

Commemorating The Holocaust Will Not Stop Another Holocaust From Happening!

It is now over seventy years since *The Holocaust* ended with the opening of the concentration camps and the slow, ever so slow, recognition of what had taken place.

And yet...and yet... with the diminishing amount of survivors left in the world, soon, a commemoration will be for whom?

We certainly need these commemorative events to honor and savor the remnants of humanity; to attest that they are remembered, still worthy and most importantly, loved.

But then...but then...who are these commemorations for? For the second generation? We certainly need to hold on to memory, because beyond memory, we are only statistics.

In any past world event, take a moment...the American Civil War, for instance. Do we know or remember any of the combatants, outside of some of its famous leaders? Statistics tell us so & so, such & such, but memory? We have none. The same goes with any event: World War I, WWII, the Korean conflict, the Bolshevik Revolution, the Irish Famine, and many others. Memory, none. All we know are statistics, in stories, in books, films, and on the internet.

And has the Holocaust stopped other holocaust/genocide? I think not. How many can we recall in just the 70 years past? There was Bosnia, Rwanda, Indochina, Syria, and Armenia, just to name a few. I'm sure you can add more, coming into the present.

So, if nothing has changed even though we remember The Holocaust, what may stop another from occurring?

I believe it is a portion of The Holocaust that we pay scant attention to...the rescuers, the Righteous of All Nations.

I know that Yad Vashem makes no bones about that. Years ago when I attended a teacher conference in Israel about the topic, the speaker mentioned the priorities of the gathering – victims, perpetrators, bystanders.

Where did the Righteous come into play? They didn't. Yet as much as we may honor the victims, and as much as we may point out the atrocities of the perpetrators, and as much as we look at the mass of bystanders, none of these areas will stop another holocaust!

We do need people to heal the world, to patch up the world when 'leaks' occur but that is still *in reaction*. Those are, indeed, rescuers; not only of a holocaust but as other horrific events occur. But we also need those who will seed the world, would-be rescuers who lead by example as well as teach and support others to do the same.

So, until we take a good look at the rescuers, not a side view, not a token look, only then may we find the gems which might lead us to stopping what we thought would be stopped just by its mere mention.

What makes a rescuer? One trait might be willingness to think for oneself. Another might be, *wanting* to make a difference (potential leaders.) Yet, basically, it is, knowing right from wrong and acting on it. We can teach this. Act 1 has. So what happened?

Although Act 1 taught courses four weeks long, in schools, public, private and religious, it was only one day's worth in a week. It wasn't enough and never will be until...until it becomes part and parcel within the overall curriculum, meaning that it has to be taught continuously, not with statistics, but with exercises which bring youngsters, that at whatever age, they can make a difference.

Yet, there are more roadblocks besides indifference. How do we ask youngsters to stand up for what's right and still keep them safe? How can we encourage them to think for themselves when parents might not allow them even if it is for a good reason?

And violence grows around us, and to someone in the world, by the day! The bystanders (they approximate 90% of the population) continue to stand by. The perpetrators continue to affront us in more extensive ways.

So, the problem needs to be looked at like a two edged sword. We *do* have good people who keep putting out the fires. It is time to find those who can incite the innate goodness in people into a counter-flame. Difficult, you think?

With the odds we have, yes. Impossible, no! Can we wait? Look at what has happened in the 70 some-odd years of trials and tribulations. With that in mind, do we have a choice?

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