondage and cried out; and their cry for help from the bondage rose up to God. God heard their moaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. • Say, therefore, to the Israelite people: I am the LORD. I will free you from the labors of the Egyptians and deliver you from their bondage. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and through extraordinary chastisements. And I will take you to be My people, and I will be your God. And you shall know that I, the LORD, am your God who freed you from the labors of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and I will give it to you for a possession, I the LORD." But when Moses told this to the Israelites, they would not listen to Moses, their spirits crushed by cruel bondage. • And when, in time to come, your son asks you, saying, 'What does this mean?' you shall say to him, 'It was with a mighty hand that the LORD brought us out from Egypt, the house of bondage.	• Moses went and repeated to the people all the commands of the LORD and all the rules; and all the people answered with one voice, saying, "All the things that the LORD has commanded we will do!" Moses then wrote down all the commands of the LORD. Early in the morning, he set up an altar at the foot of the mountain, with twelve pillars for the twelve tribes of Israel. • He designated some young men among the Israelites, and they offered burnt offerings and sacrificed bulls as offerings of well-being to the LORD. Moses took one part of the blood and put it in basins, and the other part of the blood he dashed against the altar. • Then he took the record of the covenant and read it aloud to the people. And they said, "All that the LORD has spoken we will faithfully do!" Moses took the blood and dashed it on the people and said, "This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD now makes with you concerning all these commands."

1. What is God's relationship with Israel in these columns?
2. Does God's role change from Column A to Column B?
3. How does Israel act towards God in both of these columns?
4. How could these stories about God's relationship with Israel provide a foundation for hope in Jewish tradition?
5. Can we hold these foundational stories of hope in our beliefs simultaneously? How so?
6. Do you hold one belief to be true more than the other? Why or why not?

Righteous Among the Nations

Ukraine

Anton (Antos) Sukhinski was a loner and an outcast. Some even described him as the village idiot. He never married, and lived – always on the verge of poverty – in a small modest house in Zborow. His neighbors often made fun of him because of his gentle nature and his love of all living creatures. But at the time of total moral collapse, when the great majority either participated in the murder of the Jews or indifferently turned their backs on their neighbors, it was Anton Sukhinski – the village idiot – who stood up for his beliefs and in stark contrast to his surroundings preserved human values. Without any help or support he was responsible for the survival of six people.

The Zeigers knew Suchinski from before the war. Following the first waves of killings in Zborov, the remaining Jews were put in a ghetto and then in a labor camp. Despite the periodic killing raids, the Zeiger family was reluctant to accept Sukhinski's offer of shelter. It was only when in June 1943 rumors spread that soon all the remaining Jews of Zborov would be killed, that they decided to trust the eccentric man with their lives.

The Zeiger family consisted of the father, Itzhak, the mother Sonya, and their two sons, Shelley and Michael, aged 6 and 8. They took along another woman who was a family friend and Eva Halperin a young girl who had lost her entire family in the killings and was alone in the world. When they arrived at Sukhinski's home they found out that he was already hiding a 16-year-old girl by the name of Zipora Stock. Sukhinski hid them in his cellar.

Eventually the neighbors found out about the hiding Jews and began harassing them and their rescuer, extorting money from them. When Zeiger decided not to give in any longer to the villagers' blackmail, he drew a revolver and a shooting fight ensued. The woman who was hiding with them was killed.

Being afraid that the shots would draw the Germans' attention and in fear of the neighbors, the fugitives decided to flee. But the hostility they encountered and the cold and snow soon drove them back to Sukhinski's home. He welcomed them warmly, hid them in the attic until, with the help of Itzhak Zeiger, he had dug another hideout.

For nine months they remained cramped in a small dark hole with no room to move and only a small kerosene lamp to provide light. The fear of being detected was so strong that they did not

dare leave the hiding place. Sukhinski would bring them whatever food he could find as well as remove the bucket that served as a chamber pot. Providing food for six people was a very hard task for a poor man like Anton. In addition he lived under the constant terror of being discovered by his neighbors and by the Germans. Danger was close. At one time the militia and Germans searched the premises and interrogated Sukhinski. Another time the Germans were in the basement adjacent to the hideout, and the hiding Jews stuffed their mouths with rags so that no sound could escape. Had they be found, it would be not only their end, but also the death of their benefactor.

Finally the day of liberation came, and the trapdoor opened. After a first moment of panic – they had thought that their hiding place had been discovered – they saw Anton's reassuring face. It was only then that they left the small hole for the first time in nine months. They could hardly walk and were blinded by the light.

After liberation the six people from the hiding place stayed together for a while; then they set out to build new lives. The Zeigers emigrated to the USA, Eva Halperin went to Uruguay, and Zipora Stock left for Israel.

Sukhinski was recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem in 1974. [10]

Holocaust Survivor Testimony about Anton:

The Testimony of Eve Adler

My name is Eva Adler. My former name was Eva Halperin. I was born in Zborow, Poland, where I lived with my family: my parents and two young brothers. My father was the manager of the Jewish bank of Zborow and the secretary of the Community. Our life was relatively good…

On July 4, 1941 the SS units arrived for the first time. They went from house to house yelling "out with the damned Jews". They took the Jewish men for work. They forced my father and my two brothers who had been wounded out of bed and we never saw them again…

On August 28, 1941 the SS units arrived for the second time. This time it was my mother who fell into their hands. I managed to escape and hid in a wooden shed. I remained all alone with no parents or brothers.

I left my home and went to live with a friend in the ghetto with five other families. There was a terrible typhoid epidemic. Three people of whom I took care died in my arms. There were some 20 funerals every day. Thus we lived until March 1943 when they took us to a labor camp…

Towards the end of June rumors began to spread that they would soon kill all the people in the camp. In the night of June 23, 1943, I escaped from the camp with another family. We went to the house of one of their former neighbors, and he hid us in a "bunker". I didn't know him, but it

[10] http://www1.yadvashem.org/righteous_new/ukraine/sukhinski.html

is due to him that I am here today to tell the story.
His name was Anton Sukhinsky. He was a bachelor and lived alone in a small and very poor house. He had dug a basement under the house where he hid me and another family of four – Yitzhak Zeiger, his wife Sonia and their two sons, Munio and Milek….With us was another young girl, aged 16-17, Zipora Stock, today Shindelheim….

We remained under Anton Sukhinsky's care from the night of 23 June 1943 until July 1944….At the beginning we were in the bunker. But the neighbors soon discovered our existence. They would come every night and threaten us and ask for money. One day Yitzhak Zeiger decided to refuse to give them money. He explained that at any rate they weren't intending to let us live.

One night in October they came with guns to the bunker and killed an old woman that was also with us. I was slightly wounded. We managed to escape thanks to Anton's intervention….We wandered the entire night until daylight. After we had walked some six kilometers we were received by some people who let us into their barn, gave us warm milk. We remained there shaking with cold for 24 hours.

We continued to wander until we decided to return to Anton's place. The night was terribly dark and cold. Our feet stumbled on the stones and sank in frozen water; our clothes were soaked and stuck to our bodies. We finally managed to reach Anton's home without being seen. It was a joyful moment when we reached his home. He received us warmly, opened his arms, crying with joy and kissing us. He whispered into our ears so that no one could hear: "Dears, I am so happy that you came to me. From now on I will not permit anyone to harass you. From now on no one will be able to discover you.". And he acted accordingly. He put us temporarily in the attic, and for the next three nights, with the help of Mr. Zeiger, he dug a new hole….The size of this bunker was 2.50 X 1.20 X 0.80 meters. We were six in this space and we could only sit or lie. There was only one little kerosene lamp. We were happy to be under his care, but for Anton this presented a terrible burden, and he was alone to bear it with his angelic patience, his deep love for human beings and his determination to save our lives.

They were looking for us again because people had seen us wandering about before our return. They searched from house to house, and since we were not found they assumed that we had returned to Anton. First the Ukrainians came looking for us. They threatened Anton but God prevented them from discovering us.

This was not the end. The SS came and held a gun to his chest and ordered him to denounce the Jews. But he stood firm. They searched, screamed, and again God wanted us to live. From our hiding place we could hear everything, and in fear of death we asked God to save us.

But this was not the only difficulty. Anton also had the difficult task of feeding us. He was so poor that he himself hardly had enough to eat. He couldn't appear to have enough money to buy much more food than he needed. Luckily his brother and wife lived in the neighborhood. They knew about our existence. She would cook for us and during nighttime would give it to Anton who would quietly bring it to his home and give it to us. Many times he gave us his own food and would go to bed hungry…

On 24 July 1944, following heavy bombardments, the Germans were forced to withdraw and the Russians entered Zborowv. I remember the moment when Anton opened the trapdoor of the bunker. Our blood froze because we thought the Germans had discovered us. But he had come to tell us with his soft voice that was full of joy: "Come out. You have been saved. The Russians are here."[11]

[11] http://www1.yadvashem.org/righteous_new/ukraine/sukhinski_testimony_adler.html

The Righteous Among the Nations

The Priest's Request
Father Bronius Paukstys and his brother, Juozas

Born in 1897 to a farming family with eleven children, Father Bronius Paukstys entered the priesthood and joined the Salesian order, living the life of a monk.

When the Germans occupied Lithuania, Father Paukstys began saving Jewish lives. He did not follow the footsteps of Archbishop Vincentas Brizgyz, head of the Catholic Church in Lithuania, who turned down the Jews' petition for help on grounds that this may jeopardize the Church's position or of Father Ignatavicius who held mass for one of the Lithuanian auxiliary police battalions that was deeply involved in the murder of the Jews. Paukstys did whatever he could: he provided false papers to the ghetto underground; helped Jews escape from the ghetto; hid them in his quarters and found places of shelter for them. His activity was criticized. Paukstys told Avraham Tory, one of the people he helped, that he was reprimanded by his superiors and warned of the repercussions to the church if his activity was discovered. Father Paukstys did not shy from the warnings of his superiors nor from the danger to his person. His activity was so bold that at one point he had to flee from Kovno. Pnina Tory who was hiding in a Lithuanian village with her daughter, testified that Paukstys would occasionally visit her in her hiding place and take letters back to the ghetto for her. But on one occasion the good Father had to go into hiding, because the Germans were suspicious and his help to the Jews was almost discovered.

The survivors that were helped by Father Paukstys were impressed with his deep respect for their identity as Jews. When after liberation Masha Rabinowitz came to thank Father Bronius Paukstys for his help and asked for his blessing for her soon-to-be marriage, the priest told her and her fiancé: 'If you wish to respect my feelings, please marry according to the Law of Moses and Israel and have my friend Rabbi Oshri conduct the ceremony.'

Paukstys' survivors remembered not only his assistance to their physical survival, but also his keeping up their spirits and helping them to maintain their faith in mankind. Pnina Tory told Yad Vashem: 'The very appearance of a man like Bronius Paukstys instilled in our hearts the hope that not all was lost, that not all men had turned to predator animals or cowards. That there are

still people with morals and conscience, goodhearted and compassionate, and on top of that, gifted with a unique courage and urge to combat evil.'

The danger to Father Paukstys was not over after liberation. His Lithuanian patriotism put him at risk with the Soviet rulers. The survivors tried to persuade him to join them and go to Palestine with them, but the good father didn't want to leave his country. 'I cannot abandon my flock', he said to them, 'here I belong, and I must fight the Bolsheviks as I fought the Nazis'. After his arrest, Masha Rabinowitz assembled other Jews and petitioned the authorities on his behalf, but to no avail. Pausktys was sent to Siberia, and returned only in 1956. He lived for another ten years, and died in 1966 at the age of 69.

In 1977 Yad Vashem awarded the title of Righteous Among the Nations to Father Bronius Paukstys. His brother Juozas Paukstys, a professor of agriculture who helped his brother in his rescue activity, was also recognized as Righteous Among the Nations.

From the testimony of Rachel Levin-Rosenzweig, who had escaped during the liquidation of the ghetto in July 1944:

"[…] With a heavy heart I mounted the steps leading to his room and in my heart a sole prayer 'if only he were there'. The moment I entered he recognized me; he did not ask whence I came and for what purpose. That moment my self-assurance gave way and I burst out in bitter weeping, for my whole family was still with the Germans. He then turned to me with great warmth and said: 'It's good you are here, my daughter, I will protect you; be no longer afraid.' I received a room adjoining the church, which I did not leave for two weeks. Food was brought to me, water to wash, and clean clothes. Father Paukstys visited me every day; he would bring me books and talk with me. He told me about his life and studies, his life as a monk in Italy, his family and his work. He discussed moral issues: love of fellow men, religious tolerance, and non-violent resistance. […] He was a very religious person, but no once did he raise the religious question, and he respected me for my outspokenness. I let him understand that I was not religious, but that Jewish values were sacrosanct to me. Outside, the Germans distributed fliers that the house where Jews would be found would be destroyed and its owners killed. […]"

Righteous Among the Nations

An Impossible Dilemma
Angela and Frantiszek Melo and their son – Frantiszek
Slovakia

Before the war the Lamm family owned a large estate in the vicinity of Nitra in Slovakia, which employed about sixty Slovak workers. When the war broke out the situation changed overnight and a reversal of fortunes took place. The estate was confiscated from the Jewish family, and they lost all their rights. The Lamms were now pauperized and at the mercy of the Slovak regime and Nazi Germany. But Frantiszek Melo, one of the estate's workers, did not abandon his former employer. He sympathized with the family that was left penniless and offered them to stay in his home. Later, when the Jews were in danger of deportation and death, the Melos went on to assume full responsibility for their survival.

In the beginning of September 1944, following the Slovak uprising, the Germans moved into the Nitra area. When the manhunt for Jews and partisans began in full force, the Melos prepared a hideout for their wards under the stable. When the danger increased – the Germans were rounding up Jews in the area and the neighbors began to get curious – the Lamms decided to leave the house and hide in the forest. A forester let them stay in his hut, and the Melos would visit them and bring them food. They saw the suffering of the Jewish family who only two years earlier had led a comfortable life, and implored them to return to their home. To their surprise, when the Lamms returned to their benefactors' home, they found another two women hiding with the Melos. Frantiszek had found Mrs. Korsbach and her daughter wandering in the forest – frozen and in a state of total exhaustion. As if it were the most normal thing he took them in too. His family now had nine Jews in hiding.

The danger to both Jews and their benefactors was enormous. As the Red Army approached, the Germans became more ruthless and violent. Frantizsek was well known for his sympathy of the Communists and for his resistance to the German occupiers, and therefore was a natural target. It was therefore no wonder that the Germans and their Slovak collaborators arrived at the Melos home and conducted a search. Miraculously they didn't find the hiding Jews, but they ordered the Melo's son to present himself the following day at their headquarters.

The same evening a dramatic discussion took place in the Melo's modest home. It was clear to

everybody that if the son failed to present himself, the Germans would return to search for him. There was a great risk that in a second search the Germans would find the hiding Jews. After painful deliberation the Melos decided that they wouldn't ask the Jews to leave, but that their son would have to follow the German order, even though it was likely to cost him his life. The following morning the Young Frantiszek went into town and presented himself to the police. Despite a brutal interrogation he did not betray the Jewish family or his family's ties to the partisans. He was very lucky and survived the arrest.

The Lamm family stayed with Frantiszek and Angela Melo until liberation.

After the war the Lamm family immigrated to Israel. In 1964 they invited Anglea Melo to visit them in their new country.

In 1979 Frantiszek and Angela Melo and their son Frantiszek were recognized as Righteous Among the Nations.

In August 2004, sixty years after the Lamm family was rescued by Angela and Frantiszek Melo, Edith Lamm-Veseli and her family – her two sons, daughter-in-law and six grandchildren – traveled to Slovakia. It was the first time Edith had returned to the village where she grew up and where she had spent the years of the Holocaust. She found her family home as well as the house of the Melo family and the hideout where her family was sheltered. Everything seemed unchanged. Angela and Frantiszek had died, but their grandson was still living in the village and welcomed the woman his grandparents had saved. Edith Lamm died in January 2007. She was the last witness of the courageous rescue in the small Slovak village.

From the letter of Ervina Weiss to Yad Vashem, 1979:

The beginning of this story is before the War, when I was the daughter of a wealthy Jewish family that owned a large farm in Parovske Haje, in the vicinity of Nitra. The farm employed most of the people in the area. Among the workers was Frantiszek Melo. In those days his relationship with my parents was of employee and his employers.

With the beginning of the anti-Jewish measures, when the Nazi threat to the Jews began to materialize and the Gestapo was looking for Jews to be sent to ghettos and gas chambers, my father was arrested and his entire property was confiscated. The Melos went to the authorities and asked for his release. They did it as neighbors and friends, and did not get any financial reward. They helped our family when our property was confiscated and offered us to stay in their home. It should be noted that the home consisted of a room and a kitchen where all the survivors (a total of seven) and the Melo family lived.

The rumor about the hiding Jews spread and we decided to flee to the forests. Angela visited us from time to time and brought us food. She never stopped asking us to return to their home. After two weeks we conceded and returned. We were surprised to find that another woman and child were present in the small room. Frantiszek had found them and brought them home.

The situation worsened and the Germans were searching every corner and wherever they suspected people to be hidden. Angela's home wasn't safe any longer. The best solution was

under the stable. We dug a hideout under the stable floor and all of us – nine people – moved there. Angela supplied us with food, and every night we would leave our hideout for several minutes to breathe fresh air.

While we were hiding in the Melo's room a special situation developed that added weight to the already existing danger. One day Gestapo people came to Angela's home. We were all in the room at the time. They called Angela and Frantiszek's young son who was on their list. When the son saw the Germans arriving at his home, he ran and warned us of the danger. When they realized that the Germans had come for their son, the Melos were clueless. It was clear that if the Germans wouldn't find what they had come for, they would return the following day. A possible option for the Melos was to have us leave so that when the Germans returned, they would not find us. This way their son would be saved, but nine Jews would be in deadly danger. The other option was to have their son present himself. This would endanger their son, but guarantee that the nine Jews would be safe. The Melos chose the second option – putting their own son in danger in order to save the lives of nine Jews (who in those days were considered by their compatriots to be inferior and harmful creatures - people who had no right to exist). The story had a good ending, because the son, as well as the nine Jews, survived.

This great deed should be recognized as an exemplary act by a couple of peasants who demonstrated the value of humanity and sacrifice above and beyond telling; doing so in circumstances of war, without asking for any reward. Our sages said: 'whoever saves a human soul, it is as if he saved an entire universe'. So what is there to say of a couple that saved nine souls?[12]

[12] http://www1.yadvashem.org/righteous_new/slovakia/melo.html

Righteous Among the Nations

The Devoted Teacher
Joseph Migneret, France

Joseph Migneret with his class, 1934 (Mémorial de la Shoah/CDJC)

More pictures

The elementary school of Hospitaliers St. Gervais is situated in a small street by the same name in the heart of the Marais quarter in Paris. What is today a very chic part of town was known as "the Pletzl"— the Jewish quarter, where many Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe settled. The school itself was originally a Jewish school, established in 1846. The remains of the old inscriptions are still visible on the building. Although it became a public school in 1880, most of the students continued to be Jewish. The boys' school was at number 6 and the girls were next door, at number 10.

Across the small street stands a very pretty market building, proudly bearing the inscription "Liberté, egalité, fraternité" (Liberty, equality, fraternity) – the motto that was inscribed on the pediments of public buildings to remind citizens of the legacy of the French revolution. The promise of that inscription probably warmed the hearts of parents when they brought their children to school. It was these very values that had attracted them to come to France to seek a better life for themselves and their families.

During the Holocaust 165 of the children of the Hospitalizes Saint Gervais School were deported. None survived. Soon after their arrest in July 1942, they were separated from their parents. For some reason the Eichmann office in Paris sought permission from Berlin to deport young children to Auschwitz. There were no such scruples in what concerned their parents – the transports with the adults began rolling immediately, while their children were interned in camps. A month later, in mid-August, the authorization was given, and the Germans began to add groups of children to the transports that were by then regularly leaving for Auschwitz. In result, prior to their murder, these children had to endure the horrors of internment and deportation all alone without their parents.

Joseph Migneret, had been teaching at the school of Hospitaliers St. Gervais since 1920 and was nominated as principal in 1937. The roundups of the Jews practically wiped out the school. When he heard of the deportations and his students, his former students and their families turned to him for help, he did not merely sympathize with their plight, but decided that the situation called for action. He became active in an underground network that provided false papers and aid to Jews on the run. He helped his students and their families in any way he could. One family testified that he hid them in his home for a long period of time.

Based on the testimonies of his former students, Joseph Migneret was honored as Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem in 1990.

A tree was planted in Migneret's honor at a very symbolic location – close to Yad Vashem's Children's Memorial. The tree faces the memorial of another great educator – Janusz Korczak, the Jewish writer and pedagogue who did not abandon the children in the Warsaw Jewish Orphanage that he headed and went with them to his death in Treblinka in August 1942 – about the same time that Migneret began his rescue work.

In June 2009, almost twenty years after Joseph Migneret was recognized as Righteous Among the Nations, the Department of the Righteous received a letter from Shlomo Fischer-Shenkar of Ramat Gan, Israel. Apologizing for making the request so late, the Shlomo expressed the wish to honor the principal of his school, Joseph Migneret. When he was told that Migneret had already been included in the list of the Righteous, he broke out in tears.[13]

From the testimony of Adolphe Kornman, 1989:

In October 1942 my mother wanted to move to the unoccupied zone, with my young sister and myself, in order to evade the risk of renewed roundups in our neighborhood of the 4th quarter [of Paris]. We had been lucky not to be on the lists of the previous roundups.

The director of our school in the Hospitaliers St. Gervais, Monsieur Joseph Migneret, had already provided some of my friends with false papers of non-Jewish Frenchmen. I therefore went to him. He provided us with documents that enabled us to make the trip across the demarcation line without trouble.

In addition, Monsieur Migneret paid visits to the German military hospital where one of my friends, Joseph Schulmann, aged 14, was hospitalized after he had escaped from a deportation train. He had lost his leg when the train ran over him. Migneret visited him regularly during his stay in the hospital and, taking enormous risks, made several attempts to get him released. Unfortunately, he was unsuccessful. [Joseph Schulmann was eventually deported to Auschwitz on 18 July 1943, where he perished] All the kids from the school who knew Monsieur Migneret speak highly of his exemplary conduct during the dark period of the occupation

[13] http://www1.yadvashem.org/righteous_new/france/migneret.html

Righteous Among the Nations

The Janitor's Cellar
Roberts and Johanna Sedul
Otilija Schimelpfening

Roberts Sedul, a former seaman and boxer, worked as the janitor of a building in Liepaja. Before the war he was on friendly terms with a Jewish resident of the building, David Zivcon, and had promised to help him in time of need.

After the German occupation, Zivcon was put in the ghetto with the other Jews of the town. He was an expert technician and was therefore employed by the Germans as an electrician. It was during his work, while he was doing repair work in a German apartment, that he came upon photos of the killings of the Liepaja Jews on the seashore. With the help of a photographer friend in the ghetto Zivcon made copies and buried them in the ground.

In October 1943 David Zivcon decided that the situation had become too dangerous and that it was time to go into hiding. He fled from the ghetto with his wife. They were joined by another couple, and all four appeared on Sedul's doorstep. Sedul welcomed his friend and the unannounced guests, and arranged shelter for them behind a concealed partition in the building's cellar. They were to remain there and not to see daylight until liberation 500 days later.

Eventually the hiding Jews were joined in the cellar by another three men. They were jewelers who had been left behind, after the ghetto's liquidation, to work for the Germans. Sedul had offered them his help, thus bringing the number of Jews in his care to seven. Providing food for so many people in wartime was a great challenge. Since some of the Jews hiding in his cellar were expert workmen, they did different repair work, which enabled Sedul to earn additional money and pay for their food.

In April 1944 Sedul brought another three Jews to the cellar. They had been part of the work detail kept by the Germans for cleaning-up assignments in a military base in the Liepaja area. Aaron Vesterman, described how they knocked on Seduls door and were warmly received by the couple. They were offered food and Sedul gave them a gun and took them down to the cellar where they were surprised to find the other hiding Jews.

A week later Riva, David Zivcon's sister in law, came along with her three-year-old child, Ada. Her husband had been killed as soon as the Germans had entered Liepaja, on 24 July 1941. Before he went into hiding, his brother, David Zivcon, told Riva that if she ever needed help, she

could try Sedul. Probably for the sake of security, he didn't reveal that he himself was planning to hide with his Latvian acquaintance. Riva, had survived in the Liepaja ghetto with her daughter, and was then sent to the Riga ghetto. She somehow managed to escape before the final liquidation of the ghetto, and returned to Liepaja. All the Jews had by then been killed, but she remembered the name her brother in law had given her, and came to Sedul. He took her in, and when he took her to the cellar to join the others, she was surprised to find David Zivcon.

Fearing that the child would give up their hiding place, Sedul decided that he needed to place here somewhere else. He found a safe shelter for her with Otilija Schimelpfening, a widow of German origin. Schimelpfening changed the child's name to Gertrude and told her neighbors that the little girl was a relative that had lost her parents. It seems that Sedul did not tell Schimelpfening that the child's mother was alive, and when the war ended and Riva Zivcon appeared to take her daughter back, it was painful for Otilija Schimelpfening to part from the child she had loved and cared for. As a result the two women did not keep in touch in the years to follow.

Sedul took care not only of the physical well-being of his wards, but also made sure to keep up their spirits. In order to alleviate Riva's worry about her daughter and the pain of separation, he would visit the child, make sure that she was well taken care of and also took photos of her which he would bring to her mother.

Sedul did not live to see the day of liberation. On March 10, 1945 he was killed by a Russian shell. His wife, Johanna, continued to care for the hiding Jews until the end of the war. After liberation the eleven Jews emerged from the cellar. Zvi Zivcon retrieved the copies of the photos of the massacre of the Liepaja Jews from where he had hidden them. Thus Sedul had saved not only the lives of eleven Jews, but also the evidence about the murder of the entire Jewish community of Liepaja.

In 1981 Yad Vashem conferred the title of Righteous Among the Nations on Robert and Johanna Sedul.

Twenty-five years later, and only after her mother died, Ada Zivcon-Israeli applied to have her rescuer, Otilija Schimelpfening, honored.

The story of Michael and Hilda Skutletski, who were hidden by Sedul: Reported by Melech Neistat, July 1981

"….The initiative to hide in the bunker came from David Zivcon, an X Ray specialist who lived in the four story building in town, where Robert Sedul was janitor. For many years there had been a bakery in the building's basement, that was now re-named "Deutsche Reichsbaekerei". Zivcon had agreed with Sedul that he would come to hide when the ghetto would be liquidated. Until the last minute Zivcon worked in the SD workshops repairing electrical and X Ray machines. He was the Oberjude of these workshops where some 16-17 Jews and around 50 Russian POWs worked. Michael Skutletzki was Zivcon's friend. He worked as a jeweler for the SD commander, Dietrich, producing gold and silver jewelry. He thus had a labor permit issued by Dietrich himself. During the time in the ghetto he had his own workshop where he

manufactured Dietrich's orders. Zivcon told Skutletski about his plan to hide at Sedul's place. Both of them had permits that enabled them to move around freely, and they were able to leave the ghetto and stock food at Sedul's home.

The ghetto in Liepaja existed from July 1942 until October 1943. At the beginning of October 1943 a Latvian SD man warned Zivcon that the ghetto was about to be liquidated. Four people escaped from the ghetto and got to Sedul's bunker – David Zivcon and his wife, and Michael and his wife Hilda Skutletski. At the beginning they were only four, and within half a year their number had risen to 11. Incidentally, Seduls wife, Johanna, was privy to the secret, and both of them equally and with the same dedication took upon themselves the burden of hiding eleven Jews.

The bunker was situated under the bakery in the basement of the building, under the water, electricity and gas pipes. Therefore the people in the bunker had no problems with electricity, water and gas for cooking. The problem was not the cold, but rather the suffocating heat. David Zivcon with the help of the others, mostly Sedul, had taken care of all the necessary facilities. The camouflage was perfect. The hideout could not be discovered. A narrow passage that lead from the bakery to the basement was disguised, and so was the slim door that was operated with an electric engine. Seduls had concealed electric switches in the bakery with which he could warn the hiding Jews. They could peep out through a narrow crack which was also used to air the basement a little. In an emergency, if warned by Sedul, they could crawl out of the bunker and escape. Sedul got them revolvers. Had they been discovered, the first person to enter the basement would have received a bullet in the head.

At the beginning there was no lack of food. Sedul and his wife could buy food in the market. Additional money was gained by repairing electric appliances that they would do in the bunker. Sedul would receive orders, pretending to be the expert who can fix any instrument. Later on it was no longer possible to obtain food in the market, and the people suffered from hunger. There was bedding for every one, but they would sleep in shifts. At night they would listen to the radio broadcasts from Moscow, London, etc.

When Robert Sedul was killed by a bomb that hit the building, their situation became difficult. It has to be added that a young woman lived in the same building who was Sedul's lover. She was part of the secret, and remained loyal to the hiding Jews even after Sedul's death. It was astonishing that it was agreed upon between Sedul, his wife and his lover that whatever would happen and whatever the relations between them, nothing would change their determination to save the Jews in the bunker. This continued even after Sedul was killed.

After her husband was killed on March 10, 1945, Johanna Sedul turned to another Latvian for help. The man, Arvidas Skara, was a Social democrat and had worked as a librarian. He immediately agreed to help Mrs. Sedul to take care of the Jews in the bunker. But three weeks later the man was arrested for forging identity cards for his friends. The burden was again on the two women's shoulders. Several times, when Sedul was still alive, the bunker was in danger. Since Sedul would steal bread from the bakery for the bunker residents, the police came with dogs to find the thieves. The dogs sniffed around the bakery, but did not discover the passage to the bunker and the existence of people under the bakery's floor, because the bunker residents

used petrol and garlic to deceive the trained dogs. More than once did the hiding Jews hear the policemen conducting searches, but they were unable to recover the stolen bread, nor were they able to discover the bunker."[14]

[14] http://www1.yadvashem.org/righteous_new/latvia/sedul.html

Unit 4: Yediat HaEl- Moments of Encountering God

Unit Understandings:

1. Holocaust survivors challenged traditional depictions of God in Jewish tradition due to their personal experience in the Holocaust and developed their own views of God based on the reality of their life.
2. The Jewish concept of God evolves as a result of images evoked from Jewish text.
3. The atrocities of the Holocaust demand a theological response in a Jewish framework.

Goals:

- ✓ To allow students and parents to explore their views of God together.
- ✓ To push students to consider concepts of God that were challenging to Holocaust survivors.
- ✓ To enable students to refute or validate traditional views of God on their own terms.
- ✓ To encourage students to articulate their views of God.
- ✓ To compare the experiences of Holocaust survivors that led to their subsequent formation of their view of God.
- ✓ To urge students to recognize that they can look to voices of our tradition for a resource and source of comfort.

Objectives:

- ❖ Students should be able to define *yediat haEl* as knowing God, providing examples in their own words.

- ❖ Students should be able to list and analyze their struggles with *yediat haEl* in comparison to traditional Jewish views of God.
- ❖ Students should be able to defend how a rejection of God can be a form of being in relationship with God.
- ❖ Students should be able to decide the times when Jewish traditional perspectives about God can be relevant and when they are not.

Note to teacher:

In this unit, students and their parents will begin to explore their own journey to understanding God in their own terms. God is sometimes difficult to discuss; it can be a foreign subject and feel uncomfortable. As students explore texts throughout this unit, allow them space, when necessary, to struggle and ask questions that they need to ask. The readings that are brought from the Holocaust are difficult to comprehend. Again, create an atmosphere that allows for these struggles and time to comprehend the complexity of the text at hand.

Lesson 4.1: Dear God, Have You Ever Been Hungry? God as Provider of Food and Sustenance
-Scripted Lesson-

In this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Articulate their own concepts of God and compare them to the concepts of their family.
2. Analyze the challenges of a relationship with God in a Holocaust Survivor account.
3. Consider the relationship between God and food.

Set Induction (15-30 min): What do I think about God?

Directions:
Separate students and their parents. In each room, ask the students and parents to answer the following questions about God. Record their answers on a poster board, in a chart that corresponds to the questions below.

Questions:

1. What is one word that you might use to describe God?

2. Why do you imagine you chose that word?

3. Do you struggle with that image of God? How so/not so?

4. What, if anything, about God do you find comforting?

5. What, if anything, about God do you find challenging?

6. What do you believe God's role is in the world?

7. Is God omniscient (all knowing)? All powerful? Always present?

8. What do you believe God's role in the Holocaust was? Was God present?

After the students and parents have answered the questions, bring them back together in class to compare the two posters. Highlight the similarities and the differences between the posters. When the comparison has been completed, explain to the class that they will now examine ways that Holocaust survivors have struggled with images of God. While they bring a unique experience with them, we can learn from them how they struggled with the images of God or found comfort with God in the most extreme circumstances. Perhaps we can take something valuable from their voices and struggles to apply to our own view of God.

Activity 1: God as Provider of Food and Sustenance, a text study- Jigsaw Method (30-45 min)

Directions:
Parents and children may opt to learn together or separately for this activity. The instructor will divide the class into three groups. Each group will be given one of three texts. Explain to the students that they will look at texts that deal with the image of God as Provider. Two groups will receive a poem by Joseph Bau, a Holocaust survivor, and the other group will receive a text from Birkat Hamazon, the thanksgiving prayer after meals. While the first text they study may influence their outlook on this image of God, each student will have the opportunity to reflect on both texts throughout the lesson. Therefore, their initial impression may change as they learn the other texts. Each individual in the group will be responsible for learning the text s/he is given.

The texts are as follows and can all be found at the end of this unit:

1. "An Ode to Bread" from *Dear God, Have You Ever Gone Hungry?* By Joseph Bau.
2. "The Great Hunger" from *Dear God, Have You Ever Gone Hungry?* By Joseph Bau.
3. *Birkat Hazan*, the Blessing of Nourishment, from *Birkat HaMazon*.

After learning their text, they will divide into smaller groups, with one representative per group. Each representative will teach their text to the other participants.

When the students form their new group to teach each other the texts, they should refer to the directions below:

1. Read each text aloud to your group.
2. Summarize the main points of the text.
    a. Possible Answer: In "An Ode to Bread," Bau addresses the bread in an almost idolatrous way, as if bread is like God. Bread is the metaphor for God in this poem, as Bau recounts his past "sins" of criticizing bread when he had it in abundance and was not thankful for it.
    b. Possible Answer: In "The Great Hunger," Bau plays with the biblical mitzvah of "be fruitful and multiply" and uses it to describe how his hunger has grown steady. Rather than food filling up his belly, hunger does so instead. He recounts past indulgent meals and imagines himself digesting them in the future. He concludes his poem with the recognition that he can only bask in the glory of past meals and then asks God if God knows how hunger feels.
    c. Possible Answer: In *Birkat Hazan*, the Blessing of Nourishment that comes from *Birkat HaMazon*, we are reminded that God is One who feeds all and is the Source of all food. This prayer also claims that we, the Jewish People, have never lacked food or ever will because God will not allow this to happen.
3. These texts refer to our relationship with God in connection to food. What are the aspects of the text that resonated with you? What are the aspects that were challenging for you? Have you ever considered there to be a strong relationship between God and food? Knowing that there is still starvation and hunger in the world, do any of these texts challenge your assumptions about the nature of God?

a. Possible Answers: After one has a good meal, it can be simple to rejoice in God as the Source of food and be thankful for the meal. This ability to thank and praise is easier at times of satiation. However, as shown through Bau's poetry, to express this type of joy and thankfulness to God might be nearly impossible when one is starving and does not have enough to eat. This prayer is challenging in the context of the Holocaust when so many people were starving and God was not providing for them in the way this prayer suggests. Therefore, this provides a real difficulty with God serving the role of Provider of Food and Sustenance during the Holocaust.
b. Possible Answer: These three texts compared to one another do suggest a strong connection between God and food. Perhaps Bau shows, ironically, that God is the Provider of food and sustenance. Bau does not have access to the food during the war, so he cries out to God in his poetry as he expresses his regret for acting entitled to food in the past.

4. Allow for reflections from the other group members.
5. Repeat cycle for each text.

Activity 2: Reflection and Wrap Up (10-15 min)

When the jigsaw activity is complete, allow students time for their own reflections. They should keep their reflections in their binder. Show them Joseph Bau's drawings, found in the Book Resources Section at the end of this curriculum guide that correspond with his two poems. Instruct the students that they can reflect by drawing pictures, free writing, or creating their own poem. When they have reflected, ask for volunteers to share their insights.

Lesson 4.2: Baruch Dayan HaEmet: God the True Judge.

In this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Explain how the Holocaust could challenge and change Holocaust Survivors' views of God in comparison to past understandings of God.
2. Compare and contrast Isabella and her father's view of God.
3. Articulate the theologies of Isaiah's "Suffering Servant" and "We are punished because of our sins."
4. Reflect on their own experiences of encountering God and compare them to the above theologies.

Homework:

Note to teacher:
It will be difficult to cover all of the material during class time. Therefore, occasionally there will be homework assignments, to be completed before arriving to the next class period. These assignments are meant to deepen the learning and achieve more than can be achieved during a normal class period.

The assignment below will allow the students to read a short excerpt from the book, ***Isabella: From Auschwitz to Freedom.*** This section of the book occurs when Isabella and her sister, both survivors of the Holocaust, are reunited with their father who had been separated from them in America. This excerpt will show two distinctly different perspectives on God and God's role in one's life. The activity is outlined below. It should take anywhere from 30-45 minutes to complete.

Activity 1, Part A: Charting Questions at Home
Read Chapters "Lying to my Father," "God?", "Philip Is Alive," and "Juliet of Auschwitz" from *Isabella: From Auschwitz to Freedom (p. 181-192)* found in the Book Resources Section of this Curriculum Guide.

Ask each family to read the chapters from Isabella: From Auschwitz to Freedom. Explain that these chapters are emotional and bring up some difficult questions. As the families read through, ask them to record the questions that they have as they read in a chart. Some of the questions will pertain to the story itself, while others will pertain to existential questions that these chapters bring up. Below is an example of the chart.

Questions that the reading brings up for us:	Our possible responses to the questions:
• Is the US government really to blame for the death of her family? (p. 181) • How would I respond to my father about these difficult questions? (p.181)	

• Why doesn't Isabella believe that her father can handle the truth of what happened to her mother and sister? (p.182) • How could Isabella's father believe that our sins are to blame for the Holocaust? (p. 183) • Is God merciful? • How did God act in Auschwitz? Through the guise of Dr. Mengele, or was God absent? • Does Dr. Mengele's role challenge God's role? • How can God allow Mengele to act this way? • Does Isabella blame God or blame Hitler for the Holocaust? • Is prayer a proper response to this atrocity? • How does Isabella's father maintain his belief in God? • Why does the fact that Philip is alive make prayer a little bit easier? • Why does Isabella's father believe living Jewishly is so important?	

Isabella refers to Dr. Mengele quite a bit in this chapter. Dr. Mengele's name will be mentioned in other readings as well. Here is a description of who Dr. Mengele was and what his role was in Auschwitz.

A brief description of Josef Mengele:

Josef Mengele was a so-called "camp doctor" at Auschwitz- Bikenau Concentration Camp. He became known as the "Angel of Death" and is one of the "surviving symbols" of Hitler's Final Solution. The memory of this slightly build man, scarcely a hair out of place, his dark green tunic neatly pressed, his face well scrubbed, his Death's Head SS cap tilted rakishly to one side, remains vivid for those who survived his scrutiny when they arrived at the Auschwitz railhead. Polished boots slightly apart, his thumb resting on his pistol belt, he surveyed his prey with those dead gimlet eyes. Death to the left, life to the right. Four hundred thousand souls- babies, small children, young girls, mothers, fathers, and grandparents- are said to have been casually waved to the left hand side with a flick of the can clasped in a gloved hand.

In another case in which a mother did not want to be separated from her thirteen-year-old daughter, and bit and scratched the face of the SS man who tried to force her to her assigned line, Mengele drew his gun and shot both the woman and the child. As a blanket punishment, he

then sent to the gas all people from that transport who had previously been selected for work, with the comment: "Away with this shit!" (Robert Lay Lifton, The Nazi Doctors) There were moments when his death mask gave way to a more animated expression, when Mengele came alive. There was excitement in his eyes, a tender touch in his hands. This was the moment when Josef Mengele, the geneticist, found a pair of twins. Mengele was almost fanatical about drawing blood from twins, mostly identical twins. He is reported to have bled some to death this way.[15]

After the families have created their chart, ask them to review the questions that they had and see if any of them related to God. Did they come up with responses to these questions? Record these answers on the board.

Ask the families to answer the question, after completing their chart: What do you believe is the main question about God from this excerpt?
Possible answers: What was God's involvement in the Holocaust? Was God punishing us for our sins?

Set Induction (for class):

The instructor will ask the students to free write on a time in their life when they felt God was present. How did they know God was there? Or, alternatively, students should write about a time that they wanted God to be present and struggled to find God.

After the students have done this, ask them to hold on to their free write. The instructor may invite them to share their experiences with the class if they choose. The instructor will tell them to put aside their free write. The class will return to it later on.

Activity 1, Part B: Discussion of answers from reading

When the families come back for the next class, having completed the reading and charting their questions, it will be important to go over the main points of the reading and answer any questions that the students may bring.

Ask students to share the questions that they came up with. Most importantly, ask them about any questions that this text brought up for them about God's role in the Holocaust. Write the questions on a piece of chart paper and save it for later.

Activity 2: Text Study

The instructor will ask the students if anyone knows a definition of theology. A definition of theology is the study of God.

[15] http://www.auschwitz.dk/mengele.htm

Explain to the students:

The reading from *Isabella: From Auschwitz to Freedom* brings up difficult questions for us about God's nature and God's role in the world, but especially the Holocaust. Perhaps if we can understand what Isabella's father is responding to, we can understand his concept of God a bit more in comparison to Isabella's concept of God. Note that Isabella's concept of God is more difficult to pin point than her father's, however, there are remnants of her view in the following texts.

The instructor will hand out the texts found in the resources from Deuteronomy 28:1-20 and Isaiah 53. An explanation of these two theologies can be found in the excerpt from *Wrestling with God* in the resources section at the end of this Unit. The basic theologies introduced in these texts are the following:

- Deuteronomy 28- The Jewish People were punished because of their sins.

- Isaiah 53- This is a depiction of the "suffering servant." The righteous are forced to atone for the wicked.

When the students have completed the reading and answered the questions, ask them to do the following activity. Ask the parents and students to choose opposing roles:

- Pretend you are Isabella's father and you read Isaiah 53. What would your commentary be to this theology?
- Pretend you are Isabella and read Deuteronomy 28. What would your response be to this text?

Conclusion:

The instructor should bring out the questions that the family asked at the beginning of class and ask the following questions:

- Were any of your questions answered with the theologies presented in this lesson?
- How would you respond to Isabella or her father about their belief in God?
- What challenges you and what do you resonate with?

Explain to the students that upon hearing bad news, especially news of a death, the following prayer is said:

- *Baruch Dayan HaEmet*.

This translates to either, "Blessed is the True Judge" or "Blessed is the One who Judges the truth." This is yet another theology that is professed in a blessing upon hearing the news of death. Although Isabella and her father deal with God and death differently, this blessing could perhaps provide them with a concept of God upon which they can agree.

Lesson 4.3: Theologies of the Holocaust

In this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Respond to the question "Where was God during the Holocaust?" through the presentation of one theological response to this question.
2. Create an artistic response that corresponds to a theology of "Where was God during the Holocaust?"

Set Induction: Where was God during the Holocaust?

Write the question "Where was God during the Holocaust?" on a piece of butcher paper. Ask students to write their comments about this expression around the phrase on the butcher paper. When the students have finished, read some of their comments aloud to the class. To be sure, the students will struggle with this concept, as Jews have struggled with this concept ever since the Holocaust.

Theologians have struggled with this question ever since the Holocaust took place. Many of their responses are rooted in the Bible, as they draw upon past responses to human suffering and God's intervention in the events of the world (theodicy). We have already examined two theologies that deal with the Holocaust, the theology of the "suffering servant" from Isaiah 53 and the theology of "We have brought this upon ourselves because of our sins" from Deuteronomy 28. These two theologies are not the only ways to look at God's role in the Holocaust.

Activity 1: Learning about Holocaust Theologies

The instructor will explain to the students that they will be handed one of four pieces of text. Each of these texts is theological and seeks to explain God's role during the Holocaust. The explanations of these theologies are found in the resource from *Wrestling with God*. Your job is to figure out *how* these theologies explain God's role in the Holocaust. After each group's members has investigated their text thoroughly, they will explain their theology to the class and reveal their theology's title. After each group presents, the instructor should read or summarize the Holocaust theology that the group presented. Use the questions below to help guide your investigation of these texts.

Questions:

1. Where is God in this text?
2. What is God's relationship to Israel in this text?
3. If Israel is not present in this text, what else in the text could represent Israel? How does God relate to that person/object?
4. Where is taking responsibility for action place in this text? On God? On Israel?
5. What is the conclusion of this text?
6. Is there an idea that prevails at the conclusion of this text? What is it?
7. How would you title the theology presented in this text?

Activity 2: How do these theologies help us understand the Holocaust? Handmade Midrash

Explain to the students that we have explored several traditional perspectives on God's role in the Holocaust. The instructor should explain that it may be difficult to resonate with any one of these Holocaust theologies. The goal of introducing them is to frame the Holocaust in a Jewish way and to expose you to ways Jews have dealt with the Holocaust taking place.

The instructor should provide large pieces of construction paper as well as other pieces of construction paper to create a "handmade theology." Since this topic can be quite difficult to depict in words, this is a great opportunity to reflect upon these theologies through art.

The instructor should ask the students to do the following:
Out of pieces of construction paper, create a handmade theology that reflects the Holocaust theology that you most agree with. You may want to use your answers to the questions above to help you find out what you believe, or use a quote from the texts that we looked at.

Lesson 4.4: Art and Theology

In this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Analyze Samuel Bak's paintings and decide if they agree with the theology expressed through them.
2. Articulate questions that these paintings evoke for them.
3. Compare and contrast their personal beliefs about God to Bak's theology.
4. Explain their beliefs about God's nature to each other.

Activity 1: Analyzing the Holocaust through Samuel Bak's Art

http://www.drew.edu/theo-content.aspx?id=66638#list

Art Gallery: These are the images that are included in the art gallery with Bak's explanations of them.

- **Creation of Wartime III**, 2009, Oil on canvas, 50 x 75" (BK1234)

The various figures of Adam in soiled uniform, prison coveralls, or refugee garb are contemporary representatives of the one who was banished from Paradise. Like him they must feel that they were dumped into this world, unasked. How can they rise from the rubble where they have landed? Perhaps this explains why they are all in search of God. The most they come up with in my paintings is some mysterious shape, perhaps a hand that signals meaning they must discover themselves.

My imagery derives, of course, from Michelangelo's Creation of Man, at whose center God's and Adma's pointing fingers almost touch. What do these fingers mean to me? The hands seem to be of similar size. Is God creating man in his image, or is this man's creation of God? Could their gestures express any disappointment or accusation?

-Samuel Bak, "In a Different Light: Genesis in the art of Samuel Bak"

- **Dress Rehearsal**, 1999, Oil on canvas, 40 x 32" BK734

Above Moria, the falling off cliffs to God,
there hovers the flag of the sacrificial knife
Abraham's scream for the son of his heart,
at the great ear of the Bible it lies preserved.

—from Nellie Sachs, "Landscape of Screams"

Bak's variation on the Akedah [Sacrifice of Isaac] contains a visual mutation on the original story that casts it in a different and unsettling light. No figure in the painting is looking at its most intrusive and disorienting image. Blinded by its blaze of colors and dramatic action, we are in danger of missing it ourselves. Father and son have their eyes shielded, and the angels turn their back to it, as though acknowledging its anomalous presence would further complicate their already difficult task. But one has its wings pinned to the image's surface, the arrow (if we

notice it) drawing our eyes away from Abraham's menacing weapon to the even more sinister brick chimney rising beyond the upper margin of the canvas. Was the aborted sacrifice of Isaac only a "dress rehearsal" for the vaster killing of the children of Israel in a later age? How is one to construe the covenant that grew out of Abraham's devotion to God in the unholy light of the subsequent carnage?
--Lawrence Langer, *In a Different Light: The Book of Genesis in the Art of Samuel Bak*

- **Shema Yisrael**

The summit. Here the subject is the breaking God's covenant with Israel. It raises the "question of questions." Where was He? Of course, no art could pretend to give an answer to a question of this kind. It is for the viewer to ponder. The number six stands for the sixth commandment—"Thou shall not murder"—and for the six million. Hebrew letters that spell SHEMA ISRAEL, a proclamation that religious Jews are supposed to cry out at the moment of their death, lie crumbled at the base of a huge heap of tablets. On the peak, the summit, a tablet displays two Hebrew Yods, the age-old symbol of God's name.

-http://www.chgs.umn.edu/museum/responses/bak/gallery2.html

- **Soustine Street**, 2001, Oil on canvas, 24 x 24" BK838

I am unable to take my eyes from the intricate images of all those bombed sites. A few buildings that have lost their facades look like huge dollhouses. They make me imagine a monstrous god, a gigantic and unruly brat who has amused himself by tearing them apart. Little is left untouched. Single walls, sole remnants of rooms that used to stage dramas of life stand along against the sky. They are like huge theater wings, and they too tell me stories. I look at the different layers of torn wallpaper and see in them pages of a book of former lives.
—Samuel Bak, *Painted in Words—A Memoir*

Make color copies of Samuel Bak's paintings and hang them around the room. When you hand it to the students, however, **do not** tell them the titles. It will become relevant in a later part of the lesson.
Give the following directions to explain how to analyze this painting to the students:

1. Write down shapes that you see, patterns of the shapes, how the light hits the shapes.
2. Notice if there are any letters or numbers in the painting. What could be the significance of them?
3. Do you see anything familiar or unfamiliar in the painting? What does this aspect of the painting bring up for you?
4. How does the painting make you feel overall? Explain.
5. If you had to title this painting, what would it be and why? Write your title around the painting.

After the students have done their own analysis, hand out the explanations of these paintings. The instructor will ask them a series of questions to help process the theology in the paintings. The instructor should write down responses to question 6, as these questions will guide the Fishbowl Activity that follows. Ask the students the following questions:

1. What, if anything surprised you in these paintings?
2. Which painting did you find the most powerful and why?
3. Why do you think Bak decided to interact with many biblical stories in his work?
4. Can you summarize Bak's theology, or parts of his theology, from these paintings?
5. Do you believe that Bak has a relationship with God? If so, can you describe that relationship?
6. How does Bak's theology influence you? Does he bring up questions for you about God?

Activity 2: Fishbowl activity
Directions: The class will form a circle, facing each other. Inside the circle, two or three students will sit with the paintings in the middle. The only students allowed to talk are the ones in the middle of the circle. The students in the middle of the circle will begin discussing the paintings and questions attached to them. They will have questions to guide their discussion, but should be encouraged to think freely and let the conversation flow. The students in the circle should be instructed to observe the conversation, but are not allowed to participate in it. If a person on the outside would like to enter into the conversation, he or she should tap someone in the middle on the shoulder, and switch places with him or her. This is how the activity should flow until all of the questions have been addressed.

Questions should be taken from the students' bank of questions from the previous activity.

Activity 3: Interviewing each other about God.

The instructor should break up the class into either teens and adults or families. This activity has the potential to last an entire class period or be shortened to half the class. However, in order to encourage deep thought, the recommended time for this activity is at least 30 minutes. The following is a list of possible questions about the nature of God. Students should be in groups of no more than three, and take notes on each other's responses. The students who are not responding should take notes on each other. After the interviews have taken place, the students should give their notes back to the interviewee to keep in his/her binder. If time permits, when all the interviews are finished, the groups should feel free to challenge each other on their responses. However, the challenges need to come from a place of inquiry, not of accusation or mockery.

These are the questions that are intended for the interviews. However, feel free to add your own.
1. Can you address God or is God a force or concept in the world?
2. Is God omnipotent or limited in God's power?
3. What is God's relationship to or responsibility for suffering?
4. Does it matter to God how human beings behave? Does God hold people accountable?
5. Is God attentive to prayer?

Conclusion:

We have just dealt with some of the most difficult questions about our relationship with God that arose out of the experience during the Holocaust. While we may never arrive at a sufficient

explanation, grappling with these issues now may help us to tackle our own questions about God that we have difficulty explaining.

Authentic Assessment for the *Yediat HaEl* Unit:

The instructor will explain to the students the following:

We have dealt with significant questions about God that plagued Holocaust survivors and that many of us grapple with today.
Holocaust survivors have recorded their stories and given to us their legacies in a variety of forms. One of the main formats that they have used to express themselves is through digital recording.
For your final project for this unit, address one or all of the following questions about God and record it. We will do this for each of the units and so at the end of this class, your family will have created a legacy that will be added to the voice of the Jewish People who have historically addressed these issues.

1. My beliefs about God that have influenced me in my daily life…
2. Specific teachings from Jewish source(s) that have shaped my view of God…
3. Ideals that I believe do the work of God…
4. May the Almighty…

“An Ode to Bread” by Joseph Bau

Flour hardened to a loaf of concrete
as payment for one day’s torture.
Behold the loaf!
Eight empty bellies, staring through the eyes,
carve up the prize
into eight equal portions
with no crumb wasted.
Behold the idol!
To him we address
our most ardent thoughts,
from behind these triple layers
of walls, mighty barriers
of electrified barbed wire.

And I, one of eight to share this loaf,
grateful owner of a slice spread with the memory
of abundance and fullness (may they rest in peace),
I beat my breast and beg you,
Forgive my past insults, uttered so thoughtlessly
in times of plenty.
Forget my unjust words to loaves before the flood,
when I called them, “heavier than lead,
dry as wood, tasteless, hard to digest.”
False charges all!
Forgive me, kind bread,
my heresies against the sacred loaves
I squeezed on grocery shelves, saying,
“Dough’s half raw, not fresh enough, unappetizing,”
words fallen from an ignorant tongue.

To all the loaves of wheat bread, rye bread, dark bread,
enriched with a layer of butter or jam,
which were demeaned, rejected, forgotten,
till the insults made them dry up
or hide beneath a skin of mold
to be tossed in the garbage dump,
I say:

Kind bread, forgive me and the other hungry millions,
whose empty stomachs shamefully confess their sins.

Questions:

1. What is the time and setting for this poem, described in the first stanza?
2. For what does the author ask for forgiveness in the second and third stanzas?
3. What images does this poem describe?
4. To whom is this poem directed?
5. What is the logic for the direction of the poem in this way?
6. How do the images of hunger, the variety of bread, and past satiation challenge or support a belief in God?
7. In his last sentence, the author asks the bread for forgiveness. Could "bread" stand for something else? If so, what and why?
8. To whom might you direct this poem? Why?

“The Great Hunger” by Joseph Bau

My multipleated trousers bound to my bony hips by a shoelace,
Hiding the shape of my old belly,
Like a petrified lump of bread in a ragged pocket.

Hunger has built its nest in my desolate entrails.
It has become fruitful and multiplied,
Filling my insides
with thousands of burning hungers.

Hey! Unplug my mouth!
I’m going to gulp down all the granaries in the world.
Breakfast…lunch…dinner…
I’ll join the everlasting royal banquet.
I’ll gorge myself without restraint,
Use my nails for forks to grab the browned, fat meats,
Spiced with dill and garlic,
The hot peppered sauces, giving off their tingly, heavenly odors,
The creamy cakes covered with melted butter…
And more cakes to tickle my palate,
Fried onion sauces with mayonnaise salads and meats,
Roasted, cooked, fried, and smoked.

Here come the appetizer, the entrée, and more,
Millions of meals, meat and dairy:
May my ears shake with gluttony
And my thirsty eyes fill with lust.
May my chin drip with thick, gluey fat
I’ll wipe with neither hand nor sleeve.
May the craving of my tongue fill city squares,
With or without a “bon appetit!”
Eeerup! I’ll let out a mighty burp and cry,
“Ladies and gentlemen, just a bit more, until I’m sated.”

Meanwhile, I luxuriate in meals I digested long ago.
With hands raised to heaven,
I beg for alms like all the world’s beggars,
Who would bring forth bread from the earth,
Though by devious means.

Dear God, have you ever gone hungry?

Questions:

1. What images does this poem convey?
2. To whom is this poem directed?
3. What is the logic for the direction of the poem in this way?
4. In the fifth stanza, the author plays with the image of bread brought forth from the earth, as it is referred to in *HaMotzi*, "Blessed are You, Lord our God, Ruler of the Universe, who brings forth bread from the earth." Yet, the author changes the source of bread from God to "the world's beggars." How does this challenge the notion of God as provider of sustenance?
5. How do the images of intense hunger, rich meals, and past satiation challenge or support a belief in God?
6. In his last sentence, the author asks God if God has ever gone hungry. Would you be led to ask this question? Why or why not?

Blessing of Nourishment ברכת הזן

Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the Universe,
Who in His goodness feeds the whole world
With grace, kindness and compassion.
He gives food to all living things,
For His kindness is for ever.
Because of His continual great goodness,
We have never lacked food,
Nor may we ever lack it, for the sake of His great name.
For He is god who fees and sustains all,
Does good to all,
And prepares food for all creatures He has created.
Blessed are You, Lord, who feeds all.

Questions:

1. What messages are embedded in this prayer?
2. What are the images of God in this prayer?
3. Explain what God does for humanity as described in this prayer.
4. How do the messages in this prayer support or challenge a belief in God?
5. What do you think about the images of God in this prayer? Do they resonate with you or challenge you?
6. How do you relate to this prayer?

Deuteronomy 28:1-20

Deuteronomy 28:1 Now, if you obey the LORD your God, to observe faithfully all His commandments which I enjoin upon you this day, the LORD your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth.
[2] All these blessings shall come upon you and take effect, if you will but heed the word of the LORD your God:
[3] Blessed shall you be in the city and blessed shall you be in the country.
[4] Blessed shall be the issue of your womb, the produce of your soil, and the offspring of your cattle, the calving of your herd and the lambing of your flock.
[5] Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.
[6] Blessed shall you be in your comings and blessed shall you be in your goings.
[7] The LORD will put to rout before you the enemies who attack you; they will march out against you by a single road, but flee from you by many roads.
[8] The LORD will ordain blessings for you upon your barns and upon all your undertakings: He will bless you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.
[9] The LORD will establish you as His holy people, as He swore to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways.
[10] And all the peoples of the earth shall see that the LORD's name is proclaimed over you, and they shall stand in fear of you.
[11] The LORD will give you abounding prosperity in the issue of your womb, the offspring of your cattle, and the produce of your soil in the land that the LORD swore to your fathers to assign to you.
[12] The LORD will open for you His bounteous store, the heavens, to provide rain for your land in season and to bless all your undertakings. You will be creditor to many nations, but debtor to none.
[13] The LORD will make you the head, not the tail; you will always be at the top and never at the bottom -- if only you obey and faithfully observe the commandments of the LORD your God that I enjoin upon you this day,
[14] and do not deviate to the right or to the left from any of the commandments that I enjoin upon you this day and turn to the worship of other gods.
[15] But if you do not obey the LORD your God to observe faithfully all His commandments and laws which I enjoin upon you this day, all these curses shall come upon you and take effect:
[16] Cursed shall you be in the city and cursed shall you be in the country.
[17] Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl.
[18] Cursed shall be the issue of your womb and the produce of your soil, the calving of your herd and the lambing of your flock.
[19] Cursed shall you be in your comings and cursed shall you be in your goings.
[20] The LORD will let loose against you calamity, panic, and frustration in all the enterprises you undertake, so that you shall soon be utterly wiped out because of your evildoing in forsaking Me.
(Deu 28:1-20 TNK)

Questions:

1. What is God's promise to Israel if the follow God's laws?
2. What is Israel's sin if they do not follow God's laws?
3. What is the cause and effect expressed in this text?
4. What is the nature of God in this text?
5. How could this text be seen as a theology of the Holocaust?
6. Do you agree with this concept of God?
7. What works for you with this concept of God? What does not?

Isaiah 53: The Suffering Servant

"Who can believe what we have heard?
Upon whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?
For he has grown, by His favor, like a tree crown,
Like a tree trunk out of arid ground.
He had no form or beauty, that we should look at him:
No charm, that we should find him pleasing.
He was despised, shunned by men,
A man of suffering, familiar with disease.
As one who hid his face from us,
He was despised, we held him of no account.
Yet it was our sickness that he was bearing,
Our suffering that he endured.
We accounted him plagued,
Smitten and afflicted by God;
But he was wounded because of our sins,
Crushed because of our iniquities.
He bore the chastisement that made us whole,
And by his bruises we were healed.
We all went astray like sheep,
Each going his own way;
And the Lord visited upon him
The guilt of all of us."

He was maltreated, yet he was submissive,
He did not open his mouth;
Like a sheep being led to slaughter,
Like an ewe, dumb before those who shear her,
He did not open his mouth.
By oppressive judgemtn he was taken away,
Who could describe his abode?
For he was cut off from the land of the living
Through the sin of my people, who deserved the punishment.
And his grave was set among the wicked,
And with the rich, in his death
Though he had done no injustice
And had spoken no falsehood.
But the Lord chose to crush him by disease,
That, if he made himself an offering for guilt,
he might see offspring and have long life,
And that through him the Lord's purpose might prosper.
Out of his anguish he shall see it;
He shall enjoy it to the full through his devotion.

"My righteous servant make the many righteous,
It is their punishment that he bears;
Assuredly, I will give him the many as his portion,
He shall receive the multitude as his spoil.
For he exposed himself to death
And was numbered among the sinners,
Whereas he bore the guilt of the many
And made intercession for sinners."[16]

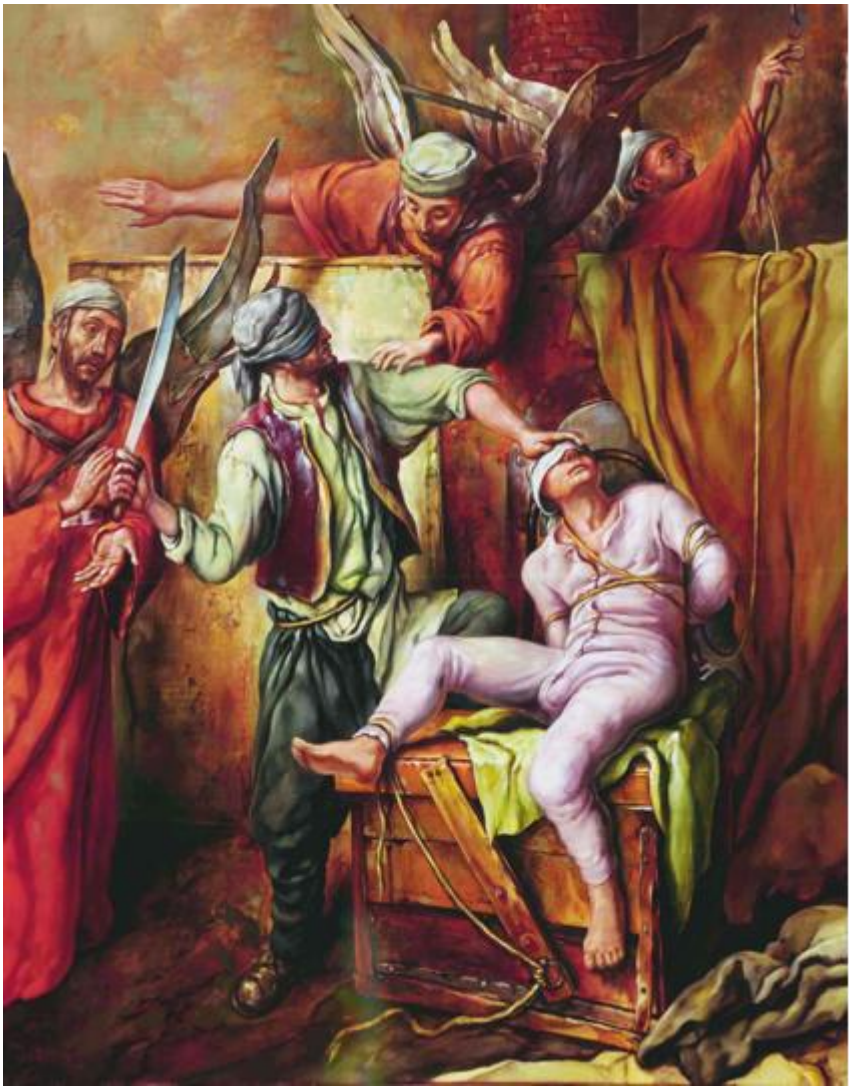
Questions:

1. Who suffers on account of our sins?
2. Who inflicted the suffering in this text?
3. What is the cause and effect expressed in this text?
4. What is the nature of God in this text?
5. How could this text be seen as a theology of the Holocaust? (What could the suffering servant represent in this text?)
6. Do you agree with this concept of God?
7. What works for you with this concept of God? What does not?

[16] Isaiah 53.

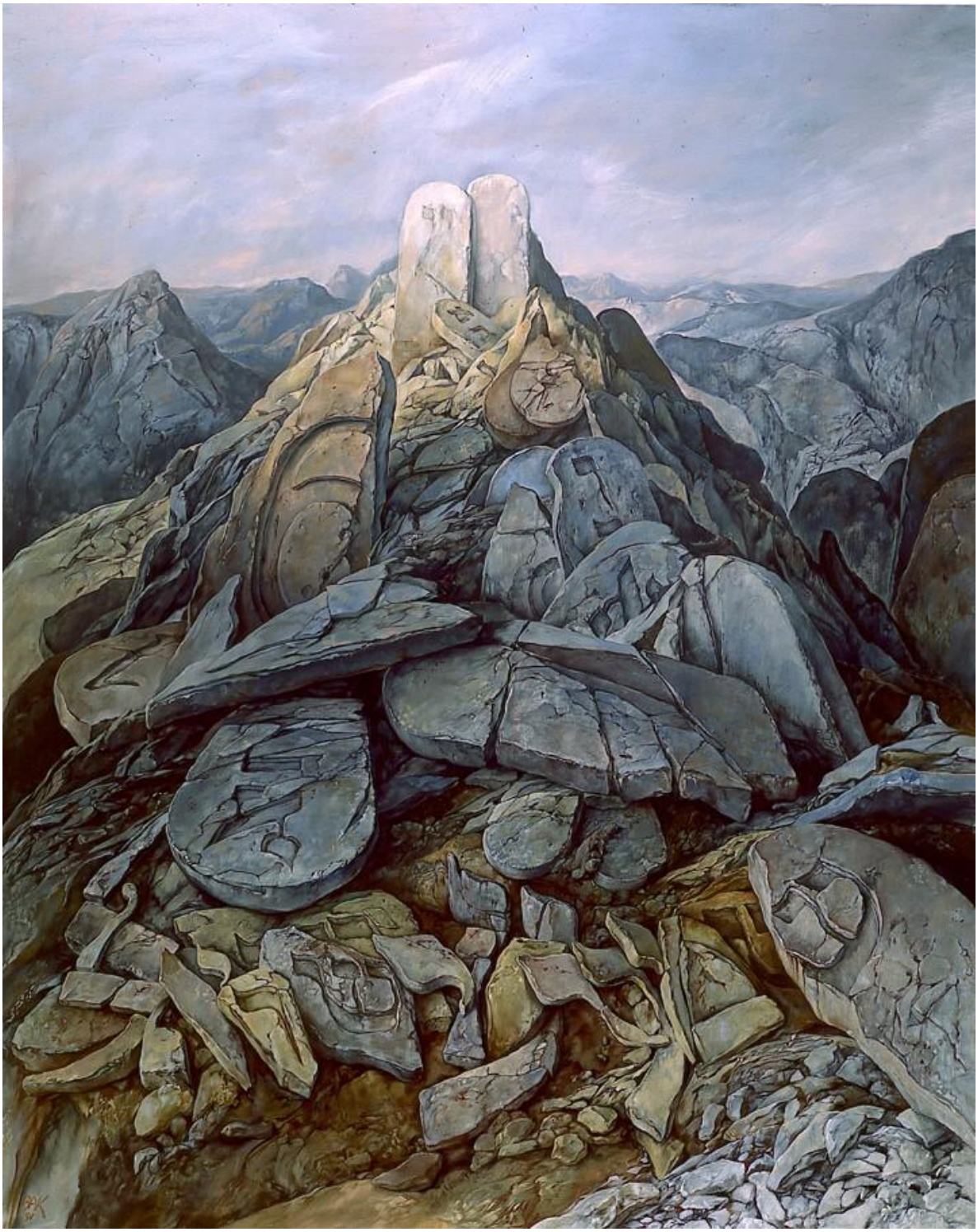
Art Gallery 1

Art Gallery 2



Art Gallery 3

Art Gallery 4



Explanation of *Shema Yisrael* by Samuel Bak

Bak and the layered memory of Bak appear and re-appear when figures and faces appear in his work. More often the landscapes are devoid of humans, but filled with symbols of the human- and specifically the Jewish- presence. And with reminders of the Divine presence- or the relationship between human and Divine, in the aftermath of the Holocaust horror which leaves such doubts in its wake as to God's presence and relationship with us. *Shema Yisrael* draws its title from the central credo of Judaism, the belief in the One God, its opening words strewn, in convex and concave stone fragments, at the base of a small hill. The hill is surrounded by barren, rocky mountains, all bathed in a crepuscular blue light, while the hill itself is crowned by the tablets of the Law, with only the letters for God's name visible on them (God's presence still apparent, by way of the Divine Name, above the rubble), and bathed in a golden, dawn-like light- as perhaps is the bottom of the hill where the letters lie. In between, smashed fragments of the Tablets tumble over each other: as if a long-gone Moses had been up and down the mountainside a dozen times or more, carving and breaking and recarving.

As if the Covenant has been smashed again and again, even as, one last time, it rises, in the ever-renewing light at the top of the hill. Who broke the Covenant? The God who didn't answer the prayers of those in the gas chambers? The humans who didn't hearken to the words "Hear O Israel.."? The murderers of their fellow humans who ignored the sixth commandment, as they turned the handle to fill the chambers with gas? Embedded in an upcropping of stone, the number "6" may be discerned, suggesting the fragmentary adherence to the sixth commandment: thou shall not murder. The *Landscape of Jewish Experience* is overrun with the cold, empty stones of just such forgetfulness.

Explanation of Art Gallery Works

- **Creation of Wartime III, 2009, Oil on canvas, 50 x 75" (BK1234)**

The various figures of Adam in soiled uniform, prison coveralls, or refugee garb are contemporary representatives of the one who was banished from Paradise. Like him they must feel that they were dumped into this world, unasked. How can they rise from the rubble where they have landed? Perhaps this explains why they are all in search of God. The most they come up with in my paintings is some mysterious shape, perhaps a hand that signals meaning they must discover themselves.

My imagery derives, of course, from Michelangelo's Creation of Man, at whose center God's and Adma's pointing fingers almost touch. What do these fingers mean to me? The hands seem to be of similar size. Is God creating man in his image, or is this man's creation of God? Could their gestures express any disappointment or accusation?

-Samuel Bak, "In a Different Light: Genesis in the art of Samuel Bak"

- **Dress Rehearsal, 1999, Oil on canvas, 40 x 32" BK734**

Above Moria, the falling off cliffs to God,
there hovers the flag of the sacrificial knife
Abraham's scream for the son of his heart,
at the great ear of the Bible it lies preserved.

—from Nellie Sachs, "Landscape of Screams"

Bak's variation on the Akedah [Sacrifice of Isaac] contains a visual mutation on the original story that casts it in a different and unsettling light. No figure in the painting is looking at its most intrusive and disorienting image. Blinded by its blaze of colors and dramatic action, we are in danger of missing it ourselves. Father and son have their eyes shielded, and the angels turn their back to it, as though acknowledging its anomalous presence would further complicate their already difficult task. But one has its wings pinned to the image's surface, the arrow (if we notice it) drawing our eyes away from Abraham's menacing weapon to the even more sinister brick chimney rising beyond the upper margin of the canvas. Was the aborted sacrifice of Isaac only a "dress rehearsal" for the vaster killing of the children of Israel in a later age? How is one to construe the covenant that grew out of Abraham's devotion to God in the unholy light of the subsequent carnage?

--Lawrence Langer, *In a Different Light: The Book of Genesis in the Art of Samuel Bak*

- **Shema Yisrael**

The summit. Here the subject is the breaking God's covenant with Israel. It raises the "question of questions." Where was He? Of course, no art could pretend to give an answer to a question of

this kind. It is for the viewer to ponder. The number six stands for the sixth commandment—"Thou shall not murder"—and for the six millions. Hebrew letters that spell SHEMA ISRAEL, a proclamation that religious Jews are supposed to cry out at the moment of their death, lie crumbled at the base of a huge heap of tablets. On the peak, the summit, a tablet displays two Hebrew Yods, the age-old symbol of God's name.

-http://www.chgs.umn.edu/museum/responses/bak/gallery2.html

- **Soustine Street, 2001, Oil on canvas, 24 x 24" BK838**

I am unable to take my eyes from the intricate images of all those bombed sites. A few buildings that have lost their facades look like huge dollhouses. They make me imagine a monstrous god, a gigantic and unruly brat who has amused himself by tearing them apart. Little is left untouched. Single walls, sole remnants of rooms that used to stage dramas of life stand along against the sky. They are like huge theater wings, and they too tell me stories. I look at the different layers of torn wallpaper and see in them pages of a book of former lives.

—Samuel Bak, *Painted in Words*

Unit 5: Zechut Avot

Unit Understandings:

1. Holocaust survivors urge future generations to remember them not only for their experience in the war, but for their lives before and after the war began.
2. As Holocaust denial becomes more widespread and accessible, and Holocaust survivors pass away, the charge to remember the real stories and facts of the Holocaust becomes the responsibility of future generations of Jews.
3. Stories from the Holocaust inform our Jewish lives and can strengthen our Jewish identity.

Goals:

- To present the value of *zechut avot*, or "merits of our ancestors" as a source of inspiration for us to internalize the messages that Holocaust survivors have passed on due to their experience.
- To present the messages that Holocaust survivors want to pass on to future generations.
- To provide examples of how Holocaust survivors experiences have changed succeeding generations' outlook on life.
- To present the students with opportunities to commemorate the Holocaust.
- To present students with opportunities to grapple with their relationship to the Holocaust.
- To teach the students various values and lessons to learn from Holocaust survivors.

Lesson 5.1: Remember-We will never be the same

In this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Defend one reason to remember the Holocaust and learn from Holocaust survivor stories.
2. Explain the range of feelings that the Holocaust survivors experienced after the Holocaust.
3. Express their feelings about the poetry and art of Holocaust survival.
4. Articulate how learning about another person's feelings can inspire empathy.
5. Survey their own emotional needs while relating to the emotional needs of their family.
6. List ways that the Holocaust has changed the way Jews think about their lives.
7. Determine events in their own lives that have changed their outlook on life.
8. Decide how one's knowledge of another person's emotional needs can affect their life.

Activity 1: What do we remember? Four Corners Exercise

The instructor will post the following four phrases around the room, in four separate corners: To pass on family legacies, to preserve the evidence of evil, to educate for the future, and to confront past atrocities and hold perpetrators accountable.

The instructor will ask the students, "Why do we remember the Holocaust?" The students will choose the corner that they most agree with. In each corner, each group will discuss the reasons they chose that corner. The instructor will then invite each corner to share its response with the group.

The instructor will then ask the group for other reasons to remember the Holocaust, and write those responses on the board. After the class has finished brainstorming, the instructor will tell them that all of the responses are correct. There is no one reason to remember the Holocaust. However, some reasons that we named to remember the Holocaust require more than just remembering, they require action. Which one of these responses might require actions?

Possible responses:

1. Family legacies- There must be follow-up to learn what these legacies are in order to preserve them and pass them on to generations to come.
2. Preserve the evidence of evil- This evidence must be preserved so we can thwart future acts of evil.
3. Educate for the future- This response is a charge to educate about what people are capable of in order to never let a genocide like this occur again and never forget the damage that cannot be repaired after such a genocide.
4. Confront the past atrocities and hold perpetrators accountable- This response requires action- to seek justice for those who cannot seek justice for themselves.

The instructor will say:
Most of these responses require action. However, the questions remain: what kind of response is required from us and how do we do it? Does it matter what we remember? As we study how

Holocaust survivors remembered and acted in response to their loss, perhaps we too can learn from the lessons they have learned. Hopefully, the rest of the unit will give us some good ideas of how to do it.

Activity 2: Preserving Family Legacies

The following two excerpts come from the memoirs of Holocaust survivors Isabella Leitner and Rose Murra. In these excerpts from *Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior Resource Book*, memories from the Holocaust became family legacy are recorded. Another resource is from Inge Auerbacher's memoir *I am a Star* and can be found at the end of this Unit. This resource can be found at the end of the Curriculum Guide in the Book Resources Section. Ask the students to read these excerpts and reflect upon them.

Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior Resource Book, p. 471-474

Questions from Facing History And Ourselves:

1. How does Isabella Leitner approach the past?
2. How does her past define her present or her plans for the future?
3. What did Isabella's Leitner's mother want her children to remember? What was her legacy to them?

Memorable Moment: Learning our family legacies

The instructor will ask the students to interview a family member about the legacy of their family. This assignment may be an opportunity to invest their own family connections to the Holocaust and learn about Holocaust survivors in their own family.

As a family, generate a list of possible family members to interview and a list of questions to ask either a grandparent, aunt, uncle, or a knowledgeable family member. Encourage the family to take this opportunity to ask questions that have never been asked before, or to tell a story that has never been told before. If possible, video record the interview for posterity. After the families have conducted their interviews, ask them to share one of their family legacies that they learned from these interviews. They may want to integrate this activity into their ethical will projects.

Activity 3: We will never be the same.

Artifact Study: In this activity we will look at a variety of different Holocaust survivors' perspectives on how they internalized their experience during in the Holocaust.

a. In Samuel Bak's painting, *Sounds of Silence*, he uses a musical quartet to express himself as an artist. As a large group, analyze this painting using the questions on the resource sheet. Bak illustrates the brokenness of a survivor. While his art is up for interpretation, feel free to utilize his explanation of this piece below:

Here, in Sounds of Silence a musical quartet is playing. The image carries an echo of the strings of Auschwitz. These musicians, broken survivors, will never be whole again. At best, their effort will result in silence, or produce a very faint sound. In order to attract his public, the musician or the artist often

pretends to speak about something else, something less troubling. At times he feels that one is better heard when wearing a mask. They try. Art must be allowed to triumph over annihilation. Our creative endeavor is the essence of life.

b. In Marcel Chalom's *Family Tree*, he emphasizes the loss of the child's family juxtaposed with the deep meaning of the child's survival. Chalom's message is ultimately to live on.

c. In Henriette Asseo's *My People*, she illustrates her feelings of being forgotten, even after survival of the camps.

d. In Herman Taube's *Rage*, he emphasizes his anger that he cannot rid himself of after the Holocaust.

The instructor will ask the students to break up into groups of four. Each group will receive a packet with the resources from above. The instructor will advise the students to create a list of feelings that these poems evoked from them. As each group concludes, they should write their list on the board. Each group should add new words that they came up with or put a check mark next to a word that another group used.

Analyze the list of feelings as a whole class. The instructor will inform the students that as a result of compiling such a list, they have begun to develop a sense of empathy for the experiences of the Holocaust survivors. While it would be impossible to fully comprehend the aftermath of such an experience like the Holocaust, this list is the beginning of at least trying to relate to the survivors as human beings. The question that remains, however, is what to do with these feelings of empathy once they are acquired.

Activity 4: Evaluating Empathy

Note to the teacher:
The following activity may be great to do as a family. However, this exercise does require a certain amount of emotional vulnerability. Therefore, the instructor should ultimately decide whether or not to do this activity as a family or divide the group up into age groups. For example, the teens and adults are in separate groups, but the teens choose partners and the parents will partner with each other. The instructor ultimately should decide based on how past family discussions have gone.

The instructor will write this quote from Rabbi Hillel, in Pirket Avot 1:14, on the board:

If I am not for myself, then who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, then what am I? And if not now, when?

The instructor will ask students, "What is the theme of this quote?" While this quote does mean many things, in the context of this lesson, it teaches us to act as empathetic individuals towards one another. How can we be empathetic towards one another? The first part of becoming empathetic person is to learn how to listen and to identify the needs of the other person.

Using the resource sheet, interview each other using the following emotional needs test as a family or in partners. The questions are quite detailed, so it may be prudent to choose a few questions to focus on instead of doing all of them. Instruct the students to take brief notes on their answers, as they will be necessary for the next activity. Below are the questions:

Emotional Needs Test:

Do you feel secure in all major areas of your life?

Do you feel you receive enough attention?

Do you give other people enough attention?

Do you feel in control of your life most of the time?

Do you feel connected to some part of the wider community?

Can you obtain privacy when you need to?

Do you have an intimate relationship in your life (one where you are totally physically and emotionally accepted for who you are by at least one other person)?

Do you feel emotionally connected to others?

Do you feel you have status that is acknowledged?

Are you achieving things and feeling competent in at least one major area of your life?

Are you mentally and/or physically being stretched in ways that give you a sense that life is meaningful?

from http://www.enaproject.org/Survey/fillsurvey.php?sid=2

Activity 5: Visualizing Our Emotions

This activity requires work as an individual as well as a family. Individually, ask each student to create a visual representation of his or her emotional needs. The representation should be based on the answers to the questions above. While there is no "correct" way to complete this assignment, it does require some planning. Students should feel free to choose colors and symbols that represent their emotional needs. However, the students should be able to identify their reasons for their choices. The students also should create a key for their representation. However, they should leave their name off of the representation.

When the students have each finished their visual representation, they should group together as a family. The families should sit in a circle, facing each other. They should pass around their

visual representations to one another. Each family member should evaluate each other's representation using the following guidelines:

1. What colors and symbols are the most present in this representation?
2. How do the colors and symbols relate to each other in this representation?
3. Are there similarities between this representation and my own representation?
4. Are there differences between this representation and my own representation?
5. What do I understand about this family member from this representation?
6. Do I resonate with all of this family member's emotional needs or are there aspects that I could understand more?
7. What questions do I have about this representation?

When each family has finished evaluating each other's representations and taken notes on them, gather the group back together as a whole class. Ask the group if they learned anything new about their family through this exercise and how they see this knowledge helping them in the future. Conclude the activity with the explanation that feeling empathetic towards one another can help us trust and respect each other more deeply, and relate to them even more. Although we may never fully understand each other's situation, through listening to each other and asking the right questions, we may become even closer.

Lesson 5.2: Remember

In this lesson, students should be able to:

- Describe Holocaust denial and give reasons why it is dangerous.
- Summarize the case in which historian, Deborah Lipstadt, disproved Holocaust denial.
- Respond to claims that the Holocaust never happened in a public service announcement.

Activity 1: What is Holocaust denial? Holocaust Denial on Trial

Set Induction:
The instructor will write on the board, "The Institute for Historical Review is offering $50,000 to anyone that has proof that Jews were murdered in the gas chambers of Auschwitz."

The instructor will ask for responses and reactions to this "advertisement." After listening to the students' responses, the instructor will tell them that this advertisement was actually placed in 1979 by the Institute for Historical Review, an institute based in Southern California that was founded by William Carto. This institute published a journal, organized conferences, and acted as a clearinghouse for historical "revisionists.[17] However, when they placed this advertisement, Holocaust survivors were stunned. We will examine this case more in a moment.

Another case of the Holocaust coming into question came more recently. This case is described in the following interview with the defendant, Holocaust historian Deborah Lipstadt.

Directions: There are two possible ways to do this activity.

1. The first way is to divide the class into two groups. Each group will be assigned to read an article about Holocaust denial on trial. As they read the article, they should use the questions below to guide their understanding.

Resource 1:
http://www.threemonkeysonline.com/als/_deborah_lipstadt_holocaust_denial_irving.html

1. What is Holocaust denial, according to this article?
2. Why did Lipstadt become interested in researching Holocaust denial initially?
3. How does Lipstadt differentiate between valid historical questions and Holocaust "revisionists" goals?
4. How do "revisionists" prove their case, according to this article?
5. Why is Lipstadt not worried about the passing of Holocaust survivors? How does she assert her point with evidence from the trial against Holocaust denier David Irving?
6. How is Holocaust denial changing form as it relates to Israel?
7. How has the internet contributed to Holocaust denial becoming widespread?
8. How does Lipstadt suggest confronting Holocaust deniers? Do you agree with her analysis? Why or why not?

[17] FHAO p. 491

9. Lipstadt notes that the Holocaust was an unprecedented event, an event that happened when there were no other examples of something like it. How would you describe the Holocaust? Would you use a different descriptive word?
10. Lipstadt addresses the issue of whether or not free speech should be given to Holocaust deniers, and decides that it should be. What is your opinion of this issue?

Resource 2: Facing History and Ourselves Reading 8 "Denial and the Holocaust," pg. 490-492.

The second way to do this activity is to watch the film about Mel Mermelstein's law suit against the Institute for Historical Review. This film can be purchased on Amazon or rented through Blockbuster and is entitled, *Never Forget*. It is 94 minutes long. This film should be followed up with a discussion about how and why Mel decided to involve himself personally in the fight and how he made a difference. If time warrants, the article about Deborah Lipstadt above could be used as another example of how Holocaust deniers have been addressed.

Activity 2: What do I do? Defending the Holocaust against Holocaust Deniers.

As we move further and further away in time from the atrocities of the Holocaust, the survivors, our first-hand witnesses to these events, are slowly passing away. The charge to remember the Holocaust and defend its' existence against Holocaust deniers or historical revisionists is now ours.

The Anti-Defamation League has identified 5 main claims made by Holocaust deniers that seek to justify that the Holocaust did not happen as historically documented. The five claims are as follows:

1) The Holocaust Did Not Occur Because There Is No Single "Master Plan" for Jewish Annihilation

2) There Were No Gas Chambers Used for Mass Murder at Auschwitz and Other Camps

3) Holocaust Scholars Rely on the Testimony of Survivors Because There Is No Objective Documentation Proving the Nazi Genocide

4) There Was No Net Loss of Jewish Lives Between 1941 and 1945

5) The Nuremberg Trials Were a "Farce of Justice" Staged for the Benefit of the Jews[18]

Divide the class into five groups. Give each group one of the claims above and instruct them to read the response by the ADL. The responses can be found in the resource section. Ask the students to create a public service announcement that explains the response to the claim, based on the response by the ADL. Ask students to present the responses in class. If possible, record these public service announcements.

[18] http://www.adl.org/Holocaust/response.asp

Activity 3: Never Again- Commemorating the Holocaust

Set Induction: Never Again by Wu-Tang

Download the music video or the audio file for Never Again by Wu-Tang. It can be found here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDxn7uolH7k

The lyrics can be found in the resources section of this Unit. As a class, listen to or watch the video of *Never Again* while reading the lyrics. After the students have watched the video, prompt them with the following questions:

1. What was the main point of the song?
2. How did this song make you feel?
3. How does this song express Wu-Tang's perspective on the Holocaust?
4. How would you add to the song?
5. Did the song resonate with you? How so?
6. What would be the main point of a song you wrote on the Holocaust?
7. How can we ensure that this message is not lost?

Memorable Moment: Yom HaShoah Ceremony

As a Jewish community world-wide, we remember the Holocaust on Yom HaShoah v' Ha'Gevurah, or Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day. In Israel, this day is scheduled exactly one week before Yom Ha'zikaron and Yom Ha'atzmaut, or Israeli Memorial Day and Israeli Independence Day. Yom HaShoah falls on the 27th of Nisan, 8 days before Yom Ha'atzmaut.

Most Jewish communities hold a solemn ceremony for this day. However, there is no set liturgy that is required for Yom HaShoah. Generally speaking, there is candle-lighting in reference to the six-million Jews lost and the Kaddish is recited. Besides this, on each Yom HaShoah, it is appropriate to plan a program that will memorialize the significance of those lost and honor their legacy.

The instructor will help the class to prepare a Yom HaShoah Program for the synagogue or setting where this class takes place.

There are many options for a Yom HaShoah Program. One particularly meaningful program that requires preparation is called Nightwords, written by Clal and compiled by Daniel G. Roskies. The program can be downloaded here:

http://www.clal.org/yomhashoah/Night-All.pdf

The class should read pages 13 and 14 of Nightwords together to determine the way in which they would like to present the program to the congregation.

Another website that provides ample options for planning a Yom HaShoah program can be found on the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website below:

http://www.ushmm.org/remembrance/dor/organize/

Or, another option would be to take excerpts from the class that have been powerful to the students and include them with the students' reflections in the ceremony.

Feel free to work with your class on the options to decide what the class wants to do. Include the clergy at your synagogue for guidelines on how the program can be most effective and invite experts and guests from the larger community to participate. Survivors or children/grand children of survivors if available should also be invited to attend.

Here is a list of things to consider when planning your own Yom HaShoah program:

1. Who will attend the program? What age groups will be present?
2. What is the main message/purpose of the program?
3. Do we want to include prayers in this service? Survivor accounts? Names of those lost?
4. Should we include some of our own reflections on the theme?
5. How will we present the information? How long should we make the presentation?
6. Will we include other classes, groups? in our presentation?

Lesson 5.3: Zechut Avot- L'Dor VaDor
-Scripted Lesson-

In this lesson, students should be able to:

1. Explain the definition of the 614th Commandment and why it is a controversial idea.
2. Summarize the message of five different artifacts from Holocaust survivors.
3. Compare and contrast the messages of five different artifacts from Holocaust survivors.
4. Explain why we need to pass on stories of the Holocaust.
5. Relate the stories of the Holocaust to their own Jewish identities.
6. Articulate how the stories of the Holocaust inform their Jewish life.

Note to the Teacher:
This is the final lesson of this curriculum guide. In it, the students will survey several texts and paintings about how Holocaust survivors feel as they live their lives after the Holocaust. The texts are by no means explicit in their message. This ambiguity is part of the exercise. The students will hopefully feel enabled in their own perspective of how to memorialize the many lessons we learn from the Holocaust. In looking at these texts, the students will hopefully understand the outlook that Holocaust survivors have on life, and their charge to carry on what was lost during the war. The concluding activity will be recording the final ethical testimonies or presenting a final draft of ethical wills to the class.

Set Induction: (5-10 minutes)

The instructor will play Josh Nelson's song, *L'dor VaDor*. It can be found as a video at this website or can be downloaded from Itunes.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzV0Y4MkIBQ

After this song plays, the instructor will prompt the students with this question:

What story will you tell to future generations about the Holocaust?

Activity 1: Commenting on the Museum of Legacies (30-40 minutes)

Directions:
The instructor will set up the following artifacts around the room. The artifacts can be found at the end of the Unit. The instructor should set each artifact on a piece of butcher paper that invites the students to comment around the artifact. If possible, it may be quite helpful to have the artifacts in a power point presentation to project on the white board or individual copies for each student to look while the class gathers back together after they have spent time in the museum. The students should be encouraged to write down questions that the artifacts evoke for them, comments about how the artifact makes them feel, or what they understand about the artifacts message. After the exercise, the instructor should spend some time with the messages of these artifacts, as the messages are pertinent to the follow up discussion.

The resources, with brief explanations are:

1. Samuel Bak, *From Generation to Generation III.* Samuel Bak explains this piece as, "[P]rotected by the lingering presence of the larger figure,…[the] middle-sized man has turned his back on the simplistic ancient laws ("an eye for an eye"). He now confidently reaches out to bless the smallest figure. The benediction is being humbly accepted and the little figure will carry forward values that have been purified and sanctified in pass *From generation to generation*. Do the weary expressions on the faces of these old Jews speak of such concerns? Perhaps. But the men may also be reflecting on the twentieth-century tragedy that wiped out millions of their kind."[19]
--from *Between Worlds: The Paintings and Drawings of Samuel Bak from 1946 to 2001*

2. Marcel Chalom, *The Prayer of the Persecuted Jew.* Chalom expresses his wish for a peaceful world that makes sense, ruled by God who is benevolent and cares for His People.

3. Violette Finz, Quote. She expresses her fear that the world will not also recognize the loss of the Sephardic Jews. Hitler's reach extended beyond just Europe and basically eliminated the Jewish community in Rhodes. Her message is to never forget.

4. Samuel Bak, *Alone.* Samuel Bak explains his painting as such, "It is another structure in the form of a Jewish star, an island surrounded by a menacing sea. The painting's sky sheds an ominous light. I have returned to the Star of David over and over again, attracted by the simplicity of its shape and by the clarity of its meaning – an icon of humiliation that has acquired the status of proud identity.[20]

5. Izthak ben Ruby, *Listen, my brother.* He was born in Salonika, Greece and moved to Palestine prior to World War II. He was well known throughout the Sephardic world for his Judeo-Spanish program on Kol Israel Radio and as the editor of El Tiempo. He writes from his perspective from Palestine after the Holocaust. He writes about the brotherhood and connection he feels with the Jews of Europe and his desire to help them rebuild their lives in Israel.

As soon as the students have examined the artifacts, the class should gather back together to evaluate their findings. The instructor should review each artifact individually, with it projected on the board or handed out to the students in a packet. As each artifact is reviewed, the instructor should highlight themes of the student's commentary and significant questions or comments that were made. As each artifact is reviewed, the instructor should check the students' understanding of the themes of each artifact. They are defined above.

The instructor should guide the class using the following questions:

1. Did any of the artifacts surprise you?
2. How did you feel overall as you examined these artifacts?

[19] http://www.drew.edu/theo-content.aspx?id=66638#generation
[20] http://www.chgs.umn.edu/museum/responses/bak/

3. What were some of the messages about the survivor's Holocaust experience in the artifacts?
4. How does each artifact express its' message about life after the Holocaust?
5. How would you explain the tone of these artifacts? Were they optimistic? Pessimistic?
6. Do any of the messages in these artifacts contradict one another?
7. How are the artifacts connected to the concept of remembering and carrying these stories of the Holocaust forward?
8. Do these artifacts shed new light on the experience of the Holocaust? How so?
9. How would you explain the messages from these survivors to a friend?
10. What is the most important message that we can carry forward from these artifacts?

Activity 2: Fishbowl Activity about the 614th Commandment (40-50 minutes)

Note to the teacher:
The instructor will explain to the students that each Holocaust survivor has something unique to pass on about his or her experience and an important legacy to pass on. We learned only of a few of those in the activity above.

Perhaps one of the most controversial statements made about the legacy was made by Holocaust survivor and philosopher, Emil Fackenheim. Here is a brief synopsis of when and why Emil Fackenheim made his statement about the "614th Commandment."

Excerpted from:

Torn at the Roots: The Crisis of Jewish Liberalism in Postwar America by Michael E. Staub

More than two months before the June 1967 war, Judaism editor Steven S. Schwarzchild, himself a refugee from Nazism, convened a symposium on the future of Jewish ethics after Auschwitz entitled "Jewish Values in the Post-Holocaust Future." In his introductory remarks Schwarzchild repeated questions that he had posed to Holocaust survivors in Europe already in 1949: "What new knowledge of God has risen out of the chimneys of Auschwitz?... By what values shall we try to live that have been seared into our flesh in Bergen-Belsen? What new Jewish actions have been commanded by the loudspeakers in Buchenwald? What new words have been pressed on our lips by the whips and boots of Theresienstadt?" Describing the Holocaust as "the enactment of absolute and historical evil" that could not be compared "quantitatively or qualitatively" with any other experience, Schwarzchild outlined the need of the symposium to address itself to the times ahead: "We are asking, and asking in all seriousness: Knowing what we do, having become what we are, seeing the world as it is- by what values are we to act among ourselves and in relationship to the world at large in our future?" There were several speakers that day, including the literary critic George Steiner, the philosopher Richard H. Popkin, and the Holocaust survivor and author Elie Wiesel. But what emerged as most significant form this symposium were the remarks of Emil Fackenheim. For here Fackenheim introduced ***"The fact that Hitler did win at least one victory- the murder of six million Jews," a fact that now resulted in what "I will boldly term a 614th commandment: the authentic Jew of today is forbidden to hand Hitler yet another, posthumous victory. If the 614th commandment is binding upon the authentic Jew, then we are, first, commanded to***

survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. We are commanded, second, to remember in our very guts and bones the martyrs of the Holocaust, lest their memory perish. We are forbidden, thirdly, to deny or despair God, however much we may have to contend with Him or with belief in Him, lest Judaism perish. We are forbidden, finally, to despair of the world as the place which is to become the kingdom of God, lest we help make it a meaningless place in which God is dead or irrelevant and everything is permitted. To abandon any of these imperatives, in response to Hitler's victory at Auschwitz, would be to hand him yet other, posthumous victories."

The students will examine this new "commandment" in a fishbowl activity. The fishbowl activity will allow students to speak freely about the issues that this text brings up. Depending upon the size of the group, this activity may be done as a whole class or split up into parents and teens. In order for it to engage all learners, group size should not exceed 10-12 people.

Directions: The class will form a circle, facing each other. Inside the circle, two or three students will sit with the text. The only students allowed to talk are the ones in the middle of the circle. The students in the middle of the circle will begin discussing the text by Emil Fackenheim. They will have questions to guide their discussion, but should be encouraged to think freely and let the conversation flow. The students in the circle should be instructed to observe the conversation, but are not allowed to participate in it. If a person on the outside would like to enter into the conversation, he or she should tap someone in the middle on the shoulder, and switch places with him or her. This is how the activity should flow until all of the questions have been addressed.

Guiding Questions:

1. How would you define the 614th commandment?
2. What is the main idea of the 614th commandment?
3. What actions would you take to perform the 614th commandment?
4. What can you point out about the 614th commandment that is difficult?
5. What can you point out about the 614th commandment that is inspiring?
6. What changes would you make to the 614th commandment?
7. What would happen if the 614th commandment formed the basis of a Jewish identity? What would that look like?
8. How would you improve the 614th commandment given what you have learned in this class?
9. What is the most important part of the 614th commandment to you? Would you use this idea as a way to inform your Jewish life?
10. What story will you pass on about the Holocaust? How will you tell future generations?

Conclusion: (5-10 minutes)

At the end of class, ask each student to respond to the following question in two sentences or less: How will you describe the messages of Holocaust survivors to future generations?

AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT: Completing Our Ethical Wills

The instructor will explain to the students the following:

In this unit, you have examined a number of ways to think about the legacy of Holocaust survivors as it relates to the Jewish people and to your own lives. You have been given the opportunity to think about the ways the Holocaust changed the lives of survivors and how the fight to preserve these legacies still exists today. You have been given a chance to consider the importance of relating to others as a result of listening to their stories and evaluated how other people's emotional needs can affect you.

At this point, you have also learned about the other Jewish values of *tochecha* (confrontation), *yesh tikvah* (maintaining hope), and *yediat haEl* (knowledge of God). How will these values be passed on to future generations in your ethical will?

Directions:
In order to complete this project, there are two things left to do. The first is to consider the legacy you would like to pass on in your ethical will. Questions to consider for this segment are:

1. Events that helped shape our family are…
2. My parents, siblings, ancestors were/are…
3. Specific teachings from Jewish source(s) that move me most…
4. Ideals that found expression in my life…
5. May the Almighty…

The last part of this project is to compile all of your previous writings into one document. It could be compiled in an online document, with images, sounds, music, or even as a web page even if they have the skills. Or, alternatively, you may want to record your final ethical will.

Final Concluding Activity:

In class, families should take time to review each others' ethical wills.

After reviewing each other's wills, the instructor should instruct the students to pick one section of their will that they would like to share with the class. The instructor should create an intimate setting for this activity. If there is a beautiful garden in the synagogue, this activity could take place there.
Or, the instructor could provide candles for each student. As they read a segment of their will they will light the candle. At the end of the activity, several candles should be lit. The instructor should explain that these candles represent their legacies. They will continue to live on thorugh the recordings and wills that the students have written throughout the course. As future generations are born, they will learn from these legacies as they also create their own. In this way, our voices and memories live one. This activity concludes the class.

Family Legacies

by Inge Auerbach

My Oma's Lullaby

In some strange and distant land,
A life snuffed out by flick of hand.
I hear the shot; I feel the pain,
My Oma did not die in vain.

I read her last postcard now and then,
"With God's help, we'll be together again."
Her birthday has become our Yahrzeit date,
To remind us of love and man's hate.

She sang me to sleep with a lullaby,
My child, be happy, do not cry.

Her Shabbos candles had a special glow,
I hope she knew that I loved her so.
Only she held the secret to prepare,
The challes and cakes without compare.

I will always recall her last gaze,
Her eyes, soft smile, and beautiful face.
Her spirit still radiates with undying love,
I know she is looking down at me from above.

She sang me to sleep with a lullaby,
My child, be happy, do not cry.[21]

[21] Inge Auerbacher, I am a Star: Child of the Holocaust, (Puffin Books: New York, 1986) 70.

We Will Never Be The Same

Samuel Bak, *Sounds of Silence*[22]

Questions:

1. Who are the characters in this piece?
2. What are they doing?
3. What other objects are around them?
4. One musician wears a mask; the other wears a blindfold. What could this mean?
5. What could the topic of music represent in this piece?

[22] http://www.chgs.umn.edu/museum/responses/bak/gallery3.html

We Will Never Be the Same

Marcel Chalom:

Family Tree…

My dear Jewish child! Live in glory!
Your mother died in a crematory oven,
Your father lies in Poland
In a mass grave,
Your brother was stillborn…
But you, the last bastion,
You are
their
RESURRECTION!

Henriette Asseo:

My People

My people you do not know
in days of old the exodus from ease
scattered them into a thousand nations.

My people do not resemble you
followers of the Covenant
identified with God.

My people do not exist
banished from memory
at the gates of the camps.

Emotional Needs Test

Do you feel secure in all major areas of your life?

Do you feel you receive enough attention?

Do you give other people enough attention?

Do you feel in control of your life most of the time?

Do you feel connected to some part of the wider community?

Can you obtain privacy when you need to?

Do you have an intimate relationship in your life (one where you are totally physically and emotionally accepted for who you are by at least one other person)?

Do you feel emotionally connected to others?

Do you feel you have status that is acknowledged?

Are you achieving things and feeling competent in at least one major area of your life?

Are you mentally and/or physically being stretched in ways that give you a sense that life is meaningful?

from http://www.enaproject.org/Survey/fillsurvey.php?sid=2

Responses to common Holocaust-denial claims: Claim 1

The Holocaust Did Not Occur Because There Is No Single "Master Plan" for Jewish Annihilation

There is no single Nazi document that expressly enumerates a "master plan" for the annihilation of European Jewry. Holocaust-denial propagandists misrepresent this fact as an exposure of the Holocaust "hoax"; in doing so, they reveal a fundamentally misleading approach to the history of the era. That there was no single document does not mean there was no plan. The "Final Solution" — the Nazis' comprehensive plan to murder all European Jews — was, as the Encyclopedia of the Holocaust observes, "the culmination of a long evolution of Nazi Jewish policy." [1] The destruction process was shaped gradually: it was borne of many thousands of directives.[2]

The development and implementation of this process was overseen and directed by the highest tier of Nazi leadership, including Heinrich Himmler, Reinhard Heydrich, Adolf Eichmann, Hermann Goering and Adolf Hitler himself. For the previous two decades, Hitler had relentlessly pondered Jewish annihilation.[3] In a September 16, 1919, letter he wrote that while "the Jewish problem" demanded an "anti-Semitism of reason" -- comprising systematic legal and political sanctions -- "the final goal, however, must steadfastly remain the removal of the Jews altogether."[4]

Throughout the 1920s, Hitler maintained that "the Jewish question" was the "pivotal question" for his Party and would be solved "with well-known German thoroughness to the final consequence."[5] With his assumption to power in 1933, Hitler's racial notions were implemented by measures that increasingly excluded Jews from German society.

On January 30, 1939, Hitler warned that if Jewish financiers and Bolsheviks initiated war, "The result will not be the Bolshevization of the earth, and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe."[6] On, September 21, 1939, after the Germans invaded Poland, SD chief Heydrich ordered the Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units operating in German-occupied territory) to forcibly concentrate Polish Jews into ghettos, alluding to an unspecified "final aim." [7]

In the summer of 1941, with preparations underway for invading Russia, large-scale mass murder initiatives -- already practiced domestically upon the mentally ill and deformed -- were broadly enacted against Jews. Heydrich, acting on Hitler's orders, directed the Einsatzgruppen to implement the "special tasks" of annihilation in the Soviet Union of Jews and Soviet commissars.[8] On July 31, Heydrich received orders from Goering to prepare plans "for the implementation of the aspired final solution of the Jewish question" in all German-occupied areas.[9] Eichmann, while awaiting trial in Israel in 1960, related that Heydrich had told him in August 1941 that "the Führer has ordered the physical extermination of the Jews."[10] Rudolf Hoess, the Commandant of Auschwitz, wrote in 1946 that "In the summer of 1941... Himmler

said to me, 'The Führer has ordered the Final Solution to the Jewish Question... I have chosen the Auschwitz camp for this purpose.' "[11]

On January 20, 1942, Heydrich convened the Wannsee Conference to discuss and coordinate implementation of the Final Solution. Eichmann later testified at his trial:

These gentlemen... were discussing the subject quite bluntly, quite differently from the language that I had to use later in the record. During the conversation they minced no words about it at all... they spoke about methods of killing, about liquidation, about extermination.[12]

Ten days after the conference, while delivering a speech at the Sports Palace in Berlin that was recorded by the Allied monitoring service, Hitler declared: "The result of this war will be the complete annihilation of the Jews. . . the hour will come when the most evil universal enemy of all time will be finished, at least or a thousand years."[13] On February 24, 1943, he stated: "This struggle will not end with the annihilation of Aryan mankind, but with the extermination of the Jewish people in Europe.[14]

Approximately 6 million Jews were killed in the course of Hitler's Final Solution.

Responses to common Holocaust-denial claims: Claim 2

There Were No Gas Chambers Used for Mass Murder at Auschwitz and Other Camps

Death camp gas chambers were the primary means of execution used against the Jews during the Holocaust. The Nazis issued a directive implementing large-scale gas chambers in the fall of 1941 but, by then, procedures facilitating mass murder, including the utilization of smaller gas chambers, were already in practice. Before their use in death camps, gas chambers were central to Hitler's "eugenics" program. Between January 1940 and August 1941, 70,273 Germans -- most of them physically handicapped or mentally ill -- were gassed, 20-30 at a time, in hermetically shut chambers disguised as shower rooms.[15]

Meanwhile, mass shooting of Jews had been extensively practiced on the heels of Germany's Eastern campaign. But these actions by murder squads had become an increasingly unwieldy process by October 1941. Three directors of the genocide, Erhard Wetzel, head of the Racial-Policy Office, Alfred Rosenberg, consultant on Jewish affairs for the Occupied Eastern Territories, and Victor Brack, deputy director of the Chancellery, met at the time with Adolf Eichmann to discuss the use of gas chambers in the genocide program.[16] Thereafter, two technical advisors for the euthanasia gas chambers, Kriminalkommissar Christian Wirth and a Dr. Kallmeyer, were sent to the East to begin construction of mass gas chambers.[17] Physicians who had implemented the euthanasia program were also transferred.

Mobile gassing vans, using the exhaust fumes of diesel engines to kill passengers, were used to kill Jews at Chelmno and Treblinka -- as well as other sites, not all of them concentration camps -- starting in November 1941.[18] At least 320,000 Chelmno prisoners, most of them Jews, were killed by this method; a total of 870,000 Jews were murdered at Treblinka using gas vans and diesel-powered gas chambers.[19]

Gas chambers were installed and operated at Belzec, Lublin, Sobibor, Majdanek and Auschwitz-Birkenau from September 3, 1941, when the first experimental gassing of a group of Soviet prisoners-of-war took place at Auschwitz, until November 1944.[20] Working with chambers measuring an average 225 square feet, the Nazis forced to their deaths 700 to 800 men, women and children at a time.[21] Two-thirds of this program was completed in 1943-44, and at its height it accounted for as many as 20,000 victims per day.[22] Authorities have estimated that these gas chambers accounted for the deaths of approximately 2½ to 3 million Jews.

Holocaust-denial attacks on this record of mass murder intensified following the end of the Cold War when it was reported that the memorial at Auschwitz was changed in 1991 to read that 1 million had died there, instead of 4 million as previously recorded. For Holocaust deniers, this change appeared to confirm arguments that historical estimates of Holocaust deaths had been deliberately exaggerated, and that scholars were beginning to "retreat" in the face of "revisionist" assertions. Thus, for example, Willis Carto wrote in the February 6, 1995, issue of The Spotlight,

the weekly tabloid of his organization, Liberty Lobby, that "All 'experts' until 1991 claimed that 4 million Jews were killed at Auschwitz. This impossible figure was reduced in 1991. . . to I.I million. . . . The facts about deaths at Auschwitz, however. . , are still wrong. The Germans kept detailed records of Auschwitz deaths. . . These show that no more than 120,000 persons of all religions and ethnicity died at Auschwitz during the war. . . ."

In fact, Western scholars have never supported the figure of 4 million deaths at Auschwitz; the basis of this Soviet estimate — an analysis of the capacity of crematoria at Auschwitz and Birkenau — has long been discredited. As early as 1952, Gerald Reitlinger, a British historian, had convincingly challenged this method of calculation. Using statistics compiled in registers for Himmler, he asserted that approximately 1 million people had died at Auschwitz; Raul Hilberg in 1961, and Yehuda Bauer In 1989, confirmed Reitlinger's estimate of Auschwitz victims. Each of these scholars, nonetheless, has recognized that nearly 6 million Jews were killed overall during the Holocaust.[23] Polish authorities were therefore responding to long-accepted Western scholarship, further confirmed subsequently by documents released in post-Soviet Russia; the cynical allegations of "Holocaust revisionism" played no part in their decision.

Responses to common Holocaust-denial claims: Claim 3

Holocaust Scholars Rely on the Testimony of Survivors Because There Is No Objective Documentation Proving the Nazi Genocide.

Another frequent claim of Holocaust "revisionists" concerns what they describe as the lack of objective documentation proving the facts of the Holocaust, and the reliance by scholars on biased and poorly recollected testimonies of survivors. However, the Germans themselves left no shortage of documentation and testimony to these events, and no serious scholar has relied solely on survivor testimony as the conclusive word on Holocaust history. Lucy Dawidowicz, in the preface to her authoritative work, The War Against the Jews 1933-1945, wrote,

"The German documents captured by the Allied armies at the war's end have provided an incomparable historical record, which, with regard to volume and accessibility, has been unique in the annals of scholarship.... The National Archives and the American Historical Association jointly have published 67 volumes of Guides to German Records Microfilmed at Alexandria, VA. For my work I have limited myself mainly to published German documents."[24]

The author then proceeds to list 303 published sources — excluding periodicals — documenting the conclusions of her research. Among these sources are the writings of recognizable Nazi policy makers such as Adolf Hitler, Heinrich Himmler, Rudolf Hoess and Alfred Rosenberg.

Similarly, Raul Hilberg in his three-volume edition of The Destruction of the European Jews, wrote, "Between 1933 and 1945 the public offices and corporate entities of Nazi Germany generated a large volume of correspondence. Some of these documents were destroyed in Allied bombings, and many more were systematically burned in the course of retreats or in anticipation of surrender. Nevertheless, the accumulated paper work of the German bureaucracy was vast enough to survive in significant quantities, and even sensitive folders remained.[25]

It is thus largely from these primary sources that the history of the Holocaust has been compiled. A new factor in this process is the sudden availability of countless records from the former Soviet Union, many of which had been overlooked or suppressed since their capture at war's end by the Red Army. Needless to say, the modification of specific details in this history is certain to continue for a number of years to come, considering the vastness and complexity of the events which comprise the Holocaust. However, it is equally certain that these modifications will only confirm the Holocaust's enormity, rather than -- as the "revisionists" would -- call it into question.

Responses to common Holocaust-denial claims: Claim 4

There Was No Net Loss of Jewish Lives Between 1941 and 1945

Another frequent "revisionist" assertion calls into question the generally accepted estimates of Jewish victims of the Holocaust. In attempting to portray the deaths of millions of Jews as an exaggeration or a fabrication, Holocaust deniers wildly manipulate reference works, almanac statistics, geopolitical data, bedrock historical facts and other sources of information and reportage.

For example, "revisionists" commonly cite various almanac or atlas figures -- typically compiled before comprehensive accounts on the Holocaust were available -- that appear to indicate that the worldwide Jewish population before and after World War II remained essentially stable, thereby "proving" that 6 million Jews could not have died during this period.

The widely cited "6 million" figure is derived from the initial 1945 Nuremberg trial estimate of 5.7 million deaths; subsequent censuses, statistical analyses, and other demographic studies of European Jewry have consistently demonstrated the essential accuracy of this first tally.[26] After nearly 50 years of study, historians agree that approximately 6 million Jews perished during the course of the Nazi genocide.[27]

In The War Against the Jews, Lucy Dawidowicz offers a country-by-country accounting of Jewish deaths.

ESTIMATED NUMBER OF JEWS KILLED IN THE FINAL SOLUTION			
Country	Estimated Pre-Final Solution Population	Estimated Jewish Population Annihilated	
		Number	Percent
Poland	3,300,000	3,000,000	90
Baltic countries	253,000	228,000	90
Germany/Austria	240,000	210,000	90
Protectorate	90,000	80,000	89
Slovakia	90,000	75,000	83
Greece	70,000	54,000	77
The Netherlands	140,000	105,000	75
Hungary	650,000	450,000	70
SSR White Russia	375,000	245,000	65
SSR Ukraine*	1,500,000	900,000	60
Belgium	65,000	40,000	60

Yugoslavia	43,000	26,000	60
Romania	600,000	300,000	50
Norway	1,800	900	50
France	350,000	90,000	26
Bulgaria	64,000	14,000	22
Italy	40,000	8,000	20
Luxembourg	5,000	1,000	20
Russia (RSFSR)*	975,000	107,000	11
Denmark	8,000	—	—
Finland	2,000	—	—
TOTAL	**8,861,800**	**5,933,900**	**67**
**The Germans did not occupy all the territory in this republic*			

28

Responses to common Holocaust-denial claims: Claim 5

The Nuremberg Trials Were a "Farce of Justice" Staged for the Benefit of the Jews

Yet another centerpiece of "revisionist" propaganda attacks the objectivity and legal validity of the postwar Nuremberg Trials, where much information about the Holocaust first became public, and where the general history of the genocide was first established.

The actual process of bringing Nazi war criminals to justice was a lengthy and complicated effort involving the differing legal traditions and political agendas of the United States, England, France and the Soviet Union. As the historical record shows, the allied victors, if anything, erred on the side of leniency toward the accused Nazis.

Discussions concerning allied treatment of war criminals had begun as early as October 1943.[29] In the summer months following Germany's surrender in 1945, British, American and Soviet representatives met in London to create the charter for an international military tribunal to prosecute "major criminals" whose offenses extended over the entire Reich, and who therefore could be punished by joint decision of the Governments of the Allies.[30]

By early autumn, the Allies had resolved their debates over whom to prosecute and how to define the crimes committed during the Holocaust; the first trials began thereafter in Nuremberg, before an international military tribunal. The chief defendant was Hermann Goering, but the prosecution also selected 20 other leading officials from the Nazi party, German government ministries, central bureaucracy, armament and labor specialists, the military and territorial chiefs.[31]

These trials did not result in either "rubber stamp" guilty verdicts or identical sentences. In fact, of the 21 defendants, three were set free; one received a 10-year sentence; one a 15-year sentence; two, 20-year sentences; three, life sentences, and 11 received the death penalty.[32]

The defendants, moreover, had access to 206 attorneys, 136 of whom had been Nazi party members.[33] Furthermore, as Raul Hilberg stated, "The judges in Nuremberg were established American lawyers. They had not come to exonerate or convict. They were impressed with their task, and they approached it with much experience in the law and Little anticipation of the facts."[34]

A second round of trials resulted in 25 death sentences, 20 life sentences, 97 sentences of 25 years or less, and 35 not-guilty verdicts.[35] By 1951, following the recommendations of an American-run clemency board, 77 the 142 convicted criminals had been released from prison.[36]

Notes for Responses to common Holocaust-denial claims

1. Israel Gutman (Editor in Chief), *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Volume 2, New York, 1990, p. 788.

2. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (Student Edition), New York, 1985, p. 263.

3. Lucy Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945*, New York, 1975, pp. 150-166.

4. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Volume 2, p. 489.

5. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Volume 2, p. 489.

6. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Volume 2, p. 490.

7. *Holocaust*, Jerusalem: Keter Books, 1974, p. 104

8. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Volume 2, p. 657.

9. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Volume 2, p. 492.

10. Ronnie Duggar, *The Texas Observer*, Austin, 1992, D. 48.

11. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Volume 2, pp. 641-642.

12. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Volume 2, p. 657.

13. Ronnie Duggar, *The Texas Observer*, Austin, 1992, D. 48.

14. *Holocaust*, pp. 105-106.

15. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Volume 2, p. 453.

16. Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, New York, 1985, p. 219.

17. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, Volume 3, New York, 1985, pp. 873-876.

18. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Volume 2, pp. 541-544

19. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Volume 2,, p. 542; Volume 4, pp. 1483, 1486.

20. *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, Volume 2, pp. 113, 116.

21. *Holocaust*, p. 86.

22. *Holocaust*, p. 87.

23 Reitlinger, who conducted his research before Hilberg and other scholars, arrives at a more

conservative figure of approximately 4.5 murder victims; he nonetheless estimates that one-third of the internees at concentration camps died as a result of starvation, overwork, disease, and other consequences of their captivity. Although his murder count is somewhat lower than that of later scholars, his overall death count remains consistent with subsequent research.

24. Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews*, p. 437.

25. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews,* Volume 3, p. 1223.

26. Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945,* p. 402.

27. Peter Hayes, Associate Professor of German History at Northwestern University, states, "After years of studying this matter, I know of *no authority* who puts the number of Jews killed [emphasis in original] by the Nazis at less than 5.1 or more than 5.9 million men, women and children.

28. Dawidowicz, *The War Against the Jews, 1933-1945,* p. 403.

29. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews,* Volume 3, p. 1060.

30. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews,* Volume 3, p. 1061.

31. Hilberg, The Destruction of the European Jews, Volume 3, p. 1066.

32. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews,* Volume 3, p. 1070.

33. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews,* Volume 3, p. 1075.

34 Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews,* Volume 3, p. 1076.

35. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews,* Volume 3, p. 1077-1078.

36. Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews,* Volume 3,, p. 1079.

Never Again Lyrics by Wu-Tang Clan

Intro:
Feel this
To all those races, colors, and creeds, every man bleeds
for the countless victims and all their families
of the murdered, tortured and slaved, raped,
robbed and persecuted - Never Again!
To the men, women, and children
Who died and struggled to live, never to be forgotten

Verse 1:
Yo my own blood
Dragged through the mud
Perished in my heart still cherished and loved
Stripped of our pride, everything we lived for
Families cried
There nowhere to run to, nowhere to hide
Tossed to the side
Access denied
6 million died for what?
Yo a man shot dead in his back
Helpless women and children on the constant attack
For no reason
Till the next season
And we still bleeding
Yo it's freezing
And men burn in hell, some for squeezing
No hope for a remedy, nothing to believe
Moving targets who walk with the star in their sleeve
Forever marked wit a number, tattooed to your body
Late night, eyes closed, clutched to my shotty
Having visions, flashes of death camps and prisons no provisions
Deceived by the devils decisions
Forced into a slave
Death before dishonor for those men who were brave
Shot and sent to their grave
Can't awaken, it's too late
Everything's been taken
I'm shaken, family, history, the making

Chorus:
Never again shall we march like sheep to the slaughter
Never again shall we sit and take orders
Stripped of our culture

Robbed of our name (never again)
Raped of our freedom and thrown into the flames (never again)
Forced from our families, taken from our homes
Moved from our God then burned of our bones
Never again, never again
Shall we march like sheep to the slaughter (never again)
Leave our sons and daughters
Stripped of our culture
Robbed of our name (never again)
Raped of our freedom and thrown into the flames (never again)
Forced from our families, taken from our homes
Moved from our God and everything we own
(never again)

Verse 2:
Some fled through the rumors of wars
But most left were dead, few escaped to the shores
With just 1 loaf of bread
Banished, hold in for questioning
And vanished
Never to be seen again
I can't express the pain
That was felt on the train
To Auscwitz, tears poured down like rain
Naked face to face
With the master race
Hatred blood of David
My heart belongs to God and stay sacred
Rabbi's and priests
Disabled individuals
The poor, the scholars all labeled common criminals
Mass extermination
Total annihilation
Shipped into the ghetto and prepared for liquidation
Tortured and starved
Innocent experiments
Stripped down and carved up or gassed to death
The last hour, I smelled the flowers
Flashbacks of family then sent to the showers
Powerless undressed
Women with babies clumped tight to their chest
Crying
Who would've guessed dying
Another life lost
Count the cost
Another body gas burned and tossed in the holocaust (never again)

Chorus:
Never again shall we march like sheep to the slaughter
Never again leave our sons and daughter
Stripped of our culture
Robbed of our name (never again)
Raped of our freedom and thrown into the flames (never again)
Forced from our families, taken from our homes(never again)
Moved from own God and everything we owned
Never again, never again
Shall we march like sheep to the slaughter (never again)
Shall we sit and take orders
Stripped of our culture
Robbed of our name (never again)
Raped of our freedom and thrown into the flames (never again)
Forced from our families, taken from our homes (never again)
Moved from our God and burned of our bones
(never again) (never again)

NEVER AGAIN
NEVER AGAIN
The final solution
Is now retribution
Remedy, Wu-Tang

Samuel Bak, *From Generation to Generation III*

L'dor VaDor

The Prayer of the Persecuted Jew by Marcel Chalom

Lord, I want a world
Not for me but for my brothers.
A new world,
with no quarrels and no wars,
With no storms and no thunder
to rumble!

Lord, I want a world
where the mothers
Will raise their children with no fear
Of seeing them suddenly leave…

A world where the life that You give
will have its value.
Where spirits will be the same,
Where men, by way of creed,
Will only know one utterance:
"I love you!"

Lord, I want a world
With no summers, with no winters,
With no mountains and no chasms.
I want in my universe
All who suffer and all who toil
To have the right to live
Without being forced to fight
For the strength to die!...

In this world, if You give it to me,
I want spring
To fill all the moments
Of the year…

In this enigmatic world,
Birds with melancholy songs
Will no longer flee from human beings.
Everywhere will be built
Happiness, peace, civilization,
With no fear of demolition!...
Each one will then follow, with no hate and no envy,

The road
That he wants to pursue in life…

All the professions will be respected,
The laborer and the poet,
The stockholder and the architect,
Each one will lay a paving stone

on the measureless road
of the tranquility of dreams…

The dance step
will replace the march step of war.
In the mouth of cannons,
rusted in disuse,
the birds will have build
their little nests…

We will have no more inventors
of engines and motors
to take life!...
Only You, Lord, will take it from us
whenever You wish!...

L'Dor VaDor

Violette Fintz, Holocaust survivor from the German extermination camps, was born on the island of Rhodes. She has participated in several celebrations of Yom Hashoah and in various conferences to keep alive the memory of the obliterated Jewish centers.

"I cry over the fate of all the Jews. I cannot forget the agony, I refuse to forget the sting of death in the camps. I shall always remember the faces of the thousands of innocent children, of our children. I want the world to know that the Sephardim were also martyrs and that we, too, saw our towns destroyed and our families vanish in the smoke."

L’Dor VaDor

Samuel Bak, *Alone*

L'Dor VaDor

Itzhak ben Ruby was born in Salonika, Greece and moved to Palestine prior to World War II. He was well known throughout the Sephardic world for his Judeo-Spanish program on Kol Israel Radio and as the editor of El Tiempo.

Listen, my brother
I beg you to listen,
my brother.
That is the only favor
I request from you
on this chill night
as cold as your heart.

I call you my brother
because you are;
of lineage,
of blood,
of faith…
There is something I must tell you,
you, and no one else.
And I want you to listen,
my brother.
I beseech your attention
on this chill night
as cold as your heart.

Give me your hand and look.
Look with me
at what I am seeing:
there, over there, this child
seized by the feet
and hurled against the wall…
to fall to the ground
with a broken head.

Look, look.
Please, do not be afraid…
You are at peace,
here where you are.
Look, look,
there, do you see those girls,
naked,
shivering
like leaves in the wind?

Demons,
spewed out from Hell,
set on them
bloodhounds
who quenched their sexual
thirst
on their martyred bodies.

Do not be afraid
and look further…
There, over there, in the distance,
those flames
that rise toward the heavens
like a cry
of all humanity-
a wounded
humanity-
human bodies
of your brothers,
of lineage,
of blood,
of faith,
that fed the fire.

And look still further:
the machine guns that riddle,
the bodies that fall,
and the infernal
black angels of death
shove them
into the holes
that they hurriedly cover
with shovelfuls of dirt.

Look, look.
There. The earth shakes?
Does it move?
Among the dead
they buried
victims who were still
alive…,
to whom they did not grant
the mercy stroke
that compassion demands
even for criminals.

And so they died,
two, five, six million
of your brothers,
of lineage,
of blood,
of faith.

…And now, leave,
leave and take with you
your heart, cold
as this chill night.
Your eyes, are they shedding tears?
Alas. Crying was for nought.
Leave, leave, my brother
of lineage,
of blood,
of faith.

You stay?
Your hand, cold
as your heart,
reaches for my hand
and holds it steadfast?
Your eyes no longer cry,
but look at me and speak?

Stay.
I shall spend with you
this chill night…
But tomorrow,
oh, tomorrow!
A bright sun
will shine on your face,
and hand in hand,
with a firm step,
we shall walk together, my brother,
-shall we?-
on the road
of human dignity
and liberty.

The 614th Commandment

A quote by philosopher and Holocaust survivor, Emil Fackenheim:

"… Hitler did win at least one victory- the murder of six million Jews," a fact that now resulted in what "I will boldly term a 614th commandment: the authentic Jew of today is forbidden to hand Hitler yet another, posthumous victory. If the 614th commandment is binding upon the authentic Jew, then we are, first, commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. We are commanded, second, to remember in our very guts and bones the martyrs of the Holocaut, lest their memory perish. We are forbidden, thirdly, to deny or despair God, however much we may have to contend with Him or with belief in Him, lest Judaism perish. We are forbidden, finally, to despair of the world as the place which is to become the kingdom of God, lest we help make it a meaningless place in which God is dead or irrelevant and everything is permitted. To abandon any of these imperatives, in response to Hitler's victory at Auschwitz, would be to hand him yet other, posthumous victories."

Guiding Questions:

11. How would you define the 614th commandment?
12. What is the main idea of the 614th commandment?
13. What actions would you take to perform the 614th commandment?
14. What can you point out about the 614th commandment that is difficult?
15. What can you point out about the 614th commandment that is inspiring?
16. What changes would you make to the 614th commandment?
17. What would happen if the 614th commandment formed the basis of a Jewish identity? What would that look like?
18. How would you improve the 614th commandment given what you have learned in this class?
19. What is the most important part of the 614th commandment to you? Would you use this idea as a way to inform your Jewish life?

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Auerbacher, Inge. I Am a Star: Child of the Holocaust. Scholastic Inc.: New York, 1986.
This book was used only once in the Curriculum Guide. It is a great, short book about a girl and her family's survival of the Holocaust. The book includes some historical background of the Holocaust and is an incredibly inspiring story of strength and courage.

Bak, Samuel. Painted in Words: A Memoir. Pucker Gallery, Inc.: Boston, 2001.
This book was not used in the Curriculum Guide. The majority of the artwork in this Guide was painted by Samuel Bak. This memoir illuminates his life as expressed through art and could enrich any section in which his artwork is present.

Bau, Joseph. Dear God: Have You Ever Gone Hungry? Arcade Publishing: New York, 1998.
Some of the poetry and drawings from this book were used in the Curriculum Guide. This book includes many more poems and short sections that recount Joseph Bau's experience during the Holocaust. His presentations throughout his memoir are quite creative and sharp, pushing the typical boundaries of Holocaust memory that only an artist can.

Facing History and Ourselves: Holocaust and Human Behavior. Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation, Inc.: Brookline, 1994.
This resource book is referred to a few times in the Curriculum Guide. It offers many more readings and explorations of several of the topics of the Guide. It also includes writings from other genocides in history, which I would not recommend using for this guide.

Frankl, Viktor. Man's Search for Meaning. Pocket Books: New York, 1984.
This book is used only once in the Curriculum Guide. Frankl writes from the perspective of a Holocaust survivor as well as a psychologist. He writes at quite a high level but is able to show the Holocaust from an analytical point of view. This book is well worth the time it takes to complete.

Jewish Virtual Library, www.jewishvirtuallibrary.com
This website can be a great place to look up terms that may need further clarification.

Klein, Gerda Weissman. All But My Life. Elek Books: London, 1957.
This book is not included in the Curriculum Guide although it easily could have been. Klein tells her inspiring, insightful story of her survival while she includes stories that were told to her during the Holocaust. This book is heartbreaking and inspiring all at the same time and would be well worth assigning to students to read.

Leitner, Isabella. Isabella: From Auschwitz to Freedom. Anchor Books: New York, 1994.
This book is used quite a bit throughout this Curriculum Guide to investigate several issues. The book is written concisely and includes Leitner's reflections before, during, and after the war. It is a beautiful book that is worth reading in its entirety.

Levi, Primo. Survival in Auschwitz. Touchstone Book: New York, 1996.

This book is used only once in the Curriculum Guide. Levi tells his story of his challenges in Auschwitz and obstacles he faced since he was not a native German speaker in the camps. As he tells his story, he digresses often to state insights or new perspectives that he has gained as he looks back. This book can be a difficult read, but is well worth it.

Levy, Isaac Jack. And the World Stood Silent. University of Illinois Press: Chicago, 1989.
This book provides the Sephardic perspective in this Curriculum Guide. The book itself is a collection of Sephardic poetry from the Holocaust that has been translated into English. It is a beautiful book that touches on so many issues during the Holocaust from the voices of the Sephardic Jews who are often underrepresented in the Holocaust narrative.

Littell, Marcia Sachs. Liturgies on the Holocaust. Edwin Mellen Press: Lewiston, 1986.
This book is not used in the Curriculum Guide, but could be used for the Yom HaShoah Memorial activity.

Mermelstein, Mel. By Bread Alone. Mel Mermelstein: Huntington Beach, 1979.
This book is used once in the Curriculum Guide. This book is Mel Mermelstein's survival story as well as a document of his law suit against the Institute of Historical Review.

Riemer, Jack and Stampfer, Nathaniel. So That Your Values Live On: Ethical Wills and How to Prepare Them. Jewish Lights Publishing: Woodstock, 1991.
This book was the inspiration for the authentic assessment assignments at the end of each Unit in the Curriculum Guide. The book provides many practical ways to create an ethical will and many more examples of these wills from a number of Jewish historical time periods. This book may be used as a reference throughout the teaching of this Guide.

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. www.ushmm.org
This website includes an incredible amount of updated resources and news articles that can be used to teach in this Guide. The "education" tab on the site provides many opportunities for enriching this guide with historical information or other ideas. There are several places in this Guide that use this website.

Wiesenthal, Simon. The Sunflower. Schocken Books: New York, 1978.
This book frames the lesson about forgiveness after the Holocaust. Wiesenthal's account of his incredible moral dilemma, to forgive a Nazi who is on the brink of his death, presents his perspective along with other responses in this book. While only the Wiesenthal's narrative is assigned in this Curriculum Guide, the respondents provide interesting questions to struggle with that would be worth reading as well.

Yad Vashem. www.yadvashem.org
This website is an incredible resource to use to find Holocaust survivor testimonies and information about current events about the Holocaust. Yad VaShem is the Holocaust Museum in Israel and thus presents information from an Israeli perspective. This website was quite useful in the Righteous Among the Nations section of this Curriculum Guide.

A Mother's Will

Published in the ghetto newspaper Warsaw-Krakow, 1940, this will was signed only "Your Mother."

Judaism, my child, is the struggle to bring down God upon earth, a struggle for the sanctification of the human heart. This struggle your people wages not with physical force but with spirit, with sincere, heartfelt prayers, and by constant striving for truth and justice.

So do you understand, my child, how we are distinct from others and wherein lies the secret of our existence on earth?

Knowing this, will your heart still be heavy, my child? Will you still say you cannot stand your fate? But you must, my child, for so were you commanded; it is your calling. This is your mission, your purpose on earth.

You must go to work alongside people of other nations . . . and you will teach them that they must come to a brotherhood of nations and to a union of all nations with God.

You may ask, "How does one speak to them?" This is how: "Thou shalt not murder; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not covet; love thy neighbor as thyself. . . ." Do these things and through their merit, my child, you will be victorious.

Zippora Birman

The writer, a member of the Jewish fighting group in the Bialystok ghetto, fell in the defense of the ghetto in August 1943. Her notes were discovered after the war.

All is lost. This is our fate, to atone for the sins of the preceding generations.

We mourned all of them, we grieved over their loss; the most horrible possibility in history has happened to us. We witnessed, we heard, we anguished; and now we have been sentenced to be silenced forever. Our bones will not even be brought to decent Jewish burial. Unbearable. There is no choice but to die with honor, along with the thousands who go to their deaths without fear, without fright. We *know*: the Jewish people will not disappear. It will return to life, grow and bloom again, and will avenge our blood that is spilled.

So I address you, comrades, wherever you may be: You have the obligation to avenge. Day and night, take no rest from this charge—avenge the blood that is spilled—just as we have no respite here, face-to-face with death.

Cursed is he who reads this, mournfully sighs, and returns to his daily tasks.

It is not mourning that we demand of you! We did not even mourn our own parents, but speechless and silent we viewed the heaped corpses of our loved ones who were shot like dogs.

We call upon you: Vengeance, vengeance—with no mercy, with no sentimentality, with no "good" Germans. For the "good" German let it be an easier death; let him be killed last. That is what they promised the Jews of whom they approved: "You will be shot last."

This is our demand, the demand of all of us. This is the burning appeal of human beings who likely will be among the fallen, who will fight with courage and die with dignity.

To vengeance do we call you, you who were not imprisoned in Hitler's hell; this is our summons, and you are compelled to fulfill it, even at the risk of death.

Our crushed bones, scattered to all corners of Europe, will know no repose and the ashes of our corpses, scattered to the winds, will have no rest until you avenge us.

Remember this and do it. It is our plea—it is your duty.

The Chief Rabbi of Grodzisk

Since ancient times Jewish sources have described the period leading to the coming of the messiah as characterized by "birth pangs." The travail of childbirth was seen as analogous to the tribulations and agonies which would precede the birth of the new era. The rabbi of Grodzisk referred to this oft-expressed belief in his exhortation to several thousand of his fellow Jews as he and they were led to the gas chambers. The event was reported to the late Chief Rabbi Isaac Herzog during his tour of Displaced Persons camps in Italy.

Brothers and sisters! One of our sages in talmudic times said in his days: "Let him come, but let me not see him" [*Sanhedrin* 98b]. That is to say, let the Messiah come, so long as I don't have to see him. That sage did not want to witness the great agonies with which Israel would be afflicted preceding the coming of the redeemer. However, he may have allowed himself to make such a request because in his days the time of redemption was still very distant. But now, at the hour when we stand on the threshhold of the redemption proper, now as we wash and purify with our blood the path of the redeemer, at the time we purify with our ashes, like the ashes of the Red Heifer, the people of Israel, to render it worthy of greeting the Messiah of righteousness, now we are forbidden to speak thus. On the contrary, we are obliged to see ourselves as fortunate that it fell to our lot to blaze a path for the redeemer and to accept with love our binding upon the alter of the sanctification of God's revered name. Come, then, my fellow Jews, and let us recite joyfully "Shema Yisrael."

With song on their lips they approached and entered the gas chambers.

Among the Embers: Martyrs' Testaments

These five wills, brief and hurriedly written, speak for themselves. All five appeared in Mime Hashoah Vehagevura, *published by Yad Vashem in Jerusalem.*

Written by the last twelve Jews to be murdered at the death camp at Chelmno, in January 1945. Before their deaths, they defended themselves and killed a number of Germans.

If any relatives or friends of these individuals are left alive, then be informed that all the Jews who were removed from Lodz were killed most brutally; they were tortured, then burned in fire. Be well. If you survive, avenge our blood.

Carved on the wall of the synagogue in Kovel', signed by David Elster, Sept. 15, 1942.

A chill passes through us . . . here come our murderers, dressed up . . . their filthy hands adorned in white gloves, they herd us two-by-two . . . tender-hearted brothers and sisters . . . O how hard it is to part from this beautiful world forever . . . let no one who remains alive ever forget—Jewish boys and girls from our Jewish street, innocent of any wrong-doing. Wreak vengeance on our murderers.

The will of the members of "Dror": signed by Sheindel Schwartz, Leah Fish, Rachel Fogelman, and David Aisenberg. These words were written on the wall of the Kovel synagogue in which the Jews were concentrated before being taken to be killed.

Greetings to our comrades from a group of *halutzim* about to die. We remained faithful to our cause to the end. Avenge our blood that is spilled.

Part of a will written by a woman of Kovel, to her husband; carved on the synagogue wall.

Reuben Atlas, this is to inform you that here, in this place, your wife Gina and your son Imosz were murdered. Our child cried bitterly; he did not want to die. Go forth to battle and avenge the blood of your wife and your only son. We die for no crime whatever.

Gina Atlas

The will of a young woman, written on the same synagogue wall.

I am a daughter of Israel, twenty years old. O how lovely is the world about us! Why should they destroy us when everything within me desires and yearns for life. Have my last minutes really arrived? Vengeance! Come and avenge me, whoever reads this last request of mine.

These lines, written in chalk on a small board, were found by one of the Jews brought in by the Nazis to clear the streets of the Warsaw Ghetto after the Uprising. The charred board was found next to the bodies of a Jewish couple.

Fellow Jews, when you find us, bury my dear wife and me according to our Jewish faith. I request that you say Kaddish three times—for my little eight-year-old son, for my devoted wife, and for me. We lived, we loved each other, we fought, and believed in the God of Israel.

Berl Tomshelski

This note was written to the Blozhever Rebbe by a Polish Jew just before going to his death. The recipient survived the war and read it at a meeting in New York, reported in the Morgen Journal, *Jan. 14, 1946.*

Dear Rebbe:

I write you these lines a few minutes before I go to sanctify God's name. Soon they come to take me to the ovens. I beg you, dear rebbe, if

God saves you from this, then for heaven's sake, perpetuate my name and my wife's name. If you are in Eretz Yisrael, please drive a stone into the holy ground in our names; and if you come to America, please write a Torah scroll in our memory.

My sister's children are with the Christian, Voshilevski, in Greiding [Latvia]. So I ask you to devote your efforts to take them from there and deliver them into Jewish hands. Whatever happens happens, but let them remain Jews. My wife, Shevah bat Hannah, they shot yesterday.

I hope that after my death I will be able to approach your holy ancestors and convey greetings from you and to intercede on your behalf for long life.

Your servant,
Arieh ben Leah Korn

Shulamit Rabinovitch

These letters were written by Shulamit Rabinovitch and her husband from the Kovno Ghetto. They were grandchildren of Rabbi Yitzhak Elchanan Spektor and devoted communal workers in Kovno before and during the war. The letters were addressed to their sons in the United States. We stand in awe of the ethical sensitivity of this couple: The wife takes pride in the fact that her husband did not take advantage of his position to show favoritism to the members of his own family. We also note the date as D-Day.

June 6, 1944

My dear, fortunate sons!

We sense the end is near. It will not be long before they finish us off. On one hand it is good, on the other hand very bad, to die right now. Good that we have lived to see the end come; and bad to die now, a moment before the redemption.

Actually it is not difficult for me to die, or for Papa either. What is very hard, infinitely hard, is the fact that your young brother Shmuel will die when we do. And he is such a wonderful boy. Even under the most brutal conditions he developed into a fine human being; perhaps with less formal education, but with so much humane feeling and refinement, that it would be truly worthwhile for him to remain alive. How few of those who suffered this treatment retained the human image! The struggle for existence is hard and everyone wants to live, to save himself; the law of the jungle is dominant: "Save yourself if you can."

But you may be very proud of your father. He is among those who never took advantage of his public office, never put Shmuel or me ahead of the other sufferers for whom he was responsible. How we wish you could have some knowledge about these past three painful years. I hope that some will survive and that you will receive some word about our sufferings and our dying. It is now in its fourth year and the end is approaching. It didn't really pay for us to hold out and suffer so long and then not to survive. Were *they* the righteous ones (if there is such a thing), those who were first to go? For years we learned so much,

suffered so much. We could teach others so very much, and it is too bad that it all comes to nothing, along with us. Were we to be rescued, we could dry up the oceans, and demonstrate with how little a person can get along! If I could only bequeath you the ability to get along with little and the ability to do everything for yourself, then you, being free, could never be unhappy.

I have already written you several letters with various dates and have left them for you at a number of locations. I doubt, however, whether you will receive them.

Our greatest consolation and good fortune is that you are not here. But, dear children, don't take foolish things to heart. Be happy, contented people; be good human beings and loyal sons of your oppressed nation. Never abandon your land or your people. Fight for freedom and social justice. Be just and honest; and under normal conditions this is so easy! We speak of you very often, and you are our consolation. Whenever Muka gets very depressed, he says: "Mama, how I'd like to see Amos and Nioma again."

There is still a remnant left here of your friends, boys as well as girls. They mention you often with affection and with ungrudging envy. Know how to appreciate your good fortune and use it not for yourselves alone but for others both near and distant. Lighten the life of your grandfather, grandmother, aunts, and uncles who have also survived. And don't mourn for us with tears and words, but rather with deeds. We were not useless here; in any way we could we tried to make things easier for those around us. I am leaving the world with almost a clear conscience. I lived my life. I have no complaints to anyone. It is a matter of fate; I believe in *beshert,* that things are destined. But why Muka? That is our greatest sorrow. I regret that I cannot communicate to you everything we have experienced. You will probably know something; but whatever you will ever hear and know, the reality is a thousand times more horrible and more painful. Words don't exist to tell it; no colors exist with which to represent it.

I hope you are under the influence of your grandfather, grandmother, and Aunt Jennie. Obey them and be good people. Too young you have become orphans. But better to be orphans there than to be with father

and mother here. I kiss you very warmly. Kiss and greet all those near to me, whoever may be there. After all, I know nothing about anyone, just as no one knows about us. We have been buried alive here for three years now.

Your mother

IRMA GRESE AND CHICHA

IS THE FACE a mirror? Is that mirror incapable of recording so much cruelty that it makes a complete turnabout and records beauty instead? How else could Irma Grese have been so perfectly beautiful? Flawless skin. A head of naturally blond hair. Almost perfect features. Who made this beautiful beast? Who was responsible for this mockery?

Irma Grese—dressed in immaculate SS uniform, usually with a light-blue shirt, a silver pistol in her holster, a huge dog at her side. The beautiful monster, our *Oberscharführerin,* our twice daily visitor, trailing her merciless terror behind her. Bisexual.

It is said that Chicha appeals to her. This manifests itself only in the fact that she always recognizes her and either tortures her more than the others or (on one occasion) does not send her off to die. This was the extent of her lesbian behavior toward Chicha. But torture her she did, in a fiendish manner, one particular afternoon.

Lager C, our *Lager,* was designed to hold 32,000 prisoners, 1,000 in each *Block* (barracks). On this late summer afternoon, the 32,000 prisoners, in rows of five, were once again being counted—*Zählappell,* they called

it—and Grese was doing the counting. This was often a sham, with the SS claiming that a prisoner was missing, and therefore we would have to stand upright in line until every single prisoner was accounted for. Indeed, the SS needed no excuses, and certainly no one had ever escaped, but the device must have amused them, so frequently did they resort to it.

Now, as Grese counted, she came not from the *Lagerstrasse*—where we could see her approaching and thus ready ourselves to stand up straight—but instead from behind the *Blocks.* Such surprises always worked in favor of the SS and left us more helpless than before. At the rear of a column of *Fünferreihe* (rows of five prisoners), a girl was sitting on the ground to gather enough strength to stand erect for the moment when Grese would appear.

At *Zählappell* all prisoners must stand erect for whatever number of hours the roll call lasts. It is one of the sacred rituals. Any deviation is a mortal sin. In retrospect, it seems to me that not standing erect was a subtle sign of the spirit ebbing away, the readiness to be off to the *Kremchy* (the crematorium). This is, perhaps, too broad a generalization; nonetheless, the conclusion is inescapable, because the life force seems to have pushed us always to stand straight for just one more *Zählappell.* I did not think of it then, but what, if not the life force, made me stand erect with a 104-degree fever, with typhus so severe that our dear emaciated doctor friend, a fellow prisoner, kept saying, "At home, with the best of care, you would have died long ago"?

The girl resting on the ground was caught in the act by Grese. But Grese attributed the "crime" not to the girl, but to Chicha. Grese's attraction to Chicha, as her whole

life did, took an aberrant form. She yanked Chicha out of the line to punish her. She dragged her to the center of the *Lagerstrasse* for all to see how crime does not pay. She made her kneel, lifted Chicha's arms high in the air, and placed two heavy rocks in her hands. She then ordered Chicha to hold her arms straight up for the duration of the *Zählappell*. *"And no wavering of the arms! If you do, you'll die! I'll return to check on you."* And so she did, over and over again, taunting Chicha, *"Have you had enough? Do you like it?"* She would touch Chicha's arms with her whip. *"They are not straight enough. There you go."*

Thousands of eyes stared at the bonelike creature in the *Lagerstrasse* seemingly holding two mountains, so frail did she look in comparison to the rocks. She, the rock herself—with all the prisoners' eyes turned heavenward in prayer: "God, do not let her drop the rocks, because then she'll die, and a little bit of our spirit, our determination to live and tell this tale, will die with her. God, help us to imbue her with our unified spirit, keep her arms straight, keep our souls riveted to hers, and maybe we'll all live. Do not desert us now. The hour that pits good against evil is right here, right now, on this ugly piece of land, mutilated by gas chambers and crematoriums that devour by the millions the highest form of life, each of which took nine months to cry out. They cry no more. Their silence deafens Chicha's ears. Their silence straightens Chicha's arms. The chorus of the dead silently whisper in her soul, 'Keep your arms straight. Keep your arms straight. For the dead and for the living. For the dead and for the living.' "

A fury of thoughts rushed through our heads: *That human being out there on display in the* Lagerstrasse *is our sister. A halo is glowing around her shriveled body. Her strength is being tested ferociously. Her three sisters' strength is being tested ferociously, too. Will she make it? How much longer can we endure her endurance? Trust me! Trust us!*

The gentile woman from Budapest, she of noble birth, who was sent to Auschwitz because she had committed an unpardonable crime—she had helped her Jewish friends—I no longer remember her name, only her aristocratic face, drawn and hungry. She had been the fifth person in our *Fünferreihe*. She died in the ovens later, but now she was with us, and we loved her, and she loved us. There had not been any need for intellectual utterances for a long while now. Only the language of survival was of import here. Yet with her, on occasion, we actually talked of books. Strange must be the ways of the hungry, for even while the body is starving, the mind may crave nourishment too.

This gentile woman stood with us now as we watched Chicha, and her words will linger in my mind for all my days to come:

> I had to save my friends. I just had to. Yet, through these months of suffering, I have thought of the luxurious ways of the privileged that I gave up. Yes, at times—ashamed as I am to say it—doubts, even regret, kept creeping into my head. But today [and she took a long, compassionate look at Chicha] I know with absolute certainty why I am here. This is where I belong. I could not be anywhere else. Guilt from a lavish life would tear my guts asunder while all of this is taking place around me. At this moment in history I belong here, with you, with the innocent, with Chicha, with her arms raised toward the heavens. I belong standing next to the three of you, caressing your wounded

hearts, and I tell you with absolute certainty that she will make it.

As we stood there in our columns, endless hours passed. At last, Grese returned. She strode up to Chicha. She knew she had been defeated. "Put those rocks down," she said.

REGINA

IT IS NOW November 1944, six months after we arrived, and the four of us are still alive. We have avoided every single selection so far. But now it is Sunday morning, and there is a sudden selection—sudden, as always.

Regina, our little sister, is too young, too broken in spirit and body. She will not possibly be able to make it. She is all too ready for the oven. But it cannot happen. We must keep her alive. We love her too dearly.

Mengele is selecting a little distance away from us. He is selecting the *Muselmanns,* those who are totally emaciated, those who have no possibility of being chosen for work transport. He is selecting for the oven.

Suddenly, frantically, we try to make Regina healthier looking, older looking (she is only fifteen and a half). Mengele must not have his way. We will keep her alive.

One of us has a piece of cloth. We place it on Regina's head as a kerchief. We make her stand on tiptoes while she pleads that she has no strength for such superhuman efforts. We pinch her face to an unnatural redness . . .

Mengele passes her by.

This day the crematorium has been cheated of our precious sister. This day Hitler has lost and we have won—wit against might. We will live on for another day.

my feet were strips of blanket. At last the Kapos and prison elders took notice and began the process of admitting us into the camp. We were stripped naked and our bodies searched for tools or potential weapons; then we were sent for delousing and a bath.

I received clean clothes and wooden clogs. My tattoo number was no longer any use except as a record of the past. We were issued new numbers of Buchenwald registry on pieces of cloth, and told to sew them on our striped jackets and trousers. As I waited to receive my new number, which was 130508, one of the elder inmates began interrogating me. He was interested in the details of our march, how long it had taken and how many of us were shot along the way.

Suddenly I found myself behind what looked like an office, next to the camp secretary filling out all sorts of forms and documents. My name, nationality, previous prison number, as well as home address were emphasized. He made out a *Haftlingspersonalbogen des KL Buchenwald* (prison personnel history card), *Arbeitskarte des KL Buchenwald* (work card), *Nummernkarte des KL Buchenwald* (prison number card), *Schreibstugenkarte des KL Buchenwald* (barracks card), *Haftlingspersonalkarte des KL Buchenwald* (prison personnel card), *Revierkarte des KL Buchenwald* (hospital record), and the documents, which certified me as a Jewish, non-Orthodox political prisoner.

What I couldn't have known at the time was that this man was one of a large group of political activists—socialist and communist prisoners who had banded into a large and efficient underground organization within the camp society. They were able to give aid to the ill and save the dying, and at the same time prepare themselves for the day of resistance and liberation. In the years that followed I revisited Buchenwald, as I had a compulsive wish to see the place in which I had been liberated. It was the liberation process of my imprisonment which set the stage of my new life. Thus I walked through the camp and was able to better understand the full impact and horror of this huge apparatus for

imprisonment, death and destruction. It was here that Ilse Koch, the Bitch of Buchenwald, as she was referred to, vented her sadistic cruelties, and the SS doctors conducted medical experiments on inmates to develop new strains of vaccines for the IG Farben trust. The human guinea pigs inevitably died. The careful German records show that 238,980 inmates were admitted to Buchenwald, and almost all of them were used as slave labor for German industry. It was here that the SS actually hired out the prisoners to the industrial trusts, and made huge fortunes from their labor—over 60 million marks profit in 1944 alone.

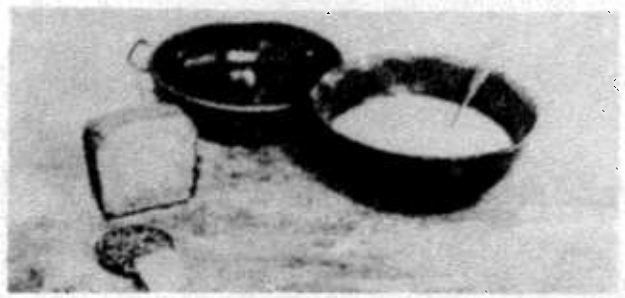
Standing at the crematorium and other sites of horror (hangings, torture, the special Nazi execution of shooting through the neck), it was with an indescribable flood of painful memory that I conjured up the vision of Buchenwald concentration camp in 1945: the strange faces, the hugeness of the place and the starving, emaciated crowds of prisoners milling about. I remember clearly that then, as now, the division of Buchenwald into two camps was quite marked.

As I took my first walk through the camp on that cold February day of 1945, I listened and questioned. I learned that the main camp was occupied mostly by political prisoners of different nationalities. The "Little Camp," as it was known, was an isolation place for the condemned, the hopeless. It was also a special breeding place for disease, hunger, misery, and sheer death.

At first I was assigned to the hastily constructed infirmary, called the Revere Block, because I was stricken with typhus. The barracks had shelf-like bunks, each of which held five inmates. They were victims of all sorts of disease, indiscriminately crammed into those shelves, and made to stay there, and ordered out only to be counted. Day after day I lay on my back on the hard surface of the shelves without any cover, without any heat, using my clogs as pillows—just dying away slowly.

The daily ration, distributed once, always in the morning, consisted of a quarter loaf of black bread and some kind of

PRISON GARB



Concentration Camp Slave Laborers Daily Ration: watery soup, imitation tea or coffee, a small piece of bread, and from time to time an extra allowance of margarine and a thin slice of imitation salami.

imitation coffee or tea. Each day, with outstretched hand, we received the long-awaited piece of bread and the sip of coffee or tea. No sooner had it been eaten, than I began to long for the next day's ration. The vicious torture from hunger was total. There wasn't anything to occupy the mind, so bread was the only wish, the only thing we could think of, the only thing we could talk about, the only thing we could dream about. It was by bread and by bread alone that we hoped to survive. I was transferred to the "Little Camp" and it was a frightening and horrible place, always mud-ridden, cold and windy. The barracks had previously been used as horse stables; they each had stalls for 28 horses and each was packed with about two thousand prisoners. With the sudden influx of prisoners fleeing westward from the advancing Russians, Buchenwald became grossly overcrowded.

Two large tents were set up within the camp, and there were sometimes as many as six thousand prisoners jammed into it. Disease was rampant, hacking and coughing was constantly heard. I discovered that I was in Barracks #56, designated for those dying from typhus. The pushcarts were ever around, constantly busy shuttling the dead to the nearby crematoria. The ovens could not consume the dead fast enough, and the corpses piled up at each barracks awaiting their turn to be consumed to ashes.

I heard there were nightly gatherings at the back of the barracks for Jewish evening services. I collected my strength and joined them in the evening prayers; suddenly I recognized a familiar face, someone I thought I knew. Perhaps a cousin, an uncle, or a friend from home.

"You look familiar to me," I said.

"So do you," he replied.

But I could see that he was uncertain. I could feel his eyes take me in, and I wondered why he looked me up and down so intently. It was eerie. This old man was a walking skeleton. Perhaps what I felt was an aura of death about him. And then it struck me that he was looking at me in much the same way. It was my awareness

that I, too, was a walking skeleton; ill for weeks with typhoid, dragging myself about, with nothing to eat but bread and water. The pity in the old man's eyes told me more fully than any mirror could just what I looked like.

"I am the son of *Hersh-Ber* Bernard Mermelstein," I told him. "From Munkacs. You know . . . Munkacs."

He looked at me with a start. "Don't you remember me? I'm your father's friend, the son of Shimshe the wine maker. *Oi, nebech!*" he added, "Oh what a pity!" He went on to elaborate, to tell me about my father, as he looked at me.

"What a pity," I echoed in wonderment. "What do you mean? Why are you expressing sorrow for my father? Why are you letting it dangle there before me unadorned, undesignated as a subject or object?"

"You don't know?" he asked cautiously.

"What! What! What don't I know?" I demanded.

His pale features turned whiter, and he began to walk away from me. Then I knew him.

"You're Shimshe Friedman's son!" I cried. The appellation came to me just as I heard it at home. I pulled him by the shoulder and literally spun him to me; he was so slight. He looked at me, concerned. My question could contain itself no longer. "Where is my father?" I demanded to know.

But I knew before he could answer. It was visible in his eyes, in the sudden sagging of his body, and in the hesitancy with which he answered me.

"I thought you knew. It happened during December...December 18th...I remember the date exactly, because it was the last day of Channukah. The evening before we had no longer been able to "organize" enough wax to light the eight candles. It didn't seem to matter anymore. Nobody had any hope left the Maccabees would rise again, that the strong would once more be given into the hands of the weak. The light in your father's eyes had been growing dimmer and dimmer, but that night it seemed to flare up again. Maybe in honor of Channukah...maybe a

remembrance of his hopes for you. In the morning he simply did not wake up."

Shimshe's shoulders straightened up a bit. The old man was moved by the moment, and sensed the significance of his mission—to tell the son the worth of his father. "Your father was a hard worker. He worked hard, extremely hard. He tried to stay out of trouble by working himself to death. Of course he smoked alot, and used to trade his meager food ration for cigarettes. Then one morning, he simply didn't wake up. The effort proved too much for him. Your father, your father, your poor father."

My eyes swam. Shimshe took me by the shoulder, and with his hands wiped away the tears. "Moishele. Yes, Moishele, your father called you. Be proud, Moishele, that he was your father." Then he concluded by urging me, "Don't give up hope, have faith, my son."

I was too overcome to clamber to my shelf that night, and slept on the floor beside those who had died during the day. For me, my father was among them.

Morning came and I looked for someone to turn to. I walked from one barracks to another until I found Elijah, a frail, bent youngster from Sighet. The other was Berry, who was from Munkacs. Berry Spitz and I had played on the same soccer team. I remembered him as the left striker and I the right striker. We played well as a team. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw Berry lying near death inside the rack. I wanted to help him, but what could I do? He told me about many of our friends who were with him at the coal mines in Jaworzna. "You remember my father?" I asked. He didn't hear me, so I asked him again, "Don't you remember him?" He looked at me strangely, understanding that I spoke of him in the past tense.

"How did you find out?" he wanted to know.

Elijah listened in silence, his eyes brimming with tears. As he realized that I had just heard of my father's death, he began to cry softly. I learned that he was crying not only in sympathy for me,

but for the loss of his father too.

Elijah was a sensitive boy, with a strong nose and haunting eyes. There was pain and suffering in his eyes. Elijah cried for his father every time I saw him thereafter.

I discovered through Berry that Lajos, too, had been in Jaworzna, working in the coal mines side by side with father. I began to envy Lajos, but then a fearful thought hit me. I remembered the words father had spoken in Auschwitz. "But if we stay together, we shall see each other's sufferings, and that would be the greatest suffering of all." How they must have suffered together, I thought. But Berry didn't know what happened to Lajos. After a lengthy talk and some tears, I returned to my barracks.

That night, as the inmates gathered for evening prayers, I joined them, this time as a mourner saying Kaddish, the Hebrew prayer for the dead, for my father. It was a prayer for peace on earth, a peace, I presumed, that would be hastened because of the merits of my father's deeds. Tears rolled down my cheeks, as the words I heard from others came to my lips for the first time.

"May He who makes peace on high make peace for us and all Israel." It seemed a prayer hopeless of fulfillment, and yet I finished the Kaddish with a feeling of relief.

The next day I began to seek out someone who knew something about the rest of my family, but to no avail. Later in the day, I walked to the gate that separated the "Little Camp" from the main camp and began to inquire of the by-passers about Lajos. No one had heard of him and I couldn't find anyone who would have known him. I crouched by the fence and just watched the inmates go by. Then I thought I saw Bram. I let out a yell, and he knew it was me before he saw me. He bounded toward the gate demanding where I'd been. Why wasn't I in the main camp with them?

"You're in the morgue, don't you know?" he said.

"It doesn't matter," I replied. "There's little hope left in me. My father's dead, and I haven't heard anything of Lajos. If only there was some news about him, I could have more will to live."

But Bram was not prepared to accept this. "You must collect your strength and hold onto your courage. The end is near. I can smell it. We have come a long way, and we have fought hard to survive, and we will survive! Don't give these bastards the satisfaction of taking your life now."

He reached across and took my hand. He pressed it firmly with both of his. "It'll soon be over," he repeated. "In a matter of days now, we'll be free again."

With Bram's words in my ears, I began to collect my thoughts as I walked back to the barracks. What had we been doing there in the "Little Camp"? ... no work details, no supervision, no duties of any kind. It was death just waiting for us it seemed. The change was unnerving and debilitating. And every day more and more corpses were hauled away.

Our only function was to line up, day after day, in front of our barracks, only to be counted as dead or still alive. Hour after hour we stood in line to be carefully counted, again and again. Slowly I realized *that* that was precisely what we were doing there ... being counted, to see how many of us had died. *WE WERE IN THE DEATH SECTION.* And the books had been kept with compulsive efficiency, and the records in perfect order to the end.

Endlessly, we continued to spend our days lying on our racks, lice-ridden, shivering with cold, starved for a bite of food, and crushed with bitterness and grief. Then the weather changed, and with the change came the sun with its warming rays. We were permitted to spend most of the day outdoors. The warmth of sun was a healing balm that I never expected to feel again. There were those who felt well enough to lay out in the sun and remove their lice-infested prison garments. I removed mine and spent most of the sunny days outside the barracks sunbathing, coupled with lice picking.

And then a new sound took over our lives, one which promised more than it threatened: the scream of air-raid sirens. At every warning we would quickly be driven into the barracks. The alarms were pleasant sounds to us, and we waited for them each day. As the days passed, the raids became more frequent and lasted for longer periods of time. Soon they took place at night as well as by day. The planes appeared and disappeared, and we knew they were Allied planes. Occasionally they flew low and the pilots would see us and wave.

All of this gave us new hope, and some began to think once again of living; but many were too far gone, and continued to die of disease and starvation. We talked for hours of the possibility of liberation, of our families, and the homes we had long since left. This made it possible for us to ignore, or at least forget for a while, the dreadful reality of the concentration camp in which we were trapped.

We talked and dreamed of our past constantly. It was those dreams and illusions that kept breath in us. Ben, the dreamer of Galicia (a region of Poland), sat on the ground next to me. He was describing in minute detail his favorite Sabbath dish, a common topic of discussion. He was licking his fingers and wiping his mouth as he described the *chulint* and the delicious stuffing it contained. He built himself up to a feverish pitch, and then suddenly took a deep breath and fell to the side with his eyes and mouth wide open. I was startled. As often as I had seen death, I had never learned to accept it calmly. I rushed to Ben's side and tried to revive him. It was no use. He was better off now, I heard others remark. First I bristled at this, but then I began to realize they were right.

Two men with a pushcart rushed over to where he lay, grabbed his arms and legs, and dragged him off to the pile of the dead in front of the barracks.

March went by. The war news was favorable to us and we heard rumors that the Americans were advancing rapidly. Americans! Strange. All these months we had waited for the Russians to free

us. Somehow it seemed better this way. The Russians conjured up visions that were mixed with fears for Jews. Somehow the Americans would make us freer. Allied planes continued to fly low over our heads, almost if they had been assigned to guard us. Because the raids in the area were more frequent and longer, we were no longer permitted to leave the barracks.

Each day our food ration was cut and many times not distributed at all. It was a clear, sunny day so I decided to sneak out of the barracks, and joined a small group of inmates nearby who had a small fire going. Elijah was among them. I went to pick grass, and scrounged a small tin cup. I filled my cup with grass and I added water and salt and put the can on the fire to cook.

The green delicacy had only begun to stew when an air-raid siren went off. It was fierce, planes flying all over, and soon we recognized them as American planes. I poured the water from the can, rushed into the barracks, and together with Elijah ate the grass raw. As bombs exploded not far away from the camp, we calmly chomped and chomped at the sweet green nourishment.

With April came the clear echoes of liberation. On the fourth of the month, we gratefully enjoyed hearing a new word—evacuation. Rumors spread that the entire camp would be evacuated, but no one was sure what our destination might be.

The main camp began first. I could hear the shouted commands, screams and constant shooting as the guards mustered all their resources to get the 50,000 prisoners in the main camp to line up for evacuation. Within days the camp looked virtually empty. It seemed to be going smoothly as the inmates yielded to the evacuation, but then many began to resist by hiding in the Little Camp. Suddenly the typhus barracks and all of the Little Camp became the most sought out hiding place. It was safest because none from the main camp, in particular the SS, would dare enter the area for fear of catching the contagious disease. In the meantime, a turmoil broke out, and no one knew what would happen from one minute to the next, so I took advantage of the situation and crossed into the main section of the camp. There I

who becomes conscious of the responsibility he bears toward a human being who affectionately waits for him, or to an unfinished work, will never be able to throw away his life. He knows the "why" for his existence, and will be able to bear almost any "how."

The opportunities for collective psychotherapy were naturally limited in camp. The right example was more effective than words could ever be. A senior block warden who did not side with the authorities had, by his just and encouraging behavior, a thousand opportunities to exert a far-reaching moral influence on those under his jurisdiction. The immediate influence of behavior is always more effective than that of words. But at times a word was effective too, when mental receptiveness had been intensified by some outer circumstances. I remember an incident when there was occasion for psychotherapeutic work on the inmates of a whole hut, due to an intensification of their receptiveness because of a certain external situation.

It had been a bad day. On parade, an announcement had been made about the many actions that would, from then on, be regarded as sabotage and therefore punishable by immediate death by hanging. Among these were crimes such as cutting small strips from our old blankets (in order to improvise ankle supports) and very minor "thefts." A few days previously a semi-starved prisoner had broken into the potato store to steal a few pounds of potatoes. The theft had been discovered and some prisoners had recognized the "burglar." When the camp authorities heard about it they ordered that the guilty man be given up to them or the whole camp would starve for a day. Naturally the 2,500 men preferred to fast.

On the evening of this day of fasting we lay in our earthen huts—in a very low mood. Very little was said and

every word sounded irritable. Then, to make matters even worse, the light went out. Tempers reached their lowest ebb. But our senior block warden was a wise man. He improvised a little talk about all that was on our minds at that moment. He talked about the many comrades who had died in the last few days, either of sickness or of suicide. But he also mentioned what may have been the real reason for their deaths: giving up hope. He maintained that there should be some way of preventing possible future victims from reaching this extreme state. And it was to me that the warden pointed to give this advice.

God knows, I was not in the mood to give psychological explanations or to preach any sermons—to offer my comrades a kind of medical care of their souls. I was cold and hungry, irritable and tired, but I had to make the effort and use this unique opportunity. Encouragement was now more necessary than ever.

So I began by mentioning the most trivial of comforts first. I said that even in this Europe in the sixth winter of the Second World War, our situation was not the most terrible we could think of. I said that each of us had to ask himself what irreplaceable losses he had suffered up to then. I speculated that for most of them these losses had really been few. Whoever was still alive had reason for hope. Health, family, happiness, professional abilities, fortune, position in society—all these were things that could be achieved again or restored. After all, we still had all our bones intact. Whatever we had gone through could still be an asset to us in the future. And I quoted from Nietzsche: *"Was mich nicht umbringt, macht mich stärker."* (That which does not kill me, makes me stronger.)

Then I spoke about the future. I said that to the impartial the future must seem hopeless. I agreed that each of us could guess for himself how small were his chances of survival. I told them that although there was still no typhus

epidemic in the camp, I estimated my own chances at about one in twenty. But I also told them that, in spite of this, I had no intention of losing hope and giving up. For no man knew what the future would bring, much less the next hour. Even if we could not expect any sensational military events in the next few days, who knew better than we, with our experience of camps, how great chances sometimes opened up, quite suddenly, at least for the individual. For instance, one might be attached unexpectedly to a special group with exceptionally good working conditions—for this was the kind of thing which constituted the "luck" of the prisoner.

But I did not only talk of the future and the veil which was drawn over it. I also mentioned the past; all its joys, and how its light shone even in the present darkness. Again I quoted a poet—to avoid sounding like a preacher myself—who had written, *"Was Du erlebst, kann keine Macht der Welt Dir rauben."* (What you have experienced, no power on earth can take from you.) Not only our experiences, but all we have done, whatever great thoughts we may have had, and all we have suffered, all this is not lost, though it is past; we have brought it into being. Having been is also a kind of being, and perhaps the surest kind.

Then I spoke of the many opportunities of giving life a meaning. I told my comrades (who lay motionless, although occasionally a sigh could be heard) that human life, under any circumstances, never ceases to have a meaning, and that this infinite meaning of life includes suffering and dying, privation and death. I asked the poor creatures who listened to me attentively in the darkness of the hut to face up to the seriousness of our position. They must not lose hope but should keep their courage in the certainty that the hopelessness of our struggle did not detract from its dignity and its meaning. I said that someone looks down on each of

us in difficult hours—a friend, a wife, somebody alive or dead, or a God—and he would not expect us to disappoint him. He would hope to find us suffering proudly—not miserably—knowing how to die.

And finally I spoke of our sacrifice, which had meaning in every case. It was in the nature of this sacrifice that it should appear to be pointless in the normal world, the world of material success. But in reality our sacrifice did have a meaning. Those of us who had any religious faith, I said frankly, could understand without difficulty. I told them of a comrade who on his arrival in camp had tried to make a pact with Heaven that his suffering and death should save the human being he loved from a painful end. For this man, suffering and death were meaningful; his was a sacrifice of the deepest significance. He did not want to die for nothing. None of us wanted that.

The purpose of my words was to find a full meaning in our life, then and there, in that hut and in that practically hopeless situation. I saw that my efforts had been successful. When the electric bulb flared up again, I saw the miserable figures of my friends limping toward me to thank me with tears in their eyes. But I have to confess here that only too rarely had I the inner strength to make contact with my companions in suffering and that I must have missed many opportunities for doing so.

We now come to the third stage of a prisoner's mental reactions: the psychology of the prisoner after his liberation. But prior to that we shall consider a question which the psychologist is asked frequently, especially when he has personal knowledge of these matters: What can you tell us about the psychological make-up of the camp guards? How is it possible that men of flesh and blood could treat others

time for mourning. When all was ready, the food cooked, the bundles tied together, they unloosened their hair, took off their shoes, placed the Yahrzeit candles on the ground and lit them according to the customs of their fathers, and sat on the bare soil in a circle for the lamentations, praying and weeping all the night. We collected in a group in front of their door, and we experienced within ourselves a grief that was new for us, the ancient grief of the people that has no land, the grief without hope of the exodus which is renewed every century.

Dawn came on us like a betrayer; it seemed as though the new sun rose as an ally of our enemies to assist in our destruction. The different emotions that overcame us, of resignation, of futile rebellion, of religious abandon, of fear, of despair, now joined together after a sleepless night in a collective, uncontrolled panic. The time for meditation, the time for decision was over, and all reason dissolved into a tumult, across which flashed the happy memories of our homes, still so near in time and space, as painful as the thrusts of a sword.

Many things were then said and done among us; but of these it is better that there remain no memory.

With the absurd precision to which we later had to accustom ourselves, the Germans held the roll-call. At the end the officer asked '*Wieviel Stück?*' The corporal saluted smartly and replied that there were six hundred and fifty 'pieces' and that all was in order. They then loaded us on to the buses and took us to the station of Carpi. Here the train was waiting for us, with our escort for the journey. Here we received the first blows: and it was so new and senseless that we felt no pain, neither in body nor in spirit. Only a profound amazement: how can one hit a man without anger?

There were twelve goods wagons for six hundred and fifty men; in mine we were only forty-five, but it was a small wagon. Here then, before our very eyes, under our very feet, was one of those notorious transport trains, those which never return, and of which, shuddering and always a little incredulous, we had so often heard speak. Exactly like this, detail for detail:

goods wagons closed from the outside, with men, women and children pressed together without pity, like cheap merchandise, for a journey towards nothingness, a journey down there, towards the bottom. This time it is us who are inside.

Sooner or later in life everyone discovers that perfect happiness is unrealizable, but there are few who pause to consider the antithesis: that perfect unhappiness is equally unattainable. The obstacles preventing the realization of both these extreme states are of the same nature: they derive from our human condition which is opposed to everything infinite. Our ever-insufficient knowledge of the future opposes it: and this is called, in the one instance, hope, and in the other, uncertainty of the following day. The certainty of death opposes it: for it places a limit on every joy, but also on every grief. The inevitable material cares oppose it: for as they poison every lasting happiness, they equally assiduously distract us from our misfortunes and make our consciousness of them intermittent and hence supportable.

It was the very discomfort, the blows, the cold, the thirst that kept us aloft in the void of bottomless despair, both during the journey and after. It was not the will to live, nor a conscious resignation; for few are the men capable of such resolution, and we were but a common sample of humanity.

The doors had been closed at once, but the train did not move until evening. We had learnt of our destination with relief. Auschwitz: a name without significance for us at that time, but it at least implied some place on this earth.

The train travelled slowly, with long, unnerving halts. Through the slit we saw the tall pale cliffs of the Adige Valley and the names of the last Italian cities disappear behind us. We passed the Brenner at midday of the second day and everyone stood up, but no one said a word. The thought of the return journey stuck in my heart, and I cruelly pictured to myself the inhuman joy of that other journey, with doors open, no one wanting to flee, and the first Italian names ... and I looked around and wondered how many, among that poor human dust, would be struck by fate. Among the forty-five people in

HOPE IS SHOUTING

AS MORE AND MORE areas in eastern Germany are liberated, the roads begin to yield survivors making their way on foot toward a railroad rumored to be in a town believed to be called Oelsk. Our village of Jagadschutz comes to life.

Hundreds of death-defiers begin to appear on the road. Isn't it strange? After all they have seen, lived through, suffered, known—they do not seem broken. They feed on insane kinds of hopes. So do we.

"Where do you come from?"

"Are you Hungarian? Polish? Italian?"

"Which camp were you in? For how long?"

"Did you escape, or was the camp liberated?"

"How many of your family survived?"

They march, and we shout questions at them. They keep shouting back.

"Did you know the Kleins from Kisvárda? The Weiszes from Miskolc? The Roths from Nyíregyháza? The Halperts from Hajdunánás?"

Names and descriptions fill the air. Hope is shouting everywhere.

"Have you seen Rosa or Sarah from Ajak?"

"Have you seen our sister Cipi?"

"How long have you been walking, marching?"

"Where are you going, and why?"

"Everybody is dead."

"No. No. No. My cousin found her sister yesterday. They say my uncle is alive. Rivka's cousin is supposed to be alive somewhere. Somebody heard it from somebody else, just yesterday."

The questions from us to the marchers, the questions from them to us, are irrepressible, constant. The marching language of hope is the sound of a new kind of after liberation symphony rising from the ashes of the Jews. There were seven in the Katz family, nine in the Gottesman, twelve in the Weisz. How many survived?

The refusal to accept the murder of our families, even after the stench of burning flesh that we know so well, and that stubborn smell of life on the road cannot be explained by anyone.

Who has had training enough in the humanities, in the mind-healing professions, in the emotional, philosophical, and literary terrain to be able to understand this mysterious insistence on life? Either the inward gazes, the depressed faces, and the dragging bodies are not too many, or we do not want to see them. Our eyes are stubborn. They search for life only. Intermittently there is a shriek because someone is told of someone's survival, because we recognize someone, or because we ourselves are recognized.

There is nothing inconsequential about the chaos that Hitler has wrought on these roads. It all deals with life, with death, with emotions, with love, with anxiety. Nothing is unmarred by what Hitler did; yet the mystery of humankind resurfacing seemingly unmarred cannot be fathomed. It is almost all there—feelings we used to

have, curiosity about everything, love that we can feel, genuine kindness.

Can it all be true, or are we merely taking a hiatus from all that hate we were forced to endure, and coldness will seep into our hearts not long from now?

God, don't let that happen. This warm shower inside feels good, God. Let us be for a while, let us feel good for a bit. We are tired, God. Living in hate was very hard. Do you hear me, God? Living in hate was very hard.

There is a loving relationship between the road people and us. There is some possibility that maybe someone else in our family is alive. Every day, after our morning's cow work, Chicha, Regina, and I run to the road that draws us to it like a magnet of hope. We must find Philip, our brother. Philip, dear Philip, are you still alive?

Where is Cipi, our sister?

HITLER'S IMPRINT

FROM TIME TO TIME it dawns on us that we have been detached from the rest of humankind. We will have to relearn how to live, how to hold a fork, how to live with the family of man. Too great a task. The resources within us will have to stand up to a nearly impossible struggle.

We have reverence for life, or no reverence at all. We have flare-ups of hope, or are dead within. We know almost everything about life or death. Still, we have to relearn how to walk, step by painfully fragile step. What will, what can, prop us up through these delicate inner negotiations?

A warring land is not without its share of decomposing bodies. They are strewn all around us. We step over them, devoid of any emotion. We no longer can locate the mourning niche for the dead in our shriveled souls.

We perk up only if some rags on the dead can be stolen, if something on the bodies is better than what we, the "living," are wearing.

Our training ground was Auschwitz. It is easy to step over the bodies on the roads of murder country. It is even easier when the bodies are clad in Nazi uniforms. Yet, whatever a body wears, parts of us are dead, and for

Our roads will yet meet again.
Then . . . but why are you crying?
Cry no more, don't be sad. . . .
Because, you see, I'm holding back too. . . .
Well, good-bye, I will see you again!
Give me another kiss and a hug
and take care of yourself,
my dear and sacred love.

NOTE: The author wrote this poem for his wife when they were to be separated on the shutting down of the Plaszow concentration camp.

It was Rebecca Bau who found a place for her husband on Schindler's list. When Amon Goeth heard that Rebecca could do manicures, he summoned her to give him one. He placed a gun at her elbow and told her that if she nicked or scratched him, he would shoot her on the spot. Though she was afraid and sometimes hid, she became his manicurist. Through this job, she came to know members of the house staff, among them Goeth's Jewish secretary, Mietek Pemper. One day Rebecca saw a Nazi guard about to shoot Pemper's mother. She intervened, warning the guard that if Goeth found out who he had killed, he would execute *him.* Pemper's mother told her son, and when the list of Jews that Oskar Schindler would be allowed to take with him to his factory in Czechoslovakia was being drawn up, Rebecca went to Pemper and reminded him of the favor he owed her. He agreed; but when he went to put down her name, she substituted her husband's instead. Many years later, after the release of the film *Schindler's List,* she told a journalist that she had had faith in her own survival, but she feared for her husband: "My husband was more important to me than I was, and I wasn't afraid." That was the first time Joseph Bau learned how he came to be spared the ordeal of the Gross-Rosen concentration camp.

Rebecca Bau was sent to Auschwitz, where she was marked three times for the gas chamber but talked her way out of certain death. During a selection, Josef Mengele took a red spot on her breast to be a sign of illness and pointed her to the line of those to be gassed. She went in the direction of the line, but circled back to the group of naked women still to be examined. Thrice she presented herself and was selected for death. The last time Mengele recognized her and became furious, but she wasn't afraid. She told him she wasn't sick, that the pimple was because she was menstruating. Dubious, because he said women in the camps stopped having periods, Mengele had a Polish woman perform a test with a rag. When the Polish woman verified her story, the "Angel of Death" relented and let Rebecca Bau go to the line of the living.

Thanks to Oskar Schindler, the savior of Jews, and to the heroic Russian army, the sealed gates of the Brinnlitz concentration camp, where I was interned, burst open for all eternity. We, the liberated inmates, still wearing our striped uniforms, dispersed in all directions, but not before emptying the stores of Jewish property looted by the German soldiers. I joined a trio of comrades, and each of us lugged suitcases filled with possessions that became ours when the world of their provisional keepers fell apart. We had no particular goal, and we didn't know the geography where fate had cast us.

Suddenly, on the horizon, we spotted a freight train moving through the unfamiliar landscape. Ignoring the fact that, because of prolonged hunger and dehydration, I scarcely weighed thirty kilos (sixty-six pounds), I started to run with my load, which must have weighed at least twice as much as me. I had made the spontaneous decision to head for my native city of Krakow, where I hoped to find my family waiting for me impatiently, and I was anxious to get on the train. I ran across plowed fields, pushed my way through bushes, and jumped over fences and railroad ties, until, in a state of utter exhaustion, I reached the last car. With my final measure of strength, I heaved my burden and myself aboard, just as the train decided to take a short break and stopped. When the engine began to pull again, I discovered that the car I was in had been uncoupled. I was left behind. When my companions caught up with me, they couldn't stop marveling at how I'd managed to get so far ahead of them, while they all but lacked the energy to follow.

Later that night, another freight train came by. Without asking the crew where it was headed, we pushed our way into a car already crowded wall to wall with passengers and baggage. In total darkness, while shaking with the movement of the train, we tried to learn from the people nearest us where we might find ourselves in the morning, but the answers only added to our confusion. However, from somewhere in the dense crowd a voice boomed out, providing the information we sought. The man who spoke was apparently a smuggler, who knew the district well. He advised us to get off with him at the station after the next, Morawska Ostrowa. From there, we could walk to the Polish-Czech border. It turned out to be good advice, as we soon reached a barbed-wire fence manned by guards. They scrutinized us and our papers, as well as every item of our luggage. Following the inspection, we were allowed to repack the suitcases and cross the border. Hurray! We were finally home! The signs spoke to us in Polish, and we no longer needed clumsy interpreters.

Our "guide" vanished from sight, but he couldn't be of help to us anymore. The locals treated us with friendship and understanding after learning we were Holocaust survivors. A few more miracles had to occur before we reached Krakow, but when we arrived, we

parted company hurriedly, without embraces or hugs, and each of us headed for what used to be his home.

Full of excitement, I ran toward the street where I was born, to the house where I grew up. Nothing had changed, but our former neighbors, whom I met in the corridor, whispered to me that our apartment was now occupied by the caretaker, who kept a knife handy by the door. He had moved in right after my father handed him the key, when the German conquerors forced us to move to the ghetto. I asked no more questions. The neighbors seemed glad to see me alive and offered to put me up until the rest of the family arrived. They also gave me the address of the Jewish Committee, where I could inquire about the fate of my relatives. It took a few visits there and scanning all the lists of survivors before I found out that my mother had died at Bergen-Belsen after the liberation. The American soldiers felt sorry for the emaciated inmates and fed them copious amounts of rich foods. However, their shrunken stomachs weren't able to digest the delicacies, and in one day ten thousand died from overeating. My brother Marcel was somewhere in Germany, and my wife, Rebecca, had left Lichtwerden, the Czech concentration camp, and was injured when the wagon she was in turned over. She was now in a hospital in Freudenthal.

Without taking time to change from my striped camp uniform, I secured a permit to go to Czechoslovakia and set out in search of my wife. Traveling by freight train, the accepted method in those days, I again found myself in Morawska Ostrowa. In a mixture of Polish and Czech, I asked the stationmaster how to get to Freudenthal. The red-capped official pointed to a train that was just leaving and said, "Take this train to Szwinow. There you must jump off while it's still moving and transfer to a passenger train to Freudenthal."

I sat down in the open doorway of a car, my feet dangling outside. Overcome by fatigue, I fell asleep in this dangerous position. When I woke, I realized that I must have passed the place where I

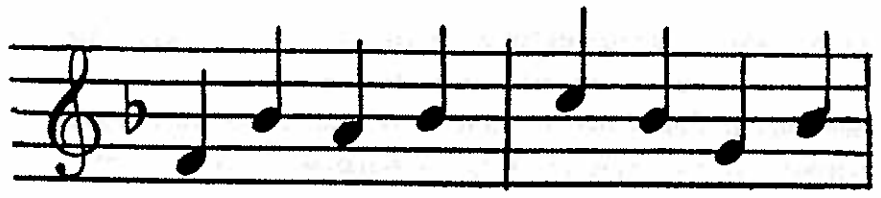
was to have jumped off. It also turned out that the other train was under way on the opposite track, so I would have missed it in any case. I got off at the next station and asked a group of workers how to get to Szwinow. In reply, they burst out laughing and told me that it was far away, but they pointed to a train that was just starting off in the direction I had come from. This time, in order not to miss my stop again, I picked a flatcar without a roof. This turned out to be a poor choice, as it started pouring rain and hail; I was drenched to the core when I arrived in Szwinow and boarded a passenger train. I chose a window seat and, being exhausted and hungry, promptly fell asleep again. Thus I was still in my seat when the conductor ordered everyone off the train. From his explanation in Czech, I gathered that the train I had missed was crossing a bridge when it collapsed, plunging the train into the river. No one knew yet how many passengers had drowned and if there were any survivors. As for us, a bus would take us in the morning to the other side of the river.

Suddenly, a woman seeing my striped uniform accused me of being a German who had escaped from a camp where those accused of war crimes were being held. My protestations that I was a Jewish survivor of a concentration camp were to no avail. She kept shouting abuse and dragged me to the police station. The duty officer examined my papers and, satisfied I was telling the truth, asked how he could be of help. I told him my story about the search for my wife, who had been injured in an overturned wagon.

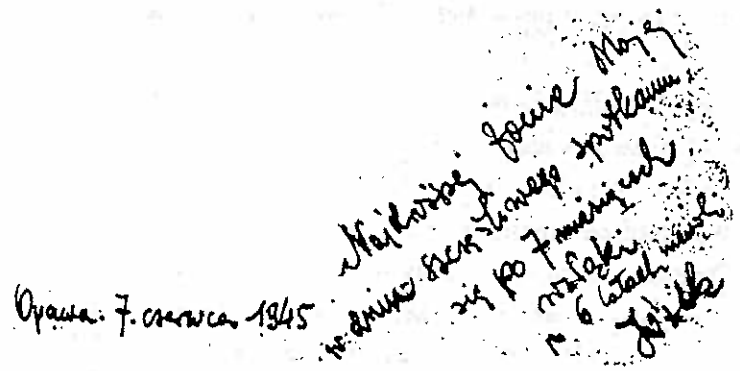
"You know," he said, "here in Opawa we had a similar accident with a wagon. In fact, there are still several girls in the hospital." I asked if they might know my wife; possibly they came from the same camp. In answer, he ordered a policeman to escort me to the hospital. Thus ended my search . . . for there I found Rebecca.

I've tried to describe our reunion, but words have failed me. How can one depict a miracle? I've scanned dozens of pages of recollections from that happy day. I kept correcting sentences and

paragraphs and correcting the corrections, but nothing I could say sufficed. I tried to tell of the Czech woman who dragged me to the police station on account of my striped uniform and caused me to meet Rebecca in Opawa instead of going on to Freudenthal after the train that had plunged into the river without me; of how I entered the hospital with the policeman and whistled the tune we'd used to locate each other at the Plaszow camp. . . .



No, I cannot find the words to describe that wonderful reunion, which defied all the laws of nature. I'll leave it to you, dear reader, to imagine what happened on that fateful evening of June 7, 1945. . . .



"To my most precious wife on the day of our happy reunion after seven months of separation and six years of bondage."
This is the dedication I wrote in the book of poems presented to my wife at our reunion. The book was the size of a cigarette pack, and I had written it by hand in the Plaszow concentration camp.

THE GREAT HUNGER

My multipleated trousers bound to my bony hips by a shoelace,
hiding the shape of my old belly,
like a petrified lump of bread in a ragged pocket.

Hunger has built its nest in my desolate entrails.
It has become fruitful and multiplied,
filling my insides with
thousands of burning hungers.

Hey! Unplug my mouth!
I'm going to gulp down all the granaries in the world.
Breakfast . . . lunch . . . dinner . . .
I'll join the everlasting royal banquet.
I'll gorge myself without restraint,
use my nails for forks to grab the browned, fat meats,
spiced with dill and garlic,
the hot peppered sauces, giving off their tingly, heavenly odors,
the creamy cakes covered with melted butter . . .
and more cakes to tickle my palate,
fried onion sauces with mayonnaise salads and meats,
roasted, cooked, fried, and smoked.

Here come the appetizer, the entrée, and more,
millions of meals, meat and dairy:
May my ears shake with gluttony
and my thirsty eyes fill with lust.
May my chin drip with thick, gluey fat

I'll wipe with neither hand nor sleeve.
May the craving of my tongue fill city squares,
with or without a "bon appétit!"
Eeerup! I'll let out a mighty burp and cry,
"Ladies and gentlemen, just a bit more, until I'm sated."

Meanwhile, I luxuriate in meals digested long ago.
With hands raised to heaven,
I beg for alms like all the world's beggars,
who would bring forth bread from the earth,
though by devious means.

Dear God, have you ever gone hungry?

"I never realized there are so many lame people in our city," said an acquaintance who was obliged to use crutches for a time. For while his legs were healthy and functioned perfectly, he failed to see the unfortunate ones, the lame and the hobbling. Only when he himself was afflicted did he become aware of their misery.

Some years before the war, owing to a dictatorial regime, there were many prisoners in our country's jails. My father once took me for a walk in order to work up an appetite before dinner. We happened to pass by a prison whose windows were enclosed with iron bars.

APRIL 6, 1945

DRESSED IN KHAKI, we are on our way to the pier in an American jeep driven by the American military attaché. On the road I try to piece together the course of events that led up to this moment. I am unable to do so; things have moved so swiftly in the last forty-eight hours. Later, however, I learn what may have happened.

Apparently, the American military attaché was so moved by our story that he contacted his superiors in Washington to ascertain whether our father was indeed living in the United States. Our story proved to be accurate, and the attaché was instructed to place us aboard the first vessel bound for America.

The SS *Brand Whitlock,* which had unloaded a cargo of tanks for the Russians, was leaving the next morning, and the attaché quickly arranged for our passage, together with sixteen liberated American soldiers and a German-American woman who was returning to the States from her fatherland. The woman had been a Nazi sympathizer, although a naturalized U.S. citizen. When Hitler was riding high, she had gone back to Germany to partake in the glory, but now that her erstwhile hero was losing the war, she was scurrying back to her American haven.

At dockside Regina, Chicha, and I, trim in our new military uniforms, alight from the jeep. It can probably not be disputed that we look very attractive. While the attaché boards the ship for last-minute arrangements, the American crewmen on deck, beholding us below, can barely control their delight.

Each face welcomes us. Each wears a smile. We, once despised Jewish girls, are suddenly a delicious sight. We are not abused, lice-filled vermin. Life seems unreal.

It must be real, however, for we feel both the joy of *now* in every vein, and the pain of *then.* Bless you, dear strangers, as you gaze down upon us with affection and curiosity, as we stand in awesome anticipation, as we look up with hope.

The attaché returns and accompanies us to our new home, a floating heavenly home, that will sail on and on and on . . . to America. The attaché introduces us to the various officers and to the captain, who escorts us to a cabin that has been arranged for us.

"Have a pleasant trip," we hear the attaché saying as he shakes hands with us. Then we see him running down the gangplank.

I want to run after him, to hug and kiss him. I want to send a message with him to Hitler, wherever he sits on his disintegrating throne of disaster: "Sir, just one more thing, please. Please tell Adolf that my sisters and I are on the SS *Brand Whitlock,* sailing to America. And, dear sir, we thank you. We thank you ever so much."

I don't move, however, and I never see that good American man again. Oh, my God, what was his name?

Dr. Mengele, we are on our way to America, and we are going to forget every brutal German word you forced us to learn. We are going to learn a new language. We are

going to ask for bread and milk in Shakespeare's tongue. We will learn how to live speaking English and forget how people die speaking German.

The ship detaches itself from land and plunges into the waves of the Black Sea. "Good-bye, Dr. Mengele, you murderer. You robbed us of our family. Seven of us were supposed to go to America. Only three of us are leaving."

I search the sky to see if I can conjure up my mother and my little sister, Potyo. I look in desperate sorrow but can discern no human form. The smoke has vanished. There is not a trace. No grave. Nothing. Absolutely nothing.

My mother lived for just a while—Potyo for less than fourteen years. In a way they didn't really die. They simply became smoke.

How does one bury smoke?

How does one place headstones in the sky?

How does one bring flowers to the clouds?

Mother, Potyo . . . I am trying to say good-bye to you. I am trying to say good-bye.

Will Cipi and Philip ever sail the seas?

The captain seats the German-American woman and me at his table, Regina at the next table. Jack, an officer and the only American Jew aboard, instructs the steward to seat Chicha at his table. Later, when we get to know him better, Jack tells us why.

"While you were standing on the pier," he tells us, "I sized you up from the deck.

"This one's cute," he says, pointing to Regina.

"That one's beautiful," he continues.

"But she's the one for me," he concludes, smiling at Chicha.

The captain, sensing my discomfort because of the German woman's presence, is solicitous and kind. He anticipates my needs and pays special attention to me. Still, for reasons I do not understand, I discover that the captain is disliked by the ship's officers and is unpopular with the crew.

Who is the finest, most adored man aboard?

The chief engineer.

The chief engineer's cabin becomes our daily social hall. Each afternoon, Regina, Chicha, and I, together with the off-duty officers, gather there for a jolly time.

How do we communicate?

With gestures, with laughter. Some speak a little German, as we do. Jack translates in Yiddish. And everyone teaches us English.

In return we teach Hungarian, and, in fun, indulge in childish pranks.

I'm sorry, fellows, but *Sarokrád* is not really shredded sour cabbage. *Sarokrád,* in Hungarian, means, "I shit on you."

We never meant it literally, fellows. You know that. It was all in fun. You taught us words, and we taught you words. And we laughed and laughed and laughed.

We have such good times in the chief engineer's cabin. The only one not included is the captain, who, if he knows of our frolics, must be jealous—and, of course, the German woman. No one sees her, other than at eating times. After each meal she disappears below deck, where the crew and the sixteen passenger soldiers are quartered.

We are protected and looked after by everyone on the

officers' deck. The officers are brothers, fathers, teachers to us. They are not lovers, although they do love us. There is only one true love story in the making—Jack and Chicha—and even Chicha herself cannot believe what is happening.

JACK AND CHICHA

IF THE CHIEF ENGINEER'S CABIN is our gathering place for fun and laughter, Jack's cabin is our refuge for tears and comfort. After all, Jack is the only Jew besides us on board, and we have only recently come from a poisonous, Jew-hating world.

We were uprooted from our land of birth, banished, and butchered. We grew up in a country where nearly everyone who was not Jewish disliked or hated almost everyone who was.

Why—because our people pray in a temple that bears no cross?

At home we did have a number of friends who were Christian. Still, they were so few, we could never feel absolutely safe.

On the SS *Brand Whitlock* we love all these good Christian men around us. We truly love them; they are so kind to us. But can they understand our suffering the way Jack, the son and grandson of Jews who had suffered the pogroms of czarist Russia, can understand it? It is too soon for us not to be wary of Christians. It is natural for us to fear gentiles and to turn more readily to a Jew for solace.

Daily, before each meal, Jack, with menu in hand, ap-

pears at our cabin. In Yiddish he explains each dish to us, so that we can later point out our choices to the waiter. It is one of Jack's most thoughtful acts, and we are so grateful.

But everything Jack does is thoughtful, from providing aspirin to listening to our sorrow. We are his family; he is ours. We have come from such horror—and have met Jack so near in time to that horror—that our relationship is being forged in a very special way.

Jack is not a survivor. He is a native American, our first Jew from the "good life"; for right now he and the ship are all the good that life can offer.

Jack is modest and somewhat shy. Sharing our sorrow and tales of hardship, he tells us of the Great Depression in America and of the hard times his family has endured, with his father barely eking out a living for his wife and eight children, sometimes earning just enough for potatoes. Now his father is in some kind of trucking business and the family is managing.

Because Jack is the first person from the New World, from across the cleansing sea, to touch our lives intimately, he will always be dear to us in our life ahead. Right now, however, he is especially dear to Chicha.

How do the mysterious forces of love work? Has anyone ever found the answer?

Attraction. Chemistry. Animal magnetism. Love at first sight. Words and clichés explain nothing. Language is feeble when confronted with reality, and the reality aboard this American liberty ship at this moment is that two young strangers, each from a world entirely alien to the other, have met and have been drawn together powerfully and tenderly.

Only twenty-four hours after their first meeting at the dining room table, where Jack ordered Chicha's food for

her, the two were openly seeking each other out, finding ways to saunter off together, to be together in odd corners of the vessel at odd hours of the day, to be together beneath the star-filled sky at night.

Up until now, Regina, Chicha, and I have been a virtually inseparable trio; suddenly, Regina and I are finding ourselves increasingly alone, wondering about the whereabouts of our sister Chicha, marveling at the exquisite miracle of it all. Later, when Chicha finally appears, she is radiant and bubbly. She cannot explain exactly where she has been or what is happening to her. Like a mechanical doll, she keeps repeating, "I'm in love. I'm in love. I'm in love."

We are told we can write to my father, telling him that we will see him soon. We don't know how our letter will reach him from the high seas, but we are happy that we can let him know we are on our way. The secrecy shrouding wartime travel and communication makes us feel like characters in some kind of international drama.

An American officer who speaks to us in German reinforces this feeling. His interest is in the German-American woman who is traveling with us. Is there anything we can tell him about her?

There is nothing we can relate; we don't know the woman. But I do recall unexpectedly coming upon her while she was fussing with her collection of Nazi postage stamps, each bearing the likeness of *der Führer*. There she was, kissing the stamps in adoration.

May she and her beloved *Führer* rot together in purgatory!

WORLD TRAVELERS

THE SHIP has been at sea for several days. For some unknown reason, we are on a southeasterly course toward the Caucasus, rather than a southwesterly one toward the Bosporus. Later we learn that the vessel is to take on a cargo of sisal at Batumi, a Russian port at the eastern end of the Black Sea, before heading west.

Regina and I are now accustomed to seeing the unmasked affection between Jack and Chicha. They make no attempt to hide it. We spot them holding each other lovingly, kissing in the corridors, disappearing entirely for long interludes.

A mixture of feelings invades our souls. We are delighted, worried, curious, envious. Still, we recognize that a strange healing process is at work. God, let the process work its magic around the clock. Let there be renewal. Let our fragmented lives become whole again. Let us arrive in the New World with new bodies, new hair, and new hearts, hearts that beat to the sounds of life and love, not fear.

At Batumi some of the crew are permitted to go ashore while the Russian cargo is being loaded on to the American vessel. To our surprise Jack is one of those descending the rope ladder from the SS *Brand Whitlock*.

Chicha cannot believe her eyes as she watches Jack disappear beyond the immediate dock area. Her newfound security, vested in Jack, suddenly seems to have vanished.

"Where's he going?" she asks Regina and me. "Where's he going?" As though we can provide an answer and reassurance.

"He'll be back soon," we tell her. "He must have some business to attend to."

But we are equally anxious and worried, for Jack represents not only something very personal to Chicha, but also, as our translator, our vital link to everyone else on the ship. In addition, we had, even as youngsters, heard about the unreliability of sailors. They were men who had a girl in every port, or so we were told.

After what seems endless hours of on-deck vigil, watching the loading operations and the activity on the dock, we see the American seamen begin to return. Soon we see Jack. He appears to be in good humor—and a bit tipsy.

As Jack makes his way up the dangling ladder, Chicha begins to seethe. She mumbles choice Hungarian epithets. Her relief at seeing "her man" return is mixed with obvious jealousy.

At last Jack is back on board among his fellow officers, who are engaged in jocular banter. So far, he has not seen us, but as he moves along the deck toward his quarters, he suddenly discovers Chicha in his path.

"Did you enjoy the Russian women?"

Jack, not comprehending a single word, opens his arms and breaks into a broad, toothy grin. "Chicha! I missed you. I should have stayed on board."

In a single enveloping gesture, he embraces her, virtually smothering her in his arms.

The next moment, as the two stand kissing, the American officers break into laughter, hoots, and applause. Regina and I, somewhat embarrassed, make our way back to our cabin.

Did we ever dream that we would become world travelers, see the sun sparkle on slender minarets in Istanbul, hear the bustling sounds of a Turkish port? We have sailed clear across the Black Sea, through the Bosporus strait, and are now plowing through the Sea of Marmara. If only we could go ashore and stroll the way we strolled on the way to Odessa.

But we are not allowed to debark anywhere; only some of the crew can do so. We envy them. We are traveling freely, it seems, but in relative confinement, delicious confinement, still not free to explore strange, wondrous places. Someday, when war will not curtail our movements, we shall return.

Our curiosity is vibrantly alive. We learned about Turkey and the Bosporus and the Dardanelles when we were schoolchildren in Hungary. Now, courtesy of World War II and Adolf Hitler, here we are.

Mealtimes are somewhat formal in the dining room. The captain sets the tone, and he is stiff and pompous. We have relearned our table manners, and it is easy to eat with knife and fork leisurely, the way the English did.

There is enough glorious food on the *Brand Whitlock* to satisfy the vultures of Auschwitz. I am overfed. No one can tell that just a few months ago—in January, as a matter of fact—all of me weighed less than parts of me do now. I am actually getting fat.

It is not natural for me to be fat. I am simply stuffed, like a force-fed goose, and nothing will stop me from

eating more, much more. If my face is indeed as beautiful as they say, there is a great spread of it. Let it be. I cannot imagine ever intentionally going on a diet to reduce my weight. More readily can I imagine stealing food rather than saying no to any offer.

Then there is the matter of my pride, as with Sam, the waiter, who dislikes me.

Sam and I are unable to communicate with each other, but each of us is capable of a full-blown emotional reaction—a negative one. Sam waits on the captain's table, and he never fails to subject me to an icy glance when he attends to my needs.

I don't know the source of his resentment, but I return the ice. *I don't like you either, Sam.*

Then, one day, it happens. Not being able to speak English, I point to an item on the menu simply because the spelling is similar to a Hungarian word.

"Do you know what you're ordering?" I hear Sam say with ice in his voice.

I nod, praying that the mysterious item will turn out to be a feast.

"Are you sure this is what you want, all you want?"

Bewildered, perspiring from my insecurity, I hold my ground. "Yes," I say in Hungarian. "I know what I want. *This.* This is exactly what I want."

Sam shrugs and disappears. Moments later he returns and triumphantly places my humiliating choice, with its sour odor, in front of my nose—a heaping dish of steaming sauerkraut!

Sam, I really don't like you, nor sauerkraut. But damn it, Sam, I'm going to eat every last shred!

And I do.

———

Fregean viewpoint, that the difficulties confronting religious language are due to the fact that in such language, words do not have their normal sense, nor is any satisfactory account available of what other sense they have. Frege (or, at least, Dummett following him) opens the way to a solution to the problem by speaking of tone, and especially evocational tone, as an element of meaning. Sperber's analysis suggest how we might explain the use of religious language by seeing it function not through its sense, but through its evocational power. There remains, though, the doubt raised in connection with Durkheim. Could this account of religious language be consciously accepted by a religious believer? I do not see why not. After all, many religious believers are sophisticated enough to realise that statements of their beliefs are subject to logical and epistemological difficulties if they are understood to have their normal senses. I claim that the account given here of the use of religious language is more satisfactory than the (in this context) question begging doctrines of analogy or metaphor. Symbols on this account are landmarks, directing people in various ways. Religious language is part of religion, its function presumably being to instill through evocation various attitudes in believers to the world and life, and to their ultimate purposes in life. There will still be room for judging that the landmarks and the attitudes they evoke are valid. The commonest mistake in dealing with symbolic discourse lies in thinking that a literal defence or refutation of it is relevant to such a judgement. Could anyone who talks like we saw Newman talking take issue with that?

One final point. Philosophers, as in my opening paragraph, often object to the idea that it is possible to believe what is not understood. Indeed there is something strange about a man saying that he believes, say, that his dog is at home and being unable to explain what this means beyond saying that he is using the terms analogically. But with religious belief the situation is rather different, for adherence to the literal sense of the propositions believed would require unprecedented feats of intellectual virtuosity from the believers, and insoluble conflicts with the normal beliefs through which the senses of the words involved are established. Surely nothing would be lost, other than a spurious need to find just one account for each type of application of a given concept, in holding that what goes here for beliefs in ordinary life need not go for religious beliefs. The reasons people hold fast to their religious beliefs are quite different from those involved in day to day beliefs, and so is their understanding of the propositions involved.

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SINAI AND EXODUS: TWO GROUNDS FOR HOPE IN THE JEWISH TRADITION

Hope is a category of transcedence, by means of which a man does not permit what he senses and experiences to be the sole criterion of what is possible. It is the belief or the conviction that present reality (what I see) does not exhaust the potentialities of the given data. Hope opens the present to the future; it enables a man to look ahead, to break the fixity of what he observes, and to perceive the world as open-textured. The categories of possibility and of transcendence interweave a closely stitched fabric – hope says that tomorrow can be better than today.

Hope, however, is not merely an expectancy which draws its nourishment from the future, while integrating and permeating the present; it may have its roots in memory. Thus, the present can be influenced by two perspectives of time which create the capacity to transcend: the *future* may be a source of hope which encourages man to overcome present despair, and the *past*, or man's memory of accomplished events, may provide a key for opening the present beyond its facticity and givenness, and may escort him past the empirically given.

In this presentation I shall attempt, first of all, to clarify the phenomenon of hope as expressed within two major currents of Jewish heritage. Secondly, I shall explore Maimonides' and Naḥmanides' interpretations of future prospects, emphasizing especially how Maimonides' outlook on the world is nurtured by the normative structure of Judaism. Thirdly, I shall propose two theological models of expectation: the Exodus and Sinai. In the concluding section, I shall consider more generally the contemporary significance of the Exodus and the Sinai paradigms of hope.

Throughout this essay, I shall underline how future expectancy is tied to one's memories, i.e., how memories define one's orientation to hope.[1]

To seek an understanding of hope is not necessarily to desire an interlude of romanticism. I concern myself with faith and expectancy because I want to understand certain features of 20th century reality where the Jewish people have demonstrated a profound will to emerge from the abyss of human brutalization and depravity and to build a new and ancient society.

[1] See John Bright, *Covenant and Promise* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1976), for an analysis of how memories affect Biblical eschatology.

I

Two Kinds of Hope

One can describe two aspects of hope: (1) the courage to bear human responsibility, to persevere in partial solutions, and to accept the burden of living and building within contexts of uncertainty; (2) the expectancy of a future resolution to all human problems. The first aspect might be called 'halakhic' hope and the second, 'radical' hope, suggesting what Gershom Scholem calls 'restorative' versus 'utopian' views of messianism.[1]

The first (the 'halakhic') form of hope liberates action. It frees one to act for it overcomes the paralysis of dejection. Where one's outlook is thoroughly hopeless and where the notion of duty appears meaningless, one's capacity to act is impaired. A prospect of attainment generates strength, while despair incapacitates. Expectancy that something new and good may occur often creates the very power necessary to implement one's goals.[2]

The other (the 'radical') form of hope need not address itself to action. It is a kind of messianic anticipation, or belief in redemption, which lends itself to *waiting*, for, as Gershom Scholem writes,

> [This] redemption . . . is in no causal sense a result of previous history. . . . [It] is not the product of immanent developments such as we find in modern Western reinterpretations of Messianism since the Enlightenment where, secularized as the belief in progress, Messianism still displayed unbroken and immense vigor. It is rather transcendence breaking in upon history, an intrusion in which history itself perishes, transformed in its ruin. . . . [The apocalyptists'] optimism, their hope, is not directed to what history will bring forth but to that which will arise in its ruin, free at last and undisguised.[3]

The discussion between Rav and Shmuel in the Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 97b, regarding redemption is relevant to the above distinction. Rav declares: 'All the appointed times of redemption are over, and the matter depends wholly upon repentance and good deeds'. History will not be redeemed of necessity; redemption is contingent on human action and efforts. In response, Shmuel states: 'It is sufficient for the mourner to remain in his mourning'. It is enough for Israel to sustain herself in history; redemption is not dependent on successful moral renewal.

This Talmudic discussion between the Amoraic teachers, Rav and Shmuel, parallels the views of the Tannaitic teachers, R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and R. Yehoshuah, two students of R. Johanan ben Zakkai. R. Eliezer says (*Sanhedrin* 97b): If Israel repents they will be redeemed; if not, they will not

[1] See Gershom Scholem. *The Messianic Idea in Judaism* (New York: Schocken Books, 1971); Gerson D. Cohen, 'Messianic Postures of Ashkenazim and Sephardim', *The Leo Baeck Memorial Lecture* (New York: Leo Baeck Institute, 1967).

[2] See William James, 'The Will to Believe', *Essays on Faith and Morals* (New York: Meridian, 1962), pp. 32–62.

[3] *Op. cit.* p. 10.

be saved. R. Yehoshuah answers: If they do not repent, they will not be redeemed – But what will happen? God will send a wicked king, one whose decrees will be as Haman's, and then Israel will do *tshuvah* (turning, repentance).[1]

Is redemption dependent fully upon human choice? R. Eliezer proposed a vision of redemption and hope centred around human freedom of choice and man's will to change. R. Yehoshua argued that God will enter the process of history in some way. God will not free men from the need to change, but he will create conditions compelling people to respond in *tshuvah*. (In Talmudic thought, oppression and suffering were considered to be catalysts to moral change. God can intervene in history, then, by fashioning circumstances impelling men to repentance.)

A profound question remains: is it possible to construct a viable religious approach without the certainty of redemption? In fact, each of the two aforementioned schools of thought agree on some sort of divine provision for deliverance, for without God's promise of salvation, there would be no certainty that even *tshuvah* would bring *ge'ulah* (redemption). Nevertheless, the two schools of thought do differ in their interpretations of human redemption. Shmuel and R. Yehoshua view national salvations as an inevitable process; Rav and R. Eliezer understand it as an open-ended possibility.

The Mishnah at the close of *Sotah* paints a sobering picture of the time when the Messiah will come: Human arrogance will become great. Prices in the market place will soar. Vines will yield fruit, but wine will be costly. Heathens will be converted to heresy, and there will be no dissenting voice. Houses of worship will become brothels. Groups of people will wander from town to town, and none shall show them compassion. The wisdom of the scribes will become decadent, and the morally upright will be despised. The young will shame their elders. 'The face of the generation shall be like the face of a dog.' Father and son together will visit the same prostitute. 'On whom then shall we lean?' asks the Mishnah. 'On our Father who is in heaven,' is the response. A later Talmudic statement claims that the Messiah will come in a generation that is either all meritorious or thoroughly guilty (*Sanhedrin* 98a).

Thus, to proponents of 'radical hope', signs of redemption are not to be found in the evolution of better social conditions but in utter darkness and in despair. Salvation is not a process in history, but a cataclysm shattering the natural order. Apocalyptic notions of redemption do not encourage action toward realistic social goals. Essential to them is the promise that no matter how miserable life will be, God will not abandon humanity.

[1] For discussion on the views of R. Eliezer and R. Yehoshua, see E. Urbach, *The Sages* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1975), trans. by I. Abrahams, pp. 668–73, and 'Redemption and Repentance in Talmudic Judaism, *Types of Redemption* (Leiden: Brill, 1970), ed. Z. Werblowsky and J. Bleeker, pp. 190–206.

II

The differing attitudes to hope expressed by the above-mentioned talmudic sages are mirrored in the approaches to hope of two major medieval Jewish thinkers, Maimonides and Naḥmanides.

Maimonides 'normalized' the radical, apocalyptic vision of messianic expectancy:

> Do not think that King Messiah will have to perform signs and wonders, bring anything new into being...[Rather], this Law of ours...is for ever and all eternity; it is not to be added to or taken away from...
>
> If there arise a king from the House of David who meditates on the Torah,... observes the precepts prescribed in the Written and Oral Law, prevails upon Israel to walk in the way of the Torah,...rebuilds the sanctuary on its site, and gathers the dispersed of Israel, he is...the Messiah...
>
> Let no one think that in the days of the Messiah any of the laws of nature will be set aside...The world will follow its normal course. The words of Isaiah: 'And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid' [Isa. 11: 6] are to be understood figuratively, meaning that all Israel will live securely among the wicked of the heathens who are likened to wolves and leopards [Jer. 5: 6]...All similar expressions used in connection with the Messianic age are metaphorical...Said the Rabbis: 'The sole difference between the present and the Messianic days is delivery from the servitude to foreign powers' (*Sanhedrin* 91b)...
>
> In that era there will be neither famine nor war...The one preoccupation of the whole world will be to know the Lord. Hence Israelites will be very wise Isa. 11: 9...(*Mishneh Torah*, The Book of Judges, 'Kings and Wars', XI–XII.)

Human nature will not change. Isaiah's picture of the lamb and the lion is allegory. The Torah and the Halakhah will be binding in the messianic period as they were before; they will be needed then, as now, to guide and to discipline human spiritual life; there will be neither a new law nor a new man. The distinction between the messianic and the pre-messianic period will be in the external political domain. Nevertheless, this majestic era will inaugurate social conditions which will stimulate a level of spiritual seeking and growth that is unthinkable when men are politically and economically oppressed. (Cf. ibid.; also *Mishneh Torah*, *The Book of Knowledge*, 'Hilkhot Tshuvah', IX, 11; *Guide of the Perplexed*, II, 36; III, 11; III, 27; etc.)

In contrast, Naḥmanides, in his Commentary on the Torah, comments on 'God will circumcise your heart' (Deut. 30: 6):

> But in the days of the Messiah, the choice of...men's genuine good will be natural; the heart will not desire the improper...There will be no evil desire in man but he will naturally perform the proper deeds and therefore there will be neither merit nor guilt in them, for merit and guilt are dependent upon desire.

Naḥmanides builds upon Jeremiah's vision (31: 30–2) of a new dispensation, where the Torah will be inscribed in the heart of man. A thirst to do good and evil

and the struggle between reason and inclination will effectively be eliminated. The coming 'complete redemption will bring about a new man. (Cf. also Naḥmanides on Lev. 26: 16 and Deut. 28: 42.)

For Maimonides, however, open-endedness and the uncertainty of human choices will remain even during the messianic age. Uncertainty is part of his vision of hope; the human condition is never transcended; there are no permanent resolutions to the human conflict, and moral struggle is an abiding feature of history.

In other words, Maimonides proposed an ameliorative conception of redemption. Maimonides portrayed messianism not as permanently resolving man's spiritual combat, but, rather, as providing for the unleashing of human spiritual capacities and the baring of new and undreamed of personal hungers.

In relation to *Sanhedrin* 97b (where R. Yehoshuah asks R. Eliezer: If Israel will not do *tshuvah*, will they not be redeemed?), Maimonides says that redemption does depend on repentance. Thus the problem arises immediately: If *ge'ulah* (redemption) depends on human *tshuvah* (turning), there is uncertainty whether history will ever be redeemed. Maimonides, however, continued: The Torah promised that in the end, Israel will in fact repent (*Mishneh Torah*, *Book of Knowledge*, 'Hilkhot Tshuvah', VII, 5).[1]

What is the meaning of this 'promise'? One possible interpretation is that the Torah makes such a promise because living according to Torah inculcates the interest in constantly assessing and bettering one's nature and one's behaviour; Torah fashions a man who does *tshuvah*. A person who lives by the Law organizes his life around the demand of return. The Law energizes man to enlarge his scope of responsibility. Torah eschews despondency and feelings of futility by always pointing to human tasks and potential achievements.[2]

The Talmud enjoins: 'If a man sees that painful suffering visits him, let him examine his conduct' and do *tshuvah*.[3] Torah trains the believing Jew to recognize the power of *tshuvah* to alter his political and economic condition by reminding him that his communal, material life is determined by his normative behaviour:

> A positive Scriptural commandment prescribes prayer and the sounding of an alarm with trumpets whenever trouble befalls the community. For when Scripture says, 'Against the adversary that oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm

[1] J. B. Soloveitchik, in this light of this problem, suggests the bold thesis that Jewish messianism demands belief in the spiritual potential of the community of Israel. See *On Repentance* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Torah Education Dept. of W.Z.O., 1974), ed. P. H. Peli, pp. 93–8.

[2] For a phenomenology of halakhic activism, see J. B. Soloveitchik, 'Ish-HaHalakhah', *In Aloneness, In Togetherness* (Jerusalem: Orot, 1976), Ed. P. H. Peli, pp. 37–188 and 'The Lonely Man of Faith', *Tradition* (Summer 1965), pp. 33–44.

[3] *T. B., Berakhot*, 5a. The following statement characterizes Rabbinic spirituality: 'The gates of prayer are sometimes open and sometimes closed, but the gates of repentance

with the trumpets' (Num. 10: 9), the meaning is: Cry out in prayer and sound an alarm against whatsoever is oppressing you, be it famine, pestilence, locusts, or the like.

This procedure is one of the roads to repentance, for as the community cries out in prayer and sounds an alarm when overtaken by trouble, everyone is bound to realize that evil has come upon him as a consequence of his own evil deeds, as it is written, 'Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withheld good from you' (Jes. 5: 25), and that his repentance will cause the trouble to be removed.

If, on the other hand, the people do not cry out in prayer and do not sound an alarm, but merely say that it is the way of the world for such a thing to happen to them, and that their trouble is a matter of pure chance, they have chosen a cruel path which will cause them to persevere in their evil deeds and thus bring additional troubles upon them. (*M.T.*, 'Fast Days', I, 1–3.)

Fatalism, accident or the belief in historical inevitability are alien to this form of halakhic activism. So too, the concept of the suffering servant, where the pain of one person is redemptive for another's sinfulness, is outside the framework of this type of religious sensibility. The Halakhah does not admit spiritual incapacity. Man abiding by God's law experiences renewal not through vicarious relationship and not by passive acceptance of God-given provision, but through seeking and discovering within himself new capacities for moral change.

Central to Maimonides' philosophy of history and concept of hope, therefore, is the belief that man can always do *tshuvah* (cf. *Mishneh Torah, Hilkhot Tshuvah*, III, 26; IV).[1]

Creation

Eternity versus Creation was a central philosophic question that Maimonides had to confront, for 'if the philosophers would succeed in demonstrating eternity as Aristotle understands it, the Law as a whole would become void, a shift to other opinions would take place' (*Guide* II, 25). Maimonides argued that the key indemonstrable (but also irrefutable) revealed tradition that a Jew must accept is belief in Creation. Creation presupposes the principle of *will* in explanations involving God and the cosmos. Things do not derive from eternal necessity; their existence requires the Will of God.

In terms of a modified Aristotelian model of the universe, the doctrine of Creation made the particular covenant at Sinai possible, since the giving of the Law and the intervention of God into history would be impossible if one accepted a metaphysic of eternal necessity. While he accepts the doctrine of Creation, Maimonides does not propose a metaphysics involving a new creation in the future. An unterminating history in no way compromises the spiritual life of Judaism, since the only halakhic requirement is Sinai.

[1] It is not accidental that Maimonides seriously deals with his philosophy of history in the *Mishneh Torah* in chapters V–IX of the Laws of Repentance.

Judaism is compatible with that metaphysics which makes the giving of the Torah possible.

In Part II of the *Guide of the Perplexed*, Maimonides emphasized repeatedly,

> ...the belief in the production of the world is necessarily the foundation of the entire Law. However, the belief in its passing-away after it has come into being and been generated is not, in our opinion, in any respect a foundation of the Law, and none of our beliefs would be hurt through the belief in its permanent duration ...(II, 27).

He concluded, from his discussion of creation and eternity,

> We agree with Aristotle with regard to one half of his opinion and we believe that what exists is eternal *a parte post* and will last forever with that nature which He...has willed;...
>
> However, that which exists has had a beginning, and at first nothing at all existed except God. His wisdom required that He should bring creation into existence at the time when He did do it, and that what he has brought into existence should not be annihilated nor any of its nature changed except in certain particulars that He willed to change...(II, 29).

It is consistent, then, with the spirit of Maimonides' writings that messianism is not the end of ordinary human history but is a description of political and social conditions where the demands of Sinai are fully realizable. The yearning for the messianic era is based on the recognition of the relationship of individual excellence and the material conditions of history:[1]

> ...when one is troubled here on earth with diseases, war or famine, he does not occupy himself with the acquisition of wisdom or the performance of religious precepts by which life hereafter is gained.
>
> Hence, all Israelites, their prophets and sages, longed for the advent of Messianic times, that they might have relief from the wicked tyranny that does not permit them properly to occupy themselves with the study of the Torah and the observance of the commandments...(*M.T.*, 'Hilkhot Tshuva' IX, 7–8).

Whereas Naḥmanides proposed permanent resolution, Maimonides claimed that freedom and human choice will endure in the messianic age, and the human 'instinct for evil' will persist. The Messiah will not create a new human nature. According to Maimonides, Sinai is the core, definitive event of Jewish history. Messianism does not supersede the legal obligations of Sinai, but is a return to, and a fulfilment of, the full scope of the Sinaitic covenant.

III

Two Memories of Hope

We have so far presented two different approaches to hope and messianism: one which anticipates final resolution, the emergence of a new man and of

[1] See *Guide*, III, 27, and my *Maimonides: Torah and Philosophic Quest* (Philadelphia: J.P.S., 1976), pp. 83–101. Maimonides should not be interpreted as maintaining a Marxist type of historical determinism. Rare individuals may achieve the goals of a messianic era (intellectural love of God) even within an unredeemed world. It was for such individuals he wrote the *Guide of the Perplexed*.

a new history, and which often awaits redemption irrespective of human action; and the other which insists upon *tshuvah*, which expects the enrichment of human spiritual possibilities, but which guarantees no final resolution. These two attitudes to redemption and to hope may have their roots in two dissimilar historic memories. One attitude may emerge from consideration of the Exodus; the other, from remembrance of Sinai. The former undergirds a *rupture* concept of history; the latter, a covenantal concept of history.

The Jewish tradition provides many collective recollections. In order to organize and to rationalize his experience, a person may select from his store of memories those events which can serve as principles of integration. At different times and in various circumstances of one's life, different events may be chosen. Indeed, phenomenologically speaking, religious practical systems are often tied more intimately to collective memories than to metaphysical beliefs.

The Exodus

Despite the presence of various themes in the Biblical story itself, the memory of the Exodus from Egypt provides a theological model where man is basically helpless before God. Men in no way warrant their redemption nor do they co-operate prominently in their deliverance. In this model, God suddenly breaks into history, and, from a 'no people', he creates his elected community.

The empirically given in no way defined the historically possible. The Exodus rupture in history suggests sudden surprise where something totally new balloons unforeseen and unexpected. Nothing in the observable process of history offered one reason for anticipating this unprecedented redemptive moment. The Exodus account describes how God chose to act after man's efforts had failed. The empirical situation was totally bleak and indicated no ground for hope, dream, or redemptive expectation.

When Moses first spoke to the people, they responded (Ex. 4: 2). But Moses' interview failed bitterly, and Moses came to God and asked, 'Why did You send me to defeat?' When Moses came again to the people, the text says that they could no longer even understand what he was speaking about (6: 9). In other words, the people had lost the image of themselves as free men.

The historical rupture occasioned by the Exodus parallels the Creation story of Genesis. God breaks into chaos and says, 'Let there be light'; transcendence rends the void. The Egyptian experience is that of the Most High exploding stagnation and saying, 'Let there be a people where there were slaves.'

If one builds an understanding of history on the Exodus model, if a man chooses to elevate the divine rupture into human affairs to the level of a centrally integrative anticipation, then he can join his conception of hope

with the expectation of a new creation. He can, like the talmudic sage, Shmuel, speak confidently of redemption coming through suffering alone. 'It is sufficient for the mourner to persevere in his sorrow.' As the Lord promised Abraham (Gen. 15: 13–14), the oppression of God's people itself would instigate his avenging intrusion into history:

> And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. (Ex. 2: 24).

Therefore, an apocalyptic vision of the new man can have its source in the rupture view of the Exodus from Egypt.

At the Passover Seder, which records the story of the Exodus, and begins with the phrase 'We were slaves in Egypt,' the participants are instructed: 'In every generation each person must feel as though he himself came out of Egypt.' The linking of past salvation with future redemption is made explicit in the blessing recited before drinking the second cup of wine. The two motifs are joined together, tying the past ('who redeemed us') immediately to the future ('bring us to other festivals... happy in the building of Your city... where we shall eat of the sacrifices and paschal offerings... and we shall give thanks to You with a new song').

Whenever the Passover was celebrated, it brought hope, and, therefore, the memory of the Exodus became a crucial element in Jewish communal experience. As the Tradition vividly evoked the memory of the miraculous deliverance from Egypt, it inspired and created the certainty of a future redemption. In other words, empirical conditions need not define the possible as long as the Exodus memory is alive. The Seder begins with the story of the exodus from Egypt and concludes with '*le-shanah ha-ba' be-yerushalayim*' ('Next year in Jerusalem').

Sinai

Sinai suggests quite another theological model upon which man can nurture a sense of hope:

> ...And Moses took the book of the covenant, and read in the hearing of the people; and they said, 'All that the LORD hath spoken will we do and obey.' And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD made with you concerning those words.' Ex. 24: 7–8.

The giving and acceptance of the Torah does not present a picture of God's single-handed redemption of powerless slaves, nor of unilateral divine fiat ordering primal chaos. Rather, the experience of Sinai is one in which God speaks and man responds.[1] The Law reveals divine confidence in man, in spite of the shortsightedness and weakness Israel showed in the desert. The Torah symbolized divine acceptance of finite mortals; it signified God's

[1] See Soloveitchik, 'The Lonely Man of Faith', pp. 28–30.

move from Creator-Redeemer to Teacher, to Instructor who is prepared to educate, to guide, and to impart of himself. The giving of the Law at Sinai expressed a belief that man has the capacity to implement right behaviour in his life. A sense of hope emerges from the memory of the command to become holy. Despite human limitations, weaknesses, perversities, and ugliness, man is charged with responsibility and he is even called by God to become part of a holy people.[1]

In contrast to certain Greek notions of self-sufficiency, the revelation at Sinai proclaims that perfection is to be realized in relationships. The covenant Biblical God chose interaction with men; the Lord of history as opposed to an impersonal ground of being pronounces that interdependency is an ultimate datum of reality. History and community, therefore, are central to a tradition where perfection is grounded in relationship.[2]

Hope need not be fuelled by romantic dreams; it can be nurtured by feelings of adequacy to bear the responsibility of becoming a spiritual man, and by the knowledge that, in spite of failures, I am given a task. The very giving of commandment, i.e., the understanding of myself as commissioned, even while knowing myself to be a creature, is a source of confidence. The Torah, the eternal mitzvah (command), binds hope into its obligation.[3]

Indeed, the vision of Ezekiel and the burden of Jeremiah, where God speaks of a new creation, or the prophet talks of a new heart, are not optimistic but are expressions of black pessimism.[4] When the Law fails, God must start all over again. He must make a new man when the old one ends in disaster.

Applications of the Models

One might understand Naḥmanides' theology as centring on the memory of the Exodus, and Maimonides', on the covenant at Sinai. If so, the contrasts in the character of the paradigmatic memories permeate their thought. The former spoke of eruptive intervention by God into history; the latter, (though allowing for miracles) required human *tshuvah* and self improvement. One spoke of a new heaven and earth, and a new human nature; the other emphasized the abiding centrality of *Halakhah*.

If a person seeks a religious characterization of Jewish experience, he can

[1] See D. Hartman and E. Yagod, 'The Joy of the Law', *Midstream* (Winter 1978).

[2] Compare Plato's arguments for the philosopher to return to the care of the community with Maimonides, *Guide*, II, 37. See my *Maimonides*, *op. cit.* p. 246, nn. 7, 10; p. 261, n. 39.

[3] This may shed light on the talmudic preference for action based on divine commandment above spontaneous behaviour. 'Greater is he who does an act which he is commanded to do than he who does an act which he is not commanded to do' (*T.B.*, *Abodah Zarah* 3a and *Kiddushin* 31a). This approach should not be confused with the Kantian preference for duty. Being commanded reflects the added dimension of divine loving acceptance of limited man.

[4] See Y. Kaufman, *The Religion of Israel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960), trans. and abridged by Moshe Greenberg, pp. 425–6, and M. Goshen-Gottstein, 'Ezekiel und Ijob: Zur Problemgeschichte von Bundestheologie und Gott-Mensch-Verhältnis', *Festschrift für Joseph Ziegler*

focus on creation and the memory of the Exodus, or on the revelation of Torah at Sinai and *tshuvah*. In the latter case, the end of history is not as crucial as present action. In a Maimonidean framework, the range of human responsibility is extensive. God accepts men despite their weakness, and, in enjoining norms upon men, he regards them as responsible, able agents. God's trust and his commission create dignity and hope. One may argue that a Sinai model where God binds Jews with a Law for all generations to come dilutes the vitality of God's relationship to man. It could be alleged that a Maimonidean system, like a deist's universe, requires God solely to set the system going; in the former case, God answers the need of a legal system for a ground of authority; in the latter case, God answers the need of a metaphysical ontology for a first cause. While an Exodus or Creation memory inspires dependence on God, the propounded Sinai model inevitably leads one to put his trust in other human beings. What, then, becomes of one's dependence on God?

It may be argued, however, that these two models suggest two corresonding paradigms of dependency. Not only is there the bond of child to father (or slave to master), there is also the mature dependency of husband and wife (or teacher and pupil). The need of an infant for his parent arises from the child's vulnerability and weakness. The mature marriage relationship is a dependency of mutual respect and love, where a partner cannot emotionally conceive of existence outside a fellowship with the beloved. This is a dependency of commitment and of meaning, rather than of helplessness and of inadequacy.

> What is the love of God that is befitting? It is to love the Eternal with a great and exceeding love, so strong that one's soul shall be knit up with the love of God, and one should be continually enraptured by it, like a love-sick individual, whose mind is at no time free from his passion for a particular woman, the thought of her filling his heart at all times, when sitting down or rising up, when he is eating or drinking. Even intenser should be the love of God in the hearts of those who love him. And this love should continually possess them, even as He commanded us in the phrase, 'with all thy heart and with all thy soul' (Deut. 6: 5). This, Solomon expressed allegorically in the sentence, 'for I am sick with love' (Song of Songs 2: 5). The entire Song of Songs is indeed an allegory descriptive of this love (*M.T.*, *H. Tshuvah* X, 5).

Maimonides' depth of love for God bordered on mystic yearning. His passionate commitment arose in response to God as the ultimate source of meaning. The model of Sinai promulgates the adult bond of commitment. There is no significance to the world without God, even though his presence, like fellowship with the beloved, offers covenantal challenge rather than eschatological certitude.

Nevertheless, the purpose of this essay is not to argue for the superiority of any particular theological model of hope. The choice of a given theological or historical paradigm

Some Implications of the Two Models

A philosophy of history founded upon an apocalyptic, utopian outlook suggests some frightening consequences. Because so much is offered and under such unlikely circumstances, one may be prepared to take irrational risks. As said, when one views redemption as a divine eruption into history, one denies that the empirical condition of man defined what is possible. Consequently, one may commit lives, fortunes, and people to reckless adventure. On the other hand, if one believes that the human condition is never transcended, he is more likely to tread with greater caution.

This distinction in eschatology indicates the likelihood of different social conduct and political action. Changing one's memory and one's view of history alters the ventures one will hazard. The issue is one of risks and of possibilities.

Disciples of a rupture view of history can revel in the failures of modern man, can focus on the futility of human endeavour, and can feel that the problems of history are resolved by resting secure in some hope that has no relationship to human effort and to mortal process. Or, they might reverse this dialectic: Instead of ordaining futility and despair as the basis of an introspective faith, they might leap to a secular or a religious totalistic response, feeling totally adequate and invincible in their *hubris*. Men can imagine that through their own efforts they will bring about a new city, a totally novel world. Revolutionaries are often prepared to risk a great deal because they believe their violent actions will indeed herald redemption. The destruction of twenty million human beings may be a small price to pay for endless future generations of tranquillity.

Thus we find that religion often absents itself from daily social struggle and grovels in the despair of human failure, or else we discover radical secularism which exaggerates man's capacities to fashion a totally new solution.

In contrast, a Maimonidean orientation offers a passionately sober conception of hope. Modern technology which expands the range of human power is not a threat to religious sensitivity, but is, rather, an expansion of human moral responsibility.[1] The task is to regard man and to focus on the vast range of human capabilities or on the widespread implications of his efforts. Mankind must be licensed and encouraged to bear its responsibility, without being promised that a realistic acceptance of that yoke will solve once and for all each difficulty of the human condition.

But the choice hangs largely on one's religious sensibility: Does one find hope only at the prospect of cataclysmic intervention? or can one stand confidently and do the job, spurning a heady romantic notion of what one can do, while refusing to collapse into despair and inadequacy?

[1] See Soloveitchik, 'The Lonely Man of Faith', pp. 11–16.

Overview of the Two Models

The survival of Judaism testifies to its capacity to incorporate a variety of sensibilities. Perhaps the kaleidoscopic variations on its tradition throughout its history result from the fact that the question 'Who is man?' (not to mention, 'Who is God?') is indeed so complex, and deciding on an adequate philosophy, even given a specific context in history, demands such great discernment. The multitudinous sects, theologies, and emphases reflect different aspects of the question, and generally are (at worst) correct partial descriptions of what the human situations are about.

There is undoubtedly a connection between the lived situation one is in and the philosophical world view one finds attractive. Pragmatism philosophically expressed an open frontier society where the possibilities of action seemed limitless; existentialism may be sensibly related to the despair of 20th century Europe where the range of action was cramped and enclosed.

Models of hope express different situations and variegated reflections on those circumstances. When the Sinai model breaks down in the face of disillusioning historical events, one may fall back on an Egypt memory and plead for God's intervention. At a different time, however, one may neutralize the memory of Egypt and call upon another memory to carry one through another experience.

Of course it is possible to integrate the Exodus model and the fact of God's intervention in history with the Sinai model and the responsibility of man for his choices. Indeed, Exodus preceded Sinai; God's rescue of Israel was a condition for his teaching of his ways. The decisive question, however, is how dominant is a particular model in one's life. In other words, one may be hedging by claiming to maintain both; a person sometimes must ask himself in which model does he invest most of his spiritual energy.

Sinai and Particularism

Proponents of the Creation or Exodus models sometimes suggest that there was nothing new at Sinai; Sinai was but a reiteration of the responsibilities already incumbent upon Adam. The suggestion hearkens back to the issue of Maimonides versus Judah Halevi concerning the relation between divine Creation and covenantal revelation.[1] It is important to separate these categories. A creational model which operates purely within nature, which does not describe God's relating to particular men and nations, which does not note his particular covenants – such a natural theology should be distinguished from one's theology of history.

As a paradigm of a particular covenantal history, Sinai is best character-

[1] See my *Maimonides*, p. 264, n. 57 and p. 267, n. 73.

ized as but one moment within a universalistic framework, the latter symbolized by the creation of mankind. Sinai need not exhaust the meaning of Creation. The covenantal giving and acceptance of the Law expresses particular special intimacy and does not negate the possibility of other intimacies. Indeed one of the dangers of monotheism is its seeming aversion to pluralism. If God reveals himself in history, then, the argument runs, universal truth is contained in and exhausted by this particular revelation. Men, prophets, priests and kings have operated with the conviction that revelation adequately expressed Creation, and that each particular vision was complete and universal.

If, however, the giving of Sinaitic law to one people is understood in its full particularity, Sinai need not present itself as an exhaustive category. From this recognition can flow a conception of a religious pluralism which allows for specific, covenantal revelations within a monotheistic framework. While God deals personally and with particular communities, the way of the Creator God is open to all men. The significance of one's memories is not lessened by one's acknowledgment of their limited relevance.

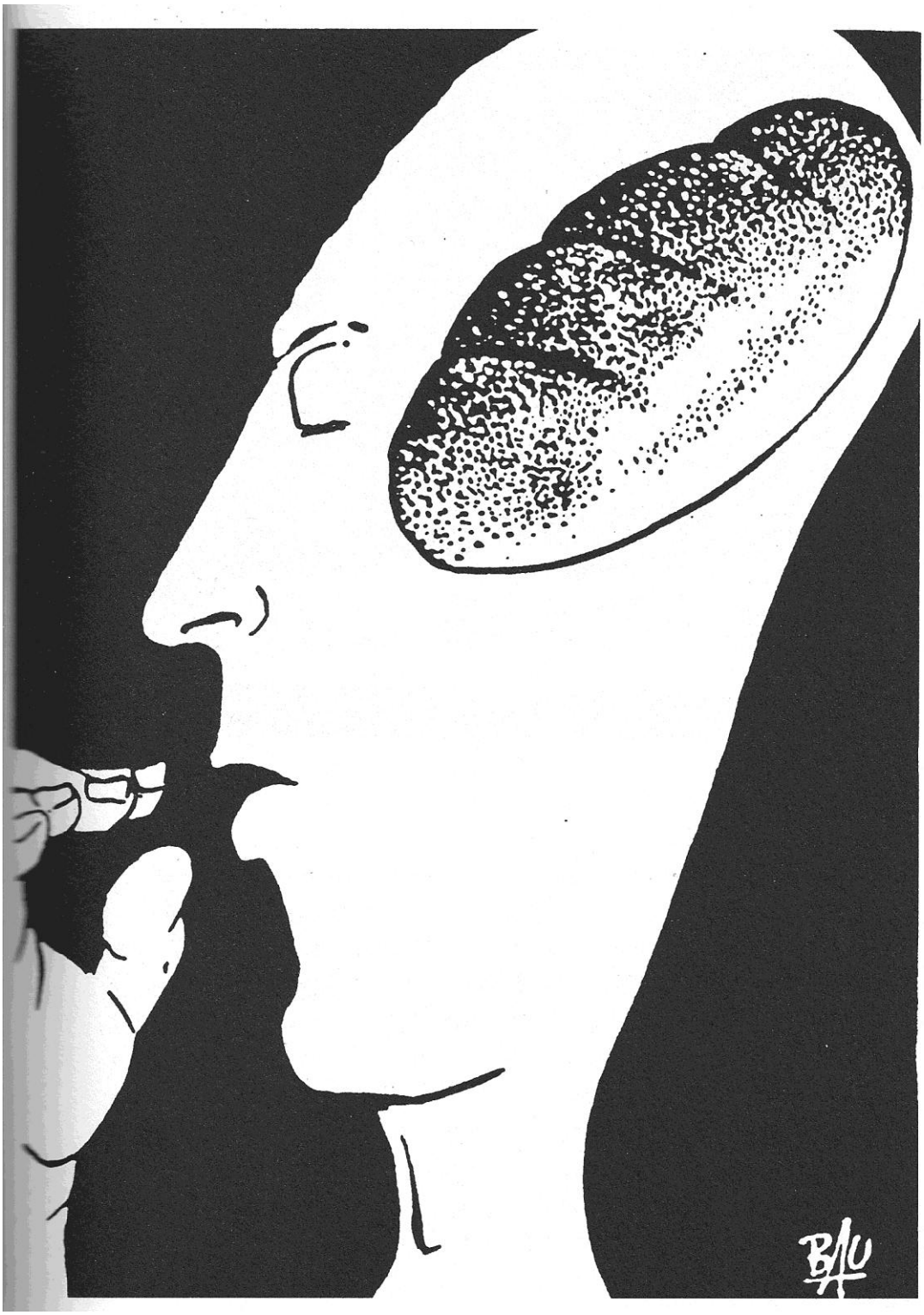
Man created in the image of God is a ground for the universal dignity of man. The covenantal intimacy of God with a particular community is mediated by the memories and symbolic forms of the given community. A covenantal theology of history must respect the inviolable limitations set on it by the concept of God, the Creator of all men.

A person's category of hope and his choice of paradigmatic memories depends to a large extent on his historical situation and his religious sensibility. Perhaps in an Auschwitz situation, prisoners need Egypt. In the light of Cassirer's notion of myth, one may doubt whether Sinai alone can provide one with the strength to persevere in the face of the enormous failures men experience.[1] Perhaps man does need mighty myths and grandiose visions to energize him. Perhaps it is not enough to tell a person that he can become a little better, and that, as the situation improves, new goals will be possible. 'Passionate sobriety' and a Maimonidean theology of history may be, ironically, utopian visions of man.

Can strength continue to be nourished by persistently dealing with the dilemma of history, by laboriously widening the range of human responsibility and by ever beginning again – in living renewal of the ancient moment of Sinai and the rediscovery of a total halakhic way of life? Can one centre one's recollections on Sinai, where the impetus, the human beginning is decisive? Or must human aspiration be nurtured by a vision of the conclusion, a longing for final *ge'ulah*?

When one marries, does one know how long it will last? When one has a child, can one foresee its future? The fragile quality of human love may

mirror the enduring mystery of man's relationship to God. If Maimonides is right, then the comfort which religious hope provides need not be based on discontinuous ruptures in history. Man bears witness to God's presence in history by persevering in the struggle for justice.


BAU

We are cared for with tenderness and kindness. We keep finding new families but cannot put ours together. The first thing we'll do in New York is place an ad in a paper:

"Has anyone seen Cipi or Philip?"

LYING TO MY FATHER

IN ANTICIPATION of our father's arrival, breakfast is served very early Sunday morning at the Sobeloff home. The sweets taste sour. The sour tastes sweet. The chaos in our emotions affects even our taste buds.

We are afraid of the impending meeting. Whoever the bureaucrats were in Washington throughout the war years, they did not issue the necessary documents to our father with urgent dispatch so that he could save his family before Hitler devoured them. The bureaucrats played the game of red tape, of rules and regulations, up to the last hideous moment.

If the bureaucrats had let our father bring his family to the United States without the hocus-pocus of immigration papers, then Dr. Mengele would have been cheated of the pleasure of sending one more Jewish family to the ovens. In the face of such deadly danger, should not that have been reason enough to bypass the insanity of bureaucratic paper pushing? After all, our father was a legal resident of the United States, having resided in the country for years, and just a bit of time away from full citizenship.

And now our father is going to be here within the hour, and he will ask us, "Where is Mother? Where is

Cipi? Where is Potyo, my youngest child? Where is Philip, my only son, my *Kaddish?*"

"Father, Father," we will say, "they are on their way."

We will lie and lie. We will not tell him the truth. We cannot bear the truth. We hate ourselves. We hate the whole world.

We are standing in the Sobeloff living room, hugging, weeping, and lying to an aging man. We have found a father, and it is inherent in the larger tragedy that we have also lost him.

There is a profound, instant aura of alienation between us. There are long moments of silence. Our father was in agony for years, but he was in agony in America. We were in agony in Auschwitz.

The gap is too wide. How can we transmit the scent, the smoke, the pall of Auschwitz? The countless dead will all narrow down to two charred bodies, Mother and Potyo. Our father will not be able to accept this kind of truth, and we will not force it down his wounded throat.

The Sobeloff living room is awash with all that Hitler wrought.

GOD?

FOR ALL HIS YEARS, my father kept his faith with the Almighty in the heavens. If the entrance to the heavens is the sky, the sky has been brutalized. It lost its color of blue when Dr. Mengele painted it weeping gray. The fire leaping toward the heavens was kept aglow with the bodies of our mothers, our children.

What is my father to do with his servitude to God? Take Him to task? Perhaps, my father says, we have all been punished for sinning against the Almighty.

My father turns more fanatically religious than ever.

We are now living in a spacious apartment, after a brief sojourn at my aunt's house. At first my father tiptoes around us with pleas for godliness, then he grows more demanding. He wants us to live a life of total devotion. He tries to literally bribe us into believing in the mercy of God.

All we want to do is live, Father. We cannot solve your quarrel with your God. Our brains are too worn for the battle, Father. Let us be.

Newspaper, radio, and film people seek us out. They want to interview us, the first Auschwitz survivors in America, to see if we are real.

My father bars the door to all of them. We are grateful

for that. Then, in earnest, people from all over the country begin to flock to our house.

"Have you seen my mother? Her name was Sarah."

"Have you seen my father, my sisters?"

"We come from Munkács . . . from Beregszaz . . . from Nyíregyháza. Have you seen my brother? What happened to my family? When do you think they'll be coming? How lucky you are to be the first to come."

What do these people want from us? Don't they know what happened?

They are all beggars. They want us to give them something that no longer exists—their families. They want us to give them their Sarahs and Yankeles and Rivkalas, and they are no more. They are practically forcing us to give them a crumb of hope.

But we are not in the business of providing impossible hope. The hope we have, we need to live on. We cannot squander it on lies.

Ask Dr. Mengele. He knows. He must be living somewhere in luxury. He was the Almighty in Auschwitz. He had the power over the lives of all these people you are asking us to remember.

We remember no one. There is no one.

The door bell rings. There is a uniformed man at the door. It is Jack.

"Father, this is the good man we spoke to you about. This is the man who was thoughtful enough to give us money when we disembarked from the *Brand Whitlock*.

"Father, he was so good to us. His name is Jack, and we owe him twenty dollars."

"I am grateful to the officer and will return his money. But not today. Today is the Sabbath, and we do not handle money on the Sabbath."

Silly Jack! How could you? We told you about our father. We told you how religious he was. Couldn't you have come tomorrow?

Poor Chicha is aching to embrace and kiss her love, but she must pretend that he is merely a friend. We must all pretend.

Jack will never do for my father. He is not religious; he is practically a goy, a gentile. He rang the door bell on the Sabbath. He probably came by taxi on the Sabbath.

Jack doesn't want to leave. He just sits there, in love, silent, bewildered, afraid to step on anyone's holy toes.

We all sit there. We all look dumb. Everyone is uncomfortable.

The officer has been sitting there too long. What does he want?

There is no suspicion yet, but a germ of it is growing.

Finally, Jack slips a telephone number to Chicha and leaves.

Everything is Hitler's fault. Everything is due to the war. If my mother were alive, she would smooth things, as she always did. She would negotiate my father's unreasonable demands.

My father hugs me. He pleads with me to go to temple.

"Go upstairs where the women are. Pray for your mother. Pray for the dead."

But the dead didn't just die, Father. They were murdered! I am not grateful for that, Father. My lips freeze in temple. I cannot praise the Lord. I am trying so hard to live with the clutter in my head. Let me be.

Live the way you can, Father. Let me live the way I can. Please.

PHILIP IS ALIVE

A LETTER HAS ARRIVED from an American soldier, Private First Class Berent: "We liberated your son. He is in a hospital. He tried to escape and the Nazis shot him. He is not seriously injured. He is fine. He'll be perfectly all right."

Should I go to temple?

My father is there now.

It will take several months before Philip can be with us, but we can make peace with the waiting period. All we wanted to know was that he was alive, in good enough condition to repair whatever damage he sustained.

Philip, do you know anything about Cipi?

We place an ad in the Hungarian-language newspaper begging anyone with knowledge of Cipi to get in touch with us.

No one responds.

We cry in Hitler's wilderness.

My father writes to Private First Class Berent:

> If it isn't asking too much, could you please write another brief letter concerning the whereabouts of my son. Is he still in the hospital?

> I have sent letters to my friends in Switzerland, England, and France, instructing them to care for my son, if possible. I will bring him to New York from any one of those countries.
>
> Also, please tell my son to pursue his religion as befits a Jewish boy like him. Please aid my son in any way. I will reimburse you immediately for any expenses.
>
> Enclosed is a money order for my son, Philip.
>
> Sending you and my son my everlasting love, I remain yours, M. Katz.
>
> P.S. If possible, please ask my son to write a letter in his own handwriting.

Philip's survival strengthens and reaffirms my father's faith. Regina, Chicha, and I are deeply religious in our love for our brother—and for our father—but we cannot come to terms with the countless dead.

My father suffers. He cannot compromise the way he lives. And we suffer. We are not asking him to abandon his faith. We just cannot live his way. Our minds are hardly clear about anything. We know only that the mountain in front of our vision is too mammoth.

My father's questions about my mother's arrival become less frequent. We wonder how much he knows. We never spell out details, to him or anyone. The "ugly thing" sits inside us, sealed, as in an iron box.

We had to speak about it in Odessa and on the ship, but from here on, we may not be able to talk about it for decades, perhaps ever.

From here on, we shall just try to live.

JULIET OF AUSCHWITZ

CHICHA uses a public telephone to call Jack at the number he gave her. She tells him that we have a live brother. Jack loves the news. He loves Chicha. They agree to meet secretly on a street corner, Delancey and Essex.

They meet the next day, and the next, and the next. No one sees them until an uncle accidentally encounters them on the subway. The uncle rushes to inform my father, whose suspicion is now confirmed—the goy in uniform is more than a friend.

My father is in a quandary. Till now, all his dreams and plans for his family have been shattered. First by Hitler and his henchmen, then by Roosevelt and his bureaucrats. Through it all, however, he has maintained his faith in his God.

He has prayed and practiced his religion with pious devotion. He has not questioned the nature or the will of the Almighty. He has sacrificed and mourned in his fashion. Throughout the years of separation from his family, he has lived on a Spartan diet, forgoing his favorite foods as a symbolic identification with his hungry and oppressed people. His handsome, tailored suits he hung in the darkest recesses of his closet, where they remained

unworn, growing stale with disuse, a self-imposed deprivation.

And God, in His mysterious manner, had blessed him by returning three daughters to his hearth and by saving his only son, who ultimately would say *Kaddish,* the holy prayer for the dead, when in good time the Lord would call his son's aged father to His fold.

Now, once again, ungodly forces and man-made circumstances were conspiring to threaten the proper and holy order of his destiny. His daughter Chicha was in imminent danger. A stranger, an alien, beardless, nondevotional "Jew" was luring his child away from her heritage.

What could he do to separate and keep this goy, this Jack, from his divinely returned daughter, the direct descendant of holy rabbis?

At first he cajoles, pleads, and reasons. He invokes the name of God, the blessings of God, the wrath of God. Calamity upon calamity has befallen those who have departed from the paths of righteousness, the way of the Book, the customs of their people. A Jewish maiden must pursue the sacred path of her forebears. She must seek a mate in accordance with divine dictates and with paternal approval. She must honor and respect the will of her father.

But an abyss, neither of my father's making nor of ours, has opened between us. A force that is ungoverned by reason, by logic, by ancestral practice has taken control of the souls of the participants in this Hitler-created drama.

Chicha and Jack, who can communicate verbally with each other only through an elementary command of the Yiddish language, have nevertheless been drawn together through a silent, voiceless communication that

transcends such barriers as mere words. This type of communication recognizes no abysses, no gulfs, no dictums. It bridges them all, and Chicha and Jack are determined to cross that bridge together. My father must recognize that this, too, is the will of God.

I am taken to visit the second of my three aunts, my father's sisters, who also live in New York. I am not averse to staying with this aunt for several days. She is kind and warmhearted. But I begin to miss my sisters. I cannot understand why they don't call me.

I call the neighbor with the telephone at my father's address and leave word for my sisters to contact me. They don't. I hear not a word from them. What is going on?

I begin to feel insecure. I feel isolated and deserted. I call again. They still do not respond. The enigma is tearing me apart.

I don't know my way around this huge metropolis called New York. I don't know anything about subways. My aunt's phone is silent. I can no longer endure my anxiety.

I pack my bags, kiss my aunt, and run for a taxi. I hand the driver the slip of paper with my father's address and listen to the racing of my heart.

When the taxi arrives, I run to the room my sisters and I have been sharing. Regina and Chicha are in bed, undressed.

"We couldn't call you because they took away our clothes."

Chicha is fuming. "They don't want me to see Jack," she says, "but soon I'm going to meet him like this."

"I gave them my clothes, too," says Regina. "'If

Chicha can't go out,' I told them, 'I don't want to go out, either.' "

"Here, put these on." I hand them some clothes from my bag, and they dress swiftly. Moments later the three of us are on our way to the aunt I just left. This aunt, at least, is sympathetic to our plight.

At a public phone, Chicha calls Jack and arranges to meet him just once more—to say good-bye. Everything has become much too difficult.

Jack gives her a relative's address, and we place her in a cab. We inform my aunt that Chicha has gone to tell Jack that she can never see him again.

Later, Chicha calls to say that Jack's relative has invited her to stay overnight. It is very difficult to separate forever. We simply must understand. We do.

The following day, Jack, Chicha, and Jack's youngest brother spend the hours in urgent activity. Jack is still in service; therefore, he can get a premarital blood test right away. He does, and the three "conspirators" hurry to the Lower East Side, a predominantly Jewish neighborhood, to find a rabbi holy enough to satisfy even my fanatically religious father.

They find just such a rabbi but then discover that they also need a *minyan,* ten Jewish men, to be present during the sacred rites of a Jewish ceremony. The *minyan* is not an absolute necessity, but having one will add an extra measure of orthodoxy to the marriage.

Jack and his brother race down the street and, at random, round up ten religious-looking Jews. They have their *minyan.*

Jack has purchased a wedding band. Chicha is wearing a borrowed dress. The *minyan* is standing by. And the rabbi performs the ceremony.

The day is June 7, 1945, exactly thirty days after our arrival in the United States.

In Brookline, Massachusetts, Jack introduces his bride to his parents and the other members of his family.

Chicha is dumbfounded.

Jack, the merchant seaman she married, is not a poor American at all. He is, in fact, the son of a very wealthy man!

May you live in peace forever, Romeo of the Seas, Juliet of Auschwitz.

MIRROR

THEY ARE MARCHING to the smell of death. Their boots are shining like mirrors reflecting the smoke that fills the earth, the heavens.

It is a year later, and my aunt pleads with me to put on some lipstick so that I might look like an American, and I refuse because I don't know yet how people live, I know only how they die—not how they die in real life, in normal life, only how they are murdered by the millions —I am all confused. I come from another planet, or my aunt does.

Then I accept the little mirror handed to me, and the lipstick. And I make believe that I am here, alive, like other people. Yes, I will make my lips beautiful, red, vibrant. I will look like other people, and nobody will know where I come from. If I look like everyone else, most assuredly I will feel like everyone else. I will have conquered it all.

My hands are not steady, but now I am determined. I begin to move the lipstick on my upper lip, and I look into the mirror. But all I can see is smoke . . . smoke circling madly on the mirror. I can't see what I am doing. My lips are red, huge, smeared. I am wearing the grin of a clown.

And my aunt weeps softly.

Introduction

Steven T. Katz

I

The selections included in this section are drawn from European and American authors. The views expressed range across the entire theological spectrum from those that are very traditional to those that conclude that the Holocaust proves God's nonexistence. Each position is thoughtful and, in its own way, provocative. But all are open to critical interrogation and various forms of rebuttal.

The responses come mainly in two forms. The first set primarily draws upon and recycles explanatory models that have their roots in the Bible. That is, they employ explanations that were first offered in the Bible in response to the perennial questions of theodicy and human suffering. Now, in the aftermath of the Holocaust, these accounts are again appealed to, with modifications, to provide an understanding of the interaction of God and man and God and Israel. The second set of responses is composed of new answers that attempt to reconfigure the theological landscape in various original ways in light of the profound theological difficulties engendered by the existence of *Einsatzgruppen* (Hitler's murder squads in Eastern Europe) and the death camps.

Given the importance of these positions, some old, some new, it will be of help to readers, especially those just beginning their study of these issues, if each is described individually with its main conceptual features highlighted.

Let us begin with an examination of the six biblical models, starting with the famous event of the *Akedah*, "the binding of Isaac."

1. The *Akedah*: The Binding of Isaac

The biblical narrative that begins in Genesis 22:2, which reports the "binding of Isaac" by his father, Abraham, in anticipation of his being sacrificed in fulfillment of God's command, is often appealed to as a possible paradigm for treating the Holocaust. Such a theological move is well grounded in Jewish tradition, especially given its use in the medieval Hebrew martyrologies of the Crusader and post-Crusader period (late eleventh and twelfth centuries), during which the biblical event of the *Akedah* became the prism through which the horrific Jewish medieval experience became refracted and was made "intelligible" to Jews of that era. In these medieval narratives, the Jewish children of medieval Europe, and more generally all the Jews slaughtered by the Crusaders, were perceived, like Isaac of old, as martyrs to God who willingly sacrificed themselves and their loved ones in order to prove beyond all doubt their faithfulness to the Almighty.[1]

Now again, after the Holocaust, this religious model is used to describe the victims of Hitler's crusade to make the world *Judenrein*, free of Jews. The great appeal

of this decipherment lies in its imputation to the dead of heroism and unwavering religious faith. Their deaths are not due to sin or to any imperfection on their part, nor are they the consequence of any violation of the covenant. Rather, they are the climactic evidence of the Jews' unwavering devotion to the faith of their fathers. Just as the Jews of medieval Europe, confronted by the Crusader bands, chose to kill their children and die themselves[2] rather than convert to Christianity and save their lives, thus affirming their belief in the truth of Judaism in the most dramatic and absolute way, so, too, the Jewish people—confronted by the satanic forces of Nazism—died as martyrs for their God. Thus, piety, not sin, is the key factor in accounting for the Holocaust. God makes unique demands upon those who love Him and whom He loves, and as with Abraham and Isaac, so too the Jewish people in our time responded with fidelity and selflessness. As such, the dreadful events become a test, the occasion for the maximal religious service "even unto death."

This response to the Holocaust is not without its intellectual and emotional appeal. Yet readers should carefully evaluate its claims, and the analogies upon which it rests, before concluding that it supplies a full "answer" to Auschwitz and Treblinka. Students need to think hard about just how exact the parallel between the *Akedah* and the Holocaust is. For example, in the *Akedah*, it is Abraham who is commanded to kill the son he loves. In the Holocaust, Hitler kills the Jews he hates. This murder creates no emotional or ethical "problem" for him; he is more than happy to carry it out.

2. Job

The biblical Book of *Job*, the best-known treatment of theodicy in the Hebrew Bible, naturally presents itself as a second possible model for decoding the Holocaust. For example, Martin Buber, Eliezer Berkovits, and Robert Gordis, all represented in this anthology, have all discussed its relevance in the context of post-Holocaust Jewish theology. That this should be the case is not surprising for Job provides an inviting paradigm in that Job's suffering is caused not by his sinfulness but rather by his righteousness—perceived by Satan as a cause for jealousy. Moreover, the tale ends on a "happy" note: Job is rewarded by God for his faithfulness with a double blessing. On a deeper level, of course, the issues are far more problematic and their meaning ambiguous. Consider that the resolution of Job's doubts is never really clear, that God's reply through the whirlwind (ch. 38) is, in important ways, no answer to his questions, and perhaps most telling, that his first wife and family are still dead through no fault of their own. It is, therefore, not surprising that the ultimate meaning of the book is unclear and much argued about and that its applicability to the Holocaust is much contested.

3. The "Suffering Servant"

One of the most influential biblical doctrines framed in response to the "problem of evil" is that of the "suffering servant."[3] Given its classic presentation in the *Book of Isaiah* (especially ch. 53), the suffering servant doctrine suggests that the righteous vicariously suffer and atone for the wicked and hence, in some mysterious way, allay God's wrath and judgment, thus making the continuation of history possible.

According to the majority of traditional *Jewish* interpreters, the suffering servant is the nation of Israel,[4] the people of the covenant, who suffer with and for God in the midst of the evil of creation. As God is long suffering with His creation, so Israel, God's people, must be long suffering. In this, they mirror the divine in their own

reality and, while suffering for others, make it possible for creation to endure. Moreover, through this act of faithfulness the guiltless establish a unique bond with the Almighty. As they suffer for and with Him, He suffers their suffering, shares their agony, and comes to love them in a special way for loving Him with such fortitude and without limit.

This theme, as already evidenced in Parts I and II of this anthology, has been enunciated in Jewish theological writings emanating from the Holocaust era itself, as well as in post-Holocaust sources. One finds it in the teachings of hasidic rebbes as well as Conservative thinkers, such as Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Orthodox thinkers, such as Eliezer Berkovits—both of whom are represented in this anthology. In these modern sources it receives a classical exposition. For example, Berkovits writes: "God's servant carries upon his shoulders God's dilemma with man through history. God's people share in all the fortunes of God's dilemma as man is bungling his way through toward messianic realization."[5]

It should also be noted that one contemporary Jewish theologian in particular has gone beyond the traditional framework and used the suffering servant idea to construct an elaborate, very novel, reading of the Holocaust. For Ignaz Maybaum, a German Reform rabbi who survived the war in London (and whose position is represented in the selection of his writing below), the pattern of the suffering servant is the paradigm of Israel's way in history. First in the "servant of God" in *Isaiah*, then in the Jew Jesus, and now at Treblinka and Auschwitz, God uses the Jewish people to address the world and to save it: "They died though innocent so that others might live." According to this decipherment of the Holocaust, the perennial dialectic of history is God's desire that the gentile nations come close to Him, while they resist this call. Therefore, the special God-given task, the "mission" of Israel, is to foster and facilitate this relationship between God and the nations. It is they who must make God's message accessible in terms that the gentile nations will understand and respond to. But what language, what symbols, will speak to the nations? Not that of the *Akedah* in which Isaac is spared and no blood is shed but rather, and only, that of the crucifixion, i.e., a sacrifice in which the innocent die for the guilty, where some die vicariously so that others might live.

Accordingly, modern Israel repeats collectively the single crucifixion of one Jew two millennia ago, and by so doing again reveals to humankind its weaknesses, as well as the need for man to turn to Heaven for instruction and salvation. In a daring parallelism, Maybaum writes:

> The Golgotha of modern mankind is Auschwitz. The cross, the Roman gallows, was replaced by the gas chamber. The gentiles, it seems, must first be terrified by the blood of the sacrificed scapegoat to have the mercy of God revealed to them and become converted, become baptized gentiles, become Christians.[6]

For Maybaum, through the Holocaust, the world again moves morally and theologically forward and upward finally transcending the last vestiges of medieval obscurantism and intolerance, the very phenomena that produced the *Shoah*.

The theological deconstruction of the Holocaust using the suffering servant model can thus be seen to be interesting as well as challenging. Readers, however, must pause and carefully examine the plausibility of this response—and in particular Maybaum's unique rendering of this doctrine—before concluding that it supplies the needed explanation for the murder of European Jewry. And this not least because they need to ask questions about the logic of the suffering servant thesis itself. That is, they must carefully examine the notion of vicarious suffering and the issues it raises

concerning God's activity in history. Would God really cause the deaths of six million people in order to make a point?

4. *Hester Panim*: "God Hides His Face"

The Bible, in wrestling with the problem of human suffering, appeals in a number of places to the notion of *Hester Panim*: "the hiding of the face of God." This concept has two meanings. The first, in Deuteronomy 31:17–18 and later in Micah 3:4, is a causal one that links God's "absence" from the unfolding historical events to human sin: God turns away from the sinner. The second sense, found particularly in a number of psalms (e.g., Psalms 44, 69, 88, and variants in, e.g., Psalms 9, 10, 13; see also Job 13:24), does not relate God's absence to sin but, instead, suggests human despair and confusion—and even protest—over His "disappearance" for no reason that can be discerned. Here mankind stands "abandoned" for reasons that are unknown and unfathomable. Thus the repetitive theme of lament sounded in the psalms: "Why" or "how long," God, will You be absent? And the putting of the bewildering question: Is it possible for God to be continually indifferent to human affairs, to be passive in the struggle between good and evil, to be unmoved by suffering and its overcoming?

In applying this unusual doctrine to the Holocaust, modern theologians—for example, Martin Buber, Joseph Soloveitchik, Zvi Kolitz, and Eliezer Berkovits, all of whom are represented in the selections that follow this introduction—are attempting to do three things: (a) to vindicate the Jewish people, i.e., the death camps are not the consequence of sin and do not represent Divine punishment; (b) to remove God as the direct cause of the evil, i.e., the Holocaust is something men did to other men, women, and children; and (c) to affirm the reality and even saving nature of the Divine despite the empirical evidence to the contrary. The first two points need no further explanation; the third does. With regard to this line of reasoning, one must understand that the notion of *Hester Panim* is not merely or only about the absence of God but rather, at least in specific contexts, entails a more complex exegesis of Divine Providence stemming from an analysis of the ontological nature of the Divine. In such instances God's absence, *Hester Panim*, is a necessary, active condition of His saving mercy. His "hiddenness" is the obverse of His "long-suffering" patience with sinners, that is, being patient with sinners means allowing sin. As Eliezer Berkovits has argued: "One may call it the divine dilemma that God's *Erek Apayim*, His patiently waiting countenance to some is, of necessity, identical with His *Hester Panim*, His hiding of the countenance, to others."[7]

Then too, within the larger mosaic of human purpose, *Hester Panim* is dialectically related to the fundamental character of human freedom without which human beings would not be the potentially majestic beings Judaism envisions them to be. (I shall return in detail to this doctrine of the absolute need for human freedom in point 6, "The Burden of Human Freedom," below.) It needs also to be recognized that this challenging notion is, at one and the same time, a proclamation of a deep religious faith. The lament addressed to God—even while He seems absent—is a sign that God is and that His manifest presence is still possible. It is an affirmation that one believes that ultimately evil will not triumph for God will not always "hide His face." In this connection, it is relevant to note that for some contemporary Jewish theologians like Emil Fackenheim, Eliezer Berkovits, Irving (Yitzchak) Greenberg, and Martin Buber—all of whom are represented in the selections below—the creation of the State of Israel following so closely upon the Holocaust is proof of this. In the State of Israel, God again openly reveals His saving presence.

The theological claim that God hides His face undoubtedly speaks eloquently to the religious confusion of the post-Holocaust situation. But students should beware of accepting it too easily as an answer to the horror of the Nazi period for, among other reasons, it appeals to a mystery, God's hiddenness, to solve the mystery represented by the evil of the *Shoah*.

5. *Mipnei Chatacynu*: "Because of Our Sins We Are Punished"

In biblical and later Jewish (rabbinic) sources, the principal explanation for human suffering was sin. According to this view, there was a balance—established by God—in the universal order that was inescapable: Good brought forth blessing; sin brought retribution (see, for example, Deuteronomy 28). Both on the individual and the national level, the law of cause and effect, sin and grief, operated. In our time, given its undoubted theological pedigree, a number of theologians, especially those of a more traditional bent, and certain rabbinic sages, have employed this explanation to account for the Holocaust. The hasidic (Satmar) Rebbe, Joel Teitelbaum, for example, puts this claim forward clearly and with certitude: "[S]in is the cause of all suffering."[8]

Harsh as it is, the argument that Teitelbaum (and others who share this view) make is that Israel sinned "grievously" and God, after much patience and hope of "return," finally "cut off" the generation of the wicked. It needs to be noted explicitly that the majority of Jewish thinkers who have wrestled with the theological implications of the *Shoah* have rejected this line of analysis. Still, an important, if small, segment of the traditional religious community has consistently advanced it.

Two critical questions immediately arise in pursuing the application of this millennia-old doctrine to the contemporary tragedy of the Holocaust. The first is: What kind of God would exact such retribution? This crucial theological issue requires close and careful reflection. Second, of what sin could Israel be guilty to warrant such retribution? Here the explanations vary depending on one's perspective. For some, such as Rabbi Isaac Hutner and the aforementioned Satmar Rebbe, Yoel Teitelbaum, and his small circle of hasidic and extreme right-wing, anti-Zionist followers, the sin that precipitated the Holocaust was Zionism. In Zionism, Teitelbaum argued (based on a nonbinding talmudic tradition recorded in B. T. *Ketubot* 110[b]),[9] the Jewish people broke their covenant with God, which demanded that they not try to end their exile and thereby hasten the coming of the Messiah through their own means. In consequence, "we have witnessed the immense manifestation of God's anger [the Holocaust]." Rabbi Hutner, in the selection reproduced below, holding a similar theological position, links the Holocaust to the instigations of the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem who, in his view, persuaded Hitler to undertake the destruction of European Jewry. For others on the extreme right edge of the religious spectrum, the primary crime was not Zionism but Reform Judaism or, again, assimilation. In this equation, the centrality of Germany as the land that gave birth to the "Jewish Enlightenment," i.e., the movement for modernizing Jewish belief and practice, to Reform Judaism, and to Nazism is undeniable proof of this causal connection.[10] All these justifications and explanations, however, must be treated with great suspicion. Readers need to reflect on the two fundamental questions posed above when deciding whether or not this response, which blames the victims for their own destruction, is plausible.

6. The Burden of Human Freedom: The "Free-Will Defense"

Among the theological and philosophical traditions that have been concerned to uphold God's justice despite the manifest evil in the world, none has an older or more distinguished lineage than that known as the "free-will defense." According to this argument, human evil is the ever-present possibility entailed by the reality of human freedom. If human beings are to have the potential for majesty they must, conversely, have an equal potential for corruption; if they are to be capable of acts of authentic morality, they must be capable of acts of authentic immorality. Freedom is a two-edged sword, hence its challenge and its cost. Applying this consideration to the events of the Nazi epoch, the *Shoah* becomes a case of man's inhumanity to man, the extreme misuse of human freedom. At the same time, such a position with its emphasis on human actions does not call into question God's goodness and solicitude for it is man, not God, who perpetrates genocide. God observes these events with his unique Divine pathos, but in order to allow human morality to be a substantively real thing, He refrains from intercession. Thus, at the same time that He respects human freedom and is long suffering with an evil humanity, His patience results in the suffering of others.

This defense has been advocated by a number of post-Holocaust thinkers. The two most notable presentations of this theme are found in Eliezer Berkovits's *Faith after the Holocaust* and Arthur A. Cohen's *The Tremendum;* sections from both works are excerpted below. Berkovits has employed it to defend a traditional Jewish theological position, while Cohen has utilized it to develop a Jewish "process theology" (for more on Cohen's view see part II, point 3, of this introduction, below). And in both cases—as well as in the work of other thinkers, for example, the argument of Robert Gordis in his selection below—it advances a powerful theological position. But, for all its significance, it does not fully answer the problem, for God is, in some ultimate sense, still responsible for creation. Thus, in the past He is said to have intervened in history, e.g., at the Exodus from Egypt, but this type of intervention seems altogether absent in the case of the Holocaust. (Yet, having said this, one needs to consider that Hitler was defeated; his plan totally to annihilate the Jewish people did not succeed; and after the war the State of Israel was, after 1,900 years, recreated. There are those for whom any one of these outcomes, and all of them together, may/do indicate God's active participation in history. But this is a very complex matter that requires careful and sustained theological reflection.) Again, insofar as human beings are His creation, He could have given us a stronger inclination for the good. In other words, there are many possibilities, Divine and human, that must be examined with great care before deciding to adopt this theological position as definitive.

II

The first six theological positions that have been analyzed have all been predicated upon, and are the extension of, classical Jewish responses to national tragedy. In the last four decades, however, a number of innovative, more radical responses have been proposed by contemporary post-Holocaust thinkers. Six, in particular, merit serious attention.

1. Auschwitz: A New Revelation

The first of these emerges from the work of Emil Fackenheim, who has contended that the Holocaust represents a new revelation. Rejecting any account that analyzes Auschwitz as *mipnei chataeynu* (because of our sins), Fackenheim, employing a Buberian model of dialogical revelation[11]—i.e., revelation as the personal encounter of an I with the Eternal Thou (God)—urges Israel to continue to believe despite the moral outrage of the *Shoah*. God, on this view, is always present in Jewish history, even at Auschwitz. We do not, and cannot, understand what He was doing at Auschwitz, nor why He allowed it, but we must insist that He was there. Equally, if not more significant, God commands Israel from the death camps as He did from Sinai. The essence of this commanding voice, what Fackenheim has called the "614th commandment" (there are 613 commandments in traditional Judaism) is "Jews are forbidden to hand Hitler posthumous victories." That is, Jews are under a sacred obligation to survive. After the death camps, Jewish existence itself is a holy act. Moreover, Jews are now forbidden to become cynical about the world and man, for to submit to cynicism is to abdicate responsibility for the future and to deliver the world into the hands of the luciferian forces of Nazism. And most important, Jews are "forbidden to despair of the God of Israel, lest Judaism perish." The voice that speaks from Auschwitz demands that no one assist Hitler to win posthumous victories. The Jewish will for survival is natural enough, but Fackenheim invests it with transcendental significance. Precisely because others would eradicate Jews from the earth, Jews are commanded to resist annihilation. Paradoxically, Hitler makes Judaism a necessity after Auschwitz. To say no to Hitler is to say yes to the God of Sinai; to say no to the God of Sinai is to say yes to Hitler.

To fully evaluate this interesting, highly influential response to the *Shoah* (reprinted below), a detailed analysis of a sort that is beyond our present possibilities is required. Nevertheless, it needs to be stressed that the main line of critical inquiry into Fackenheim's position—as well as that of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, who draws his main theological argument from Fackenheim's views (see his selections below)—must center on the dialogical (Buberian) notion of revelation and the related idea of commandment, as that traditional notion is here employed. One needs to ask Fackenheim: (a) How do historical events like the Holocaust become "revelatory"? (b) What exactly does he mean by the term "commandment"? And, as a related question, one needs to ask whether one wants to make reaction to Hitler the main reason for continued Jewish existence. This latter topic is pursued, in particular, by Michael Wyschograd (see his selection below), who is highly critical of Fackenheim's attempt to respond to the Holocaust and to justify continued collective Jewish existence on grounds other than the classical doctrines of covenant and Torah.

2. The Covenant Broken: A New Age

A second contemporary thinker who has urged continued belief in the God of Israel, though on new terms, is Irving (Yitzchak) Greenberg. For Greenberg, all the old truths and certainties, all the old commitments and obligations, have been destroyed by the Holocaust. Moreover, any simple faith is now impossible. The Holocaust ends the old era of Jewish covenantal existence and ushers in a new and different one. Greenberg explains his radical view in this way. There have been three major periods in the covenantal history of Israel. The first is the biblical era. What

Survivors and Memory

After taking part in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, Alexander Donat was sent to Majdanek, Auschwitz, and later Dachau. He writes, "I felt I was a witness to disaster and charged with the sacred mission of carrying the Ghetto's history through the flames and barbed wire until such time I could hurl it into the face of the world. It seemed to be that this mission would give me the strength to endure everything."[4]

Many survivors have shared his need to tell the world what happened. Rose Murra traces her obligation to conversations she had with her mother after her father, uncle, and brother were killed. For a time, she and her mother managed to elude the authorities. But each day was a test of survival. And in the end, they, like so many others, were herded onto cattle cars bound for Majdanek. Rose wanted to join the many young people who jumped off the train, but her mother begged her to stay. As the two huddled together, they spoke of what lay ahead.

I felt I was a witness to disaster and charged with the sacred mission of carrying the Ghetto's history through the flames and barbed wire until such time I could hurl it into the face of the world.

Rose Murra's family in 1938.

"Ma, listen we gonna go to a camp—I don't know they're gonna kill me. They're gonna kill you? Who gonna get killed first?"

"Listen don't cry over me—if I be killed—because that's the way of life—that's gonna be—don't cry—your little boy got killed—your husband—everybody died already—so what you think—we have to be the chosen ones—we don't have to be the chosen ones—we're gonna die too. So take it nice and easy. Death is not so bad. After death there's nothing to remember no more—so maybe death is the solution of it. I mean suffering—even more—look Ma—we went through typhus and hunger—the cold and the hiding—How much more can you take of this?"

So my mother said—"Okay my child, I was thinking—okay I would die—at least I want you to live. Somebody—somebody from the family should live and survive."

I said, "Listen—a lot of families are killed already—nobody left already from a family."

"In case you live through—don't ever forget to tell the story what your family went through."

I said, "If I come through—which I know I'm not, well, I tell, I tell." So that's what it is!

When we entered Majdanek—the young went to one side—the old to another side—I was going with my mother—we came closer to the soldier and he told my mother to go to this side—"You mean this side"—my mother said—"I'm still young. I can work."

The soldier said—"If you don't shut up your mother—I'm gonna beat you to death." And that's the last I saw of my mother—she just like disappeared."[5]

Isabella Leitner never forgot her mother's words either. On the train that took the family to Auschwitz, her mother told her children.

Stay alive, my darlings—all six of you. Out there, when it's all over, a world is waiting for you to give it all I gave you. Despite what you see here—and you are all young and impressionable—believe me, there is humanity out there, there is dignity. I will not share it with you, but it's there. And when this is over, you must add to it, because sometimes it is a little short, a little skimpy. With your lives, you can create other lives and nourish them. You can nourish your children's souls and minds, and teach them that man is capable of infinite glory. You must believe me. I cannot leave you with what you see here. I must leave you with what I see. My body is nearly dead, but my vision is throbbing with life—even here. I want you to live for the very life that is yours. And wherever I'll be, in some mysterious way, my love will overcome my death and will keep you alive. I love you.[6]

I want to tell my mother that I kept her faith, that I lived because she wanted me to, that the strength she imbued me with is not for sale, that the god in man is worth living for, and I will make sure that I hand that down to those who come after me.

Isabella Leitner lived with those words for the rest of her life. In her memoirs, she tells why May is an especially difficult month.

May is such a "big" month. The first of May has overtones of political celebrations, and that is meaningful to me. In my teens, the first of May meant serenading under your window, a burst of spring, love, music, all sentimentally shouting hosannas in your body, masking the dread of reality.

May 1st is my sister's birthday. There is something special about being born on May 1st, and dear little Rachel is special. There is something special about being born any time in May—May 1st, May 28th. The scent of spring is delicious. It permeates the air. It sings the song of birth, of life. All is drenched in sun. The earth smiles. It is happy you are here.

The world ended in May. I was born in May. I died in May. We started the journey of ugliness on May 29th. We headed for Auschwitz. We arrived on May 31st.

The scent of spring wasn't delicious. The earth didn't smile. It shrieked in pain. The air was filled with the stench of death. Unnatural death. The smoke was thick. The sun couldn't crack through. The scent was the smell of burning flesh. The burning flesh was your mother.

I am condemned to walk the earth for all my days with the stench of burning flesh in my nostrils. My nostrils are damned. May is

damned. May should be abolished. May hurts. There should be only eleven months in a year. May should be set aside for tears. For six million years, to cleanse the earth.

For more than twenty years I have walked zombie-like toward the end of May, deeply depressed, losing jobs, losing lovers, uncomprehending. And then June would come, and there would be new zeal, new life.

Now I am older, and I don't remember all the pain, and June hurts, and so does May. May laughs sometimes, and so does June, and now in May I bend down to smell the flowers, and for moments I don't recall the smell of burning flesh. That is not happiness, only relief, and relief is blessed. Now I want to reinstate the month of May. I want to reincarnate the month, reincarnate the dead. I want to tell my mother that I kept her faith, that I lived because she wanted me to, that the strength she imbued me with is not for sale, that the god in man is worth living for, and I will make sure that I hand that down to those who come after me.

I will tell them to make what is good in all of us their religion, as it was yours, Mother, and then you will always be alive and the housepainter will always be dead. And children someday will plant flowers in Auschwitz, where the sun couldn't crack through the smoke of burning flesh. Mother, I will keep you alive.[7]

CONNECTIONS

What did Rose Murra's mother mean when she told her daughter, "don't forget to tell the story"? Why was it important that it be told?

Does it matter what you remember? What did Isabella Leitner's mother want her children to remember? What was her legacy to them?

How does Isabella Leitner approach the past? How does her past define her present? Her plans for the future?

➤➤Edith P., a survivor, ends her testimony by expressing her sadness at the plight of the Cambodian people. "Why do we do nothing?" she asks. For more of Edith's story, see *Elements of Time*, pages 32-34. A video portrait is available from the Facing History Resource Center.

➤➤The video montage *Future Imperfect* describes the way Holocaust survivors have dealt with their memories in recent decades. The montage is available from the Facing History Resource Center and is described in *Elements of Time*, pages xxxi-xxxii.