

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG194 – Holocaust Memorial Day - 2024

God bless you, and welcome to this podcast. Today, we are talking about the Holocaust Remembrance Day, which in Israel is May the sixth for the year 2024. I want to address it specifically because of the events that are occurring surrounding this Holocaust Remembrance Day. One thing I want to focus on in the beginning is just a little bit of a history about the whole idea of remembrance. When we look at the Jewish times of feasts and fasts that they celebrate annually, and also events like the Sabbath that are celebrated weekly, we see that remembrance is really a focal point that God has imparted into the heart of the Jewish people. Speaking about the Sabbath, for instance, if we look at Exodus the twentieth chapter, verse 8 says, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” So, this is an idea that goes down through the fasting and the different feasts that exist in Judaism, that you remember something in order to keep it or to act upon it.

Verse 8 says, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.” When we go down to verse 11, it says, “For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.” You are remembering the fact that God is the Lord of all creation. He created the heavens and the earth, and He rested on this day; and you are to rest along with Him because He has sanctified that day. So, again, we are emphasizing that God has constantly imparted to Israel this idea of remembering, and keeping, or acting, upon what is to be remembered.

If we go down to another example, we could look at the Feast of Passover, or Pesach, which remembers the days of both the slavery and deliverance of Israel from Egypt. As it says in Deuteronomy 5:15, “You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the Lord your God commanded you to observe the sabbath day.” We see that on Passover, Pesach, we are remembering the events that took place; and, of course, when you are remembering these events, like the days of slavery in Egypt and the way God delivered them out of Egypt, they are filled with lessons. These lessons are to be remembered, they are to be learned, and they are to be taught and imparted generation after generation to all of Israel.

Another example is Pentecost, or Shavuot, which remembers the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. We have Tabernacles, or Sukkot, which remembers the days that Israel was in the wilderness on its way to the Promised Land; God’s Presence was visible with them day and night, and He provided food and water during the time of the forty-year journey. So, again, there is quite a bit to be learned by going back and remembering what did transpire during that time, even though that was not in your generation. And so, you keep those lessons fresh, the reality of those lessons fresh, for you and your generation, and you pass them on to the next generations.

Another great example is the Fast of Esther and the Feast of Purim, which remembers the determination at that day to annihilate the Jewish people. Again, this really applies to us when we talk about Holocaust Remembrance Day and we think about, specifically in this year, what transpired on October the seventh

of 2023 with the attack of Hamas against Israel. We see the shadows of what took place during the days of Esther, and we recognize really that that same determination to annihilate the Jewish people is still very much alive in this day and age. That is one of the reasons for the remembrance of the Holocaust this Memorial Day, not just to memorialize and honor those who were murdered during these events; but also we are to learn the lessons, as we did during some of these feasts, to see what God was teaching the people. So, it is interesting that we have this great impartation to Israel about this idea of remembering and acting upon those memories.

There are also reminders on a daily basis that we have in Judaism. One thought that comes to my mind is the Shema prayer, which is to be said daily by the Jews. It also continues after the specific Shema prayer into what is called the Ve'ahavta. Ve'ahavta means "you shall love." The Ve'ahavta is filled with instructions for them that they should love the Lord their God with all their heart, all their mind, all their strength, all their wealth, everything that they own. This is telling them not only to love the Lord God, but also it gives other instructions about how they are to relate to the Word – they are to bind it upon their arm, they are to put it on their doorpost, they are to teach diligently their children "as you walk in the way, as you are sitting at home"; all of these ways that you are to not only remember the Lord, not only love the Lord, but you are to act upon that remembrance, and you are to teach it. You are to keep it alive to yourself, and also that generation after generation of Israel would never forget to follow after the Lord with all of their heart, to love Him and to be obedient to His Word. And so, we have this tremendous emphasis in the Jewish people, the heart of the Jewish people, we have it in Judaism very deeply, that we are to remember, and we are to act on what we are remembering.

When we look through this lens at Judaism and the Jewish people, it is no surprise, then, that we recognize that they are motivated by and act on that which they are remembering. And so, when we talk about Holocaust Remembrance Day, we can see that this is in the very fabric of the Jewish people. And in fact, then, it is no surprise that the United Nations Resolution 60/7, and the International Holocaust Day, was an initiative of the State of Israel, and that the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel was the head of the delegation from Israel to the United Nations to present this initiative. The initiative was presented and it was passed, as I stated, as this Resolution 60/7. So I want to read out of this. I want to read basically the statement of this Resolution that is found in Wikipedia; and I am just going to read it as it is presented, so that I am not misstating or interpreting something. I want it to be very, very factual, what we are looking at in this Resolution.

So here we are, [from Wikipedia](#):

Resolution 60/7, adopted by the General Assembly on 1 November 2005, established 27 January as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. The resolution urges every member nation of the U.N. to honor the memory of Holocaust victims, 6 million Jews, "one third of the Jewish people, along with countless members of other minorities," and encourages the development of educational programs about Holocaust history to help prevent future acts of genocide. It rejects any denial of the Holocaust as an event and condemns all manifestations of religious intolerance, incitement, harassment or violence against persons or communities based on ethnic origin or religious belief. It also calls for actively preserving the Holocaust sites that served as Nazi death camps, concentration camps, forced labor camps and prisons, as well as for establishing a U.N. programme of outreach and mobilization of society for Holocaust remembrance and education....

The essence of the text lies in its twofold approach: one that deals with the memory and remembrance of those who were massacred during the Holocaust and the other with educating future generations of its horrors.

Here is a “message by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for the second observance of the Holocaust Victims Memorial Day on 19 January, 2008.”

The International Day in memory of the victims of the Holocaust is thus a day on which we must reassert our commitment to human rights. We must also go beyond remembrance, and make sure that new generations know this history. We must apply the lessons of the Holocaust to today’s world. And we must do our utmost so that all peoples may enjoy the protection and rights for which the United Nations stands.

It is interesting to me in this statement – this is the end, by the way, of the statement, as it exists in the article we are quoting from in Wikipedia. But in his statement, he really picks up on the heart of remembrance in Judaism. He says, “We must go beyond remembrance and make sure that new generations know this history.” So we are to remember, and we are to act; we are to do something about that which we are remembering. We must apply the lessons of the Holocaust to today.

The reason we remember is because we want to do something about it today. We want to never forget what God has been teaching, and we want to do something about it. So, to me, he picks up in his statement these two very, very important key parts of the Jewish culture and the Jewish training that God has brought through the years in the feasts, the fasts, and the different celebrations.

If we talk about this year’s Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel – we know this is the date that they are celebrating it at this year’s time of Memorial – Israel is going to be remembering not only the Holocaust, but also October 7th of 2023, when Hamas exposed the determination of the Islamic forces of jihad, proving their stated purpose for existence and confirming their goal of total annihilation of all Jews and the Jewish State of Israel. It is interesting when we look at the events of October 7th and how quickly the nations, especially the United Nations itself – which is why I am pointing so specifically to the United Nations, who created this resolution, and has made all of these statements about why we are remembering the Holocaust itself and what we are to do about those memories – then, it amazes me how quickly the United Nations General Assembly and the nations have forgotten, seemingly, what transpired on October the 7th, and they are moving away from their original purpose of having a Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Remember, this October 7th, when Hamas attacked Israel, it really exposed the determination of not only Hamas, but of other Islamic jihadist forces, proving their stated purpose for existence and confirming their ultimate goal, which is the total annihilation of all Jews and the Jewish State of Israel – which is exactly the same purpose that the Nazis had during World War 2 in bringing about the Holocaust; which is to be remembered, but not just remembered, it is to be acted upon. It is to be acted upon through education of new generations so that it does not happen again, and that is exactly what the U.N. is calling for. So, when I look at it, and where we are today, not very long after the events of October the seventh, to me, not only has the United Nations forgotten its Resolution 60/7 to remember the Holocaust and the cry “Never again,” it has also failed to apply the lessons of the Holocaust, as it stated it would, to today’s world, by educating new generations of its horrors, assuring that “Never again” would be our reality in today’s world. This is what we are supposed to have by virtue of this resolution, by virtue of the statement that was made about the Holocaust and the remembrance that is

to take place, when Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon made his statement on the second observance of the Holocaust itself. So, there was to be the education of people that this never transpire again.

“Never again” should be the reality in today’s world. But if we go on from there, more tragic than the United Nations’ failure to remember and to act on their resolution is that it has actually participated in the education of the new generation of Gazan children to hate and annihilate the Jews – exactly opposite of what they stated the mandate was, based on remembering the Holocaust. Beyond this knowledge is also the understanding that the United Nations finances facilities and employees that were actually involved in the inhumanity, rape, and murder that occurred on October the seventh, 2023.

So, as Israel prepares to remember the Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel this year, sadly, it is marred by the antisemitic protests that are transpiring in many nations. And these, again, are happening because of the failure of not only the United Nations as an organization, but also of the nations themselves: the failure to educate the children. Remember how Israel is to educate their children in the Ve’ahavta: diligently, every day, while you walk in the way, while you are sitting at home. There has been a tremendous failure by the United Nations, by the nations individually, to train the new generations in a different way of thinking, in a different way of remembering the Holocaust, so that there would be different actions that are taking place today.

This is going to be a day that is really marred by what is transpiring through these antisemitic protests throughout the nations; through the shouts on college campuses that we hear, demanding that Palestine be free “from the river to the sea.” And by the way, in case you do not understand that statement, this is a cry, it is a demand, for the success of Hamas and its purposes, and the success of every Islamic jihadist organization globally that has one stated purpose, and has a one-state solution in mind. As much as the United States and other nations say they are pushing for a two-state solution, what they keep forgetting is the fact that that is not what Hamas wants, and that is not what radical Islam wants. They do not want a two-state solution; they could care less about a two-state solution. But seemingly the administrations are deaf to that understanding, and to the very clear statements made by these people of what they do want: they want a one-state solution, and that state includes no Jews, and there is no State of Israel existing after the implementation of their one-state solution. It is, again, a cry for the absolute and total annihilation of the Jewish people globally, and within the land of Israel, and within the State of Israel.

We need to see this, we need to recognize this, if we are going to in any way have an effective time of memorial, of remembrance, of the Holocaust and of the day, October 7th, 2023.

So, I am asking you this year, please stand with the Jews throughout the world, and with the State of Israel, to remember the horrors of the Holocaust, to remember the horrors of October the seventh and the attack that took place against Israel; to honor the memory of those brutally murdered in these and other anti-Semitic attempts of annihilation. That determination is not gone, the spirit behind it is not gone.

If we are going to do anything, please, let your voice be heard in any way you can and in every way you can. Let it be heard clearly by the nations, by your neighbors. It is a cry that says, “Never forget,” and “Never again.”

God bless you. God bless the Jewish people, and the State of Israel, during this Day of Remembrance on May the sixth, 2024.