שמור וזכור

The Transmission of the Holocaust: When the Survivors are Gone

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I. PREFACE

I am a member of the second generation of Holocaust survivors. Some of us seek to escape our roots, others embrace them, and others still ask, "What does all of this have to do with me?" What makes us a group or possibly even a movement is the shared experience of our parents. They either lived under German occupation, experienced the early days of the Third Reich, were sent to ghettos or concentration camps, hid or were hidden, joined the partisans or escaped to foreign lands. Even while most of their families did not make it to the other side. We are a community because our lives were shaped both consciously and unconsciously by our parents' survival of horrific racism, genocide and numerous losses. For instance, we know that our very existence is a miracle. It is not easy growing up a miracle. But I, and thousands of others were the hope of the Jewish future after the destruction of European Jewry. My parents would never have met, let alone married, had it not been for the Holocaust. Family was all-important, and rebuilding what was lost was what mattered. As writer Melvin Bukiet's father, Joe, said at each of his grandchildren's bnei mitzvah,"This is the moment when we can say, Hitler! You did not win. We're still here!"

Some 30 years ago, living in Boston, I found myself becoming part of a group of Second Generation (2G) individuals, led by Helen Epstein.[1] I was not sure I belonged. After all, my parents had not survived the concentration camps. They had only escaped to Shanghai. But soon enough, I realized that I did belong with the others in the room with whom I shared a great deal: we were our parents' translators of an American way of life. Our parents made us feel very special and at the same time wanted us to keep a low profile. Unlike our Jewish peers whose families had come to America earlier, we learned not to take anything for granted.

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[1] Epstein, Helen. *Children of the Holocaust: Conversations with Sons and Daughters of Survivors.* New York: Putnam, 1979.

I grew up surrounded by Holocaust history. The stories of the life before and during the Shoah were everywhere. Survivors and their stories surrounded me. They told stories of the camps, stories of Shanghai, stories of the Dominican Republic, stories of starting over. What was lost was clear: family. My mother's enormous family with many aunts and uncles on both sides was reduced to a family that included no children other than her, her parents, two aunts and one uncle. All of those aunts and uncles who had been an integral part of her life in Germany chose not to follow my grandfather to China and ended up in concentration camps instead. On my father's side only my father and his brother survived, with most of the family being killed digging their own graves in Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia, which had been their place of refuge as they fled from Austria, became their final stop.

In light of this, Holocaust education is very personal for me. Both of my parents escaped Hitler's Europe in the nick of time. Their stories are embedded into the fabric of my being, but what about everyone else? Where does the Shoah fit in for them?

Until now, the living stories of the survivors have been an integral part of the teaching of the Holocaust. Soon, there will be no survivors left.

How will that change the landscape of Holocaust education?

The incident that initiated my interest in teaching the Holocaust after all of the witnesses have gone began at the General Assembly of The Jewish Federations of North America some years ago. There, I first heard the notion that, in the future, the Shoah would no longer be commemorated on its own day, but that it would eventually be conflated with the observance of Tisha B'Av. After all, as someone stated that day, "Once there are no longer any survivors, the Holocaust would become another in the long line of tragedies that had befallen the Jews."[2]

[2] United Jewish Communities General Assembly, 2005, Toronto, Canada

The idea of Tisha B'Av as a day of observing the Shoah gnawed at me, and as my own Jewish education expanded and deepened, I believed that this could simply not be the case. *But belief that is informed primarily by one's own history is simply not enough.* The enterprise of Holocaust education needs to go beyond families of survivors.

The counter point to the stories of the life of my family was the boredom and ennui that greeted me in a Hebrew School classroom as we were preparing to observe Yom Hashoah. "Not that again," said one of the children. Maybe those who want to relegate this not-so recent piece of our history to Tisha B'Av were correct.

What will happen to all of those Hebrew School classrooms when there are no longer individuals to come and tell their first-person narratives? If the personal interaction were the only way to reach future generations, our work would be impossible. Truthfully, there are many Jewish communities across the U.S. that never had Holocaust survivors enter their classrooms.

One more obligation fuels this work. My dear friend, writer, Esther Hautzig[3] z"l was always adamant that we remember not that 6 million died, but that they lived. Our challenge, the challenge of those of us who never knew them, is to give them life once more.

At first, I believed this to be a comparatively finite exploration about the transmission of the Shoah to future generations without the benefit of survivors to bear witness. However, this has become a more multi-faceted endeavor demanding more time, energy and resources. With that expansion comes the acknowledgement that what I will be presenting here is only the beginning of a much more in-depth project. In all likelihood, this will become a book. What you have before you is the beginning of that book, a book that needs to be written in order to pay homage to

[3] Hautzig, Esther. *The Endless Steppe: Growing up in Siberia.* London: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968.

the survivors and the many ways in which we need to remember.

II. INTRODUCTION

When I began thinking about Holocaust education as a rabbinic leader in a congregation, I believed that I knew how best to incorporate this most challenging subject for my young and old congregants.

In the process I realized that the entirety of my educational process from my days as a student of theatre to my road to the rabbinate has put all of my assumptions and suppositions to the test. My training in both arenas has made it quite clear that what you see depends in large part upon where you stand. Having been taught over the past ten years that the lenses we use change our perspective on what we are exploring holds true for this particular exploration as well.

I am leading a congregation in the post-Holocaust world. I have a responsibility to those who died in the Shoah as well as to those who survived. Most of the survivors are no longer living. Soon they will all be gone. I have a responsibility to the dead and to their offspring to celebrate the lives they lived – to understand their values, with their emphasis on "*gemilut hasadim*"[4] and learning, to know what were their vibrant Jewish traditions, to study the texts, which formed the core of that tradition. All of these elements held the Jewish people together in spite all of the destructions throughout Jewish history. Through it all, the Jewish people "choose life."

Remembering those who perished and the lives they led goes beyond prescribed days. I want to emphasize that remembering does not have to mean remembering only the loss.

Over the years, the approach toward Holocaust education has not been static with the advancement of historical research. The reality is that we know much more now. Therefore, we have much more information to disseminate to our children in our

[4] Acts of loving kindness

Hebrew schools and adults in our adult education classes and community events.

This paper seeks to step back and see how the teaching of the Shoah is changing as those who experienced the events first-hand are disappearing. Our task is to make certain that their stories and lives remain even as we find ourselves in a time where the Holocaust and its perpetrators are used to represent any position that a particular group does not like about another.

שמור וזכור

Keep and Remember

In the process of all my research, it has become clear that my task in developing Holocaust education for a congregation is two-fold – שמור וזכור.

When we use the terms שמור וזכור in relation to Sabbath observance, it is clear that both elements are necessary. There are tasks that we refrain from doing to set the day apart from all others and tasks we do to beautify and enrich the experience of the day. These two concepts of the Sabbath are beneficial as we construct our transmission of Holocaust education.

When we take the approach of שמור, we protect against the misuse of this episode of our history. This can be seen in the case of Fox News and Glenn Beck. Glenn Beck, Fox News commentator, scurrilously attacked Hungarian Holocaust survivor George Soros.[5] Beck crossed a line when he accused Soros of being a Nazi sympathizer and collaborator as a child. He even accused Soros "of helping send the Jews to the death camps."[6] Beck uses language reminiscent of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*[7] to paint Soros as a man seeking world domination. Beck grounded his factually

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[5] Mercury Radio Arts, prod. *The Glenn Beck Program.* Fox News Channel. New York, NY, 10 Nov. 2010. Television. Transcript. http://www.glennbeck.com/content/articles/article/198/47910/

[6] Ibid.

[7] The Protocols of the Elders of Zion -fraudulent anti-Semitic text purporting to describe a Jewish plan to achieve global domination

inaccurate case in the accusation of Soros' so-called support of Nazi activities.

Beck's statements produced an outcry in the Jewish community, in particular in those sectors that are often in disagreement with George Soros' political positions. The right wing Jewish community has seen him as one who separates himself from the larger community.

Glenn Beck can be ignored and has a right to freedom of speech, but what happened just a few days later brings into sharp focus the need for Holocaust education in both formal and informal settings. Fox News President Roger Ailes used the appellation Nazi in reference to the management of NPR. He is within his rights to disagree with NPR's news policies, but it is entirely inappropriate to call them Nazis.

Words like 'Nazi' should not be thrown about with impunity. 'Nazi' is a symbol of evil. Symbols are rife with meaning and when those symbols are misappropriated, the original meaning is in danger of being lost. Jews stand at a moment where our history and that of the German people is being usurped by those who would use the Holocaust as a rhetorical device stripping it of meaning and devaluing the loss into ephemera.

Through שמור, we acknowledge the sanctity of the memory and its unique qualities, even as we speak up about new virulent forms of racism and genocide. In contrast, זכור is all about the transmission of the lives before, during and after. זכור can be more particular, personal and immediate. זכור is about the Jewish lives that were led before the Shoah, during the Shoah and subsequent to it.

Despite some of the negative responses to some of my questions about the future of teaching the Holocaust, congregational rabbis, as informal Jewish educators have multiple opportunities for Holocaust education. They can utilize both שמור וזכור, honoring the dead and remembering their lives. These are the two tent-poles of transmission. They are the means by which the enormous expanse of Holocaust

education can be harmonized as elucidated. This need not be an either/or proposition; but rather an "and/also" approach. We need to memorialize, mourn, and remember the depth of the horrorific destruction. At the same time, we need to remember the lives that were lost and changed.

OVERVIEW: Four Approaches to the Holocaust

Educational strategy

We are in the midst of the ongoing conversation on how best to teach the Holocaust. There is an enormous divide between those that experienced and survived the Shoah and young people today. The technology that crowds the lives of the current generation was unimaginable to those who survived and would have been to those who did not survive. The shape of their lives is almost unimaginable to the current generation. I recall a survivor speaking to a group of college students. One of the most urgent questions was not about loss or trauma, but "How did you manage without regular showers and toilets?" The big questions were almost too big. Also, there is no unitary vision about adult education.

What are we teaching? It makes an enormous difference if the educational entity is Jewish or secular. The Paper Clips Project[8] is an example of outstanding secular Holocaust education. Although ultimately the children of the community learned a great deal about the Holocaust, the original intent was teaching tolerance and broadening the worldview of a fairly homogenous population. In Jewish settings the objective is to teach Jews their own history, whether young or old.

What we teach, and how we teach it matters. Often, we have not allowed ourselves

[8] The ***Paper Clips Project*** is a project by students from the small southeastern town of Whitwell, Tennessee who created a monument for the victims of the Holocaust. It started in 1998 as a simple 8th-grade project and evolved into one gaining worldwide attention. At last count, over 30 million paper clips had been received, each one representing a person who was killed in Nazi concentration camps. Paper Clips, an award-winning documentary film about the project, was released in 2004 by Miramax Films.

the time to explore the various ways in which the Holocaust has been taught. My task is not to provide an exhaustive overview, but to give a sense of the wide range of approaches and strategies that are currently used.

Theological strategy

There are numerous strands to the theological approach. They range from those that view the Shoah as Divine retribution for those who turned away from tradition to Richard Rubenstein's view in "After Auschwitz" that God was dead after WWII. He believed that after the horrors of the camps humanity was in no position to say anything about God.

Then there is Rabbi Irving Greenberg's powerful construct in *The Jewish Way: Living the Holiday* that those of us living today in the shadow of the Shoah are living in an era of voluntary covenant. We are no longer obligated by the first two covenants, the one with Abraham and the one at Sinai. This new covenant is an act of love of God and faith in God. As Rabbi Greenberg writes:

> The Jews had every right to reject the covenant. Instead, countless assimilated Jews, seeing that modernity's messianic claim was premature and that the Jewish witness of "not yet" was still needed, have turned around and become more Jewish. Committed Jews have increased tzedakah and responsibility for other Jews to the highest levels in Jewish history. Observant Jews—backed and in some cases joined by nonobservant Jews—have recreated yeshivot and the study of Torah so that more people study Talmud today full-time than ever before in Jewish history. Indeed, right-wing Orthodoxy has had magnificent resurgence with the active and generous support of nonobservant Jewry.
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> The bulk of Jews, traditional and modernist, religious and secular alike, acted together to recreate the great biblical covenantal symbol, the State of Israel. Israeli and Diaspora Jewry alike responded to the Holocaust with what could be called a frenzy for life and renewal. On the other hand, the magnitude of the destruction and the sheer gravity of six million dead witnesses against redemption make it impossible to act as if nothing happened.
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> - What then happened to the covenant? Could it be that the covenant was broken, but the Jewish people, deeply committed to the partnership, chose voluntarily to take it on again? Not just those observant Jews who heard commandments from Sinai but the vast majority of Jews who heard no commandments but were still so in love with the dream of redemption that they volunteered to carry on the mission. They were all so committed to the triumph of life that they would brave the threat of limitless death again. Samuel Bak, who portrays the Holocaust in powerful images of broken tablets, writes as follows: 'Throughout their long history of violation and abuse, the Tablets have

> maintained their eternal power to reemerge as a guide for those who choose to accept their covenant. Their power cannot be totally annihilated: Out of their fragments new Tablets are being created.'[9]

The idea that we are living in the time of the third covenant, one chosen by the people in the shadow of the Holocaust, resonates deeply as our culture finds itself surrounded by so many spiritual seekers. We are living in a time where being Jewish is a choice.

Historical strategy

Historical approaches rely on evidence and are not primarily concerned with the impact of the event but rather seek to place it in a historical context even as it contends with the evil nature of the Holocaust. Historical approaches adamantly reject any notion that the Shoah is inexplicable, even as all of its possible causes have yet to be fully catalogued. Within Jewish historical settings, there is the particularist approach which seeks only to look at the Shoah from a Jewish perspective in light of Jewish history. Some believe that the Holocaust belongs only to Jews. For others still, the Shoah is the ultimate symbol of evil whose message, "beware and learn," is universal. But in truth, most historians, whether Jewish or not, would agree that they are engaged in the process of trying to understand how and why the Holocaust happened. Each historian approaches history with his/her own particular bias.

Political strategy

An emerging political perspective is that the Shoah is a model for how political systems fall apart. Political analysts use the Holocaust as a case study for ways that can help us stop the destructive trends that confront the world today. It finds the victims and their stories germane, if one adheres to the theory that history has the capacity to repeat itself. By contrast, historians with whom I spoke would disagree; history never repeats itself, rather it functions as a signpost reminding us to be alert.

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[9] Greenberg, Irving. *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays.* New York: Summit, 1988. 319.

Elie Wiesel, who for many has come to personify the ultimate survivor of the Shoah through the eloquence of his writing, believes that the Holocaust is inexplicable, irrational and mystifying. Yet, his writing allows us into his world and pulls away the curtain. As an artist, he has the gift of allowing us to approach that which we will never be able to fully comprehend. Maybe Wiesel finds the Shoah inexplicable, not on the macro level but on the micro. How could such horror have been perpetrated by one being on another? However, for him, the Holocaust is one of many genocides, with each genocide being unique. The uniqueness of the Holocaust lies in great part in the disappearance of national boundaries. The intent of the perpetrators was global destruction of the identified victims, while other genocides have been much more localized.

FOCUS OF THIS PAPER

All of the previously mentioned approaches have included first-hand interactions with survivors. That is about to change. Holocaust Education and commemoration are relatively recent innovations that have developed in the last 30 years. Now, just when education and commemoration have solidified and become well established, we are about to go through another major shift when the first-hand, face to face accounts will no longer be available.

I have begun to explore how educators are grappling with the impending change. I have found no books that directly address the question of how the eventual disappearance of the survivors will change the way we teach the Holocaust along with its dissemination to the general populace. This is shocking when one considers that the number of books and articles written to address issues surrounding the Holocaust, its history and its importance are countless.

As we move further away from the event of the Holocaust itself, two issues come up: 1) how do we transmit the information, and 2) what message are we trying to

transmit as we study the Holocaust? The role of the survivor as the immediate transmitter of experience is disappearing with each day that passes.

III. HISTORICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Even after collecting testimonies and acknowledging their varieties, we must still sort out fact from fiction. This is important to do in teaching any course, but even more so for the Holocaust. The Holocaust is sprawling, covering a great deal of territory, both geographic and historical, creating many opportunities for mythologizing. Regardless whether Holocaust education is geared toward public schools, Jewish schools or the university, many myths about the Holocaust have been spread that educators need to be aware of no matter who they are teaching.

WHAT TO TEACH: History vs. Myths

Professor Peter Hayes of Northwestern University is an eminent non-Jewish scholar of Holocaust history. His average class size is about 250 students, of whom possibly 10% are Jewish, the majority of which do not come from survivor families. His area of expertise is primarily focused on the economic aspect of the Holocaust. He is passionate about his subject and quite serious about reaching a wider audience. But first and foremost, he is concerned about the "widening and particularly stark gap"[10] between what scholars of the Holocaust have learned over the past 30 years and what the general public believes to be true.

Hayes identified eight myths about the period, three of which I present here:
1) **Anti-Semitism played a key role in bringing Adolph Hitler to power.** "Every contemporaneous source that we have confirms that fear and hatred toward socialists and communists had much more to do with Hitler's rise than fear and hatred of Jews. More Germans became antisemites[11] after becoming Nazis than became Nazis because they were antisemites."

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[10] Leopold, Wendy. "Holocaust Expert Counters Myths About the Holocaust : Northwestern University Newscenter." Northwestern University Newscenter. Northwestern University, 18 Nov. 2010. Web. 28 Nov. 2010. <http://www.northwestern.edu/newscenter/stories/2009/11/hayes.html>.

[11] In his class on the Holocaust, Dr. Jerome Chanes noted that there is no hyphen in German and that the word antisemite was coined by the German antisemite Wilhelm Marr in 1879.

2) **"Killing Jews was on Hitler's agenda from the beginning of his political career."** Very little evidence indicates that Hitler contemplated murdering Jews until the late 1930s, when he realized he could not drive them out of the ever-expanding German territory that contained hundreds of thousands more Jews.

3) **The Allies could have saved more Jews,** a favorite belief among many Holocaust survivors. However, says Hayes, "the majority of Jews (75%) were killed while the Germans appeared to be winning the war."

It is the role of adult education to debunk these and other pre-conceived ideas about the Holocaust and Jewish history. These myths tie directly to the lachrymose sense of Jewish history that many Jews have; and a belief that the way the Holocaust unfolded was planned from the beginning. It confirms their belief of the Jew as the eternal victim. This does a disservice to the survivors. It paints them as eternal victims.

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONS: How to Assimilate All the Data

We live in a moment where the data available to us are increasing. We have more testimonies, more documents and more curricula. Educators have many more choices to make about what they want to transmit about the Holocaust. Each educator needs to be aware of how they choose the materials they use and why and what they are trying to teach about the Holocaust. With the increase in available resources these choices have become more complex. For some, the complexity pushes them away from teaching this material.

The meaning of testimonies as historical resources is not unequivocal. There are both advantages and limitations from a historical perspective. In *Holocaust Testimonies – The Ruins of Survival,* Dr. Lawrence Langer addresses the problem of the use of testimonies and how to categorizing them. Some testimonies are

historically faithful, some have gaps, some serve to protect the speaker, while others are a stripping away of all protective layers that the speaker has invested in for all these years. One reviewer described this exploration as "disturbing and controversial." It seeks to gain understanding of the Holocaust by digging deeply into the testimonies of those who lived through it. It is disturbing because of the survivors' graphic retelling of the starvation, torture, brutalization and cannibalism that occurred in the Nazi death camps. It is controversial because, instead of focusing on the bravery necessary to endure such horrors, Langer's book delves into the psychic wounds that 50 years after their infliction remain unhealed. "We have these double lives," said one survivor. "We can't cancel out. It just won't go away."[12]

What he finds is that there is no way to escape the darkness. Langer calls these narratives "an insomniac faculty – testimonies that are human documents."[13] In his introduction, he describes two Holocaust survivors being interviewed with their children in the room. The survivors speak of loss, of pain and of emptiness. Their daughter is asked about her parents, she speaks of their strength and fortitude and their ability to connect through all that was lost and its deep meaning. The loss is there, as is the ability to go forward. But he does not see the ability to go forward as simply redemptive. The black hole that is the Holocaust is more complex than that; people survived but they lived lives that were in many ways bifurcated.

It is not enough to have a lot of data. Rather our task is to be responsible in our use of these data. Frank Mecklenburg, a trained historian and chief archivist for the Leo Baeck Institute,[14] tackles this issue directly. Mecklenburg has an expansive view of the process of data collection. The Institute has received a great deal of material over the past few years, his work is directly affected by the loss of so many survivors.

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[12] Langer, Lawrence L. *Holocaust Testimonies: the Ruins of Memory.* New Haven: Yale UP, 1991.
[13] Ibid. preface page xv.
[14] The Leo Baeck Institute New York is a research, exhibition, and lecture center whose library and archives offer the most comprehensive documentation for the study of German Jewish history.

Leo Baeck Institute is very interested in the question, "What are the stories of [German Jews] that we are telling?" Or, "To what end will these stories be used?" Interestingly, with so much material available, there was always a fear that the neo-Nazis and the deniers would come to make copies of the archives and falsify the documents. Happily, it never happened.[15] Had this occurred it would have been another opportunity to mythologize and falsify the reality of what actually happened.

One of the questions that fuels the Institute is, "What is the power of the eyewitness? Does the authority shift as they leave the scene? Who can claim authority? Who is authentic? Could it be all of us (the "us" here being those of us who are stakeholders in this history.)?"[16]

The personal witness remains important. We have the memoirs. But the Holocaust cannot be viewed as simply an educational issue. It is a social issue on the level of history, in particular, as we are coming to the end of the survivors' lives. It is a social issue because it continues to impact the lives of the survivors and their families directly.

As an archivist, Frank Mecklenburg's task is to seek out and collect materials from German Jews. This is the point at which the social issue intersects with the historical. The social are the ties, the reverberation of history born out in correspondence among people (and a letter as a static document), the tales of how objects survived the camps and got passed down (as opposed to focusing on the object itself). It is from the particular that we gain knowledge and understanding of the larger frame.

Some Holocaust studies programs are attempting to achieve a global approach or attempting to locate Nazism within its larger global context. They are attempting to

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[15] "Frank Mecklenberg." Telephone interview. 9 Dec. 2010.
[16] Ibid.

compare Stalinism with Nazism, thereby putting the Holocaust into the larger framework of the 20th century. A prime example of this debate is the recent book, *Stalinism and Nazism: History and Memory Compared* by Henry Rousso and Richard Joseph Golsan. Are all totalitarian regimes the same? That is a question that is being asked at this moment. Sixty years later, we are only beginning to see where more research is needed.[17] The work of Peter Hayes, Karen Shawn, and Frank Mecklenburg, among others, attest to this. During the 20th century, we did not have enough sophistication to deal with all of the sources, the immense complexity and global reach of the Holocaust.

If we think about how many years it took for survivors to begin to speak about their experiences, there were many years of relative silence. In our conversation, Mecklenberg made clear:

> It is important not to minimize the Holocaust and stop the investigation as to how it could happen. The scale of this genocide crossing national boundaries is unprecedented, thereby making the investigation all the more complex. The dimensions of the Holocaust and how it happened demands that we keep looking. We need to be on the alert, to guard against something like this from ever happening again. But as a historian, I know that the lessons of the future do not come from the past, History does not repeat itself, whatever we have learned will not happen the same way again. Too often we fight the last war, solve the last problem. We need to be on the alert from the unknown. But one still has to study the circumstances of the past to gain insight into the present.
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> In truth, the years from 1860-1932 were very good years in Germany for Jews. German Jews made up 4% of those living in Berlin, with Jews making up 1% of the remaining German population. It is easy for society to ignore history, which is why living, breathing reminders are important. We have film and we have the next generations, but will it be enough?[18]

Properly recording and respecting first person narrative about the Holocaust is not the end of the story. There are other considerations, such as: 1) how to use the narratives, 2) in what ways the narrative can reflect accurate records and inconsistencies, 3) how to use and respect every story told, and 4) what gets taught.

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[17] Mecklenberg Interview
[18] Ibid.

In my investigation, I found that the personal story, whether on videotape, told by the person, by a child or grandchild, has immediacy. But its value is limited without context. History enters the picture because it provides the frame. For example, it is important to know that life for Jews in Germany was basically the same as that of non-Jews prior to Hitler's ascendance to power. It was particularly true in the cosmopolitan city of Berlin, making it easier to understand why the Jews of Germany did not leave immediately. The story of the Jews of Poland is different, as is that of the Jews of France, Greece, etc. Hearing a particular story without this background muddies the waters. It is true that Jews from all over Europe and North Africa were put in concentration camps, and there our understanding shifts again.

IV. EDUCATION: CURRENT APPROACHES

Two generations after the end of World War II, in the mid-1980s, there was an upsurge of interest in teaching the Holocaust. This followed two watershed events in 1978, the establishment of the Presidential Holocaust Commission and the television broadcast of the mini-series, 'Holocaust'. Classes were being taught on the Holocaust in university, public schools and, of course, Jewish schools. These were more than isolated classes in the university. It was around this time that Illinois became the first state to mandate Holocaust education in the public school. Today twenty-one states are mandated to include Holocaust education in their public school curriculum.

Many Holocaust oral history projects picked up momentum at this time with survivors talking and sharing their experiences. People had become interested in their experiences, and the survivors were making themselves available across the United States. They could be found in classrooms, synagogues and commemorations making their presence felt.

Many states developed curriculum, Holocaust museums proliferated throughout America and they too, became major centers of Holocaust education and became places where survivors met with groups young and old on a regular basis. In fact the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles has had their tours of the museum end with a survivor speaking in person to the group.

The contribution of Holocaust survivors to Holocaust education has been immeasurable. Holocaust Education faces a great challenge in the 21st century, how to fill the vacuum when the survivors are no longer able to fulfill the function of direct transmission.

TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST IN COLLEGE SETTINGS

Let us assume we have figured out the nuances of using first person narration after the survivors are gone, and let us suppose we have even solved the historiographical questions raised in the previous section. Even with all that, we will still be left with educational issues: how will we teach the relevant materials surrounding the Holocaust?

The issue has been raised on how will we be teaching the Holocaust as the survivors are dying off. They will no longer be a presence. Different approaches are being mounted to tell the story of the survivors of the Holocaust. This question is on the mind of the Jewish community, but it is also on the agenda of universities around the country.

The current status of Holocaust education on the college level is a complex story. While Peter Hayes has 250 students in one of his classes, most of whom are not Jewish, Karen Shawn is teaching an elective on Holocaust education to future Jewish teachers at Yeshiva University. More and more Holocaust courses have been instituted over the past ten years at the university level, including a doctorate in Holocaust Studies at Clark University.

In speaking at length with Karen Shawn, a teacher of teachers, I was affirmed in my understanding that there are multiple approaches and that this is a moment where we need to be clear about what we are teaching the next generation of Jews, as the witnesses diminish in number.

Karen Shawn is a Covenant Foundation award-winning educator in the area of Holocaust education. For 20 years, she has been teaching non-Jewish teachers to teach the Holocaust. During that time, there was a good deal of "pressure to universalize," making the Holocaust less of a unique occurrence. Currently, she is Visiting Associate Professor of Jewish Education at the Azrieli Graduate School of

Jewish Education and Administration of Yeshiva University teaching an elective course on Holocaust education, a Senior Fellow of Azrieli's Institute-School Partnership, and co-editor of Yeshiva University's PRISM: An Interdisciplinary Journal for Holocaust Educators.

Recently, there has been a major change in what she teaches. At Yeshiva University, she teaches survival, dilemmas and the response to the Holocaust. There is no need to teach about other genocides. Other genocides are not on the agenda, nor is there any push to see how the Shoah has impacted the greater world.

She has made a conscious decision to teach the literature of the Holocaust. With that in mind, she has started the journal *Prism* wherein a theme related to the Holocaust is explored through different senses/lenses including literature, psychology, sociology, art, and history. From the first two issues, I am struck by the depth that is achieved by looking at one topic through a variety of lenses and how much is gained in our understanding. There are poems, short stories, essays, and works of art all of which is original. The contributors include academics, scholars, teachers, and artists. The first issue reflects the growing interest in trauma, resilience, victorious traumatization and post-traumatic growth.[19] The theme of trauma and resilience is a powerful lens with which to begin the publication of this journal. The second issue explores "the bystander" those who were witnesses and remained silent.[20] *Prism* provides an excellent model that can be used in many settings going forward.

Karen Shawn's classrooms are primarily filled with the grandchildren of survivors who want to delve into the subject matter. Many want to teach history with what they learn. They want to teach Jewish history as part of the modern history of Europe, who we were, why we were, why it happened. It is its own body of knowledge. War is both universal and particular. "Let them learn it in all of its complexity. All some of them know are the commemorative services. These young

[19] Shawn, Karen, and Jeffrey Glanz. "Introduction." *Prism* 1.1 (2009): 3-5.
[20] Shawn, Karen, and Jeffrey Glanz. "Introduction." Prism 1.2 (2010): 3-5.

people have no idea beyond that people died, no sense of the variety of the lives they led. They begin to understand that this is a large body of knowledge."[21] She goes along with the view of Yad Vashem that the Holocaust was a uniquely Jewish event and her job is to teach the particularity of the event.

Unfortunately, despite all of the many college courses being offered around the country, universities find themselves at a crossroads. There are so many competing genocides, both before and after the Holocaust that many universities are beginning to consider not having Holocaust courses. Rather, universities are beginning to offer courses in genocide studies, courses in which the Holocaust is but one among many.

Manhattan College in Riverdale finds itself at just such a juncture.

CASE STUDY: The Manhattan College Holocaust Resource Center

In my interview with Professor Jeffrey Horn, Director of the Manhattan College Holocaust Resources Center, the complexity of the changing scene was made abundantly clear. He told me that the Holocaust Center needs to move in a different direction. It began over a decade ago as a response to the Second Vatican Council's *Nostre Aetate*'s promotion of Catholic-Jewish dialogue.

Manhattan College has seen the Center's mission and principle sphere to be educational. The Holocaust and its lessons have been seen as essential "to the education of future generations in order to fight prejudice, genocidal ideologues, apathy and Holocaust denial."[22]

The Center has invited speakers over the years and has created an archive of survivors giving testimony. All of this is about to change as the Center is in the process of refocusing its mission.

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[21] "Karen Shawn." Telephone interview. 21 Nov. 2010.
[22] "Professor Jeff Horn." Telephone interview. 2 Nov. 2010.

My understanding is that one of the major reasons for this change is that the Riverdale community of survivors is shrinking, as is the rest of the survivor community. Some of the initial support for the Center came from the Riverdale Jewish community. But the landscape has shifted, and although Holocaust/Genocide education remains important, the work of the Center will shift to address current political realities.

At this juncture, no new testimonies will be added to the archives. The testimonies will continue to be used in class, specifically in classes teaching future teachers. The objective is to get the students to use the available resources.

HOW SHOULD WE UNDERSTAND THE HOLOCAUST?
A Genocide Among Many or a Unique Phenomenon?

The uniqueness of the Holocaust is a big issue for Dr. Horn who, along with being the director of the Center, is the chair of the Manhattan College history department. After teaching genocide studies over the past few years, the uniqueness of the Holocaust is not the central question. There have been more genocides in recent time than in any other period in history. The Holocaust is one among many, and, therefore, cannot be divorced from other genocides. Otherwise, how could genocide happen again and again? We falsely assume that human beings learn.

"How could this happen again and again? For me, the only way to communicate it is to examine others who suffer. My act of Tikkun Olam (the sign on my desk) is to educate people in the suffering of others."[23]

For many in the Jewish community, this view of the Holocaust as one of many is seen as a downgrading of the event. Dr. Horn believes that the fact that the Shoah is one of many creates an opportunity to heighten the empathy of students. It becomes

[23] "Professor Jeff Horn." Telephone interview. 2 Nov. 2010.

a way of making sure that others will not suffer in the same way.

His approach is fundamentally historical: "if history is not for the purpose of teaching, what is it for?" "This is my mitzvah, creating changes in the Catholic community, expanding the discussion. This is what you need to train to be a citizen of the world, of the United States. It raises the question, 'What are you going to do about genocide?'"

Professor Horn believes that knowledge and understanding are key to informing the next generation and putting them on their guard that this can happen again. His students come from various ethnic and religious backgrounds, however there are few Jewish students at Manhattan College. His students represent a cross-section of New York society, and find resonance in his message.

A counterpoint to my discussion with Dr. Horn was my conversation with Emily Witty, a young, Orthodox Holocaust educator at the Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York. Witty was firmly entrenched in the position that the Holocaust is a unique Jewish event. Her opinions come across with great assurance, as when she said, "There never has been any other genocide like it." She is deeply engaged with Holocaust education and she has important things to say,

> As to the role of the survivors, as a teacher of teachers, first hand always acts as the richest source of information. The further one moves from the event, the more detached one becomes. However, technology is an amazing tool in allowing us to see and hear them speak. The humanity remains accessible. It also allows one to shape the transmission – which has both positive and negative aspects. We know we will lose something, but we are not exactly sure what. But I am sure that the ability to feel empathy will not be lost.
>
> Another example of the use of technology goes beyond recorded testimonies, with the ability to email survivors. I am currently in email conversation with a former partisan.[24]

However, the reality is that each genocide is unique and unlike any other. As in my conversation with Dr. Horn, the difficulty arises when the particulars cloud the investigation into the horror of the genocide itself. When I asked her why we should

[24] "Emily Witty." Telephone interview. 5 Nov. 2010.

continue to teach the Holocaust, I found that my questions seemed to move her out of her comfort zone. She had never been asked that question before. But if we do not remind ourselves as to why we are teaching this difficult piece of our history we lose sight of the big picture and get lost in the details.

This question of why we are teaching the Holocaust reverberates even further as we move away from teaching the Holocaust as separate subject on the college level. We do not yet know how the Holocaust will be treated as it becomes one genocide among many in a genocide studies class. It will have a trickle down effect in every aspect of Holocaust education.

V. TEACHING YOUTH AND TRAINING TEACHERS

For many people, on the east and west coasts of the United States, learning about the Holocaust first hand has meant listening to a survivor. As the survivors become fewer and fewer, we are left with the dilemma of who will do the teaching, even though most of the survivors that we have heard over the years have not been professional educators.

This is the challenge for all of us, not just the educators. There will soon be no survivors in the classroom, the museums, synagogues or commemorations. Their absence will be a challenge even as we have more information. How will we compensate for the lack of immediacy?

Karen Shawn learned first hand of this quandary and was surprised at some of her findings. She recently spent a week working with 47 survivors to try to help them reconfigure their testimonies as teaching tools. It was not very successful for two reasons. The first is that many survivors are not master teachers. The second is that today's young people do not have the patience to sit still for an hour and listen to a survivor speak. The divide between the speaker and the listener has expanded. It is not that the content needs to be changed, rather common ground is usually not established.

On the other hand, Karen led a six-week course with second-generation people which concluded with them talking to eighth graders. She said this was much more successful. I believe this generation was far more willing to incorporate the methodology that Karen was teaching. They were able to reach the young people at their level. Karen was very clear about what was possible:

> The 2Gs are crucial. We are not taking advantage, as we should. They can tell their story as well as that of their parents, the effects of growing up in the shadow.
>
> [Karen is a great believer in harnessing the power of the 2G.]
>
> The writing of 2G is incredibly powerful, particularly the poetry. It is a completely

> different way into the topic. People do not take the time to spend with it. In the classroom, less can be more. We want to pique their interest, so the kids will follow up. The historical overview tends not to interest kids. It fails to contextualize the experience of the survivor. First, get them interested. Teach about children.
>
> [The story of Daniel at the National Holocaust Museum is a prime example of this.]
>
> Teaching the Holocaust is far from an exact science, its impact not clear. On the national level, twenty-one states are mandated to teach the Holocaust, but the teachers are not trained to teach it. New Jersey has more teacher training than any other state. So, we have teachers mandated to teach with no training. Sixty-seven per cent of teachers in Florida did not even know there was a mandate.
>
> I must admit, I do not have much hope after the survivors. I do not see any push for Holocaust education once the survivors are gone.[25]

I believe that Karen's dismay comes from the challenges she faces even as she makes enormous strides in this area. She understands better than most that a multi-disciplined approach is critical. She observed:

> There are currently more than 1,000 testimonies available. They do make teaching easier. Teachers have the materials available. I hope that there will be the future, a real possibility for future engagement.
>
> Sadly, there is no push for education for adults. However, art remains a powerful means of teaching the Shoah. There are many 2G artists and their work is key for the differentiated learner. As you can tell, we do not know what will happen next.[26]

The loss of the survivors is not the loss of the story. The next generation, the 2G, have much to contribute. I also believe the 3G too have much to contribute, and I will discuss this later in this paper.

Like Shawn, Peter Nelson also approaches the question of who can teach the Holocaust with another out-of-the-box solution. Nelson, of *Facing History and Ourselves* [27] is concerned that the specific stories of the Holocaust are getting lost, with their places being appropriated by survivors of other genocides. This is done

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[25] Karen Shawn interview
[26] Ibid.
[27] Since 1976, **Facing History and Ourselves** has offered in-depth professional development services; curricular resources; and ongoing support to educators and students in the areas of history, social studies, and language arts. It is dedicated to helping teachers around the world lead their students in a critical examination of history, with particular focus on genocide and mass violence.

so that the immediacy of meeting a person who has gone through the trauma of persecution does not disappear.[28] Currently, many survivors are too frail to meet with young people to tell their story. Non-Jewish young people who have no other opportunity to meet survivors particularly feel this loss.

One approach to make up for this group has been the Lipper Fellows Program at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. The fellows program trains college students to do presentations for school groups in the museum and at schools. First, they meet the children in their schools to prepare them, then give an on-site tour and finally debrief them back in the school. Not all of the fellows are Jewish.[29]

The fellows come to the program primarily as education or history students. They undergo intensive training prior to working with the children. The way information is imparted is directly relatable to the children. On one of the tours, the kids are told the calories in a Butterfinger candy bar were all that people had to eat in the camps as a daily ration. They wanted to know if anyone survived. This model of education has been quite effective. It relates directly to the children building bridges between themselves and the history that is being taught.

Facing History trains 1,200 teachers a year and has found that direct survivor testimony has an enormous impact. "Something visceral happens. We see that students have an empathetic connection that cuts across racial, gender and religious lines. There is more of a response by the non-Jewish students," said Nelson.[30]

A conference held at Yad Vashem in 2008 attended by 715 educators from 52 countries explored a similar methodology. The conference's focus was how to reach

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[28] Rosenberg, Merri. "Teaching the Holocaust by and for the next Generation." *The Jewish Week* [New York] 22 Aug. 2008, Education sec.: 40-42.
[29] Ibid. Page 41.
[30] Ibid. Page 40.

people in a way that is not experiential given that the survivors were disappearing.[31] (In Europe, where Holocaust education is mandated, visiting actual sites of the Holocaust is emphasized, but elsewhere this is not possible.)

Meanwhile, the Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center at Manhattanville College have begun to train the second generation, their goal is to train 2G and 3G to make "connections that are authentic."[32]

We have discussed the role of 2G in teaching the Holocaust, but I believe it is important that we consider what 3G can contribute as well. In an earlier section, I mentioned Emily Witty's perspective on history, but her own story comes back to enrich our discussion of learning and transmitting the Holocaust.

I asked Emily, as one who could technically be a third generation individual, if she believed there was a special connectedness for 3Gs. She does not. Although part of a 3G Internet community, she does not believe there is a special connection between 3G's and the Holocaust. To her way of thinking this is because no personal trauma was involved. I wanted to know if she thought there was a sense of obligation for this group. She was not sure. She firmly believes that although the Holocaust is a particular Jewish event with universal implications, it is in no way comparable to any other genocide and, therefore, should not be taught side by side with other genocides.

I asked her about observance. Her response was simple: because it exists on the Jewish calendar, Yom Hashoah will be observed, particularly in Israel. It is on the national calendar there. Observance will depend on what kind of Jew you are.

I asked about what she wanted to impart about the Holocaust:

> The take away depends, like Langer...We want to feel redemptive. However, it was

[31] Ibid. page 42.
[32] Ibid.

> an entirely evil event – an event about evil. There is no 50/50 balance. It was all evil...
>
> There is a sharp distinction between Jewish and non-Jewish children in how to teach this material. It is tricky to teach children. What kind of materials? That's where the wrestling is – interdisciplinary learning and empathy are at once the large and small picture.[33]

I asked what we are teaching, when we teach the Holocaust. "We are teaching people's stories. The story needs to be told of those who did not survive. For the lost communities, we use primary documents. It needs to be part of Jewish education, part of our shared history."

Is that the Jewish response to loss? "I am not of the ilk that says, 'Let's compare it'. [The Holocaust] demands that we understand. It is not to be used as a social action tool."[34]

My take away from this conversation was that although Emily had a great deal of knowledge and deep caring about the subject, there was also a certain amount of naiveté. I found there was a great deal of either/or in her understanding of how to impart information about the Holocaust. Therefore, in the world of this material it holds the Shoah so close that not much more than pain and loss are revealed. It also shuts out those who are not Jews. There is no room to go beyond the particular.

I spoke to an actual 3G person completely by accident. I heard her being interviewed on the radio, and I felt that I had to meet her. Clare Burson is a singer-song writer from Tennessee currently living in Brooklyn. She was talking about her new album "Silver and Ash" and the trip she and her grandmother took to Germany together, which was the inspiration for this album. Her grandmother escaped Leipzig right after *Kristalnacht*. But it was this story of grandmother and granddaughter that struck a chord, as my own daughter made a similar journey with her grandmother some years ago.

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[33] "Emily Witty." Telephone interview. 5 Nov. 2010.
[34] Ibid.

Clare and I met, and I found it important to talk to someone from the third generation. Her story is very particular, yet it has all kinds of resonances. Her maternal grandmother never talked about the Germany she left behind. When Clare asked her grandmother questions about Germany for an eighth grade school project, her grandmother said she could not remember. She had spent so much time blocking out the past that she could not remember. It was only when Clare went to Germany on a Fulbright Scholarship, that she and her grandmother finally spoke about Germany and what had been left behind. It was then that her grandmother joined her in Germany and told her about her Germany as they traveled together.[35]

Clare's music is both haunting and lovely, and it is another way into the loss that is the Shoah. She is not someone who sought to be identified as a Jewish artist when she began as a musician. But her interest in her Jewish heritage led her to become a recipient of a Six-Points Fellowship, a grants program for emerging Jewish artists. It was the grant that gave her the support to produce this album.

I spoke to Clare about her trip to Riga, where her grandmother's family had come from originally and where the Nazis transported her great grand-parents. She intended to be in Riga for two days, go to the woods and place a stone in memory of those that had died. Being a student of history as well as a musician, she believed she could treat the trip in a very matter-of-fact manner. She told me that she spent her two days in Riga weeping, unable to fulfill the task she had set for herself.

Although it is true that neither her mother nor her sister have been compelled by the past in the same way that she has been, I am left with the question, "Is it necessary for all of us to hold on in the same way? Is it enough that in each generation there are those that will tell the story in their own way based on their memories and the memories of others?" For me, such people are legacy keepers.

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[35] "Clare Burson." Personal Interview. 26 Oct. 2010.

Guy Raz is a 3G. He is also one of the hosts of *Weekend All Things Considered* on NPR. For me, Guy Raz has been a pleasant, authoritative voice on the radio. But, on November 21, 2010, he came out as a 3G, the grandson of Aryeh and Clara, who left Europe in time, when he read an essay[36] about his family. He wrote eloquently on how he is not sure where his son gets his blonde hair or his smile. The details about the family that remained behind are lost.

Guy Raz chose to leave his somewhat anonymous identity as a newscaster behind and share his personal history, because his colleagues were being called Nazis, the name of those who killed an entire generation of one wing of his family. He used this moment, when the term Nazi was being bandied about, as a teachable moment, reminding us that, "Nazism was unequivocal...65 years ago the Nazis killed one out of every three Jews on the face of the earth."[37] He reminded all of us what the word "Nazi" really represented.

In addition to the problem of who will teach the Holocaust in the future, the question remains of what perspective will guide the approach, the inquiry.

In my initial research, an article by Holocaust educator Jeannette Friedman caught my attention. Her article points to the fact that the individual is important, because the Holocaust did not occur to one entity that happened to be 6 million people. The Holocaust happened to 6 million individual Jews, each with his/her own life and stories.

We need to bring the story home without being able to talk directly to the survivor. The study of the Holocaust is either about disseminating another Jewish tale of oppression, or it is an opportunity to educate young people to be caring people and understand the plight of others, or possibly it is both. Ultimately we are left with the

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[36] Raz, Guy. "'Nazis': A Word With Deep And Brutal Meaning." *Weekend Edition Sunday*. NPR. Washington, DC, 21 Nov. 2010. Radio.
[37] Ibid.

question: What are the lessons of the Holocaust, and are those questions true to the legacy of the survivors? Her article makes the following points, which were certainly amplified in a subsequent conversation:

> **Tempus Fugit —The Survivors Are Running Out of Time**
> Madonna has a hit song that begins with the sound of a clock ticking. As the ticking continues to impose itself her voice chimes in: "Time goes by, so slowly, so slowly, so slowly." Maybe for some, but not for everyone—time is passing like a runway train for Holocaust survivors and they worry that their legacy will be forgotten. Every day another personal connection to the past that so shaped our present and linked us to the seminal event of our age, to our murdered families and Yiddishkeit—our Yiddish culture, not our Judaism—is broken. And the time goes by so quickly, so quickly...so quickly.
>
> ...In fact, in some places there is already erosion, misinterpretation, trivialization, and perhaps, worst of all, exploitation of the Holocaust as a means of raising funds for causes that have nothing to do with the Holocaust or for political purposes to create a siege mentality.
>
> It is a desecration to the Six Million that the aging and often ailing survivors find hard to swallow—along with their prohibitively expensive medical care. And every day the news gets worse and the survivors ask, "Is this why we survived?[38]

Jeannette Friedman goes on to address what I believe is the central challenge to those of us who feel a sense of responsibility to those who survived: What should we be teaching?

> For the survivors, in addition to remembering, the first lesson of the Holocaust is that we have to be better people—and that means we have a responsibility to hardwire the kids to care about others—and by the time they get to high school and learn about the Holocaust, it is often too little, too late, because parents, media and environment have already shaped their thinking—thinking that often needs to be countered. And it often seems that no matter what you tell teenagers about the Holocaust today, they don't really care about the Jews. It makes more sense to teach them about what happens when political systems fall apart and hatred is used as a political tool—whether it is Nazi Germany, Iran, or even the United States.
>
> For what the survivors really want is that people of all ages need to be able to address their inability to care about the other guy, whether it's a Jew in the Holocaust, an "Albanian" in Kosovo, a slave in Darfur, a little girl in Rwanda, or anyone of the 50 million victims of genocide and ethnic cleansing since the beginning of the twentieth century.[39]

When I had the opportunity to interview Jeanette Friedman, I found myself speaking

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[38] Friedman, Jeanette. "Zachor, Remember! -- But What? And How?" *Berman Jewish Policy Archive @ NYU Wagner.* NYU's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, 4 Dec. 2007. Web. 6 Aug. 2010. <http://bjpa.org/Publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=3786>.

[39] Ibid

to someone who is a true believer that Holocaust education matters and that it cannot merely be about dead bodies. Subsequent to writing this article, Jeanette Friedman has expanded her work on Holocaust education by co-authoring the book *Why Should I Care? Lessons from the Holocaust.*

Talking to Jeanette was like talking to a whirlwind. She received a great deal of push-back for the article she wrote from the Holocaust establishment as she clearly believes that the Shoah has something to teach all of us. As much as she understands the value of a survivor standing in front of a class telling his/her story there is so much more that the Holocaust can convey.

Jeanette Friedman is the daughter of survivors, and in her experience she views the survivors with a more critical eye than most. Some survivors embellished their stories and some were not the nicest in order to survive. They were not angels. Yes, they suffered. But it is not their suffering that we need to teach. It is how they were put into the untenable position of having to make difficult choices, choices we can barely comprehend in order to survive.[40]

She believes that teaching the Holocaust is about teaching critical thinking. It is teaching about bullying, and about standing idly by as someone else gets knocked around. It is about designating someone to be the other. Anyone can be the other tomorrow, and if we think about it honestly, it is already happening today.

The stories we tell need to be carefully chosen. The stories of survivors need to be carefully chosen. Talking to children is all about using what is familiar to them, be it Harry Potter or Avatar. The Holocaust then becomes the vehicle to teach how propaganda, political systems and tactics work. Jeanette quoted Carl Sagan, "Why can't parents teach their children to think critically?"

[40] "Jeanette Friedman." Telephone interview. 21 Oct. 2010.

Ultimately, at the end of a long conversation, Jeanette expressed the opinion that teaching the Shoah is "really, really, really all about teaching ethics." Although we mourn the loss of the survivors, others have to take on the responsibility of teaching the Shoah.

VI. INSIGHTS AND COMMEMORATIONS

Holocaust education, in all of its diversity and internal turf battles, is really held up by the two pillars of שמור וזכור. This is exemplified by the two premier East Coast Holocaust museums in the United States: the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. The mission statement of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is all about שמור:

> The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is America's national institution for the documentation, study, and interpretation of Holocaust history, and serves as this country's memorial to the millions of people murdered during the Holocaust. The Holocaust was the state-sponsored, systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Jews were the primary victims — six million were murdered; Gypsies, the handicapped and Poles were also targeted for destruction or decimation for racial, ethnic, or national reasons. Millions more, including homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, Soviet prisoners of war and political dissidents, also suffered grievous oppression and death under Nazi tyranny.
>
> The Museum's primary mission is to advance and disseminate knowledge about this unprecedented tragedy; to preserve the memory of those who suffered; and to encourage its visitors to reflect upon the moral and spiritual questions raised by the events of the Holocaust as well as their own responsibilities as citizens of a democracy.[41]

It is a museum dedicated to the memory of those who perished, the protection of the misuse of that memory, the sanctification of that memory, and it seeks to be a place where issues of racism and genocide can be explored. It is an example of שמור. This mission statement clearly identifies the museum as an institution that seeks to document and study the genocide which is the Holocaust and to serve as a bulwark against future genocides.

In contrast, two quotes define the mission of the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust: "Remember, Never Forget" and "There Is Hope For Your Future." Although the Museum centers on life before, during, and after the

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[41] "Mission Statement." *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*. Web. 24 Dec. 2010. <http://www.ushmm.org/museum/mission/>.

Holocaust, the obligation to remember is enriched and enhanced by a commitment to the principles of social justice, education, and culture:

> Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust is a living memorial to those who perished during the Holocaust, our Museum honors those who died by celebrating their lives - cherishing the traditions that they embraced, examining their achievements and faith, and affirming the vibrant worldwide Jewish community that is their legacy today.
>
> The Museum is at once a museum devoted to the exploration of Jewish heritage and a living memorial to the Holocaust. It depicts in detail the lives and communities that shaped Jewish culture in the early part of the century, for it is only through an understanding of life before the Holocaust that one may truly begin to comprehend the magnitude of its destruction - and the sense of determination and courage that shaped the renewal of Jewish life after the war.
>
> The Museum differs from other institutions of memory by telling the story of the Holocaust from the perspective of those who experienced it. The personal objects and photographs that illustrate the story of 20th century Jewish history are at home in a venue for memory and learning, which also offers musical and theatrical performances, lively lectures and debates, thought-provoking films, and special events for visitors of all ages.[42]

The mission statement clearly states that it is all about remembrance, זכור. It is about life, and not death. It celebrates life before the Holocaust as well as what came after. If we only remember the lives without remembering their deaths or the deaths without remembering their lives, one cannot begin to fathom the depths of the loss that this unique genocide inflicted upon the Jewish community. Our task, without having survivors to remind us by their very presence, is not to slip into a passive commemoration of the Holocaust. Because of the seismic nature of this event, it behooves us to continue to engage with its legacy using all the means at our disposal, be it through further historical research as more and more archival information becomes available, be it through the prism of the arts, and most importantly, through the memory of family stories. The museum is certainly a place that brings all of these elements together.

Liturgically, the two pillars of שמור וזכור are upheld at times through various rituals. Of all the dates on the calendar, Tisha B'Av has the least relevance for non-Orthodox

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[42] "Museum of Jewish Heritage." *Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust.* Web. 24 Dec. 2010. <http://www.mjhnyc.org/museum_aboutus.htm>.

Jews and functions as the epitome of lachrymose Judaism, when every Jewish tragedy is piled on top of the destructions of the two Temples. The deep tragedy of the destruction of the Temples loses some of its meaning as all the tragedies are given equivalent value.

Yom Hashoah, despite the fact that it has yet to develop fixed rituals, is a fixed date on the calendar and will continue. The question remains on how we will commemorate the day.

Rabbi Yitz Greenberg writes that Yom Hashoah in its establishment follows quietly on the heels of Passover. The shadow of the Shoah is cast over Passover, but there is also a sense that although Passover is impacted, we continue forward swayed, not broken, in this post-Holocaust era.[43] To date, there is no central Yom Hashoah ritual aside from lighting Yahrzeit candles and, for some, reciting El Maleh and Kaddish. It has not taken root in the home, thereby making it a synagogue-based observance, allowing clergy to develop programs and commemorations that both שמור וזכור, creating teachable moments, where the lives and legacy of those who died are remembered, and the way they died is mourned.[44]

With the calendar having at least three opportunities (Yom Hashoah, Kristallnacht, and UN Holocaust Remembrance) for Holocaust commemorations and two opportunities (Passover and Yom Kippur) to bring it into services, a rabbi can be very thoughtful about the larger message that is being transmitted.

On Passover, many recent Haggadot have sections that recall the Shoah. The challenge is how to include the memory of the life that no longer is and include its value and strength. In being a home ritual, it is an opportunity for the rabbi to give congregants tools with which to enhance their Seder.

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[43] Greenberg, Irving. *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays.* New York: Summit, 1988. 338-339.
[44] For example, David Roskies, *Night Words: A Midrash About the Holocaust,* CLAL, 1971.

Since the Seder is a time of joy and not sadness, it is an appropriate moment to remember (זכור) the inheritance that we carry with us today from those who survived Hitler's Europe and those who did not. Our Seder always includes my mother sharing her personal "Exodus," her years in the "desert of Shanghai" and her coming to the "promised land of America." The description of a Seder in China or the first Seder in America, or the last Seder before Hitler are memories that strengthen our ties with all of those who came before, adding to the textured experience of the Seder.

On Yom Kippur, we recite Eleh Ezkerah, a martyrology that has lost much of its immediacy over the millennia. Most non-Orthodox Mahzorim have taken the traditional piyyut and have supplemented the section in various ways, much of it a litany of the Jewish people's history of pain and suffering. It is a formal moment of pain. The Reform Machzor spends 20 pages on this section. What was once a concise piyyut with a clear aim has become an unfocused part of the Yom Kippur service. It puts forth a view of Jewish suffering and at the same time puts forth a universalist perspective where all of humanity is suffering and looking for redemption. It is hard to know where to place one's focus.

However, שמור וזכור does not have to be limited to these rituals, these observances. There is nothing more deadly and manipulating than creating a moment whose purpose is simply to make those who are participating cry. Although it functions as an emotional release, not an unimportant value, where is the learning? Where is the lasting value? The job of clergy is to create points of access. The day is quickly approaching where simply reciting the names of the concentration camps will no longer evoke a direct connection to the words. The names will no longer represent the depth of horror that was their reality. Making this an annual recitation will numb us to their truth. It is our obligation, as clergy and educators, to create active moments of זכור that allow us to see and feel that which has been lost.

On Yom Kippur, it has become my practice to share first-person narrative with the

community during the part of the service set aside for the martyrology. We are enjoined to remember the lives they led before their horrible deaths. Even the original intent of the Eleh Ezkerah piyyut assumed that those listening knew all about the ten martyrs described and what they meant to the Jewish community Sadly, for so many in our community, all that remains of the Ten Martyrs is their death, rendering the piyyut a paean to death not life.

There is more that we can do. Here are some examples of ways to create a more active memory of those who lived during the Holocaust:

Another aspect of commemoration, legacy keeping and the role of the second generation involves my friend Doris and her desire to remember the family she never knew. Doris' father passed away at the age of 90, having lived a rich, full life. On the occasion of what would have been his 100th birthday, she, her siblings and her mother put together a book outlining her father's life.[45] It was a life that began in Germany, led to Guadalupe and ultimately ended in the United States. This book speaks to the complexity of growing up in the shadow of the Shoah, including the things that are spoken about and that which is left unspoken until it's almost too late.

For Doris, part of the legacy she carried was her own connection to those family members she never knew and the cousin after whom she was named. She wanted to honor those family members she never knew, her grandparents and cousins who were killed in Sobibor and her aunt who died in Amsterdam.

She believed that it was important to mark their existence and to put up a monument in their memory. Her siblings, as well as her mother had some difficulty with this. Ultimately, they reached an agreement that the monument would be

[45] With the ease of computer publishing, the practice of creating books to memorialize the departed is gaining traction. These books commonly contain photographs, a biography and personal reflections by family members.

erected after their mother was no longer living.

Why do this? Why does it matter? A memorial that clearly states that members of one family of various ages were killed in Sobibor and Auschwitz raises questions for future generations when they see the memorial. A question is always a good place to begin to have the conversation about the Shoah, to both שמור וזכור.

At a storytelling event, I recently heard one of my husband's business colleagues tell the story of visiting Auschwitz with her mother, a survivor. The story was about her 85 year old mother's insistence on joining her daughter on a Jewish trip to Poland. Despite her mother's diabetes and doctor's belief that she ought not go, she went with her daughter. My husband told me that his colleague told him this story the first time they met. It was clearly core to her.

As the bus approached Auschwitz, her mother gripped her daughter tightly, digging her fingers into her arm and asked her if they would be allowed to leave Auschwitz. "Yes, of course," her daughter replied. Upon arriving at Auschwitz, her mother fell to her knees imploring heaven and addressing her dead mother in Yiddish. She told her that she was honoring her memory by returning and that she was hereby designating her daughter who had traveled with her to Auschwitz as the one who would make sure she and the others would not be forgotten.

If she had not been one before, on that day the younger woman was given the role of legacy keeper. This is another way of keeping memory holy and intact, if those who experienced the events directly bestow this obligation upon us directly or indirectly, and we accept it.

They are both legacy keepers. Some of the experts I spoke with fit into that category, but, more importantly, legacy keepers are members of the 2G and 3G cohort who feel a sense of obligation to give voice to the lives of those who survived and those who perished in the Shoah. The lives that they safeguard and remember are those

of their own family. They are actively engaged in the process of שמור וזכור.

The Yahrzeit of my father's family who were killed by *Sonderkommandos* occurs on the fifth day of Chanukah. This year, I led mincha at The Academy for Jewish Religion on that day. I struggled with the image of this sprawling family being killed digging their own grave. I did not want to use this communal moment during the holiday of Chanukah to recall the way in which they died. Instead, I used it as an opportunity to share the legacy that my family has passed down through the generations. Growing up, I heard about all the cooking and eating that went on in my grandparents' home, meals that included multiple generations, aunts, uncles and cousins.

As long as they were alive, both my father and my uncle cooked. My father did so professionally, my uncle did not. However, meals in both homes were occasions for good food and good company. The tables always seemed bountiful, even when times were difficult. This practice of having tables creaking with food surrounded by friends and family has continued even as both my father and my uncle are no longer with us. It is this hearth that was passed down through the generations that I recalled as I recited the mourner's *kaddish*. I was rededicating myself to the lessons that they had passed on.

Bar/Bat Mitzvah are opportunities to pair children with a child who died in the Holocaust. It provides an opportunity for study, a way to connect to the past and pay homage. As a teacher of any age group, it is of critical import to meet one's students where they stand. This pairing should be about the life of the child.

Richelle Budd Caplan writes about a powerful Yad Vashem Bar Mitzvah project. As Holocaust survivors write their memoirs, they give voice to the fabric of their lives before, after and during the Shoah. Another place where we hear echoes of their voices is in the Hall of Names at Yad Vashem. There are two million pages of

testimony about those murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators.[46]

In Israel, children have taken it on to collect more of this information. Two 12-year old children in Herzliya led the way and told their schoolmates about the importance of the collection of the Pages of Testimony at Yad Vashem. As a result of their initiative, 200 Pages of Testimony were collected. There are examples of children doing this in America and New Zealand.

Collecting these Pages of Testimony may lead to a deeper connection to a child's own family.

For families that have the connection to the Shoah, there are numerous ways to שמור וזכור. At one memorable Bar Mitzvah, the family created a huge map that showed how everyone had traversed the globe to arrive at this day. It covered just about every continent. It was the tale of the wandering Jew made visible. This was then capped off when the grandfather got up to speak and remembered how his Bar Mitzvah had taken place on the run under very simple circumstances. The transmission of the past was made tangible to all.

When we name our children, the Ashkenazi tradition is to name the child after someone no longer living. Here is another opportunity to bring back into the room someone the parents of the new baby never met, but about whom stories abound. It is these stories that give life to those no longer with us. There is already something very powerful in the Ashkenazic tradition from which we can engender a [teaching about the Holocaust] in a way that does two things: 1) is not dependent upon the transmission of the dying eye witnesses, and 2) promotes a rich acknowledgement and honoring (שמור וזכור) of the lives they lived.

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[46] Caplan, Richelle Budd. "Coming of Age and Collecting a Page: A Yad Vashem Bar Mitzvah Project." *Berman Jewish Policy Archive @ NYU Wagner*. NYU's Robert F. Wagner Graduate School of Public Service. Winter 2003. Web. 6 Aug. 2010. <http://www.bjpa.org/Publications/details.cfm?PublicationID=753>.

The power of art as a form of "legacy keeping "was exemplified by an exhibit this fall at the Bronfman Gallery at the Washington D.C. Jewish Community Center.[47] The artist, Miriam Nathan, began with a query, who are these people in these pictures that have traveled around the world? She had photographs of her family in Czechoslovakia from the 1920's to the early 1940's. Her mother had asked a non-Jewish friend to hold onto the photographs and somehow her mother was able to reconnect with this woman and retrieve them.

Miriam Nathan's work focuses on her relatives whom she never met, who did not survive. The process of turning these photographs into pieces of art highlighted how sometimes memory can become distorted. In particular, her work around a photograph of her aunt Greta who perished is very telling. The artist was told by those who knew them both that she bore a striking similarity to her aunt. The photograph is black and white, and through the process of monotype silk screening, she has created the photo over and over, each time changing the color of her aunt's dress. The question is not "which color do you like, Greta?" says Nathan. Rather it is a statement, "I really don't know which color you like. I don't know what food you like. I don't know who you really were, but I have this connection to you." The power of this void is heightened in these large pieces whose image is blurred by the very process that created them. It makes manifest that which our parents and grandparents told us again and again, "You will never know..."

[47] Forhecz, Topher. "Silver Spring Artist Aspires to Understand Family's past." *The Gazette* [Gaithersburg, MD] 29 Sept. 2010: C-3+. Print.

VII. CONCLUSION

Liberal Jewish community provides religious leaders with an opportunity to both שמור וזכור. It is an opportunity to present first person narrative attesting to the lives that were led and to mourn all that was lost. The personal provides immediacy and connectedness and a real ability to mourn. Interestingly, the Torah narrative provides these opportunities over and over again. It is the duty of clergy to follow the example that the tradition has given us and make the past live in our hearts and minds.

As clergy we have a responsibility to שמור וזכור, to maintain and further these two-tent poles in our approach to Holocaust education. It will not survive the absence of the survivors if we find ourselves following a unilateral approach. When we study our sacred texts, we are treated to a multiplicity of approaches with which to engage them. The same is true for Holocaust education. There are multiple lenses and multiple modalities. The lenses of theology, history, education and politics provide a way to look at the Shoah. Each of them has been formed by interactions with survivors and their unique stories.

The history of Holocaust education is relatively recent. The Holocaust happened 65 years ago. It has been only thirty years that we began to both commemorate and teach and learn about the Holocaust in formal ways.

Myths always spring up – but the number of half-truths and myths surrounding the Holocaust are reflective of how recent the event is and how vast its reach. We live in a time, where as another survivor dies, he leaves behind archival information. Children do not always understand the import of what is left behind. Frank Mecklenberg attests to this fact, saying that the Leo Baeck Institute gets more material every day as survivors leave this world.

Holocaust education is being assailed on all sides – this relatively recent field of

study that had reached the heights of import on college campuses has begun to suffer a decline. As we are losing survivors so are we losing Holocaust courses as colleges and universities turn to Genocide studies in their place. With absence of survivors and these courses, there will be a need to reassess the way in which we train teachers and disseminate information. We cannot predict what these concurrent changes will do to the field of Holocaust education.

Another danger facing Holocaust education is if the focus continues to be that of suffering alone. The number 6 million and suffering serves to turn people – all people including Jews – away from the subject. Six million is too big too comprehend. The suffering of others touches us most deeply when it is specific – that is why Anne Frank remains the poster child for access into the Holocaust experience, even though her experience was very much her own.

However, we need to get beyond Anne Frank and her story and see the wide expanse that the Holocaust covered, there were many different stories, stories that it would take a lifetime to tell, but stories that the human community needs to hold on to. How will we do that when the storyteller who lived it is no longer available to tell the story directly to us?

We will never fully fathom the depth of pain, loss and trauma that those who survived experienced; all we can begin to comprehend is something about the world before the Holocaust. It was a time of relative peace for the Jewish community. It was a time of learning, both secular and religious, a time of political ferment with the debate surrounding Zionism and the one between tradition and modernity.

It is through learning about what was lost individually and as a community that we can connect to the past in a deep meaningful way. However, if all we do is look backward without seeing that we have responsibility to future generations, we will not being the work of שמור וזכור. As Jeannette Friedman so forcefully articulated the Shoah gives an ethical imperative to not stand idly by as others are oppressed for

who they are and what they stand for. In reality, we do not need the survivors to be able to do that.

The complexity of the reality that the survivor experienced needs to be transformed through multiple approaches as we cannot recreate what another experienced in the fullness of that experience. However, we are left with multiple approaches which when taken together can begin to approximate that which we are about to lose. Karen Shawn is doing this with her journal Prism, Peter Hayes does it as he examines historical myths, the artists I spoke with do it through their work and the rest of it do it when we thoughtfully incorporate the memory of those who went through the Shoah in our Jewish observances.

All in all, a tapestry emerges of the enormity of what we have lost in the passing of the survivors and the enormity of what they have come to teach us as we move forward. Their lessons are here for us to learn as we read their memoirs, look at their art, hear their music and listen to their testimonies. This is being passed on through the 2Gs and the 3Gs. However, we have not yet arrived at an answer as to how we will continue when those standard bearers (the 2Gs and 3Gs) are no longer with us to remind us with their presence what happened to their families. The task is daunting, but at least those in the field are engaged with this issue and seek ways to keep all of us from forgetting. I am convinced we will find multiple ways to do so, each appropriate for different settings as we have always been actively engaged in the process of honoring the past and remembering it so as to change the future.

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Burson, Clare	Cornelia Street Café, October 26, 2010
Friedman, Jeanette	Telephone interview, October 21, 2010
Hayes, Peter	Email communication, November 27, 2010 – no time for a long conversation – directed to web site
Hirsch, Robin	Telephone interview, October 27, 2010 (beginning conversation- research went in different direction)
Horn, Jeff	Manhattan College, November 2009 Telephone interview, November 2, 2010
Lisner, Rochelle	Informal ongoing conversations
Mecklenberg, Frank	Telephone interview, December 9, 2010
Shawn, Karen	Telephone interview, November 21, 2010
Ullendorff, Doris	Ongoing conversations about the memorial over the past year
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