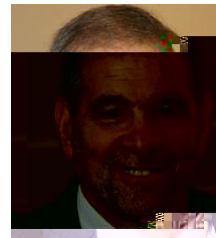


Note to Readers: In addition to providing holiday inspiration, we are pleased to offer you continuing access to a vast library of Ziegler Torah commentaries on each weekly Parashah throughout the entire Torah cycle. To delve deep, please [click here](#).



Jews have always been a community drawn together by virtue of Torah. No matter where you may be, we welcome you to the Ziegler community through Today's Torah e-mail.

21, 2020 - 27 57 0



No sooner have we finished Passover and Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, is upon us. The juxtaposition is startling. Passover celebrates liberation, the passage from slavery onto freedom, from Egypt to the Promised Land. And the Holocaust is the anti-Exodus, the passage from freedom – albeit not without discrimination and difficulty – to slavery and soon thereafter, to annihilation.

God's role in the Biblical account of the Exodus is dramatic. God smites the Egyptians, rescues the Jews, splits the Sea and provides manna throughout their sojourn in the desert. God's role

in the Holocaust has baffled theologians and rabbis, philosophers and survivors.

Jews awaited miracles and they were not forthcoming.

The Exodus was for a dual purpose, for the people of Israel to return to the Promised Land. After a 40-year sojourn in the desert, a new generation arose that was ready to live as free people in their own land. The second purpose was for the newly liberated slave to stand at Sinai and accept the revelation of God entailed responsibilities to one another.

In my work I have come to portray Auschwitz as the revelation of the anti-God – the idolatry – and the anti-humanity, the anti-Sinai itself. All Jews stood at Sinai, all were condemned to Auschwitz. Jews must testify to both moments in their history.

How can these two events – Exodus and Holocaust, Pesach and Yom HaShoah -- be linked?

This question was faced by those who established Yom HaShoah. Secular survivors wanted Holocaust remembrance joined with the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, which began on the secular calendar on April 19, 1943, the eve of Adolf Hitler's 56th birthday. For the Germans, the Fuhrer's present was going to be a Judenrein Warsaw, a Warsaw without Jews.

On the Jewish calendar April 19th, 1943 was the 15th of Nisan, the first evening of Passover the night of the Seder. So religious leaders in Israel objected, Jews could not both celebrate the Exodus and Remember the Shoah on the same date, at the same time. Furthermore, by tradition, Nisan is a month without lamentation, Tahanun is not recited, even funerals cannot be held with the deepest of mourning. By tradition, no eulogies are allowed though even among the Orthodox such a practice is honored in the breach.

Given that this observance was proclaimed not by Rabbis or Jewish thinkers but by political leaders in the Israel Parliament, a compromise was reached that satisfied no one completely but forced both parties to concede something important. A day was chosen within the week that Passover ends, the 27th of Nisan, the one day that cannot fall on a Shabbat so the month of liberation is marred because this initial liberation from slavery, great as it was, heralded as it must be was incomplete and remains incomplete until the final liberation that has not yet come. And Holocaust Remembrance Day is as close as it could be to the Hebrew Day of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising without falling on Passover or Shabbat.

Others have commented on the fact that Yom Hashoah V'hagevurah [Holocaust and Heroism Day] begins what are the Israel High Holidays followed seven days later by Yom HaZikaron [Memorial Day to the Fallen Israeli soldiers] and Yom Ha'atzmaut.

“You, your children and your children’s children shall never become a perpetrator.

You, your children, and your children’s children shall never, ever allow yourselves to become victims.

You, your children, and your children’s children shall never ever, never, be passive onlookers to mass murder, genocide or (may it never be repeated) a Holocaust like tragedy.”

Elsewhere, he has been more succinct:

Thou shalt not be a perpetrator;

Thou shall not be a victim;

And above all, thou shalt not be a bystander.

Bauer has told us what we must not be.

Holocaust survivors and Holocaust rescuers have taught us what we must be “Upstanders,” confronting evil, enlarging the domain of human responsibility one for another, standing with the oppressed and not the oppressor. The Holocaust has become the “negative absolute” and thus a touchstone for human ethics. And survivors themselves have become defined not by that anguish they suffered but by the resilience they have manifested in its aftermath, not as victims but as witnesses, speaking to our generation and to generations beyond.

, is the Director of the Sigi Ziering Institute: Exploring the Ethical and Religious Implications of the Holocaust and a Professor of Jewish Studies at the American Jewish University. The author and editor of 20 books, he was also the Executive Editor of the Second Edition of the Encyclopaedia Judaica. He was Project Director overseeing the creation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the first Director of its Research Institute and later served as President and CEO of the Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation, which took the testimony of 52,000 Holocaust survivor in 32 languages and 57 countries. His work in flim has won Emmy Awards and Academy Awards.





[View this email](#) | [your preferences](#) | [using](#)
Got this as a forward? [to receive our future emails.](#)

15600 Mulholland Dr.
Los Angeles, CA | 90077 US

This email was sent to michelle.starkman@aju.edu.
To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

