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HOLOCAUST STUDIES

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In Memoriam

Gerald D. Feldman

1937-2007

Frederick E. Sontag

1924-2009

The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life...

Proverbs 13:14

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CHAPTER 39

JUDAISM

MICHAEL BERENBAUM

The impact of the Holocaust on Judaism and particularly on Jewish theological reflection did not reach full force until the 1960s. Since that time, attention to the Shoah's implications for Jewish religious thought and practice has been intense and widespread (Cohn-Sherbok 2002). As struggles persist to grasp what God's relationship to the Holocaust might be, confidence is not the lot of those who wrestle with the Holocaust's significance for Judaism. The deeper the struggle to confront the Holocaust, the deeper the mystery, the more profound the humility and incomprehension. The acclaimed Talmud scholar David Weiss Halivni (b. 1927) provides an instructive example in *Breaking the Tablets: Jewish Theology after the Shoah* (2007).

FROM THE TALMUD TO AUSCHWITZ

Study of Talmud, the ancient and authoritative rabbinical exposition of the biblical Pentateuch (Torah), is king in the Jewish sciences. From the most traditional yeshiva to the theological seminary and even in many secular universities, unique authority is granted to the Talmudic scholar—until recently all Talmudic scholars were men—and singular respect is accorded to his branch of Jewish learning. A *talmid hatum* was the traditional title of veneration for the gifted student of Talmud, a wise student, no matter what the age. So when Halivni, a renowned Talmudist, employs his immense learning to write a work of theology—traditional and radical, personal and philosophical—dealing with the question of God and the Holocaust, attention is due. When he writes with the authority of a Holocaust survivor, that is all the more the case.

A child of Sighet, a Romanian city but part of Hungary during the Holocaust and made legendary by Elie Wiesel (b. 1928), Halivni's contemporary and friend, Weiss—he later added the name Halivni (the Hebrew word for “weiss” or “white”)—was an *ilui*, a boy genius. He spent his youth studying from morning until night, and his Talmudic acuity brought him to the attention of the religious leaders of the city, who expected great things from him. They were not to be disappointed. He was ordained a rabbi at 17, just before the Germans and the Holocaust came to Hungary in March 1944. Ghettotized and then deported to Auschwitz, Weiss was shipped from there to Wolsberg, a forced labor subcamp of Gross-Rosen, and eventually liberated at Ebensee. His autobiography *The Book and the Sword: A Life of Learning in the Shadows of Destruction* (1996) recounts his experience during the Shoah, including an episode when he saw a German soldier eating a lunch that was wrapped in a page of rabbinic commentary. Risking his life, Weiss begged the soldier for the wrapping. His risk embodied his love for Torah, the study of which helped him to endure the camps.

After liberation, Halivni came to the United States, attended college, and continued his religious studies, coming under the tutelage of Saul Lieberman (1898–1983), the preeminent Talmudist at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) and also a teacher of Wiesel. Halivni received a second ordination, pursued a doctorate in Talmud, and taught at JTS for thirty years. But he left the seminary—according to his memoir—when he was not named Rector after Lieberman's death. This period coincided with the 1980s debate at JTS over the ordination of women, which the traditionalist Halivni opposed. He moved up Broadway to Columbia University and went on to do some of his finest work. After retiring from Columbia in 2009, he relocated to Israel, lecturing at the Hebrew University and at Bar-Ilan University and receiving the Israel Prize for his lifetime of scholarly accomplishments.

Halivni's religious response to the Holocaust is as radical as it is steeped in the most fundamental traditions of Judaism. Unlike Wiesel, who uses Midrash, a Jewish interpretive tradition that seeks the underlying and even hidden meaning of scripture, to create novel narratives that echo ancient texts but recreate them in ways necessitated by the Shoah, Halivni responds to the Holocaust by using close textual analysis to develop a traditional argument, but in ways that produce the most untraditional, perhaps even anti-traditional, results.

SIN DOES NOT EXPLAIN THE HOLOCAUST

Halivni critiques the simple explanation employed by traditionalists who feel required to justify God during the Holocaust: The Holocaust was God's punishment for Israel's—the Jewish people's—sin. Basing his claim on a detailed textual analysis of

Jewish scripture (Tanakh)—the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings—and the reflection of revered Jewish sages, Halivni states his conclusion in a traditional way: “Do we attribute the Shoah to sin? . . . It is written in the Torah, a second time in the Prophets, a third time in the Writings, and a fourth time in the words of our sages, that the Shoah was not the consequence of sin” (2007: 17, italics his).

Halivni argues in rabbinic fashion, using texts to prove his point. His proof text from the Torah is Leviticus 26:44: “And yet for all that, and when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not loathe them to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them.” The key Hebrew word is *l'khalotam*. Those who interpret it to mean total annihilation argue that since there were survivors of the Holocaust, the covenant was not abrogated. Halivni is more radical: “*L'khalotam* does not mean total extermination, the killing of a people or a large part of it, but rather the irremediable destruction of a people's institutional infrastructure. And this is precisely what happened in the Shoah: institutional Jewish life in Eastern Europe was uprooted and almost totally erased; the only survivors were as brands snatched from the fire.” The words “brands snatched from the fire” allude to Zechariah 3:2 in the Bible's prophetic writings. “The limits of *lo l'khalotam* [not to destroy them],” continues Halivni, “were blurred and suspended, and the covenant God made with Israel was shaken if not totally abrogated” (2007: 18).

Halivni's notion of the shattered covenant is widely shared among post-Holocaust thinkers, although he makes no mention of their work. “The Torah was given at Sinai and we gave it back at Lublin,” said the great Yiddish poet Jacob Glatstein (1896–1971) in 1946 (in Curzon 1994: 165–7). For the Jewish philosopher Emil Fackenheim (1916–2003), the Holocaust was the great and almost total rupture of the traditional covenant between God and the Jewish people (1972). Richard L. Rubenstein (b. 1924), among the earliest Jewish thinkers to probe the radical theological implications of the Holocaust for traditional Judaism, added to these perspectives: “To see any purpose in the death camps, the traditional believer is forced to regard the most demonic, antihuman explosion in all history as a meaningful expression of God's purpose. The idea is simply too obscene for me to accept” (1966: 153). In a symposium on “Jewish Values in the Post-Holocaust Future,” Wiesel contended that “for the very first time in our history, this very covenant was broken. That is why the Holocaust has terrifying theological implications. In the beginning there was the Holocaust. We must, therefore begin all over again” (1967: 285).

Halivni's primary concern is neither to break new ground nor to begin all over again, but he shatters conventional pieties. Turning the table on the traditionalists, he writes: “We must not blame such a catastrophe on the sins of its victims. Anyone who does so denies the promises God made to Israel and merits our careful scrutiny” (2007: 19). And if the Torah is insufficient, Halivni cites the Prophets in typical rabbinic fashion: “Chastise me, O Lord, but in measure, not according to Your anger, lest You reduce me to nothing” (Jeremiah 10:24). Jeremiah's prayer is

answered: "I will indeed chastise you in measure and will not utterly destroy you" (Jeremiah 30:11, 46:28).

Unlike many Christians, especially Protestant fundamentalists, Jews do not approach scripture immediated by commentary. So, for a more detailed understanding of what "in measure" means, Halivni turns to the sages' commentaries. Radak (1160–1235), the medieval commentator on the Prophets, said that "in measure" means in proportion that one can tolerate. Rashi (1040–1105), the great French commentator, interpreted "in measure" to exclude annihilation. As a traditionalist, Halivni considers their interpretations authoritative.

Turning to the biblical Writings, Halivni cites Nehemiah 9:27–8: "and you rescued them again and again." Tradition holds that God saves despite sin and insolence because God is gracious and merciful, long suffering, and of great kindness. While this passage indicates that God would not annihilate the Jewish people utterly, Halivni and others still contend that God did not save at Auschwitz. Rubenstein, for one, would rather reject the God of tradition than affirm God's presence at Auschwitz. Fackenheim's first extended articulation of a response to the Holocaust discarded the notion of a saving God and replaced it with a commanding God—more appropriately a teaching God—because God did not save at Auschwitz (1972). In Fackenheim's view, the divine "Voice of Auschwitz" says:

Jews are forbidden to hand Hitler posthumous victories. They are commanded to survive as Jews, lest the Jewish people perish. They are commanded to remember the victims of the Auschwitz, lest their memory perish. They are forbidden to despair of man and his world, and to escape into either cynicism or otherworldliness, lest they cooperate in delivering the world over to the forces of Auschwitz. Finally, they are forbidden to despair of the God of Israel, lest Judaism perish. (1972: 84)

Halivni's approach turns in different directions, emphasizing that a gracious, compassionate God could not be present at Auschwitz. He speaks of the absence of God; in the language of mysticism of *tsimsum*, God's contraction, which leaves room for human freedom.

Unfortunately for their victims and for us, those who exercised this free will exercised it in the most evil of ways, while their victims remained unprotected and undefended, without any intervention from Above. *They suffered and died, but for nothing they had done. The cause of their suffering was cosmic.* (Halivni 2007: 34, italics his)

Questions persist, however:

Why during *our* generation in particular did God choose not to intervene, despite His having intervened in previous epochs to save Israel from annihilation? Why in *our* generation in particular did He choose not to interfere with the freedom and moral license of evildoers, when He did interfere in previous times and even hardened Pharaoh's heart? Why was *our* generation singled out? (Halivni 2007: 32)

Halivni acknowledges that he has no answers to such questions, but "must be instructed by Isaiah's words, when he rebuked King Hezekiah and said, according to Talmudic tradition, 'Why do you concern yourself with the secrets of the Merciful One?'" Nevertheless, Halivni still longs for "an appropriate metaphor," which is not the same thing as an explanation, "to capture the singular fate of our generation, who suffered so terribly, not because of anything they did or as a result of any misdeeds of their own." Halivni finds that metaphor in the "Divine Contraction," which resulted in a maximal human freedom that led tragically to the Shoah.

Halivni's glimpse of the *tsimsum* finds it to be a cosmic process, one that requires periodic regenerating and reequalizing of

the normal balance between humanity's bounded freedom and the absolute freedom of God... Since God will continue to intervene in history, we should expect that it will be necessary, in the course of time, for the *tsimsum* to be restored and adjusted once again. Let us hope that the free will that results from this restoration will be exercised for good and not as it was exercised in our generation. (2007: 32–3)

PRAYER AFTER THE HOLOCAUST?

Prayer is fundamental in Judaism. But how does one—Jewish or not—pray after Auschwitz? Wiesel recalls the observance there of Rosh Hashanah in 1944. The prayers said, "Blessed be the Almighty... Blessed be God's name... All the earth and the universe are God's!... All of creation bears witness to the Greatness of God!" Wiesel describes the prisoner who officiated at the solemn service:

He kept pausing, as though he lacked the strength to uncover the meaning beneath the text. The melody was stifled in his throat. (2006: 67–8)

Holocaust survivor Norbert Wollheim remembers his neighbor's prayer in Auschwitz:

I saw that friend of mine who was standing there not far from me praying, ... I said, "What are you doing?" He said, "I am, uh, pray-praising God." I said, "Here! Are you out of your mind?" ... and I said, "What are you thinking? What are you thanking God for?" He said, "I'm thanking God for the fact that he didn't make me like the murderers around us." (Wollheim 1991)

More recently, David Blumenthal has wrestled with prayer after the Holocaust, composing prayers that echo Wollheim and also Wiesel's protest when he says in *Night*, "I was the accuser, God the accused" (Blumenthal 1993; Wiesel 2006: 68).

Halivni considers prayer during and after the Shoah by asking *how* Jews prayed in Auschwitz—not how in a technical sense but how in the deepest sense: What did they say? What prayer could they recite? A passage in *Breaking the Tablets* offers Halivni's confession to God, expressing his grief for a moment when, in pleading for his life, he addressed an SS man with the "holy word, 'Merciful One' (*har-achamin*)—which appears in the sources only in relation to the Holy One" (2007: 37). What he perceives as a moment of personal weakness is theologically insightful, for those German "masters" played God, sometimes choosing Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, for "selections" that usurped God's place by deciding "who shall live and who shall die." Perhaps Halivni's tormenter even believed that he was being the "merciful one" by sparing a Jew's life, but Halivni ends this episode with a prayer of his own:

May it be Your will that, by virtue of my having understood the correct meaning of the prayer, *malokh al kil huolom kulo beki yodekha*, "Rule over all the world in your full glory," that all the world comes to eradicate the condition that ruled in the forced labor camp. May it be Your will to repair the damage I have caused by substituting the profane for the holy. And may we be worthy of beholding the fulfillment of the prayer, "And His dominion rules over all." (2007: 37–8)

What prayer can one offer in and after Auschwitz? For Halivni, sound responses to that question require awareness that there have been "two major theological events in Jewish history, 'Revelation' at Sinai and revelation at Auschwitz" (2007: 117). The former is of God's presence, the latter of God's absence. Halivni shares this position with Wiesel, Fackenheim, and Irving Greenberg (b. 1933). Fackenheim called the Holocaust an "epoch making event" (1982: 20). He tried to fill its void by invoking the Commanding Voice of Auschwitz, but he never removed crucial and perhaps unavoidable ambiguity as to whose voice that was: God's or the voice of Jewish history? And if this Voice spoke and was heard, did that action take place at Auschwitz or in its ashes and in the Shoah's aftermath? Fackenheim conceded that the saving God was not present at Auschwitz. He later attempted to fill the void by emphasizing *tikkun*, which he defined minimally as "mending" rather restoring it, or as reuniting the divine sparks, building on those elements that were not totally destroyed during the Shoah and may yet heal its great rupture (1982).

Greenberg also speaks of the shattering of the covenant in the Holocaust. Following Wiesel and Glatstein, Greenberg recognizes that the Holocaust altered our perceptions of God and humanity. He offers a powerful verification principle that, he argues, must become the test of religious integrity after the Holocaust. "No statement, theological or otherwise, should be made that would not be credible in the presence of burning children" (in Fleischner 1977: 23). Greenberg argues that the authority of the covenant was broken in the Holocaust, but the Jewish people, released from its obligations, chose voluntarily to renew it again. "We are in the age of the renewal of the covenant. God is no longer in a position to command, but the

Jewish people are so in love with the dream of redemption that it volunteered to carry out the mission" (1987: 37). Our choice to remain Jews, Greenberg argues, is our response to the covenant with God and between generations of Jews and our utterance of the response to Sinai, "we will do and we will hear" (Exodus 24:7, 19). The task of Jewish existence—and of all authentic religious existence after the Holocaust—is to recreate the divine and human images that were destroyed in the Holocaust, to respond to death by creating life, and to continue the Jewish people's journey in history. Jews must continue to labor to bring redemption.

For Halivni, how to conceive and participate in a Holocaust-shadowed relationship with God is the key challenge. Like Rubenstein, he says we live in a time of God's absence; like Rubenstein and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) before him, he believes that if God is absent (dead), anything is possible. Rejecting Nietzsche's celebration of the "death of God," which was amplified by some American Christian theologians in the 1960s, Halivni, along with Rubenstein, takes Auschwitz to be one of the consequences of a disrespect for and denial of divinity. Would that the fear of God had really existed, but in the Holocaust even that was absent.

Halivni experienced the Absence. In his generation it was Auschwitz. What then can be said? What words of prayer can be uttered? Consider the words of the Rosh Hashanah liturgy repeated in the silent devotion of each service:

Our God and God of our fathers, reign in your glory over the whole universe and be exalted in the whole earth so that whatever has been made may know that You made it, so that whatever has been created may know that You have created it; and so that whatever has breath in its nostrils may say: "The Lord God of Israel is King and has dominion over all."

This affirmation was so distant from the experiences of those imprisoned in the *lagers* or those murdered in the Shoah. Halivni writes:

In the concentration camps and forced labor camps... the prisoners perceived the incomprehensible evil that happened as the consequence of the Holy One's abdicating His rule, of His transferring the reins of government into the cruel hands of blood suckers, and of His own decision not to intervene against them but to grant them unlimited authority. Against them, they prayed, "Rule over all the world in Your full glory. And may every creature know that you created it, and everything that moves know that you move it..." And they said, Now these villains behave like gods. Life and death is in their hands; by their will life is given, and by their will life is taken away. Remove this power from them and punish them according to their deeds, and then, "Every soul will say, 'The Lord God of Israel is King and His dominion'—the right and true One—"rules over all." (2007: 36–7)

The point of such prayer, Halivni explains, is not to request directly that "the government of the world would be conducted according to justice and law." Instead, the prayer "Rule over all the world, in Your full glory" is "a petition for God's own good, that He would rule, that He would be glorified, that He would appear." If God would do so, "then the world would be conducted according to justice and law" (2007: 36).

Halivni's sober scholarship unmasks the shallowness of attempts to explain God's presence in catastrophe by a calculus of reward and punishment, sin and atonement. He insists that no form of Judaism can be credible, no matter what its momentary confidence and comfort, if it cannot stand the test of the events it purports to illuminate or explain. Therefore, Halivni underscores that history is the realm of human responsibility. The Holocaust's perpetrators, not God, are responsible for their deeds. But having seen what he has seen, having experienced what he has experienced, Halivni prays for God's dominion; he has seen enough of human dominion unchecked by the fear of God. Halivni's sense of Holocaust-related prayer holds God as well as humankind accountable. It beseeches God to be God.

LOSS, RE-CREATION, LEGACY

What else shall Judaism say of the Holocaust? One response emphasizes the difference between tragedy and atrocity (Berenbaum 1990). In tragedy what is learned balances, to some extent, the price paid for such knowledge. Atrocity offers no possibility of such balance. At most, it leaves those left behind searching amidst the ashes to find some meaning in events that defy meaning, to confront the presence of an absence and the absence of presence, to grapple with the void. As Judaism goes forward after the Shoah, it cannot avoid asking, "Where was God in that abysmal time?" Whether the responses of Halivni, Fackenheim, Rubenstein, Greenberg, or any other post-Holocaust Jewish thinker will be sufficient remains to be seen.

As that process unfolds, it seems clear that God is not to be found in the acts of the Holocaust's perpetrators or in the selection of its victims, but amidst the destruction's rubble perhaps God's traces can be found in rescue, in sheltering, providing a meal, offering a haven, in moments of compassion and remnants of decency. God may be found as well in the courage of the Holocaust's victims and survivors. Rabbi Harold Schulweis (b. 1925) has written of God as a Predicate. To say that God is love, for example, means that loving is Godly. To say that God is just means that doing justice is Godly (1984: 124). As time passes, Judaism will continue to find little solace—quite the opposite—in the Holocaust. But in the lives of its victims, in those who helped and rescued them, and in the example of its survivors, doing justice and loving that are Godly can be found.

In *The Song of the Murdered Jewish People*, written in 1943 and 1944 shortly before his murder at Auschwitz, the great Yiddish writer Yitzhak Katzenelson (1886–1944) lamented for his people:

Never will the voice of Torah be heard from *yeshivah* synagogues, and pale students . . . Masters of Talmud and Codes, small Jews with great heads, high foreheads, bright eyes—all gone . . .

Never will a Jewish mother cradle a baby. Jews will not die or be born.

Never will plaintive songs of Jewish poets be sung. All's gone, gone . . .

Woe unto me, nobody is left . . . There was a people, and it is no more.

There was a people and it is . . . Gone . . . (1980: 84–5)

In the fateful year of 1944, when the last living Jewish community in Hungary was being eviscerated and the last ghetto in Poland destroyed, Katzenelson's vision seemed almost a prophecy. Two of three European Jews were dead, one in three Jews in the world. The great center of Jewish life, the reservoir of the Jewish culture, which had given rise to the American Jewish community and planted seeds in Palestine for emergent Jewish nationalism, was destroyed. The event now known as the Holocaust nearly destroyed Yiddish as a daily and vibrant language as well as the diverse expressions of Yiddish culture. The age-old Jewish village—the *shtetl*—was wiped off the face of the earth. Europe was no longer the center of Jewish leadership and learning. Judaism in Poland, which served as the biological and spiritual center of Jewish life, was reduced to rubble, while other old European Jewish centers suffered deeply. Jewish Vienna, Jewish Berlin, Jewish Prague, Jewish Paris, Jewish Amsterdam, and Jewish Salonika were no more.

Nothing, it seemed, could arise from the ashes. Would Auschwitz be the graveyard not only of the Jews of Europe but of the Jewish people, Jewish history, and even of a vibrant Judaism? In 1945, the fate of the Yishuv in Palestine seemed precarious; what would become of this remnant? Soviet Jews had been depleted by the German occupation; entire communities had been murdered one by one, day after day, by the Einsatzgruppen and their collaborators. And those who had been spared the rod of Hitler soon faced Stalin's purges and the Soviet Union's hostility toward manifestations of Jewishness among its nationals. Would American Jews, whose country had emerged triumphant from World War II, be able to fill the gap, to provide the leadership necessary for regeneration? The sons and daughters of the great 1881–1920 emigration to the United States were coming into their own, ready to claim their rightful place as Americans first and foremost, but perhaps not as Jews. During the 1930s and well into the early war years, antisemitism was at its all-time high in the United States. Barriers were erected, sanctioned by law and custom, social exclusion was not rare, and the desire for assimilation was rampant. Would this community be able to assume responsibility for the Jewish future? Even in 1945 after the liberation of the camps, the verdict was not clear. A remnant had survived, truly a brand plucked from the fire, to use Zechariah's metaphor, yet could these emaciated souls, who had seen and lost all, return to life and rebuild their existence? Would they give up on Jewish history?

Illustrative responses to such questions are found in the narrative of Romana Strochlitz Primus (b. 1946), who considers the mystery of her origin:

My parents, who had met briefly in Birkenau, were both liberated in Bergen-Belsen. My mother weighed 78 pounds and was delirious with typhus; she barely understood that she was liberated. My father weighed 88 pounds. They had lost their families, their communities, their way of life. And yet, I was born in a Bergen-Belsen DP camp less than 15 months after the liberation. (in Rosensaft 2001: 22)

In those fifteen months, survivors reconstituted themselves personally, politically, and Jewishly. They married, often out of loneliness rather than love, dared to have children even when their future was uncertain, even when they had lost their first families. Perhaps most dramatically, even while living in the lands of their oppression, they dared to circumcise their sons but months after the mark of the covenant could have condemned them to death.

In the aftermath of dehumanization and destruction, survivors reclaimed their lives and renewed the will to restore the Jewish people. Within three years of liberation Israel was born, but even then the future was uncertain. Would the fledgling state withstand the onslaught of war declared against it by its neighbors and would survivors of the *Churban* (the destruction)—it was not yet known as the Holocaust—dare to place themselves in danger once again?

Historians note that the period 1945–1967 was a period of Jewish rebirth, restoration, regeneration of life. One wonders if the motif of resurrection would have been used had it not been so central to Christianity, but the major response to overwhelming death was the fervent re-creation of Jewish life. Only later, however, did a language of Holocaust and Rebirth give voice to this phenomenon. Only later did the Jewish community begin to see what had been done.

The re-creation of Jewish life astonishingly reinvigorated the ultra-Orthodox community. Hasidism, the fervent pietism of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Poland, long viewed as being in corrupt and inevitable decline, reasserted itself with new vigor in Brooklyn and Jerusalem as well as in places farther removed from large Jewish populations. Katzenelson's plaintive fear, well-grounded in 1944, that "all's gone, gone" has not been realized. On the contrary, Jewish communities and traditions have come back in remarkable ways.

Judaism is the ongoing creation of a living people wrestling with its traditions and shaping its future. Thus, it can be said that Judaism responded to the Holocaust by Zionism and the empowerment of the Jewish people. Jews and Judaism also responded by bearing witness about the Holocaust, by commemoration and remembrance, and by transforming the Shoah into a universal call to conscience. The Israeli scholar Yehuda Bauer (b. 1926) argued, "The reason why Holocaust survivors turned to Zionism is not hard to understand. The murder of the European Jews seemed to vindicate the Zionist argument that there was no future for Jews in Europe" (in Rosensaft 2001: 25). After World War I, Jews could imagine that they could find their future by appealing for the protection of minority rights within majority cultures. After World War II, that position was

untenable. Even during World War II, the Biltmore Conference, convened in New York in May 1942, united Zionists in a program for the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine.

Emphasis on empowerment for the Jewish people accompanied Zionist initiatives. Powerlessness invites victimization, and the experience of the Holocaust evoked a great upsurge in Jewish power and willingness to employ that power for specifically Jewish causes. During the second half of the twentieth century, the State of Israel became a regional military superpower and a dominant presence in the Middle East. It repeatedly demonstrates the link between the Holocaust and that accumulation of power by bringing state visitors to Yad Vashem, Israel's and the Jewish People's Memorial to the Holocaust, which is situated in Jerusalem, and by periodic flyovers from Tel Aviv to Auschwitz by the Israeli Air Force. The message is clear: Israel's task is to protect the Jewish people, and Israel has the power to do so. The accumulation of power, however, has not enabled Israel or the Jewish people to shake senses of vulnerability, at least not completely. How Judaism will and should respond to these realities is a chapter of Jewish life still in the making.

Survivors once proclaimed a simple message: *Never Again*. This impassioned cry of an anguished people said that no one—Jews or others—should have to suffer as they had suffered. Although mass atrocity crimes continue, the Holocaust has a central place in contemporary political and ethical consciousness. It has become the negative absolute, a cornerstone for consideration of values. Under the leadership of survivors, museums and memorials teaching and commemorating the Holocaust have been created throughout the world. Holocaust remembrance has become a basic part of the Jewish calendar and increasingly a part of the calendars of many nations affected by the Holocaust, including the United States, Germany, Poland, and Great Britain, as well as the United Nations. Because of Holocaust denial and antisemitism, many governments have placed increasing emphasis on Holocaust commemoration.

Utilizing state-of-the-art technologies, Holocaust survivor testimony has been gathered on an unprecedented scale, supplementing the many memoirs that survivors have written. These developments ensure that the survivors' witnessing voices will live long after their lives end, continuing to form cornerstones for films and educational programs for generations. The generation of Holocaust survivors responded to survival in the most biblical of ways: by remembering evil and suffering in order to strengthen the force of conscience, by enlarging memory and broadening responsibility. The ancient Israelites responded to slavery and the Exodus in that way. By transforming victimization into witness, dehumanization into a plea to deepen our humanity, survivors of the Shoah carry on traditions that are central to Judaism, the life of the Jewish people, and the future of humanity itself.

The narrative of the Jewish people has been altered. Shaped in slavery, biblical Jews and their descendants told of their enslavement and redemption, the Exoduses from Egypt, and their standing before Sinai and hearing the revelation of God that demanded the best of humanity. Jews must now speak of their journey from freedom into slavery and to the revelation of the anti-man and anti-God that was Auschwitz. To live authentically after the Shoah, to journey forth into the future, to enliven post-Holocaust Judaism, they must testify to and struggle with these diverse and even conflicting moments in Jewish memory.

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