

offend. The New England Holocaust Memorial will consist of 6-56 foot high glass towers. A total of 6,000,000 numbers will be inscribed on the faces of these towers, to memorialize the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. It is one thing to say that we cannot identify all the victims, that some have gone to their death namelessly and unremembered; but it is quite another thing to focus on the number, and not on the individuals. In relegating the 6,000,000 individuals to random numbers, for the sake of expedience, we are, in a sense, subscribing to a dehumanizing view. Yad V'Shem, after all, has a documentation center which is still collecting data on the victims and the survivors, to ensure that wherever possible, the victims are remembered as individuals, and not as statistics. Yad V'Shem--a monument and a name. Absent this respect for the individual, the Memorial effort is destined to failure in Jewish terms.

It is difficult to comprehend the message of the Holocaust as represented by the museum builders. If the purpose of the memorial is to create a consciousness which will never again allow such an event to occur, we have failed. I do not put the Yugoslavian situation on the same plane as the Shoah, and yet these two experiences are certainly on the same side of the Good-Evil continuum. For all these years, we may have understood the facts of the Shoah, and its consequences and individually share the emotions in reaction; but we could never really comprehend the basal hatred and cruelty which allowed such actions to occur.

In Yugoslavia, our generation sees these forces, unhidden and revealed for the first time, in a familiar western state. Much like Germany. And we see the world essentially stand by once again as innocents are murdered because of their nationality. It is fair therefore to ask of what use is any memorial. If the experience cannot effect a fundamental change in behavior now, it certainly won't do so in the future. The allies had "rational" reasons to not bomb Auschwitz. We hear similar reasons now why forceful intervention in Yugoslavia is not practical. If the memorials and museums do not convey the message that exigencies are irrelevant, then the Holocaust can happen again. Perhaps not to the Jewish people, but to others. It can indeed happen again, and memorials and museums on every street corner in the world will not guarantee otherwise.

The Jewish tradition is skeptical of enshrining values in buildings, and places greater stock in the eternity of our traditions, beliefs and practices. Future projects to memorialize and educate about the Holocaust should be planned from within this tradition.

The Shoah has earned a place of reverence in the consciousness of the Jewish people, and memory of the victims will be secure as long as there is a Jewish people. I know this with great certainty because it has happened before. The Jewish view of time transcends the chronograph. At the Passover Seder, we affirm that it is each of us individually who was brought forth from Egypt, some 3,250 years ago. We live in both the present and the past. The many of our people who have perished through the ages, as martyrs and as heroes, live in the present in our culture, our religious services, our calendar and our holidays. We do not need monuments or memorials to remember the suffering of Egypt, the victims of Titus, the threats of Haman or the expulsion from Spain. The Jewish view of time is long indeed. Hitler may have envisioned a Thousand Year Reich; but while his evil empire lasted a little longer than 12 years, the Jewish people are in a position to challenge the proposed beatification of Queen Isabella, four and a half centuries after her death, and do so because the memories of the expulsion and persecution of Spanish Jewry is palpable, even now.

We can have faith in our identity and our people; and in this timeframe physical memorials become much less critical, as our everlasting memorials have always been non-physical and thereby eternal.□

Moses passed the memory to Joshua and ...

Morris Engelson

Survivors can do as they please. They can be silent, lecture, publish their stories.... All of these contribute to the future "memory". But memory is more than information; it is more than words. Memory is also a type of belief, internalized knowledge that comes not from cognitive understanding, but from experience. I know that the Holocaust happened, even though years of study have convinced me that I will never arrive at a level of real understanding. How do I know, you ask. I know because I was there, I experienced it. That memory, and the certain knowledge that goes with it, will be gone forever once there are no more survivors. We cannot transfer the actual memory to future generations. We can, however, transfer an extension of it.

Pirkei Avot does not begin with a lesson to be learned but rather an explanation of how the lesson was handed down from generation to generation. Something similar

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needs to be done to preserve the memory of the Holocaust. I suggest that no meeting or commemoration of the Holocaust be considered complete without a ceremony to hand over the experiential memory to future generations along with the usual information-based memory.

All that is necessary is for a survivor to state, "I am a survivor of the Holocaust. I was there. I lived through it while many more perished for the crime of being Jews. I testify to it, and I am your living witness. There are those who would deny that it happened. There are those who would deny that those who died ever existed. But they did die. They did exist, and it did happen. I am your living proof. Many here are too young to have a personal memory of it. I cannot transfer my memory to you. But I can give you a memory of my memory.

"One day, perhaps 30 years from now, when no survivors are left, it will be your turn to speak for us. You will say that you were present when a survivor was witness and made you a witness for the witness. And when you are no longer able to speak, then the next generation will speak for you."

This way, a thousand years from now, someone will stand and be a witness in a living chain of memory. □

Alicia seeger, in tribute

Eugene B. Borowitz

This will be the first issue in *Sh'ma's* twenty-three year history in which my neighbor and colleague Alicia Seeger has not had a hand. Over the years people often tried to write to *Sh'ma's* "office", not realizing that we never had one. Of course, papers overflowed Alicia's enclosed porch and took up a good part of her basement but *Sh'ma's* overhead stayed incomparably low thanks to her dedication and genius. Through these decades she kept doing more things for us, like designing our several books or creating several issues. To every new task she brought her love of Judaism and Jews (not infrequently tested by *nudnik* subscribers, authors--plus the then-Editor--or true-believers looking for someone to assault). All of them she handled with her refined taste and her profound personal grace. She treated the endless details of running *Sh'ma* (and much else in our community) as her way of serving God and the Jewish people. *Sh'ma* could not have survived without her. And without her soul, it would not have been such a joy. When they count this generation's mandatory 36, she will be among them. □