

The Holocaust is an orphan with no comfort and a moral responsibility without compromise. It does not permit us, the Jewish people, to turn a blind eye. It must always be a warning to the entire human family.



As we leave Chanukah and Christmas and the lights burning brightly upon the Chanukkot and Christmas lights shining in the streets and upon festive decorations and trees, it is appropriate leading up to Yom h'Shoah to think of the millions of lights of life, including 1.1 million defenseless children that along with the lights of their potential generations, were extinguished during the Nazi terror.

Holocaust Remembrance Day marks the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camps in 1945. In Israel, the Knesset made Holocaust Remembrance Day (also known as Yom Hashoah) a national holiday in 1959. In the Western world it took many years to also incorporate the idea to at least pay notice to the event Holocaust Remembrance Day being inaugurated on 27th Jan 2001, the date being held over for yearly observation. It was endorsed and designated by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/7 on 1 November 2005 during the 42nd plenary session observance. The significance of resolution A/RES/60/7 is that it calls for a remembrance of past crimes with an eye towards preventing them in the future

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon summed up the resolution:

Denying historical facts, especially on such an important subject as the Holocaust, is just not acceptable. Nor is it acceptable to call for the elimination of any State or people. I would like to see this fundamental principle respected both in rhetoric and in practice by all the members of the international community".



The Holocaust began in 1933 when Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany. It ended in 1945 when Allied powers defeated the Nazis. Jewish people were excluded from public life on September 15th, 1935 when the Nuremberg Laws were issued. These laws also stripped German Jews of their citizenship and their right to marry Germans. All Jews were ordered to wear a yellow Star of David on their clothing and forced to live in ghettos the larger ones witnessed up to 1,000 people a day were deported by train to concentration or extermination camps. Upon arrival 'selections' took place as to who would be put to slave labour and who would be immediately sent to the gas. At Auschwitz babies and small children were thrown alive into fire pits to save time and the cost of the gas (2/5th of one American cent)

In the camps, prisoners were forced to do hard physical labor surviving on minimum rations. Torture, medical experiments and mechanized death were common and frequent.

Two-thirds of Jewish people living in Europe at the time of World War II were killed by Nazis. They did not kill the Jews because they wanted their property. They robbed their property in the process of getting rid of them, first by emigration, then by expulsion, and in the end by murder. They killed Jewish armament workers when they needed every pair of hands after the defeat at Stalingrad in early 1943; they murdered Jewish slave laborers while they were building roads for the German military. If they had followed modern, capitalistic practice, they would have robbed Jewish property and then utilized Jewish slave labor for their own purposes, as they did with the Poles, for instance. But they murdered the Jews

because that was where their ideology led them, an ideology that had the character of nightmares.

We are confronted by the following questions of: what happened? How did it happen? How could it happen? Could it happen again? How should we respond?



It is important to remember in order to learn the lessons of the Holocaust:

1 The Holocaust happened in the middle of Christian Europe and the atrocities were carried out by baptized Christians. The rest of Christian world stood by passively whilst the programme of mass extermination moved relentlessly forward. As Elie Wiesel pointed out the opposite of love is not hate – it is indifference. James 4:17 states plainly to know good and ignore it is sin ! We must be alert to the dangers of such movements such as Jobbik in Hungary and other neo Nazi groups or Nazi revivals and not stand idly by.

2 The holocaust is a concrete fact of history. Despite the best attempts of David Irving, Arthur Butz, in the west and Ahmed Ahmadinejad, Mahmoud Abbas the leader of Fatah and ex-Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi in the Arab nations plus a miscellany of others, the eye witness statements and copious Nazi documentation. To the reasonable person the mere idea it did not happen is ludicrous in the extreme.

3 The Holocaust is the greatest disfigurement of human history, to minimize or trivialize the events is the route towards historical amnesia and opens the gates for it to happen again. We must not lose sight that the holocaust was not a localized event or minor initiative. The Jewish people were to be hunted down world-wide and none were allowed to die comfortably or in their own beds.

The setting of the holocaust as backdrop for romantic movies sits comfortably alongside Holocaust revisionists who whilst not denying it happened go out their way to minimize or sanitise the events

4 It could happen again. The underlying spiritual reason behind the holocaust was not simply to remove an assumed undesirable element in society. It was part of a far reaching programme to remove God and replace him with new neo Pagan religion. Man cannot remove God but can attempt to remove the physical evidence of Him by destroying his representative people.

5 The church needs not only to accept the concrete reality of the holocaust but also its responsibility both for the institutional antisemitism but the indifference to the fate of the Jewish people. The Catholic Church remains largely antisemitic and the Methodist church is largely anti-Israel.

The church also needs to accept the concrete reality of the State of Israel and the God-land people relationship that underpins the scriptures.

6 Nationalists movements are on the rise and where nationalism appears it walks hand in hand with racism and anti-Semitism.

7 The Holocaust was an unprecedented crime against humanity and a defining historical moment, one that fundamentally should alter how the world views and treats acts of ethnocide and genocide.

The last word remains with Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer aka, The Baal Shem Tov, who taught that:

"Forgetfulness leads to exile while remembrance is the secret of redemption,"

