



# LIFE RISING OUT OF DEATH

## Seventy Years after Auschwitz

What was it like to be in a concentration camp? With death ever-present and *hope* an irrelevant word?

Could I have survived? Could you? How would one possibly find redemption in such darkness and depravity? Could any of our emaciated, crushed people even have dreamed that the rebirth of the Jewish state was to occur a mere three years after the slaughter?

On January 27, 1945 the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp was liberated. Two of those who survived recorded their experiences that we might dare look through the window of their tortured

souls. We want to look away, to wish it never happened. But we must not. It is an ineradicable part of our story. On the other hand, we must not become paralyzed. To remain fixated on the endless grave - the ashes - is to surrender to death, granting the Enemy posthumous victory.

*Night* is Elie Wiesel's haunting account of deportation from the Transylvanian town of Sighet and incarceration in Nazi death camps. As a teenager Wiesel was swallowed by the experience. To read this masterpiece of description and self-disclosure is to be dropped into its frozen frame of time.

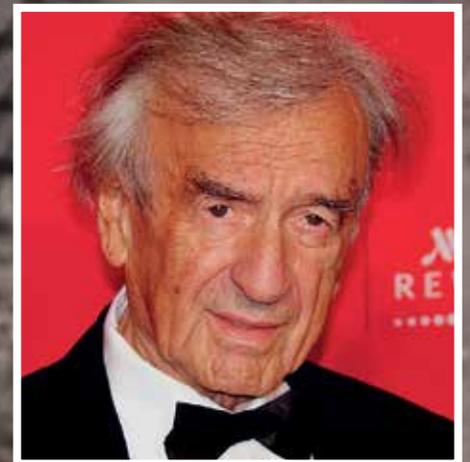
*"I did not know that in that place, at that moment, I was parting from my mother and Tzipora (my baby sister) forever."* (page 27)

Descending into the maelstrom of inescapable horror, young Wiesel - who had been a passionate student of Talmud and rigorously committed to daily synagogue prayer - ceased to pray.

*"Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me for all eternity, of the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust."* (page 32)

Even so, *"we decided that, if we were granted our lives until liberation, we would not stay in Europe a day longer. We would take the first boat to Haifa."* (page 48)

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Elie Wiesel (Wikiphoto by D. Shankbone)

While pouring out the emotions that were seared numb at Auschwitz, the future Nobel Prize winner admits that there was hope embodied in the Zionist dream.

### Man's Search for Meaning

Hope is the very theme taken up by another brilliant Auschwitz survivor, Dr. Viktor Frankl. A published Austrian Jewish psychiatrist, Frankl analyzed the internal reality of prisoners in his classic *Man's Search for Meaning*.



Viktor Frankl (Wikiphoto by F. Vesely)

*"Life holds a potential meaning under any conditions, even the most miserable ones."* (page 12)

After recounting his endless days as a common laborer, under the sickening shadow of the ovens where fellow Jews were turned to ash by the hundreds of thousands, Frankl writes this profound conclusion.

*"Man's search for meaning is the primary motivation in his life. This meaning is unique and specific in that it must and can be*

*fulfilled by him alone ... Man ... is able to live and even to die for the sake of his ideals and values."* (page 105)

Riveting is the depth of his experience while thinking of his wife during an endless forced march through icy conditions. While stumbling in the dark he concluded:

*"... that love is the ultimate and highest goal to which man can aspire... The salvation of man is through love and in love."* (page 49)

In a barracks speech to his fellow sufferers the doctor spoke of the many opportunities that give life meaning. He tried to shore up their courage, to show that there was still something to look forward to in the future.



Young Holocaust victims (Wikiphoto by Czeslawakwoka)

### Life from the Dead seen by Israel's Prophets

Israel's prophets foresaw a time of terrible suffering. Their lasting testament, however, is *life rising out of death*. As if viewing both the ovens of Auschwitz and the rebirth of Israel, they spoke of a miraculous resurrection. Without seeing, they saw. One saw ashes turned to beauty (Isaiah 61:2). Another saw dried out bones - a whole valley of them - rising up as refabricated Jews. They came up from their graves, returning to Eretz Yisrael to receive His Spirit and a new heart (Ezekiel 37:17).

One cannot understand the nature of Israeli society without touching the Holocaust. Our intensity, our drive to defend ourselves, our assertiveness with each other, the invisible backdrop of trauma - all these can be traced back to the immeasurable tragedy that ended 70 years ago. I am not justifying arrogance or mistrust. But awareness of the nightmare that preceded our return from the death camps is essential if we are to participate in the Messianic revival promised by these same prophets. ✡



By EITAN SHISHKOFF

# PRAY FOR ISRAELI ELECTIONS

March 17, 2015



The Knesset parliament hall (photo by Noam Chen www.goisrael.com)



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# THROUGH THE VEIL

## The Invitation

**T**oo often we take for granted the invitation to enter into the holy of holies. We have become numbed to the majesty, to the undeserved privilege we casually read about in the Bible. The high priests were not so insensitive. For them it was an exalted, transcendent moment of awe.

## An Appointment

When we make an appointment with an important person such as the owner of a company, we do not just walk into his office. There are terms of entrance and a protocol for setting the appointment. There is a waiting room. Only when the owner is available and notifies us, can we go into his posh, oak-paneled executive suite and meet with him from the far side of his oversized mahogany desk, and even then only for a brief visit. He is busy.

## Greater Tabernacle

How much more weighty is it to be invited into the presence of God in His heavenly tabernacle!

Hebrews 9 describes the Tabernacle God commanded Moses to build on earth, giving intricate details of the work and the sacrifices to be made for the people and for the priests (Exodus 25:9-40). We read a description of the Holy Place and what it contained, continuing on into the Holy of Holies where the ark of the covenant rested holding manna, Aaron's rod and the tablets of the covenant (Hebrews 9:4).

The veil (parochet) separated the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. Only once a year could it be entered, and then only by the high priest (*cohen gadol*) on the Day of Atonement with intensive preparation. The veil was a double veil, with an interior and an exterior layer. When the high priest went in with his incense he entered the

veil through the side and not the middle. The south end of the outer veil was open to the Holy Place. The north end of the inner veil was open to the Holy of Holies.

The earthly Tabernacle was built by the hands of men, whereas the heavenly one is the work of Yeshua. At His death the veil was torn in two down the middle (Luke 23:45).

**“Messiah came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation.”** (Hebrews 9:11)

## Sprinkled and Washed

The Holy of Holies, the most important place in the Temple, was not entered lightly. The high priest had to follow many conditions and processes of purification. God spelled out these instructions for purification and sacrifices in Leviticus 16.

What about us as believers today? Unlike the high priests, we have been granted an open invitation to continually enter in! God's grace purifies us - not the work of our hands but the work of His. He gave all men a way, through His blood and sacrifice, to enter the Holy of Holies.

**“Therefore brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Yeshua, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh...let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.”** (Hebrews 10:19-22) ✨



By GUY COHEN



Paratrooper unit with hydration packs

# A HEART FOR THE IDF

**R**eturn to Zion has decided to do more for our hard-working soldiers in 2015.

Young men and women from our congregation are serving their country in various units in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), including the Special Forces. We have raised these young people and taught them to follow God in all their ways and decisions. Now as they serve, we are providing support, gifts and conferences for Messianic soldiers.

Last year saw war in the Gaza Strip. It was our desire to bless the soldiers who were fighting there. We made packages with clothes and sweets, went to the border and gave them to the soldiers. It was a huge encouragement for them and for us.

Last month we donated hydration packs to a paratrooper unit. The soldiers were very thankful and received these practical gifts with joy.

Our next step is more spiritual. We want to create a “pathway” and raise support to enable Messianic soldiers who finish their service to fly abroad to a quiet and beautiful place, to spend time alone with God, receive teaching and travel around. The goal is to see them refreshed and strengthened in faith before their next step, which is serving the Lord with new power here in Israel. ✡



Hydration packs



Youth leader Yevgeny with a soldier from our congregation

By YEVGENY