

## *I Promised I Would Tell*

### **Preface**

As a survivor of the Shoah, I come from another world, a universe where genocide was committed with scientific precision by implementing just three basic ideas:

1. You cannot live among us as Jews...
2. You cannot live among us...
3. You cannot live...

Yes, we struggle to comprehend the unthinkable—an era when death factories were operated by a self-appointed “super race,” whose success was enhanced by sympathizers and collaborators from many nations.

I come from an age of darkness when my people—even the children—were condemned to torture and death for no other reason than because they were Jewish. Of course, not all of the victims were Jewish, but *all* the Jews were victims.

The handful who survived try to bear witness; some in silence, which is perhaps the most fitting testimony of all, and some by speaking out. A tragedy of such overwhelming dimension creates an uncommon opportunity to explore, to question, to challenge, and hopefully to learn. Lessons and parallels...Learning to be human? Just what have we learned?

The American massacres still make up a historically “forgotten genocide”. The Cambodian tragedy is yet another scar upon creation. Then there was Bosnia...Rwanda...Sudan...These people and countless others all have been victims of prejudice and ignorance, deprived of freedom and dignity. It has been said that after Auschwitz all things are possible. Was, then, the Holocaust the “pilot project” for the destruction of humanity? Or are we to perceive it as an event—unprecedented but not inevitable—whose lessons cannot, must not, be ignored?

Genocide is the end result of hatred, prejudice, ignorance, and indifference. When scapegoating and stereotyping go unchallenged, sooner or later we all become enslaved. Those of us who survived that other universe where the darkness was almost complete have an obligation to warn you, because we know that under the right conditions it can happen again, anywhere, to any people.

We, the survivors of the Holocaust, are the credible link between this world and “the other place.” But how does one bear witness to the unspeakable? Some of us try and fail...and try again, because we dare not be silent.

Normal standards do not apply to the Holocaust. Even language fails and words like hunger, fear, hot, cold, and pain lose their meaning. In fact, the Holocaust is a crime without a language. Yet we must speak about it, and we must remember from generation to generation, because if we remember, then memory will (we hope) shield us from repeating such unthinkable evil.

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