

# YOM HASHOAH

## ***What does it mean to be human?***

*“It means to have the ability to care for other human beings. The intensity of our humanity is in direct proportion to how much we care for others.”*

*Abraham J. Heschel*

As Yom HaShoah approaches, we are about to engage with a commemoration that, due to the historical proximity, emotional impact and commitment to the future, often moves us the most.

Talking about Yom HaShoah brings to the forefront of our minds millions of stories that arose from the crematoria, and spread like the ashes and smoke that covered the death camps, challenging us to never again let that happen – to never again allow anyone to determine the fate of their neighbor with the simplest flick of a the proverbial switch.

We are called to repeat a thousand times that never again should a human being be reduced to ashes, and that barbarism must never be allowed to prevail.

Each time we see new fanatical leaders rising to power we are reminded of the possibility that the Shoah could happen again. Each time that we hear or read a story about the Shoah not in the first-person, it gives more and more deniers the opportunity to come to light.

But what can we do? Clearly, by bringing into our consciousness the atrocities of the Shoah, we are exercising our memory. Memory is much more than simply remembering, it is generating positive energy for change. How much sadness and despair, how much bitterness!

The full name of this day, uses the word G'vurah (heroism), and in this day we recall and appreciate each and every insurrection and rebellion. But our focus is not on military heroism, but on a spiritual heroism instead – that of leaders, teachers, rabbis and many more, who heroically put the lives of their fellow Jews in front of their own. Are they not laughing now at those who were raised to erase

the Jewish people from the face of the earth, and failed? Just look at the Jewish people around the world, and especially in the modern and wonderful state of Israel, to understand that those heroes of hope are, no doubt, the big winners in life.

Today, we do not feed on the revenge for what happened; we dream of a world where values and education ensure the peaceful coexistence of peoples with universal peace as our flag guiding our journey. This is the same Chazak Ve Ematz (strength and courage) passed on to Joshua by Moses before his death, in order that Joshua continue the work Moses had begun with the Jewish people.

The Shoah was a destruction that led to a hope for freedom, and a time when dreams were renewed. The Nazis and their machinery failed – yes they did much damage, but eventually failed – and HERE WE ARE! I invite us all to exchange weapons and gases for the special life-force that the brave and courageous fought with.

Let us be worthy heirs of the partisans, and of the 6,000,000 stories – the ones with names, and the ones without.

We are all of them because they were all of us.

## ***Yehei Zichram Baruch***

*May their blessed memory inspire us in the task of being citizens and not just people in the world in which we live.*

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MERCAZ



Marom Amlat



Masorti Amlat



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