

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

Among the more distinguished milestones of Human history, no one could stop mentioning Yom Hashoa, the day we remember the six million Jews murdered by the claws of the Nazis and, by extension, a whole stage of violence, hatred, persecution, war and death in colossal proportions. But far from being an allusive act, for the Jewish People this day involves a set of meanings, and even of practices, which go far beyond a historiographical point of view. And thus, it implies referring to a fundamental element of our calendar. In the words of Elie Wiesel we read that "The opposite of love is not hate, it is indifference. The opposite of beauty is not ugliness, it is indifference. The opposite of faith is not heresy, it is indifference. And the opposite of life is not death, it is indifference between life and death."

Without a doubt, the writer is leaving us by means of his pen a great legacy: for all those that are living after the Shoa, there is an extra obligation to the one that any man from the past could have had, and that is remembering and never forgetting this horrifying chapter of our lives.

And, in order to remember and not forget, it is not enough to think or feel. It is necessary to educate, to don't stop telling, transmitting, fighting and living accordingly. And also to object and protest in the event of coming along with any circumstance in which people are being truly discriminated, oppressed, and persecuted.

When every year we carry out the traditional Pesach Seder, one of the most emblematic moments of our tradition, we go deeper into the Haggadah and we sing a celebrated paragraph referred to the festivity, known as the Vehi Sheamda, a reference to "her, the one that remains through time"

Who is she? Our sages teach us that she is the promise of G-d, that He foresaw and states that in every time, even though in each generation an oppressor arises and persecutes us and wants to exterminate us, he could never finally achieve its mission.

We still have a duty pending: we are the ones who have to fight for a Shoa to never happen again. In

this way, Yom Hashoa does not constitute a day that was simply determined to commemorate an event of our history, but an undivided, unavoidable and essential part of our identity as Jews and our values as human beings.

When World War II broke out, my dead great-grandfather chose to hide himself, together with his family, in a rural area from the interior of Poland from which he was a native. Each morning he woke up early and he went into the thick grazing lands, where he stood for several minutes but never stopping to move. Only some natives noted him and end up believing him crazy.

This "madness" was no other thing but the practice of putting on the tefilin and performing his tefila every day, even if he had to put his life in danger. But it also was much more than that: it was the responsibility of keeping his identity and his people's identity even in the most difficult events, of fighting so as to not forget his values.

It cannot be denied that there is a point in which, despite the geographical origin of his ancestry, every Jew is scarred for life by what happened in the Shoa. And this is like that from the very moment that he comes to this World and gets in touch with his roots and becomes aware of who he is.

Yom Hashoa, day of remembrance and calling to action, is not simply a look into the past; Yom Hashoah is a message for the future. And it must be a teaching that maintains its strength and effectiveness in all times, so as to be able to stand up to the oppressors of each generation and to live lives of true freedom.

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